

Letter from Vietnam



Henrik Pontoppidan, Director of S2U Design, talks about the coming together of both HAWA and VIFA, as well as explaining why there were two Saigon shows this year.

The HAWA Exhibition in Saigon, formerly known as VIFA, unfolded its splendour from March 6th to 9th this year. Since 2010, I have either visited or exhibited at the Vietnam International Furniture & Home Accessories Fair (VIFA) in Saigon every March. In the early days, this Furniture Exhibition occupied a solitary hall, a far cry from the expansive showcase it has become today. Beyond its role as a marketplace, VIFA has served as an annual reunion for global furniture enthusiasts, offering insights into emerging trends and providing a platform for networking with colleagues from around the world, as well as catching up with old friends scattered around the globe.

HAWA/VIFA – an evolving event not to be missed

Over the years, I've witnessed VIFA's remarkable growth, from its modest origins to its pre-COVID peak featuring seven circus-sized tents adjacent to the main halls. The show's evolution mirrored Vietnam's ascent as a major player in the global furniture industry. Pre-COVID, VIFA's organizers demonstrated a commitment to enhancing the show's quality, transforming it from a market-stall-like event into a professionally organized international showcase. Government institutions and industry trade organizations began to take notice, further elevating VIFA's stature on the world stage.

The HAWA/VIFA confusion

However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in a period of upheaval for VIFA. After two years of cancellations, the Handicraft and Wood Industry Association of Ho Chi Minh City (HAWA), the perennial sponsor of the show, decided to chart its own course. This decision severed ties with 'Lien Minh Company', the traditionally contracted organizers of VIFA, and gave rise to a period of rivalry between the two entities. The resulting confusion led to the defiant organisation of two competing shows in 2023 and the subsequent year, both vying for the coveted March dates. This fragmented landscape left international buyers bewildered and diluted the impact for exhibitors.



Fortunately, (at least at present) it appears that VIFA and HAWA have now reunited under a single banner, offering hope for only one event again in 2025. The upcoming show, slated for March 5th to 8th, 2025, presents an opportunity for reconciliation, consolidation and collaboration. With the potential to become the largest iteration yet, it's an event that should not be missed.

Review of HAWA 2024

At this year's HAWA Exhibition, the range of products showcased was nothing short of impressive, spanning from the weird to the wonderful. From avant-garde designs to timeless classics, exhibitors left no stone unturned in their quest to captivate attendees. Moreover, the general quality standard of both booth design and products was on the rise, reflecting the industry's commitment to excellence and innovation.



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In the spotlight this year, the HAWA Exhibition showcased a plethora of daring designs, innovations, and ambitions. The show's March edition boasted three large, air-conditioned tents in addition to the main halls, ensuring a steady flow of visitors. Exhibitors unveiled a diverse array of products, from chairs and upholstery, Cabinets and Dining Furniture to outdoor furniture and many new eco-friendly materials. The exhibition hall buzzed with excitement as attendees marvelled at the industry's latest offerings, signalling a promising future for Vietnam's ever evolving furniture sector.

The HAWA Exhibition stands as a testament to the resilience

and adaptability of Vietnam's furniture industry. As we look ahead to next year's show, let us celebrate the spirit of collaboration and innovation that defines this remarkable event.

If you need help with connecting of any of the exhibitors you are welcome to reach out. My contact details are underneath. You can find a list of exhibitors here:

www.hawaexpo.com/exhibitor-list/

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www.s2udesign.com - www.vinahardware.com