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In a different **direction**

Pilar Landaluce travelled to her native Spain to attend the Madrid International Furniture Exhibition and to see what one of Europe's major furniture manufacturers is offering for 2008.





The Madrid International Furniture Exhibition has been running for the last 25 years and it has been attracting an ever increasing number of participating companies and professional visitors. This year's event brought together 635 companies, of which 23% were foreign entries, which filled 50,000 sq metres displaying their products, trends and interior solutions.

Metallic finishes, although used in a more muted way, were very much present in a variety of furniture pieces and decorative objects, which was the case of The Colección Alexandra with its Deco Table in a chocolate and silver finish and the Álvaro armchair finished in gold and upholstered in cowhide.

The French country style was again an important approach taken by a number of participating companies such as Beccara with an entire range of furniture finished in all-weather, stone, off-white and grey finishes. However, this look was mixed with vibrant colours to give a more contemporary look.

Rich decorated interiors and more elaborate furniture was very much the scheme presented by companies such as Guardarte with its re-interpretation of the Baroque style while incorporating minimalist touches, promoting the use of both straight lines and moderate curves.

Other interesting entries, among many, was the one presented by Berlanga which produces entirely handmade high quality furniture in Spanish walnut. Also Epoca Internacional displayed a line of furniture combining a contemporary style with touches and reminiscences of Moorish inspiration using aged black finishes with inlaid silver and steel leaf work.

One of my favorite entries was the one presented by Swala Line with its mix of contemporary and tradi-

tional styles, incorporating African design elements. This company had a few magnificent light fittings such as The Flor de Vida ("Flower of Life") handmade with steel chains, a laser-cut steel structure and based on a chain-suspended assembly; or a splendid original lamp consisting of three spheres made of ostrich feathers. All the pieces from this Spanish company were far from brash or over the top instead they were filled with sheer simplicity and elegance.

Overall the Madrid International Furniture Exhibition was a very interesting design event covering all aspects of the interior design industry from the more traditional style to the more cutting edge designs. Although this is not the most prominent and largest of the European events, it is a very manageable one with a very good international representation and, best of all, a great way to see what Spanish designers and manufacturers have to offer.

The Madrid International Furniture Exhibition, in collaboration with the Official College of Decorators/Interior Designers of Madrid (COD/DIM), presented three Design Awards to the three best new ideas featured at this year's show:

- **SCV** From Madrid with a collection designed by Sofia Calleja and manufactured by the same company. SCV exhibited a very extensive collection of lacquered furniture, upholstered seating and lamps, featuring a uniform set of design criteria focusing in particular on texture and finish.

- **VERTICE** Also a Spanish exhibitor that designs and manufactures its own products. The judges awarded the Phileas Wardrobe, designed by Quim Larrea, a table-top wardrobe, thought out for hotel use, and based on the theory of the old trunk containing all of the practical items required by a traveler, effectively creating an original ambience due to its size and format.

- **ALEAL** A Portuguese company that also manufactures its own creations. They were awarded for the Zenith Bar Furniture, designed by Virgilio Silva, an interesting and solid design consisting of four doors and a single central handle

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