**Preview of the Brussels Furniture Fair 2019**



**Welcome to Brussels**

Our world has to a large extent become digital. We increasingly reach for the internet for inspiration, or to shop. The demise of the trade fair has been predicted more than once, but a trade fair still fulfils a useful purpose. It is the key moment for the furniture trade to view and compare the latest collections for the coming furniture year, all together in one place; to visit established suppliers, and make discoveries at new ones. For the manufacturers, receiving direct feedback from buyers cannot be replaced by digital communication. If necessary, they can adjust their latest design before it is manufactured. For both visitors and exhibitors, the direct human contact offered by a sector meeting up for an annual get-together is incredibly important. Facilitating these encounters and inspiring visitors remains the key function of a trade fair.

A relevant commercial offering in a convivial setting has been the Brussels Furniture Fair’s trademark for years. So let’s start with the former. A buyer who wants to pay an efficient visit to the fair, with its more than 300 exhibitors spread across 7 halls, has a number of options. Firstly, the Furniture Fair is split up into a series of segments, based on the style that the manufacturers offer. Are you looking for contemporary, modern furniture? Then City in Halls 3, 4 and 5 is where you should start your visit. The crème de la crème of the Belgian furniture industry proudly showcases its wares in the imposing Hall 5, and you’ll find strong international manufacturers in Halls 3 and 4. Are you in search of something a little sleeker? Then visit Hall 3, where you’ll find affordable design in Square. Or is the country or industrial look more your thing? In that case, you’re sure to find what you’re looking for in Fusion, in Hall 8. In Holland à la Carte in the Patio, the two styles come together. Here the common thread is the Dutch manufacturer. For sleep specialists it couldn’t be simpler: Brussels by Night in Hall 6 groups together Belgian and international manufacturers of both technical innovations and stylish sleeping concepts. Or is your clientele looking for price-conscious furniture? If so, don’t miss Mozaïek in Hall 9.

Last year, there was a fresh new concept for the trend passages. As for every edition, Art Director Siegrid Demyttenaere has once again developed three themes around the central question “How are you?”. The key concepts are harmony, physical and mental wellbeing, and spirituality as a counterpoint to technology. The young generation is bursting with energy and wants to create solutions that harmonise with our inner selves. Each theme is encapsulated in a character: the Essentialist, the Spiritualist and the Energist. In the trend passages at the fair itself, these are illustrated with a selection from the exhibitors’ offering. They might offer a fresh perspective on a manufacturer, or show you the way to an exhibitor of which you were previously unaware. The presentation can also provide inspiration for decorating your shop in an original way. Feel free to take away a trend booklet as a guide!

Thorough preparation prior to your trade fair visit saves time at the fair itself. Since early September, the Brussels Furniture Fair website has featured a list of every exhibitor taking part in this edition. You can select them based on nationality, hall or segment. Contract specialists are visiting the fair in ever-greater numbers. It is useful for them to see a list that exclusively details manufacturers specialising in the contract market. This can be done at the click of a button! To refine your selection still further, you can also indicate all the manufacturers that you want to visit and neatly export them in a list. Armed with your list, you won’t miss anything at the fair itself. Shortly prior to the fair, the clickable floor plan will appear online. However it would be a great shame to rely on your pre-selections alone. Don’t hesitate to step into a stand you are not familiar with and allow yourself to be surprised. The furniture manufacturers go to great lengths to come up with fresh ideas each year. So they greatly appreciate your visit. And yes, even if you don’t buy, you are still welcome!

You are also welcome to rest up for a while in one of the Furniture Fair’s bars with surprising food concepts. These offer a drink or a snack free of charge. So treat yourself to a delicious coffee or a glass of Belgian beer. You can fill any small gaps with a fresh croissant in the morning; or with soup, sandwiches or one of the small, original dishes in the afternoon. Would you like a more elaborate meal? Then you can visit the restaurant above the entrance of Hall 5 or in Hall 9, where a paid-for lunch is available.

But the party isn’t over when the fair closes its doors for the night. Brussels is a great city to explore, with something for every culinary taste. Would you like some help deciding where to head to? You’ll find our selection on the Brussels Furniture Fair website, featuring restaurants and bars in all price categories. That’s all part and parcel of an enjoyable trade fair visit!

On the evening of Tuesday 5 November, it’s time for the eagerly-awaited festive ceremony at which the Balthazars are awarded every year. There are four categories of award, in which the jury shines the spotlight on an exceptional innovation, an original design, or a stylish collection. The winner goes home with a certificate and the Balthazar: a giant bottle of champagne containing no fewer than 12 litres. At the reception afterwards, the champagne corks will be popping and together with exhibitors and visitors we’ll be toasting the winners. This is a moment for meeting up that illustrates the power of a trade fair. Prefer to sit at home on your tablet? I didn’t think so!

Lieven Van den Heede

Brussels Furniture Fair

3 – 6 November 2019

9 am – 7 pm (on Wednesday till 6 pm)

[www.furniturefairbrussels.be](http://www.meubelbeurs.be)