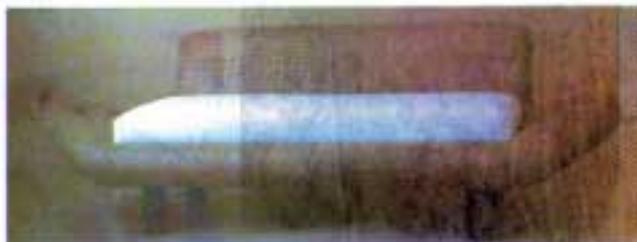




COFFEE table sure to be made of solid and Philippine mahogany



AFTERNOON DELIGHT. Lounge chair with reclining footrest of wood and fabric.

Cebu's best-kept secret

(From page B3)

credits with a gradual shift in her familiarity with indigenous materials. It pays to know their strengths and weaknesses by heart for these up-and-coming, she added.

Experience has taught her new ways of combining and putting these materials to good use despite shifting trends. Spraying of trends, she says, "We never worry for trends, but today's furniture market still goes for clean, modern lines bordering on the neoclassical. Details has kept this in mind without being too trendy."

"I try to maximize materials in a way they best suit their own forms," Debbie explains.

The Penatrype country

Queen City

of the

South is

also the

world's

queen

of native-

based

furniture

Common, she observes, are now more concerned with durability and function. As the years pass, however, they have become more adventurous in mixing and matching furniture pieces. She notes below. As long as the functions are carefully put together, the odds, makers need not worry about breaking rules.

Debbie merely dragged her shoulders when asked about neotrends. As a "penatrype" country, she believes the Philippines has always had a unique style regional buyers who buy furniture pieces by the individual, even only to clear out shop inventories by the thousands later on.

"We'll continue to make sure it's easier for them to cope by producing better pieces with certain trends," she says. "While I'm also a CHC, my real love is systems. I've designed computer-based systems to track down the progress of each piece from the factory to the store."

There's always room for improvement, what with several styles rubbing down their respective counterparts at the same time. The need for speed and efficiency has become a paramount importance in the face of competition from other countries that employ cheap labor.

As president of the Designer Guild, she attempts to further local cooperation among members through seminars and open communication. Only then, she believes, can they address problems that directly affect their companies and professions.

JLQ and Silya Int'l Inc.

While most of the companies are known for their furniture pieces made of wood, other companies (JLQ and Silya Int'l) have purposely chosen a different route for a good reason. The two are noted for their metal-based furniture combined with wood, leather, glass and various indigenous motifs.

Since JLQ spent over 20 years ago from Manila, one of the country's leading motorcycle manufacturers, it has enjoyed an edge over others for its use of metal. JLQ's pieces are mostly custom-made based on the ideas produced by Silya, which was established several years later to cater primarily to hotels, restaurants and resorts, apart from their uniquely placed stores. An big reason usually have no trouble to make it easier to reach them in site visits.

"Manila, which is owned by Liza Quinsigano's father-in-law, had a furniture division that she and husband later used to manage. The couple later bought the division when the old man decided to retire."

"We also do wood pieces but not so much as in others," says Quinsigano. "My husband and I decided early on to concentrate on what we're good at, which is metal."

Manila, after all, is known for its superior metal work. In fact, a number of JLQ and Silya's competitors also go to Manila for their top-quality and



SUMMER SURPRISE. Lounge table and chairs with cushions and three ottomans in white and beige go well with the tropical weather. Touching up with great ideas with finished feet patterns for added details and charms.



CHARMED LIFESTYLE. Lounge pieces and table are made of metal and finished alloys, while coffee table in laminated bamboo strips contrasts with warm grass and ottomans. A round glass-topped table is made of epoxy resin and solid leather. Ottomans. Both white chairs were taken at the Phil. Maldives.



DESIGN Ventures' dynamic couple DARINA and Que Pasa

clustering trends. Of course, she was also aware of right ahead of the others. Since Silya's been the first to start of Manila's home industry.

"I like to be a designer and I like to be a designer," she says. "That's the passion, and that's the goal. Manila can never be without it."

JLQ and Silya's edge is more to provide the most the look and feel of metal, but the creative needs of their. The Binky Hedges lounge had almost steel made of alloys and laminated bamboo around wood-finished metal tubes as painted neoclassical. There are also ottomans, modern glass, and the laminated table that has a metal base with a wood finish on top.

Others, like the successful Benitojos chair, represent the ability and their progress of metal. Some pieces are made of wood and finished alloys combined with glass and imported leather from Thailand. Through the use of a sophisticated machine called CNC, people at Silya can easily achieve an image or form through a piece's finished made of metal.

"Metal works are finished but just like the way they used to be," says Quinsigano. "We also import polished metal from Korea and Japan for the sake of our clients for its strength and durability."

For the other companies, the goal comes to metal. However, with other items comes up with

new designs it starts appearing in many of its markets. The Quinsigano rely on a number of house designers and a US-based manufacturer from West Elm for their. Trends, he pointed to the Liza Quinsigano has over a dozen different styles.

"Of course, starting three months design process involves a lot of work," she adds. "We always on the list in terms of timely and quality. It's hard to make these pieces and sell them."

And products like ottomans come from the US, she said. She said to maximize use of quality materials, she said. She said to maximize use of quality materials, she said.

It will always be a challenge to come up

Cebu's best-kept secret

by Alex Y. Vergara

Design Ventures Inc.

Nothing is perfect. "What really matters is how we use these imperfections to create beauty." So says Debbie Palao, managing director of Design Ventures, when asked to describe the philosophy behind her designs. Debbie established Design Ventures with husband Gus Palao, the company's marketing director, more than 10 years ago.

Before that Gus worked as a buying agent for furniture pieces bound for Australia, while Debbie, a CPA, managed a Japanese restaurant. She has been into designing clothes and accessories long before they made their fortune in furniture.

"The thought of selling better furniture than the ones I was selling then inspired us to establish our own company," recalls Gus. "We were then renting a factory without the slightest idea on how to sustain it. Fortunately, we got our first batch of buyers soon enough."

Indigenous materials

From five people, including themselves, Design Ventures now employs more than 100 employees. Many of its products have found their way to North America, Europe and the Middle East. From individual pieces, Debbie and Gus now sell a particular look.

"My [furniture] designs have evolved since then," says Debbie, also the president of the Cebu-based Designers Guild of the Philippines. "The pieces no longer stood out individually, but now blend with others to create a certain lifestyle."

Apart from maturity, not age, she insists, Debbie credits such a gradual shift to her familiarity with indigenous materials. It pays to know their strengths and weaknesses by heart to come up with, say, the ideal chair.

Experience has thought her new ways of combining and putting these materials to good use despite shifting trends. Speaking of trends, the

spirit of '80s excess may be back, but today's furniture market still goes for clean, modern lines bordering on the sculptural. Debbie has kept this in mind without losing her imprint. "I try to manipulate materials in a way they haven't been used before," Debbie explains.

Prototype country

Consumers, she observes, are now more concerned with durability and function. As the same time, however, they have become more adventurous in mixing and matching furniture pieces like never before. As long as the furniture are tastefully put together, she adds,, makers need not worry about breaking rules.

Debbie merely shrugged her shoulders when asked about copycats. As a "prototype" country, the Philippines has always been a magnet for shady regional buyers who buy furniture pieces by the cobtainer vans only to churn out cheap reproductions by the thousands later on.

"We'll just have to make sure it's harder for them to copy by producing better pieces with certain twists," she says. "Since I'm also a CPA, my next love is systems. I've designed a computer-based system to track down the progress of each piece from one section to the next."

There's always room for improvement, what with several styles rolling down their respective assembly lines at the same time. The need for speed and efficiency has become of paramount importance in

the face of competition from other countries that employ cheap labor.

As president of the Designers Guild, she also hopes to further instill cooperation among members through constant and open communication. Only then, says Debbie, can they address problems that directly affect their companies and professions.

