

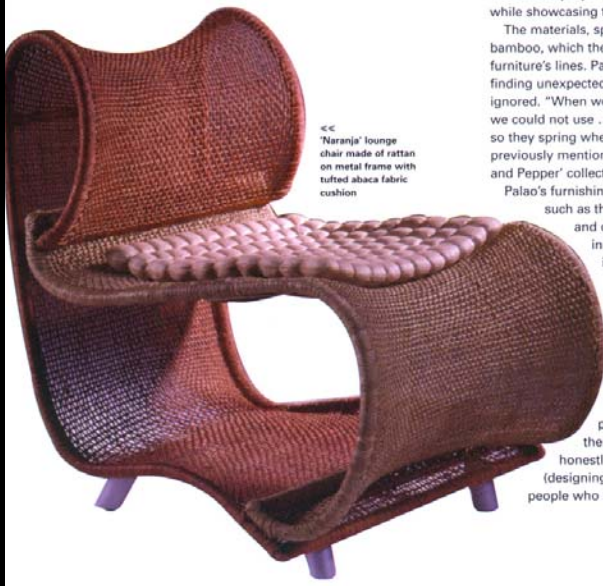


My first encounter with a Debbie Palao design was in a friend's sitting room. What I initially thought was centre table was actually an astonishing ottoman composed of bamboo stalks that sank into cushion beneath it and moulded to your bottom comfortably as you sat on it. Such is the nature of Palao's creations for her company, Design Ventures -- emphasis is put on tactility or otherwise. **"Furniture pieces can have that cutting edge if its fulfills a purpose . . . above what it should achieve intuitively while showcasing the naturalness of its materials,"** says Palao.

The materials, specifically woven rattan, abaca, jute twine and bamboo, which the designer loves, are just as important as the furniture's lines. Palao experiments with them, occasionally finding unexpected uses for bits and pieces

that would usually be ignored. "When we accumulated quite a pile of bamboo nodes we could not use . . . I thought of putting them on top of cushions previously mentioned ottoman, which was part of her 2000 'Salt and Pepper' collection.

Palao's furnishing, which have been exhibited regularly in fairs such as the Salon du Meuble de Paris, the Valencia Fair, and others in Cologne and Milan, are contemporary in flavour. But although the materials used are indigenous to these islands, they do not have that dated tropical look. **"My designs have not been intended to mirror Asian design and living, otherwise they will have limitations,"** Palao explains. **"(But) they have been designed with Asian sensibilities because of the indigenous materials used, and the Filipino craftsmanship.** However, we follow the standards for comfort and an intuitive purpose which make them acceptable all over the world." She also believes the end user should honestly enjoy the designs as well. "I have fun (designing), that's for sure," she admits. "I wish the people who buy my pieces (will) have fun as well."



**Debbie Palao**  
My first encounter with a Debbie Palao design was in a friend's sitting room. What I initially thought was a centre table was actually an astonishing ottoman composed of bamboo stalks that sank into the cushion beneath it and moulded to your bottom comfortably as you sat on it. Such is the nature of Palao's creations for her company, Design Ventures — emphasis is put on tactility and each piece contains a surprising, unexpected feature, textural or otherwise. "Furniture pieces can have that cutting edge if it fulfils a purpose . . . above what it should achieve intuitively while showcasing the naturalness of its materials," says Palao. The materials, specifically woven rattan, abaca, jute twine and bamboo, which the designer loves, are just as important as the furniture's lines. Palao experiments with them, occasionally finding unexpected uses for bits and pieces that would usually be ignored. "When we accumulated quite a pile of bamboo nodes we could not use . . . I thought of putting them on top of cushions so they spring when they are sat on," hence, the creation of the previously mentioned ottoman, which was part of her 2000 'Salt and Pepper' collection. Palao's furnishings, which have been exhibited regularly in fairs such as the Salon du Meuble de Paris, the Valencia Fair, and others in Cologne and Milan, are contemporary in flavour. But although the materials used are indigenous to these islands, they do not have that dated tropical look. "My designs have not been intended to mirror Asian design and living, otherwise they will have limitations," Palao explains. "(But) they have been designed with Asian sensibilities because of the indigenous materials used, and the Filipino craftsmanship. However, we follow the standards for comfort and an intuitive purpose which make them acceptable all over the world." She also believes the end user should honestly enjoy the designs as well. "I have fun (designing), that's for sure," she admits. "I wish the people who buy my pieces (will) have fun as well."