



First CHAIR

HANDSOME YET SOMBRE, DELICATE YET DURABLE; THE BEAUTY OF TEAK IS MAGNIFIED IN KAREN MOK'S FURNITURE LINE, KERUSI.

The Vivid sofa is one of Mok's favourite pieces in the Fuse collection.



The Quilt dining chair from the Fuse collection.

And I love the natural beauty it gives to furniture."

She describes teak as handsome yet sombre, delicate yet durable. The rich simplicity of solid teak, she adds, ensures that the pieces from Kerusi become the classics of tomorrow. "The superiority of material and craftsmanship are reflected on each end product," says Mok. "That's why it's very crucial that we do not compromise on quality."

As she runs her fingers across the surface of a sideboard from Kerusi's debut collection, Fuse, Mok explains, "You see, each piece of wood is authentic and solid. You need that to achieve that robust appearance. If you're frugal in providing genuine material, its aesthetics are affected, and so will its value."

REAL VALUE

Value is, after all, what distinguishes Kerusi. The brand strives to set itself apart from over-commercialised, mass-produced furniture. "It's hard to find well-designed furniture in Malaysia. More often than not, it's very monotonous and lacks character," laments Mok. "Kerusi comes in and fills the gap by creating unique, top-notch pieces that are of good value for money."

But finding a balance between commerce and design is really the key to determining the >



A colourful sculpture furniture from Kerusi's upcoming collection. Above Karen Mok was an interior designer for 14 years before launching Kerusi last year.

If there's one thing that Karen Mok doesn't enjoy, it's having her photographs taken. The designer may share the same name as the award-winning Hong Kong-based actress, being the centre of attention is, on the contrary, not her bag. "I feel very uncomfortable when I'm asked to strike a pose," she chuckles.

Mok's tensed posture, however, gradually loosens up as she starts to talk about Kerusi, her very own line of furniture. An interior designer for the past 14 years, she's no stranger to the industry. And after years of contemplating on starting her own business, she finally took the plunge and

launched Kerusi in 2011. "I told myself to just do it!" she exclaims.

Unlike what its name suggests, Kerusi offers more than just chairs. The brand's lineup of products also includes sofas, coffee tables, and sideboards. "I'm not a fan of bombastic words," Mok shares. "I decided to name my company Kerusi because it's a direct, basic Malay word that everybody knows."

Kerusi's essence lies in its emphasis on the magnificence of solid teak. "The brand is synonymous with solid teak," discloses the Malaysia Institute of Art graduate. "Teak is alive.



success of a brand, Mok admits. "It takes time for a brand to find its place in the market. It's hard to predict whether Kerusi is successful in just one or two years' time."

Within the next three to five years, she hopes that the brand will, through its partnership with lighting giant Lightcraft, reach a greater audience, where its virtues are recognised and appreciated. "At the beginning, we teamed up simply because there was a space in Lightcraft's massive showroom. But in hindsight, we realised that we actually complement each other," shares Mok.

Mok is currently working on Kerusi's upcoming collection. Called Basic/Log/Raw, the collection features a selection of furniture made from recycled logs. "The collection is about the interspersing of various raw materials to give rise to a new contemporary piece of furniture," she reveals. "Besides, I'm also collaborating with Hong Kong-based artist Frank Woo this time around who will help to inject vibrant colours to the new collection!" ●

Kerusi is available at Lightcraft, 145-5 & 6 Jalan Sungai Besi, Kuala Lumpur, tel: +603-9222-2413. To view the entire collection, visit www.kerusi.co.

"KERUSI IS SYNONYMOUS WITH SOLID TEAK.

TEAK IS ALIVE. AND I LOVE THE

NATURAL BEAUTY IT GIVES TO FURNITURE."

above Kerusi on display in Lightcraft's showroom. below The Duvet lounge chair from the Fuse collection.



Besides solid teak, Mok also uses rattan in her design.

