



Products are suitable for both interior and exterior use



# Rustic elegance for the home

Everything old is new again with Usang Collections' assortment of reclaimed boatwood furnishings

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The paints are kept in their original state to maintain authenticity

Homeowners and establishments seeking décor with an exotic touch need look no further than local boutique Usang Collections, whose authentic handicrafts have turned heads with their vibrant, eye-catching motifs and use of reclaimed boatwood sourced directly from the traditional folk vessels of Javanese seafaring communities.

"All our furnishings are made from reclaimed woods, about 80% from boatwood and the rest from houses and other structures. We source our materials from Indonesia, and our processes have the benefit of being eco-friendly while delivering lasting quality," says Yuva Kuthayan, business development manager of Usang Collections.

## Inspired by nature

A joint enterprise with her husband, Kathi Swaran, the Usang Collections concept came to them when they were developing a jungle retreat in Raub, Pahang, where natural surroundings paired well with the aesthetic appeal of rustic furniture.

Founding the boutique with the aim of showcasing green products that merged affordability with premium design, the pair set about bringing their vision to life.

Initially exploring options along the East Coast, including Kelantan and Terengganu, Yuva and Kathi found that domestic sources could not supply the quantities of reclaimed materials they required.

Broadening their scope to the surrounding region, the traditional wooden boats of Java — dubbed *perahu* in the

Usang Collections include assorted collectibles



native tongue — presented a unique opportunity, and they wasted no time in setting up shop in Semarang in Indonesia.

"All our manufacturing takes place in Semarang, but in terms of ordering, quality checks and so on, those are done in Kuala Lumpur. We are still new, having just started last July, and it is a niche market, but we are expanding this month to Penang, where we are partnering with a retailer to distribute our designs," explains Yuva.

## A celebration of colours

The lively hues found in Usang Collections' portfolio showcase the painting schemes of the Javanese *perahu* they are fabricated from, with bright colours derived from Chinese maritime influences. The paints are kept in their original state to maintain authenticity, with touch-ups administered when needed.

The boutique's technique transforms each Usang creation into a one-of-a-kind heirloom piece, with years of history and personality etched into every seam. The hardwoods used for seagoing vessels are also selected for durability, offering greater permanence over the teaks found in mass-produced furnishings.

"We put a coating on each piece to preserve the colour. Our designer, Phan Meng Hooi, comes up with at least three new designs every month, so we always have fresh stock,





PHOTOS BY DD HOE



and we also offer customisation. We use every part of the *perahu*, with even the smallest parts going towards art pieces and accessories. Nothing is wasted,” says Yuva.

## Durable décor and designs

Having already weathered the tests of time and climate, Usang Collections’ products are suitable for both interior and exterior purposes, whether as conversational centerpieces to be passed down to the next generation or attractive outdoor fixtures that can stand up to Malaysia’s tropical storms and sun.

Its range includes a variety of furnishings from cabinets and chairs, to bar counters, wine racks and frames. Existing designs like the Madura Mini Boat Table and Delima Jewellery Box are perennial favourites, with new additions like the Perahu Lena bedframe and Sandar Dua two-seater introduced last month.

“We use a mixture of teaks, ironwoods, *bengkirai* and *nyamplung*, which are strongwoods found in Indonesia. As boatwood, these materials are also naturally resistant to pests like termites, but we do put them through a preventive treatment process just in case,” says Yuva.

Furniture collectors can check out Usang Collections’ eclectic designs at its Kuala Lumpur showroom at Centrio Pantai Hillpark off Jalan Pantai Murni. ▣

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:**  
Yuva says Usang materials are sourced from Indonesia

Furniture displayed range from cabinets and chairs to bar counters, wine racks and frames

The boutique’s fabrication process uses every part of the *perahu*

The *Perahu Embun* table is a new design

