



Flagship store: Artist's impression of Friven & Co @ Tanglin which is due to open in June. It will be modelled after a home, with each area featuring related products

Friven making foray into lifestyle 'mall' business

By CHEAH UI-HOON

BEDLINEN and bedding manufacturer and distributor Friven & Co Ltd is making its foray into a lifestyle "mall" business, with its global flagship store at Tanglin due to open in June.

Taking over some 18,000 square feet of the Singapore Post building at the corner of Tanglin Road and Orchard Road, Friven intends to offer a "one-stop home solutions" hub by bringing together other tenants such as SunMoon Food Company Ltd and Denise the Wine Shop, and providing services such as those from HSBC's Premier Banking Centre. It in effect will become SingPost's anchor tenant there. The post office will still offer its services, albeit taking up a smaller part of the building.

Friven & Co @ Tanglin will also be the listed company's global flagship store - occupying half of the retail area, or 9,000 sq ft, which will be modelled after a home.

Located on the second

floor of the building, the flagship store will stock an extensive range of home and living accessories. The store will be segmented like a home - with customers entering a living room, kitchen, dining room, bath area, and even bedrooms for both adults and children.

"Each area will feature related products to give homemakers interior design and usage ideas," says Gary Loh, executive chairman of Friven & Co.

Partners will include Kitchen Culture which is showcasing a show kitchen system, while Friven & Co will also introduce new brands to the market, such as Honey Berrie children and baby collection from the United States and Japan, and Scandinavian lifestyle brands Nou Nou and Tonfisk.

SunMoon, in addition to its fruit offerings, will offer quality meat products from Huber's and distribute premium meats and sausages from Australia. SunMoon also holds another conces-

sion, Haato, which specialises in Japanese gelatos.

Mr Loh says that Friven & Co will sink in at least \$1 million to retrofit the building, adding that managing this "mall" would be another level up for the company to build its brand. The Singapore Exchange-listed company currently has six stores in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Shanghai, with plans to add five more by the end of the year. There will be a new store at Tampines by year-end, with three more to open in Malaysia by June, besides its new flagship at Tanglin.

"Running a mall is our dream; it's the top of the distribution chain as we already have standalone stores, shop-in-shops, and we also do wholesaling and more recently, Internet sales," says Mr Loh.

It started expanding its retail footprint after acquiring Eagleton Direct Exports Ltd in April 2007, a sourcing company which specialises in a wide variety of home living accessories.