

## Home-grown retailer Thomas Wong lauded at industry awards



Thomas Wong opened his shop at Boat Quay last year so he could impart his decades of experience as a tailor to young apprentices. ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

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SINGAPORE - At 71, most Singaporeans would have retired. But not Mr Thomas Wong. Instead, the master tailor opened a retail shop in August last year.

On Friday night (Sept 29), his atelier-cum-workshop, The Prestigious, was named the best new entrant to the retail scene.

Mr Wong opened his shop at Boat Quay last year so he could impart his decades of experience as a tailor to young apprentices.

"It wasn't about making money, I wanted to train a new generation of tailors and breathe life into the industry," said Mr Wong, who has nine young tailors under his wing.

The Prestigious was given the accolade by the Singapore Retailers Association (SRA) at its annual awards event, held at the Raffles City Convention Centre.

SRA president R. Dhinakaran said it was heartening to see a home-grown talent win this award.

"The Prestigious is proof that 'traditional' trades like tailoring is still very much alive and relevant (amid) a changing retail landscape," he said.



**Life interview with tailor Thomas Wong: True master of the craft**

He added that it is proof that customer engagement and creating a positive experience are key factors in getting ahead in the competitive environment.

At the event on Friday, which was attended by 650 guests from the retail industry, the SRA also gave out seven other awards.

Among them are Best Retail Concept, which was awarded to Victoria's Secret flagship store at Mandarin Gallery, and Best Retail Event, which went to the "Pokemon at Changi Airport" event.

Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry Sim Ann, who was guest of honour at the event, said all retailers could learn from these winners.

She added that the retail industry is undergoing a disruption worldwide and she was glad to see stakeholders here band together to launch the Retail Industry Transformation Map last September.

The road map aims to help retailers launch new concepts, redesign jobs and use technology, including e-commerce, to find overseas customers.

Under the road map, the SRA will in January lead a study group of retailers to New York City for a conference, and to visit retailers there.

Said Miss Sim: "No aspiring global city can afford to do without great shopping. I believe in the relevance and the potential of Singapore retailers and retail brand owners."