

Director

For business leaders in Thailand

MAY-JUNE 2009

Green Issue

Is energy working for you?
Eco-friendly office solutions
Fueling the economy

HR

Is it the end of the
expat executive?

SHINING BRIGHT

Mechai's Future Vision

ISSN 1906-4411 180 BAHT



SPECIAL FEATURES

Out of Office

Whisky & Cigars

Business Books

The Latest Reviews

Post Its



The View From Here

Architecture in Bangkok

Jon Plate

director Sukhothai Capital

In challenging times it can be difficult to remember that a bright future is waiting just around the corner. Times of financial difficulty are, however, followed by much needed improvements in governance and prolonged periods of economic growth. This time will be no different. Now is the right time to plan for that bright future.

If we were to imagine one single event that would give Thailand's international image a boost and send a message of optimism, progress and environmental awareness to the world what would it be? I can think of at least one.

One of the most effective ways of attracting positive attention would be to invite top international architects to participate in a competition to design an iconic and environmentally friendly building in Bangkok. The building could be a multi-venue performing arts centre or something entirely different, but the aim should be uncompromising: to give Bangkok an icon in the league of the Sydney Opera House or the Gherkin in London.

Bangkok has become a vibrant and cosmopolitan megacity with much to offer its citizens and the world. An international architect competition could boost Bangkok's standing tremendously:

- by announcing the competition, Bangkok will immediately be on the international design map and subtly remind the world that the long-term future for Thailand is indeed bright.
- by emphasising green credentials Thailand will lead the way in promoting a new world vision, and in the process get the chance to highlight the environmental improvements made in Bangkok over the last few years.
- the competition will further enhance a very positive trend among developers and architects in Thailand to constantly outdo each other. Just look at the interesting design trends currently on display in Phuket and latest in Cha-am/Hua Hin/Pranburi. Beautiful design feeds beautiful design.

One should not underestimate the positive effect of a lasting, unifying beacon for Bangkok and Thailand. The case in point is of course the Sydney Opera House by the Danish architect, the late Jorn Utzon. Apart from being a masterpiece, it is a symbol for not only a city, but a whole country and continent.

What better way to celebrate progress and optimism for the future?