

■ Study trip to Bangkok, January 2005

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This report gives an overview of the study trip to Bangkok, organised by Christian Prilhofer Consulting in the middle of January this year. Although initially there was considerable interest, the number of those taking part fell to just a small group of eight, mainly because of the catastrophe. However, for the participants this turned out to be a considerable advantage, because the trip was more tailored to the individual. As a result, for some participants the study trip not only provided an insight into Thailand, but brought some business contacts too.

Dechavas, the owner and managing director, gave a very impressive account of his company and its development, together with his philosophy of how to successfully lead the business into the future. As chairman of the Thai Real Estate Association, he was also able to give an impression of the general economic situation in Thailand and the situation in the construction industry in particular. In summary, he stated that current economic growth in Thailand is good, with an annual average of 6 - 8 %. At the moment, no one can say how long the boom in the residential construction sector will last. This means that companies in the construction trade react differently.

well by Home Place, has shaped his decisions. Now they build between 20 and 30 houses every month, mainly two-storey. The floor area is between 120 and 160 m². They are completed to the highest standards, to make sure that they always have satisfied the customer. He pays special attention to balanced financing arrangements that, in the event of more problems with economic growth, will remain manageable and under control. Over and above that, they are putting efforts into further developing the product.

In his lecture, he described the path taken by HP over the last 10 years. Back in the mid 90's, they had already decided to go for precast construction. Following a series study trips across the world, accompanied by his two leading employees, Dr. Chiravut and Dr. Somchai, he introduced the double wall and precast floor in line with the European model. A suitable plant was built. He would have preferred to introduce Japanese technology, but the costs were too high for Thailand. Over the years further investigations and development work has been carried out, in order to lower construction costs.

The building system was adapted to meet local conditions. It turns out that in Thailand the lattice girder method of building is too expensive for the residential construction sector, where houses are usually two-storey. According to the construction standards currently in force, this method of construction is over dimensioned, and today it is only used for taller buildings. For Home Place Group these are mainly condominiums, usually 9-storey blocks of flats, with smaller freehold flats. For two-



The party in the conference room at Home Place Group

In this report we will again look in particular at the visits to two companies, "Home Place Group" and "Preuksa Real Estate". In their very detailed lectures, the two managing directors provided an insight into the business that was more open and natural than is often the case.

On Monday, 17 January, the visit was to "Home Place Group" (HP). Mr. Kanok

His approach to managing the company is based on years of experience. The economic crisis in the mid 90's, weathered



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Mr. Thongma, managing director and owner of Preuksa Real Estate Ltd.

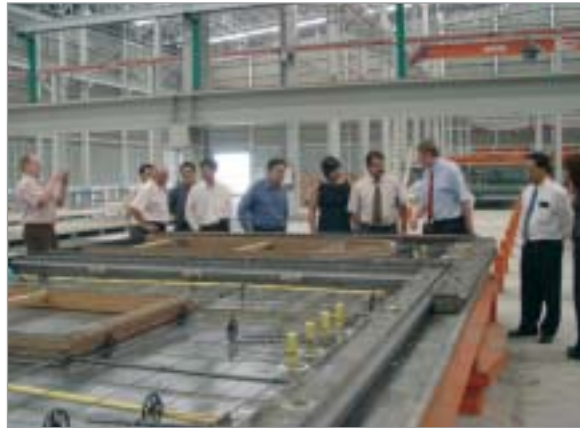
storey houses, which at present make up the majority of construction activity, Mr. Kanok developed a method of construction that better suited the conditions in the Thai market. The supporting walls are 150 mm thick solid walls, while the floors are precast, or sometimes solid. Much value is placed on short construction times, with fixed delivery dates and high quality. Costs must be within the range set by competition. So in the middle of last year, HP started their 28-Day House. This period covers the entire construction time, right up to handing over. The basis is a flow diagram showing all information relating to the daily progress in construction work. Each day, all activities, materials, equip-

ment etc. are itemised for the assembly teams. In the case of hold-ups, actions that are to be initiated are also listed. Quality assurance is present throughout the construction phase. Finally an internal technical approval is carried out, leaving one day for fault rectification before the hand-over.

The first building was completed within the specified 28 days. This provided a

is common in Thailand, it was on a large, enclosed area, controlled by a private security firm. There different stages of construction work could be seen: houses that were already inhabited, buildings under construction and properties where plans and preparations were already under way for the future.

On 18 January the visitors had the opportunity to get to know Mr. Thongma



The party at Preuksa Real Estate Ltd's new precasting plant

reason to make further improvements. Today they are built in 24 days. Mr. Kanok is already talking about a further improvement, possibly lowering the construction period to 20 days.

After the lecture came lunch, followed by the opportunity to see real life construction work by visiting a current project. As

Vijitpongpun. Mr. Thongma is managing director and owner of Preuksa Real Estate Ltd., who are currently building the world's largest precasting plant. His senior staff, Mr. Yothin, Mr. Amornpol, Mr. Pornsak and Dr. Songpol were also present. At present they are in charge of the many tasks relating to the new factory. ▶



Progress in the construction work on the "24 Day House". This is the situation on the third day



8th day



14th day



20th day



22nd day



24th day

Mr. Thongma spoke impressively about the development of his 12 year-old company, which he has piloted to becoming one of the largest and most successful firms in the sector. In the past the company has built around 23,000 two-storey houses. Other residential buildings have also been constructed, and Preuksa is a business with a history of success in the Bangkok construction sector. For example,

he explained his grand target for 2005: 5,000 houses are to be built and sold this year, based on around ten different house designs.

Obviously the technology and organisation for this must be the best possible. In February 2004, he signed a contract with Christian Prilhofer Consulting, Weckenmann, Vollert and Unitechnik to build a modern plant. The specifications

were tough, but were nevertheless met. On 4 December 2004, according to plan, the first full pallet was produced. Enough concrete elements for around 12 - 17 houses must be made each day to reach the 2005 sales figures. This makes this plant the largest of its kind in the world. There will be a detailed report on this unique precasting plant in a future edition of CPI. ■

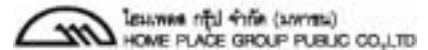
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The 2005 in-house exhibition at Hess

Once more, the Hess Group organised their annual in-house exhibition at the main plant in Burbach Wahlbach on 3 and 4 June 2005.



Exhibition of plant and machinery at the Hess in-house exhibition

The entire range of block-making machines was on show, some even operating in test mode. The exhibits also included a handling system, the servo packet assembler, and a group of vehicles.

A highlight of the exhibition was the Tumblemasters TP 2 for finishing paving stones, which at this fair was operating with real products, giving an impressive demonstration of how it works.

The new SM 2250 mixer from Schlosser-Pfeiffer was also there, as were moulds for concrete blocks from HMB. These items are now part of the Hess Group's product range.

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