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TAK

# Spaces that inspire

by ALEXS ANG



Mr. Andrew Tan

Ms. Geraldine Tan

**T**-A-K. That is the name of a Singapore-born laminate company that has thrilled regional architects with designs such as Stateroom Eames Teak, Avant Garde Ash, Black Dome, and Bianco Marble Uassiq.

Chairman and Founder, Mr Andrew Tan started the business in 1989, dealing then in pneumatic tackers, wood fillers and wood glue. From his experience in the industry, he knew that the laminate industry could grow a lot more in Singapore, and in 1997, he successfully negoti-

ated for exclusive distributorship of Nevamar – a premium American high-pressure laminate brand. Acquiring this exclusive distributorship was no easy task, but Andrew's commitment and hard work paid off.

From this humble beginning, TAK has continued to leap forward with no turning back.

## Lamitak

Back in the day, laminates had a notorious reputation of looking very much like plastic. Decorative papers were beautiful, but did not offer the durability that laminates had. It was TAK's goal to find a way to marry the two surfaces together and in 2001, after extensive research Lamitak was born.

"One thing that is fun about being our own business is that we can really stretch our imagination," Geraldine Tan comments – she is the oldest of Andrew's three children, who joined TAK in 1999 as Business Development Manager and is now the company's Executive Director. "It is our business, and our passion, and we want to

*Eclectic Attic*



*Grain Revival*



applications when designing a space," Geraldine elaborates..

**Something for everyone**

Besides the fabulous and creative designs, TAK is committed to offering clients a full range of options. Jansen Tan, Geraldine's younger brother, who is at the helm of Lamitak's product and design development shares, "We don't

inject as many different ideas as possible, sometimes from other industries."

The result? TAK's innovative rebranding exercise.

At TAK's brand launch held in April 2010, guests were greeted by themed living spaces that were recreated and brought to life through various acts. Boogie Wonderland, Eclectic Attic, Grain Revival and Rockin' Rococo each presented a wide variety of designs and surfaces, along with creative ways to use these surfaces. Little was left to the imagination as guests could see how a person would interact and move around the surfaces.

"Architects and designers have the expertise and the trained eyes to appreciate the laminates, but we are trying to tell people that they can be inspired by the possibilities too. We present them with a room, and possible suggestions for surfaces. They may or may not like what we use for a feature wall, but it opens up the possibilities and they can think of other surfaces or

believe in offering just a white of this and a black of that – there is always a range. Most of our designs have four colour variations so the clients have more options."

In addition to colours, TAK's 'range of options' extends to design. Their designs cater to every age group, from child, to teenager, to adult. "We are trying to provide more options for teenagers and children. Teens may not like wood grains, neither do they want stars on their walls, so we offer them some other options."

Not forgetting their clients in other markets, TAK prides itself on meeting client needs, ensuring that they have something for everyone. "We pay a lot of attention in listening to people because we provide a range of solutions, and do not specifically cater our designs to one sector, or one demographic. This is one aspect that TAK pays a lot of attention to because the ability to provide a quick turn round is something that clients appreciate."



Besides laminates, TAK has expanded its product offering. In response to consumers' concerns of holistic designs, Newedge, which was launched in 2006, is an edge band solution that complements Lamitak laminates. Newedge matches perfectly with Lamitak's exclusive collection in colour, design and even surface finishes. This helps clients to achieve that flawless look in their designs.

### Crossing borders

The demand for high-pressure laminates in Singapore is high despite being a small island nation, due mostly to the fact that a large majority of the population live in high-rise apartments. Jansen elaborates, "We are very involved in our homes, and we engage designers to make a really beautiful living space for us. If I want to recreate a marble wall in my 24th floor apartment, I can't possibly carry marble slabs all the way up. Laminates make things easier for designers, and so the demand for these durable materials is really there."

A few years after Lamitak was introduced to the local Singapore market, TAK found that order enquiries were coming in from other markets like Indonesia and Thailand, and even as far as Dubai. "These instances caused us to look beyond our own border to see what the international demand was," Geraldine says. It

turned out that the demand was so encouraging that TAK ventured to establish offices in the region. They now have an office in Malaysia, Thailand, and the most recent one is in Guangzhou, China.

The group's expected turnover for 2010 is approximately SGD 30 million for Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. While the percentage increase varies across the different markets, TAK's turnover is expected to be up by 20 per cent, 30 per cent, and 40 per cent in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand respectively.

"With the recent expansion in the region, we saw that TAK was able to fill in the gaps of the laminates industry. With strong support from our business partners and consumers,

we were able to drive the brand and its product offerings. With ever changing market trends and our desire to continue to be the market leader, TAK has to constantly meet the needs of our business partners and consumers," Andrew states.

"We definitely will not rule out the possibility of expanding into other markets, such as the Middle East, but for now, our focus is on gaining a foothold in places where we have opened offices first and then explore developing into other parts of the world," Geraldine adds.

TAK's global ambitions and confidence can be attributed to its Asian roots and its lean company operations. "The world is constantly evolving," Geraldine explains. "It is no longer about how big or how small you are, it is about how fast you can react to the needs of the industry. When we started the company in Singapore, it was in response to a need. And likewise with Lamitak, when we realised that our clients needed a brand that reflected our Asian identity, we thought why not explore the possibility of starting our own brand. . We are definitely proud to be an Asian brand - with a heritage that sets us apart from the rest"

Having worked on major local projects, such as the Singapore F1 Night Race and the Youth Olympics, TAK looks forward to bringing choice and inspiration to the rest of the world. **PFA**