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Jiang Li Wongsin - Mario Kleff's daughter

New Generation
of Creative Engineering:
Cellular Beam

hh HEIGHTS HOLDINGS

Elegant Simplicity
The Metier of Mario Kleff

Many of you looking at this month's front cover and having been referred to this article by the index are no doubt wondering what on earth could possibly be the relationship between a young girl, pieces of Lego and the Architect of Lifestyle, Mario Kleff. Well, the answer is quite simple; there are distinct parallels between Mario's extreme engineering techniques and the method of building with Lego. And the girl? That's Mario's daughter. What the cameo is saying is that building Mario-style is child's play.

outrageous spans, I can bear witness to. I was taken to see one of Mario's masterpieces by the man himself and saw the main 20 metre support beam; two 10 meter girders spliced together, herringbone style. It has to be done in this way because no one in Thailand can conceive of building with spans this wide, let alone making them in the first place. Having said that, however, the workmen who actually erected them as part of the incredible Japanese, Zen-inspired house, **(Pictured here below)** were Thai, part of Mario's workforce. They're not fazed in the slightest by Mario's extreme engineering, but take it completely in their stride, just like a child building with Lego, in fact.

In practice, of course, it's radically different, but there are, nevertheless, similarities. The techniques Mario uses can be best described as 'extreme engineering.' So extreme, in fact that he completely freaks out the Thai architects tasked with vetting his projects for governmental approval. He uses spans of between 20 and 40 metres, when the norm is no more that 8 metres! Most of the Thai architects and 'so called Experts' declared that such spans were impossible and that Mario was living in a dream world. That he manifestly is not and he does actually use such

"Mario got official approval from Thailand's Authority; for Wandeegroup to manufacture Cellular steel"

Mario's houses often act as showpieces for his condo projects due to their tremendously solid and enduring standards of construction. The chunky, Lego-like stanchions of the Zen house put a nearby condo
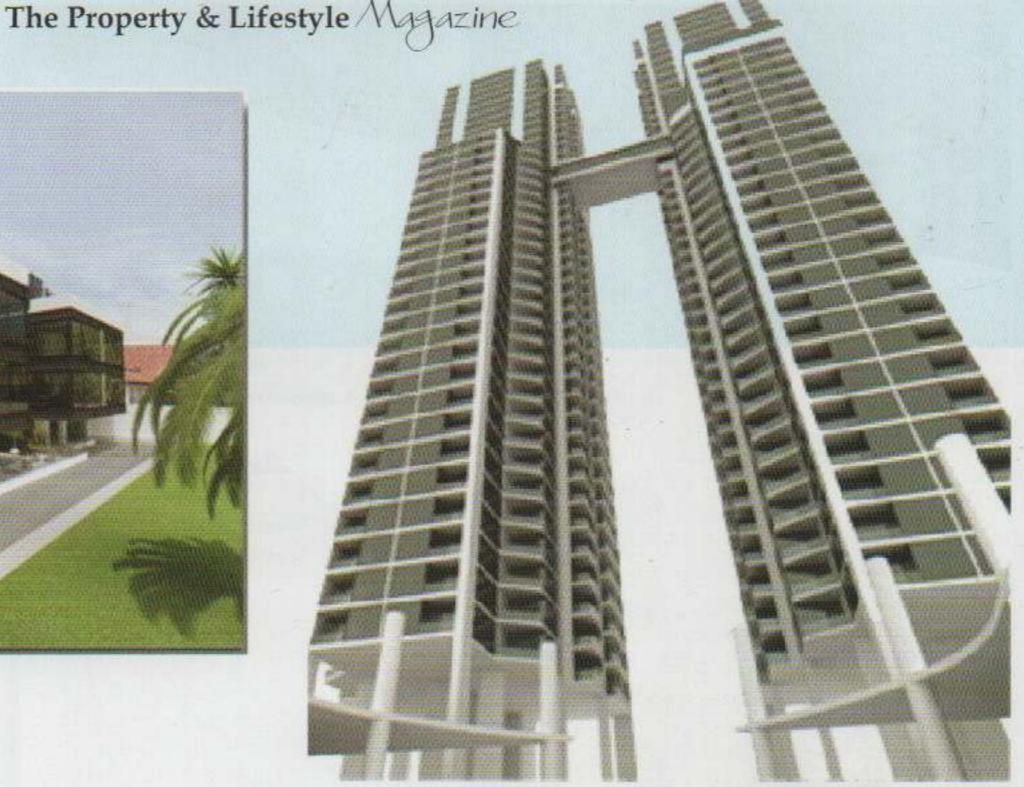

to shame, the condominium looked really fragile in comparison. Mario's revolutionary, yet supremely elegant and simple building technique is to use pre-formed modular components, large building blocks, as such, just like giant Lego pieces. These are then hoisted into place by a crane and then gently guided and slotted into place by seemingly demented Thai work persons, precariously balanced on impossibly thin steel beams, ludicrously high up in the air, without safety nets, or any other precautionary measure, for that matter. They obviously take a leaf out of Mario's book, because he relishes the steeplejack lifestyle, merrily tripping along steel beams at awesome heights.

Anyway, I digress. The technique of using Lego-style components, supported by incredibly stalwart beams is Mario's stock-in-trade and superbly cost and labour-efficient. By using such techniques, Mario can work with a minimal number of workers, and finish the job in half the time taken by more conventional measures. And it's so easy, Mario's daughter (*Featured on the front cover and here alongside*) could do it, with the help of a crane, of course. Mario's daughter is a chip off the old block, needless to say, artistic rather than undertaking macro-engineering as yet, and she'll receive a fine foundation in the plastic arts and unconventional educational methods of the Montessori school she goes to, but then you have to remember Mario's

"Mario's architectural solutions opt for very large spans and glasses"

**I-Condo (6 m overhang), Skypark Twins (180 m high)
Below Heights Holdings Club Royal (40 m spans)**

background was artistic. His latest endeavours, however, are a radical departure from when he spent seven years reproducing the Mediaeval masterwork, the Book of Kells. Those loyal, avid readers of Property & Lifestyle, will remember my article about Mario's history and the illustration in the article of the incredibly intricate patterns contained in the Book of Kells, a far cry from the simplicity of his current architecture, with its clean, pure lines. The template's the same, though. Strip away the Celtic complexity and minutiae of style and you'll see the selfsame underlying pattern of the Golden Mean, the exact same leitmotif used in ALL Mario's projects, without exception. When you've discovered the epitome of perfect elegance and style, why devalue one's endeavours with anything less?

The Golden Mean is the multi-functional tool, par excellence. For one, using the Golden Mean enables Mario to counter the fixation of the developers with optimal use of square metreage.

He also used it to create a beautiful, iconic building as per the CEO of Heights' Holdings, Haim Ben David's request; after all what is more beautiful than perfect proportions? Rather than produce a mundane square box-like construction with Heights' Holdings W Tower, Mario offset all the balconies, so every resident will have sea views, he also designed it with overhangs, where he intends to put greenery. Talking of greenery, *Heights'*

Holdings new project, **Club Royal**, will be an eco-sensitive lifestyle personified building, in an idyllic location close to the Sanctuary of Truth, lavishly endowed with vegetation, from roof gardens to the surrounds of the six condominium spread, which will also be laid out with due regard to Feng Shui, with water gardens between the buildings.

Most noticeable at **Club Royal** will be the lavish use of reflective glass, allowing it mirror the water gardens below, with considerably less concrete than normal and exposed beams. Not just any beams, you understand, but the revolutionary modular cellular beams that Mario started to use in W Tower. These beams are incredibly strong, but light and enable Mario to indulge in his mammoth 40 metre spans. The combination of the beautiful water gardens between the elegant buildings of **Club Royal** and large reflections of trees, sea and blue skies in morning and emotionally inspiring reds in the evening make **Club Royal** a lifestyle aspiration for any prospective buyer; not forgetting the respected Thai professor Somsak Khumplew, *(Pictured here below)* of course who subse-

quently took over the 'signing-off' role, but who, unlike the other Thai architects, empathised with Mario and who has made all Mario's projects possible by gladly signing them off and thereby giving Mario inestimable support.

The project should easily satisfy Mario's quest to please everyone, from the developers to the residents, who will be living in enviable surroundings in a cutting-edge series of buildings, as can be seen from the pictures in this article.

"Somsak Khumplew is supporting Mario's extreme Engineering

What's more, **Club Royal** will be even more modern than the virtually transparent Bang & Olafson building, designed by Jan Søndergaard, one of the ultra-innovative inspirations that Mario is aspiring towards, along with Norman Foster's new *London City-Hall* and the *Chinese CCTV-Tower of Rem Koolhaas.* All of which make minimal use of columns and thus maximise living space, whilst simultaneously exposing the interior of the buildings to increasingly more light. Mario is confident that he, too, is capable of designing and building similar architectural masterpieces, all he needs is a super-rich patron - any offers?

Pictured Top this Page: The Chinese CCTV Tower

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