

RAISING THE BAR

THE PRESTIGIOUS RITZ-CARLTON RESIDENCES BANGKOK AT THE MULTI-USE MAHANAKHON DEVELOPMENT IS RAISING THE STYLE BAROMETER IN THE THAI CAPITAL TO UNPRECEDENTED NEW LEVELS.



FIRST IT WAS MahaNakhon's iconic architectural design with its distinctive sculptural appearance that stole the show, carefully carved to introduce a three-dimensional ribbon of architectural 'pixels' that circle the tower's 77 storeys. Then, earlier this year, the 200-million baht Ritz-Carlton Residences Bangkok Sales Gallery was launched at MahaNakhon Pavilion, complete with three show units decked out in a way Bangkok has never seen before.

It's a collaboration with award-winning interior architecture practice David Collins

Studio, creative force behind some of London and New York's most opulent and highly acclaimed commercial interiors. Collins' interiors simultaneously combine classic British elegance with contemporary Hollywood glamour, and his company counts Madonna among its VVIP residential clients. In an exclusive interview with **2magazine** he shared some insight about his first major project involvement in Asia...

"We were approached by PACE Development to work with them to develop show apartments that would be unique for

the Southeast Asian market," David says. "They wanted to incorporate the materials and craftsmanship which attracts so many Western buyers to the East, together with the colors and luxury of Western influences. Therefore it was a brief that appealed to us, because we are great admirers of the aesthetic of Asia and Thailand in particular."

According to David they met and worked with a number of companies within the industry in Thailand, and whilst establishing a relationship found out exactly what the strengths and weaknesses of the various

companies were, regarding the production and procurement of design elements. There were at any one time between 12 and 15 people (from David Collins Studio) working on the project, and it took almost a year to resolve the brief. "As well as the specifics of the brief, the market had also changed, and we feel it was really quite a quick turnaround."

David said he was most impressed with the craftsmanship and manufacturing capabilities in Thailand. "We worked with overseas companies on a lot of the marble, stone and joinery work, but we made much of the metalwork and the fine furniture in Thailand."

For him the unique aesthetic of the project is the number of cultural influences that have been diffused to create a contemporary but luxurious environment. "The Ritz-Carlton brand speaks about luxury, service and indulgence, and at the same time a very contemporary building means something that is very pared down and simplistic on the interior. It was our vision to update both of these concepts, and to focus on finishes that would engage prospective buyers," he says.

Buyers will have the option to order bespoke pieces of furniture directly from David Collins Studio, and many of these pieces will be numbered and signed; limited-edition pieces designed specifically for this project that will be manufactured in Thailand. The concept and interior architecture evolve around a spectacular circular reception hall, covered in hand-dyed shagreen (stingray), which flows effortlessly to link the private and entertainment spaces within the residence. A subtle combination of spatial optimization, minimalism and understated luxury make for a look-and-feel that's unmistakably plush and inviting.

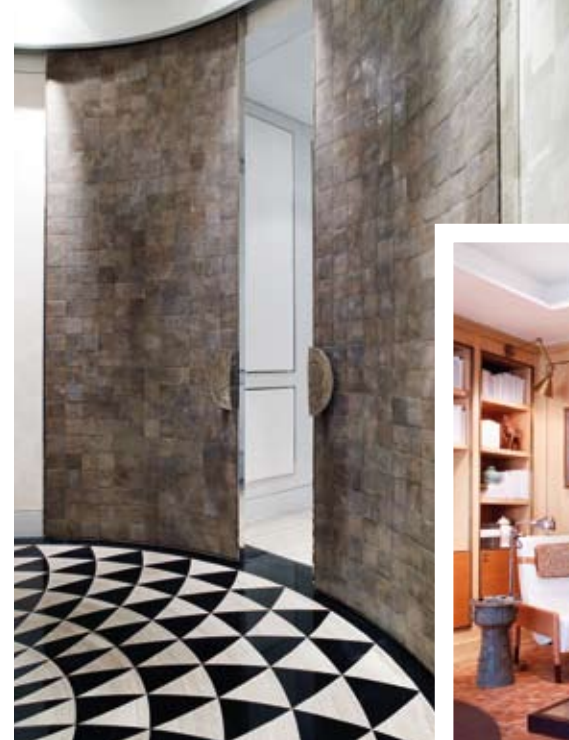
Overall, David is thrilled with the results. "All projects are challenging, both from a creative and logistical point of view, but

we had great support from the client and our collaborators in Thailand. I think the outcome reflects this spirit of cooperation and enthusiasm."

The 194 units of Ritz-Carlton Residences Bangkok will start on the 24th floor of MahaNakhon tower, up to the penthouse Sky Apartments on the 73rd floor. Sizes range from 120 to 850 square meters (two to five bedrooms), with selling prices between 32 and 320 million baht per residence. Each will feature impressive hi-tech fittings and features, ceilings will be up to 3.5 meters high, while expansive panoramic views promise to be a real show-stopper through floor-to-ceiling glass window walls. Among the world-class services and amenities available to residents will be a Ritz-Carlton Club Lounge on the 53rd floor with private dining rooms, a library and meeting rooms, as well as an outdoor lap pool alongside a landscaped sundeck, extensive fitness facilities, and a Media Lounge for private film screenings.

The Sales Gallery at MahaNakhon showcases two- and three-bedroom units designed over three floors to accurately reflect the scale and revolutionary architectural features of the actual residences. On the ground floor is also a Public Gallery that will be used for frequently rotating exhibitions, as well as a Dean & DeLuca Café.

At 314 meters high the 18-billion baht MahaNakhon project – adjacent to Chongnonsi Skytrain station in the prime Sathorn area – will be Bangkok's tallest building on completion in 2015. It will also comprise The Bangkok Edition (a signature boutique hotel conceived by famed hotelier Ian Schrager), MahaNakhon Square (an outdoor landscaped public plaza), a 10,000-square-meter upscale retail center called MahaNakhon Terraces, and a multi-level rooftop Terrace Bar and restaurant. **2**



FACT FILE

Project Name: The Ritz-Carlton Residences Bangkok (www.rcr-bangkok.com)

Location: MahaNakhon Tower, Sathorn, Bangkok

Type of Development: Mixed-use

Ownership: 99 years Leasehold

Developers: Joint venture between PACE Development and Industrial Buildings Corporation (IBC)

Number of Residences: 194

Sizes: 120-850 square meters (2-5 bedrooms)

Prices: 32-320 million Baht



All interior images courtesy of Richard Powers Photography