

Energy drinks focus for leading Thai glassmaker

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Having graduated in chemical engineering from Chulalongkorn University, with a Masters degree in marketing from Thammasart University and another Masters in engineering management from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Viwat Supatham has enjoyed a successful and varied career in Thailand's glassmaking industry for more than 25 years. A disciplined and hard working approach has provided opportunities in a diversity of disciplines, culminating in his appointment as General Manager at Siam Glass Industry.



Networking is an important element of AFGM meetings.

It all began as Branch Manager at Tang Nam Glass, with responsibility for a flat glass processing plant, before Viwat Supatham's appointment as Finance and Administration Director at Bangkok Crystal, the specialist manufacturer of tableware and glass blocks. He has been a Production Manager at Guardian Industries, running a 600 tonnes/day float furnace and is currently General Manager at Siam Glass, managing the company's glass container production business on three sites near Bangkok, from seven furnaces and 19 lines. "Every role has provided its own highlights, challenges, fun and tears but

fortunately, I have enjoyed them all" he suggests. "In its different forms, glass requires very high temperatures for melting and forming, consumes a lot of natural resources but also contributes endless life. Every glassmaking business in which I've worked has very high fixed costs, so it's been essential to know the nature of glass production and how to operate plants on a profitable basis."

ENERGY DRINKS FOCUS

With a workforce of approximately 1000 people, Siam Glass Industry is currently the third largest glass container producer in Thailand, manufacturing some 1500 tonnes/day of flint, amber and green bottles on three production sites (Rojana, Samutprakarn and Ayutthaya). The company is a subsidiary of energy drinks market leader and one of Thailand's main beverage producers, the Osotspa Group, which also represents its biggest customer. In addition, approximately 25% of production is sold to external customers, many abroad.

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Cha-Am and Hua Hin will host the 40th ASEAN Glass Conference from 17 to 20 October 2016.



Siam Glass Industry maintains three high productivity glass container plants in Thailand.

The business was established 38 years ago and has maintained a strong technical relationship throughout this period with Japan's Nihon Yamamura Glass. In addition to domestic sales, the glassmaker exports to other ASEAN Economic Community member countries and is excited by the potential opportunities that exist in Myanmar. "Myanmar is currently the talk of the town" says Viwat Supatham. To maintain successful customer relationships, Siam Glass Industry pursues a philosophy based on teamwork, quality awareness, keeping its promises, passion for excellence and the ability to adapt to change. "These are all essential elements to win customers."

The glassmaker's latest plant – Siam Glass Ayutthaya – utilises the most advanced equipment from leading international suppliers. Pack-to-melt efficiencies of better than 90% have been achieved, with 15% lower production costs than those required at other sites. "Further reductions in energy consumption are targeted every year, even as the furnaces get older" Mr Viwat explains. In addition, some furnaces are operating at 90% cullet levels.

Plant, equipment and materials suppliers are selected with a view to the establishment of long-term partnerships, with a close eye maintained on equipment cost and benefits. Among the glassmaker's leading suppliers are Nihon Yamamura Glass (furnaces, refractories and batch plant), ZIPPE (batch plant), Ihara (refractories), Bottero (forming technology), Antonini (annealing lehrs) and IRIS Inspection machines and TIAMA (inspection equipment). In addition, ware handling equipment is sourced from Revimac and Pennekamp.

Bottero forming equipment has been specified for a number of recent Siam Glass Industry projects, including three 12-section 4 1/4in triple gob IS machines at the Rojana glassworks, equipped with Bottero's E-MOC technology. And when upgrading two IS machines at the Samutprakarn site from 4 1/4in double gob to 4 1/4in triple gob operation, the glassmaker selected Bottero blank and blow side E-MOC equipment.

IRIS inspection equipment was first installed at Rojana four years ago and subsequently, several machines have also been purchased for the Samutprakarn and Ayutthaya factories. The latest equipment order involves 17 Evolution camera-based inspection machines for the Samutprakarn



Vivat Supatham delivers the opening address as Chairman of the organising committee of the 31st ASEAN Glass Conference in Chiang Mai in 2007.

and Ayutthaya sites. This includes 11 Evolution 5 machines for base, base stress and finish inspection, together with six Evolution 12 machines to perform sidewall and sidewall stress inspection.

Several furnaces will undergo cold repairs between 2018 and 2022. In addition, another brownfield plant is planned by 2019 or 2020.

INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION

Having worked in the glass industry for more than 25 years, Viwat Supatham is also the current Chairman of the Glass Manufacturers Industry Club at the Federation of Thai Industries (GMFTI). "It's time for me to pay the industry back for providing me and my family with such a good career and so much

fun." GMFTI provides valuable support to members, covering everything from raw materials to environmental and government legislation.

The organisation is also responsible for co-ordinating the ASEAN Glass Conference when staged in Thailand, as is the case this October with the 40th annual event in Hua Hin and Cha-am. "It will be an opportunity for glass industry friends to meet informally, away from structured meetings" says Viwat Supatham. "Business discussion at the pool side, during lunch/dinner/show is what I love to see from participants!"

Mr Viwat was Chairman of the 2007 ASEAN Glass Conference in Chiang Mai and understands the importance of a skilled committee to manage the event effectively. This year's event will be led by Conference Chairman, Worawit Suresarakorn from Siam Fiber Glass, with valuable advice from Somchai Ovuthitham from L Lighting Glass. "Together with other committee members, they are devoted to making this year's event in Thailand a memorial one. I would like to take this opportunity to invite all our glass friends to Hua Hin/Cha-am on 17-20 October 2016." ■



Nineteen production lines are operated by Siam Glass Industry.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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