

# The Starck Effect

Philippe Starck, the world's most commercially successful designer, speaks exclusively to *Thailand Property Report* about his role in Phuket's Cape Yamu development.

**E**stablished in 1999, yoo ltd. is a collaboration between property developer John Hitchcox and Philippe Starck. As well as London and New York, yoo have previously completed projects in Hong Kong, Miami, Buenos Aires, Melbourne, Sydney, Tel Aviv, Madrid and Boston. The company has recently been awarded the interior design contract for the Cape Yamu project in Phuket.

Cape Yamu is located on Phuket's east coast. The project will become a gated residential and resort community with 38 residential villas and a brand-name 75 room 5-star hotel. Renowned Amanpuri architect, Jean Michel Gathy, will design the villas.

**What are the main attractions of Thailand for you?**

The sophistication of the culture and the coconut trees,

sand and blue water that are almost everywhere. In Thailand you have a very interesting mix of energy and sophistication. Thai people are very refined and that's why I enjoy visiting here.

**How will you approach the Cape Yamu project?**

The project is very simple. Today you have a lot of beautiful, beautiful, beautiful things and sophisticated architecture that is really well done. In Phuket you have the most beautiful hotels in the world, I think. So it's quite difficult to add and make something new. The only thing we can bring is a little more surprise and, perhaps we can say, modernity. Today it is very monolithic. We have Thai architecture, Thai decoration and Thai dress of the people. Everything is Thai of Thai of Thai. It is very well done, astonishingly well done. But we can also imagine a new angle

of view, which is more mixed. This means we can keep all the beauty of Thai culture and architecture and mix it with life, with art, with other countries. So we shall create a new cocktail, which will perhaps be more sophisticated and perhaps more rich.

**Will you be bringing a French touch to the design?**

You know me, I am not really French, I am everywhere in the world. But French culture is very mixed. In France we invented, through the revolution, democracy. That's why I recognise the difference. Also France is a place of quality and critical spirit. In France we also want the best and we always try to select the best. That's why we can imagine in this beautiful place in Phuket that we can mix the fantastic Thai architectural base with the best of everything else from the world.

**You're working with Jean Michel Gathy on the project. How is that going?**

He is a fantastic person. I love him. It is a personal affair, we can say. I have a lot of respect for his work. He is a real specialist of Asian and Thai Architecture. I am not. That's why he is a very vital piece in the cocktail. With Jean Michel we have imagined, under my input, something new. We have fresh blood and new intuition, poetry and modernity.

**So you'll compliment each other?**

Absolutely. I cannot make good Thai architecture. Without me, he will not have all my craziness and finesse.

**Following yoo's lakeside development in the English countryside, Cape Yamu is only your second non-urban project. Do**

Starck with yoo  
Chairman, John  
Hitchcox.



**you prefer these kinds of projects?**


I love everything if it is well done and can bring happiness to people. If we can create the elegance of intelligence and the beauty of happiness. This is a new philosophy because everybody thinks about architectural style and differences. Me, I am not concerned by all that. Just how we can make the right thing, at the right price, in the right place. My vision is one of humour and poetry.

**So will this be the first of many projects in Thailand?**


No. I'll make this one and that's all. I have agreed this one with Jean Michel, but that is that. I'll only do one, so I don't repeat myself. ■

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