

Thai Airways International

History

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Posted on : 2010/5/18 16:50:00

THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL was established in 1959. Its first logotype (a Thai classical dancer) was designed by His Royal Highness Prince Kraisingh Vudhijaya, an outstanding designer who also created the silk uniforms worn by the in flight personnel.

However, in 1975, the company decided to modernise its image (except for the uniform) and ordered a new logotype from Walter Landor Associates, of San Francisco (USA). A talented team of graphic designers was assigned to produce a visual concept that would combine the greatest immediate recognition with the strongest esthetical impact.

The new image definitely had to reflect Thailand and the richness of her bountiful and varied culture. Hence, when it comes to the logotype's colours, the lustre of the gold reminds us opulence of the temples, the rose-magenta symbolises silk with its shimmering reflections, while the crimson-purple provides a hint of the magnificent hues of a Thai orchid. The shape itself evokes the petals of the orchid, which has become one of the main symbols of the country at the international level. What an excellent choice indeed, since the orchid represents Siamese decorative arts, as it combines delicacy, sensuality, softness, elegance, prestige, exoticism, permanence, robustness and dynamism. The new logotype is also reminiscent of elements of Thai mythology and traditional architecture. But its somewhat aerodynamic form equally reflects the stately take off and supersonic speed of the aircraft, and as such it symbolizes aviation and modernity. Thai Airways International's motto -- "Smooth as Silk" -- invites us to enjoy the comfort and elegance of its celestial journeys. Nevertheless, for the sake of intellectual and scientific honesty, it is our duty to bring forth a minor observation that might sound crude were it not the fruit (literally!) of botanical academicism. For according to no less than the distinguished Oxford English Dictionary, the name of this flower is recorded as appearing for the first time in 1766 and comes from the Greek word orkhidion, which means a "testicle". To make matters even worse, an "orchidectomy" is the act of surgically removing of one or both of someone's testicles. I wonder if any of those designers in San Francisco bothered to inform the airline of that!

Raymond Verg?