I am delighted to welcome you to this, the first edition of the DSA Middle East Newsletter, which is intended to provide an insight into the activities of our business here in the region. I hope you will find it of interest. We aim to issue similar newsletters on a quarterly basis.

DSA continues to undertake work on some of the regions’ most iconic projects, and I feel immensely proud to be able to showcase a selection of these to you in this Newsletter, as well as giving a flavour of some of our very exciting recently awarded ones.

From our commencement in South Africa in 1985 we have grown from 3 Partners and 5 Staff Members, to an international practice with 12 Partners, 14 Associates, and 105 Staff, with regional offices in Johannesburg, Lisbon and here in Dubai, and as those clever ones amongst you will have spotted, this year marks DSA’s 30th anniversary – you will hear and see more of this in due course.

Our first exposure in the Middle East came with the hugely successful Royal Mirage Arabian Court project in 2000, followed by Madinat Jumeirah Resort in 2001 which led to the permanent establishment of the Dubai office to deliver the project and the formation of ‘DSA Architects International’.

Our experience covers a variety of sectors but our main area of specialisation is in the hospitality and leisure industries; from intimate boutique hotels to large multifaceted resort and conference facilities. Many of our projects are of mixed use, including residential and commercial along with retail, industrial and high rise components.

DSA delivers projects from initial concept design through documentation to construction and completion. We have the experience and capability to undertake entire projects, from inception through to completion and final handover.

This growth and a commitment to total client satisfaction has enabled DSA to develop into a substantial company with a broad portfolio of local and international projects across four continents.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many clients, consultants, contractors and suppliers who have entrusted us with the design of their buildings, supported us with design services, and delivered quality products and services, all of which have contributed towards the success of DSA in the Middle East.

We look forward to continue to build on these relationships as we move forward, and to continuing to provide a high quality service to clients on many more iconic and important projects.

Steve Kelshaw
Managing Director

In this issue:

- Swiss International Scientific School, Healthcare City, Dubai
- Anantara
- Staff Profile | Meet Floris Smith – Design Principal
- Four Seasons Q&As
- Saraya Bandar Jissah
The Swiss International Scientific School (SISS) Dubai’s first private school to offer multilingual education in French, German, Italian, English and Arabic, opened its doors in Dubai on 29th August to around 270 pupils from different 40 nationalities.

The first phase of the 67,845 square meter Dubai Healthcare City campus has 17 classes from pre-kindergarten to Grade 6, with grades 7 to 12 to be added in the coming years in line with the regulatory requirements. The school has been designed to maximize the potential of the plot, and the facility will eventually house 2,442 students, including 350 international boarding places, and is built to meet the highest expectations of such an international school, with students becoming multilingual with the option of entering bilingual sections, in French or German, or studying languages within the English section.

Filled with natural light, the spacious classrooms, libraries and laboratories, the school will be an inspiring place for our students to learn in.

The schools’ first phase will be ready to welcome students for the 2015-16 academic year, with additional sports facilities opening in Spring 2016. The full campus including the Boarding Houses, Auditorium and Secondary School will be ready for September 2016.

All practicalities of running a successful school have been fully considered within the overall design, even down to drop off facilities for parents using traffic management practices to minimise queues at drop-off and pick-up times.

The school benefits from having His Highness Sheikh Hasher Maktoum Juma Al Maktoum as its’ Honorary Chairman and Abdul Hamied Ahmed Seddiqi, co-founder and Chairman of the Board.
The soon to be completed ‘Swiss International Scientific School’ (SISD) being built for Swiss Education Partners (SEP) in Jadaf, Dubai, recently received some very good news when Omar Danial of SEP advised that the project is to receive ‘MINERGIE’ pre-certification. MINERGIE is a Swiss registered quality label for low-energy-consumption buildings. Prioritizing the well-being of students, the design of the School has been developed by experts in energy optimisation of buildings. SISD is an eco-friendly campus, meeting the highest standards of energy consumption. Less cold air is circulated into the classrooms and high natural light levels are only reinforced when necessary. Not only is this more environmentally sustainable, it’s better for the pupils of the school also.

SSID will be the first ever purpose built building in a desert climate to meet Minergie standards.

How does Minergie work?
The building is designed as a high-grade envelope with the best air tightness and the highest insulation standards, to reduce air loss as well as heat transfer, known as thermal bridge. At the same time, the light transmission is optimized to reduce electricity consumption. The building’s energy consumption will be certified at 33.9 KwH/m²/year, while a regular building will consume more than 100KwH/m²/year.

What is the outcome?
Not only is the school pioneering the development of a better educational environment, but it is also applying renewable and sustainable principles to fund its’ scholarship programmes - thus, contributing directly to the students’ education while ensuring they benefit from a comfortable and healthy interior climate!

Carl Harris, HPM Project Manager for the school said

“This is particularly positive and we would like to thank all of the design team in their efforts and focus in bringing the MINERGIE design requirements for the project to this significant milestone”.

The MINERGIE pre-certification stage is necessary to validate the building conception and leads to an official inspection 3 years after operations at which point official certification will be received.
We are delighted to have been appointed as Lead Consultant by Dubai Properties (DP) for the 290-room luxury Anantara Hotel Dubai Creek to be built in Cultural Village, Dubai.

Located on the waterfront directly facing Dubai Creek with a contemporary design, the new Anantara hotel will be one of the first luxury hotels in Culture Village, with 290 guest rooms, rooftop pool, spa and a range of restaurants, bars and retail outlets. The hotel will also boast waterfront views from its ballroom and conference facilities.

Due to open in early 2018, it will be operated by Minor Hotel Group (MHG) as part of its’ portfolio of over 16,000 rooms in more than 120 hotels, resorts and serviced suites in 25 countries across Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Africa, the Indian Ocean, Europe and South America.

Minor Hotel Group CEO Dillip Rajakarier, “We are very pleased to partner with Dubai Properties, such influential and highly respected partners in the region, to develop an Anantara hotel in the impressive new Dubai Culture Village project, and we look forward to a strong alliance going forward.”

Dubai Properties Group chief officer of urban planning and infrastructure Mohammed Al Habbai added: “Anantara is a brand which is synonymous with luxury, and we expect the hotel with its culture spirit to become a key attraction for Culture Village.”

Ground breaking is expected in the fourth quarter of this year.
Meet Floris Smith - Design Principal, Dubai office

Originally from Johannesburg, Floris studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania where he completed a Masters in 1980, and received a Gold Medal for design.

After emigrating from South Africa, where he was the chairman of Floris Smith and Meyer Pienaar (a high profile award winning practice) and a 12 year stint working in Australia, Floris first arrived in the UAE in 2008, albeit expecting to follow a different path than the one that turned out. An invitation from the renowned architect Hazel Wong to join her in her new Dubai based business, enticed Floris to resign from his position as a partner in an architectural practice in Australia and move to the UAE. However the timing could not have been more unfortunate, as Dubai suffered along with most other major cities around the world as a result of the global financial crisis of that year, and scuppered the plans of Ms Wong, leaving Floris with no job, in a new city where he knew no one, and at a very difficult time economically.

However, as they say “every cloud has a silver lining” and Floris was introduced to the directors of DSA, and offered a position to join them – which he gladly accepted. Within six months he had become a director of the practice, and now leads the design studio as Design Principal.

As Design Principal, he describes his role as being to “bring a front end concept design and masterplanning capability, which means DSA can provide a full A to Z design and supervision offering to clients. I am very actively involved in the early stages of the design, and I am fortunate to be able to work with a very talented team of architects who then develop that concept through detailed design, whilst I oversee to ensure the overall design theme and intent stays on track with what was originally intended and desired by the client.”

“My aim as Design Principal at DSA Architects is to foster a studio culture in which young talent can thrive in the delivery of our service. We have devised a combination of design and management which we successfully employ on a large variety of projects in many different countries.”

“We are fortunate to have a very strong management structure at DSA, with Steve Kelshaw managing the business, Tim Goodall and Peter Davison heading up Design Management. Our mutual respect ensures an operation free of interference with everyone focussed on their core skills to achieve the objectives of the entire team – it works really well.”

With experience across all project types, hospitality has played a major part in recent times, and among many of the landmark projects in the Middle East Floris has been responsible for, he cites a few as worthy of particular note, including:

- Anantara, Dubai Culture Village
- Saraya Bandar Jissah, Oman
- Hilton Dead Sea Resort & Spa, Egypt
- Oberoi, Business Bay, Dubai
- One&Only, Bahrain

Married to Wilma, with 2 children and 3 grandchildren who are all living in Australia, Floris and Wilma try to spend as much time as possible with the family.

As well as watching all sports, extensive travel, and being an avid reader of philosophy, a passion is that of sculpting, and Floris disappointed his father when many years ago when he told him that he was giving up playing rugby to spend more time sculpting. Whilst much of his sculpting work has been given away mainly to family members, he is determined to do more, particularly when he eventually retires (if indeed he ever does).

Back to design, “I’m interested in the underlying principles that underpin all good environments. In a world besotted with mindless shape making posing as contemporary architecture, I still subscribe to the philosophical difference between Form and Shape. Good building design should make occupants feel at home when they use the building – this is especially true in hospitality where DSA has particular expertise.”

He added “Good buildings start with a strong concept and then follow on with a strong story – people should be able to ‘sense’ what the building is all about.”

Many of his design ideas and solutions come to him in an unusual way – “I think my brain works overtime during the night and then manifests into an idea or solution when I am showering in the morning!”

"Every specific question deserves a specific answer - such is design, whether at the scale of a chair or a city. This is my quest"
FOUR SEASONS at JUMEIRAH BEACH
Officially open for business!

The DSA luxury Four Seasons Hotel has been operating and welcoming guests for almost 12 months. We caught up with Shahb Lutfi, CEO of Development Managers H&H Investment and Development, who generously took spent time to answer some questions on why he feels the hotel has been such a success in such a very short time.

DSA “Was the Four Seasons H&H’s first hotel development?”

Yes, this was our first resort development. Building a five star hotel in a market like Dubai is a challenge on its own, not only due to its technical complexity but also due to the fact that in such a competitive market the quality of the end product has to be such so that it stands out of the competition. Hospitality in Dubai is a mature market and hotel guests are these days well informed and know exactly what they are looking for, which makes quality of paramount importance when it comes to choosing your accommodation. At the same time since this was our first resort project we knew that we had to get it right not only to satisfy our client, which is part of our core business values, but also to capitalize on this project in order to expand our business in the hospitality sector which we have achieved as we are now managing six new hotel development projects that are coming up in Dubai.

DSA “What do you believe makes Four Seasons Dubai stand out from the other hotels in the city?”

The first thing that makes Four Seasons stand out of its competition is the quality of the building and its workmanship as well as the very careful selection of materials and decorations that have been combined in such a way so that guests experience a “subtle luxury” which is in line with H&H’s vision for a five star resort of the twenty first century. The second thing is its unique location, which we managed to obtain, which sits in the heart of the Jumeirah beach, the most popular beachfront in Dubai. The next thing is the F&B offer which we managed to couple with the main hotel that has brought together some of the best food and entertainment offers worldwide, such as COYA, Provocateur and three Michelin Star restaurant Jean Georges. Last but not least is the Four Seasons brand itself which stands out from the competition having been a perpetual trend setter of the hospitality sector and a symbol of excellence.
Isadore Sharp, The Founder of Four Seasons said that “Long term success is based on intangibles. Beliefs and ideas. Invisible concepts”. I believe that the success of Four Seasons which is now evident as it has managed to become and remain the talk of the town since its opening, lies with the team that has put this project together starting from the owner and investor which had the vision to create such a remarkable property and supported the project throughout its development, the design team which outdid themselves producing a harmonic end product that works together so well as if it was designed by a single person, the general contractor which except from ensuring that the workmanship is of the highest quality, also contributed in finding the best solutions to the challenges that we came across and finally the Four Seasons team who were with us from the very beginning contributing their vast experience into the project. It is all of these intangible assets, ideas and concepts that combined turned the hotel into a success and it is our mission to continue to find new ideas and innovations to keep our property at the top of its league for the years to come.

We knew from the very beginning that the success of the project was directly linked to the design and construction teams and the way these teams were going to interact with each other. On the design side we wanted to break from the norm and bring a fresh view to the local Dubai hotel design standard. This was achieved by combining world class expertise with first comers in Dubai ranging from the UK to San Francisco, New York and other places. This design eclectic mix led to create a fresh and cozy feel to the hotel but at the same time without jeopardizing its grandeur and luxurious feel. On the construction side the challenge was to find a partner that would share the same vision with us in constructing a unique building that everybody would aspire to since we believe that this was the only way to achieve the quality results that we did. Dubai Contracting Company was the ideal partner for this challenge since their strong track record in hospitality projects coupled with their complete understanding of the designers and the owners vision lead to a successful development.
SARAYA BANDAR JISSAH, OMAN

S AOC, the company developing a 2.2 million sq m ‘integrated tourist complex’ in Bandar Jissah, a coastal town 11 kilometres southeast of Muscat, has signed a contract with DSA Architects International for the design of a 106-key boutique Jumeirah hotel.

The contract is to provide lead consultancy services for the 106-key hotel, which will be fully designed by DSA along with engineering partner WSP, in the style of an Omani village.

The design will incorporate elements from the natural surroundings including the mountainous terrain and beach. A fundamental part of the design theme will integrate the history of the area and the archaeological remains on the site to create a story line for design inspiration - the remains will be protected and integrated into the architectural design as one of the main elements in the story line exploring the history of the local area of Bandar Jissah.

Sheikh Hamood al Hosni, chief executive of Saraya Bandar Jissah, said, “This contract is the final step in the design of the hotels and the vital last link in the complete development design. We are very much looking forward to starting work with DSA Architects and seeing the complete vision of the project come to life”

Steve Kelshaw, Managing Director, and Peter Davison, Director, DSA Architects International, said, “We are pleased to be appointed to work on the Saraya Bandar Jissah project which is an important part of the tourism strategy for Muscat and the sultanate, but which also has its own interesting story to tell. The project also continues our long and successful relationship with Jumeirah Hotels”