

Volvo to Husqvarna



Jan Eriksson has made Swedish brands big in Asia. First he did it with Volvo where he was an executive for 30 years. Now he has his own company, together with another Swede, which exclusively imports Husqvarna products. However, he himself has not been living in Sweden for 36 years.

By Rikke Bjerge Johansen

He has been living in seven different countries and moved houses 15 times. But now Jan Eriksson has finally decided to settle down. The choice fell on Thailand.

"I have always loved the country and the same goes for my wife. The climate, the people and the fact that we have been living here twice before made us always want to come back again," Jan Eriksson says.

However, to settle down in one country is not the same as to retire if you ask Jan Eriksson. Even though the 60 year-old businessman had an early retirement from Volvo five years ago after 30 years as a senior executive for various Asian regions, you won't find him relaxing on the golf course or by the pool. On the contrary, the Swede is not at all done with the business world and has just started up a new company Spica Co., Ltd that is the exclusive importer for Husqvarna products to Thailand. His company has been in operation for one year,

has 20 employees and is currently expanding with two new staff members every month; a rather unique thing in these financial crises, but for Jan Eriksson the reason is logical. "We have been lucky to start up in this difficult time. It's good because it enables us to build up our business. If you start business in good times it needs big infrastructure and when a crisis like this occurs, you have too big overheads. Our company started in bad times so we are building for the future based on current circumstances. Therefore we have a better balance," the Managing Director explains.

From cars to chainsaws

The company Spica Co. is the exclusive importer for Husqvarna products in Thailand. It includes Husqvarna's 'Forest and Garden' products, such as chainsaws, lawnmowers and brush cutters and also Husqvarna's 'Construction' products used in the building industry. The biggest selling product is without a doubt Husqvarna's chainsaws. However, import of chainsaws was banned until a year ago.

Two years ago when Jan Eriksson was asked by Staffan Anaker, who is a very successful importer of

Husqvarna products in Vietnam, if he wanted to participate in a joint venture to import Husqvarna products, Jan Eriksson didn't have to think twice. Shortly after Spica's appointment as Husqvarna importer, the Thai Government lifted the ban on import of chainsaws. And since Husqvarna is the biggest manufacturer of chainsaws in the world this was a great opportunity for Spica. It means that it is now legal to import chainsaws to Thailand. However, large chainsaws require an import license as well as an end-user license which will create a lot of bureaucratic work, necessary in order for the Government

