

Samui airport expansion

Bangkok Airways has begun work on expanding its privately owned airport on Koh Samui. The airport, which is the main point of entry for visitors to the Gulf island, has won several design awards in the 12 years since it was built...

... and has helped drive the island's explosion of real estate activity. The airline has also recently inaugurated a Samui to Hong Kong flight, which has made weekend trips much more viable for many of the SAR's property investors.

"We currently have four terminals which can handle up to 150 passengers each at a time," Group Captain Charoon Peetong, Vice President - Airports of Bangkok Airways says. "The new terminals will maintain the same tropical architectural style, but will have much greater capacity and will have five pavilions, which will be able to take up to 800 passengers at a time."

The existing airport will be maintained as office building, and the capacity for planes on the runway will be doubled to eight planes at a time. This will undoubtedly be a prelude to an increase in the number of flights, from the current 34 per day. In fact Mr Charoon revealed that Bangkok Airways is in negotiation with the AAT (Airports Authority of Thailand) to extend the airport's opening hours. The airline also intends to increase its usage of Boeing 757 jets, whilst maintaining its current fleet of turbo prop ATR's.

The expansion is scheduled to be finished by the end of the year and is expected to increase the airport's overall visitor numbers by up to ten percent a year.