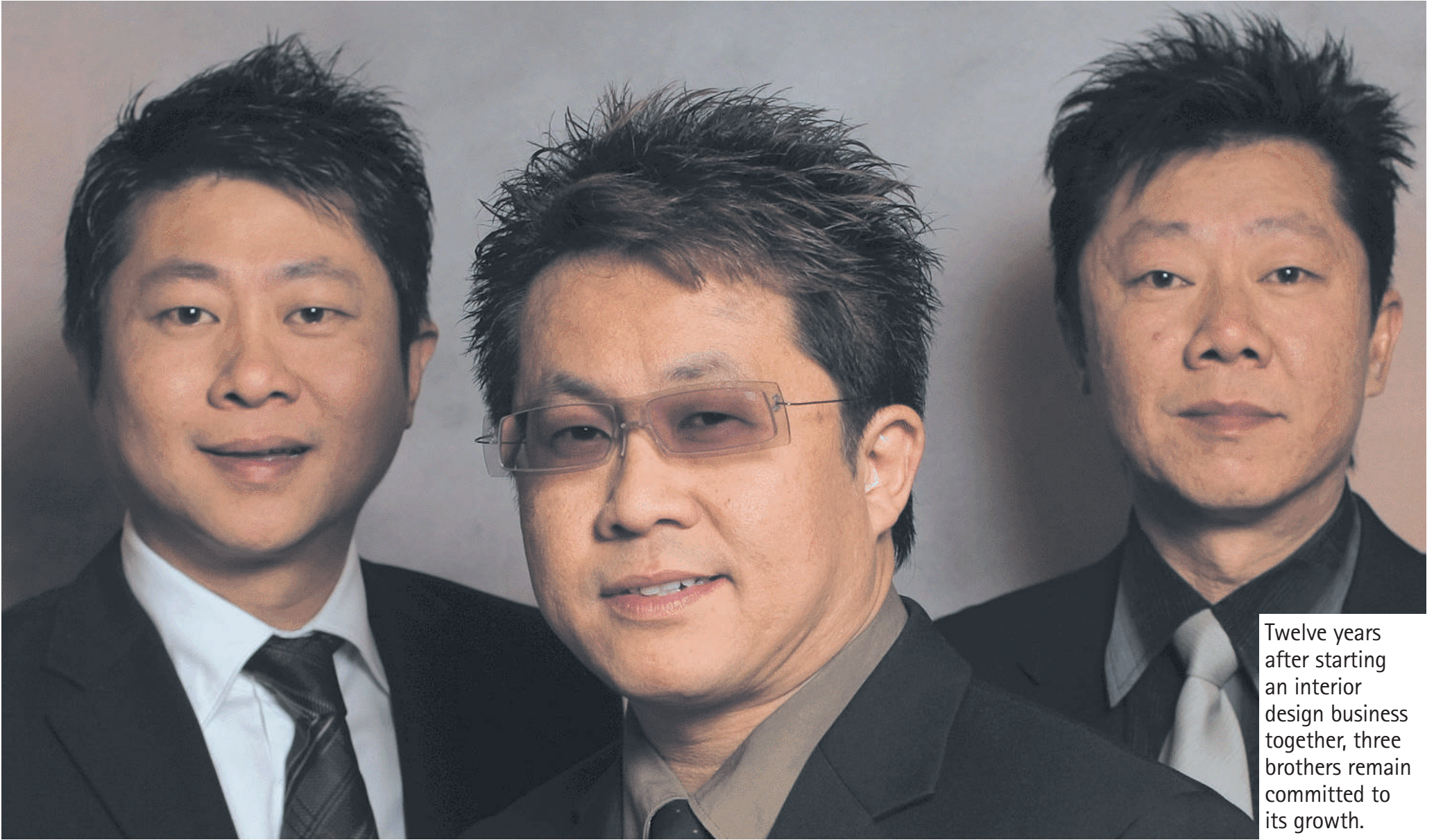


SPECIAL

The Entrepreneur Of The Year Award 2007

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Mr Randy Tan, Mr Roger Tan and Mr Elson Tan — Image Creative Design

Building on brotherly ties

By GERALDINE TAN

MORE than a decade ago, three brothers had a family gathering and they came up with a business plan.

"We always had the entrepreneurial spirit but had never started a business," recalls eldest brother Roger Tan of the decision to take the plunge with his brothers Randy and Elson.

"Since we each had some experience in the interior renovation trade, it was a natural choice to go into the interior design business," he explains.

Armed with a \$10,000 loan from their father, the Tan brothers set up Image Creative Design in 1995 — in a 50 sq ft space.

The company has come a long way since then, having made its name in designing and renovating offices, homes and retail stores here and in Thailand. The three brothers are now eyeing other projects in the region.

From the rented office, the 70-strong company now operates from a wholly owned, spacious showroom.

In 2005, Image Creative Design became the first interior design company to be awarded a Superbrands Award, an international accolade recognised in over 40 countries worldwide.

This year, it became one of Singapore's top 500 small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

This is tremendous progress for a venture that came about over a dinner discussion. The brothers are thankful for the help from their father and have never forgotten it.

Mr Roger Tan says: "It motivated us to work hard and turn the \$10,000 into a \$20 million business today. This is all due to our father's loan and trust in us, and a lot of hard work."

The trio has also made it a point to stick together through thick and thin. Apart from sharing business decisions, risks, successes and setbacks, they also drive the same cars, live in the same condominium and take their vaca-

tions together.

Building the right culture at work is important to them. He says: "We consider our employees our most valuable asset. Our strength lies in being able to cultivate an entrepreneurial culture, empowering and encouraging them to be entrepreneurs themselves."

Given the time and energy invested, being named top entrepreneurs is the icing on the cake for the Tans.

"We feel that we have brought recognition to the company and to our employees, whose efforts have made our company a success," he says.

Besides having foresight and taking risks, an entrepreneur should also be creative and constantly reinvent his business to stay relevant, he adds.

"Trends and lifestyles are changing, and we have to come up with new concepts and designs to meet those changing demands."