

British Club Seniors Section

Dinner Presentation: “Journey of a Trailblazing Businesswoman in Thailand”

Chairperson’s Introduction of the Speaker Vibeke Lyssand Leirvag:

Hi everyone and welcome to our first Fireside Chat but without the fire!

I thought it would be helpful for our non-British... English speakers with us this evening for me to define the word “Chat”. In its original rather than current day digitally focused iteration, “Chat” is an ancient English word dating back to the 15th century and before meaning to talk in an informal and friendly way.

Bruce, our Inquisitor In Chief this evening, will be his usual friendly and informal self as he poses a number of questions to our distinguished guest. But don’t worry, you will all get a chance to ask your questions in due course.

By way of an introduction, I would like to start by telling you a few things about our guest Vibeke. She arrived in Thailand in 1989 armed with a background in jewelry design and manufacturing. She took the position of Sales & Marketing Manager of a well-known local jewelry manufacturer, became MD two years later, before leaving in 1995 to start her own company Felicia Design, where she currently remains the Owner and Managing Director of the company, for many years internationally recognized as a leading high-end designer and manufacturer of silver and gold jewelry.

Quickly realizing the many difficulties that non-Thais in business in Thailand face, as many of us in business in Thailand have done, she joined her, the Norwegian Chamber of Commerce to seek advice and also the comfort of realizing that she was far from alone in facing all the challenges and pitfalls she undoubtedly encountered on her journey to business success in the country as well as abroad.

She became a Board Governor of the Norwegian Chamber in 1997 through to 2006, then Vice-President to 2013, and President until 2017. She has since remained as Vice President.

In 2017 she joined the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce in Thailand, became Vice-Chair until 2022 when she took over as the Chamber’s Chairwoman, a post she currently holds.

I’m sure that Bruce will be quizzing her on why she took on so many of these arduous roles whilst still battling to grow her company.

But there is more: in 2019 she was appointed an Advisor to the Thailand Board of Trade, a post that she currently holds and with whom she remains very committed. She currently sits on 5 committees active in making the undertaking of business in Thailand easier, and since 2022 she

has been a Board Member of the Anti-Corruption Commission and a Board Member of Anti-Corruption Thailand.

In addition to all of that, she is married with two lovely daughters, and as a perpetual “doer” she is Vice Chair of the Shrewsbury School Parents Association and is currently Chair of her condominium’s Committee.

Finally, she is heavily involved in Blood Donation and the Thai Red Cross, where she and the employees at Felicity Design give blood 4 times a year. As an aside, I have a great story to tell from my own blood donation experiences, but that is for another time.

Ladies and gentlemen will you please welcome Vibeke Lyssand Leirvag.