

ZEKO AT FIVE

Macau's New Kids on the Block

In a five-year sprint, Zeko Construction and Engineering Company Limited is disrupting Macau's build scene with fresh ideas.

Text : Julianne Raboca

In a city that doesn't shy away from the opulent, a construction disruption is taking shape in the hands of Zeko Construction and Engineering Company Limited. Within the span of five years, this spirited upstart has moved around industry giants, manoeuvring through the pandemic with an agility that belies its embryonic status.

"It's not about the size we start at; it's the strides we make," says Director Jason Li, UK-born interior designer who infused Zeko with a blend of Eastern work ethic and Western strategy.

He encapsulates the ethos that has catapulted Zeko from a modest start-up to an SME powerhouse, nurturing a workforce that mirrors a close-knit family more than a corporate hierarchy.

Nick Lo, Jason's counterpart and the company's hands-on visionary, founded the company in 2019 after doing project management at MGM for more than six years. "I reached Assistant Director level, but felt like my personality was more fit to contracting and working as a team... I wanted to be hands-on," says Nick. After working with some of the biggest industry names, he decided to start Zeko.

Disrupting the Old Guard

Zeko charted an unexpected path through a pandemic. "Before Covid, Macau was a bubble," says Nick. "We had no choice but to adapt quickly when the pandemic halted the high rollers and their colossal projects. But we saw an opportunity."

Where behemoths stalled, Zeko found its stride, offering cost-effective solutions and tapping into a vein of local, smaller-scale projects. "Suddenly, our size became our strength," Jason says. Their strategy wasn't just about survival; it was about establishing a legacy in a market that prizes reputation above revenue. "We strive on quality," Jason asserts. "We have a proven track record, and of course, we deliver."

Each year Zeko continued to surprise even its founders. "You keep building the relationship with clients, and that becomes your business," says Nick.

Company Ethos and Culture, A Community-Centric Approach

Nick's philosophy is simple yet profound, "We're hands-on, and we're not just management." This ethos echoes through Zeko's daily operations, where problems aren't passed down a hierarchy but are shared challenges to overcome collectively. This approach has nurtured a culture distinct from the typically hierarchical workplaces of Asia, engendering a sense of community and joint responsibility.



The backbone of Zeko isn't forged from concrete or steel but from the spirit of Macau itself.



MGM Platinum gaming & Hu Dao Restaurant renovation works



Londoner Slots overhead signage



Artyzen Grand Lapa Hotel Chinnery Ball room renovation

"Since opening the office, it's become warmer... we have a more like a family vibe to our office," says Jason.

Their contrasting personalities—Nick's introverted, meticulous planning and Jason's extroverted, dynamic execution—harmonise to drive the company forward.

"I'm more of the planning guy," Nick explains, "Jason... can get my idea, and then keep giving me the way to get there." Together, they embody the yin and yang of leadership.

Beyond their construction sites, Zeko's leadership extends to their charity work. Active in organisations like the Lighthouse Club, they leverage their industry connections for broader community benefits.

"It's not just about getting our name out there," says Jason, who believes that mingling with competitors and clients at charity events creates a network that transcends business in ways like supporting families affected by construction tragedies. "We feel good to support Lighthouse," Nick says.

The founders are also active in the British Chamber of Commerce, Friends of Caritas, and the Macau Golf & Country Club, fostering the groundwork for a community-oriented, culturally sensitive approach to business—a narrative of warmth amid the steel.

Vision for the Future

As the Macau skyline shifts, so too do the aspirations of this local company, peering boldly into the future. "We could grow rapidly in an instant, but we chose not to do it," says Nick. "We want to grow at a comfortable rate."

"We need a bigger office, which is the next step," Jason laughs. Nick looks further: "It may be international... that is definitely something



DFS Studio city phase 2

we could look into, in the near future." The past five years may soon transform into a narrative of global expansion. "The next five years will be completely different from the last," Nick predicts.

"We don't have a target to chase," Jason states, "as long as every year we feel uncomfortably busy, we know we're on the right track."

As they stand at the crossroads of the past and the future, Zeko's story remains grounded in their roots. It's not just about expansion for the sake of growth; it's about the journey of a local enterprise ready to set foot on international shores without losing sight of its origins.

