

Press Release  
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**The Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards 2010**

**Samba Financial Group (Saudi Arabia) wins Best Retail Bank in Saudi Arabia for the year 2009**

- *For the first time, Samba Financial Group wins the Best Retail Bank in Saudi Arabia Award for the year 2009.*
- *Over 120 banks and financial institutions from 23 countries across the Asia Pacific, Gulf and Central Asian regions were evaluated as part of the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme.*

**Singapore, 19 March 2010** – Samba Financial Group has been named Saudi Arabia’s Best Retail Bank in the ninth Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards Programme. The bank received the award at The Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards 2010 ceremony, held in conjunction with the region’s foremost retail banking event, the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Convention. The ceremony was held at the JW Marriot in Shanghai on the evening of March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

About 120 senior bankers from award winning banks in 22 countries across the Asia Pacific, the Gulf and Central Asian regions attended the formal gala dinner, the industry’s celebration of the region’s best retail bankers that recognizes their efforts in bringing superior products and services to their customers.

The awards programme, administered by The Asian Banker and refereed by prominent global bankers, consultants and academics, is the most prestigious of its kind.

A stringent three month-long evaluation process, based on a balanced and transparent scorecard, determined the winners and the position of the different retail banks in the region. A full list of winners is attached.

**For the first time, Samba Financial Group wins the Best Retail Bank in Saudi Arabia Award for the year 2009**

Samba Financial Group (Samba) has won the Best Retail Bank in Saudi Arabia for its strong performance in 2009 and having gained the highest scores than the other banks surveyed in the programme including the largest retail bank in Saudi Arabia, Al Rajhi Bank

Samba distinguishes itself by focusing on the premium and affluent segment of the retail business in Saudi Arabia. Samba has the fastest growing credit card base and the lowest NPLs. Samba is also successful in maintaining a low cost-to-income ratio of 30%.

Samba is highly effective in cross-selling to its customers and commits to relationship pricing. Furthermore, it is also very successful in migrating customers to e-channels. The bank also grew its mortgage book by over 20% and increased its market share in consumer loans by 2%.

“Samba, which is targeting only the premium and affluent segment of the retail business in Saudi Arabia, has been successful in competing with some of the largest and mostly mass segment-focused retail bank in Saudi Arabia. Samba’s operating income remained buoyant even when peers such as Al Rajhi Bank reported a precipitous drop in operating income. This in itself is a very big achievement,” said Mr. Chris Kapfer, head of Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards Programme at The Asian Banker.

### **Over 120 banks and financial institutions from 23 countries across the Asia Pacific, Gulf and Central Asian regions were evaluated as part of the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme**

“This year over 120 banks and financial institutions in 23 countries across the region were evaluated as part of the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme. It has become the single most prestigious, comprehensive and anticipated awards programme that recognises the pursuit of excellence amongst retail financial institutions available almost anywhere in the world today,” said Philippe Paillart, Chairman of The Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme.

The transparent award evaluation process uses a balanced scorecard approach and a comprehensive methodology to evaluate the strength of individual banks’ retail banking businesses that involves extensive research and probing interviews, and taps on the combined experience of a team of experienced researchers.

Strause, Paillart, formerly vice chairman and CEO of DBS Bank and a pioneer in the retail banking industry in the Asia Pacific region, added: “The Asian Banker Excellence Programme was instituted in 2001 on the premise that an outstanding player in the retail financial services industry should build business franchises that are sustainable, competitive and profitable over a period of time.”

### **About The Asian Banker**

The Asian Banker is the foremost provider of strategic business intelligence on the financial services industry in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions. The organization has offices in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Beijing and Dubai as well as representatives in Shanghai, London and New York. With a business that revolves around publications, research services, training and forums, the organization is highly regarded in the financial services community for its incisive and independent commentaries on developments in the industry. The company’s website is [www.theasianbanker.com](http://www.theasianbanker.com).

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