

# Bus Recognition Guide



Soon Chow is the oldest and most well known bus and coach builder in Singapore.

The company was founded 80 years ago and operated under the name of Weng On Workshop which built many of the "mosquito" buses in the 1930s.

The name was changed to Soon Chow Corporation in the 1970s. During the 1970s to the 1980s, Soon Chow built almost 100% of the buses for the local bus operator Singapore Bus Service (SBS), the predecessor of present day SBS Transit.

This design was perhaps Soon Chow's most popular bus model. A large number of them were built for use as transit buses and school buses during the 1970s to the mid 1980s. PH1943R, a Mercedes OF1318, is among the last few remaining units still in service with private bus operators.



The Duple 320 designed coaches were built under license by Soon Chow using various types of chassis. PZ796K is a Hino RK176.



CKD kits from PSV International were used to assemble a fleet of Scania buses for the SBS Airport Limousine service to Changi Airport. The service was unprofitable and was withdrawn after a few years and PA919E was acquired by West Point Transit.



Soon Chow assembled a number of these Duple Metsec designed buses for private operators in the early 1990s. The majority of them were built on Mercedes OF1315 chassis.



Sentosa shuttle bus PH2930X is a Scania LI13CRB assembled by Soon Chow using CKD kits from Jurucoach Malaysia.

# Singapore Part I - Soon Chow

By the late 1980s, SBS had set up its own bus assembly line, and Soon Chow only played a supporting role to SBS, assembling less than 50% of the buses.

The company still builds buses for SBS Transit, but only on an ad-hoc basis and in very small numbers. The main bulk of the company's business now is in the building of high-end luxury tour coaches.

Text and pictures by Lee I.Y.

This model is the replacement for all previous models. It was introduced in late 1990s and is used for both buses and coaches.



By 2001, Soon Chow has decided to concentrate on building luxury coaches only. This is the last design used by the company for building buses supplied to local private bus operators. PA3267H is a Volvo B10M belonging to West Point Transit.

PA7071D is a low height double decker coach built for 707 Travel service. The seats are on the upper deck and the lower deck is used as lounge. 707 operate an express coach service between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.



Hippo Tours added another two more open top double deckers in 2006. The design was different from the first four. The colour used for these two is blue and green. The green Hippo PA6433A is seen here on lay over at Suntec City.

PA6437P is the latest coach built by Soon Chow. It features a sloping floor.