More than 30 projects showcasing Singapore's vision are on display at the prestigious Venice Biennale exhibition.

The Little Red Dot's blueprint for its future skyline has received the thumbs-up from visitors to the world's most prestigious showcase of what's hot in architecture.

Singapore is one of 50 countries with their own display pavilion at the 10th Venice Biennale International Architectural Exhibition, which officially opens today.

It is expected to be attended by about 100,000 movers and shakers in the world of architecture.

Already, Singapore's $800,000 pavilion at the exhibition has proved a talking point among 200 visitors, including European students, who attended a preview earlier in the week. They went away impressed by Singapore's sophisticated architecture.

"It is amazing how the city has high-rise buildings that are not skyscrapers, but instead look artistic," says Ms Maria Dini, 25, an architecture student from Rome.

The pavilion shows designs for 31 projects including the winning proposals for the upcoming integrated resort at Marina Bay.

Before entering, exhibition-goers receive a chirpy greeting - literally - courtesy of an art installation of Singapore's wildlife and fauna by local artist Terence Yeung, which even includes brightly coloured fake birds.

It highlights Singapore's aim of being both a modern, urban business hub, and also a green, vibrant Garden City.

In another twist, Singapore's architectural designs on display include some buildings that won't actually be built.

Alongside winners of building design competitions held over the last six years are designs of those who made the final cut, but were not ultimately successful. This reflects the pavilion's theme, which is "Singapore Built And Unbuilt" (see facing page).

Dr Milton Tan, director of the DesignSingapore Council which promotes local design and who is also the commissioner of this year's pavilion, explains: "Singapore is not just about buildings that are built. It is also built on ideas, many of which do not get put into construction."

Some unbuilt ideas are not put into reality, not because they are so good but because they are ahead of their time, he says.

Indeed, home-grown architectural firm Woha Architects' Richard Hassell says unbuilt ideas form the basis for future works.

He cites the firm's design for the Duxton Plain Public Housing project competition. It did not win, but the firm used the same concept for its design of a high-rise residential building, The Met in Bangkok, which will be completed in 2008.

The Singapore Built And Unbuilt theme, meanwhile, replaces a previous proposal themed on shopping that was rejected midway through preparations for the biennale, due to differences in ideas between the council and the former curatorial team.

The pavilion is a 400sq m exhibition space in a three-storey historic building. As well as an art installation, the City In A Garden concept continues with a video featuring Singapore's urban and nature life. The 31 projects are drawn from three areas:

Possibilities At Marina Bay, which includes the upcoming integrated resort, Marina Bay bridge and Gardens By The Bay;

Perspectives Of The City, which features new and evolving designs for the city centre, including proposals for the Museum MRT station, the Singapore Arts School and the Singapore Management University; and

Prototypes From One-north, which contains built and unbuilt proposals for the one-north research hub master plan, condominium@one-north and Fusionopolis in one-north.

The pavilion will be officially opened today by Mr Edmund Cheng, chairman of DesignSingapore Council, a division within the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts.

Mr Cheng says unbuilt ideas form the basis for future works.

He cites the firm's design for the Duxton Plain Public Housing project competition. It did not win, but the firm used the same concept for its design of a high-rise residential building, The Met in Bangkok, which will be completed in 2008.
Local architectural firm Woha in a competition to design the Wbn -abilities at Marina Esay at the Singapore Art Museum.

The Garden at Marina East will be designed by Grant Associates led by designer Andrew Grant. Vibrant and colourful, it will feature, among other things, Showcases gardens and orchids and the glasshouses.

The Garden at Marina East, by Gustafson Porter led by principals Kathryn Gustafson and Neil Potter, will have a water theme. Expect to see water gardens with terraces that come with views of the Singapore skyline as well as a research and education centre on the relationship between plants, animals and water in an aquatic ecosystem.

The Garden at Marina East will be designed by Grant Associates led by architect Andrew Grant. Vibrant and colourful, it will feature, among other things, Showcases gardens and orchids and the glasshouses.

Gardens by the Bay by Grant Associates

When completed in 2009, this 280m pedestrian overpass - Singapore's longest - will connect areas such as the upcoming 'integrated resort and Gardens by the Bay'.

The design, a Wedged glass-and-steel structure in the shape of a double helix, is the work of a consultant team comprising Australian firms Cox Group and Arup, and Singapore firm Architects 61.

The Garden at Marina East, by Gustafson Porter led by principals Kathryn Gustafson and Neil Potter, will have a water theme. Expect to see water gardens with terraces that come with views of the Singapore skyline as well as a research and education centre on the relationship between plants, animals and water in an aquatic ecosystem.

To be completed by end-2008, this condominium will have 350 to 380 units and is developed by United Oceanic Land, Kheng La Company and Low Keng Huat. It will have a "fenceless" concept to promote ground-level activity and unity between buildings. The complex will be the epicentre of information technology and medical industries.

SINGAPORE ARTS SCHOOL by Woha Architects

To be opened in 2008, the arts school designed by Woha Architects is a 9-storey building with copper-covered exterior. The school in Kreta Terre is the firm's first institutional project. The design encourages the effective use of natural light and ventilation while providing private spaces for artworks to be showcased.

SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY (SMU) by KNA Architects

Opened last year, SMU was the first institutional project for local firm, KNA Architects, led by architect Tan Teck Kiam. The campus has five buildings spread over the former Bras Basah Park. Much of the greenery has been retained and the campus has earned a "campus in a park" nickname.

When completed in 2009, this 280m pedestrian link - Singapore's longest - will connect areas such as the upcoming "integrated resort and Gardens by the Bay".

The design, a Wedged glass-and-steel structure in the shape of a double helix, is the work of a consultant team comprising Australian firms Cox Group and Arup, and Singapore firm Architects 61.

The Garden at Marina East, by Gustafson Porter led by principals Kathryn Gustafson and Neil Potter, will have a water theme. Expect to see water gardens with terraces that come with views of the Singapore skyline as well as a research and education centre on the relationship between plants, animals and water in an aquatic ecosystem.

To be completed by end-2008, this condominium will have 350 to 380 units and is developed by United Oceanic Land, Kheng La Company and Low Keng Huat. It will have a "fenceless" concept to promote ground-level activity and unity between buildings. The complex will be the epicentre of information technology and medical industries.

SINGAPORE ARTS SCHOOL by Woha Architects

To be opened in 2008, the arts school designed by Woha Architects is a 9-storey building with copper-covered exterior. The school in Kreta Terre is the firm's first institutional project. The design encourages the effective use of natural light and ventilation while providing private spaces for artworks to be showcased.

SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY (SMU) by KNA Architects

Opened last year, SMU was the first institutional project for local firm, KNA Architects, led by architect Tan Teck Kiam. The campus has five buildings spread over the former Bras Basah Park. Much of the greenery has been retained and the campus has earned a "campus in a park" nickname.