

► Bayou Water Village
WINNER IN THE CATEGORY
Residential (Low Rise)

Eco-chic homes all the rage

> The development draws inspiration from the concept of fishing village in the east coast

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TODAY'S home buyers are, not surprisingly, more discerning and discriminating than ever before. Being well-travelled means they have more sophisticated tastes and higher standards. It also means they have higher expectations where lifestyle choices are concerned. Property developers hoping to meet their demands successfully would have to rise to the occasion. They would be most familiar about lifestyle marketing, and their products and services would reflect creativity and innovation. They would readily evaluate to accommodate modern urbanites who seek brands that understand their lifestyle needs. And surely eco-chic is one hot trend one won't go wrong in adopting.

Ask the experts. Mulpha International Bhd's developments reflect its commitment to this particular lifestyle theme, notably its Bayou Water Village development. One of the projects in the Leisure Farm development situated within Iskandar Malaysia, Johor, Bayou Water Village recently won in the category of Residential (Low Rise) in FIABCI's Malaysia Property Award 2011. And Mulpha International Bhd executive chairman Lee Seng Huang is naturally ecstatic with the good news—and the fact that the project's eco-chic tag is well-received.

Lee says, "We will continue to build on our brand momentum in the local property industry as we apply our experiences gained from other world class award winning developments from abroad. This award from FIABCI reaffirms the quality and reputation that Leisure Farm has achieved."

Ronn Yong, the company's property division deputy CEO says, "This is our sixth FIABCI and Prix d'Excellence award for Leisure Farm and it is a great honour."

"All of our colleagues, consultants and contractors helped put it together with the backing of our chairman and CEOs. We are all very proud of it as we strived very hard to make a mark for Leisure Farm. We are extremely grateful winning this award due to the competitive entries in the Low Rise category. We deeply appreciate



the sincere efforts of the supportive judges who believed in our project, especially with the tough evaluation process involved."

The award helps build the branding for not only the company but the team, consultants and contractors, says Yong, adding that the achievement wasn't gained single-handedly but with teamwork and it has geared the company's staff to be more focused. "It gives them a sentimental value when they see their opinions being adopted and treasured. It motivates and encourages them to go further."

The recipe for success, Yong adds, lies in hard work. "We explored new boundaries, shared ideas, and listened to feedback from residents, colleagues and consultants to set the development apart from others. It has become a prized product of the company. Our staff, consultants and contractors are honoured to be associated with it and they feel that Leisure Farm belongs to them," he says.

REVIVAL OF THE KAMPUNG HOUSE

The name, Bayou Water Village, easily conjures up images of greenery and blue water bodies. Sure enough, a canal waterway runs through the project like a spine, flowing elegantly out towards the Tebrau Straits.

Yong recalls the initial period when his company was still pondering the type of development to go for. A key factor, he says, was the canal waterway that resembles a little bayou—meaning breeze in Malay, and creek or river in English.

"Creating Bayou Water Village was interesting. We screened through houses by the river, found out how small village towns were formed, and we thought we should follow the concept of a small fishing village town in Marang, Terengganu," Yong explains.

"You don't get a lot of houses with water front as a main strength. We took the unsightly storm drain reserves creek and transformed it into an asset for our project. We also didn't want to adopt the ultra modern designs other developers are doing, therefore we took the approach of going back to kampung times. It is a revival of the kampung house. Our marketing team calls it old charm with modern facilities."

Bayou Water Village sits on 22 acres with nine acres of open space. It offers 213 units with more than 90 water-front units. Twenty pocket parks are created for those without water view. Each unit has a built-up area of between 1,777 and 2,200 sq ft, and four rooms with attached bathrooms. Units are priced between RM500,000 and RM1.3 million.

The homes are designed to reduce energy consumption as you won't need to turn on your lights and air conditioner due to the cleverly

Lee: "We will continue to build our brand momentum."

New interpretation of old world charm... The Bayou Water Village's nature-friendly theme is a revival of the kampung house.



Ideal urban living... the development is dotted with parks where the young and old alike can spend meaningful recreational hours.



designed courtyards serving as light and ventilation air wells.

"The planning was very challenging due to the triangulation of the site. With its shape, it is difficult to put in the houses because each house has a different orientation as it manoeuvres along the canal," says Goh Han Shin, Mulpha International Bhd property division design architect. Therefore, he adds, the canal waterways were widened and a step was created by gently carving the embankment for safety purposes.

"We try to keep the natural earth profile without bulldozing the hills that give the project a natural feel. As the houses do not have a linear terrace order, we get leftover space where we created themed pocket parks (for activities and elements) such as yoga and reflexology, trampolines, life-size chess, picnic spots, and barbecue pits. Each park gives each neighbourhood a distinct character," says Goh.

RESORT LIVING CONCEPT

Developing Bayou Water Village also proved to be a test where pricing is concerned, so the company reduced earthwork cost by not transporting too much out or importing too much into the site. The goal was to strike a balance and use more environment-friendly approaches. For example, a mud wall was built along the clubhouse canal embankment instead of a reinforced concrete wall to regulate water flow and reduce

erosion.

The developer also keeps the canal clean by using EM (effective micro organisms) mud balls, water plants, and organic solutions. Residents were also involved in the cleaning activities that evoked their environmental sustainability conscience. The residents, Goh says, have developed a strong sense of stewardship towards their neighbourhood.

"Residents of Bayou Water Village say they don't feel like they are in Malaysia because of the excellent environment. This is what we are trying to achieve... to break away from urban boxes. It is something rare that you won't find in KL or Singapore. We provide the resort living concept to differentiate from other developments, and it has attracted people from countries like Singapore, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the US, Australia, and European countries," says Yong.

One upcoming development for the company is Bayou Creek that was launched recently with an initial 96 units. Bayou Creek is another series of eco-chic homes adopting the SEEDS concept. SEEDS stands for sustainability, energy, environment, design, and security. It offers canal front bungalows and semi-detached units, and feature four community parks with 11 themed gardens. The show village and parks will soon be ready for viewing.

Yong says people will not buy a house that isn't secure and safe. "They'd want award-winning



Yong says the goal is to "break away from urban boxes".

properties as it would give them an assurance that someone has cross-checked the property.

"It has gone to that level of preference, therefore it is important that we take that direction, and FIABCI is important to help set industry standards and benchmarks. In fact, they have done well in moving Malaysia's benchmark internationally. People recognise our products as they are well positioned."

For more information on Mulpha International Bhd's latest developments, log on to www.mulpha.com.my

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