

SONEVA KIRI
SIX SENSES, THAILAND

Thailand has long been a popular destination for holiday ownership, with residences in Phuket, for example, traditionally netting investors as much as two to three times their initial investment. Even following the credit crunch and the country's recent political unrest, Six Senses has continued to receive enquiries about their latest resort development, Soneva Kiri.

With only a strictly limited number of residences for sale, owners are guaranteed exclusivity. Each villa is an average of at least 1,250 square metres, with four to six bedrooms, priced at around US\$4,000 per sq m. Each property has sea views and meets the highest international standards, including a Bose sound system, WIFI, infinity pools, water slides, private wine cellars and a fully equipped gym.

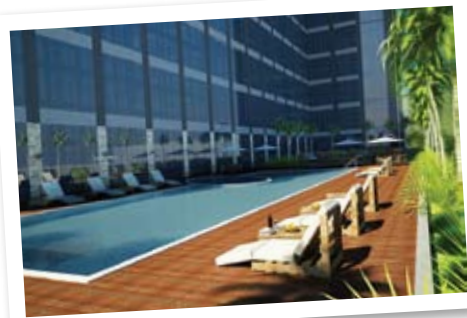


Owners receive special rates for the resort facilities and services, complimentary seaplane transfers and use of their own speedboat. Butlers are on hand to answer every whim, and there's an on-site spa, just in case living in the lap of luxury gets a little too much! There are still 12 units for sale out of the 21 planned for 'Phase 1', and the resort opened last year.

www.sixsenses.com/privateresidences/kiri

MAKATI
RAFFLES, KINGDOM HOTEL INVESTMENTS, PHILIPPINES

Entering their third phase of sales, and with two-thirds of the Makati's residences sold already, there's no time to spare if you want to get hold of



one of these exclusive city escapes – local buyers have been snapping them up like hot cakes.

Makati, one of Manila's most fashionable new commercial districts, is home to many of the country's tallest skyscrapers, so each of Raffles' 236 branded penthouses will offer exceptional views of either Manila or Laguna Bay. Designed by renowned architects Arquitectonica, and with interiors by award-winning interior designers Bent Severin International, each residence promises to follow contemporary Filipino design principles.

All residents are also entitled to a limousine service from the airport, as well as full access to all the facilities within the neighbouring hotel Raffles Manila.

www.afflesmakati.com

MAHE, PETITE ANSE
FOUR SEASONS, SEYCHELLES

An 'acre of paradise', courtesy of Four Seasons Seychelles, will set you back a mere US\$7 million. For this you'll get one of 26 freehold plots, surrounded by lush, tropical vegetation, overlooking the Indian Ocean. On this plot you will find your own Chong Yew Kuan-designed multi-level villa, wrapped around the island's rocky landscape, complete with indoor/outdoor living space and an infinity pool, of course.

Interiors are very typically Creole in their design, the brainchild of Hirsch Bedner Associates – famed for their discreet and low-key style.

Every resident is, of course, afforded access to the resort's facilities, including two restaurants,

bar, gym, pool, spa and helipad. Oh, and did we mention that each villa has its own butler?

All residences are due for completion in 2010 and, amazingly, there are still a few available.

www.residences.fourseasons.com



IN THE CLUB

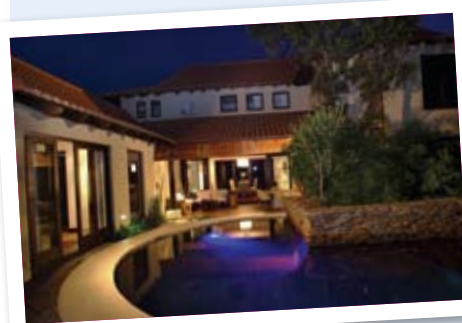
Despite everything that's been said, there are a large number of individuals out there who have shifted their opinion following the recent economic downturn and are no longer interested in owning equity outright, in the form of overseas property.

These people, though, are still afforded their slice of paradise in the form of private residence 'clubs'. There are several companies out there offering investors the hassle-free luxury of buying time in a luxury piece of real estate, that have taken fractional ownership to the next level.

IFA Hotels & Resorts is one such company, offering investors a deeded ownership product in which they may enjoy several weeks' occupancy each year.

"One thing all of our investors have in common is that they believe a good investment is a holiday home, in which they have a perpetual ownership interest, but in which they pay only for the time they use," says Piaras Moriarty, vice-president of client management Middle East, IFA Hotels & Resorts.

"Our owners have exchange privileges that allow them to swap their stay in Zimbali for a stay in 59 other Fairmont and Raffles Hotels and Resorts around the world."



FAIRMONT HERITAGE PLACE
FAIRMONT ZIMBALI RESORT,
SOUTH AFRICA

The Private Residence Club – Fairmont Heritage Place – is located within the Zimbali Coastal Resort on the North Coast of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa. The resort is also home to the five-star Fairmont Zimbali, with state-of-the-art conference facilities, a Willow Stream Spa and a beach club on site.

The residences include designer apartments, hillside villas and beach front villas. Also on site is a Gary Player Signature Golf Course, country club and golf academy, food and beverage outlets and a fitness club.

NUMBER OF UNITS:

Hotel: 150 rooms.

Residential: 17 villas and 75 apartments.

Fractional: 10 garden villas.

www.fairmontzimbali.com

The ultimate address

Whether a villa on a private, paradise island or a designer city loft, branded private residences offer the investor a hassle free alternative to home ownership, writes Megan Wynes

Robinson Crusoe syndrome is still alive and well it seems, despite the economic gloom, with cash rich investors seeking out their own slice of paradise in the form of a second home on a distant shore. And what better way to avoid the headaches involved with overseas property ownership than to invest in a home managed by a well established hotel brand?

It's the perfect recipe: an exotic location, privacy, luxury facilities, unparalleled levels of service and the reassurance that the property will be maintained, year round, to impeccably high standards. Plus, there's the added bonus that when the property is vacant, the management company can secure owners a rental income.

"Having a luxury, branded holiday home means you can be assured a peak season stay in a highly acclaimed resort," says Lynn Villadolid, senior director, Six Senses Residences.

"And you have an international, five-star brand that deals with renting out your property, which offsets the annual running cost as well as providing an attractive cash yield."

Branded private residences are not a new phenomenon; the United States and the Caribbean have been hot spots for this kind of property investment for decades.

Regional US/Caribbean specialists, such as Ritz Carlton are now looking further afield, with units springing up in Singapore and Bangkok, while Asian giants, such as Mandarin Oriental and Banyan Tree are casting their eyes towards the emerging markets of the North Africa (Morocco), Central America (Costa Rica) and the Middle East (UAE and Oman).

There are few companies that can be said to have achieved a truly global portfolio, but Four Seasons is well on its way, with residential properties selling out in North Africa, Indonesia, the Seychelles, Central America, the US and Canada.

"Experienced investors purchasing high end

real estate rightly still regard property as the most secure and profitable form of long term investment," says Dean Foley, International Sales Manager, Hamptons International.

"Serviced residences, particularly those from a highly-regarded brand, such as Four Seasons, are becoming increasingly popular," says Foley.

These are strong international brands, and by appealing to buyers in those areas less affected by the recent global economic downturn, many of their sales offices have remained busy.

"The economic downturn has negatively impacted the start of new luxury developments, and slowed the pace of existing sales," says Barry Landsberg, director, residential marketing, Fairmont Raffles Hotels International.

"However, as Raffles is a brand with strong international appeal, we have developments that are still seeing steady sales in parts of the world that are quickly recovering."

Indeed it seems that for some operators in this market, the recent downturn has separated the wheat from the chaff.

"We no longer have a flood of enquiries from speculators; all of our enquiries are now coming from genuine buyers," says Jenni Beggs, managing director, Zil Pasyon Seychelles.

"In fact, we are still experiencing very positive responses to property as an investment."

Of course, buying into a brand does come at an additional cost – sometimes as much as 20 per cent extra for the property itself, plus service charges. And then there are the limits imposed by the brand on the personal touches buyers may add to their homes, plus there is the concern that as more and more properties of this kind come on to the market, 'exclusive' residences will lose some of their face value. These are all considerations.

But – and this is a big but – when each property comes with a rental return, is situated in a locale with limited developments (ensuring exclusivity), and is part of a five-star resort, with all of the corresponding facilities and levels of service, it's a bit of a no brainer.

ZIL PASYON PER AQUUM, SEYCHELLES

Per Aquum Resorts, creator of the award-winning Huvafen Fushi in the Maldives, has joined forces with local and international investors to deliver Zil Pasyon – Creole for "island of passion". Promising to be the ultimate statement in 'barefoot elegance', the villas – up to 1,394 square metres and priced from US\$2.9 million – have been designed to take advantage of every ounce of light, with the interiors taking on a minimalist style.

Some villas will even have their own helipad, and each of the master bedrooms will have a terrace featuring a glass-bottomed pool, which then forms the roof of the living space below. All properties are isolated, but still close to the island's marina precinct, with shopping and dining options, and one of Per Aquum's boutique 'super-spas'. Villas are still available for sale, with the resort due for completion later this year.

"We believe that privacy is the new luxury and so we offer extreme privacy, which affords you your own, bespoke lifestyle that you are able to tailor to suit you," says Zil Pasyon managing director, Jenni Beggs.

www.zilpasyon.com



Island of passion
Discover your own
paradise in the
Seychelles