Zerin Properties’ Premivdran going places

BY ROSALYNN PON

Zerin Properties Sdn Bhd, a local real estate agency, may not be big in size, but it is definitely big in thinking — it is going places with its "Malayan brand" regionally. Its founder and CEO Premivdran Singh is recently named "Outstanding Individual" for Real Estate Industry (category Real Estate Awards) in the inaugural RFP Magazine Outstanding Individuals in Industry Awards 2007.

First published in May 2004, RFP (real estate, facilities, projects) Magazine was created to provide quality, independent information for corporate real estate, facilities and project managers in Asia. To date, RFP has more than 30,000 readers working in a diverse range of local, regional and multinational companies within Asia and beyond.

The only Malaysian in the awards line-up, Premivdran was awarded based on his involvement, success of the H.Api's hospitality transactions of 2007 — the sale of Four Seasons Langkawi to investors of premium hotels Grande Hotel Investments (K) Sdn Bhd. He negotiated KHI's entry into the Asian tourism market for US$129 million (RM464 million), making one of the biggest forays by a high-profile international investor into Malaysia.

"It was a three-year project to bring Middle East investors. I embarked on a marketing trip to the Middle East in 2004 (and I still do) to see clients and people who are interested in Malaysia," he explains. He has met the founder and chairman of KHI and member of the Saudi royal family Prince Al Waled bin Talal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud twice.

According to the judging panel, the sale has the capability to change the scope of economic development in the region. It necessitated a certain vision, comprehension and sustained efforts to convince an investor to venture into a new market.

There are 12 winners from Asia-Pacific in nine categories. The winners were selected from a shortlist of 50 by a panel of senior industry experts, including Margaret Brooke, CEO of Hong Kong-based Professional Property Services (PPS); Penang-born Datuk Ken Yeang of Liewinyin Davies Yeang and TR Hamzah & Yeang Sdn Bhd; and Mike Zamora, CooneNet Global Asia regional chairman and Cisco System senior manager.

Nominees were considered based on various factors, including their individual and team contributions, the significance of their projects, sustainability, effectiveness, innovation and project size. The awards ceremony will take place in Hong Kong on June 12.

Zerin Properties was established in early 2002 with footprints in Singapore, India and Australia. It is the first Malaysian real estate agency to take the local brand outside to Australia in 2003. Zerin Properties has four main businesses, consisting of corporate hotels, corporate non-hotels (offices), expatriate leasing and residential.

"If you want a business answer, Zerin Properties is an estate agency. We are dream makers — we help people achieve their real estate dreams," says Premivdran when asked how he would describe his company, which was initially set up mainly for friends and family. It was not long before he decided to sell the managed hotels for sale, including the Hotel Langkawi which was held by the Faber group, assisted AirAsia Bhd in buying the Grand Centropole Hotel on Jalan Sultan Ismail (now known as Tune Hotel) and recently sold two hotels in Vietnam.

"We are client-focused and offer personal services. I’ve been very lucky as it has been a great journey so far. There were many failures, too, but I believe everything happens for a reason," says Premivdran, adding that one should be thankful for what one has, feel sorry for the losses (failures) but never let them determine the rest of one’s life. He is passionate about real estate, resorts and hotels as well as cooking.

He concedes that he views the most unforgettable professional experience aside from closing the deal for Four Seasons Langkawi to be the agency’s efficient response time (a small team of 15, including two in Singapore and one in Australia), and focused and experienced staff. "It is a research-based company," he says.

"Zerin means golden in Sanskrit. It is also my second daughter’s name so I have a huge responsibility to make sure the company excels," adds the father of three. He has a degree in property management and valuation from University of Malaya.

Premivdran was nominated by Rajhindran Thaver, head of international business development for the DEYAA group and currently based in Dubai.

During the interview with Premivdran, this writer couldn’t help but be impressed with his passion for everything Malaysian. So when it comes to naming his two local favourite hotel destinations, he says without hesitation: "Tanjung Rhu Resort in Langkawi and Sentosa’s Shangri-La Rasa Sayang in Penang." He adds that his goal is to make Malaysia the ultimate real estate investment destination.

Does he think Malaysia has what it takes to achieve this?

"Most definitely. Unlike countries like Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, Malaysia offers something different. For example, a foreigner cannot own freehold land in Singapore, only non-Housing Development Board apartments," says Premivdran. He cites the good response from foreign investors to the Kuala Lumpur city center projects, adding that places like Sabah, Langkawi and Penang also have so much potential to attract these investors.

Looking forward, the football and rugby enthusiasts plan to make a bigger impact on Asia, with future expansion to South America and Europe.

Premivdran will be one of the speakers at The Edge Investment Forum on Real Estate 2008 at E&O Hotel, Petaling Jaya, on May 10. He will touch on the outlook of the Malaysian property market and whether it is time to exit. The forum is exclusive for readers of The Edge.

Cove Story

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home office can be planned, to give the residents privacy.

Those heading for the other three levels of the villa can choose to take the passenger lift or the main lift. Cars can either be parked in the covered car porch or be "lifted" to the private car park two levels down.

The layout has been designed with the privacy of the occupants in mind. Outside, there is nothing pretentious about the villa," explains Lee. "There will be two bungalows, one for six to seven passengers (it will also fit a wheelchair) and another for cars, the latter being the one that will lead to a covered garage on the lower level of the villa. We anticipate that the residents will have a fleet of luxurious cars so there will be dedicated car lovers. With the covered garage that will accommodate four to five cars, owners will be able to even sleep with their cars" quips Lee.

Level 3 comprises the main areas of living and dining rooms, which enjoy commanding views of the city and tree tops and an infinity pool. Complementing these spaces will be the dry and wet kitchens, and a walk-in wine cellar.

A 8m by 18m swimming pool extends from the length of the living spaces, with a private, semi- enclosed pool pavilion and the master bedroom with "boxing" on either side. There is a private deck in front of the bedroom, with uninterrupted views of Penang and the sea. A master bath room sits on one side, with direct access to the swimming pool on the other.

Another level is where the more private floor, as Lee calls it, is located, with three en suite bedrooms and individual private deck/balcony. Here will be a family room that opens onto the audio-visual/entertainment room. The rooms for maids, drivers and laundry and the private garage will be located on this level.

The lowest level opens directly onto the garden. There will be a private sitting room outside the lift lobby and this leads to a guest room suite, a home spa with Jacuzzi and a massage room. The highlight of this level is a spacious multi-purpose room, which allows for barbequing by the individual buyer. "The space can be transformed into a private gym, more bedrooms, a private art gallery or even a self-contained apartment," suggests Lee.

No hard sell

Any bid to hard sell Clearwater Estate can prove counterproductive, and this is something Lee would attest to, given her profile as a property tycoon herself. Quality service and pampering would be king, and it is exactly what the Clearwater Estate marketing strategy is all about.

Since registration for Clearwater Estate was opened in late March, Lee says "more than 100" parties have signed up their interest in the five villas, which she hopes to officially launch on Aug 6, 2008 — an auspicious date no doubt.

"We will definitely not hard sell. Our experienced team members will be making appointments with all those who have shown interest in the project to work with them on their individual needs; from the finishing to the layout. We are adopting a very friendly, not moody, approach. We are being very, very, very, very personal," discloses Lee.

In short, what Lee is offering at Clearwater Estate is a high-end home complete with detailed customisation, a feature that the well heeled will welcome.

For an idea of what Clearwater Estate has in store for buyers, Lee will be converting one of the two existing buildings on the land into a show gallery. "Clearwater Estate will be completely different from Clearwater Residence; it is going to be a super boutique development," she promises.

It is clear that Malaysia’s developers of high-end homes are indeed walking the extra mile. They simply have no choice. This Datin Lee will attest to.

There seems to be no stopping this young mother of a four-month-old baby. She and her partners are now busy sourcing for landbank, ...
Icing on the cake for Zerin CEO

Wins award for playing instrumental role in landmark deal

ZERIN Properties chief executive officer Previdran Sahbarganinhe has won the inaugural Real Estate, Facilities, Projects (REP) Outstanding Individuals in Industry Awards 2007 in the real estate investment category.

Previdran is the only Malaysian selected from among 12 winners across nine categories. The winners are from a wider pool of 50 nominees from across the Asia Pacific region.

He is recognised for being instrumental in a landmark hospitality transaction in 2007 — the sale of Four Seasons Resort, Langkawi to Saudi Arabian Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal and his entry into the Asian tourism market.

The property, sold at US$1.29 million (RM460 million), enables the buyers to leverage the value of proposed private villas on the property. The deal is said to have marked one of the biggest forays by a high profile international investor in Malaysia.

The judges in awarding

Previdran said: "The sale has the capability to change the scope of economic development in the region. It definitely necessitated a certain vision, comprehension and sustained efforts to convince an investor to foray into a new market." The awards, which include awards in real estate strategy and real estate transactions, are the first in the region to recognise the professionals who build, design and manage buildings.

REP Magazine's co-publisher Claire Suki said that all too often exceptional individual contribution is overlooked in the rush to award the building itself.

Previdran when contacted said, "I think as a Malaysian, I am really proud and honoured. To win it was a superb feeling for Malaysia as it proves that we are ready to make Malaysia an international real estate destination with quality projects and properties." He acknowledged that it would not have been possible but for his all Malaysian team, who are experts in this field.

Zerin Properties, formed in 2002, is registered and licensed real estate agency with the Board of Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents, Malaysia.

Within a span of two years, it opened offices in Singapore, Sydney and New Delhi, providing its clients with a global reach.