

Building Greener Homes

With a track record spanning more than three decades in the property development sector, Mutiara Goodyear Development has bullish sentiments for 2010.



Hamidon: A definitive vision for the company

BACKED BY EXPERIENCE IN

urban and town planning, Hamidon Abdullah took over the mantle of Executive Chairman of Mutiara Goodyear Development Bhd in 2008. He has a definitive vision for the company and in his own words, is currently rewriting the agenda on the company's direction and is ensuring that there is a stronger focus on building greener homes.

Outlook for the year

Having just passed the half-year mark for the year, Hamidon has a positive outlook for the rest of 2010. 'The year so far has been good. The last two years since the new shareholders came on board and I took on my current position have been busy for us.' He explained that under the previous management, the properties developed targeted at medium to just slightly above-medium markets. But over the past year, Hamidon has redirected the agenda to now focus on the medium to upper-end market. 'The first half of the year was particularly busy, as we have been engaging the authorities and are putting four major projects on the market this year. There is significant work and we paid a lot of attention to the details in our upcoming properties.'

Clearly denoting a shift in the Mutiara Goodyear business model, these new projects include a mix of medium, medium-high and high-end offerings. 'We have four

very good projects totalling RM1.6 billion. I would classify these as good projects as the details have been highly thought out and these details are not just limited to things like high ceilings and types of finishing but also how the product interacts with the buyers in respect to the kind of lifestyle they desire.

'For the six months of this year, we have been very engaged in detailing all our projects and one by one, they are being sold. We have our showcase development Nadayu in Melawati and even though it's only been offered via a soft launch, we have achieved a 60% take-up rate. Based on our registration list, which is building up very credibly, we are optimistic about this development.' This property averages RM6 million per bungalow and the group is looking at officially launching Nadayu in July.

Plans in the pipeline

The second half of the year will see more Nadayu products coming through with super links and semi-detached units coming on-stream to complement the bungalows which have been released.

Hamidon updates that within the next six months, Mutiara Goodyear will also release their Kajang offering of a gated community strategically located next

to a golf course. This will comprise of super links, semi-detached houses and bungalows and then at a later date, a small commercial development. At the moment, the site work is almost completed and they expect the showhouses to be up in August.

'We are also constructing just under 300 units of apartments in Bandar Sunway and these are in the vicinity of the university colleges. There is a shortage of housing for students and the kind of market we are looking at; there are people who invest to rent to students. Currently, student

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accommodation in Sunway is not exactly the best.' He elaborates that these offerings are more amenable and have an emphasis on safety. In addition to the number of Malaysian parents who have registered to buy, there is a keen interest from foreign investors as well.

Another development that is targeted for release in December or early 2011 is a very high-end development in Bukit

Gambir, Penang. This is pending certain approvals that are still forthcoming. 'This site is on a hill and overlooks the Penang Bridge, Georgetown Centre and the open body of sea will position us as a serious developer in Penang.'

Taking a responsible approach to development

Hamidon stresses that while some developers tend to wash their hands off a project once the keys have been handed over to the buyer, Mutiara Goodyear takes a more responsible approach. 'We stay involved for at least six months to watch out for the variations and adaptations that need to be put in place to make our projects more liveable and conducive to the living conditions there. This is something very different from our previous approach.'

When asked as to what their renewed green direction was, Hamidon replies in a matter-of-fact manner, 'To me, this is a no-brainer. It is about putting your head in the right place in the context of today and it need not be driven by regulations, incentives, authorities and the government. It should not be driven from external sources and must come from the developer itself; not because it is a selling point and the authorities would like you to. Let's be responsible without being told to be. This is not a fashion statement.'

He highlights that a green outlook is something that the group has been actively executing in its projects. 'When we launched the Serai Saujana property five years ago, we incorporated elements such as collection rainwater, harnessing solar power and we even took into consideration the orientation of the building. At that point, the green building index wasn't the buzzword that it is today. Moving forward, we not only incorporated this into all our properties but also improved upon it because technology is a moving art.'

Exciting plans ahead

'Many people flip when they see Nadayu's price tag of RM6 million but nonetheless we have a good registration list. I do believe my product is a cut above what is





available in that area, but as a developer, I am prepared to wait and let the market develop itself. Nadayu is one such area where we are creating a name for ourselves. It is our flagship development and it will be done and done well. We will pace ourselves and build stage by stage with the focus on community development.'

The Penang project is an important milestone for Mutiara Goodyear as it is their first joint venture with a local bank (Affin Investment). 'We want to make a statement of what a high-end development is. I am not trying to benchmark against my competition but I am only in a race against myself and

I want to define what a good high-end product is all about.'

The group has a total landbank of just over 1,000 acres, while other projects are being conceptualised. Hamidon felt it was premature to share details on this at this juncture. 'At this point in time, we are concentrating on our projects in the Klang Valley and Penang.'

Ensuring brand staying power

In order to achieve this, Hamidon reiterates that the group via its offerings wants to understand buyers' expectations when they are buying a new home.

He believes in Malaysia the property market is changing and buyers are more discerning, they know what quality is from their experience overseas and want these elements to be incorporated into the properties that they buy here.

'We want to emphasise on living conditions, given volumetric space of the unit itself, what you can do inside the house, given the environment that you create within the house and the surrounding areas. In so far as that is concerned, the detailing and the quality thereof is very important. Naturally, Mutiara Goodyear as a developer wants to give this but of course we are also a business entity and we need to take profit into consideration as well. As such, there needs to be a good balance between profit and what you give to customers. The formula is there for us and it is consistent with our objective. We want to make our mark as a very serious property developer who gives quality products and in doing so we do not short-change anybody.' 