

KEN BANGSAR STRIKES GOLD... TWICE!

NEW STRAITS TIMES

Written by S.C. Cheah

Apr 30, 2010

WHERE it shines is behind the doors of each of its apartments, where developer Ken Holdings Bhd has taken great pains and expense to offer a truly over-the-top quality product.

Priced from RM1.6 million to RM3.6 million (or RM800psf to RM1,200psf) for standard units with 500sq ft to 2,700sq ft of space, it may seem expensive compared with other projects in the vicinity, but as Ken's executive director Sam Tan C.S. explains, the difference is like a Mercedes and a Bentley - it is the detailed craftsmanship of the latter that makes it all the more expensive and special.

In Ken Bangsar's case, all the units are equipped with top-notch Dornbracht sanitary fittings from Germany, double-laminated bullet-proof floor to ceiling windows and two-foot by two-foot high quality marble floor tiles. Even the bathrooms in the common areas, like the swimming pool, use Dornbracht rain showers that cost over RM8,000 a piece! What really distinguishes Ken Bangsar, though, is its many green features that won it Singapore's BCA Green Mark GoldPlus Award (for highrise residential development) - the first developer in the country to win the coveted award - as well as the local Green Building Index (GBI) Gold Award this month.

"Ken Bangsar incorporates numerous green features that allow it to reduce energy and water bills, minimise its potential negative impact on the environment and improve indoor quality for its residents," said Ken's chairman and managing director Kenny Tan Boon Kang.

Among the environmentally friendly specifications is a specially designed water feature that cools the building's double-volume lobby as well as the lift lobby. Both sides of this lobby also feature wooden wall panels with openings that allow the breeze to enter while a waterfall separating it and the spacious foyer further cools the place so that no air-conditioning is required. For the windows, low-E (emissability) glass costing five times more than normal glass has been specified for its ability to cut down heat by as much as 39 per cent.

This means residents can stand near a window in bright sunlight but not feel the heat. There is also a heat pump to harvest hot air from air-conditioning compressors so that hot water can be produced in the toilets. Rainwater too is harvested to water plants, while energy-saving light bulbs have been employed throughout the premises.



What makes the project all the more unique is that when Ken bought the property for a reported RM15 million in 2005 from Pengurusan Danaharta Nasional Bhd, a special-purpose vehicle set up in the wake of the Asian financial crisis in the late 90s to buy up from the country's financial institutions their non-performing loans and collaterals, it was designed as an office block. Under Ken's hands, it was transformed into a high-end luxury serviced apartment comprising 76 standard units and four triplex penthouses with a collective gross development value of RM120 million.

So far, about 60 per cent of the units have been sold, including one of the cavernous penthouses that range in size from 7,000sq ft to 8,500sq ft. Priced from RM7 million, its privileged owners have the opportunity to sit in their XXL-size living rooms and gaze at the KL city skyline through 27ft high double-glass windows.

Each penthouse comes with centralised air-conditioning, a swimming pool complete with a spacious deck on the top level, a 900sq ft master bedroom and four other bedrooms excluding a double-maid's room.

During my visit to Ken Bangsar, work was ongoing to turn one of the penthouses into a show unit complete with chandeliers.

The already completed project also accommodates three lower ground floor car-parking levels (with two bays allocated to standard units) and a medium-size gym with treadmills similar to those found in the world's most expensive hotel, the Burj Al Arab in Dubai.