

Join The Village people

New complex is planning to be much more than somewhere locals and tourists go to shop

IT'S hard to put into words ... but sometimes you just get a feeling about a place. You walk through an opening and the sight that greets you "clicks", you feel good just for being there.

That's how I felt when I visited the visual delight that is The Village shopping centre which is due to open later this month, writes John Davids.

The centre is at the junction of Sukhumvit and Soi Chaiyapruk just a short hop away from Jomtien Beach. I've been living off Chaiyapruk-2 for the past nine months and each time I reached the traffic lights at Sukhumvit I've been wondering what they were

up to there on the site of a former hotel.

In truth, there wasn't much to report in terms of visual change as the developers deliberately worked from "back to front" so as not to give away too many secrets. They retained much of the hotel's original façade and structure.

However, early last month I took a personal tour with one of the men behind the project, Ian Stuart, and what I saw impressed me.

So it's little wonder then that two established names from the property field have decided to take shop space in the 100+ unit centre.

The two are Tudor Villas, the property developers with strong UK links, and Town & Country, the

broker/developers headquartered in Pattaya Tai.

Tudor wanted additional high profile space to promote its Tudor Court Condominium project as the condo's showroom is on building land which does not get a lot of passing traffic.

Adam Kuhl will be in charge of the Tudor shop. He explained: "Our main issue was trying to find somewhere that offered the potential of a lot of footfall but was not going to break our marketing budget with huge amounts of key money, deposits and monthly rental.

"I had already been in touch with The Village regarding a small business for my wife, so knew the

centre quite well and persuaded my director Simon Ditchburn to take a look at it.

"We were both really impressed with the layout and design concept and fully appreciated that people would actually enjoy shopping here, rather than just going through the function of getting the weekly supplies. The other main potential benefit we could see was that many tourists and tour buses would be visiting and that is just the kind of market we are seeking to open up."

He added: "Also, the fact that The Village management had decided not to implement the controversial key money charge and kept their rental rates at a





very sensible level was a major influence to our decision to book space there.

“We can have our fully fitted shop unit for eight or nine months for the same cost as a display booth for one month at other shopping centres!

“Our unit will soon be complete and although we will be primarily promoting Tudor Court, we will also be working in conjunction with a few more developers so we can offer a good range of property to customers.”

In the case of Town & Country they already have offices in Pattaya Tai and in Second Road at the Nova Platinum Hotel. They see their unit as more of a showcase

for the business as opposed to an out-and-out sales office.

“Our shop at The Village will be a showcase displaying our projects The Residence, The Meadows and Whispering Palms,” said T&C managing director Cees Cuijpers. “We will have a member of staff there to take notes; hand out information and link referrals and enquiries to one of our agencies. So, its main purpose is to boost interest in our products.”

He added: “We have been involved with roadshow expos at Carrefour; Royal Garden and Big C festival centre. Those were usually for 10-14 days and they have been quite effective for us at times.

“We see The Village project as

an ongoing roadshow. Because it will offer forms of entertainment such as fashion shows, magic, music, dance contests and the like plus some nice restaurants and pubs, I think this venue could become a destination.

“A destination that could draw quite a bit of attention for local residents as well as from tourists.”

Being part of a shopping complex is a new venture for Town & Country. Does it represent something of a gamble? Cees said he feels that prices to rent space at The Village are such that, apart from the cost of the shop fit out, his company has little to lose by giving the idea a try. What The

● **Turn to page 68**

What makes The Village different

- Behind the shops lies a floating market of 30-40 boats. The water flows around restaurants, the entertainment area and a separate bar area.
- There will be entertainment with live music on stage every day.
- There is no “zoning” so shoppers will not find all the clothes shops together, for example.
- Other shopping areas closer to the city centre have no room for coach parking (with the exception of Mike’s). There is room at The Village and the management there is keen to encourage tourist coaches to visit “provided we can make it so they don’t all turn up at the same time,” said Ian.
- Much thought has been given to accessibility for those in wheelchairs and parents pushing prams. Ramps can be found everywhere.
- All people working on the site will be The Village employees – not sub-contractors.
- There will be two children’s adventure playgrounds.
- You can even take the family dog along as there will be kenneling available.





Join The Village people



● From page 67

Village offers in terms of diversity gives it every chance of success, he said.

I asked Ian Stuart to tell me more about The Village. Ian sounds like an Englishman but is actually from Andorra, the principality in the Pyrenees mountains between France and Spain.

"It's a totally different concept compared to other shopping malls," he said. "At other malls people go to shop and maybe eat or be entertained. Here the concept is in reverse. It was a priority for us to get the restaurant areas let."

There are several eateries lined up for The Village but each has to specialise in a different type

of cuisine. "We have an area set aside for a supermarket but we have turned some groups down because they want to include a restaurant in their plans," said Ian. "That would have put them in competition with our restaurants and we don't want that."

The Village is keen to avoid too many shops of the same type – "I know one mall that has five opticians on the ground floor," said Ian. This means that, as far as The Village is concerned, no more slots are available at present to real estate agents or developers. One of each is the general rule of thumb.

"We want diversity," said Ian. "We don't want this to be like everywhere else. We reject 70-80

per cent of the approaches made to us because we don't want lots of the same type of shop. Also, we will advise on things like ... is the area prospective owners are thinking of renting too big or too small for their type of enterprise to be profitable. We're retailers ourselves, not just developers, so we have a view about what works and what doesn't.

"This place is designed to encourage start-ups. We believe in making it easy for people with good ideas to get going here."

Prices and terms at The Village seem to back this claim. It's Bt750 per sq m plus services on the ground floor (Bt500 on the upper floor). A typical small unit





would be 24 sq m. All budding entrepreneurs need to pay is one month's deposit and one month's rent in advance plus any fitting out fees. They even get a month free just a short way into the lease. And, if that's not attractive enough, the management is prepared to consider not charging rent but letting shop owners get started on "consignment". This means The Village levies a percentage of the money taken each day.

"We know people can make money here," said Ian. "We don't expect shop owners to stay on consignment for long. We are confident they will find it cheaper to pay rent rather than give us a percentage of their take. But

consignment is a way of taking the fear factor out of starting up."

The Village will be run along democratic lines. Shop owners will form part of a 10-man committee which will make decisions about how the complex is run. For example, the committee will have its say in the type of entertainment that will be offered there on the big stage area to the rear of the complex.

It's a place designed with the family very much in mind. Somewhere to while away hours not minutes (see differences panel on previous spread).

The Village hopes to open for business around Christmas time. It should be an event – or, more accurately, the first of many! Ω



Royal Cliff Garden Suite



Beautiful renovated apartment in an exclusive development on Pratamnak hill !!



Enjoy your living and nice 360 degrees of view with 192 Sq.m. of living area, 2 bed, 3 bath and European kitchen. Comes fully furnished on a high floor in foreigner ownership.



Only 22,000,000 THB



Looking to buy property in Pattaya?
Try us!!



NORRAMON REAL ESTATE CO.,LTD.

CONTACT: 081 6343014, 038 233457-5

WWW.NORRAMONREALESTATE.COM

WR Vinyl

Windows and doors for life



WR

Certified THYSSEN window fabricator



55/5 Moo 7, Road 36, Nongplalai, Banglamung, Chonburi 20150
Mobile : 081-658 6830, Fax: 038-241 844, www.wrvinyl.com, info@wrvinyl.com