

Taking an UNCONVENTIONAL APPROACH



KSK Land managing director and KSK Group CEO Joanne Kua

KSK Land seeks to redefine the idea of branded residences with its debut project 8 Conlay

Kuala Lumpur is full of stories. From its turn-of-the-century identity as a tin mining town to the modern metropolis studded with skyscrapers that it is today — generations of people have added to the layers of its storied past. The best part of all is that the city is still growing, with new developments continually altering its cityscape.

By the end of next year, the unusual architecture of 8 Conlay — named after the street it is located in — will add to the colour and cacophony of KL's concrete jungle. Situated between Kuala Lumpur city centre and the bustling Golden Triangle, this integrated development will comprise three towers — five-star Kempinski Hotel, the first in Malaysia, and two twisted structures devoted exclusively to branded serviced residences called YOO8 serviced by Kempinski — sitting atop a four-storey lifestyle retail podium.

8 Conlay, designed by architect Hud Bakar of RSP

Architects Kuala Lumpur with landscaping by Bangkok-based landscape architect Pok Kobkongsanti of TROP Studio, is the inaugural project of KSK Land. Wholly owned by investment holding company KSK Group Bhd, KSK Land was founded in 2013 with the singular vision to craft bespoke properties that prioritise design, craftsmanship and lifestyle. But this is more than lip service paid in a typical property brochure — the dedication to design and style is very much part of the entire development's DNA, going beyond what looks beautiful to what actually works for the eventual dweller.

This is especially evident in the way the two branded residential towers have been planned, beginning with the choice of designer. YOO, which was established in 1999 by leading property developer John Hitchcox and celebrated designer Philippe Starck, has a vision to enrich lives with extraordinary living spaces.

Named the world's largest branded residences brand

by London-based global real estate services provider Savills in 2018, YOO has worked with a team of celebrity designers to create distinctive designer-branded residential and hotel projects in over 36 countries throughout the world. Getting YOO on board was an inspired decision and speaks of the commitment of the KSK Land team to provide a new experience for KL.

Similarly, the Berlin-born and now Geneva-based Kempinski's reputation in the global hospitality scene is unparalleled, making it the ideal candidate to be part of such a meaningful project. In addition to its 260 rooms and 300 suites, the 8 Conlay Kempinski Hotel Kuala Lumpur — the catalyst for the 3.95-acre 8 Conlay masterplan — will feature a range of gastronomic destinations, most notably the world's first-ever premium durian hotel lounge.

Through colourful and flavourful gastronomic trails, the five-star luxury hotel will celebrate modern Malaysia

8 Conlay's three soaring structures comprise the five-star Kempinski Hotel, and twin twisted structures devoted exclusively to YOO8 serviced by Kempinski — which, upon completion, is set to be the world's tallest spiralled twin residential towers



Hoppen's aesthetic for her urban-themed units combine neutral tones with darker hues to create a more intense look and feel



Within a multi-tiered park in the sky that evokes Balinese rice terraces that boasts an elevated jogging path, resting nooks and KL's best views, a light-flooded library — with innovative shelving, greenery and a wall-sized picture window — provides an inspired escape while remaining close to the elements



and its one-of-a-kind spirit, positioning the hotel as a destination in Kuala Lumpur to meet, work and spend time together. Kempinski will also provide the branded residences with a variety of services, including valet, concierge and doorman, as well as à la carte services such as laundry and housekeeping.

"What I really like about Kempinski, Europe's oldest luxury hotelier with 122 years of history, is the sense of uniqueness you get from every single hotel in its portfolio. There's a sense of place relating to the city it is in, as well as a sense of where the owner is from and an unwavering idea of luxury hospitality. And I think that's very important when you talk about branded residences and the services that they render," says KSK Land managing director Joanne Kua, who is also the CEO of the KSK Group. "Design plays a very important role in branded residences as it defines what the spaces look like so the dwellers can make their own memories and stories there. Through

We feel like the conductor in an orchestra. All these talented people are parts of this incredible ensemble and 8 Conlay is going to be a wonderful piece of music. — Kua

our conversations with YOO, we understand how to build vertical communities and how they can collide with each other in various public spaces."

Exclusive design concepts mark the identities of the two branded residences — Hong Kong-based Steve Leung brings his Asian aesthetic to Tower A while British celebrity designer Kelly Hoppen's creative handprint can be seen in Tower B. This gives potential buyers a wide range of options to choose a home from, a home that really suits them and their individual sensibilities.

For example, as Leung's style is evocative of a modern urban space as well as a tranquil retreat, YOO8 Tower A exudes a sense of calm, bringing together the best of modern design and refined city living. With interiors designed to reflect Leung's two exclusive concepts, Wood and Water, YOO8 Tower A's 564 serviced residences range from 700 sq ft to 1,308 sq ft across 61 floors, setting a retail benchmark of RM3,260 per sq ft. Some of Leung's inspirations include batik fabric while his childhood in Hong Kong has infused his designs with a strong sense of space.

Radiating timeless elegance and Hoppen's quintessentially English style, YOO8 Tower B appeals to the inner cosmopolitan with its understated glamour and aesthetic vision of leisure and luxury. With interiors designed to reflect the South African-born designer's linear style in two exclusive concepts, Spring and Urban, YOO8 Tower B's 498 serviced residences range from 705 sq ft to 1,328 sq ft across 56 floors, setting a retail benchmark of RM3,350 per sq ft.

Branded residences are not new into Malaysia. There are a number of luxury hotels in the larger KL area that comprise both hotel and residence elements. In establishing itself as a truly branded residence, 8 Conlay sets itself apart by ensuring that the term extends to everything from the personalised service its dwellers enjoy right up to details like custom-designed curtains and unique light fixtures.

"Let's go back to the definition of branded residences. You have to think about every single detail," Kua explains. "That's why we don't only have one partner. We have a hotel partner, a design partner, a landscape architect — all these people are very important to us. When customers buy a branded residence, they buy into over 100 years of luxury hospitality but, at the same time, they are also assured that the design of the home takes into account how they live their lives, and that every detail has been accounted for.

"It also means that everything in the residence is designed for them. Hoppen is also a product designer and she's done the bathtubs together with Apaiser and the sanitary fixtures with Crosswater, brands that have been established for many years. Quality is very important but everything is like a collectible because you won't find it elsewhere," she adds.

The other aspect of branded residences is its value retention. "Just like how people might acquire a Patek Philippe for their son or daughter, they would buy a unit at 8 Conlay to pass on to the next generation ... you're not going to find a place like this anywhere else. There are 400 branded residences all over the world and only 120 are in Asia-Pacific and there are limited numbers so close to the city centre. That's what a lot of our owners understand."

Maintenance is also a major factor to consider when projecting a given property's future value, and partnering with Kempinski puts this concern to rest.

Because 8 Conlay is KSK Land's debut development, it was imperative that the team got all their ducks in a row before going public with the project. But the benefit of coming from an industry outside of property development and hospitality — Kua's father, Tan Sri Kua Sian Kooi, founded Kurnia Insurance in the 1980s — is a relatively unconventional approach to piecing the project together with multiple partners, all of whom are experts in their respective fields.

"I very much appreciate that we have so many talented individuals on board but the great part is that they really understand that there needs to be a unifying story that ties everything together," Kua smiles. "As the developer of a project like this, we feel like the conductor in an orchestra. All these talented people are parts of this incredible ensemble and 8 Conlay is going to be a wonderful piece of music. That, I think, is our story."

For more information,
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