

elite escape

“If you don’t want to travel first class, get to the back of the bus,” declared Gary Player at the launch of The Malkai - an enticing investment opportunity for property buyers seeking a superior lifestyle as much as a luxury second home

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NEED TO KNOW: THE BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN THE MALKAI

- * You will have full use of the hotel’s facilities including restaurants, private beach club, spa, Kid’s Club and Gary Player Course and Club house
- * Freehold title and no restrictions on foreign ownership
- * Oman is tax free and has no restrictions on repatriating funds

- * Immediate residency visas for buyers, including extended family
- * The option to include the villas or suites into the hotel rental pool
- * Low density development. Only 10% of the 216 acres will be built up

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On the same day the Olympic torch passed through the Omani capital, Muscat, a new flame in the Middle Eastern real estate market was lit – that of The Malkai. As a joint collaboration between Adrian Zecha, hotelier par excellence, Gary Player, international golfing legend and Pankaj Khimji, owner of The Chedi, its credentials are second to none. And, if you're looking for an escape from the busyness of the Emirates, this is certainly an option to consider with plenty of added benefits.

Launched as an exclusive community (on 14 April 2008) the development will comprise 101 four-bedroom signature villas for sale, 92 bedroom suites as well as a boutique hotel offering 41 luxury suites. The lead design has been carried out by architect Reda Amalou of AW2 Paris, who reinforced the project's over-riding ideal. "We're not designing or selling real estate, we're selling a lifestyle. And with that, the idea was to present fully furnished properties which left nothing to chance. While clearly contemporary we wanted to remain rooted in the essence of the Omani architecture and tradition." What this translates as is an extensive use of screens, walls, shadows and light throughout the design which is a direct reference to the rich Islamic architectural past. The use of outside spaces as extensions to the villas and suites, the shaded courtyards with their pools will also contribute to creating a unique experience. Similarly the narrow lanes, walkways and paths will form a world of shade and water leading to the suites. The traditional narrow spaces will open up to stunning views and perspectives across vast expanses of green and the desert.

If you're familiar with The Chedi or The Setai, Miami, for example, you will instantly recognize trademark features and indeed the retained management company is GHM which bears Adrian Zecha's inimitable touch for understated chic and unrivalled comfort.

The Malkai (whose name is an amalgam of initials from the owner's family) is located in the midst of palm and date

groves approximately 3km from the beach and within easy reach of Muscat and the dramatic Al Hajar Mountains and the vast desert landscape to the sea. Approximate pricing is currently set at USD\$1.3 million for the 2 bedroom suites and USD\$4.4million for the villas. All of the villas and suites will be interior designed by the renowned Jaya Ibrahim and come fully furnished, while each property will be landscaped and feature large swimming pools designed by Karl Prinic of Intaran. The idea is that by the time you are given your keys to the properties, they will be ready to live in immediately.

Gary Player's involvement in the project is obviously an added bonus for the budding amateur golfer and his 9 hole course will be a first for Oman. With over 250 golf course designs around the world during the last thirty years, Gary Player Designs brings a unique perspective to The Malkai project. The concept behind it is that of a desert oasis with the centre piece and focal point being a large lake separating holes six and seven. Player's own decision to commit to this project was because he endorsed the high standard of living surrounding the project. More than that he also felt an immediate bond with Pankaj Khimji who spoke to him about 'his dream' for The Malkai. Said Player, "Every successful person has a dream but more than that Pankaj wanted quality which is what my company stands for." He also had a more personal reason to promote the project. At the golf course he is hoping to set up a Junior Programme and declared that it would be great if Oman could produce the next Tiger Woods. "Champions come out of nowhere and this could well be the perfect opportunity." Let's hope he's right about that.

At The Malkai what you will be buying into is not just the combined dream and integrity of a team of professionals at the top of their game but the idea of living in a country club with all its elitist connotations, a certain uniformity of perfection and a project which will put Oman on the world property market. The project is due to be completed in late 2010.

