

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Wah Mie Confident of a Bright Future

Photo by Louis Pang Studio

Wah Mie Group is one of the largest property developers in Sabah. Its home base is in Sandakan, where its name is popular among the locals. In 1995, Wah Mie Group began its operation in Kota Kinabalu, developing Taman Indah Permai, which has now turned into a vibrant housing estate.

From its humble beginnings, the Wah Mie Group has blossomed into one of the major property developers in Sabah and has contributed immensely towards Sabah State's real estate development. The Group runs its operations from 2 offices – its headquarters in Sandakan and a branch office located in Kota Kinabalu.

The Group began its development known as Taman Sentosa in Sandakan. In the last 30 over years, the Group has built more than 20,000 units of housing of various types, from low-cost apartments to affordable homes, luxurious detached and semi-detached houses as well as multi-storey luxury condominiums.

The Group takes great pride in its successful completion of 296 units of Double-Storey Terrace Houses in Taman

Indah Permai, Kota Kinabalu, which were built specifically for students of Universiti Malaysia Sabah as students' quarters - all within a tight time-frame of only 12 months.

The Group's Managing Director, Quek Siew Hau and his Deputy Managing Director, Fong Kin Wui and Executive Directors led their Senior Management team to meet with Property Hunter magazine for an exclusive interview for the benefit and knowledge of the reading public keen on property matters in Sabah on Wednesday June 19, 2013 at Wah Mie Group Kota Kinabalu office.

The Wah Mie Group is currently embarking on the following developments:

Kota Kinabalu

1. Terrace Houses called Taman Rimbain phases at Menggatal North.
2. Exclusive Detached Residences called D'Ambience at Taman Bukit Sepangar (Completed with OC)

Sandakan

1. Taman Indah Jaya (Annexe) – condominium development.
2. Taman SejatiUjana – Apartments, Terrace, Commercial Shoplots and Hypermarket.
3. Taman Mawar Terrace Houses.





Quek Siew Hau - Managing Director

of founders has recently been fully executed. New development concepts are conceived by the well-educated second generation, assisted and supported by the first generation founders.

The Group is continually strengthened with a good management team in over thirty five years history. We believe in harnessing the skills, knowledge and creativity of our human resources. We consult and lead our professional managers to continue to improve and overcome all challenges.

The Group's extensive knowledge, experience and capabilities have allowed us to continually innovate new products while maintaining quality and timely delivery regardless of market conditions. The Group pledges Quality on all its products for all market segments. To achieve this goal, various programs have been put in place to continually educate our staff at every level so as to better equip them for their jobs and see them through future growth, thus enabling them to contribute more towards the Group's future.



Fong Kin Wai - Deputy Managing Director

Q: What advice would you give to young developers new to the business and marketplace?

A: It is difficult today to enter into the property development business with rising costs from land and other expenses unless it is your family's land and with strong financial backing. For new developers in Sabah, make sure you are financially strong and capable of sound cash flow management. Don't be too greedy and don't cheat people. Be more sincere to your buyers and deliver what you promised. Try to get the best people to work for you and form a strong management team.

Q: What do you think of the Sabah property market and its directions?

A: As mentioned earlier, with the booming oil and gas businesses, the outlook is good and positive. The mainland Chinese are venturing abroad. They are in

Q: Wah Mie Group has a long history that dates back to its inception since 1979 and is one of the most outstanding developers in Sabah with a good reputation. Can you share with us how was Wah Mie Group formed?

A: The founding members of Wah Mie were active in the timber and plantation industries in Sandakan. They were visionaries to venture into the property development business with their strong financial resources derived from the timber and plantation businesses. At that point in time, property development was still at an infancy stage, not the 'in-thing' in Sabah, but they saw its future potential.

Q: Who were the pioneers of Wah Mie Group?

A: There are a few families – the Fong family, the Quek family, the Kong family, the Chan family, the Seah family.

Q: That's unusual, as Chinese business structure is usually centred under one clan family control.

A: This is not the first time that someone has commented on this matter. People are so amazed that different clans, the Teo Chew, Hakka and Cantonese can work so well together like 1Malaysia ahead of its time until today.

Q: The public noticed that Wah Mie is planning on building luxurious condominium and shopping mall development projects. Is this trend a sign that the second generation of Wah Mie Group shareholding families are implementing their vision on assuming management leadership of the group? How are decision makings done in Wah Mie Group in view of its various shareholdings?

A: With a well thought Succession Plan implemented years ago, the second generation has been acquiring vast experiences with the company as Directors for many years and the succession from the first generation



Johnny Lim Ted Hing - Executive Director

Q: Is Wah Mie Group's management receptive to green building standards?

A: Yes, green concept is a very saleable idea today. It is a 'must' today, given the global scenario of climate changes. We are working with our consultants on green design concepts and landscaping in our future projects.

Q: Will Wah Mie be expanding its development operations outside of its Sandakan – Kota Kinabalu land banks?

A: We have enough land to sustain our core business plans for many years to come. Together with our associated companies, we have about 1,000 acres of land bank in Sabah. With this, we are focused on our operations in Sabah.

Q: Do you see the influx of non-Sabah based developers posing serious business competition?

A: We see them as complementing our property development business. To a lot of people, it looks like competition. We take it as complementing our business in setting new benchmark prices. They bring money in to create a property boom and make many other things possible, which is good for us. We are confident of our abilities and capabilities with our strong management team.

Why are they coming? They see the opportunities, for example the oil and gas sector after the oil palm businesses, especially in Kota Kinabalu. With the influx of big petroleum corporations, their contractors and suppliers require offices and business premises and these big companies provide their staff with good accommodation or living allowance support that will benefit the property market as a whole.



Chan Ka Tsung - Executive Director

Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Johor, Singapore and other international cities buying properties and many of them pay by cash. With this and coupled with tourism growth potential, the palm oil people buying properties in blocks and rows as in the past and with a growing young workforce population in Sabah, the property market will continue to sustain.

Moving forward, the Wah Mie Group is committed to be environmentally conscious in all our future developments and strives to be recognised as a Premier Property Developer, delivering quality products and excellent customer service for the benefit of the Group and the betterment of the community at large in Sabah, Malaysia.



Seah Sen Onn - Executive Director