



ABOVE Name recognition linked to branded luxury property developments such as that of The Ritz-Carlton Residence, Bangkok adds to the value of these properties especially in the eyes of foreign buyers.

Magnolia Residence, the first condominium to be built at the ICONSIAM complex, has already sold out. The Residences at Mandarin Oriental, which started sales on October 29, 2015, still has some units available in the 50 million baht to 420 million baht range. One of the condominium's leading attractions is that it is on freehold land. "Also our property is the first super-luxury riverside residence under the Mandarin Oriental brand in the region," Visit said.

Using a branded management company to guarantee international quality service at luxury condominiums is a new trend in Bangkok, which usually fetches a seven per cent premium on the properties. "Brand names claim to add to the value rather than the salability, but for foreign sales where the Thai developer may not be known they certainly help as well," said Landy, of Colliers International. Since brand name management services such as a Ritz-Carlton, Mandarin Oriental and Four Seasons don't come for free, luxury properties that don't use them should, in theory, be a bit cheaper. This is the case for the Marque Sukhumvit and Tela Thonglor but is not the case for 98 Wireless, which is not branded and yet is asking the highest price on the market.

While 98 Wireless is being managed by Sansiri, it has used the brand name Ralph Lauren for all its interior design work and has also hired Quintessentially Service, a personal luxury lifestyle service from the UK,

to handle the daily needs of residents, such as arranging flights and organising dinner parties. 98 Wireless is also aiming at the Mainland Chinese market, which is still a somewhat untested market in Bangkok's super luxury segment. While mainland Chinese have been buying mid-level properties in Bangkok, they have not yet been active in the higher-end of the market, but this trend could change as more Chinese tourists visit the country (they currently account for about 30 per cent of tourists visiting Thailand each year) and they become more appreciative of Thailand's property attractions as an investment and potential second home. "For Chinese, you can appeal to them with good restaurants and everything but for them it is very important that they feel comfortable and feel they can get around. They like to feel they belong," said Han Yang, a public relations officer for 98 Wireless.

Ultimately, for high net worth mainland Chinese, as for potential buyers in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan, Bangkok's high end condominiums will be attractive mainly because they are a lot cheaper than the equivalent properties found at home. Even with Thailand's new land taxes about to go into force, this comparative price advantage is not expected to disappear. "Even these increases in tax rates, ranging from 0.03 per cent to 0.1 per cent to appraised value are quite reasonable when compared to other property markets in the region," ICONSIAM's Visit said. ☺