

## **THAILAND RESORT**

### **Resort owners offer new buyer option**

The time-share operator Absolute Group has introduced a fractional ownership programme for high-end properties in Phuket and Samui to offer holiday home buyers opportunities to have partial ownership.

Chairman Bryan Lunt said the programme was designed as an alternative for holidaymakers or Thais to own property for the desired period of time for their holidays rather than buy a unit that is used only a few times a year.

Fractional ownership, often known as shared ownership or co-ownership, involves between three and 13 people buying one unit among them. It is different from time-sharing, which is for simple use for a set period and much more affordable as it is broken down into weekly intervals.

Seven units of Absolute David Lloyd Beach at Nakalay, a beach near Patong Bay in Phuket, are up for sale. The project is developed by a joint venture between Absolute Group, former Wimbledon champion David Lloyd and A Plan Co, which is the land owner and developer.

The project comprises 33 units and almost 80% were sold three months since the soft launch. The seven remaining units would be available on a fractional ownership basis at prices starting from 775,000 baht for a four-week or 28 night ownership period each year for life\_ a series of renewable 30-year leases. The fractional ownership programme is also available for the Bangla Suites project, a luxury apartment in Soi Bangla in the heart of Patong.

The project comprises 53 units and is 85% sold. The seven penthouse units are being offered at 1.75 million baht for a four-week or 28-night ownership period each year.

Another project is at Thongkrut on Koh Samui, a luxury resort with 17 exclusive units that is now in the final design process.

**Source: Bangkok Post**  
**Posted: April 25, 2008**

### **Marriott in major expansion mode**

Marriott International plans to open 11 hotels and serviced apartments in Bangkok, Phuket and Hua Hin between 2008 and 2010 due to the brighter outlook of the tourism industry, says Panjit Howe, the country's director of human resources. She said the tourism industry had been more active since the country's political situation improved. However, competition in the hotel business on Sukhumvit Road is higher, with the entry of almost every major global brand.

"Last year, all hotels in the central business district faced a drop in occupancy rates. This year they will pick up," she said. The occupancy rate at the JW Marriott Hotel Bangkok declined from 81.9% to 78.5% but is expected to improve to 82.7% by the end of 2008.

In Bangkok, Marriott plans to open the luxury brand Renaissance at two locations: 333 rooms at the Ratchaprasong junction behind Maneeya Center this year and 310 rooms on Sukhumvit in 2010.

As serviced apartments have become a more popular alternative for guests, the hotel will also open three new Marriott Executive Apartments: 195 rooms on Soi Suan Plu off Sathon Road in 2008, 300 rooms on Sukhumvit 24 and 310 rooms near Benjasiri Park in 2010.

In Phuket, it will open two luxury resorts: Phuket Marriott Resort & Spa with 202 rooms this year, and Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa with 175 rooms in 2010, with a targeted 80% occupancy rate in the first year, said Mrs Panjit.

To tap the economy segment in popular beach destinations, it plans three Courtyard hotels in Phuket: on Patong Beach with 399 rooms, Surin Beach with 256 rooms and Kamala Beach with 180 rooms and another 243-room Courtyard on Cha-am Beach within the year.

The opening rates at Courtyard in Phuket will range from 4,000 to 11,000 baht a night during the low season, 5,500 to 12,000 baht in the shoulder season (the period between the high and low seasons) and 9,500 to 19,500 baht in the high season. The average occupancy rate is targeted at 60% for the first-year operation.

"Given such big expansion, we need to have around new 50 managers and 2,200 hotel staff," said the human-resources director who joined the hotel 10 years ago.

"It's not only the building, the brand or the marketing plan that leads to a hotel's success but it's a spirit to serve which is hard to maintain," said Mrs Panjit, adding that the hotel group's staff turnover rate was 20% compared to the market's average of 25%.

Marriott also has a time-sharing business under Marriott Vacation Club International, with at least 250 rooms at the JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa. The Phuket Marriott at Kamala Beach and Renaissance Phuket will join this vacation ownership property business in 2008 and 2010, respectively.

Since starting in 2001, it now has a total of 6,000 members and more than half of them are Thais. Membership fees start at US\$12,000 or 360,000 baht for eight years. Each member can spend seven nights a year at any of 52 destinations under the chain worldwide.

**Source: Bangkok Post**  
**Posted: 10 April 2008**