

HORSE POWER PMV VISITS MEYDAN CITY TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE MEASURES THAT IGO IS TAKING TO DELIVER ITS POLO TOWNHOUSES AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

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FEBRUARY 2015

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PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Champing at the bit

Eng Mohammad Hussein and Dr Anas A Kozbari tell James Morgan how IGO intends to exceed its clients' expectations whilst delivering the Polo Townhouses ahead of schedule

When it comes to confidence in their product, the folks at Invest Group Overseas (IGO) have it in spades. Not content with merely talking the talk, however, the developer invited PMV out to its Polo Townhouses project to demonstrate how it's also walking the walk.

Situated in the heart of Dubai's Meydan City - a stone's throw away from the famed racecourse and hotel - the Polo Townhouses look set to establish themselves as a prime piece of UAE real estate. Every last one of the units at the site has been spoken for.

The development, which forms part of Meydan Gate Community, consists of 106 Get townhouses spread across a net land area of more than 30,000m². At present, the main contractor, Technical Architect Contractors, and the infrastructure contractor, China State Construction, are working simultaneously to ensure that the project is delivered on time (if not earlier), within budget, and to a higher spec than was originally promised.

The man tasked with coordinating this mammoth undertaking is IGO Property Development's Eng Mohammad Hussein (right), project manager for the Polo Townhouses development.

"Infrastructure work at this site started under a month ago," he began.

"Because of this, we have had to alter our logistics plan to accommodate the requirements of both the main contractor and the infrastructure contractor, in accordance with the site conditions," said Hussein.

It was hardly surprising, therefore, to find that the construction site was a hive of activity. Work is taking place in a two-shift pattern between the hours of 6am and 3am, with an average of 1,000 construction professionals

"We need to deliver on target, and if we can, ahead of time... IGO's signature will be all over this project..."
Eng Mohammad Hussein, IGO PD

on site every day. Accompanied by a plethora of construction machinery, ranging from nifty skid-steer loaders to giant excavators, every inch of the development seemed to be occupied by busy hands - so much so that our photographer had to wait until workers started leaving for lunch before he began snapping

That's not to say that these activities are unfocused. It's all hands on deck, but with good reason, according to Hussein.

"We need to deliver on target, and if we can, ahead of time," he told PMV.

"We must also ensure that we deliver the best-possible product in terms of our clients' expectations. IGO's signature will be all over this project so it has to be of the highest-possible quality," Hussein added.

The IGO PD project manager is clearly passionate about the Polo Townhouses, but he is not the only person striving to over-deliver. As managing partner and chief executive officer of IGO - an affiliate company of MAG Group - Dr Anas A Kozbari is clear that he and his employees have a formidable reputation to uphold, and to build upon.

"For us, reputation is everything; it truly is," he told PMV.

"IGO doesn't work under the notion of 'hit and run'. Our group of companies has been active in this market for more than three decades, and we are going to stick around for many years to come. We are committed to contributing to the ongoing success of Dubai, but we cannot remain part of that story unless we maintain the standards of Dubai. That's what we are trying to do here," Kozbari explained.

ENG MOHAMMAD HUSSEIN is IGO Property Development's project manager for the Polo Townhouses in Dubai's Meydan City.





Once finished, the Polo Townhouses development will accommodate six three- and four-bedroom homes and a club house, featuring a gym, a community pool, and recreation hall.

Indeed, the Polo Townhouses are by no means the only channel through which IGO is looking to cement its reputation. A few minutes' drive from the development is the future site of the Polo Residences, an 871-apartment project comprising 20 G+4 buildings.

Despite the magnitude of these developments, Kozbari made clear that he goes to great lengths not to limit himself to the "big picture." Legacy building, according to the hands-on CEO, is all about immersing oneself in the minutiae of a project.

"We live by one particular motto: the process is the product," he explained.

"We believe that if you perfect the process, you will inevitably perfect your product, and when the product turns into reality, it becomes history.

"Perfecting the process requires all of us - we included - to get involved in the nitty-gritty of our projects. I have always said that whatever our clients see at the outset must be improved in the run-up to completion. For this reason, all of the finishing materials - any

VITAL STATISTICS

POLO TOWNHOUSES

Location: Meydan Gated Community, Dubai, UAE

Master developer: Meydan Group

Project developer: IGO Property Development

Project manager: Invest Group Overseas (IGO)

Consultant: Archcorp Architectural Engineering

Main contractor: Technical Architect Contracting

Infrastructure contractor: China State Construction

Number of units: 106 G+1 townhouses

Net land area: 30,885m²

Official handover date: June 2016

fixtures and fittings that the end consumer is going to see and touch - have to be personally approved by me," Kozbari revealed.

He wasn't exaggerating. One of the first stops on my tour of the site was the Polo Townhouses' sample room. Around the

periphery of the cabin - which will ultimately be cleared to make way for the community's 1,831m² club house - an array of finishing

materials are displayed, all sporting the CEO's signature. The vast majority of these materials have been upgraded from those picked out



A walk model demonstrating how the Polo Townhouses development will look once construction work has been completed.

during the specification process. What's more, the cost of these improvements has been covered by IGO itself.

"For the flooring of the townhouses - both downstairs and in the living area on the first floor - we've chosen to use 30mm-thick, natural marble from Spain," said Hussein.

"We've also taken the decision to use wood-finish, ceramic flooring from Italy in the bedrooms, and upgrade to solid-wood, panel doors throughout," he added.

What followed from Hussein was a whirlwind exposition of the finishing materials that IGO has chosen to improve from their original specifications. Ironmongery, aluminum and other metal finishes; wiring and circuitry; handrails and balustrades; bathroom and kitchen fixtures - all have received the premium treatment.

But why? If the clients were satisfied with the original specifications, why did Kozbari decide to incur additional costs? As he explained, it all comes back to reputation. "Satisfactory" simply isn't good enough.



The S52 is one of the smaller units being used at the site.

property into which they have invested their money," Kozbari added.

While this philosophy is certainly laudable, the finest finishing materials in the world will not add up to much unless the core townhouses are built on time and to spec. With this in mind, I returned to the construction site to discuss the sizeable fleet of machinery that was still away under the Dubai sun.

Naturally, the kit on site at any one time will depend on the stage of construction. When I visited the Polo Townhouses, Hussein offered up his daily equipment report to provide a glimpse into the units that were being used.

Present on the day were six telehandlers, a six-tonne wheel loader, two 20-tonne mobile cranes, a skid-steer loader, a backhoe loader, an excavator, and a roller. Supplementing the construction equipment were six tower lights, 40kVA, 110kVA, and 250kVA generators, and a 60t tipper truck.

"The JCB Loadall telehandlers are the most important machines on site at present," Hussein pointed out.

"They are being used for the transportation and delivery of materials around the site. We have a schedule for these machines. The loaders are taken from their designated zones to the specific areas where they are to be used. They are then returned to these zones following implementation," he explained.

"This level of organization is vital for IGO and its contractors, especially when one considers the amount of activity that is taking place at the construction site. Military precision enables all involved to maximize efficiency, and to minimize clutter.

A multi-boom concrete pump had also been supporting operations at the site. This is not necessarily the type of unit that immediately

"We are always above standard when we hand over, and we are very proud of this fact. I like to leave my fingerprints on all of IGO's projects,"

Dr Aras A Kozbari, IGO

"We are always above standard when we hand over, and we are very proud of this fact," proclaimed the CEO.

"I like to leave my fingerprints on all of IGO's projects. I truly believe that we should engrain the IGO name within everything that we do. We cannot achieve this goal unless our product is of sufficient quality. As such, we do everything within our power to perfect the product to the point whereby end users are genuinely proud to live in their townhouse or apartment. They should be proud of the



When PMV visited the Polo Townhouses development, a six-strong fleet of JCB Loadalls were supporting onsite operations



"...we can't bring a pump into the middle of the site. We therefore have to raise the boom over structures,"

Eng. Mohammad Hussein, IQOPD

springs to mind when one thinks about a horizontal project like the Polo Townhouses. However, as Hussein explained, it is the limited space that makes such a machine necessary.

"The brands used are subject to our concrete suppliers, but we have had to enlist the services of a 4.2m-long boom for concrete placement," he told PMV.

"Some of these roads are closed because work is taking place. This means that we can't bring a pump into the middle of the site. We therefore have to raise the boom over structures. A 4.2m-long, multi-section boom is a valuable tool," commented Hussein.

It's clear that IQO and its partners are investing a great deal of effort into ensuring that the Polo Townhouses are completed to a high standard, but more than this, one gets the distinct impression that the developer has pinned itself in a race against time.

The official handover deadline, meanwhile, is June 2016, so what's the rush? Well, in the same way that 'satisfactory' is not an option for Kozbars when it comes to product quality,



IQO has opted to upgrade a range of finishing materials

PLAYING THE LONG GAME

As infrastructure contractor for the Polo Townhouses, China State Construction has a daunting task ahead of it.

Having only started work at the turn of the year, the contractor has until August 2015 to ensure that all of the townhouses' amenities are in place.

"We're responsible for all infrastructure, including electrical and water supplies, drainage and irrigation, street lighting, the Etsalat network, and roads and parking spaces," said the contractor's construction manager, Eng. Ashraf Barham.

"The timeframe is our major obstacle. Our work must be completed before the end of August. However, we can overcome this challenge by increasing manpower and optimising working hours," he added.

Barham and his colleagues also have a multi-brand fleet of premium construction equipment at their disposal.

"Volvo, Caterpillar, and JCB - these are the three main brands we like to use," he explained.

"They offer long-life machines with excellent uptime, and spare parts availability is good. When you purchase a machine, you need it to serve you for five to six years without any problems.

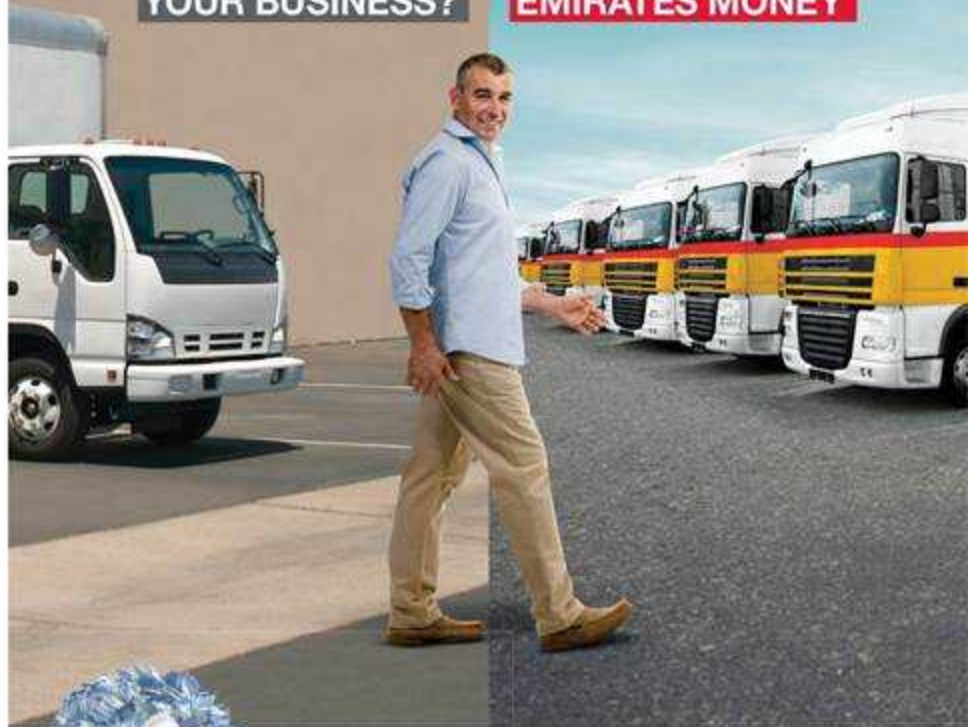
"If you spend a little more at the beginning, you will save money in the longer term. The retail price is also higher when you opt for premium brands," Barham concluded.



China State's Ashraf Barham

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