

The Rising Tide

Top of Form

By Thunder Storm

12/18/14 4:15 PM

By Kannan Chandran

The waves of change that have reshaped the Singapore skyline continue to ripple along Beach Road.

The latest towers to rise up are not as tall as those already redefining Singapore's skyline, but will have a significant role in interpreting a historic parcel of land. The South Beach stands on the block where the NCO Club used to sit; a regular hang out for those in the military in search of cheap beer. The junction of Beach Road and Bras Basah Road is filled with history, and is ideally located near trains, restaurants and shopping.

The South Beach development will add to the mix.



The towers are taking shape at The South Beach.

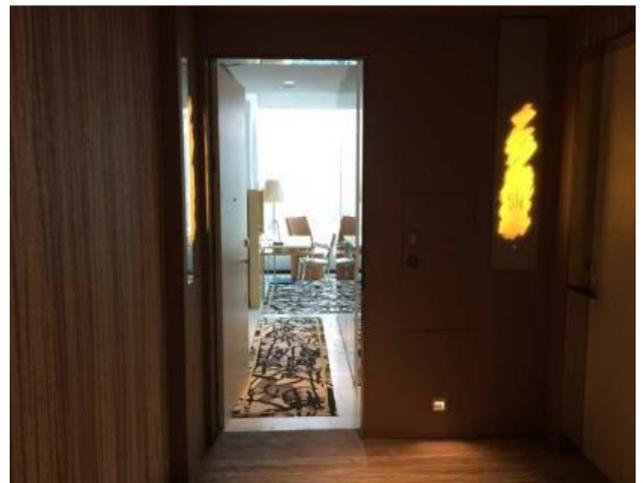
The South Beach site has four conservation buildings, so City Developments Ltd (CDL) and Malaysia's IOI Group, who jointly won the tender for this 99-year-lease plot, had to tread carefully. Shiny towers, waves and other softer elements help the reinvigorated old sit comfortably with the sparkling new.

Aloysius Lee, CEO of The South Beach Consortium, led a small team around the site, which will be opened in stages from April 2015. The \$3 billion mixed-use development will comprise two towers — a 45-storey hotel and residential highrise, and a 34-storey office block.

The office tower will be part of the first wave to open. Close to 90% of the 500,000sqft of office space has been taken up, at rentals ranging from \$9–12 per square foot. Rabobank was the first to lease approximately 30,000sqft in late 2013, though it is not occupying the largest space.



Aloysius Lee, CEO of The South Beach Consortium, fronts The South Beach development that will add to Singapore's changing skyline.



The wood-lined corridors lead to rooms that are decorated in Philippe Starck style.

The hotel, designed by Philippe Starck, takes into consideration the “alone/together behaviour” of the new generation of customers. The 654-room HIP concept refers to the device-oriented generation who like being in open spaces with others, but without interacting with anyone. A Starbucks café would be a good example of this behaviour, with loads of people drinking java and feeding off the free wifi. The rooms shown to us are in muted shades of grey and brown with highlight pieces. Riding the elevator is like ducking into a dance club, with colourful panels and the lights changing hues on the ride.



The colourful wall panels in the elevators.

The 190 luxury residences will include two- to five-bedroom units, ranging between 950sqft and 6,500sqft. “Given the current market, there are no plans to market the units as yet,” Aloysius said. The general mood is one of optimism that things will swing up again, and that the prices will find buyers. “About 80% of apartments priced over \$5 million are owned by foreigners, so it’s a question of whether they want to invest in it.”

The 37,000sqft retail space will lead into the Esplanade MRT station and will be populated with tenants that will offer a mix of options. “There are a lot of celebrity chefs interested,” Aloysius commented.



The waves that will reshape Beach Road's profile.

The environmentally conscious building makes full use of the natural elements. The wave-like canopy, which will be a signature motif of the development, will shield people from the elements while generating electricity and recycling rain water.



The designer lights at a function room at The South Beach Club.

The South Beach Club (the former NCO Club), retains much of its old exterior lines, but has an interior that is as quirky as its designer, Starck. There are private dining rooms, a cigar room and a sushi bar with a view of what goes on beneath the surface of a diving pool.