



A Confluence of Creativity

Working together with the likes of Kempinski and Yoo, 8 Conlay pushed the boundaries of luxury development. KSK Land's managing director Joanne Kua elaborates on this collaboration

GROWING UP with parents who succeeded in the insurance industry, it was natural for Joanne Kua to pursue the same path. She started her career with Munich Reinsurance Company before joining Deutsche Bank London as an associate. Upon her return to Malaysia in 2010, she joined her family's conglomerate, Kurnia Insurance Malaysia. In 2012, she took the helm as group CEO of Kurnia Asia and spearheaded the overall rebranding exercise of Kurnia Asia to KSK Group, followed by a privatisation exercise in 2013.

At the last quarter of the same year, Joanne made the announcement that the company was setting up KSK Land, which specialises in property development, and revealed the first project in the company's lineup—8 Conlay, a fully integrated mixed-use luxury commercial development, sitting on a four-acre land, at the heart of Kuala Lumpur City Centre's golden triangle. Industry watchers were puzzled at this decision—after decades of prospering in the insurance field, why was KSK choosing to embark on such an ambitious luxury development as its maiden project?

WORDS: LILY ONG; PHOTOGRAPHY: SHAFIQ FARHAN

THE BEST OF THE BEST

"It's been our chairman's lifelong dream to diversify into property development," reveals Joanne—the chairman she refers to is her father, Tan Sri Kua Sian Kooi. "Real estate is evergreen but at the same time, we don't want just another 'template' building. We decided from the beginning that we will be a lifestyle property developer. For us, we put a lot of emphasis in making a lifestyle come alive, so it can add value to the community."

When 8 Conlay was launched, its selling price of RM3,200 per square foot got tongues wagging as it set a new pricing record in luxury living. "People called us crazy at the time, but today, 8 Conlay no longer holds the record for the highest priced land per square foot. Despite all the fuss about our pricing, we knew we were right. It is our vision to push the boundaries in property development, thus bringing in only the best talents in terms of service, design and architecture," she states.

YOUR PLACE, YOUR STORY

With this decision made, Joanne started on procuring the right partners to complete the project: 121-year-old European luxury hotel brand Kempinski for service, architects Hud Bakar, Thai landscape architect firm Trop, plus London-based design studio Yoo.

"Ultimately, we want to create a vertical village for like-minded people with shared passions. Those who know luxury will understand our value, because they know who we have partnered with," says Joanne.

What is it like working with these global talents for one project? "It has been amazing. Every creative mind behind 8 Conlay shares the same ideology—to create a space where you can craft your own story. We take care of everything else, as you make memories for yourself when living at 8 Conlay."

CONDUCTING AN ORCHESTRA

"KSK Land acts the chief placemaker. We coordinate with our partners, who have shown nothing but passion for what we do, from Hud, the team from Trop and the rockstar designers from Yoo—Steve Leung and Kelly Hoppen. Magical things have

happened when we bounce ideas off each other. As the developer, our role is to keep the show going, like an orchestra conductor," shares Joanne on how she views KSK Land's role in this massive, international project.

In the promotional videos for 8 Conlay, Joanne refers to the project as an 'impossible dream come true.' "We are aware that KSK Land's success is tied together with 8 Conlay. Every milestone we hit, we celebrated it together as a team. Every one of us in the company—myself included—grew as an individual as the company and 8 Conlay developed," she says.

To be completed in 2020, 8 Conlay's Yoo8 Residence has been snapped up by buyers around the region. No doubt, the property's partnership with big names like Steve Leung and Kelly Hoppen added to its allure.

"At KSK Land, we believe in providing that extra added value for our customers. For example, when you own a home in Yoo8, you can rest easy with the fact that a renowned brand like Kempinski is taking care of your asset for you, so you know its value will be at a good position. That's our promise," says this articulate lady boss with conviction about what keeps her going. ●

AN ICONIC PROJECT
KSK Land's managing director Joanne Kua believes in setting the right tone for its maiden project 8 Conlay from the start



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