

Bespoke and boutique: A new kind of home for the elite

Mosaic Realty and Development Corporation's Jillian Sze talks about the top merits in investing in boutique developers

When Jardin Wong, Jillian Sze, and Miguel Tan approached WTA Architecture and Design Studio with their idea for their first project as real estate developers, they came with a story about independence. Seeking to cast a new shadow over the hyper-competitive Philippine property scene, and make a mark outside their respective family businesses, the three partners — who formed the leadership of Mosaic Realty and Development Corporation (MRDC) — proposed their idea for The Silhouette.

Working closely with William Ti, Jr., principal architect of WTA Architecture and Design Studio, MRDC's first foray into turning their creative visions into reality is now set to rise at the heart of San Juan. The Silhouette is a distinct and exclusive 19-storey residential tower, housing only 12 units built with a strict one unit per floor philosophy. This design was intentional, as the company wanted to distinguish themselves from the mass-marketed condominiums that already dot Metro Manila's cityscape.

"I don't want people to misinterpret it as a polarizing thing, that we just want to be unique. No, we're unique because we are in-depth and we understand the granularity of what exclusive and what premium means," Jillian Sze, chief operating officer and co-founder of MRDC, told *BusinessWorld*.

"When you've been successful for quite some time, the pleasures in your life and your lifestyle choices would be different. Just think of clothes. You don't want to wear the same clothes that are being sold in a thousand malls



The Silhouette, MRDC's first project that is soon to rise in San Juan City

nationwide, right? You want to belong to a community that exudes the same values and lifestyle," Ms. Sze shared.

Priding themselves as a 'boutique' property developer, Ms. Sze noted that their company is comprised of young, innovative talent that have been exposed to new information and new experiences that make them distinctly well-equipped to



Photo shows Mosaic Realty and Development Corporation founders (L-R) Jardin Wong, Jillian Sze and Miguel Tan.

cater to a market that mirror their experiences and lifestyles. Yet, they are no less driven than their seasoned competitors.

The Silhouette is a result of their desire to cater to this exclusive market.

Boutique development firms are slowly gaining ground abroad as highly specialized real estate developers putting a premium on character and uniqueness through a focused interior design and bespoke architecture.

As opposed to corporate developers that prioritize larger projects catering to the broader market, boutique developers are more niche, intent to offer more customized, carefully curated properties for discerning buyers.

"A boutique developer at the end of the day goes for quality over quantity. For a property developer like us, there's this certain lifestyle of exclusivity that sets our target audience apart," Ms. Sze said.

She pointed out that people's

lifestyles have changed drastically over the years, not least because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The benefit of being a boutique developer is that they are far closer to the ground than their corporate counterparts, and as a result are more in-touch with these changes as they happen.

"At the end of the day, the philosophy of being a boutique firm is that you are nimble. You are closer to the ground. Because you don't have a steep vertical hierarchy in your organization, and that means you're very in touch with what's happening on the ground," she said.

"Intently designing ourselves to be a boutique firm, volume is not our game. Mass marketing is not our game. We understand what makes our market tick, what makes them buy, what makes properties more exclusive and more premium. There are a lot of things we take into consideration, like the lifts or the flow of the rooms or even the amenities."

Such amenities are to be found in The Silhouette, which boasts an impressive 270-degree view of San Juan on each of its spacious balconies, with floor to ceiling windows from the living area up to the bedrooms.

The residential tower is outfitted with a sophisticated grand lobby and all the first-rate facilities and services buyers would come to expect at other premium developments. Residents and guests can enjoy family-friendly recreational options with the swimming pool for adults and kids, a high ceiling fully-equipped gym, and open spaces with lush greeneries housing a barbecue area well-built for family weekend gatherings. For bigger celebrations, indoor and outdoor function areas are also available for residents and guests to use.

The development also integrates modern technology to keep residents safe and secure with its smart building features using facial recognition, QR code, card access, and fingerprint technology to provide residents and their guests exclusive access to the building and facilities kept exclusive within the property.

In addition, the Silhouette is accessible to major central shopping districts, premier schools, and top hospitals in the city.

With the Silhouette, MRDC aims to set a new trend in the property landscape of the country: one that eschews the traditional bigger-is-better approach that many real estate empires are built on.

"We made an intentional choice to win where it matters most: satisfying the customer experience," Ms. Sze said.



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