Mireille Choufany, General Manager, MAF Holding Investment SAL, talks to Cityscape magazine



"Beirut is benefiting from the best international practices and global thinking on 'city-making in the 21st century' and is now getting back its regional role as the former financial, trading, educational, cultural and tourism focus of the <u>Middle East."</u>

What is the current climate in the Lebanese real estate market ?

The real estate market in Lebanon is in a stability mood. Real estate value has increased and is projected to rise continuously. The sector profited from the economic growth, sustained large remittances from Lebanese non-residents and country's stability, encouraging investors who are increasingly looking to Lebanon as a prime market in the Middle East region. Also, a good reason behind this rise, is the shortage of available plots in a small country like Lebanon, especially its capital.

What are the main challenges the market faces?

Neighbouring countries' political turmoil may challenge the sector, affecting buyers and investors sentiments, and may hold back activity progress, however, Lebanon is still capturing benefit from the regional disorder as it did during the global financial disorder few years back. The unstable political situation in the neighboring countries made Lebanon a hub for secure investments.

What are the current trends?

The market is experiencing a shift to reasonably small living spaces, the most in demand being those with sizes that range between 150 and 250 square meters, in addition to the retail landscape which is witnessing steady demand across prime locations. MAF Investment performed to harmonise the needs and the desires of the community by meeting these needs while conserving the desired luxurious components. It was a considerable challenge for the project team, which they have relished.

How does the Beb Beirut project fit into the current situation and what is its particularity in terms of its location?

What is exceptional about Beb Beirut in today's market is that it caters to a spectrum of buyers by offering a range of sizes. The cutting edge design encapsulates two monumental vertical prisms of apartments ranging between 175 and 422 square meters, two Sky Palaces of 1,000 square meters each with private swimming pools and a retail area.

While up above the apartments offer exquisite views of the sea, a one minute walk from the AI Amine Mosque and Saifi Village, down below there is a range of services that guarantee residents' satisfaction. including 24/7 maintenance, a 24/7 multilingual concierge, a private car wash facility, a valet parking, 71 additional parking spaces dedicated to visitors, drivers' rooms, staff rooms, 24-hour security and surveillance. Thus inventive design and seductive luxury are underpinned with an exceptional, multi-layered support service.

How does the project contribute to the reconstruction of Beirut in line with the Solidere vision and what are its larger implications for the country of Lebanon?

Beirut is a city of distinction and countless fascination; it has captivated many civilizations for centuries creating a unique medley of cultures. Beb Beirut was designed by Bernardo Forte Brescia, in collaboration with Solidere urban design team, as part of a wider master plan to regenerate the heart of the town, creating a modern city that demonstrates the evolution for the better in the urban planning, while keeping the ancient structures of historical value, archeological and architectural patrimony. Indeed, the capital is benefiting from the best international practices and global thinking on 'city-making in the 21st century' and is now getting back.

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