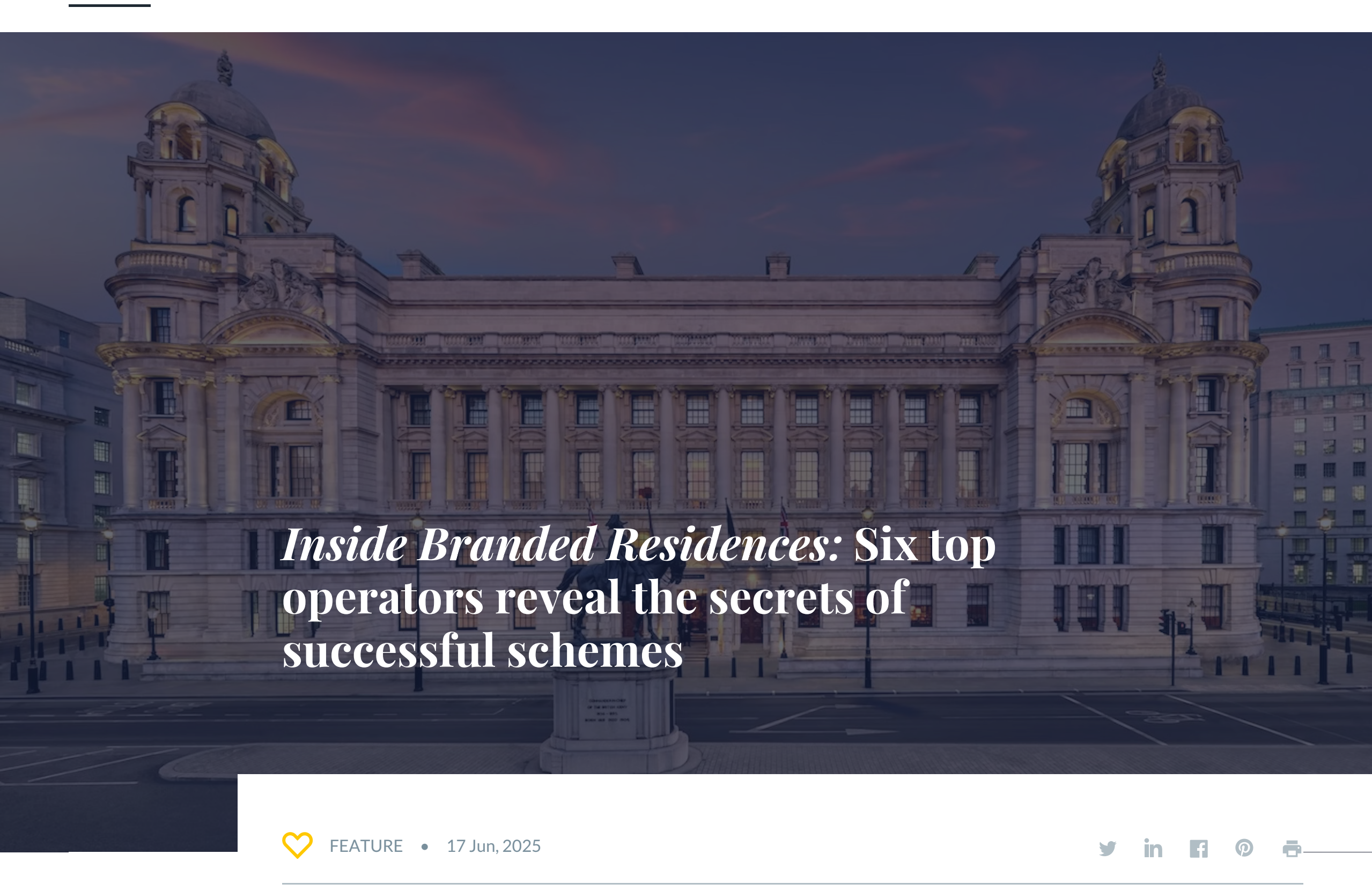

Inside Branded Residences: Six top operators reveal the secrets of successful schemes

FEATURE • 17 Jun, 2025

By PrimeResi Journal

Chris Graham of Graham Associates takes a deep dive into the branded residential sector, gaining fascinating insights from senior figures at leading operators *Accor*, *Four Seasons*, *Hilton*, *Kerzner*, *Marriott & Yoo.*

The branded residence sector has ballooned by over 180% in the last decade, according to in-depth research by specialist consultancy Graham Associates. And growth shows no signs of topping out, with ever more diverse brands "jumping on the B®andwagon" (report author Chris Graham's phrase).

"It is a 'win-win-win' model that offers manifest benefits to buyers, brands and developers," argues the report – which is aimed at industry insiders including property developers, designers and consultants.

BRANDED RESIDENCES: AN OVERVIEW
SIXTH EDITION
GRAHAM ASSOCIATES
GLOBAL MARKETING SOLUTIONS

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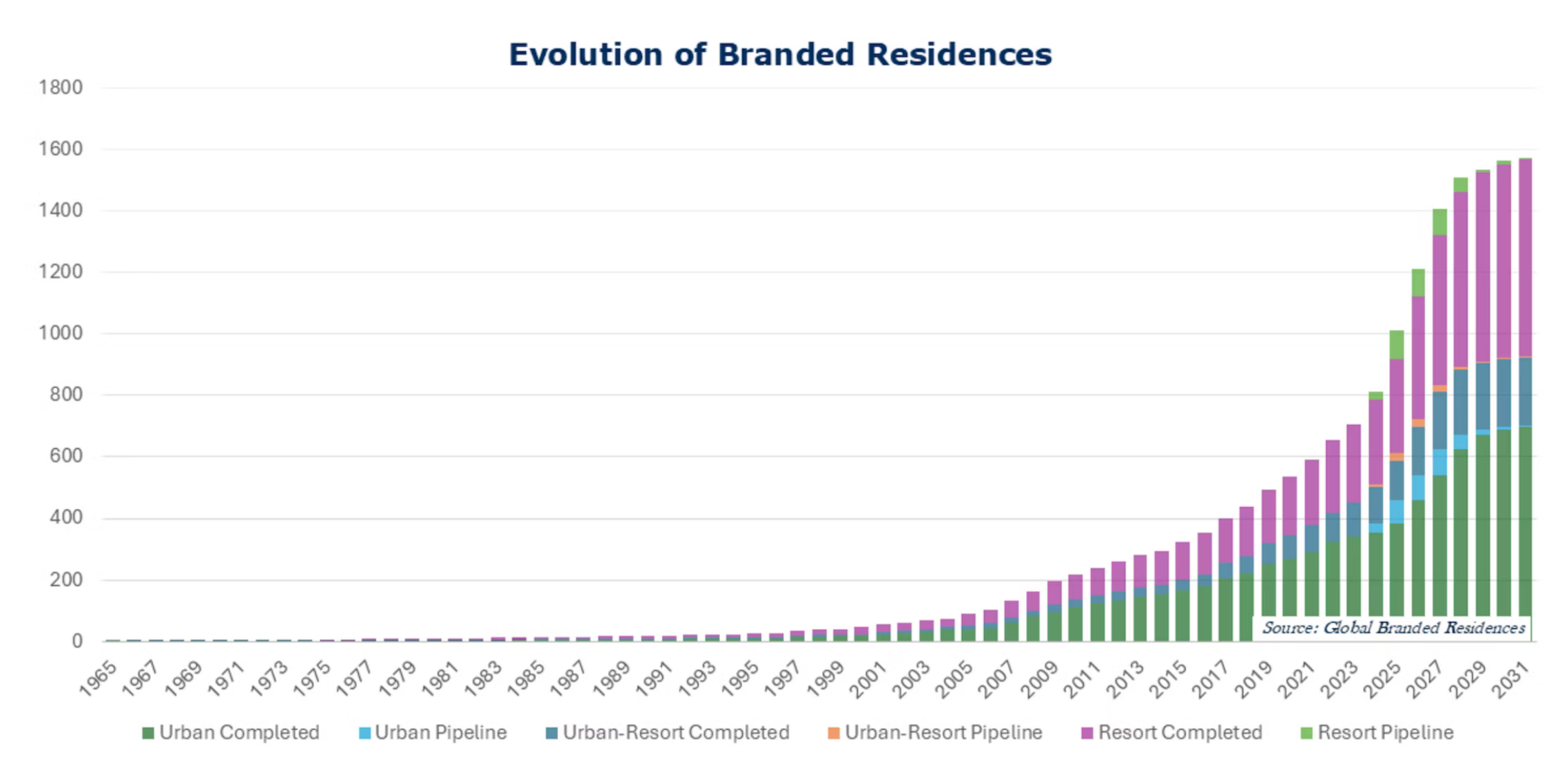
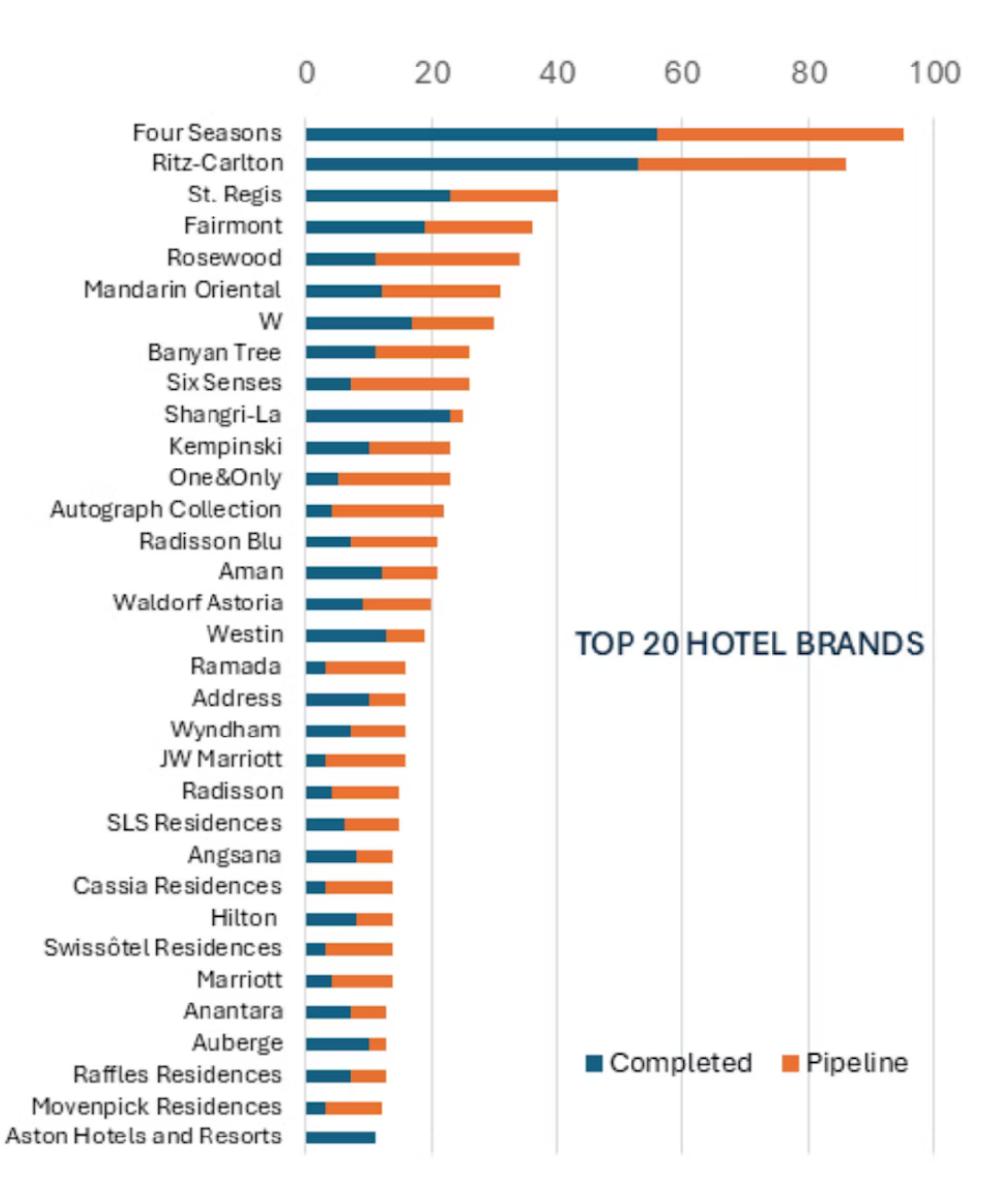
Hotel groups still dominate the space, with an 80% market share, but non-hospitality names are rapidly gaining ground. Automotive (such as Aston Martin and Bentley), fashion (Armani, Missoni, Diesel), and entertainment businesses (Disney and E11even nightclub) are all joining the fray.

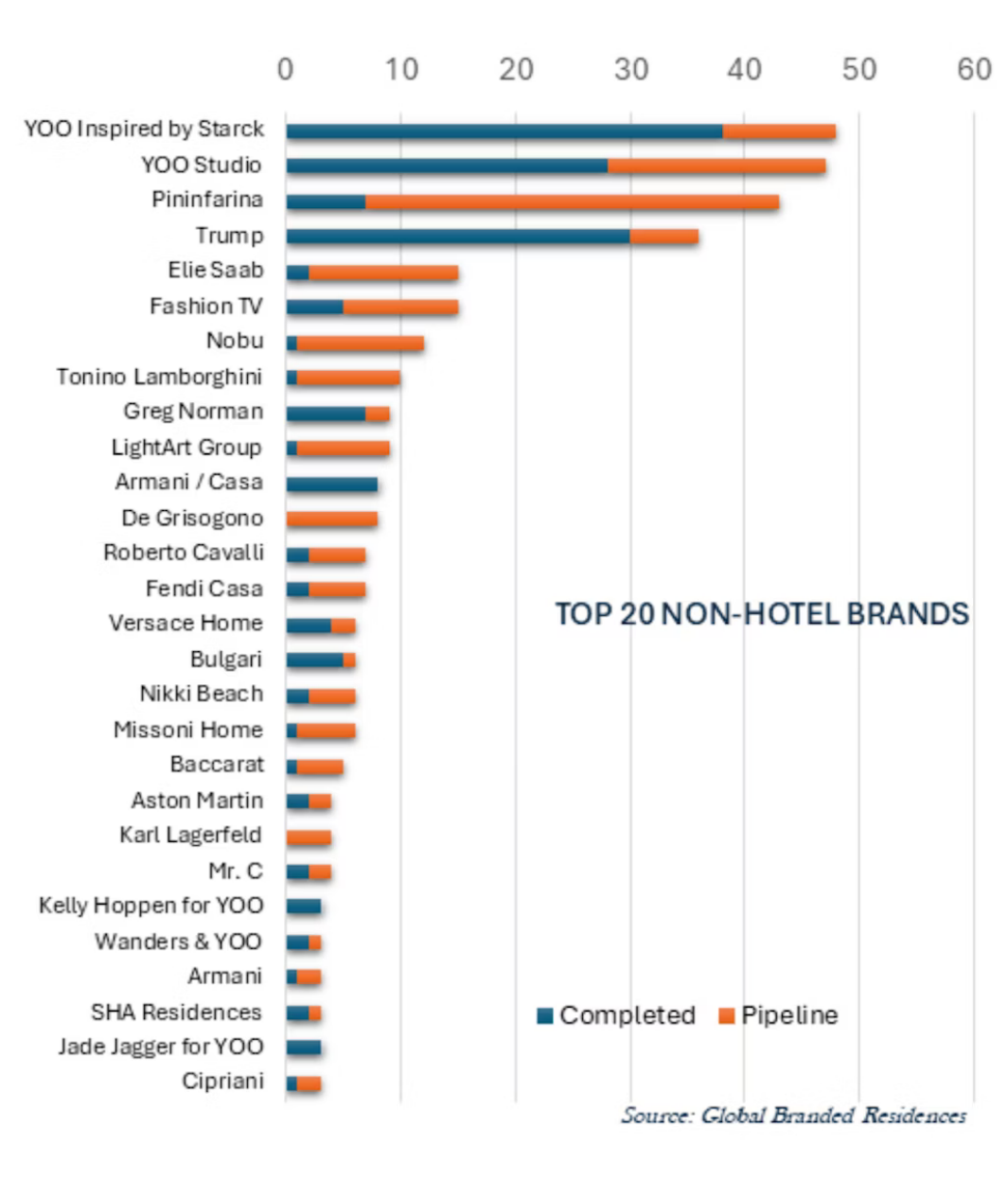
Many of these new entrants are delivering stand-out projects, but some are met with some scepticism. As Ben Martin of HKS Advisory puts it: "A car manufacturer or fashion brand may not be your first port of call for the perfect property ownership experience."

Graham flags the importance of "trust, quality and a hassle-free experience" for branded home buyers. "Buyers want peace of mind that the property will be completed to a high standard, managed professionally, and maintain its value," he explains.



Source: Global Branded Residences





Source: Global Branded Residences

- **Scroll down** to read insights from six top branded residential operators, or click here to delve into PrimeResi's unique archive of branded resi articles.

Branded residences typically command a c.30% premium over non-branded equivalents – a figure that has remained consistent since Knight Frank floated the estimate back in 2012. But there are differences of opinion (typically ranging from 20-50%), and differentials can vary widely according to local conditions (e.g. emerging Vs established luxury markets).

One of the key growth niches is standalone developments. Branded residences without a co-located hotel now account for 15% of Marriott's pipeline, and 20–30% of Accor's. "Ten years ago, few major operators even considered standalone residences," notes Graham. "Today, most are actively expanding into this space."

There's also notable growth in the "midscale" market. The branded resi sector is still driven almost entirely by the luxury end, but less prestige operators (think Wyndham or Ramada rather than Four Seasons) are sensing an opportunity. As boutique hotel pioneer Ian Schrager puts it: "Luxury is now accessible to everyone who wants it… and it should be. It's egalitarian and democratised."

The report really digs into the business of branded residential, highlighting the mechanics of brand-developer collaborations, and shining a light on often-complex cost and fee structures (including royalty, management and engagement fees).

"My prediction is just one word," concludes author Chris Graham: "More. More brands, more sectors, more locations, more upscale, more midscale, more standalone, more ESG."

BEHIND THE SCHEMES

Chris Graham

Six top branded residence operators answer seven important questions posed by Chris Graham of Graham Associates – featuring senior figures from *Accor*, *Four Seasons*, *Hilton*, *Kerzner*, *Marriott*, and *Yoo*.

The panel of experienced industry insiders reveal the secrets of successful collaboration, identify big emerging trends in the sector, advise on practical matters, and share invaluable advice for resi developers looking to bring forward a branded project.

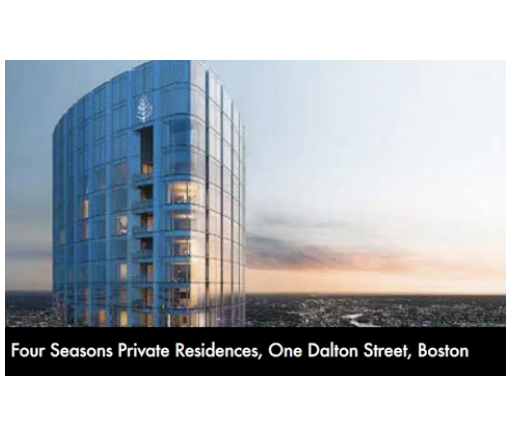
- **Dana Jacobsohn** is Chief Development Officer, U.S. & Canada Luxury Brands and Global Mixed-Use Development at Marriott. 2025 marks Marriott International's 25th year since launching its first branded residences. The company has grown its open portfolio by over 50% since year-end 2019, and retained its position as the market leader in the branded residential sector.
- **James Price** is VP Residential Development, Marketing & Sales at Four Seasons. A pioneer of branded residences, Four Seasons opened its first residential project in 1985.
- **Jonathan Wingo** is Global Head of Residential Programs at Hilton – which has been sharpening its focus on branded residences, with more than 30 open properties and a pipeline of over 20 (many under the Waldorf Astoria brand).
- **Jeff Tisdall** is Chief Business Officer at Accor, which has been on a global roll these past few years and now ranks second in the global sector (up from fifth in 2021). It operates a portfolio of 25 residential brands.
- **Jonathan Tomlinson** is SVP & Global Head of Private Homes and Branded Residences at Kerzner. The late Sol Kerzner opened Sun City resort in South Africa in 1979. Today Kerzner International's global portfolio includes Atlantis Resorts and Private Residences, One&Only Resorts and Private Homes, SIRO Hotels, Resorts and Branded Residences, and Rare Finds.
- **James Snelgar** is Head of International Business Development at YOO. Founded in 1999 by John Hitchcox and Philippe Starck, YOO has been a pioneer in the sector, evolving into the world's largest non-hospitality residential brand with 70 completed projects worldwide and 11 under development.

1. When is the optimum stage for a developer to engage with potential brand partners?

Grand Marina, Marriott & JW Marriott Residences, Vietnam

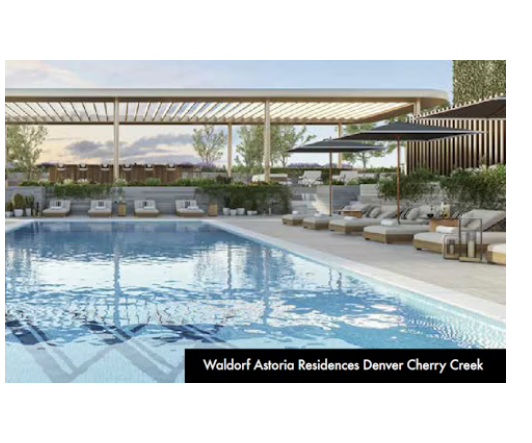
Dana Jacobsohn, Marriott: "We work closely with our development partners to achieve success. In 2024, the Marriott Branded Residences portfolio (142 open projects and 138 in development) generated $2.1B in residential sales revenue for third-party developers, nearly double the previous year's total. We encourage real estate developers to engage with our global Residential & Mixed-Use Development team as early as possible—ideally once a potential site has been selected and is under the developer's control to determine the appropriate brand and programming for the project.

"However, if a developer is still in the process of identifying markets and potential sites, as a first step toward collaboration we can provide guidance and feedback."



Four Seasons Private Residences, One Dalton Street, Boston

James Price, Four Seasons: "Before design concepts have been developed; meaningful conversations can start once a developer has a concrete opportunity and an outline vision. That said, we are often approached with opportunities and then bring in development partners.Location, scale, and a shared vision with the developer are the primary elements we look for at the outset."



Waldorf Astoria Residences Denver Cherry Creek

Jonathan Wingo, Hilton: "Sooner is always better. We prefer a collaborative approach and see the best results when the brand has an opportunity to immerse the project team (architect, interior designer, landscape architect, etc.) in the brand positioning, programming and standards."

Apartment at The OWO by Raffles, London

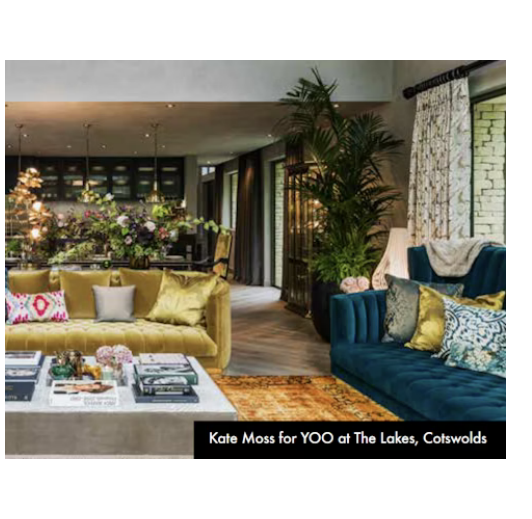
Jeff Tisdall, Accor: "Our collaboration with partners really starts from the initial planning phases and is an important element of our 360° turnkey support.

"With 25 residential brand collections available covering luxury, ultra-luxury, premium and lifestyle segments, we have the ability to explore projects from a variety of perspectives.

"Working closely with our partners from the outset helps us align brand recommendations with needs of targeted homeowners and, in turn, enable a customized service offering and design that is right for the market."

One&Only Private Homes Porto Novi, Montenegro

Jonathan Tomlinson, Kerzner: "A developer should engage with potential brand partners immediately on conceptualisation of their development. This enables a developer to determine the brand's suitability, while providing key input into the structure of the project and necessary planning considerations while enabling its ability to provide support across all real estate functions, and to align key strategic development objectives. At Kerzner we're engaged hand-in-hand at every step throughout the project lifecycle, working with our developer partners to achieve mutual objectives and, just as importantly, ensure delivery on every aspect of our brand promise to all stakeholders and homeowners."



Kate Moss for YOO at The Lakes, Cotswolds

James Snelgar, YOO: "The simple answer is as early as possible; thismeans there is time to get everything right. No one ever expects to hit the ground running but, unsurprisingly, this does happen a lot.

"In our case we like the developer to own the site, have consent to build, and have finance in place. We also prefer the local team to have undertaken a rough schematic so we know the height, the massing and volume."

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2. How long does it take from initial discussion with a developer to completing contracts?

Dana Jacobsohn, Marriott: "A typical deal will take a few months, but our team can work as quickly as needed to execute the developer's vision if the project is a great fit for our brands. Our goal is to make the process seamless, with a focus on long- term success from brand selection all the way to opening."

James Price, Four Seasons: "Whilst agreements can be completed in under a year, 1- 2 years is typical, and some can take even longer. Complexities of projects can vary significantly, and the resource, experience and familiarity of the developer with the operator will also have a wide variance."

Jonathan Wingo, Hilton: "This varies greatly depending on several factors. We've executed deals in less than 30 days and others have taken more than 12 months. I don't have empirical data on this. The biggest factor is typically the level of experience of the developer, their consultants and legal representation."

Jeff Tisdall, Accor: "This can vary significantly across projects and really depends on the needs of each partner. Often there is an immediate alignment and consensus, enabling the commercial framework to be formalised within a matter of months.

"In other instances, we spend more time upfront exploring various scenarios with partners, to help them confirm the right strategy and brand direction. What is important for our partners is that we are able to respond to their timing needs and enable them to move efficiently through their decision-making processes."

Jonathan Tomlinson, Kerzner: "Developers should assess a brand's residential experience and support, to ensure the selected brand aligns with their vision and objectives. This process does vary depending on whether a developer has a preferred brand in mind or is undertaking an operator selection process: generally, this seldom takes less than 12 months and can take up to 24 months, as both parties should conduct necessary due diligence to ensure objectives and compatibility is aligned."

James Snelgar, YOO: "It varies. Typically it is inside 12 months, but sometimes it can take years.From initial discussion to contract it's usually 1-6 months, then 2-3 months of legals, with design and marketing teams mobilising upon signing.

"The most successful collaborations are fast moving, with clients who have a strong vision and know what they want, and we find that if discussions and negotiations go on for too long, the deal never happens."

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3. Your top criteria when evaluating a potential project to partner with?

Dana Jacobsohn, Marriott: "1. Site (control, entitlements, views, and accessibility).

2. Residential demand and pricing in line with the desired brand.

3. Developer experience in the premium and/or luxury residential space.

4. Existing supply and competition in the market; Ability to secure financing to construct an complete the project."

James Price, Four Seasons: "1. Location: we have priority markets we target, both for mixed use projects but in particular now for our standalone residential portfolio.

2. Mature market with clear buyer profile.

3. Shared vision (based on quality of offering).

4. Development partner having a strong track record & financial strength.

5. Experience of project team."

Jonathan Wingo, Hilton: "1. Credibility, experience and reputation of the developer.

2. Site location.

3. Alignment of project vision and positioning with the brand.

4. Financial wherewithal.

5. Agreement on commercial terms."

Jeff Tisdall, Accor: "1. Will the proposed brand and associated service offering play an essential role in enabling our partner to achieve their residential business objectives?

2. In a mixed-use context, will the hotel serve to elevate the residential experience and, at the same time, will the branded residences lend synergies to the hotel investment?

3. Confidence in underlying market demand.

4. Proven partner, with a strong mixed-use track record.

5. Location, of course!"

Jonathan Tomlinson, Kerzner: "1. Developer Strength and Vision

2. Market and Location

3. Project Size/Scale and suitability for the brand

4. Development Financial and Commercial viability

5. Developer's experience and execution capability."

James Snelgar, YOO: "1. Developer experience and track record

2. Suitable construction budget confirmation

3. Project scale – unit numbers, common areas and amenities

4. Project price point

5. Location and target customer."

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4. Are you seeing any noteworthy new trends?

DanaJacobsohn, Marriott: "We continue to see increased residential demand for second homes in locations that allow Residence Owners and their families to vacation and work remotely. Buyers across our brands are seeking larger interior and outdoor spaces, offices within their homes, walkable neighbourhoods, and exceptional wellness amenities such as yoga studios, mindfulness gardens, and Himalayan Salt Saunas. Lastly, we are seeing developers and buyers interested in branded residences across all our 16 full-service brands, ranging from premium to luxury brands."

James Price, Four Seasons: "Location wise, we're seeing an increase in demand for 'second home' locations where people can spend more time, balancing this with their primary (often urban) homes, so branded and serviced residential communities are likely to feature increasingly.

"Within home design, we're seeing a reflection of the 'work from home' ethos, requiring more spacious accommodation with an emphasis on private work zones. Additionally, it is critical to have a great (and well-spaced) amenity program; however, although there seems to be demand for more and more facilities, which means higher service charges, a key question is 'what are residents prepared to pay for'?"

Jonathan Wingo, Hilton: "In line with our 2023 Hilton Trends report, we have noted greater demand for wellness and remote working spaces, both in-residence and shared, plus increased interest in standalone private residences."

Jeff Tisdall, Accor: "The mega trend we see coming out of the pandemic is remote work and related hybrid variations. This has driven demand for residential locations outside of city centres, and for second homes that offer turnkey services that enable homeowners to transition seamlessly between their properties.

"Branded residences with rich service offerings, and dedicated teams who support with pre-arrival and post-departure services, are exceptionally well placed to address these new market requirements. Of course, the impact is far ranging. We see a need in some schemes to add a second home office, co-working facilities are increasingly a feature of residential common area facilities, and generally there is demand for flexible, multi-use spaces.

"No doubt, these market dynamics are contributingto the strong demand we are seeing in standalone branded residences, which is increasingly a focusfor Accor One Living. In 2023, standalone branded residences represented 30% of Accor's signings, and we expect this trend to continue."

> **Jonathan Tomlinson, Kerzner:** "We're seeing several key trends shaping the branded residential market today as it continues to grow with a array of brand and offers available to buyers. At Kerzner our buyers prioritise experience driven living, bespoke services with personalised, intuitive services, exclusivity, and strong investment value while placing a strong emphasis on the community and connection to our brands. We're also noticing and increased demand for sustainability and smart living requirements."

> **James Snelgar, YOO:** "Consideration for wellness increasingly forms part of the mix, along with environmental consciousness."

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5. Have you noticed any change in developers' expectations about the support they require from brand partners?

> **DanaJacobsohn, Marriott: "**We know that expectations are strong, and our external developers are very pleased with the Development, Operations, and Sales & Marketing support provided by our seasoned residential team throughout the lifecycle of a project. We recently launched ONVIA, our exclusive owner recognition platform, and we continuously strive to create and elevate best-in-class marketing opportunities and customer acquisition strategies to drive consumer preference.For example, we generate strong leads through our dedicated website and HEREIN Magazine, a lifestyle publication developed exclusively for our branded residences and Residence Owners. We also leverage data through customised targeting to reach high-net-worth Marriott Bonvoy loyalists who we know have a propensity for our brands."

> **James Price, Four Seasons:** "We try to lead that conversation from the outset, impressing upon our development partners that we are there to support and provide insight, experience and expertise – not just simply to 'police' the use of the brand!Developers we work with are really focussed on two things- the long-term credibility and assurance they can promote to buyers driven by the fact that Four Seasons will be the property manager vs a third party, together with the marketing support that we bring helping to optimise pricing and ensure strong pace of sales."

> **Jonathan Wingo, Hilton:** "I've been working on branded residential products for over 15 years and the questions we get asked feel pretty much the same. What's changed is that the brands are now providing more of what developers have been asking for, primarily more consultative services around the programming, and greater assistance with marketing their project."

> **Jeff Tisdall, Accor:** "Developers today understand they have real choice and, in a world of increasing consumer segmentation, they seek brands that truly resonate with their target market.
>
> "In addition to seeking bespoke brand solutions, developers want partners with a proven ability to bring these experiences to life during the operating phase. It is not enough to 'brand it'; you need to be willing and able to embrace residential operations, customise services for a private residential setting, and ultimately recognise homeowners as best customers of the brand they are buying into.This demand for turnkey solutions is really the inspiration behind Accor One Living."

> **Jonathan Tomlinson, Kerzner:** "Developers now have a lot of choices who to partner with, and increasingly require a brand partner who understands the importance of branded residential to their project and are aligned with their objectives."

> **James Snelgar, YOO:** "With us, not so much. Their greatest concern is usually to increase the visibility and profile of their project to enhance sales pace and values."

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6. Although non-hospitality brands are increasing, hospitality brands still account for the overwhelming majority of branded residential projects. What is it that continues to attract buyers (and developers) to hotel brands?

> **DanaJacobsohn, Marriott: "**The lifestyle delivered by, and the community created by our dedicated residential team resonates with both buyers and developers. Our Residence Owners love – and expect – bespoke design complemented by exquisite, personalised service, and our track record as the largest branded residential operator with the longest tenure gives us enormous credibility in the market."

> **James Price, Four Seasons:** "The leading hotel brands provide a very clear value proposition, which is all about providing excellent levels of service and really understanding what HNWIs value.Looking after people (whether guests or homeowners) is at the heart of what we do; of course, creating beautiful design and experiencesis a huge part of the appeal, but the proven service culture offered by established hospitality brandsis what appeals to buyers in the long term.The developers in turn rely on this to drive optimal pace and price in their sales."

> **Jonathan Wingo, Hilton:** "Hospitality brands offer the greatest value and the greatest enhancements to a buyer's lifestyle, whereas non-hospitality brands typically only offer enhanced design, which is just one piece of what a branded residence can offer.
>
> "Hilton brings over 100 years of hospitality experience to each resident's home, which includes exceptional design that's highly functional, along with all the services that we deliver at our hotels and are renowned for. Hospitality brands can also offer an owner benefits package that's beyond what design or luxury retail brands can offer to high-net-worthindividuals, especially those who travel frequently."

> **Jeff Tisdall, Accor:** "Buyers continue to be attracted by brands that innovate, address unmet needs, and deliver on promises. For successful brands like Raffles, Fairmont and SLS, it is not about bringing a 'hotel experience' to homeownership, but rather the successful translation of that brand into a private residential setting.
>
> "Design must enable a service offering and experience that is not only 'on brand' but tailored to the preferences of buyers. With more than two decades experience of managing exclusive homeowner communities, our partners and their buyers have a lot of confidence we will not only get this right, but – crucially – continue to do so for years to come."

> **Jonathan Tomlinson, Kerzner:** "Buyers and developers continue to choose Kerzner's brands for our exceptional, intuitive service, exclusive lifestyle, and seamless ownership experience. We deliver ultra-luxury living with world-class hospitality, meticulous property management, and a strong investment proposition. For many, owning a Kerzner branded residence, is one of the most significant investments of their lives—one with deep emotional ties to both the brand and their property. Our integrated resort-residential model, or standalone residential where we've recently entered, enhances desirability, exceptional experiences and lasting memories. Developers benefit from our brand equity, pricing power, and the trust that comes with a globally recognised name."

> **James Snelgar, YOO:** "Obviously service levels are usually increased, as well as the ability to measure 'in market' build quality, design and brand standards. Familiarity provides an extra level of comfort. There is a sense that they are in safe hands from the beginning."

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7. Your top three tips for developers?

> **DanaJacobsohn, Marriott:** "1. Visit existing co-located and standalone projects in our global portfolio, immerse yourself in the incredible amenities and facilities, and talk to existing Residence Owners and developers about their experiences.
>
> "2. Partner with a strong brand, which will support pricing, sales velocity, and secure financing.
>
> "3. Collaborate early with the brand team to select approved architects and interior design firms
>
> capable of delivering an on-strategy project."

> **James Price, Four Seasons:** "1. Engage with the operator sooner than later;
>
> the best operators have been managing resort and residential homes for decades, so offer huge experience on what works best for people and where you can really add value.
>
> 2. Think about what the brand will bring to your project, and if that will hold true for owners for years to come, i.e. what are the tangible benefits the brand will bring to someone living in that property; put yourself in the shoes of the buyer and ask "what am I really getting here?"
>
> 3. Do the research and be realistic; understanding the market dynamics of the location is critical and, while some brands may promise higher price premiums, the numbers must be robust and based on expert consultation."

> **Jonathan Wingo, Hilton:** "1. Assemble a competent and experienced team.
>
> 2. Encourage teams to embrace the brand that has been selected to work collaboratively.
>
> 3. Communicate well and frequently, avoiding work isolation and then submitting materials/plans with short deadlines."

> **Jeff Tisdall, Accor:** "1. Getting really clear on needs and preferences
>
> of the target market for residences is essential. Knowing how purchasers will use their home drives design, residential amenities, customization of service offering and owner benefits.
>
> 2. Engage early on with the Hotel Operator. Mixed-use projects are exciting and there is a tremendous amount of value to unlock, but doing so requires careful planning and extensive collaboration.
>
> 3. Make sure your brand partner is committed to every phase of your project, and has the team to deliver on this commitment."

> **Jonathan Tomlinson, Kerzner:** "1. Do Your Homework – Ensure the brand has a proven track record in successfully delivering branded residences and is committed to achieving all stakeholder objectives.
>
> 2. Align with the Right Brand – Not all hospitality brands offer the same value. Choose a partner with deep expertise in branded residences and
>
> a dedicated residential team. At Kerzner, we've successfully developed and operated ultra-luxury private homes and branded residential projects across 20+ countries, ensuring seamless and effective integration between all stakeholders.
>
> 3. Think Beyond the Sale – A branded residence is more than just a real estate transaction; it's a long-term relationship between homeowners, the developer, and the brand and being aligned with your objectives is critical for the development to succeed."

> **James Snelgar, YOO:** "1. Don't start marketing prematurely. Not until you have satisfactory, solid answers to every conceivable question anyone could ask.
>
> 2. Go green! Sustainability matters.
>
> 3. Look around at what everyone else is doing – and don't do that!"

Download the full Graham Associates report at ***gagms.com***

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By PrimeResi Journal

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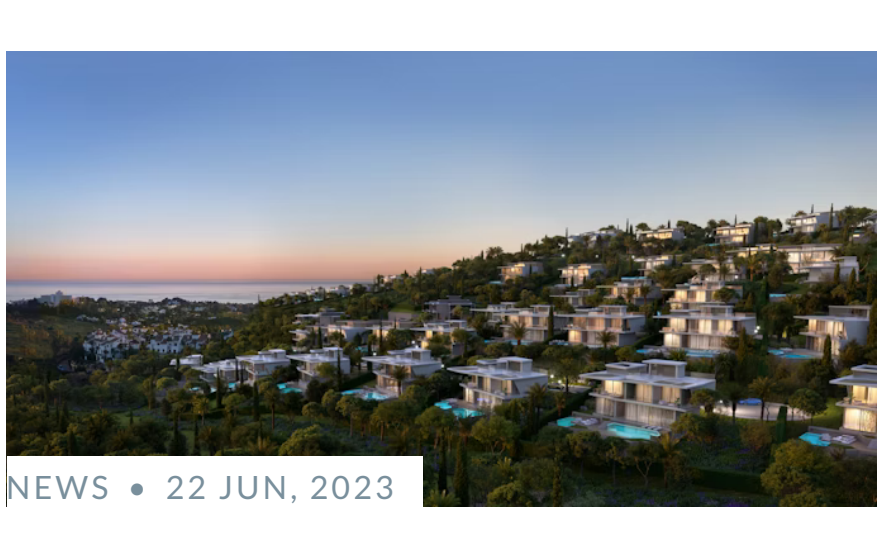

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The Rise & Rise of Branded Residences: 12 industry experts explore the trends, challenges & future of the sector