

# SAYFCO

SAYFCO Holding sal is a private Lebanese company owned by Mr. Chahe and Serge Yerevanian. Specializing in the development of large-scale residential and commercial centers, the company enjoys a 50-year track record in the real estate industry, where it has completed over USD 2 Bn worth of projects, representing over 2 million square meters of real estate. It focuses on the development of middle-income housing as well as large luxurious, residential and tourist developments. The company has earned recognition for excellence in the real estate development industry, offering all aspect of real estate services from the undertaking of feasibility studies to financial analysis, design, building, promoting, selling and managing residential communities and commercial centers. **Mr. Chahe talks to us about his projects, prospects and winning the Man of The Year Award by Beirut International Award Festival (BIAF) for his remarkable achievements and distinctive developments.**

## HOW CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR COMPANY PERFORMANCE AND EVOLUTION IN 2013? HOW DO THESE FIGURES COMPARE TO 2012?

Obviously, 2013 was one of our best years and it is remarkable because I think for Lebanon, it was probably one of the worst years. In 2013 alone, we were able to sell over 2,000 units – whereas in 2011 and 2012, we sold around 1,000 units, averaging to around 500 units per year. Over the past three months, we were averaging over 500 units per month. It is an exponential increase because we had more projects, along with the SAYFCO brand becoming more known, and the delivery of past projects we started in 2010 and 2011. We have already delivered a few projects, and in the next two to three months, we will be delivering another two to three. This will help our 2014 figures, as we are aiming to sell around 5,000 units in the upcoming year.



Panorama

Of the 3,500 units sold over the past few years, 99 percent were sold to Lebanese clients, 35 percent of which were expats. Buyers fall between the ages of 25 and 35 years old, which means we are actually selling to the Lebanese youth, and this makes us proud. Other than the financial satisfaction this brings, there is also this patriotic satisfaction. It makes us happy that the youth is investing in their country. What makes you attached to your country is your home; so by giving them a home, you are assuring their stay.

## DESCRIBE YOUR LATEST REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENTS. WHERE ARE THEY AND WHY? CRYSTAL TOWERS

Our past few projects were mega projects – such as Crystal Towers, which is one of the highest towers on the coastline outside of Solidere. Crystal Towers consists of two towers, one of which is residential and made up of 30 floors above 100 meters, and another commercial tower of 20 floors, which was sold out in less than 12 days after being launched in 2011.

### FORTYFOUR

Another mega project we are working on is the second highest tower in Lebanon called FortyFour, which was recently launched on our Facebook page. It consists of a modern, all-glass façade, forty-four floors, shops on the ground floor, offices on the first 12 floors and residential apartments from the 14<sup>th</sup> until the 44<sup>th</sup> floors.

### LES ROCHES

Les Roches is another mega project we launched in 2013, consisting of one-of-a-kind with chalets selling at USD 100,000 with only a USD 10,000 down payment. Out of 400 units, we sold 330 units in one month.

### REDROCK

We also launched Redrock, a mountain resort in Batouta, consisting of 650 units of chalets, an international spa – the biggest in the region in fact – and the first bio-agricultural farm in Lebanon. The farm will cover an area of 50,000 square meters, in which vegetables and natural fruits will be grown. Residents will be able to eat from the land.

### ADMIR

Admir in Adma Ghazir was also launched in 2013. It's a 70,000 square meter hill on which we're building a project of 400 units, consisting of around 50 buildings, each of which includes a pool on its roof.



Crystal Towers

Thanks to the 2,000-2,500 units that we sold in 2013 alone, we were able to launch all these new projects. We are also working on establishing a Saudi SAYFCO, because there exists high demands of residential units there – over 275,000 per year in fact.

## DO ANY OF YOUR PROJECTS INCLUDE A GREEN ASPECT?

Redrock will be the first real green project, because all its soil will be treated with no pesticides. Also, we will be trying to make use of the rainwater in order to water our fruits, vegetables and flower gardens. Solar energy use will also be made available.



Fortyfour Tower

## HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE LEBANESE REAL ESTATE MARKET?

It is stagnant, but I would not call this a recession. Small apartments are selling better though. The economical and governmental situations, as well as regional and security factors are ingredients that weaken a healthy real estate sector. It is in these difficult times that you have to squeeze your prices, squeeze your profit margins, offer a perfect product, do proper market studies, avoid relying on

debt and rely on equity instead. All these elements have really put the light on SAYFCO.

## WHAT ARE THE NEW CHALLENGES YOU EXPECT THE MARKET TO FACE IN 2014?

I have hope for Lebanon. My prediction in a way is that things will get better, starting in the summer of 2014; and in the next two to three years, we will witness a real estate boom.

## WHAT ARE THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT YOU HAVE TOWARDS A “HEALTHIER REAL ESTATE SECTOR” IN 2014 AND BEYOND?

I made it by believing in myself, keeping a positive attitude despite all the ups and downs, and by having perseverance. In these difficult times, being able to have the number one worldwide page on Facebook – with two and half million fans – and to sell to 3,500 Lebanese is rather an accomplishment. I hope that this inspires people to believe they can make it as well.

## TELL US MORE ABOUT WINNING THE MAN OF THE YEAR AWARD.

BIAF awarded me the Man of The Year title because they believe I am inspiring the Lebanese youth and encouraging them even more. In less than eight years, I was able to re-establish SAYFCO. It is an honor accepting such an award because as a Lebanese, I am being awarded in Lebanon for success I accomplished in my country, while inspiring the youth to make it in Lebanon. And this remains my ultimate goal. Gaining this award at 42 years, while most people in Lebanon are awarded after they pass away, makes me want to push even further and achieve more.