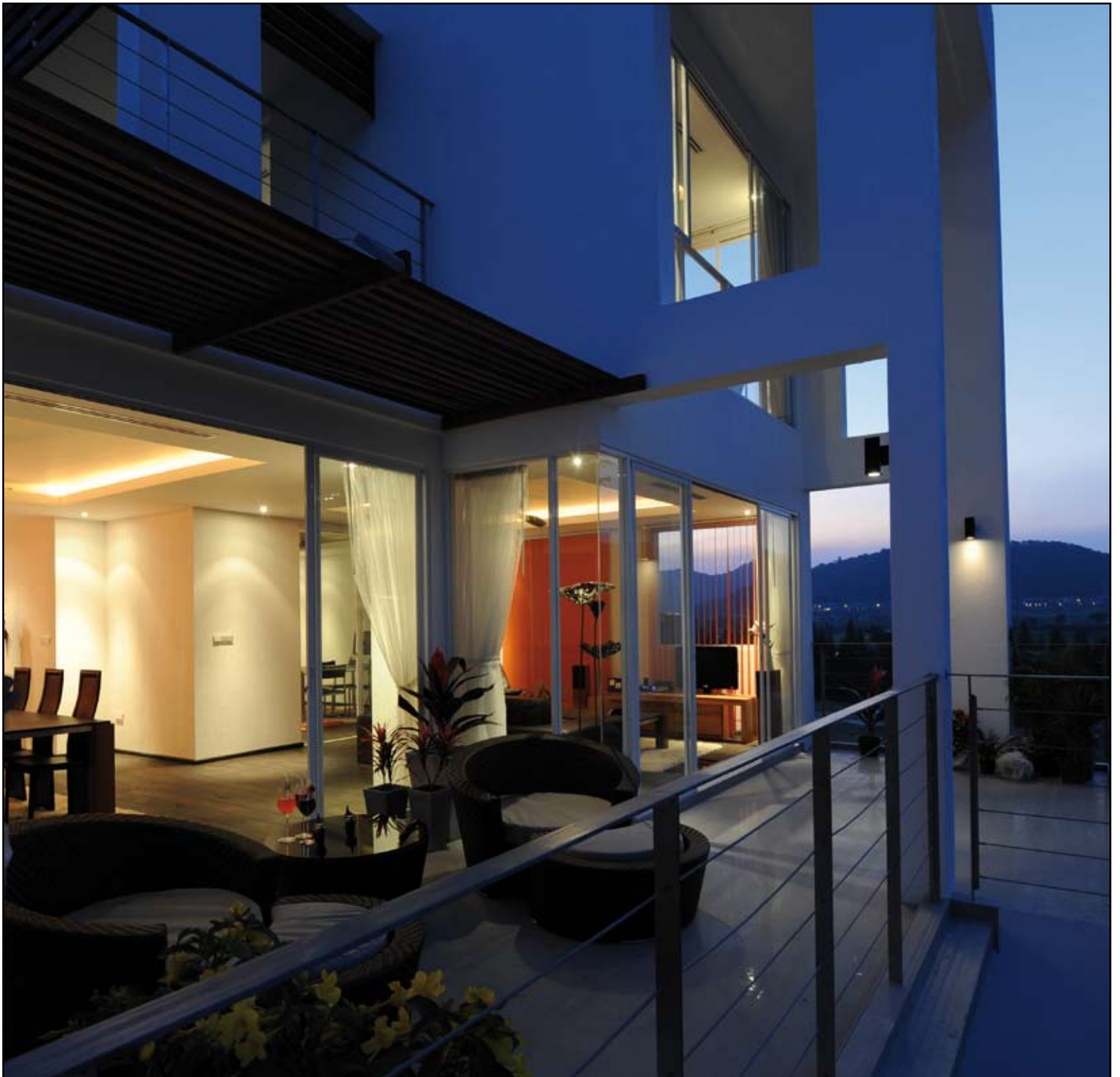
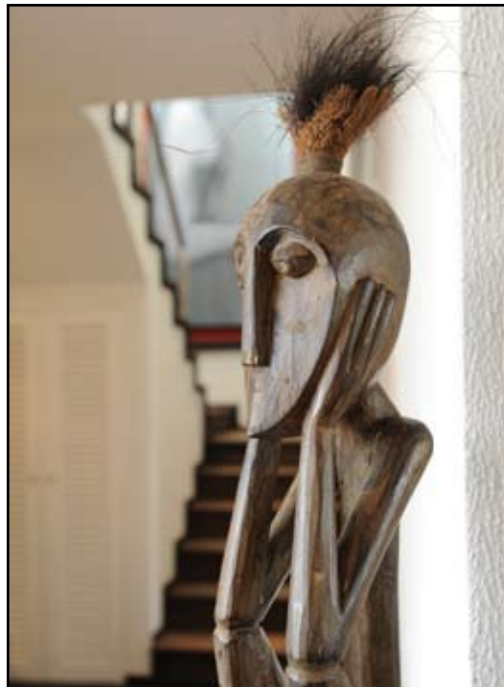


Through the Keyhole

ROOM WITH A VIEW

Peter Ton's newly completed penthouse brings bold and modern design to a quiet, rural valley at the foot of the Black Mountains.





The painting hanging above the staircase is four metres tall and was commissioned specially. The apartment is also adorned with a selection of Balinese sculptures.

Dutchman Peter Ton is the owner and developer of Baan Ing Phu, an exclusive villa and condominium development near Hua Hin. He is also the first resident of the project, having recently completed his own 250 square metre, duplex penthouse unit.

Before moving to Thailand four years ago, Ton was at the helm of successful IT businesses in the UK, Belgium and Holland. "Managing these companies was a good job, but sometimes it is nice to do something that makes people happy, and I can assure you that software

doesn't make people happy," he jokes. "I thought I would come to Thailand and do something totally different, something more tangible."

Within weeks of arriving in Thailand he had started a real estate maintenance company, but sold this a few months later because it was "too operational, too much like a software company," he says.

Ton then came across an investment opportunity in a real estate project a few kilometres inland from Hua Hin. He agreed to invest, but decided he wanted to buy

Through the Keyhole



The development enjoys panoramic views over the adjacent golf course and the Black Mountains beyond.

part of the plot to build a development of his own. He ended up with the whole project.

"I started with a small piece of land, just to build five villas was the initial idea, and then I got the opportunity to buy more land, which was part of the original plan of the previous owner. And then I bought more land again this year, so in total it is now almost 60 rai."

The plot itself is nestled in a scenic valley with panoramic views over the nearby Black Mountains, and adjacent to a newly built golf course. Within easy reach of Hua Hin but far removed from the busy atmosphere of the town, the area is already home to a number of small scale, high end villa developments. Baan Ing Phu however is on a much larger scale; 18

custom-built villas and an eight unit condominium block have already been completed, but there are plans for another 18 spa villas, and 64 condominium units in five different blocks.

"It is a big project but it is very close to where the high end villas are, so it had to look special. We didn't just want to put up a square condominium block. It had to look attractive from the outside too," says Ton.

"We decided to work with different heights, different depths. The blocks are mainly only 2 storeys high, with the penthouses on a third storey, so it looks quite playful. And the outside at the front is a combination of lots of wood, glass, concrete and stainless steel. So I wanted the building to look very modern, but not too



The use of modern materials is softened by wooden tones and hints of bright colour.

cold. That's why we used lots of wood. It's very modern but not disturbing in its environment."

Ton adopted the same principles when it came to the interior design of his own penthouse unit.

"I am not a designer, but I know very well what I want," he says. "The theme for the interior was again that it had to be very modern, and the materials that I used outside like stainless steel, I also used inside. So for example when designing the stairway that goes from the first floor to the second floor living area, we used stainless steel for the handrails, in exactly the same design as we used for the balustrades outside.

I wanted the materials to be consistent on both the exterior and the interior. We used wood and leather to

compensate for the cooler materials such as the steel." For the artwork on display in the apartment, Ton opted for size over quantity. He has just three paintings, up to four metres tall, all commissioned from the same Bangkok-based painter, Apisan Rorchan. He liaised with Apisan for over a month until he was happy with the designs, but he now says that the three big paintings are "all the artwork I need in the house".

Ton's conversion from IT entrepreneur to real estate developer has been as rapid as it has successful. And with the completion of the first units at Baan Ing Phu, including his own, the Dutchman can no doubt be satisfied that his new career is providing the "something more tangible", that was lacking in his previous job. ■