

Property on Koh Samui – buyers guide

Buying property on Koh Samui can be a rewarding investment option, your money will not go as far as it might do elsewhere in Thailand, but compared with Western markets there are still plenty of bargains to be had. The choice is surprisingly diverse with everything from high-end super villas down to basic bungalows on offer, either as a long lease or to buy outright. Views, space and local amenities are all aspects to consider before making a purchase. The property market on Koh Samui is undergoing a change and current trends suggest long leases and condominium sales may begin to feature more prominently in the years to come. Buying land as an investment is less attractive than it used to be. As market matures and growth occurs in areas that have already been developed, residential properties, often with management contracts attached are the more popular choice. Current developments tend to involve a range of property choices on a single site. Thus, stand alone villas share space with smaller properties, often with communal facilities to supplement the private ones. On Samui, prices still vary enormously depending a whole host of factors far beyond size and location. Options between 2 and 8 million Baht are continuing to attract plenty of interest on Samui, but the mid-level property market is relatively quiet, especially in contrast to its previously sustained period of growth. Victor, however, is confident that another boom is sure to follow, as many investors still believe Samui will follow a similar development path to Phuket, with a well-established property sector eventually offering long-term security to investors and residents enjoying all the benefits that go with a full-service destination. Thai buyers are also beginning to see the island as an attractive option but tend to prefer the convenience of being close to commercial areas or in secure gated developments. Condos are yet to make a significant impact on the island although recent projects are certainly beginning to include them. Notable condominium developments include Casavela, Peregrina bay and Kirikayan, all of which offer luxury high-end facilities on site. In Thailand, a foreigner can personally own a building, but not the land it sits on. Therefore an apartment within a condominium provides an obvious solution to the foreign ownership issue. Those who still choose to buy land, for example foreigners with a Thai spouse, will find this still represents the best value on Samui and therefore offers the maximum returns. Small inland plots are still very affordable and with some knowledge of the local construction scene, materials and labour can be found easily and cheaply. However, few agents recommend this unless the investors are prepared to stay and supervise the entire building process or at least return every two or three weeks to check on progress. Even with a professional construction firm on board, supervision and checks are essential to guarantee satisfaction. Samui now has dozens of property agents, building firms and lawyers some with good reputations for satisfying foreigners demands. Others tend to waste

your time, trying their luck on all sorts of unsuitable houses. It is worth being patient and familiarising yourself with the various \suburbs and dimensions of the city before buying. There is also quite a range in value-for-money and new arrivals should first get a more realistic idea of what's on the market before throwing lots of cash around.

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