

THE VOICE OF THE OVERSEAS PROPERTY INDUSTRY

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OVERSEAS  
PROPERTY  
PROFESSIONAL

Awards  
The 2012  
launch

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# Paradise on the horizon?

Why does Starwood Hotels boss Frits van Paasschen think residential tourism is "on the cusp of a golden age?"

## Chinese puzzle

Do you know how to deal with China's bureaucracy and get your money out?

## OPP interview

Why does hard work and transparency mean so much to MBI founder Robin Forster?

## Aussie outlook

Our new Australian columnist Michael Matusik asks has the market turned a corner?





WORDS | Geoff Hadwick

# Going for gold in 2012

It is time to start thinking about the OPP Awards for Excellence 2012. Judged by a global panel of just under 50 highly influential business leaders drawn from every part of the overseas property industry, this year's scheme will offer a broad range of categories and generate more profile and more prestige for its winners than ever before. Get into the 2012 Olympic spirit and start preparing your gold medal entry now.

There is plenty of time to go before our entry deadline of midnight on Friday, August 3 2012, but we wanted to give you as much information as early as possible. It is never too soon to start thinking and planning.

As well as showing potential buyers and partners that you set the highest possible standards, winning an OPP Award for Excellence 2012 could also have a tangible impact on your business.

An online entry form and application pack explaining the categories and the judging criteria in more detail will be hosted on our web site, [www.opp.org.uk](http://www.opp.org.uk), from mid May onwards, so keep checking the site.

We will accept electronic entries only via the online Word Document form

that will be hosted on our website and there will be Gold and Silver awards in each category, if the judges think appropriate. A downloadable PDF will also set out all of the judging criteria and give you all of the details.

Each entry will need to be accompanied by an entry fee of £295 plus VAT. Judging will take place during August and September and the shortlist will be announced immediately afterwards.

There will be news and features to promote the 2012 scheme in forthcoming editions of OPP magazine, on our web site [www.opp.org.uk](http://www.opp.org.uk) and in our weekly email newsletters. Please keep an eye out for them and, if you decide to take part, please allow us to wish you the best of luck.

And don't take our word for the

impact that winning an OPP Award can have on the reputation of your business. Here are the views of some of our winners in 2011:

**Campbell Ferguson, Owner & Director of Survey Spain S.L. and winner of the Best Overseas Property Business category:** "We have worked so hard and it is fantastic for us to be recognised as one of the good guys in the industry. We are thrilled that OPP has recognised this. The worldwide reach of OPP has provided us with the opportunity to put forward our services to others. By their, and the judges complimentary comments and decision, they've put us in front of a much wider audience."

**Peter Esders, Head of the Spanish Department at Chebsey & Co and winner of the Best Lawyer category:**

"Being recognised by the OPP Awards For Excellence is a huge achievement and honour for any company. Receiving a further award this year after winning the Best Lawyer category last year has been fantastic for Chebsey & Co. We are used to being appreciated by our clients but to be appreciated by the leaders in the industry and to be given such prestigious awards is special for us. Not only do these awards make you realise that all the hard work is worth it, they also undoubtedly help drive your business forward. Winning has not only brought us work but also strengthened our existing contacts within the industry. The awards have really increased awareness of our business and have played a great part in bringing our credibility and ethos to the attention of industry and the public alike."



## Our sponsors for 2012

OPP is very pleased to announce that Rightmove Overseas and Smart Currency Exchange will sponsor the 2012 OPP Awards for Excellence. We are looking forward to working closely with our two new sponsors very much, as we seek to find and recognise the best in the business.

Shameem Golamy, Head of Overseas at Rightmove Overseas, said: "Rightmove Overseas are delighted to support the OPP 2012 industry awards. OPP have always played an important part in recognising talent in the industry and we are proud to stand alongside them as a sponsor."

For Charles Purdy, the managing director of Smart Currency Exchange, the OPP Awards is "a scheme that recognises companies in the overseas property industry committed to offering exceptional products and customer service. Supporting OPP demonstrates Smart Currency Exchange's commitment to the industry as a whole, and how the currency transfer specialist values companies that share its own focus on raising industry standards and putting customers first. Forming partnerships with the UK's leading property portal, Rightmove Overseas, and now with B2B media channel OPP, highlights Smart's commitment to long-term growth in the overseas property sector."

Xavier Wiggins, chief executive of OPP and its parent company Richmond Green Group Ltd, says that he is "delighted to welcome two such important and high quality brands to the OPP Awards for Excellence 2012." "Their presence and participation in the whole process will add a lot of value and expertise."

"And last, but by no means least," says Wiggins, "we are absolutely thrilled to announce that the OPP Gala Awards Dinner is making a return this autumn after a three-year absence - a move that has been made possible in part by this exciting arrangement with our new sponsors."

**Paul Harrison**, Operations Director at Platinum Portfolio Builder and winner of the Best Innovation category: "As a hard working, highly focused Property Investment Company we welcome this chance to tell more and more agents/investors about what we do and why we are so good at it."

**Robert Pestello**, Director of Sales at Beach Republic and winner of the Best Fractional Scheme category: "It's fantastic to have won an award for what we knew was an incredible product. It feels awesome. And it's also an honour to be recognised at the industry's premier event. I want to thank everyone at OPP for considering Beach Republic alongside the world's leading fractional ownership resorts. To be commended on the international stage like this is truly humbling."

**Steve Melhuish**, CEO of Property Guru and winner of the Best Online Service category: "Winning these prestigious awards is definitely an encouragement to PropertyGuru Group. Not only does it establish the fact that the group is moving in the right direction, it also recognises the high standard of excellence we have on our services. In the past year, we've definitely set a benchmark and cemented our position as Asia's Leading Property Portal, with a

presence in 10 countries, and 4 offices regionally."

**Daniel Tan**, Marketing Manager at PropertyGuru and winner of the Best Media Brand category: "We are delighted to have won this award as it definitely strengthens our brand and enhances our company image. We believe that our customers will have greater confidence in us than before."

**Matt Williams**, Business Development Manager at Moneycorp and winner of the Best Financial Service Provider: "It is nice to be recognised. Moneycorp has always focused very heavily on the overseas property market and has worked hard to create tailored packages for agents and developers as well as clients. It is great that this hard work has been recognised by OPP and that our brand is featured alongside some truly exceptional companies in the other categories at this year's awards"

**Samantha Gore**, Sales Manager for uv10.com and winner of the Best Estate Agency category: "We operate in an industry that is still, despite the best efforts of voluntary regulatory bodies, a bit of a minefield for prospective investors. uv10 has done everything right from the day we set up in 2007, and awards such as these organised by OPP give us the

opportunity to communicate this to the overseas property buying public. We are highly selective about what we sell, conduct extensive due diligence and are ourselves full-time residents and multiple investors into Brazil. We put our money where our mouth is. It's great that OPP has recognised us as true experts in the Brazilian market, leaders in our field and a great example of how to do it properly - one of the reasons why we receive countless client referrals."

**Lobna Fawzy**, Marketing Specialist for Orascom Development and winner of the Best Affordable Developer category: "OPP has granted us a wonderful opportunity. Our project needs awards like this and having the OPP next to our name means a lot."

Being recognised by OPP and its panel of judges will present us to a larger audience and clients who want to invest in trustworthy overseas properties that deliver on quality. It is a great honour to be acknowledged by OPP."

**Jonathan Salsbury**, UK Sales Manager, Cybarco Ltd and winner of the Best Luxury Developer category: "We are absolutely delighted to have won this prestigious award. It is fantastic to be recognised by such a significant industry body as OPP and this award demonstrates our high standards and pursuit of excellence at all times. Winning this award demonstrates that Cyprus occupies a

**"This award will definitely raise our profile in the international property market"**

strong position as a key world-class luxury destination in the international property arena."

**Julian Houchin**, Director of iO Adria and winner of the Best Developer Southern Europe category: "Our achievements are the result of a very detailed strategy plan, communicating with customers about what they want, and researching well in high-end luxury. We are very honoured to have been awarded OPP's Gold Award for Best Developer in Southern Europe. The award is testimony to our (iO's) detailed planning and design of Dubrovnik Sun Gardens and our vision to be one of Europe's finest 5 star integrated resorts."

**Tan Sri Dato' Sri Leong Hoy Kum**, Managing Director of Mah Sing Group Berhad and winner of the Best developer Worldwide category: "We are honoured to win an OPP award, especially considering that we had to compete with other developers from across the globe. This award will definitely raise our profile in the international property market and provide us with an avenue to enhance our extensive network, whilst showcasing our products to the international market."

**Here are the categories for 2012, and a quick summary of the judging criteria you will need to think about and answer if you want to win:**

### 1. Best Global Developer.

We will ask entrants to explain / give evidence of:

- How you deliver value for money ... (i.e. the price of comparable developments in your area, region or country; the level of amenities and services provided; the price offered against market valuation; and so on.)
- Your financial packaging ... (i.e. how easy is it for today's buyer to get involved; payment plans; mortgages; pension compliance; "no money down" schemes; and so on.)
- Your marketing strategy and materials ... (i.e. accuracy; "responsible marketing"; innovative marketing; cohesion; search engine positions; ease of navigation of marketing materials; overall strength of marketing strategy; and so on.)
- Sales partner support ... (i.e. your commitment to sales partner training; reporting; commission structures and payment schedule of commissions; sales partner marketing support; and so on.)
- Your commitment to good customer service ... (i.e. internal training programmes; charters; response times; testimonials; and so on.)
- Your sales strategy and sellability ... (i.e. sales figures; overall strategy; sales training; and so on.)
- Your environmental impact ... (i.e. your social and physical environment; do you provide jobs for local people; eco friendly materials and strategies; and so on.)
- Your track record ... (i.e. what has your business delivered; plaudits; strength of company financially; etc.)