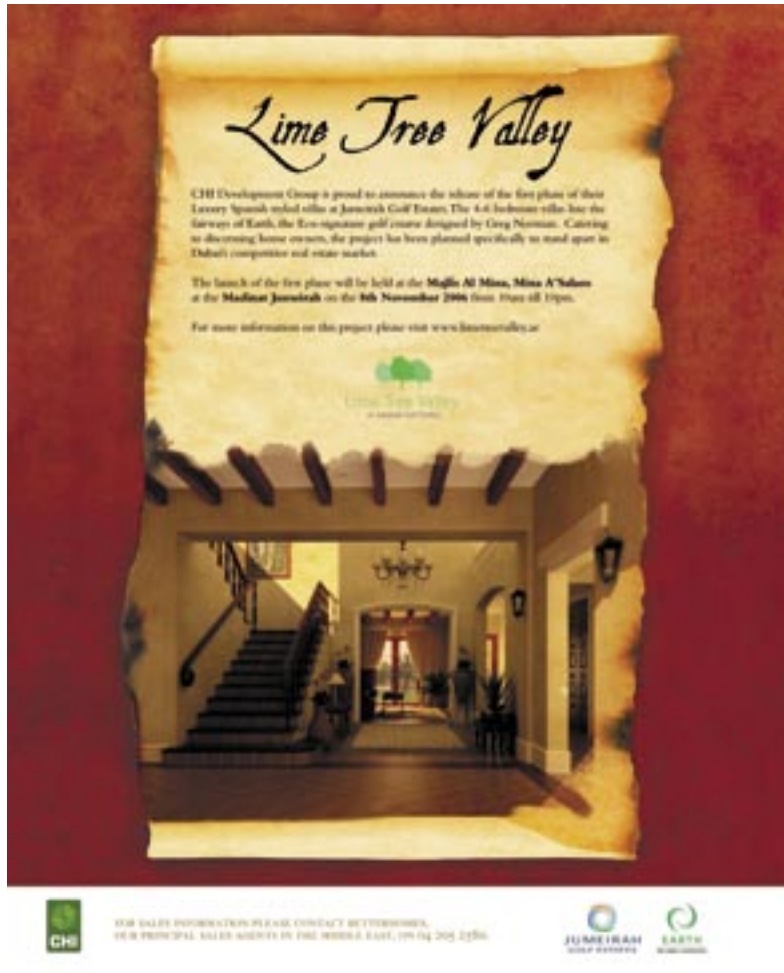




The Lime Tree Valley Diaries



Ambient marketing

Exactly what approach do you take to presenting a golf residential development of stature in the midst of a prolific property boom involving a corporate cast of thousands all vying for prominence? New Dubai's urbanisation program at its peak reputedly seized the assistance of 30% of the world's tower crane population, despite competition from a Chinese Dragon heading toward hosting a first Olympic Games and in the midst of an unprecedented economic expansion. Enter the Irish and Lime Tree Valley at Jumeirah Golf Estates.



by Andy McTiernan

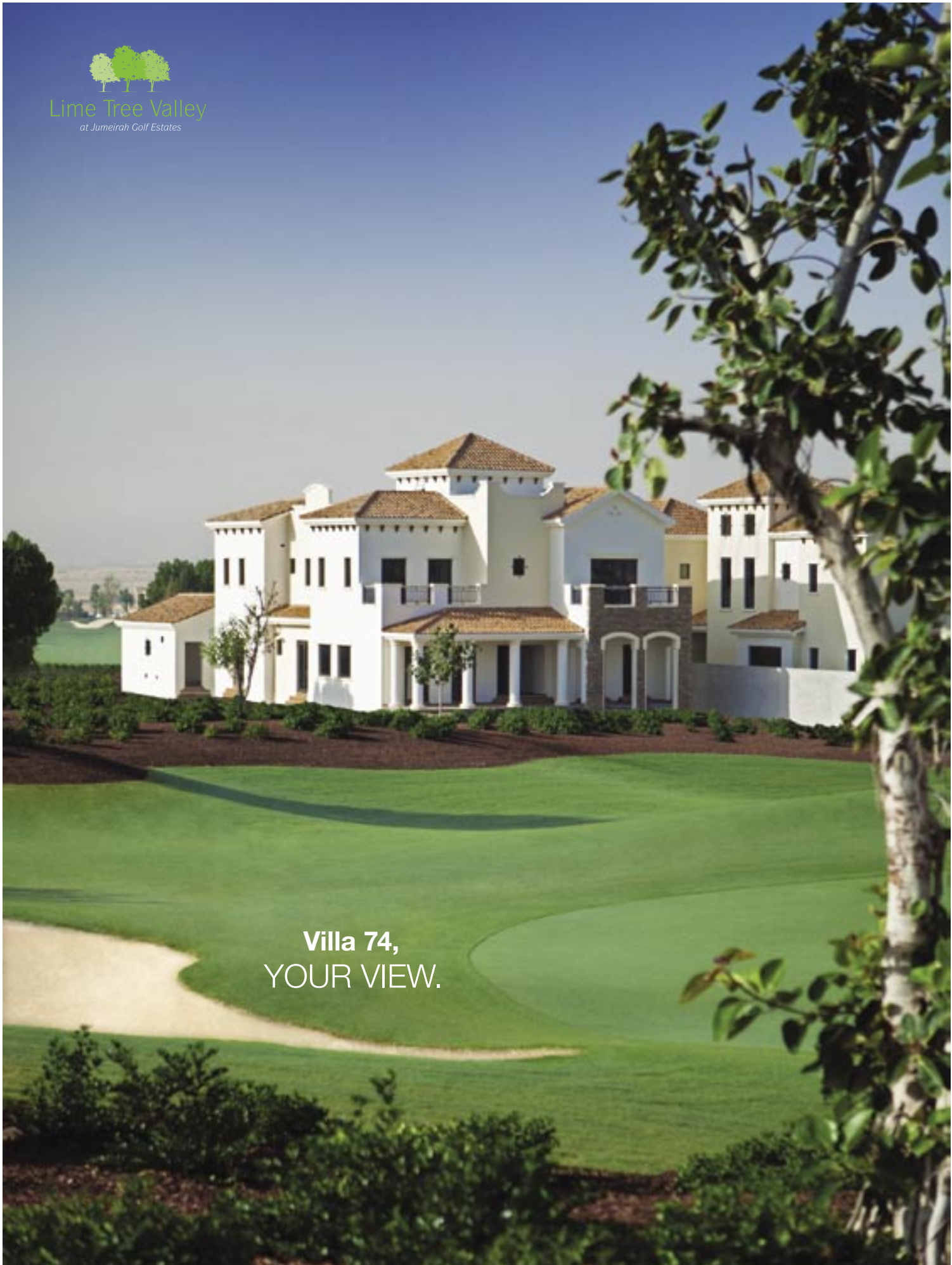
So there CHI were, proud owners of a relatively modest piece of land by comparison with what was evolving around them in a sea of superlatives, biggest, tallest, a global first etc, etc. Concrete and rebar steel structures rocketed skyward, clad in an armour of

mirrored glass covering a vast repertoire of design, as complex man made islands emerged from the foaming brine offshore in tandem. One might say that there was more than a small element of competition from a marketing perspective.

Roger Wakeham, Development Director at CHI for Lime Tree Valley, a residential community of substance rising at Jumeirah Golf Estates and, in the case of many of the remarkable residences it contains, already risen,



Lime Tree Valley
at Jumeirah Golf Estates



**Villa 74,
YOUR VIEW.**



CHI Development Group
RERA 251

To buy this view call +971 4 340 8914

www.limetreevalley.ae info@chi-uae.com



JUMEIRAH
GOLF ESTATES

tells all; in a marketing sense that is. As for my part, I merely wield the journeyman's writing implement and attempt to keep up.

"Our main business principle from day one was the desire to create a point of difference in our approach to that of our industry peers. We have, I believe, in all dimensions tried to be an accessible and not a faceless developer. Inviting potential clients into the office to spend a detailed two or three hours (or longer) with us was normal practice. We took clients to site to show them the shaping of the golf course and what their plot might overlook. We allowed early clients the options to make changes to their potential property. Brokers were engaged generally only to act as finders; we elected to painstakingly 'sell' our own villas on an in-house conducted basis. Even our marketing and advertising took a different tack."

"In October 2006, you were able to open any newspaper or magazine and confront an immense array of computer generated images of glossy towers and other un-built properties. Thus our early creative contained no buildings and no people whatsoever (the latter still stands true). We wanted to create a rich texture without gloss in order to express a legacy of craftsmanship and traditional building values. As a company we have a

distinctly Irish background and a development history which spans thirty years of exceptional building, which has added value in the eyes of most discerning members of property society."

However, when one is bombarded by glossy brochures from all quarters how do you rise above the marketing rainforest?

Marcus O'Grady, one of the founding partners of CHI, paints the verbal picture: "We noticed that the majority of property sales collateral presented the same stereotypical images. They were like holiday brochures. A vista of people enjoying themselves surrounded by a lifestyle as yet to be manufactured but no inkling of an actual product. The objective from our point of view was to encourage them to want to live in our properties. We felt a strong impulse to express a practical imagery, not overwhelmed by excessive false glamour, in other words a picture of authenticity. Any renderings employed were actually what you would expect to find upon completion of the product. It was important to convey a sense of heritage and old fashioned workmanship. In fact we showed no images of property at all in our initial ads, opting for a gradual build up."

An impressively short intake of breath ensues: "We eventually whipped the dust covers off the properties



themselves on our third advertisement. Even then we utilised hand drawn sketches as evidence of our tradition driven approach to building, which clients warmed to. The portrayals of the villas were reminiscent of old architectural records on vellum, as if they had been originally drawn in an old moleskin note book. It was not at all the intention to be clever, pictures are meant to stand out; for instance old bookshops are fascinating to so many people, and



there is an earnest feeling derived from turning over the pages of an antiquarian volume with an exquisite level of fine art illustration. We took a similar path to our logo branding, a simple colour scheme that balanced the green hues of Irish origins, together with a Celtic knot which also had a symbolically Arabesque link in keeping with historic Islamic designs."

"What of more modern branding techniques", say I swiftly, not wishing to disrupt the vocal flow with another air break?

"Our first website was innovative, it was one of the first to employ a click and turnover page by page with the sound of the paper turning, yet we also made use of the same drawing style, which lent itself to perhaps further reinforce the definition of a heritage background."

Roger intervened at this point: "We have just updated the website which we feel needed to display an entirely different sense of occasion. Clean crisp images that evoke the perfect light that falls on many a hamlet in the Mediterranean; the freshness of the golf course, the contrast between the green landscape and white of the villas etc. We are now able to take a fresh angle as we are in a position to display finished houses."

That was then and now, but suddenly in early 2007 Lime Tree Valley marketing tactics assumed a much lower key?

"There was a conscious decision to go quiet and become a working developer as we had in fact sold the quota of properties which we intended to bring to market at that time. We also liked the notion of being discreet as there was such a cacophony of noise in the market that we were in danger of being swept aside by the pervasive marketing of other developers. In this regard we did not even commit to any of the Cityscape events. However, to follow euphoria with action is essential. Thus we stepped back, diverted our energy supply to practicalities and let the 'chattering classes' take the reins, rumour mills,

bloggers. By now we were also riding on the coat-tails of the Jumeirah Golf Estates master marketing machine which was in full swing. Getting on with the job at hand is the traditional approach of course but exhibits a strong element of humility and commitment toward the paying customer; we are after all working builders by profession. We avoid wearing sales suits and a tie, for our true remit of course is ultimately to deliver a collection of high quality properties. We all spend considerable time on site ensuring that the project progresses in the most effective manner possible."

As the level of industry has progressed, CHI and LTV are back in the marketing frame with another shift in approach.

According to Philip Lloyd, another of the Partners: "Most certainly we are now in a different marketing phase, having established our work capability reputation. The language employed has taken a more contemporary approach as we to start to express an emotional experience for clients who are now able to see and feel a new home. The focus on the 'your view' campaign is intentional; the golf course is complete as a playable environment so what was formerly visualisation has become lush, landscaped and complete. In every sense we are better equipped to capture the hearts and minds of avid window gazers with an exceedingly pleasing aspect, a home attribute to which everybody aspires. The adverts, by their very simplicity, speak volumes about the environmental evolution at LTV and our confidence as a bespoke developer."

Standing out in the crowd is a cunning business, often underwritten by handsomely paid spin doctors and marketers, CHI have adopted one path amongst many to achieve this. Taking yours truly as a Guinea Pig, I have been called worse; there is no doubt in my mind that I have every desire to live there. Effective, most effective.