

A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Developing properties and curating new communities, one company is leading the way in Spain

AS THE FLAGSHIP LUXURY PROPERTY development in southern Europe, La Zagaleta stands out not only for its dedication to excellence in all aspects of quality and service, but also for its reputation as one of the few brands that continue to innovate and prosper in the face of economic adversity in Spain. Ignacio Pérez Díaz, Business Development Manager at La Zagaleta (UK) Ltd in London's city centre, explains why a project like La Zagaleta still attracts the world's elite and manages to sell luxury properties in the current recession.

How can La Zagaleta "escape" the general downwards trend of the real estate industry, especially in Spain, and being a luxury product?

Luxury goods, and specially property have suffered a lot in the last two years. Nevertheless it is important to distinguish between the various areas where the real estate is situated, and La Zagaleta is a good example of the good old saying "location, location, location". To start with, La Zagaleta is a fully gated, secure and very large real estate development. It is unique in its kind and enjoys the privileged climate and lifestyle of surrounding cities like Marbella, Malaga, Ronda or Sotogrande which are at its doorstep. A ten minute ride will take residents to San Pedro de Alcántara and world famous Puerto Banus.

The estate boasts a total of 420 large plots, with currently about half of the plots built, that is some 200 houses are currently built and occupied. The development owns two private 18 holes championship golf courses, an equestrian center, tennis courts, two beautiful clubhouses with a first class cuisine, a private heliport, six reservoirs and plenty of green land for hiking, jogging or mountain biking.

Current homeowners include some of Europe's leading personalities, successful entrepreneurs, companies executives, some famous personalities as well as retired people from the UK, Germany, Sweden, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland, the US, the Middle and Far East, and of course Spain.

With such background, an important length of advance in local and national standards and some 20 years of housing facilities and service management at the doorstep of the homeowners, La Zagaleta's success is no surprise to industry experts. At this level of luxury, good services both inside and outside

the estate is a must for the enjoyment of a holiday lifestyle. And it starts at Málaga airport, where a brand new and impressive passenger terminal is awaiting you, the 40 minute trip through the coastal highway with La Zagaleta's personal chauffeur will help improve what is called a good "sense of arrival".

What makes La Zagaleta different and what does it offer its residents today?

The principle of La Zagaleta's development idea is quite rare in Europe and certainly unique in Spain. Back in 1989, while most developers were trying to obtain maximum buildability ratios per available square meter of land, La Zagaleta's bet was precisely the opposite: "to reduce the density in order to increase the quality and space". In short, quality versus quantity, a definition of "Luxury". Combined with the gated resort style, widely spread through the US, and the construction of private golfing facilities that the developer undertook in the year 1991, was the perfect combination for the huge success to come. Our clients are looking for excellent building conditions but also a worthwhile price-quality ratio which they find with us, especially if they compare it with the French Riviera. Above all, our clients find in La Zagaleta discretion and the sense of being taken care of in the most secure and luxurious conditions.

La Zagaleta Service Management, an on-site subsidiary company of the developer is specialised in the maintenance and upkeep of the homes, which includes anything from garden landscaping, swimming pool and cleaning services to contracting a personal chef to a home-delivery laundry service. The service management on the estate is a true luxury, especially for those clients living thousands of miles away and seeking for hassle free maintenance of their homes with a trustworthy partner.

As of today, La Zagaleta constitutes a unique spot in the world with truly special homes, all of which in the mild and sunny climate of Southern Spain. With the exceptional surrounding of the mountains, the sea and the beautiful countryside of Andalucía, this development of the size of a mini state (nearly 10sq km) and its business model are, already now, serving as a model in the real estate industry and education and will make history for centuries to come.

How did La Zagaleta start?

La Zagaleta as a company was founded in 1991 and three years later the Club de Campo La Zagaleta was founded. La Zagaleta's Chairman is Mr. Enrique Perez Flores, a retired Spanish banker who has lived in Zurich since 1960; the purchase of the land was by La Zagaleta S.A. (the company) in a Spanish court in 1990, formerly owned by Adnan Khashoggi.

What does La Zagaleta represent today?

La Zagaleta is considered one of the most exclusive areas of the world and the total of the investment made on the estate represents approximately €1.5bn. In terms of European networking, it is quite unique and amongst its residents are entrepreneurs, sports figures, doctors and lawyers.

In a world where marketing can make or break a company, what has been the strategy for La Zagaleta when it comes to maintaining its appeal as a luxury brand?

It has been important for us to let potential buyers know that La Zagaleta continues to be successful even amidst the crisis; in other words, that we continue to evolve as a brand. The company is focused on giving residents a continued luxury experience within La Zagaleta by building alliances with top brands and exclusive events. La Zagaleta Lifestyle Magazine, an international luxury publication edited by La Zagaleta Company is a good example.

What are La Zagaleta's future projects as a developer?

First of all to continue consolidating and completing the remaining 50 percent of the estate, that is to build the remaining 200 homes. At the same time and through the London and Zurich offices, study possibilities of expansion in the same field in other parts of the world, taking into consideration mind geopolitical, economical and but also opportunity factors. ●

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