

developing bill

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EMPORIO - ARTIST'S IMPRESSIONS



BILL DARBY

ALLI GRANT CHATS WITH LOCAL PROPERTY IDENTITY, BILL DARBY, ABOUT HIS MOVE FROM MELBOURNE TO THE SUNSHINE COAST 16 YEARS AGO AND DISCOVERS JUST HOW BILL PLANS TO INJECT A LITTLE BIT OF COSMOPOLITAN MELBOURNE INTO MAROOCHYDORE'S NEW CBD.

When holidaying on the Sunshine Coast in the early nineties, a 26-year-old Bill Darby immediately fell in love with the friendly coastal township. Straight way, he saw potential in the area, identifying opportunities for growth in the underdeveloped suburbs of Maroochydore and Mooloolaba.

What Bill didn't know at that time was that 16 years later, he'd be responsible for the marketing and sales of one of the most significant and innovative property projects the region has ever seen, Reed Property Group's 'Emporio' precinct at Sunshine Cove.

While he loved the relaxed pace of the Sunshine Coast, Bill did miss the hustle and bustle of cosmopolitan Melbourne.

"It was definitely a lifestyle choice as well as a career choice to move to the Coast. The area had a really honest, country town feel. But I did miss Melbourne, especially the restaurants and cafes but most of all the night life".

A real estate agent by trade, not only has Bill been instrumental in the marketing of a number of landmark projects on the Sunshine Coast, but he's also become a well known figure in the local community. Active in a number of charity organisations, Bill is a popular MC and his fundraising auctions are always an entertaining spectacle.

Along with long-time business partner Mark Hall, Bill started in project marketing in Duporth Avenue Maroochydore in 1992; just down the street from where they now work. Trading as Stockdale & Leggo, Bill and Mark relocated to Mooloolaba where Parkyn Parade became home for many years.

"There was definitely a niche in the market for specialised residential and resort marketing services so we decided to start our own business," Bill reflects. "Since then we have worked with nearly every major developer on the Coast. We've also forged many lasting friendships along the way"

"We started working with Reed in 1995 and have enjoyed a great relationship, so we're happy to be back on deck for Emporio, which is the most exciting project Mark and I have ever worked on."

Bill describes some of their projects as, "Real beauties" as he takes a trip down memory lane.

"We were asked to market 'Mariner on the Pacific' up on the headland at Alex in 1993. We knew that there would be more buyers than units, so decided to conduct an off-the-plan auction campaign. This campaign was the first of its kind in Queensland, so it was quite innovative for the Coast. In one night we sold all nine apartments for record prices."

Bill and Mark were also instrumental in the development of the first university accommodation at the Sunshine Coast University. Launching their management company VMC in 1995, the pair worked with Reed planning and marketing The Village in 1996 and then UniCentral in 1999.

"We had 12 students when we first opened The Village at Chancellor Park. Over five years, we grew this to 510 students at USC and an additional 120 students at Griffith University's Logan campus. We had an ongoing partnership with Reed; they'd build the complexes and Mark and I would market and manage them." Bill recalls.

With two decades of experience marketing resorts, gated communities and residential projects, Bill believes the Coast is ready to step up in the sophistication stakes, acknowledging that this once sleepy coastal community has definitely come of age.

"Over the years the Coast has really matured. It is far more culturally diverse and there is a much greater level of acceptance of people's differences. Coast people are dynamic, progressive, positive and most of all, tolerant. There's always a lot going on and I have the same feeling of enthusiasm about the Coast now as I had when I arrived in 1992."

Part of this enthusiasm stems from Bill and Mark's latest marketing conquest, Emporio at Sunshine Cove at Maroochydore, the first stage of which was launched in mid September.

As marketing coordinator for Reed Property Group, Bill has been instrumental in the design, launch, sales and marketing of the innovative community, the first official 'mixed use' development on the Coast. Emporio will mesh more than 200 quality apartments with commerce facilities, dining, bars and a much anticipated fresh food marketplace.

"Working on Emporio reminds me of the things I liked most about Melbourne and I'm so happy to be involved in bringing these lifestyle elements to the Coast. Locals are definitely ready to accept something new, something that you would traditionally find in capital cities. Both enquiries and sales have exceeded expectations," Bill explains.

"Residents at Emporio will want for nothing, with a rooftop entertainment area, residents' lounge and theatre, pools, access to high speed fibre-optic broadband, security systems and of course, proximity to cafes, dining, bars, the fresh food marketplace and commerce precinct."

What excites Bill the most is the fact that Emporio represents exceptional value for investors and owner occupiers alike, with entry level one bedroom apartments starting at \$329,000.

You can rest assured Emporio will be a success, with Bill Darby leading the sales and marketing charge. His passion for both the Sunshine Coast and the property industry is obvious. Combine this with Bill's refreshingly cosmopolitan outlook and the project simply cannot fail. ■

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