



Tips for Buying Property in Thailand

A Quick Guide to Buying a Quality Home

Thailand is the perfect place for a vacation or retirement home. With Thailand at the very center of the most rapidly growing region in the world, a Thai property can also be an excellent investment.

Buying a home in a tropical paradise like Thailand can be an exciting experience. Purchasing a Thai property is also relatively simple and straightforward. However, with construction standards very different from those in Europe and North America, spending a bit of time familiarizing yourself with these differences is highly recommended. Knowing what to look for in a home, can help you avoid buying a poorly constructed home that can mean high maintenance costs and considerable trouble in the future.

We've prepared this brief guide to help you select a well-built home that will give you years of trouble free enjoyment and provide excellent investment value. In this guide, we give you some of our top tips for evaluating a Thai property – either villa or condo. We hope you find it useful and informative.

SeaRidge – Your Very Own Private Resort

SeaRidge is an exclusive resort community of luxury condominiums and villas on a beautiful hillside setting in Hua Hin, Thailand. At SeaRidge, we've combined our superb quality with surprisingly affordable prices to give you the very best value for money in Hua Hin.

Our SeaRidge condominiums are now finished so you can move in and begin enjoying your new home right away. Our first group of villas has also now been completed, with our second group well under construction.

Find Out More

If you'd like to find out more about purchasing a home in Thailand, please contact us at: searidge@theSeaRidge.com.

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SeaRidge Condo Bathroom with High Quality Floor & Wall Tiles

Tip 2: Check the Building Foundation

One common method to reduce construction costs is to cut the quality of the foundation – the concrete and steel structure on which your house is built.

Evaluating whether the foundation is good or bad can be difficult, but one simple indicator is how high the ground floor of the house above ground level. If the ground floor is not at least 40 cm above ground level, this can be an indication of a low quality foundation.

In an existing house, you should check to see if there are any deep, wide or long cracks in the foundation walls.

A poorly designed and constructed foundation can be extremely expensive to repair. It can also tell you a lot about the overall quality of the house. A low quality or poorly built foundation usually means there are other quality problems throughout the house.



High Quality Home Foundation under Construction

Tip 1: Show Me the Blueprints

A well-built home starts with a good design. It may surprise you, but many lower quality homes in Thailand are built without proper architectural and engineering designs.

In some cases, no designs at all are prepared - just some basic sketches and then the construction starts. You don't have to be an experienced builder to know that constructing a home with no designs is a disaster waiting to happen. Ask the developer to see the detailed designs, called "blueprints".

A proper set of house blueprints would consist of at least 50 – 60 pages of detailed drawings and specifications. If you have any concerns, hire an architect or engineer for a few hours to take a quick look at them. Ask the developer to give you a copy of the blueprints for your home. If he says no, he might have something to hide – so watch out!

Tip 3: High Quality Floor Tiles Will Save You Money and Trouble

There are a very wide range of floor tiles available in Thailand, many of which are of good or excellent quality that will last 20 years or more. However, there are also extremely poor quality tiles that will start discoloring and cracking within the first 1 – 2 years of use. Over the longer-term these low quality tiles will end up costing you more money and a lot more trouble than higher quality tiles.

Low quality tiles are not only found in low cost homes, but can also sometimes be found in higher priced homes as well. In a new home, or an off-plan project, it can be very difficult to tell if the builder is using high quality or poor quality tiles. Here are some simple tips to help you tell the difference:

- **Material Consistency** - For high quality tiles, the top and bottom layers are made of the same material. Most lower quality tiles have a coating made of one material on top with the layer below of a different material. Over time, the top coating can wear out and expose a different color from below.
- **Density & Thickness** - High quality tiles are normally made of much denser material and are thicker than low quality tiles. One example is granite tiles, which are much stronger than normal ceramic tiles. Check the density and thickness of the tile – denser and thicker is better.
- **Granito Tiles** - High quality Granito tiles are a good choice - they are beautiful, strong, and easy to maintain, while being much less expensive than real granite. However, there are many different grades of granito tiles and it can be very difficult to tell good quality from bad. Check to see if a protective coating has been applied to the tile to prevent scratching. Good quality Granito tiles will have a thick layer of protective coating. You should also check the tile thickness - good quality Granito tiles should be at least 0.5 cm (5 mm) thick.
- **Waterproof Testing** - One way to test the quality of a tile is to submerge the tile in water for at least 24 hours and then check if the top coating and side have been damaged by water penetration. If you see any damage, the tile has not been adequately waterproofed, which means it is likely to wear out more quickly.



SeaRidge Condominium - Every Condo has Heavy Duty 100 Amp Electrical System

Tip 5: Don't Assume You'll Have Water – Check it Out

Water is in short supply in many areas of Thailand, particularly in the rapidly growing beach resorts. Providing a good supply of water can be expensive so many developers looking to save money don't simply don't make the necessary investments. This can mean that your home may experience permanent water shortages. To avoid this, it is important that you check to confirm that you will have an adequate supply of water.

Existing Homes – if you are looking at buying an existing home, you can check the following:

- **Central Storage Tank** – Has the project invested in a central storage tank? Or does it only provide individual tanks in each house? An individual tank is better than nothing, but it is a low cost approach that might leave you without enough water. Individual tanks can also be a maintenance headache. A central tank that provides water to the entire project is much better.
- **Check the water flow** by turning on each tap in the villa or condo during the early evening hours (6 pm – 7 pm). If it is a 2 level villa, check the flow on the second level. First turn on 1 tap, then turn on 2 taps at the same time, and check if there is any noticeable loss in flow when the second tap is turned on. If the flow of water is sufficient, you should not have a noticeable loss in flow.

Off-Plan Homes - If the home has not yet been built, you can't just turn on the taps to check the water. But you can do the following:

- **Confirm the source of supply** – ask the developer exactly where the water is coming from. If it is coming from the municipal water system, find out exactly where the connection point to this system is. The best supply of water will generally be provided where the connection point is directly into a main water pipeline, which is normally located along main roads.
- If the project is located on a hill with the surrounding areas below, you need to be particularly careful in checking the source of supply.
- If the project will depend on well water, ask to see the tests that should have been done to confirm water flow and water quality. If the developer can't provide this, this is a major cause for concern.
- Ask the developer what storage facilities will be provided – central or individual.

Tip 4: Check the Amps

What is an amp? An amp is the basic measure of electrical current. The number of amps tells you how much electricity is being drawn by a particular appliance, like a microwave oven or air conditioner, or by an entire house or condo.

The electrical system in your home must be sized correctly to handle the electrical appliances you have.

Why is This Important? Most condominiums and many villas in Thailand are built with undersized electrical systems. Condos are often equipped with only 30 – 50 amp systems.

With a 30 – 50 amp system, you need to be careful about what appliances you turn on at the same time. For example, you might not be able to turn on both an oven and microwave at the same time. If you do, they may overload the electrical system. This will then cause the circuit breaker to shut your power off to prevent the possibility of an electrical fire.

How Many Amps Do You Need? It depends on how many electrical appliances you will have in your home. It also depends on the electrical requirements of the appliances. Air conditioners, cookers, ovens, clothes washing and drying machines, dishwashers place the heaviest loads on the electrical system. Lighting places a lower load on the system.

The table below provides a very approximate guide that you can use. The precise capacity you will need depends on the combined electrical demand of the appliances, lighting and other power consuming devices you will have in your home.

Home Type	Amps
2-3 bedroom condo	75 - 100
Small house	75 - 150
Large House	150 -250



SeaRidge Crescent Villa with High Quality Aluminium Frame Windows

Tip 6: Stay Away from Wood Frame Windows

What's the Problem with Wood Frame? Wood frame windows may look great in a brand new home. However, the wood used for these frames in Thailand almost always warps and cracks within the 1 – 2 years, sometimes even sooner. This means gaps in the windows letting in the hot air and noise from outside. In many cases, the warping can be so bad that the windows won't even close properly.

Aluminium Frame is Best - High quality aluminum frame windows are far better. They'll last for at least 20 years with no warping or cracking. Unlike wood frame windows, which require repainting every 1 – 2 years, aluminium frame windows are zero maintenance.

Examples of Wall Construction Materials Used in Thailand



SeaRidge Uses Only High Quality Concrete Block



Low Quality Red Brick Construction

Tip 7: Concrete Block is Best

In Europe, high quality homes are often constructed of brick. However, in Thailand the brick used is very different – cheap and low quality.

Constructing external and internal walls using red bricks instead of high quality concrete block is a telltale sign of a low quality home. Red brick is a lot cheaper than concrete block, so this is a favorite way to cut the cost of constructing a home or condo. Since the brick is covered by a layer of plaster, the buyer of the house often doesn't realize that brick was used.

Concrete block is much better than red brick for a number of reasons:

- **Energy Efficiency** - 6 times more insulating capacity than red brick, which can reduce air conditioning by up to 60%. Therefore, you might pay less for a red brick house, but your electricity bills are going to be higher.
- **Safety** - Concrete block has 4 – 8 times greater resistance to fire than red brick.
- **Appearance** - Plastered walls over red bricks are much more likely to crack than homes built with concrete blocks. This also means your future maintenance costs will be higher with red brick.
- **Sound** – Concrete block provides greater sound insulation, between inside and outside. and between interior rooms.

Find Out More

Dan O'Hearn

dohearn@sierraprojects.com

SeaRidge Resort Homes

Soi 134, 109/202 Soi Moo Baan Khao Tao

Hua Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan 77110, Thailand

Tel: +66 (0) 828-810, +66 (0) 32-515-464, +66 (0) 89-771-1532

Skype: [searidge](#)

www.theSeaRidge.com

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