

Kisten's building a LEGACY

THE MAN BEHIND THE GRAND FLORIDIAN

KISTEN started as a young man who was banned from attending any educational institutions under the Department of Internal Affairs for his leadership role in the liberation struggle and student uprisings in the 1980s. Today, he is an entrepreneur with wide-ranging business interests and at 41 years old, among the youngest of the emerging new developers in Umhlanga.

As a victim of the apartheid system, Kisten engaged in a desperate two-year court battle to return to school and complete his secondary education. Yet his efforts were in vain and Kisten found the doors firmly slammed in his face when he attempted to secure long-term employment.

As with every successful entrepreneur, it was his tenacity that became the catalyst for what followed. Kisten turned his adversity into opportunity by deciding to help himself.

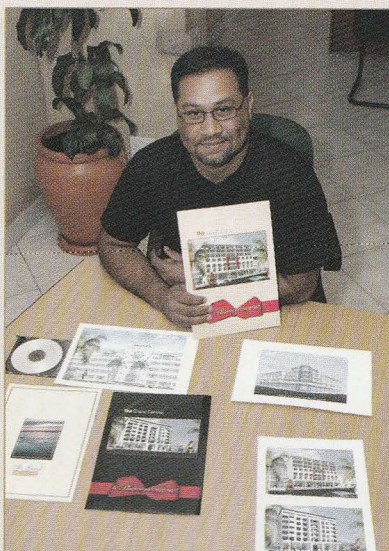
He hawked fruit and vegetables door-to-door before juggling a second-hand car sales business from his father's backyard; opening a one-man video hire and shoe repair outlet and eventually launching a supermarket and amusement centre in Umhlathuzane.

All of these experiences sharpened his salesman skills, but, quips Kisten, hard work is seldom unrewarded.

At 28, Kisten had bought the Hotel Savera in Chatsworth in a deal clinched with a partner, but later abandoned that industry to pursue a career as an estate agent. He has now ventured into the real estate market by buying property in newly-opened areas as a developer.

With fellow Live A Little directors Vejan Pillay, Prega Mudliar and Kay Maharaj, Kisten is developing The Grand Floridian.

The R100 million project at the pinnacle of Ilala Ridge represents one of the most innovatively planned and designed residential



COLIN KISTEN IS A HUMBLE MAN WITH SIMPLE PLEASURES, BUT HIS BUILDINGS PROMISE TO BECOME A LEGACY TO HIS DREAMS. NICOLA HAYWOOD CHATS TO THE PERSON BEHIND THE GRAND FLORIDIAN, THE MERIDIAN, THE GRAND CENTRAL AND CRYSTAL ROCK RESIDENTIAL AND CAFÉ-STYLE APARTMENT BLOCKS GOING UP ON THE RIDGE

schemes. It is also among a handful of apartment complexes where owners drive up to their home regardless of which floor that may be.

"This exciting development bears every hallmark of our commitment to creating the highest quality living environment," Kisten says.

Every unit priced from R2.7 million to R5.5 million has a 180° sea view, while the development has a heated indoor and outdoor pool, a fully-equipped gymnasium, squash courts and a conference centre.

Kisten is also the sole director of Africa Rising, the company currently developing The Meridian, Grand Central and Crystal Rock on the Ridge. Collectively these developments are worth R150 million and embody the café society principle on which Moreland wanted the Umhlanga Ridge new town centre to develop. The Meridian, with its ground floor commercial use, and The Grand Central, with its ground floor retail and office space, reflect a London-style residential living.

Kisten says their locality next to Gateway and European Square means the apartments have "an ambiance found nowhere else in the country". Crystal Rock is another mixed-use development with a supermarket, 20 offices and 40 apartments.

Kisten has his goals set on constructing upmarket leisure homes along the Dolphin Coast and is negotiating on a tract of Hillcrest land on which to develop 500 homes. Yet his philosophy remains unchanged: "Keep things simple and to remember that sometimes, downscaling is to upscale."

Kisten has built his life on a determination to succeed and the development industry has refined the concept of being driven by one's vision. Those are the qualities in this man who describes himself as "Mr Simple" that will ensure his visions build legacies. R