

Wong to design 18-storey West Wharf

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Dubai: In an age of eye-grabbing designs, from the Dancing Towers to the rotating, solar-powered Time Residences tower, Karim Chamseddine knew his first Dubai development needed to make a splash.

So Chamseddine, executive director of Corporate Finance House, a Beirut-based investment bank, hired a master architect - Hazel Wong who also designed Emirates Towers - to design a residential tower.

The result is West Wharf, an 18-story residential tower overlooking the creek in Business Bay.

"This is our first project in Dubai and so we needed to have an impact," Chamseddine said of his decision to call in the architect superstar. "If you have a good architect you will have a good project, ensuring it will be delivered in good quality and good terms," he said.

At an event held fittingly at Emirates Towers, Chamseddine revealed the designs for West Wharf, which will consist of studios, one and two bedroom simplex and duplex apartments, studio and one bedroom lofts, and three bedroom townhouses.

Situated in the Phase 1 section of Business Bay, West Wharf promises luxury leisure facilities such as private swimming pools, high-tech connectivity, security features and fitness accommodations.

Wong, who was present at the launch, described the building as "unpretentious architecture with bold clean lines and simplicity of form."

With the building scheduled for completion in December 2008, prices range from Dh790,000 for a studio on up to Dh4.2 million for a townhouse.

Corporate Finance House, with \$200 million under management and \$350 million in ongoing projects, is pursuing a strategy of real estate development in urban centres of the Middle East including Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Amman and Beirut.

It has already begun developing two buildings in Business Bay consisting of an office tower and a residential building and also holds investments in several properties in Dubai.