



Dynamic duo behind iconic Soul

By Brian Harrower

MEET dynamic father and son duo, Graeme and Shaun Juniper – the developers behind the awe-inspiring 77-storey Soul tower now under way on absolute Surfers Paradise beachfront.

There is so much happening in the heart of Surfers Paradise at the moment and Soul has caught the public's imagination.

The family-owned Juniper may be new to the Gold Coast, but not to Queensland.

The Sunshine Coast-based company has designed and completed significant projects spanning 15 years across the tropical North Queensland and the Sunshine Coast, with plans to invest further in the Gold Coast.

The Juniper men built their path towards their greatest achievement to date from humble beginnings.

The spectacular, world-class Soul residential tower's is set to spiral skywards from the apron of Australia's most talked-about beachfront.

Foundation preparation is now in full swing with a completion date set from late 2010, and Soul has seen more than \$425 million in sales activity to date.

It will take a decade from conception to the final product.

But father and son are patient men, they know they are creating a worthy new icon in the heart of this cosmopolitan city.

"Like everyone, you start off small and we did that," said Graeme.

Shaun said their first project in 1992 was a group of townhouses called Parklane in Maroochydore.

"We try to achieve in all our devel-

opments a product that remains fashionable even 30 years later," he said.

"Basically we went on from our first project building on each other's strengths as we have individual outlooks that come together really well."

Since then Juniper has become a well-recognised developer of 26 resort-themed residential and retail projects in Queensland, including the two latest in the making – Soul and Coconut Grove in Port Douglas.

Without doubt their entry into the Gold Coast is remarkable.

There has possibly never been such a long and most ambitious lead-up promotion for a development.

By the time Soul welcomes its first residents, Graeme and Shaun Juniper will be as well recognised among the city's favourite quality project development sons such as Jim Raptis, Soheil Abedian and Bill and Con Nikiforides.

Shaun is confident Surfers Paradise will continue to regenerate through renewal of existing building sites into world-class architecture.

By the best international standards our paradise will remain fresh and vibrant.

"We are seeing a dramatic change in such a short period of time and I think it will continue," he said.

During a recent visit to Dubai, Graeme met with business associate Soheil Abedian to see the progress on the world's tallest building, the Burj.

"I take my hat off to Soheil as the trailblazer with Q1 where he faced many difficulties and negativity," said Graeme.

"Tall buildings are very difficult to do and on a scale of difficulty from one to 100 tall, buildings sit at 103.

"He had to get the authorities to understand what was involved in tall buildings, the different timeframes

it takes to design and build them.

"It's a big learning curve and we've learnt the same way he's learnt."

Juniper is constantly forward planning, but would Graeme and Shaun do another tower following the unique Soul development?

It's probably on the cards, but is it on the cards for tomorrow?

"Not really," said Shaun.

They want to see the Soul project completed and then look at what's available to them after that.

"We are definitely committed to further investment on the Gold Coast though," said Shaun.

"There is still a great deal of potential here."

Graeme said: "Our policy is to always try to do better every time, whether it's a smaller or larger project."

For the moment, putting a real soul back into central Surfers Paradise is a significant contribution.

Juniper, they say, has no plans to go public.

"None at all," said Shaun.

Graeme adds that any advantage in it has been investigated over time but it's not on their radar.

"What has become quite clear in the current marketplace is that there can be dangers and pitfalls there," said Graeme.

"One of our strengths as a father-and-son team is being able to jump very quickly and sometimes with listed companies they can become top heavy.

So at this stage nothing's changed for us but one thing about the property industry is that it's always subject to change.

"At this stage however, it suits our family image to stay privately owned."

That's two very good operators on a mission where nothing's impossible.