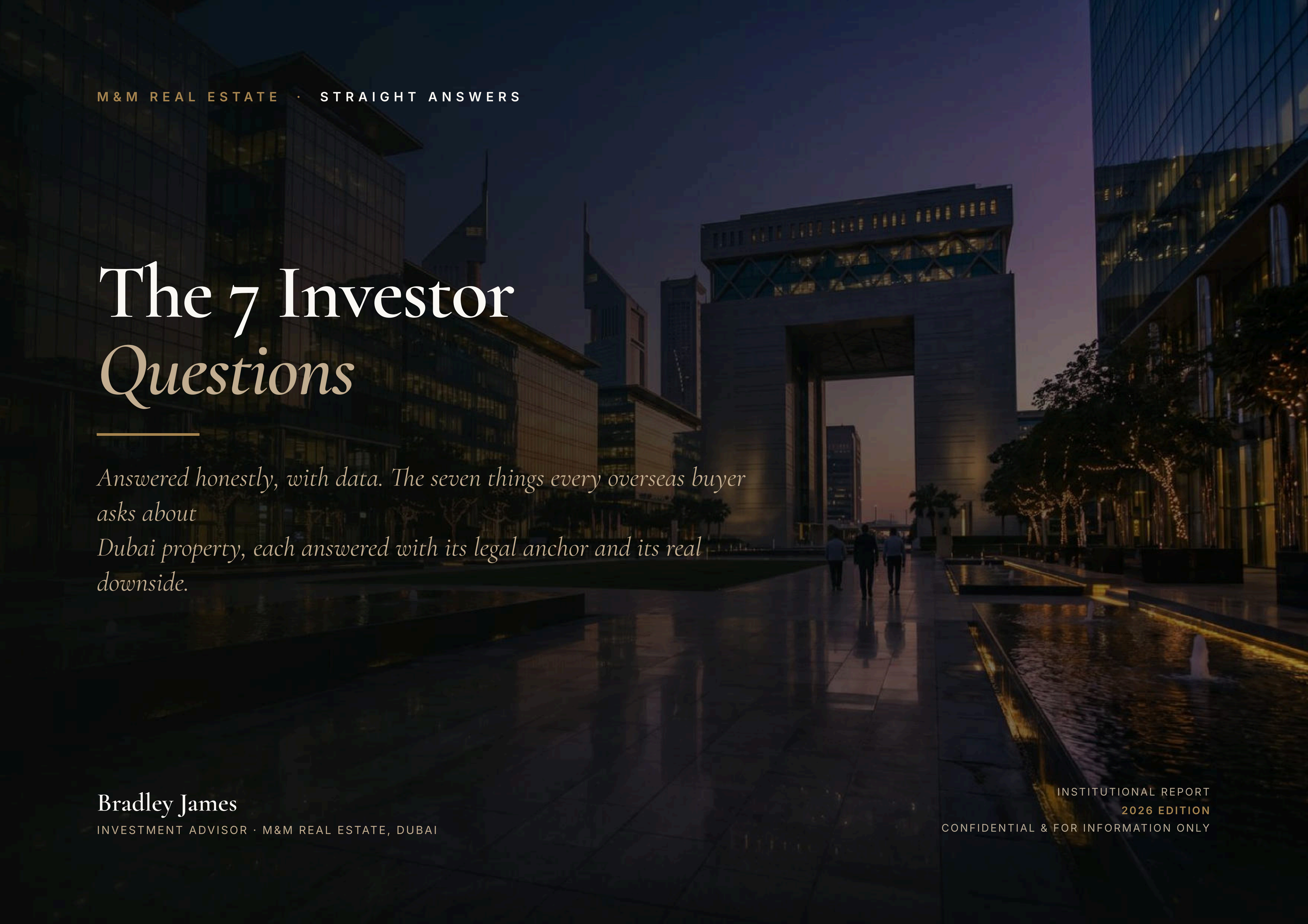


M&M REAL ESTATE · STRAIGHT ANSWERS

The 7 Investor *Questions*

Answered honestly, with data. The seven things every overseas buyer asks about Dubai property, each answered with its legal anchor and its real downside.

Bradley James

INVESTMENT ADVISOR · M&M REAL ESTATE, DUBAI

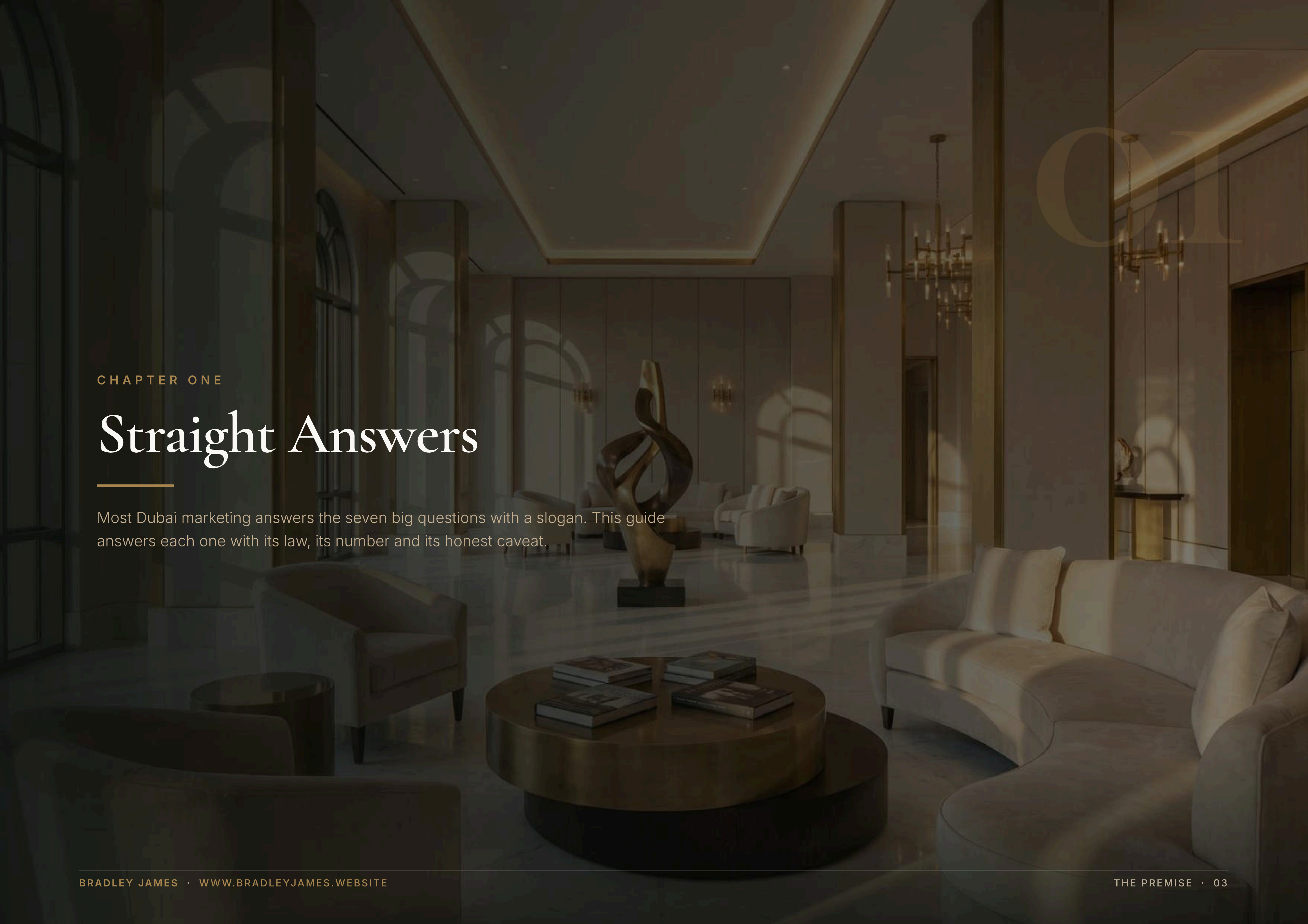
INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

2026 EDITION

CONFIDENTIAL & FOR INFORMATION ONLY

CONTENTS

What This Guide Covers



CHAPTER ONE

Straight Answers

Most Dubai marketing answers the seven big questions with a slogan. This guide answers each one with its law, its number and its honest caveat.

CHAPTER 01 · THE PREMISE

Why This Guide Only Gives Straight Answers

Every overseas investor who looks at Dubai seriously asks the same seven questions. Can I actually own it? Is my money safe off-plan? What's the real yield? Is it a bubble? What about the region? Do I get residency? And what will I actually pay in tax? The answers exist, they're sourced, and most of them are good. So there's no reason to dodge the hard half of any of them.

That's the whole method here. Each of the next seven chapters takes one question, gives you the sourced legal or regulatory anchor that answers it, and then states the honest caveat in the same breath. Where Dubai is genuinely strong, and it often is, you'll see the source. Where it isn't, or where the answer has a catch that costs people money, you'll see that too, in the same size type.

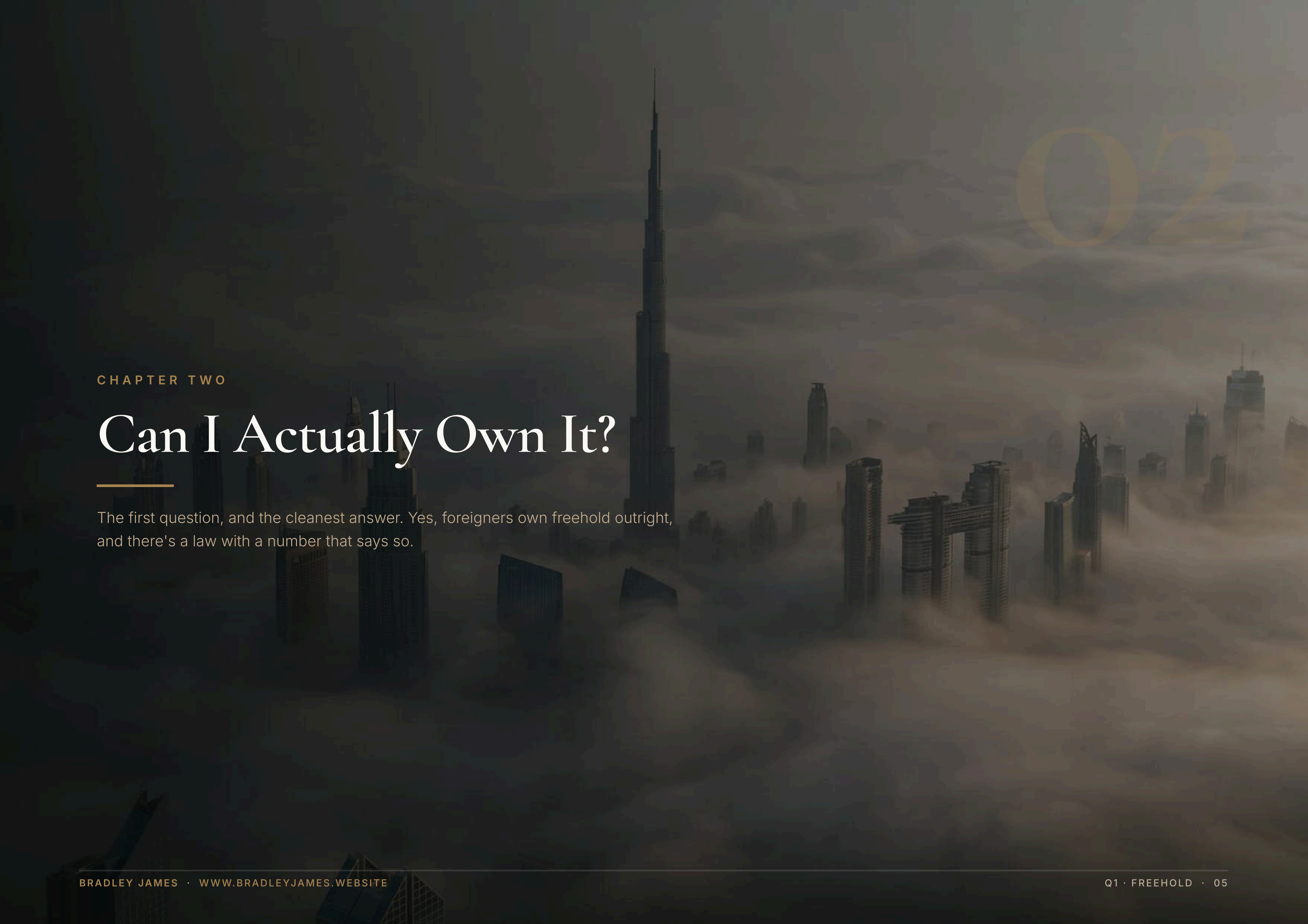
Why write it this way? Because I sell nothing by pretending Dubai is risk-free. The market cooled in 2026. Prices actually fell for a stretch. A regional escalation hit transaction volumes hard. None of that is hidden in a footnote here, it's in the chapters, because a case that can't survive its own downside isn't a case worth acting on. If you want the brochure version, this isn't it. If you want the version you'd get from someone who has to be right, read on.

◆ THE SEVEN QUESTIONS

- Can a foreigner actually own it, freehold?
- Is my money protected when I buy off-plan?
- What's the real net yield, after costs?
- Is it a bubble, am I buying the top?
- What about regional conflict?
- Do I get residency if I buy?
- What tax will I actually pay, here and at home?

◆ THE RULE

"Every answer ships with its source and its caveat. If the downside doesn't fit on the page, it wasn't an honest answer."



02

CHAPTER TWO

Can I Actually Own It?

The first question, and the cleanest answer. Yes, foreigners own freehold outright, and there's a law with a number that says so.

CHAPTER 02 · QUESTION ONE

Freehold, In Your Own Name, No Sponsor

The first question is usually the most anxious one, because in a lot of the world a foreigner can't truly own land. In Dubai's designated zones, you can, outright, and it's written into law.

Foreign freehold ownership is granted by **Law No. 7 of 2006**, the Real Property Registration Law, with **Regulation No. 3 of 2006** designating the zones where non-UAE nationals may buy freehold. Those zones are where nearly all the investor stock sits: Dubai Marina, Downtown, Palm Jumeirah, Business Bay, Jumeirah Lakes Towers, Jumeirah Village Circle, Arabian Ranches and more. Inside them you hold the title in your own name, registered with the Dubai Land Department. No local sponsor, no nominee, no residency requirement to buy. You own it the way you'd own a flat in London or a condo in New York.

The honest boundary, and it matters, is the word **designated**. Freehold for foreigners applies in specified zones, not across every square metre of the emirate. Outside those zones you may find leasehold or usufruct arrangements rather than absolute freehold, and the distinction is not cosmetic, it changes what you can do with the asset and for how long. So the answer is a confident yes, with one instruction attached: confirm the specific plot sits in a designated freehold zone and that the title deed says freehold, before you transfer a dirham.

Law 7
OF 2006 GRANTS FOREIGN FREEHOLD REGISTRATION
Dubai Land Department

Reg 3
OF 2006 DESIGNATES THE FREEHOLD ZONES
Dubai Land Department

0
LOCAL SPONSOR OR RESIDENCY NEEDED TO BUY
DLD / Law 7 of 2006

WHAT FREEHOLD ACTUALLY GIVES YOU

- Absolute ownership of the unit, registered at the DLD in your name.
- The right to sell, let, mortgage or bequeath it.
- No local sponsor and no residency needed to purchase.
- Title confined to designated zones, so verify the zone first.

THE ONE CHECK

"A confident yes with a condition: confirm the plot is in a designated freehold zone and the deed reads freehold. Then it's yours, outright."

CHAPTER THREE

Is My Money Protected?

The off-plan question. Yes, buyer funds are ring-fenced in escrow by law, and no, that doesn't protect you from delay. Both are true.

Escrow Is the Law, But Read What It Covers

Buying a building that doesn't exist yet is the part that makes people nervous, and they're right to ask. In 2008 there was no ring-fence and off-plan chains collapsed. Since 2007 there is one, in law. Here's exactly what it does, and what it doesn't.

Law No. 8 of 2007, the Escrow Accounts Law, requires that money you pay for an off-plan unit goes into a **project-specific escrow account**, not into the developer's general pocket. The funds are released to the developer only against **verified construction milestones**, supervised by the DLD and RERA. On top of that, **Law No. 13 of 2008** created the Oqood interim register, so your off-plan purchase is recorded on the DLD's system from the start, closing the untracked-flipping loophole that made 2008 so much worse. Escrow plus the interim register are the two reforms that most change the risk picture versus the pre-crash era.

Now the caveat that keeps this honest. Escrow protects your funds against a developer simply taking the money and not building. It does **not** protect you against a project running late, and it does not protect you against the market falling while you wait. Completion slippage is real: across Dubai only around **49% of the units announced for 2025 actually completed on schedule**, with the rest pushed into later years. So the right way to hold both truths at once is this. Your capital is ring-fenced against fraud, which is a genuine, legislated protection. Your timeline and your entry price are not guaranteed, which is a genuine, uninsured risk. Buy the developer's track record and the escrow structure, and size the position so a delay doesn't break you.

1. **Funds in escrow**
   You pay into a project-specific escrow account under Law No. 8 of 2007, not to the developer directly.
2. **Milestone release**
   Money is released to the developer only against DLD and RERA verified construction milestones.
3. **Interim register**
   Your purchase is recorded on the Oqood interim register (Law No. 13 of 2008) from day one.
4. **The uncovered risk**
   Escrow does not insure against delay or a market fall during construction. Size for it.

Law 8

OF 2007 MANDATES PROJECT ESCROW FOR OFF-PLAN FUNDS

DLD / RERA

~49%

OF 2025 ANNOUNCED UNITS COMPLETED ON SCHEDULE

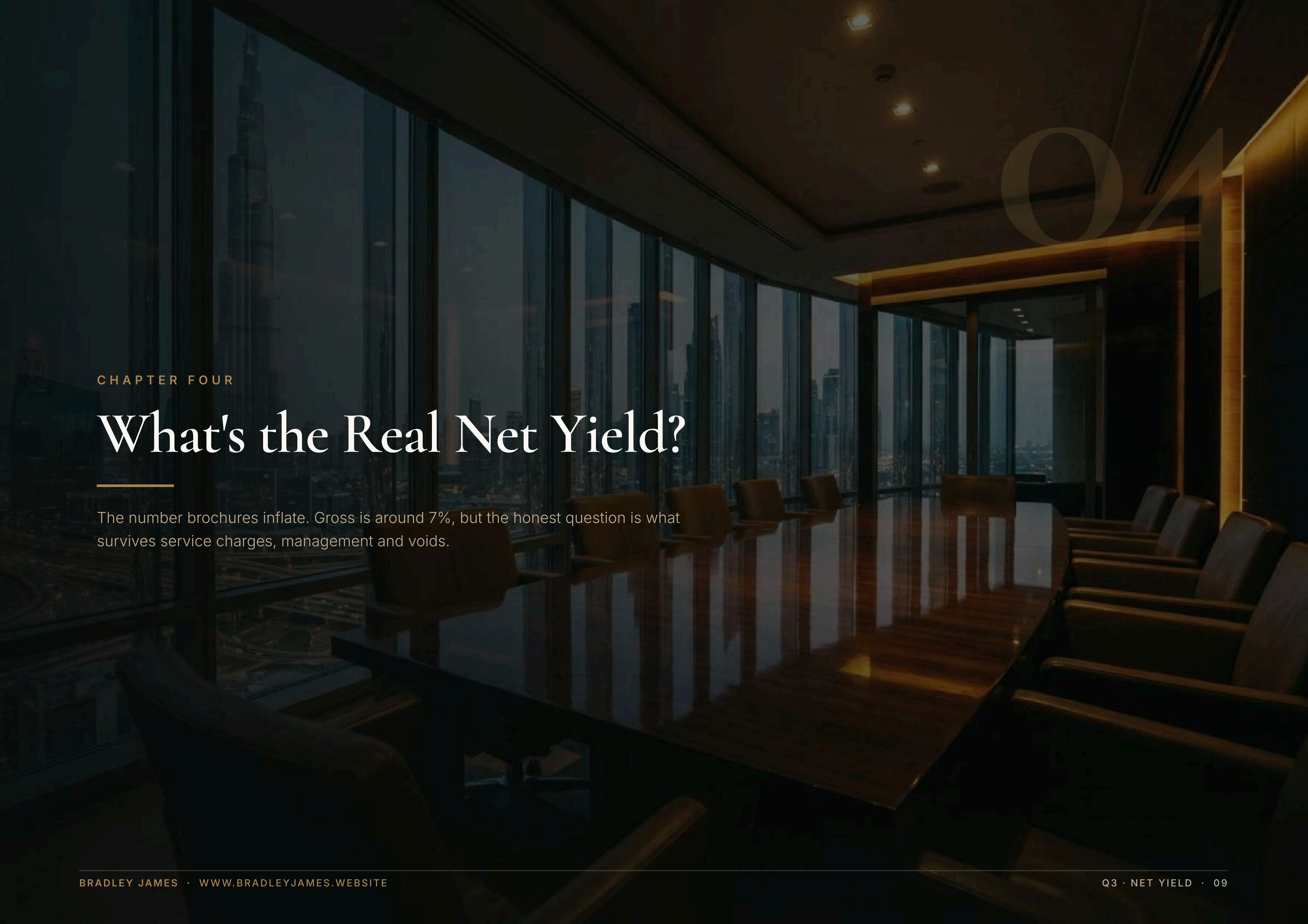
Cavendish Maxwell FY 2025

◆ WHAT ESCROW DOES AND DOESN'T DO

It ring-fences your money against a developer taking it and not building. It does not guarantee your handover date or protect your entry price if the market softens while you wait. Both statements are true at the same time.

◆ THE HONEST LINE

"Your funds are protected against fraud by law. Your timeline is not protected against slippage by anything. Plan for the second while you trust the first."



04

CHAPTER FOUR

What's the Real Net Yield?

The number brochures inflate. Gross is around 7%, but the honest question is what survives service charges, management and voids.

From a 7% Gross Headline to an Honest Net

Every listing quotes gross yield, because it's the bigger number. The useful number is net, what actually lands in your account after the costs of owning and letting. Let's walk from one to the other with the real deductions named.

Start with the honest gross. Dubai apartment yields run around **7.0% to 7.2% city average**, with prime areas nearer **5.5% to 6.5%**. That's genuinely high, 250 to 460 basis points above London, New York or Singapore, and it's Dubai's single strongest line. But gross is not what you keep. From it you subtract **service charges**, billed per square foot and very area-dependent, **management or letting fees** if you don't self-manage, and an allowance for **void periods** between tenants. Those are the three leaks that turn a gross number into a net one, and no honest yield conversation skips them.

Here's where Dubai genuinely helps the net figure, though, and it's not marketing. In London, New York or Singapore, the biggest gap between gross and net is **tax**: rental-income tax that can run to 45%, plus recurring property taxes year after year. In Dubai that leak is **zero**, no personal rental-income tax and no annual property tax. So while your gross-to-net still leaks through service charges, management and voids, it does not also leak through the tax line that does the most damage elsewhere. That's why a Dubai net yield tends to hold up better against its gross than a high-tax city's does, even though the gross headline was always going to shrink.

LINE	FROM GROSS TO NET, THE HONEST PATH
Gross apartment yield	~7.0% to 7.2% city average; 5.5% to 6.5% prime (illustrative range)
Less service charges	Per square foot, area-dependent; the single biggest recurring deduction
Less management and voids	Letting or management fee if not self-managed, plus a void allowance between tenants
Tax drag	0% personal rental-income tax and 0% annual property tax, so no tax leak on the way to net

Illustrative structure, not a projected net yield. Gross ranges from Global Property Guide and CR.D; actual net depends on the specific building's service charge, your management choice and occupancy. Not a forecast.

7.0% to 7.2%
GROSS APARTMENT YIELD, CITY AVERAGE
Global Property Guide / CR.D

~7%
ALL-IN ROUND-TRIP TRANSACTION COST
DLD / CR.D

0%
PERSONAL RENTAL-INCOME AND ANNUAL PROPERTY TAX
PwC / CR.D

◆ THE THREE LEAKS THAT MATTER

Service charges, management fees and voids are what separate gross from net. Name them, price them for your specific building, and the net figure is honest. The one leak Dubai spares you is tax, which is the biggest one everywhere else.

◆ THE DISCIPLINE

"Never underwrite on the gross headline. Subtract the service charge, the management fee and a void allowance, and hold the net figure to that."

A Worked Example, With the Assumptions Shown

Numbers beat adjectives, so here's the gross-to-net walk made concrete. It's illustrative, the assumptions are on the page, and your own building will differ, but the shape is the honest one.

Take a one-bedroom apartment bought for **AED 1,000,000**, let at a gross yield of 7%, so **AED 70,000 of gross annual rent**. Now subtract the real leaks. Service charges on a mid-market building might run in the region of AED 12,000 to 15,000 a year. A letting or management fee, if you don't self-manage, is commonly around 5% of rent, say AED 3,500. And a void allowance of a few weeks between tenants might cost another AED 4,000 to 5,000. Net those off and you're landing somewhere around AED 45,000 to 50,000, a net yield closer to **4.5% to 5%** than the 7% headline. That's not a disappointing number, it's a realistic one, and it still clears what a London or Singapore flat nets after their far heavier tax and cost drag.

The reason it lands where it does, and not lower, is the tax line. In a 40% rental-tax jurisdiction the same AED 70,000 gross would lose AED 28,000 to tax alone before service charges even start. In Dubai that line is zero. So the honest summary is: expect the 7% to compress to a mid-single-digit net once you price service charges, management and voids properly, and know that the tax line, the one that does the most damage elsewhere, is the one Dubai removes.

LINE	ILLUSTRATIVE ONE-BED, AED 1,000,000 AT 7% GROSS
Gross annual rent	AED 70,000
Less service charges	approximately AED 12,000 to 15,000
Less management (about 5%)	approximately AED 3,500
Less void allowance	approximately AED 4,000 to 5,000
Illustrative net rent	approximately AED 45,000 to 50,000, a net yield near 4.5% to 5%

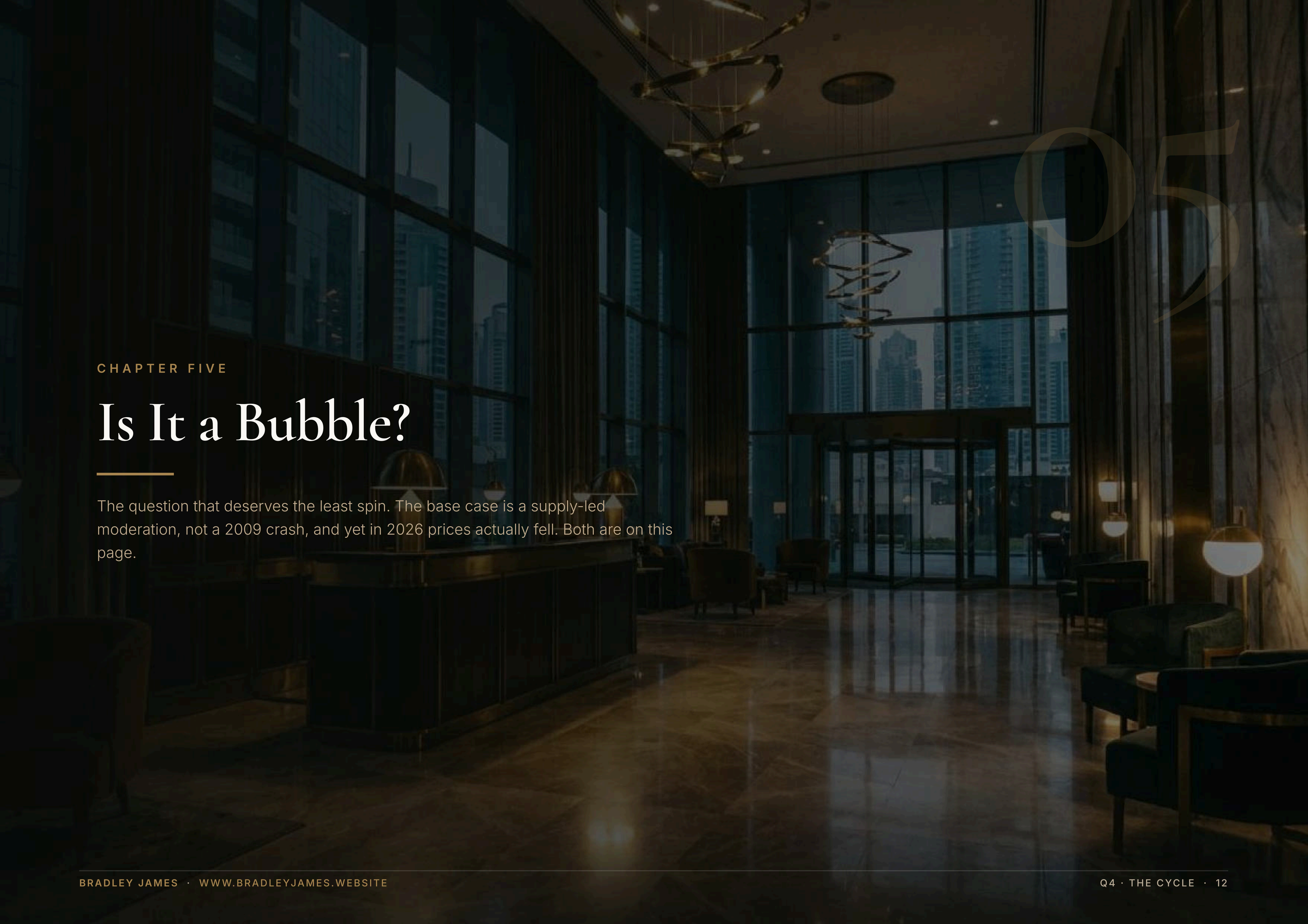
Illustrative only. Assumes AED 1,000,000 price, 7% gross, and typical mid-market service charge, 5% management fee and a short void. Actual figures vary by building and area. Not a forecast or a guaranteed return.

ILLUSTRATIVE YIELD, GROSS VS NET (%)

Illustrative, on the worked example. Net after service charges, ~5% management and a void allowance.

◆ WHY NET STILL HOLDS UP

The 7% compresses to a mid-single-digit net once you price the three real leaks. It stays respectable because the biggest leak everywhere else, tax, is 0% here. That's the difference that survives the honest arithmetic.



05

CHAPTER FIVE

Is It a Bubble?

The question that deserves the least spin. The base case is a supply-led moderation, not a 2009 crash, and yet in 2026 prices actually fell. Both are on this page.

Not a 2009 Crash, But Prices Did Fall in 2026

This is the question I refuse to spin, because getting it wrong is how people lose money. The honest answer has two parts that both have to be said out loud, in the same size type.

Part one, the structural case against a 2009-style collapse. The 2008 crash, roughly a 50% peak-to-trough fall, was a leverage and speculation event: untracked off-plan flipping, no escrow, easy credit. Every one of those has since been regulated. Escrow is law, the Oqood register tracks off-plan, the Central Bank caps mortgage loan-to-value and debt burden, and today's market is largely **cash**: mortgages were only about a quarter of 2025 sales value, so roughly three-quarters was cash. On the numbers, Dubai also screens cheaper than London, a price-to-income ratio near **7.3** against London's **15.3**. On that evidence **Fitch** expects a moderate correction of **up to 15%** peak-to-trough, explicitly not a crash, and the 2026 capital-growth outlook cools to about **~10%** from roughly 19.8% in 2025. A leverage-driven banking crisis is genuinely less likely than in 2008.

Part two, the fact that makes the first part honest. A market can be low-leverage and still fall, and in early 2026 it did. A regional escalation drove UAE transaction volumes down roughly **37% year on year** in the first days of March 2026, off-plan deals fell about **21% month on month**, and the **ValuStrat price index posted its first monthly decline since 2020, -5.9% in March 2026**. Low leverage prevented a forced-sale banking crisis. It did not put a floor under prices when sentiment turned. So the real answer is this: not a 2009-style crash, the structure is genuinely different, but not immune either, because 2026 proved physical prices can and did fall on a sentiment shock. Underwrite for a drawdown you can hold through, not for a line that only goes up.

	2008 CRASH	2026 CORRECTION
What happened	~50% peak-to-trough fall	ValuStrat -5.9% in March, first monthly fall since 2020
Funding base	High leverage, easy credit	Majority cash, ~75% of 2025 value
Protections	No escrow, untracked flipping	Escrow law, Oqood register, CBUAE LTV caps
The lesson	Leverage turned a fall into a collapse	Low leverage limits contagion, not price falls

2008 ~50% figure: Deutsche Bank via Bloomberg. 2026 figures: Goldman Sachs volumes and ValuStrat index via Fortune / ValuStrat. Fitch and outlook figures from CR.D. Correction figures are observed facts; Fitch 15% is a forecast.

up to 15%
FITCH PEAK-TO-TROUGH CORRECTION, NOT A CRASH
Fitch / CR.D

-5.9%
VALUSTRAT INDEX, MARCH 2026, FIRST MONTHLY FALL SINCE 2020
ValuStrat

~-37%
UAE VOLUMES YOY, EARLY MARCH 2026
Goldman Sachs via Fortune

◆ WHY NOT 2009

The 2008 mechanism was leverage plus untracked flipping plus no escrow. All three are now regulated, and roughly 75% of 2025 sales value was cash. That makes a banking-crisis crash far less likely, but low leverage does not stop a sentiment-driven fall, as 2026 showed.

◆ THE HONEST BOTTOM LINE

"Not a crash on the 2009 mechanism. Not immune to a fall either. Prices dropped in 2026. Buy something you can hold through a drawdown."

CHAPTER 05 · QUESTION FOUR

The Cycle You're Actually Buying Into

Dubai's property market has a real cycle, not a straight line, and pretending otherwise is how people buy the top. Here's the honest history, so you can see where 2026 sits in it.

The market corrected roughly 50% in 2008 and 2009, then drifted through a soft, supply-led cycle from about 2014 to 2020. From February 2021 it ran hard, cumulative growth of around ~75% into 2025. Then 2026 delivered the first real cooling of this cycle: a regional escalation, a sharp volume drop and that first monthly price decline since 2020. What the timeline tells you is that Dubai rewards holders across a cycle and punishes people who buy the peak on leverage and have to sell into a trough. The valuation screen is on your side, Dubai trades cheaper than London on both price-to-income and price-to-rent, but a cheap screen is a reason to hold through a dip, not a promise there won't be one.

1

The crash

2008 to 2009 · Roughly 50% peak-to-trough on leverage and untracked off-plan flipping

2

The soft cycle

2014 to 2020 · A long, supply-led drift, not a crash, before the next upswing

3

The boom

2021 to 2025 · Cumulative growth of about ~75% from February 2021

4

The cooling

2026 · Regional shock, volumes down sharply, first monthly price fall since 2020

So where does that leave the bubble question? On the structural evidence, escrow, the Oqood register, Central Bank loan-to-value caps and a majority-cash funding base, a 2009-style leverage collapse is genuinely less likely. On the observed evidence, the market is not immune to a sentiment-driven fall, because one happened in 2026. Hold both. Buy quality, buy for income and the structural story, and buy at a size that survives the next dip rather than forcing you to sell into it.

AFFORDABILITY SCREEN, PRICE-TO-INCOME RATIO

Numbeo 2026, crowd-sourced, directional affordability cross-check, not a valuation authority.

◆ WHERE 2026 SITS

This isn't the top of a straight line, it's a cooling inside a real cycle that has crashed once and drifted once before. The cheaper-than-London valuation screen is a reason to hold through a dip, not a guarantee there won't be one.

◆ THE CYCLE RULE

"Dubai rewards holders across a cycle and punishes forced sellers at the trough. Buy at a size you can hold, not one you might have to dump."

06

CHAPTER SIX

What About Conflict?

The nervous question about the Middle East. The record is resilient but not immune, and 2026 is the proof of both halves.

Resilient, But Not Immune, And 2026 Proved It

Nobody serious dismisses this one. Regional conflict is a real, recurring risk, not a tail risk, and this guide is being written in the aftermath of an episode that moved prices. So here's the record straight, both halves.

First, the reassurance that's actually true. Domestically, the UAE is among the safest places on earth, ranked **#1 safest country** globally, with a Dubai Numbeo safety index of **83.8**, well above London at 44.8 or New York at 49.2. Day-to-day security is simply not the risk here. And the demand story has been a safe-haven flow: the UAE has been the world's **#1 destination for millionaire migration**, with a net inflow forecast near 9,800 for 2025. On a longer view, Dubai property has absorbed multiple regional shocks, the 2019 tanker tensions, the 2020 pandemic, repeated escalations since, and recovered each time, often in a V-shape.

Now the half that people selling Dubai tend to skip. The **2026 regional escalation caused a real, measurable dislocation**, not just a wobble in confidence. Transaction volumes fell sharply, off-plan resale traded 10 to 15% below original values in distressed cases, and the ValuStrat index posted that first monthly decline since 2020. The honest reading is two-sided. The correction concentrated in speculative off-plan, while **ready, end-user homes proved significantly more resilient**, and the quarter as a whole still grew, with Q1 2026 DLD transactions up 31% year on year to AED 252 billion. But the safe-haven inflow that supports Dubai can also **reverse** if tensions escalate materially, and airspace or flight disruption is a genuine transmission channel for a tourism-led economy. So the discipline is to hold ready-completed assets for income and the structural story, size to survive a 12 to 18 month sentiment drawdown, and never trade the headlines.

#1 safest country
UAE SAFETY RANKING (NUMBEO, INDEX 85.2)
Numbeo / CR.D

83.8
DUBAI SAFETY INDEX VS LONDON 44.8
Numbeo

+31%
DLD Q1 2026 TRANSACTIONS YOY, TO AED 252BN
Dubai Land Department

THE TWO-SIDED RECORD

- Domestic safety: UAE #1 globally, Dubai index 83.8.
- Demand: world's #1 millionaire-migration destination.
- But 2026 escalation cut volumes and prices, hardest in off-plan.
- Ready end-user homes held up far better than speculative off-plan.
- Safe-haven inflows are real but can reverse on escalation.

THE DISCIPLINE

"Resilient but not immune. Hold ready assets for income, size for an 18-month drawdown, and don't trade the headlines."

CHAPTER 06 · QUESTION FIVE

The Recovery Record, And Where It Has Limits

The fair way to judge conflict risk isn't a single scary headline, it's the track record of how Dubai property has behaved through shocks. It's a record of drawdown followed by recovery, with one honest limit attached.

Look at the pattern. The 2019 Gulf tanker tensions hit equities more than physical property. The 2020 pandemic knocked sale values down about 10% and volumes about 12%, and then the market rebounded sharply, over 20% quarter on quarter, by late 2020. The 2026 escalation caused a real physical price fall, the sharpest of the three, but even then the quarter as a whole still grew, with DLD Q1 2026 transactions up 31% year on year. The shape each time has been a drawdown followed by a recovery, with the pain concentrated in speculative off-plan and the ready, end-user segment holding up far better.

1	2	3
Tanker tensions	**Pandemic shock**	**Regional escalation**
2019 · Hit equities more than physical property, which was already in its soft cycle	2020 · Values down ~10%, volumes ~12%, then a 20%+ QoQ rebound by late 2020	2026 · Real physical price fall, hardest in off-plan, but the quarter still grew +31% YoY

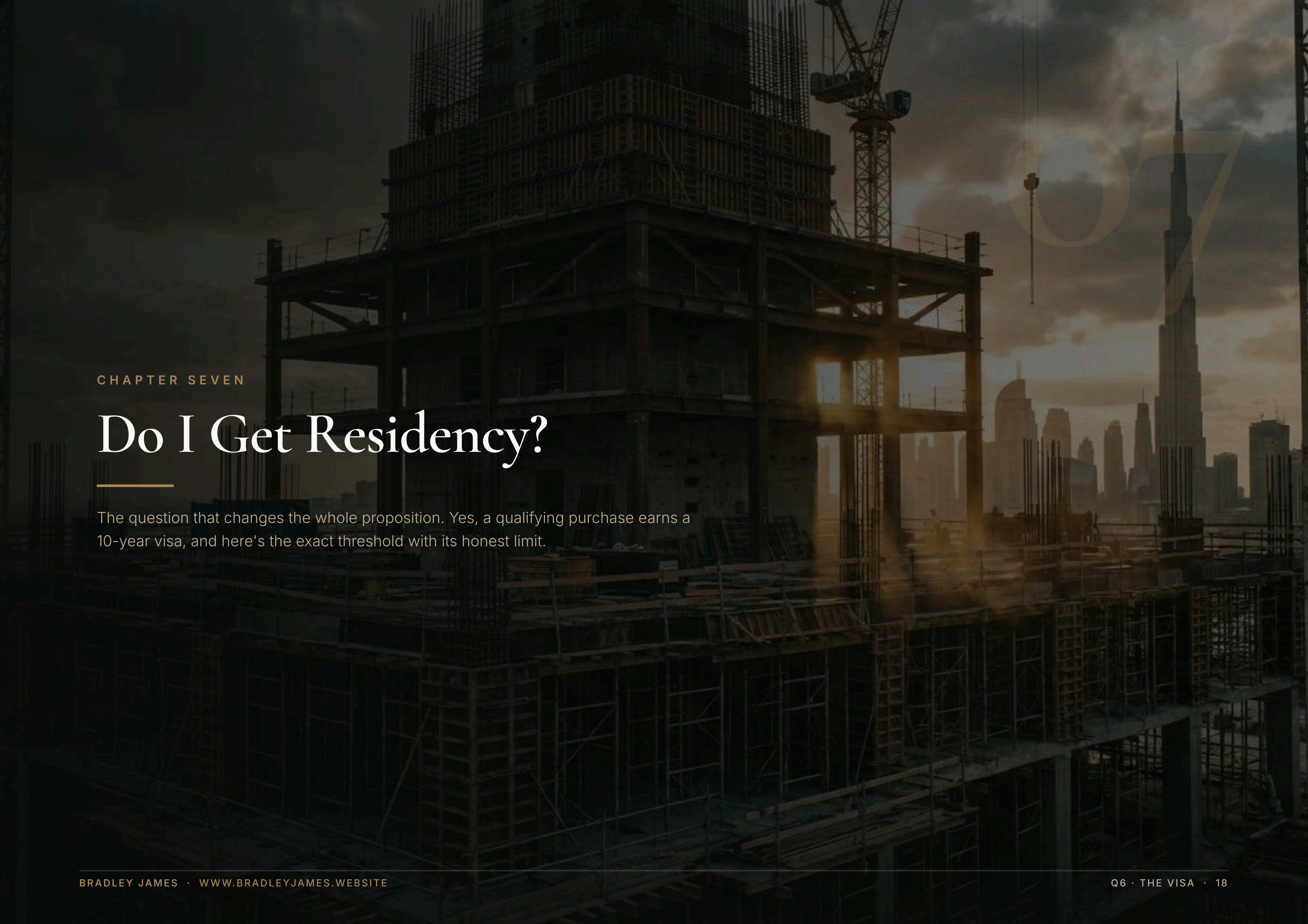
Now the limit, stated plainly so you don't over-trust the pattern. Past recoveries do not guarantee the next one. The safe-haven inflow that has supported Dubai can reverse if tensions escalate materially, airspace or flight disruption is a genuine transmission channel for a tourism-led economy, and the off-plan segment carries most of the geopolitical beta. The conclusion the data supports is a careful one: resilient, repeatedly, but never immune. Own ready assets you'd be happy to hold and let through an 18-month drawdown, and don't build a position that only works if the region stays quiet.

◆ RESILIENT, REPEATEDLY

- 2019 tanker tensions: equities more than physical property.
- 2020 pandemic: ~10% down, then a 20%+ QoQ rebound.
- 2026 escalation: real price fall, yet the quarter still grew +31% YoY.
- Every episode: off-plan hit hardest, ready homes far steadier.

◆ THE LIMIT

"A recovery record is not a guarantee of the next recovery. Own ready assets you'd hold through an 18-month drawdown, not a bet that the region stays quiet."



CHAPTER SEVEN

Do I Get Residency?

The question that changes the whole proposition. Yes, a qualifying purchase earns a 10-year visa, and here's the exact threshold with its honest limit.

A Purchase That Comes With a Decade of Residency

For a lot of buyers this is the question that turns an investment into a life decision. The answer is yes, with a clear number, and one honest clarification about what the visa is and isn't.

A property purchase with a Dubai Land Department valuation of **AED 2 million or more** qualifies you for the **10-year renewable Golden Visa** on the investor route. The old minimum down-payment rule was removed in 2025, and crucially, **off-plan and mortgaged properties now qualify**, provided the DLD valuation meets the AED 2 million threshold. It's self-sponsored, so you're not tied to an employer, it lets you sponsor your spouse and children on the same term, and it doesn't lapse if you spend an extended period abroad. For a family thinking in decades rather than lease renewals, that's a materially different proposition from a normal residence visa.

The honest clarification, because it's where people over-read the benefit: **the Golden Visa is residency, not citizenship, and residency is not automatically tax residency**. It gives you the right to live, bank and run a business here for a renewable decade. It does not, by itself, make you a UAE tax resident, and it does not by itself end another country's tax claim on you. That's a separate process with a separate day-count test, and it's exactly the subject of the next chapter. So hold the two apart. The visa is a genuinely strong, verified benefit of buying. It's just not the same thing as changing where you're taxed.

AED 2 million
DLD VALUATION FOR THE 10-YEAR INVESTOR VISA
DLD / u.ae

10 years
RENEWABLE, SELF-SPONSORED TERM
u.ae / DLD

Off-plan
OFF-PLAN AND MORTGAGED PROPERTY NOW QUALIFY
DLD (2025 update)

WHAT THE VISA DOES

- 10-year renewable residency at AED 2m DLD valuation.
- Self-sponsored, not tied to any employer.
- Sponsor spouse and children on the same term.
- Off-plan and mortgaged property now qualify.
- Does not lapse for extended time abroad.

THE CLARIFICATION

"The visa is residency, not citizenship, and residency is not automatic tax residency. Strong benefit, but keep it separate from the tax question."

08

CHAPTER EIGHT

What Tax Do I Actually Pay?

The most misused answer in the whole market. Yes, 0% in the UAE, but the load-bearing caveat is that 0% does not travel home with you.

0% Here, But That Zero Does Not Travel Home

This is the answer that gets abused more than any other, and it's why I put it last. The Dubai half is genuinely excellent. The half nobody in a hurry mentions is the one that actually determines your tax bill, and it's about your home country, not Dubai.

The Dubai half, verified. For an individual the UAE levies **0% personal income tax, 0% capital-gains tax, 0% tax on personal rental income, 0% annual property tax and 0% inheritance tax** at the federal level. Rent from a property you own personally is not caught by the 9% corporate tax, which applies to business profits above AED 375,000. That's real, it's sourced to PwC and the UAE government, and it's a large part of why the net yield holds up. If you are genuinely, fully tax-resident in the UAE, this is close to as clean as personal taxation gets.

Now the load-bearing caveat, the one that decides what you actually pay. **The UAE's 0% does not travel home with you.** If you remain tax-resident in the UK, your Dubai rental income and gains are still within scope of UK tax under worldwide-income rules, regardless of the UAE charging nothing. If you're a US citizen, the IRS taxes your worldwide income wherever you live, full stop. Owning in Dubai, and even holding the Golden Visa, does not by itself change your country of tax residence, which is a deliberate process with its own day-count and tie tests. Anyone who implies the 0% automatically becomes your global rate is either mistaken or selling. The correct step is to check your own position against your home country's rules, the PwC country summaries are the cleanest starting point, and take cross-border advice before assuming a saving.

TAX LINE	THE UAE SIDE	THE HOME-COUNTRY SIDE
Personal income tax	0% in the UAE	May still apply where you are tax-resident
Rental income	0% on personal rental income	UK worldwide rules and US citizenship-based tax can still reach it
Capital gains	0% in the UAE	Home-country CGT may still apply on the gain
What decides it	UAE charges nothing	Your country of tax residence, not Dubai, sets your actual bill

General information, not tax advice. UAE position from PwC / u.ae / CR.D. Home-country treatment depends entirely on your residence and citizenship; consult the PwC Worldwide Tax Summary for your jurisdiction and take professional cross-border advice.

0%

UAE PERSONAL INCOME, CGT, RENTAL AND INHERITANCE TAX

PwC / u.ae / CR.D

9%

CORPORATE TAX, BUSINESS PROFITS ABOVE AED 375,000 ONLY

PwC / CR.D

◆ THE CAVEAT THAT DECIDES YOUR BILL

The UAE charging 0% is not the same as your paying 0%. If you stay tax-resident in the UK, or you're a US citizen anywhere, your home country can still tax your Dubai income and gains. The zero is real in the UAE. It does not travel with you.

◆ THE RULE

"Dubai's 0% is a UAE fact, not a global one. Check your home-country position before you count the saving, and take advice before you act on it."

09

CHAPTER NINE

The Honest Round-Up

The seven questions boiled down to the answers you can act on, plus the caveats that keep every one of them honest.

CHAPTER 09 · FAQ AND CAVEATS

Straight Answers, With the Catch Attached

Q. So can I actually own it outright?

Yes, freehold, in your own name, in the designated zones set by Law No. 7 of 2006 and Regulation No. 3 of 2006. No local sponsor or residency needed to buy. The one check: confirm the specific plot sits in a designated freehold zone and the deed reads freehold.

Q. Is my off-plan money really safe?

Your funds are ring-fenced in a project-specific escrow account under Law No. 8 of 2007, released to the developer only against verified milestones, with the Oqood interim register tracking the sale. That protects against a developer taking the money and not building. It does not protect against delay or a market fall while you wait, and only about 49% of 2025's announced units completed on schedule. Buy the developer's track record and size for slippage.

Q. What net yield should I actually expect?

Gross runs around 7.0% to 7.2% city average, 5.5% to 6.5% prime. Net is that minus service charges, management fees and voids. The one leak Dubai spares you is tax, 0% on personal rental income and no annual property tax, which is why net holds up better here than in high-tax cities. Never underwrite on the gross headline.

Q. Is it a bubble about to crash?

The base case is a supply-led moderation, not a 2009 crash: the market is majority cash, escrow and LTV caps now exist, and Fitch expects up to 15% peak-to-trough, not a collapse. But be honest, prices did fall in 2026, the ValuStrat index posted its first monthly decline since 2020 at -5.9% in March. Not immune, just structurally sturdier. Buy something you can hold through a drawdown.

Q. Should the regional situation stop me?

It's a real, recurring risk, not a tail risk. Domestically the UAE is the #1 safest country, but the 2026 escalation cut volumes and prices, hardest in speculative off-plan, while ready end-user homes held up far better. Size to survive an 18-month sentiment drawdown, hold ready assets for income, and don't trade the headlines.

Q. Do I get residency, and is it citizenship?

A purchase valued at AED 2 million or more earns a 10-year renewable Golden Visa, self-sponsored, and off-plan and mortgaged properties now qualify. But it's residency, not citizenship, and residency is not automatically tax residency. Strong benefit, just don't over-read it.

Q. Will I really pay no tax?

In the UAE, yes, 0% personal income, capital gains, rental and inheritance tax. But that 0% does not travel home. A UK tax resident still faces UK tax on Dubai income and gains, and a US citizen is taxed worldwide by the IRS. Your country of tax residence, not Dubai, decides your actual bill. Take cross-border advice before counting the saving.

REFERENCES & SOURCES

Every Figure, Sourced

Every statistic in this guide is attributed. Where sources differ, a range is used. Links are live and clickable.

01 **Dubai Real Estate Legislation (Law No. 7 of 2006 freehold registration; Law No. 8 of 2007 escrow accounts; Regulation No. 3 of 2006 designated zones)**. Dubai Land Department. https://dubailand.gov.ae/media/zrrd4qw4/en-legislation.pdf

02 **Oqood interim property register for off-plan sales (Law No. 13 of 2008)**. Dubai Land Department. https://dubailand.gov.ae/en/eservices/oqood/

03 **Regulations Regarding Mortgage Loans, Article 3 (LTV and debt-burden caps, Circular 31/2013)**. Central Bank of the UAE Rulebook. https://rulebook.centralbank.ae/en/rulebook/article-3-important-ratios

04 **Dubai property boom leans on cash as mortgage lending lags (mortgages ~25% of 2025 sales value, cash ~75% by value; average new-mortgage LTV below 73%)**. AGBI, reporting Dubai Land Department data. https://www.agbi.com/real-estate/2026/01/dubai-property-boom-leans-on-cash-as-mortgage-lending-lags/

05 **Property prices are down in Dubai: war blip or worse (Goldman Sachs UAE volumes ~-37% YoY and ~-49% MoM early March 2026; off-plan -21% MoM; seller price cuts)**. Fortune, citing Goldman Sachs and DLD/market data. https://fortune.com/2026/06/01/property-prices-down-dubai/

06 **ValuStrat Price Index: first monthly decline since 2020 (-5.9% in March 2026, erasing roughly six months of gains)**. ValuStrat. https://www.valustrat.com/valustrat-price-index/

07 **Dubai Residential Market Performance FY 2025 (materialisation ~48.9% of announced units)**. Cavendish Maxwell. https://cavendishmaxwell.com/insights/market-reports/residential/dubai-residential-market-performance-fy-2025

08 **Dubai real estate transactions surge 31% to AED 252 billion in Q1 2026**. Dubai Land Department. https://dubailand.gov.ae/en/news-media/dubai-s-real-estate-transactions-surge-31-to-reach-aed-252-billion-in-q1-2026/

09 **Property investment ratios: Dubai price-to-income ~7.3 and price-to-rent ~14.1 versus London ~15.3 and ~28.7**. Numbeo. https://www.numbeo.com/property-investment/in/Dubai

10 **Dubai Real Estate Transactions 2024-2025 (volumes and values)**. Dubai Land Department / DXB Interact. https://dubailand.gov.ae/en/open-data/real-estate-data/

11 **Dubai population clock (crossed 4.0 million, August 2025)**. Dubai Statistics Center. https://www.dsc.gov.ae/en-us/Pages/default.aspx

12 **Dubai Economic Agenda D33 (AED 32 trillion, double the economy)**. Dubai Media Office. https://mediaoffice.ae/en/news/2023/January/04-01/Dubai-Economic-Agenda-D33

13 **Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan (population target 5.8 million)**. The UAE Government Portal. https://u.ae/en/about-the-uae/strategies-initiatives-and-awards/strategies-plans-and-visions/infrastructure-and-transport/dubai-2040-urban-master-plan

14 **UAE Article IV Consultation and World Economic Outlook (GDP, inflation)**. International Monetary Fund. https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/ARE

15 **ValuStrat Price Index (VPI) and 2026 capital-growth outlook**. ValuStrat. https://www.valustrat.com/valustrat-price-index/

16 **Dubai residential market review, prime price per square foot**. Knight Frank. https://www.knightfrank.ae/research

17 **Global Sovereigns and UAE / Dubai real estate outlook (supply-led moderation)**. Fitch Ratings. https://www.fitchratings.com/

18 **Private Wealth Migration Report 2025 (UAE the world's #1 net inflow)**. Henley & Partners. https://www.henleyglobal.com/publications/henley-private-wealth-migration-report-2025

19 **UAE corporate tax and 0% personal-tax framework for individuals**. PwC Middle East Tax Summaries. https://taxsummaries.pwc.com/united-arab-emirates

20 **The dirham peg to the US dollar at 3.6725 (since 1997)**. Central Bank of the UAE. https://www.centralbank.ae/en/

21 **Safety and crime indices 2025 (UAE ranked safest country)**. Numbeo Crime and Safety Index. https://www.numbeo.com/crime/rankings_by_country.jsp

WORK WITH BRADLEY JAMES

Straight Answers Beat a Good Pitch.

◆ ABOUT BRADLEY

Not a broker, an advisor. I built a business in the UK and spent more than a decade advising people from all walks of life, before moving to Dubai and joining M&M Real Estate to work at a higher strategic level than the typical transactional broker. I specialise exclusively in off-plan investment for overseas and high-net-worth clients, I put my own capital into the projects I recommend, and my business is more than 80% referral-driven, because every client came through someone who trusted me first.

WHATSAPP
+971 56 500 6162

EMAIL
b.james@mandmrealestate.ae

WEBSITE
www.bradleyjames.website

Bradley James

INVESTMENT ADVISOR · M&M REAL ESTATE · DUBAI