

# Holistic house

> Design that meets the needs of inhabitants of home and nature



**M**ORE than just bringing the outside in and vice versa or erasing the boundaries of in and out, holistic interior design is an approach that integrates the functional needs of the \*built environment, as well as the body, mind and spirit of the occupants.

From the choice of colour to the amount of light, the sounds and sights, textures and aromas - marrying the needs of the environment and that of the inhabitants is crucial in this home design concept. The goal is to enhance wellbeing and create a harmonious setting for the occupants, including Mother Nature and all it encompasses.



## LET THE SUN IN

Go for natural lighting and save on energy use by cleverly playing with natural light. Use various materials that reflect or intersperse light to achieve a variety of artistic effects. From creating shadows on walls to forming colours and shapes or simply allowing direct or indirect sunlight to shine onto objects or spaces - be amazed and awed by the many stunning visual effects sunlight can form.

## NATURE'S ART

Why spend lots of money buying art when nature's beauty itself can provide glorious masterpieces? Go big on windows and liberal in glass door dimensions and allow nature's scenic beauty to captivate the onlooker. Simply incorporate clear glass or go for "naked" open concepts where occupants have grand views of the outside. Another idea is to use glass ceilings where

one can "sleep under the stars" or on rainy nights watch the splatter of raindrops, which some find therapeutic.

## AU NATURAL

In the interiors, use nature's elements like wood and stone, in its natural state (eg timber frames, weaved ceilings, wooden flooring, natural stone walls, etc) These not only give one a sense of being outdoors, but natural elements are said to enhance a sense of "balance", improve the state of wellbeing, stimulating a sense of equilibrium. As humans, we are part of Mother Earth. Therefore, to be among nature and its elements, this encourages one to feel whole and complete, and at one with nature.

## WATER, THE SOURCE OF LIFE

Water features can be a sight for sore eyes. Moreover, the sound of flowing water is calming and



soothing. From fountains to ponds, indoor swimming pools, Jacuzzis, water walls, et cetera, when used creatively together with lights, these can make stunning features that captivate and even "heal". In fact, research recognises the healing power of sound, which has been used for thousands of years. And since our body is actually made up of 70% water, the two sort of complete each other. Moreover, one can make use of water to generate energy by playing with the natural topography of an area.

## FRESH AIR

Especially for homes situated on elevated grounds, on hills or in the outskirts where the air is cleaner, more fresh, cool and crisp - no words need describe the amount of goodness fresh air does for the body, mind and soul, compared with the city smog. The wind can also be used to generate energy. One helps save the environment when one uses less electricity.



## SOUND OF THE WILD

While city folk sound-proof homes to keep "noise pollution" low, houses in the rural areas welcome nature's symphony. From the sound of rain or wind, the harmonious resonance of insects and small creatures like the croaking of the frogs and chirping of the birds, et cetera, all these are said to have some healing capacity for our body, mind and soul. Like the sound of water, sounds of certain decibels are said to have been used for thousands of years, as a tool for healing.

## ZEN-INSPIRED SPACES AND COLOURS

Lots of open spaces that are free from clutter along with "zen colours" - these have been

scientifically proven to calm and heal. Zen-inspired spaces, colours and interior design (clutter-free included) concepts are also said to invite calm and cause the body, mind and soul to be in a relaxed state. In fact, some reports state that these help reduce distractions, calm the mind and promotes the feeling of peace and serenity.

*[\*Built environment in this context refers to the surroundings created by humans, for humans, to be used for human activity. It is a material, spatial and cultural product that combines physical elements and energy, defined as "human-made space in which people can live, work and recreate on a day-to-day basis".]*

**\*\* Note:** The images in this article are taken from Casabrina Vacation Villas in Raub, Pahang. Casabrina is nestled along the quiet foothills and provides the weary with acres and acres of all the above and much more. The day-to-day running of the resort is skewed towards sustaining the environment. It is built with respect and care for Mother Nature, and breeds positive energy.



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# Driving knowledge & opinion leadership



> Empowering access to property market knowledge and data for purchasers, sellers and industry analysts

**PROPERTY.COM** was established in 2003. Leveraging technology and internet scope and dynamism, it was set up to facilitate property sector data, knowledge and insights. Offering innovative “products” and supported by a team of young (and young at heart), enthusiastic and spirited individuals, iProperty became a public listed company in 2007 with offices in six Asian countries – Thailand, Hong Kong-Macau, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia.

Visibility and dynamism of the “iProperty brand” caught the attention of the REA Group, the Australian media conglomerate, which inter alia, owns television stations, news portals and dailies. REA Group bought into the business and as the largest shareholder, took iProperty to greater heights.

Today, iProperty.com is arguably the most prominent and reputed **online real estate company** in Southeast Asia. Staffed by 380 employees, it is increasingly gaining more momentum and driving opinion and thought leadership in the property arena. As more people come into the middle class, PMEB and opulent sectors, it will postulate more buyers and investors, further driving and expanding the property industry. iProperty is thus operating in consistent-growth sector.

Georg Chmiel, who has been on the board of directors since 2011, formally took hold of the reins as regional managing director and CEO of iProperty Group in 2014.

## IPROPERTY PLUS POINTS

**1) People and facilitation**  
Driving a successful regional business in today’s world requires a combination of talented personnel and appropriate use of the internet. Companies without capable, committed staff and lack of “online leverage” are unlikely to feature among the top players in any industry.

“For us, the key is real estate advertising. Making it more efficient and convenient for the industry, allowing buyers and investors to find the properties they want easily, for vendors to touch base with agents ... in general, better outcomes for the sale of properties. On the other hand, we also look into the developers’ concerns and help them sell their products ... faster,” Chmiel informs.

The CEO also shares that the customer is always in mind when the company designs new features and products. “We always ask ourselves who is the person “searching”? Is the person...

- ▶ an investor?
- ▶ a first home buyer?
- ▶ an up-grader?
- ▶ an empty nester?

“Based on these factors, we segment the properties and information on our website to around 15 different categories. This will facilitate the users’ search.”

iProperty is now a well-established brand and automatically attracts people to its website. “Our portal is accessible to everyone. Besides helping you with the data and categorisation, it guides and facilitates your search,” Chmiel adds.

## 2) Easy accessibility

Besides its dynamic and forward-thinking workforce (a relatively young team, averagely aged below 30), iProperty can also shout about its strongest point, its “core product” – powerful, updated knowledge and insights on property markets – readily accessible 24/7, worldwide on the internet via iProperty.com.

Online leverage is among the most important tools for any company today, particularly in connecting buyers and sellers. “We’ve also revamped the website using new technology, on how a search is conducted and how properties are being displayed. It’s having an impact as people can find things more easily now. We’ve also refreshed the content and now have a separate news section specifically for property news – iPropertyFocus – via [focus.iproperty.com](http://focus.iproperty.com). The website works much quicker empowering easier and faster access to desired information.

“We have also segregated properties according to certain buckets of similarities. Further providing potential associative links ‘... if you like this, you may also like these ones’. The company has simultaneously also developed

plus insights about the market’s wants, needs and trends. “If you log into our website, you will note that we also have data gleaned from tracking the search patterns – from house types to locations, city-centres and suburbs, price range and configurations. We can also predict what people are looking for at any appointed time, in a certain suburb, in which price range, even preferred configurations. This information postulates really powerful insights for developers and sellers,” states Chmiel.



Georg Chmiel.

a strong online experience for mobile apps and mobile websites, not just for consumers, but also for agents,” Chmiel informs.

## 3) Valuable data

“On iProperty.com, we empower our site-users with readily available data for potential property buyers and investors. It’s not just about advertising. We also utilise the insights and experience provided by the people executing the searches,” Chmiel says.

By analysing the wide range of searches executed by all interested parties, iProperty.com is able to provide

updated information plus insights about the market’s wants, needs and trends. “If you log into our website, you will note that we also have data gleaned from tracking the search patterns – from house types to locations, city-centres and suburbs, price range and configurations. We can also predict what people are looking for at any appointed time, in a certain suburb, in which price range, even preferred configurations. This information postulates really powerful insights for developers and sellers,” states Chmiel.

There is also an international section where iProperty presents information about overseas

developments to Malaysian buyers, assisting and guiding them before they make a purchasing decision. “A lot of data can be amassed from the searches ... we are planning on providing certain key information to developers so they can build what people are looking for ... and of course insights to support the agents as well,” said Chmiel.

## 4) New innovative products

Around four months ago, iProperty developed some new products to assist developers, home buyers and investors.

“Barely half a year and it is already gaining momentum and has the industry talking. Many

developers are already realising the effectiveness of iGoggles and how it can help them by involving us at an early stage, not just at the advertising phase, but at the planning feasibility stage,” Chmiel informs. Like a virtual showroom, iGoggles bridges the gap between the developer and the buyer/investor. Besides the viewer being able to see a development in a three-dimensional space, the “goggles” comes in handy as it is compact and portable. iGoggles has not just widened iProperty’s buyer base, it has allowed a much greater degree of people to be aware of its “customer’s” projects, local as well as international.

iRealtor is also an iProperty app but for mobile phone users. “When one wants to do a new residential listing for example – a house for sale/rent, with number of rooms and description, et cetera – all one needs to do is fill in the information required on our website, snap pictures and upload them. We’ve also put in place a couple of buttons to report the quality of listings, to report abuse or misuse and such,” Chmiel adds.

## 5) Agents and peoples’ choice awards

“After a very successful start last year, iProperty is conducting the second “Agents Awards”. This has now become an important event for the property agent community.

The prestigious Peoples’ Choice Awards this year is scheduled for early November. This is among the rare property awards where the preference and opinion of consumers, property buyers, purchasers, developers and even agents, is recorded and considered by a panel of eminent judges.

The number of award categories has been increased to 15 this year, besides including international developments. We have already received 111 entries and numbers have been screened and narrowed down to 84. “This year we have five judges. **Public voting will**

**continue till Oct 13.** Anyone living in Malaysia can put in their vote,” informs Chmiel

“Besides these awards we also regularly organise ‘developer and agent mingling nights’. We often execute surveys, connecting with consumers and property buyers, collating insights gleaned from their aspirations, budgets, practical desires and expectations in the property market. We believe in spending time with our customers and talking to them, understanding their sentiments and helping them to disseminate information from and via our portals.”

## VIEW ON MALAYSIAN MARKET

“Many felt that the GST and downward slide of the ringgit would destroy the market but it hasn’t. They have actually made it more attractive. In fact, Malaysians with capital and disposable income apparently suggest that they are more interested in buying now than they were six months ago. After all, most countries have GST. Like when the euro was introduced (in 2002), prices rose and things were quiet for a while ... it’ll all be back to normal.

“Actually, despite the temporary downturn and the tanking of the ringgit, the market potential and confidence are still very high.

## Confidence is driven by facts and perception in every market.

The underlying verity is that Malaysia, the 34th biggest country in the world, has a relatively stable socio-economic foundation compared with other countries. So, people are willing to invest.

Moreover, we are a growing, young population. Factoring all that helps drive the confidence in this market,” Chmiel states.

Affordability is another key factor in the market. “Anything up to RM500,00 is very high in demand. Anything up to RM800,000 to RM1 million is still very strongly in demand. Above that, it really depends on which segment you’re in. But we definitely see a demand in Johor,” informs Chmiel and culls some relevant insights gleaned from a recent survey conducted by iProperty in Johor.

Chmiel also reiterates that Penang has always been among the top three markets in Malaysia, especially where upcoming areas are concerned. “There is still a high demand for property in Penang. Many of our survey respondents outside of Selangor still choose Penang as their top-priority destination for purchasing property.”

theSun exclusive interview with Georg Chmiel, regional managing director and CEO of iProperty Group was conducted by Michele Theseira and Prashun Dutt.



## Investing in property



**THIS** Sunday, from 2pm to 4pm, those interested in investing in the property market are invited to a talk hosted by Agile Real Estate Development (M) Sdn Bhd at Mont Kiara Sales Gallery. At the event, author of the book “The Strategic Property Investor” Ahyat Isyak will share valuable insights on “Buying property in times of uncertainty”.

Ahyat, a name that is renowned in the property industry here, is also founder of the “Property Investor” programme. He will also share how he became a millionaire before the age of 30, through property investments. Hear how he has helped other Malaysians increase their wealth by replicating his successful property investment strategies, along with snippets of information on the life of the man himself and his rise to success.

Why invest in shares which are an “index”, on companies that come and go when property is tangible and here to stay? Moreover, as land becomes scarce with time, prices will appreciate. For enquiries and registration, log on to [www.agilemalaysia.com.my](http://www.agilemalaysia.com.my)

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# The people's choice

> One of Asia's leading property website portals now brings the consumer's views and preferences into the reckoning frame

THESE are super-colossal amounts of information easily available on the internet via websites. With just a click of a button on your smartphone or a light touch on your computer keyboard, information is aplenty and research most times get you additional data than you initially required. On property matters, it is no different. And with the improved iProperty.com Malaysia website, searches are made much easier than before.

## ENLIGHTENING WEBSITE

Unlike most other property websites, www.iproperty.com.my serves the buyer, the seller as well as the developer, operating property portals and delivering innovative advertising solutions to its advertisers across Asian markets in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Macau and Singapore. Its website includes properties for sale, rent, auction, as well as new launches, covering residential and commercial real estate across the globe.

There are even tips, guides, property-related articles and news blurbs, plus a "condominium directory" and a "find an agent" tab, among other essential, informative and helpful links. These include new launches as well as re-sale/sub-sales, even assistance in finding an agent. Sub-sections on the website are a huge help for the amateur internet user.

While buyers will find joy in the vast amounts of options for sale; those looking to sell their property will find it a breeze in putting up their properties for sale. In fact, with the recent and successful launch of iGoggles, developers can take advantage and leverage from the amazing features the new product can provide.

## PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS

Since the establishment of iProperty Group in 2003, the company has grown its online



The panel of judges (from left) Chan, Owen, Chris, Chmiel, Chong and Ahyat.

property advertising market throughout the region. It continuously expands further, improving its "products" to serve the market's wants and needs, besides driving knowledge and opinion leadership.

In 2014, iProperty.com Malaysia launched its inaugural consumer selected awards for property developers. Its objective: To give due recognition to the unsung heroes in the property industry who have successfully shaped the property scene in Malaysia.

Aptly named the iProperty.com People's Choice Awards – it was the first of its kind in Malaysia and has provided a platform for consumers like you and I, to vote for our most preferred developer

and/or development in the country. As it is the company's axiom to grow and deliver solutions to serve the market, what better way than to get consumers to vote, at the same time receive valuable information regarding the industry's demand.

While the first of its People's Choice Awards comprised of 10 categories and received 190 submissions from developers across the nation, this year's will see 15 categories which are:

- ▶ Best International Development
- ▶ Best Value Development
- ▶ Best Commercial Development
- ▶ Most Iconic Development
- ▶ Best Integrated Development
- ▶ Best Township of the Year
- ▶ Best Luxury High Rise

- ▶ Development
- ▶ Best High Rise Development
- ▶ Best Luxury Landed Development
- ▶ Best Northern Development
- ▶ Best Southern Development
- ▶ Best Waterfront Development
- ▶ Best Landed Development
- ▶ Best Emerging Developer
- ▶ Developer of the Year

## BEHIND THE SCENES

iProperty Group managing director and CEO Georg Chmiel mentioned that the awards are not just aimed at recognising the best property developers in the country, but the view from a consumer's perspective. "We are excited to host the awards for the second year running. It's the first

of its kind in Malaysia and it provides us with a platform to not just pay tribute to the developers that have and continue to shape the Malaysian skyline but also a platform to engage with property buyers and investors. It is the highest recognition to be bestowed upon developers, as the winners are purely chosen by property buyers and investors themselves. The power to select the winners in the 15 categories, lies purely with property buyers and investors," added Chmiel.

Voting ended October 13. Of the many submissions received, 83 entries have been shortlisted after a stringent selection process by a panel of renowned judges. The esteemed panel this year comprises:

- ▶ Ahyat Ushak, Founder of The Strategic Property Investor Model & Program;
- ▶ Chris Tan Chur Pim, Founder and Managing Director of Chur Associates;
- ▶ Chan Seong Aun, Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM), President 2014-2015;
- ▶ David Chong, Vice President (I) Investment Promotions of Malaysia Property Incorporated;
- ▶ Owen Tan, Director, Professional Sales Akzo Nobel Paints Malaysia (Dulux); and
- ▶ Chmiel.

On November 3, industry players and guests invited to the exclusive, glittering gala awards ceremony, will be the first to learn about the **people's choice winners in each of the 15 categories**. Look out for our exclusive on the exciting upcoming event.

## Reminisce the golden era at Bandar Rimbayu

RELIVING nostalgic moments of yesteryears, IJM Land brings back the simplistic lifestyle through its Bandar Rimbayu mixed development project. Under the gleaming portfolio of a leading developer in Klang Valley, Bandar Rimbayu is strategically situated next to Kota Kemuning in Shah Alam and has many exceptional features to flaunt.

## GREEN VISION

Surrounded by lush greenery, the township is masterfully designed with four separate precincts: Flora, Fauna, Bayu and a Commercial Hub. Flora and Fauna both present residential, educational and recreational amenities while Bayu offers a high-end waterfront residential development.

Extraordinary in the Flora precinct other than its houses, is The Arc, the township's main gathering venue and an iconic landmark in the entire development. The Arc will feature an array of unending outdoor activity venues including an Olympic-size swimming pool, a football field, a gymnasium and dance studio, badminton and squash courts, and a cafeteria to name a few.

IJM Land also recently announced that an international school will be developed in the township. The third school in



The first phase of Bandar Rimbayu – Chimes.

Klang Valley to adopt the American System, the Oasis International School adds value to the township with world-class academic system run by qualified American educators. Completion date is scheduled to be in 2017.

## PRIME DISTRICT

"The ultimate point factor for Bandar Rimbayu mostly for its strategic location that makes it accessible through five major highways. With a gross development of RM11 billion, Bandar Rimbayu will be an integrated township with residential, commercial and recreational components spread over four precincts. Just like the

good old days, our neighbours are our friends," shared IJM managing director Edward Chong.



The first gated and guarded landed strata development in Bandar Rimbayu – Wisteria.

The certified green township is easily accessible via Kesas, Lebuhraya Kemuning-Shah Alam (LKSA), South Klang Valley Expressway (SKVE), North South Expressway Central Link (Elite) and the West Coast Expressway (WCE) which is under construction and will link Banting to Taiping once completed. The 1,879 acres of land will be able to house 12,000 families and is prepped with high-speed broadband infrastructure for better connectivity.

## YESTERDAY ONCE MORE

In August 2015, IJM Land launched #RimbayuTogethertgather, a fitness programme to gather the public and engage them in activities like Zumba and kids boot camp at The Arc. There will also be a

"Rimbayu Run With Me 2016" fun run soon. True to its theme,

there will be regular activities panned out from time to time to bring neighbours together to remind the people what it used to be like years ago.

To date, IJM Land has launched a total of 1,818 units of homes with two phases, Chimes and Perennia, comprising residential of varied sizes. Its latest residential project, Wisteria, is the first gated and guarded strata title development that offers two types of floor plans. Priced from RM901,800, the property has a 4.68-acre green lung area for residents to relish in nature. Moreover, IJM's commercial project in Bandar Rimbayu – Blossom Drive, offering 48 units of double-storey and three-storey shop offices – have all been sold out, promising a robust township that will boom in the future.

To nurture undiscovered young designers below the age of 30, IJM Land will be running its first ever Interior Designer Award 2016. Attractive cash prizes and gadgets such as a MacBook Pro and iPhone 6 are up for grabs. Those interested can visit the Facebook page for the IJM Land Designer Award or [www.rimbayu.com](http://www.rimbayu.com) for more.

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PART 1

# Call to green

> Kedah state government gets ball rolling in advocating green agenda

**W**ITH the current hazy climate conditions the country is faced with, many feel that perhaps this is a wake up call for the people and those governing, to start acting on intentions and declarations to go green. There is no time left to wait. If you just skim through dailies and look at what is happening all around the world, the so-called "natural disasters" people claim "can't be helped" stem from the theory action-reaction. No doubt there are natural disasters but these that once happen rarely are becoming more frequent, and impacting more forcefully.

We have been given this gargantuan piece of "property" called Earth. It is home to us and our loved ones. We only have this space to live in and by right should give a lot more thought to the damage we are causing it as it will eventually leave us and our children, and children's children, with no "home" (over and above sickness and suffering).

## TRANSFORMATION PLAN

On a smaller scale, we return to Malaysia, Kedah in particular, where its Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mukriz Mahathir recently unveiled the Kedah Green Agenda at the Langkawi International Cities Forum. The event was graced by the Energy, Green Technology and



(From left) Samuri shows support as Ongkili hands the Kedah Green Agenda to Mukhriz during the unveiling ceremony at the Langkawi International Cities Forum.

Water minister Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Johnity Ongkili and the deputy-minister of Natural Resources and Environment Datuk Hamim Samuri.

It was revealed that the Kedah Green Agenda was developed in partnership with the Malaysian Green Technology Corporation, better known as GreenTech Malaysia. Its constitution is in line with the 11th Malaysia Plan Strategic Thrust 4 which is structured around the central theme "Pursuing Green Growth for Sustainability and Resilience" as well as the Kedah Strategic Plan

2014 - 2018 - both aimed at boosting socio-economic growth.

## STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The Kedah Green Agenda is said to consist of 14 action plans. Each strategically positions Kedah as a model green state. Components of this programme include strategies and initiatives focusing on:

- ▶ Human Capital Development, developing a Centre of Excellence for Solar Technology,
- ▶ enhancing Sustainable Energy Management,
- ▶ installing LEDs in State Government Buildings,



Langkawi cable car.

- ▶ encouraging the adoption of Government Green Procurement,
- ▶ deploying Green Data Centres and Green Data Recovery Centres,
- ▶ an LED Street Light Retrofitting Programme,
- ▶ incorporating Solar Rooftop for Rakyat's Housing,
- ▶ expanding Solar Power Plants,
- ▶ the adoption of a Government Electric Vehicle (EV) Fleet,
- ▶ increasing EV Infrastructure,
- ▶ promoting Sustainable Waste Management,
- ▶ expanding the Rice Husk Ecosystem, and
- ▶ the implementation of Low Carbon Cities in Kedah.

## GREEN EFFORTS

On the initiative, Mukhriz said: "The seeds of Kedah's green transformation have already been planted with Kedah emerging as one of the major solar photovoltaic manufacturers in the world. With the growing emphasis on going green, the time is ripe to catapult Kedah into its next phase of growth, by positioning Kedah as a model Malaysian state that has successfully brought about the convergence of societal well-being,

economic progress and environmental sustainability."

The minister added that the state will work closely with the knowledgeable experts at GreenTech Malaysia on the implementation of the plan. He also highlighted the state's other initiatives that considered the importance of the environment. These included the establishment of:

- 1) First Solar Inc - a company manufacturing the world's largest thin-film photovoltaic (PV) solar module Kulim Hi-Tech Park;
- 2) Frangipani Langkawi Resort & Spa which won the Asean Green Award 2012/2014; as well as the
- 3) Langkawi cable car - Malaysia's longest free-span mono-cable car which has been operating on a PV diesel hybrid power system with a capacity of 60kWh per day (since 2008).

## AIM AND INTENT

Ongkili expressed his pleasure on the state's green undertakings and initiatives as these are aligned with the National Green Technology Policy and Green Technology Masterplan which were formulated by his ministry KeTTHA (Kementerian Tenaga, Teknologi Hijau dan Air) to propel the application and development of green technology in the country.

In fact, he informed that the cooperation between the state in GreenTech Malaysia was timely as it coincides with the prime minister's aspiration for Langkawi to become the first low carbon island by 2030. "We hope that the initiative by Kedah will be emulated by other states ... using green technology and green approaches to power the country's economy," Ongkili added.

On the collaboration, GreenTech Malaysia CEO Ahmad Hadri Haris commented that he was encouraged by the partnership with the state. "This is a fine example of how State and Federal Governments can come together, working in tandem with a Government agency such as GreenTech Malaysia, to holistically deliver Malaysia's green agenda, achieve the nation's COP15 pledge and ultimately realise our vision of becoming a world hub for green technology by 2020."

Follow our property section next week to learn more of Kedah's green transformation plan.

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Frangipani Langkawi Resort & Spa.

# A taste of cushy

**PREMIER** developer SP Setia has been on the roll providing owners of its properties with sophisticated lifestyle comforts and luxury-filled experiences. Its recent lucky draw campaign rewarded its purchasers with top drawer trips to various local and international destinations.

The first draw under the campaign saw 10 lucky consolation prize winners receive an exclusive and tasteful opportunity of indulging in hi-tea onboard a luxury yacht.

Prior to being whisked away on the swanky cruise, the winners were given a first-hand tour around Setia Eco Park. Famed for its sprawling forest park, the development boasts impressive facilities and amenities offering residents state-of-the-art security systems and an environment of lush landscapes.

The winners were then ferried to the Admiral Marina in Port Dickson where two luxury yachts were awaiting to spoil its guests rotten on this once-in-a-lifetime experience. As the crafts cruised along the Straits of Malacca, guests were treated to an extravagant hi-tea buffet spread. Together with the gentle sea breeze, nourishing to all the senses; there was



Team Setia with the winners, friends and family before boarding the yacht.

also a live band performing to entertain. The well-appointed sojourn saw all on board looking pretty satisfied and satiated, relaxing and basking in the pleasurable experiences.

The Jet Set with Setia campaign was launched on August 31 this year and is scheduled to run until December 1, 2015. The campaign is part of SP Setia's 40th anniversary,

where the company decided to express its appreciation to all its purchasers who bought SP Setia properties from Jan 1 to Dec 1, 2015. The remaining lucky draws will take place on Oct 31 and Dec 31 this year. Purchasers of SP Setia property developments still have a chance to win trips with all the extras to cities such as London, Melbourne and Singapore.

# Budget 2016 PART 1

> HBA's views and concerns on its impact on property industry

**W**ITH regard to the recently announced Budget 2016, here are views and comments from national House Buyers Association (HBA) president Chang Kim Loong. "On behalf of HBA, we acknowledge the challenges faced by our prime minister in tabling Budget 2016 in view of the global economic slowdown, along with the steep drop in the value of the ringgit," said Chang.

Below are HBA's views on Budget 2016.

The budget's new/additional positive take in relation to property include:

1) Increase in construction of affordable homes under the PRiMA, SPNB, PPAiM and PPR schemes; and

2) the "First Home Deposit Scheme", which will receive RM200,000 to assist first-time home owners make their deposit when purchasing affordable housing.

Other areas surrounding the property sector which have been retained and have the people's interest at heart include:

### a) The Developers' Interest Bearing Scheme (DIBS)

The government will continue to prohibit any permutation that entails interest capitalisation, including the DIBS.

"Developers, being entrepreneurs, should bear the risks that come with investment and not be allowed to enjoy profits at the expense of house-buyers bearing the risks on their behalf," expressed Chang.

For developers who feel DIBS should be allowed, claiming it

"assists new purchasers", Chang recommends these developers use the Build-Then-Sell (BTS) 10:90 concept if they are sincere in not wanting to shift the risks to house buyers.

### b) Affordable homes by the government

The prime minister announced that more affordable homes will be built by government-linked developers and agencies.

However, HBA had its reservations expressing that the right implementation plans need to be heeded in order for affordable housing to reach and benefit the right target market. "The right product must be built at the right place with the right numbers," voiced HBA members.

Its recommendation: reasonable prices between RM150,000 to RM300,000, not exceeding RM400,000 and ONLY for first-time house buyers and not second-time house buyers which PRiMA allows with certain conditions.

HBA also felt that PRiMA should ensure all allocated land be used for affordable housing instead of partnering with private developers where some are said to apportion only 40% of the land area to build affordable houses, the rest used for lifestyle properties, commercial and high-end developments.

HBA also opined that the government should boost the delivery of affordable housing by giving incentives and rebates to private developers such as lowering corporate tax rates of these developers; reducing land conversion premiums; and applying fast track release of unsold bumiputra units.

### c) First Home Deposit Scheme - 10%

Though claimed a laudable scheme that assists first-time home owners to come up with a 10% deposit, HBA advises some caution be taken as it may send the wrong message. "HBA has always felt that Zero Cost Entry properties where buyers do not need to make any down payment will encourage speculation. House buyers should rent if they cannot raise the initial down payment or meet the commitment fee for an affordable house."

The association also raised concerns stating that the government's obligation should be focused on providing housing for households earning less than RM10,000 a month. "Buyers should bear in mind the back-breaking loan spanning 30 years and not blindly jump to sign a 100% loan agreement (in this case 90% margin). Remember your obligation to repay the monthly mortgage, besides the maintenance, sinking fund, utility charges and so forth."

HBA also reinforced its voice on the 10% First Home Deposit Scheme. It advised the people: "Think thrice before buying a house if you can't even come up with the 10% down payment. Rent if you can't afford."

HBA also urges the government



to include a clause for houses purchased under this scheme. "Such properties under this scheme should be restricted from sale within the first 10 years, similar to PRiMA properties. It should also be only available to first-time house buyers and should be owner occupied."

Due to the recent announcement on Budget 2016, part two of the

article on Kedah's green transformation plan has been postponed. Follow our section for more information regarding the property sector in view of Budget 2016 next week.

► Email your feedback and queries to: [propertyqs@thesundaily.com](mailto:propertyqs@thesundaily.com)

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