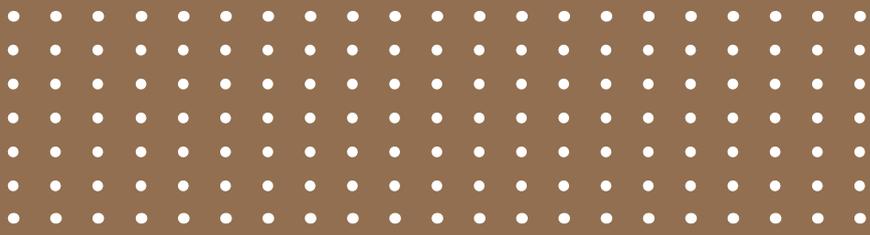


ISSUE 37 • April - June 2016

CITi-ZEN

Living Life Large



EXPLORING
SANDAKAN



Ireka Development Management Sdn Bhd
 Level 18, Wisma Mont' Kiara
 No. 1, Jalan Kiara, Mont' Kiara
 50480 Kuala Lumpur
 T +603.6411.6388
 F +603.6411.6383
 W i-zen.com.my
 E enquiry@i-zen.com.my

CONTENTS

- 1 : Sandakan Surprises
- 4 : Sandakan heritage Trail
- 5 : Four Points By Sheraton Hotel, Sandakan
- 6 : New Kid In Town - Lotus Five star Cinemas Opens New Multiplex In Harbour Mall Sandakan
- 8 : Southeast Asia's Largest Bookstore, Popular Books Charting A New Course In Sandakan
- 9 : Tks Grocer Sets Its Sights On Harbour Mall Sandakan
- 10 : Andy Hall, The Ruma Hotel's Interior Architect Unveils His Plans For This Classy Establishment
- 13 : Progress Intelligence On The Ruma Hotel And Residences

GREETINGS TO OUR CiTi-ZEN READERS

This issue of CiTi-ZEN (Issue 37) marks a huge transition for the publication - it is the last printed edition. Of course, as with any technology-related enterprise, this is not the end, but the beginning of something exciting and new for us.

Starting in July 2016, CiTi-ZEN will become a 100% digital publication. We hope that the benefits of this medium will be clear quite quickly because we will work hard to enhance your digital experience. You will continue to receive the same quality news, information and interviews you have come to expect over the last 10 years and we are energized by the endless possibilities of the digital format.

- Our digital platform makes it possible to deliver that same magazine experience on your PC. Just click the link to either download the latest edition, or to view it entirely online.
- It's Green: You can actually feel good about the amount of paper, ink, and electricity we will be saving by not producing a physical magazine.

If we already have your e-mail address, you don't have to do a thing. The digital edition will begin arriving in your e-mail inbox. If we don't have your e-mail address, please let us know by sending an email to Rene Anthony from our Marketing team - rene.anthony@ireka.com.my

A brief word about this issue of CiTi-ZEN – the focus is on Sandakan and all that this city has to offer. We have also featured an interview with award-winning architect, Andy Hall who has shared his interesting ideas with us on The RuMa Hotel.

Finally, I want to personally thank you for 10 years of support to CiTi-ZEN in its print form, and now I invite you to join us in the digital age.

Live Life Large

Lai Voon Hon
 Group Managing Director
 Ireka Corporation Berhad



SANDAKAN SURPRISES

This article and the photos have been used with the expressed permission of The Expat Magazine where this was featured in the November 2015 issue. Our heartfelt thanks to Chad Merchant and his team for generously letting us publish this article in its entirety.



Across the South China Sea, on the far side of the world's third-largest island lies Sabah's junior varsity city, Sandakan. **The Expat** magazine editor **Chad Merchant** recently visited and found a treasure trove of surprises here, both in the city and in the great forested wilderness beyond.

No domestic flight in Malaysia is longer than the one from Kuala Lumpur to Sandakan. Clocking in at just under three hours, it's a journey that stretches from the west side of Peninsular Malaysia to just about the furthest eastern area of Sabah. For me, it was a trip full of surprises right from the start. Upon landing at the newly revamped Sandakan airport, I was greeted by a bit of an oddity for a domestic flight: an immigration clearance counter. Surprisingly, travel to Sabah or Sarawak from Peninsula involves going through immigration (even for Malaysians), at these states retained a relatively high degree of autonomy upon joining the federation in 1963 and operate their own immigration controls. The airport was bright and spacious, apparently a dramatic improvement over its pre-refurbished condition, from what I was told.

As I was being driven to my hotel in town, I was met with another surprise. Sandakan, contrary to what I had held in my mind, is no small backwater town. I had imagined it, for whatever reason, to be quite rural and small, perhaps East Malaysia's version of Cherating or something like that. In actual fact, it's a moderately sized city, and the "Greater Sandakan" area is home to some 400,000 people, with a little under half of those residing in the city itself.

Perhaps the most welcome surprise was the hotel itself. The Four Points by Sheraton is not really the sort of



Puu Jih Shih Buddhist Temple



Rainforest Discovery Centre

property you might expect in a city like Sandakan. A contemporary high-rise hotel right on the harbourfront, this is easily the city's standard-setting hotel. Boasting nearly 300 spacious rooms, a lovely 13th-floor infinity pool, three restaurants, a well-fitted gym, a business centre, an executive lounge, and even a dedicated wine and cigar lounge, this hotel has a distinctly big-city feel to it. I checked in, then got busy exploring.

City Sights

The city of Sandakan offers visitors a – you guessed it – surprising range of activities. Near the hotel is a promenade fronting the sea, dotted with a nice mix of shops, cafes, and restaurants. Sandakan's Central Market is also a short stroll away, along with the Four Points-adjacent Harbour Mall Sandakan. The city is also known as "Little Hong Kong" and a walk around the area



St Michael's Church



English Tea House and Restaurant

surrounding the hotel will reveal why. Narrow, crowded streets with all manner of Chinese shops and businesses are indeed reminiscent of parts of Hong Kong, though perhaps not nearly as congested or chaotic. The Four Points hotel is also home to a popular restaurant. The Best Brew, which has live music on most nights and is a bit of a hot spot in the city. I enjoyed a couple of dinners here, accompanied by a cold draught beer and some very entertaining and talented bands.

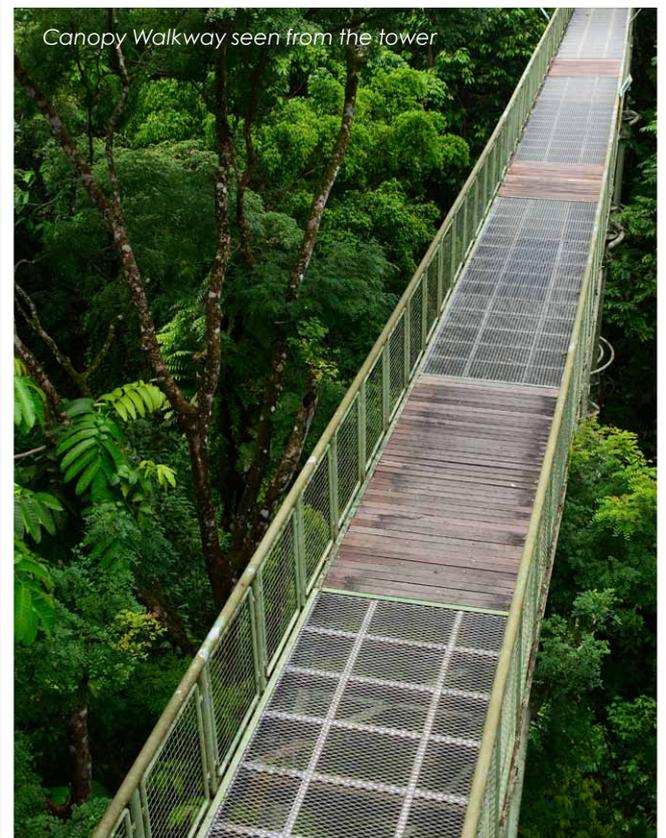
Heading out by car during the day, I visited the Puu Jih Shih Buddhist Temple, which is located strategically on a hilltop about 4km from the town centre. Naturally, the temple grounds afford a sweeping view of Sandakan Bay and the harbour. The temple itself was built in 1987, and though it's not at all ancient, it is currently undergoing a fairly extensive renovation, so much of the interior was inaccessible when I visited. Still, it's a lovely temple to see, and the panoramic views are quite impressive, too.

Another worthwhile place is the Agnes Keith House. The well-known American author of a trio of Sabah-themed autobiographical novels including *Land Below the Wind* and *Three Came Home*, Agnes Keith and her husband, Englishman Henry "Harry" Keith, who was the Conservator of Forests and Director of Agriculture for British-ruled North Borneo, lived in Sandakan for several years. The beautifully rebuilt and subsequently refurbished house stands now as a museum, having opened in 2004 in this capacity. Walking through the open and spacious – which incorporates American, British, and local architectural elements – and viewing its antiques (both genuine and reproduced) and a series of informative displays. I could easily imagine the idyllic times spent here by the Keiths. As a nice complement

to the Agnes Keith House, history buffs can also spend a bit of time exploring the Sandakan Heritage Museum in town, which offers free admission. For traditional British food and a civilised spot of tea, the place to go is the aptly named English Tea House and Restaurant, a colonial dining concept on a grassy hilltop near town, just next to the Agnes Keith House.

The oldest stone church in Sabah is the St. Michael's and All Angels Church in Sandakan, an Anglican church built from 1893 to 1925. The church's beautiful stained glass windows were donated by Australia to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, and two time capsules were buried beneath a memorial on the church grounds in 1988, to be opened in 2038 and 2088.

Finally, the Sandakan Memorial Park is a must-visit site for those interested in Sabah's history or who wish to pay respects to the thousands of Australian and British POWs who died here during WWII, not perishing on the Sandakan Death Marches at the hands of the Japanese. The park comprises six stations connected by a circular pathway and includes a memorial pavilion with a permanent exhibition about the POW camps here and the death marches. Of some 2,500 POWs in the camps, only six Australian men, who escaped during the marches, survived. The park was created as a joint effort of the governments of Sabah and Australia, along with the Australian veterans' association and Sandakan Municipal Council. It is an exceptionally well-designed and beautifully maintained memorial park, a serene and reflective site that stands as a somber remembrance to the victims of a painfully dark chapter in Sabahan and Australian history.



Canopy Walkway seen from the tower



Black Flying Squirrel



Black Hornbill male



Great Egret



Sun Bear showing off his climbing skills

Natural Wonders

Though Sandakan offers a number of city experiences, perhaps it's best-known as the gateway to many of Sabah's natural wonders. Among the most popular of these is the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, located in the Kabili-Sepilok Forest Reserve about 25km west of Sandakan. At the centre, which opened in 1964 to rehabilitate orphaned orangutans, visitors can watch orangutans in a semi-natural setting, observe them during feeding times, and enjoy the newly opened nursery centre where the younger orangutans learn important survival and social skills. Though this centre is certainly a worthy destination when visiting Sandakan, they inexplicably levy as separate RM10 charge for cameras, which is baffling, as it seems a foregone conclusion that most visitors here would want to take pictures. It also must be stressed that this is not a zoo or theme park, but rather a working rehabilitation centre, so visitors should not expect any "hands-on" interaction with the animals, nor any staged orangutan shows.

Adjacent to the Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre is the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre, which on top of the admission fee levies a bewildering RM1,000 charge for cameras with a lens of 500mm or longer (no charge if shorter). Fortunately for me, my longest lens checks in at 450mm, though no one asked or checked. Also of note: at both of these centres, non-Malaysian pay six times as much as Malaysians to enter (RM30 vs RM5), and the Malaysian iPass that many expats hold sadly does not seem to be of much use for enjoying the local rate.

Not far away lies the Labuk Bay Proboscis Monkey Sanctuary where visitors can see large numbers of these monkeys, which are endemic to Borneo, in the mangrove forests. Owing to the sanctuary's proximity to the sea and ongoing struggles with Filipino incursions, there were armed security personnel present here, yet another surprise offered by the trip. The groups of monkeys, with their impressively long tails and even more impressive noses, were in abundance here. I counted at least 50 animals, and when it was feeding time, they seemed to come from all directions. Dutch expats will perhaps be less than amused to learn that the Malay name for these big-nosed creatures is *Monyet Belanda* – or Dutch monkey – suggesting that the locals found a more than passing resemblance



Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre



Pig-tailed Macaque Monkeys

between these animals and colonists hailing from the Netherlands.

Though all of these animal centres were enjoyable places to visit, my favourite attraction was the Rainforest Discovery Centre (RDC), also located in the Kabili-Sepilok Forest Reserve. Opening in 1996, the RDC is now one of Sabah's and indeed Malaysia's – most popular environment education centres. A particular highlight here is the outstanding canopy walkway, a breathtaking 347-metre walkway that soars 25m above the ground. The walkway is punctuated by two observation towers that allow visitors to go even higher. On my visit, I was lucky indeed to spot from the canopy walkway all these local species of hornbill – including both the male and female of the sexually dimorphic black hornbill species – along with various monkeys, flying squirrels, and the highly vocal hill myna birds. Back on the ground, the RDC has a nice visitor's centre, a number of nature trails, and a Plant Discovery Garden. For this and all your Sabah Jungle expeditions, bring a little bag with the essentials: sunscreen, insect repellent, sunglasses, hat, and sanitizer are all advisable.

It took me seven years of living in Malaysia to finally make my first trip to Sabah, and it's one I would cheerfully embark on again. Natural beauty, a wonderful array of wildlife, a city of heritage and history, and in the Four Points by Sheraton Sandakan, a very comfortable and impressive place to call home base for a few days. This is an easily recommended place to stay in a very worthwhile destination for any expat living in Malaysia.

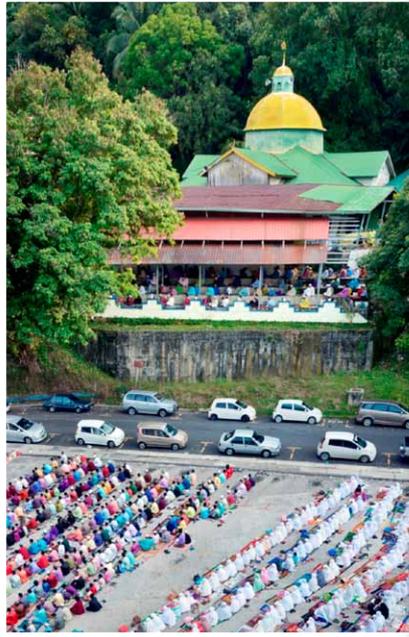
SANDAKAN HERITAGE TRAIL

A more energetic attraction whilst in Sandakan is the Sandakan Heritage Trail (Sabah's first), created jointly by the local Municipal Council and volunteers, supported by Sabah Tourism and Tourism Malaysia to show visitors around the main historical points of interest and sights around the city.

Sandakan is a historically significant place with a proud history as a trading outpost, firstly of the Sulu Sultanate and then of The British North Borneo Chartered Company (who ruled Sabah from 1881 – 1946). William Pryer was the first British Resident in North Borneo and the founder of modern Sandakan in 1879. Beeswax and edible birds' nests were its main trade. A lesser known fact is that Sandakan had an automatic telephone exchange in 1923, ahead of Hong Kong and Shanghai; and motorcars were already on the Sandakan streets as early as 1912. It was badly destroyed in WWII and until today, both Sandakan Day in August and ANZAC Day in April are remembered in the city to remember all the soldiers who fell in the war. In fact the beautiful stained glass in the St Michael's & All Angels Church have been donated by Australia as a memorial to Australian and British POWs, and as a thanksgiving to the courageous people of Sabah who helped them.

Many of the buildings and monuments established before and after the war, are today considered heritage sites, and with cultural significance. The Sandakan Heritage Trail, established in 2003, offers visitors many of the historical sites including Masjid Jamek, William Pryer Monument, Stairs with Hundred Steps, Agnes Keith House, Remains of Old Staircase, Goddess of Mercy Chinese Temple, St. Michael's & All Angels Church, Sam Sing Kung Chinese Temple, Malaysia Fountain, Wisma Warisan and Sandakan Heritage Museum. The 11 main heritage sites are within walking distance from the town centre and can take around 2 hours to do, depending on your pace of walking, how long is spent at each monument and of course, the heat!

According to the Trail's Chairman, Mr Lai King Hang, "Sandakan Heritage Trail is as much for our younger generation as it is for tourists because the city has a long history which must be treasured for the future. We will continue to look after the Sandakan Heritage Trail for everyone to enjoy for a long time to come."



FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON HOTEL, SANDAKAN

Family Holiday Packages

Description | Enjoy more fun family vacation in Sandakan Nature City and explore Sandakan's renowned wildlife biodiversity.



Packages Includes:

- Daily buffet breakfast for 2 adults and 3 kids at The Eatery
- Kids eat for free from the Kids Menu when adults dine-in at The Eatery (below 12 years old, maximum of 2 children)
- Late checkout at 2 pm (subject to availability)
- 25% off second room
- Complimentary cookies in the room
- Complimentary valet parking available
- Rate starts from MYR 265 per room per night for a Deluxe Room
- Valid for bookings and stays until 31 December 2016

Terms & Conditions

- Offer is valid for booking and stay period until 31 Dec 2016
 - Maximum 2 kids (aged 4-12 years) eat for free at The Eatery when dining-in with parents
 - Offer is subject to 6% GST tax per room per night
- Offer is subject to availability at the time of reservations
- Limited number of rooms may be available at these rates
 - Blackout dates and other restrictions may apply
 - Offer not applicable to groups
 - Not to be combined with other offers or promotions and subject to change
- Not responsible for omissions or typographical errors
 - Void where prohibited by law
- Starwood reserves the right to discontinue this offer at any time
- Starpoints, SPG, Starwood Preferred Guest, Sheraton, Four Points, W, Aloft, Le Meridien, The Luxury Collection, Element, Westin, St. Regis and their respective logos are the trademarks of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc., or its affiliates.

i-ZEN caerdholders can enjoy a further exclusive 20% discount on F&B at the Four Points by Sheraton Sandakan.

NEW KID IN TOWN - LOTUS FIVE STAR CINEMAS OPENS NEW MULTIPLEX IN HARBOUR MALL SANDAKAN



DVDs and internet downloads may be causing the decline in cinema attendance in many parts of the World, but in Malaysia film-watching is still big business and movie theatre operators are thriving, opening more multiplex halls across the country. Going to the cinema for Malaysians is a social destination and families still make cinema going an event in itself. The volume of films increasing whether from Hollywood, Bollywood, Hong Kong, Thailand, Indonesia or even Malaysia warrants the expansion of multiplexes everywhere. Shopping malls are the ideal venues because they are after all, popular one-stop centres for family outings. Six years ago there were 400 screens in the entire country and today, there are around 1,000 screens to delight and entertain.

Lotus Five Star Cinemas is one of the top four cinema operators in Malaysia with 125 screens in 25 locations; and by the way, they are averaging opening two cinemas a year nationwide. Their latest venture will be in Sandakan at the Harbour Mall. There is going to be a 7-screen cinema with seating capacity for around 1,000 people.

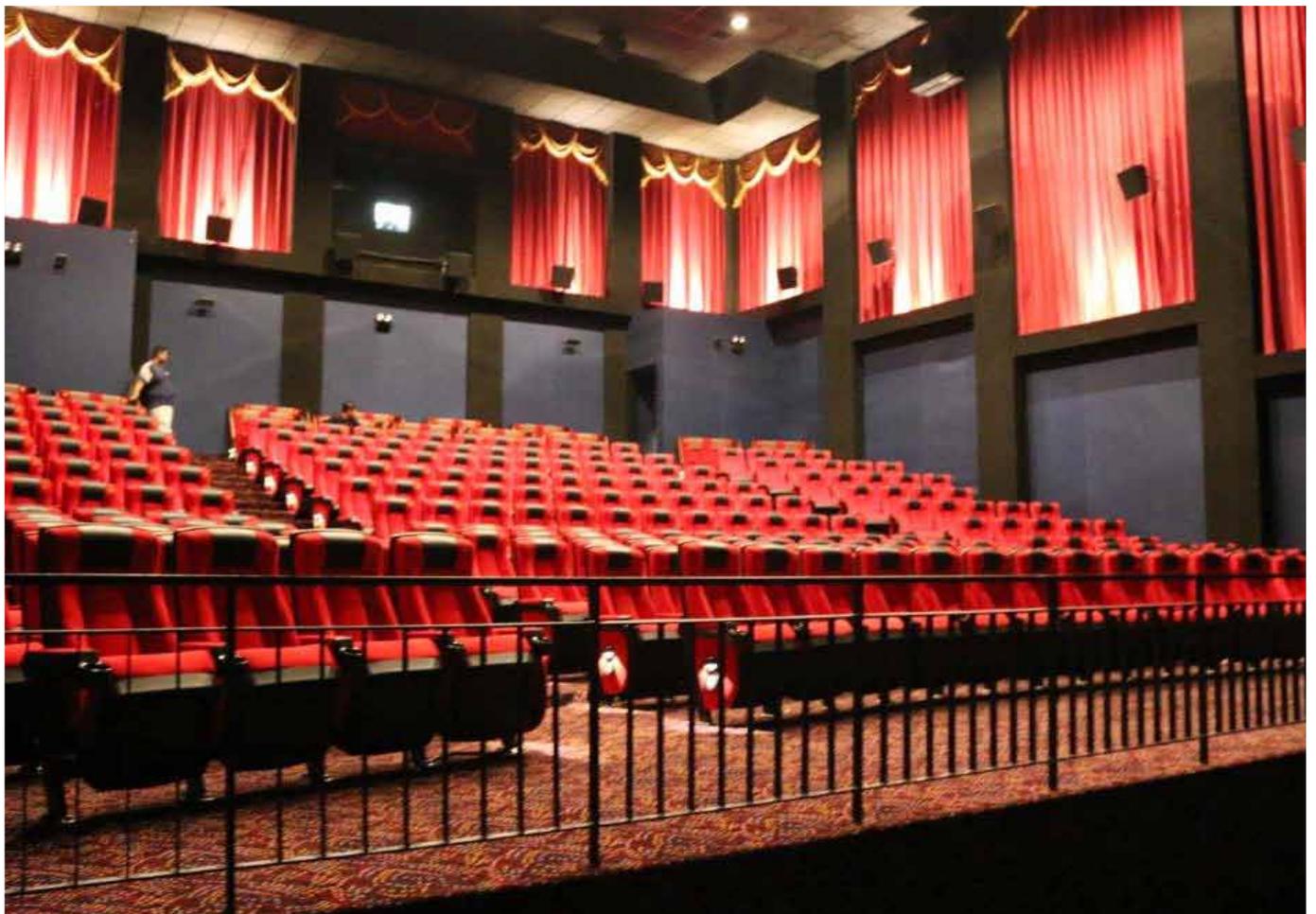
This will be a huge boost to the town centre because there is currently only one cinema available offering only 3 screens. It is not unusual for cinema fans to travel to Kota Kinabalu (KK), Sabah's capital city, to watch the latest blockbusters. Lotus Five Star Cinemas is going to change all that and is looking to opening its doors in Sandakan at the end of May.

According to the Business Development Manager, Mohammad Shah, "Lotus Five Star Cinemas' business strategy is to open multiplexes in secondary cities because cinema goes there are often less well served and competition is also less fierce. This strategy has worked well for our 30 years in the industry." Seeing that KK is well served for multiplexes, Lotus Five Star Cinemas therefore decided to open its latest venture in Harbour Mall, Sandakan. Shah's 20 years in the cinema industry has given him expert knowledge on what audiences want and his enthusiasm for the cinema is infectious.

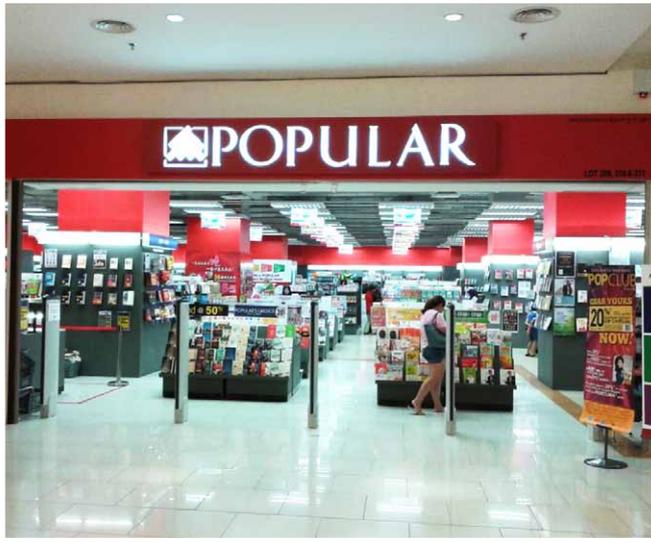


“We do not compromise on quality in any of our cinemas wherever they may be. For Sandakan, we will be offering luxurious cinema viewing with top of the range picture and sound quality brought in from Europe, Japan and the USA. The Dolby Atmos, the best sound system in the World, will be installed in the biggest cinema hall holding around 250 people, with speakers at the sides, rear and even the ceiling for a truly full surround audio experience. The films will be projected onto Silver Screens and everything is fully automated. Comfort is also a priority for us so the best seats will be installed so that cinema goers will leave feeling they have had a great time.”

As well as building cinemas, Lotus Five Star Cinemas is both a distributor and exhibitor of Chinese, Tamil, Hindi, English and Malay films. Sandakan's new cinema will have all the latest films in these languages to choose from. The plan for the first week of opening is to offer free shows to everyone in Sandakan. There is no doubting that Lotus Five Star Cinemas intends to make cinema going a memorable experience for the people of Sandakan and for sure, they have a proven 30 year track record of achieving this.



SOUTHEAST ASIA'S LARGEST BOOKSTORE, POPULAR BOOKS CHARTING A NEW COURSE IN SANDAKAN



POPULAR Books Co (M) Sdn Bhd is a household name and everyone will have visited it at some point. It has recently set up its latest store in Harbour Mall Sandakan following a positive response at the Sandakan Book Fair in October 2014. In fact, POPULAR Books has been holding book fairs in Sandakan since April 2011 and these events have always elicited encouraging responses. POPULAR Books already has established 5 stores in neighbouring Kota Kinabalu and saw the potential in opening in the Mall to meet the gap in the paucity of similar bookstores in Sandakan.

"There is a mature and ready catchment in Sandakan and we are confident that over time, Sandakan will be retailers' next expansion target. This has certainly been the case for POPULAR Books. As Harbour Mall is the sole shopping centre in Sandakan, POPULAR Books could see the potential of opening in this city following encouraging local market responses. So, we see this as the right time and a golden opportunity," says Mr Siew Sheue Liang, General Manager, Business Development, POPULAR Books Malaysia.

Popular Books is the largest bookstore chain in Southeast Asia. What is amazing is that the digital revolution has not affected POPULAR Books' expansion. On the contrary, its perseverance, hard work and dedication, has made this bookstore brand a household name. In fact, it has branched into areas like retail, e-learning and publishing – all amounting to become a prestigious cultural brand.

POPULAR Malaysia opened its first store in Kuala Lumpur in 1984. In 1990, it expanded throughout Peninsular Malaysia and eventually to East Malaysia in 1996. POPULAR's first mega-store measuring at 30,000 square feet is located in Damansara, Petaling Jaya was opened in 2003. To date POPULAR Malaysia has a total of 4 mega-stores, strategically located in the Klang Valley, Penang and Johor Bahru. POPULAR Malaysia is the largest bookstore chain in the country with 89 stores nationwide. POPULAR has also successfully organised the inaugural BookFest@ Malaysia in 2006 which today has become a major annual event for the book industry in Malaysia.

Being the largest bookstore chain in Southeast Asia, POPULAR has an extensive retail network of nearly 156 stores throughout Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong, with a total retail space of 973,709 square feet. POPULAR Bookstore is a one-stop retail hub that provides a comprehensive range of merchandise that include books in the main Malaysia languages, stationery, multimedia, music and audio-visual products. POPULAR has also successfully established a membership base, and currently has over 1.0 million members in Malaysia



POPULAR Books is situated on 2nd Floor in Harbour Mall, Sandakan. Come and experience it for yourselves!

TKS GROCER SETS ITS SIGHTS ON HARBOUR MALL SANDAKAN



A new superstore, TKS Grocer is set to open in the Sandakan Harbour Mall in May 2016. Owner and local entrepreneur, Vincent Tan says, "I wanted to expand my business and saw an ideal opportunity in the Harbour Mall. Having built up a strong customer base over the years in the supermarket business, I can definitely bring lots of medium and upper tier customers to the Mall. The adjacent Four Points Sheraton Hotel guests will also have a supermarket they can shop in for their convenience."

Vincent Tan started his first Sandakan store in 2004, importing household and hardware goods, and toys from China, where everything was sold for RM2.00. After 3 years, Vincent expanded his stores and changed his concept to selling imported quality products, also expanding the repertoire to include fashion items from China, Indonesia and Thailand. Today he has 3 branches around Sandakan

aimed at the budget market because this is definitely a niche in the local market.

From initially starting out with a 16ft by 33ft shop lot, TKS Grocer in the Mall will cover a floor span of 10,624 square feet. With the good reputation the business has built up since 2004, Vincent is confident that his new supermarket will be a big hit. TKS Grocer's expansion is good news for customers and local people alike. Customers can buy quality TKS Grocer products in a fully air-conditioned environment and it goes without saying that more jobs will be created (the company already employs 200 members of staff). Fresh products will be sourced locally and with around 200 local suppliers on their books, customers will be spoilt for choice. TKS Grocer will continue to draw appeal with their winning formula of cheaper basics and affordable luxuries.



ANDY HALL, THE RUMA HOTEL'S INTERIOR ARCHITECT UNVEILS HIS PLANS FOR THIS CLASSY ESTABLISHMENT

In the last two issues of Citi-ZEN, we followed the behind-the-scenes workings of the successful Urban Resorts Concept (The RuMa Hotel operator), featuring the CEO and his senior team. In this issue we focus the spotlight on **Andy Hall**, celebrated UK-born architect who has made Asia his home since 1997. He is the interior architect for The RuMa Hotel.

Andy started award-winning MQ studio in 2006, and is all about promoting high standard of design. In describing his architectural firm, Andy says, "The studio is an interdisciplinary, boutique architecture practice that specializes, mainly in hospitality related projects (ranging from luxury transportation, hotels and resorts), as well as retail and private residences."

Andy gives an exclusive and candid interview on his design style, philosophy and his ideas for The RuMa Hotel.

Here is Andy, in his own words.....

What is your design philosophy?

MQ studio pursues a fascination for the unique and fresh. That's why we do not work to any particular formulaic style. Instead, through rigorous research and probing into the specifics of the project, we endeavor to create an enriched architecture that has an intimate connection to the site and its function via the associated stories or narratives.

We believe that high quality design can only be reached through an integrated dialogue and synthesis with the client, consultants, contractor and the end-user at all stages of the design and construction process to fully maximise the potential of the final product. The project always starts with a blank piece of paper and over time, a project starts appearing in front of you as the concepts and stories start to develop.

Working with Urban Resorts Concept

With Urban Resorts Concept (URC), they are involved in every aspect of the project, from F & B concepts, Spa strategies, attitudes towards room service and so on. This leads to a project where all the individual parts of



the hotel are interconnected and communicate with one another leading to a coherent and thought through end result- a truly 'hand crafted' experience. There is no handbook approach to follow because everything is bespoke to the URC brand and high standard.

The initial strategy and design direction for The RuMa Hotel is laid out by URC. This is based upon their prior market research of the environment where the hotel is to be built, in particular, with relationship to The RuMa's competition around the KLCC area. Thereafter, MQ Studio is free to interpret and expand on this strategy.

What ambience do you intend to create for the RuMa hotel and why?

There are two recurring themes within the design of The RuMa Hotel. The first is a contemporary interpretation of Malaysia's Colonial past, the second is driven by the name of the hotel itself- that is RuMa(h), the Malay word for home. Therefore, the design and conceptual approach for the hotel has been informed by both these two themes - a home that captures, in spirit, the houses of a bygone era, however unlike their ancestral past, The RuMa Hotel will remain resolutely domestic. Amongst these main themes, other sub themes emerge and reveal themselves within the project, specifically referencing aspects of Malaysian culture and design. Inspiration for the hotel is derived from walking the streets of Kuala Lumpur, rummaging through the flea markets, to trawling through the internet and chatting to local Malaysians – all information is potential source for ideas or inspiration for The RuMa Hotel.

The story of the hotel so far :

Drop off

Wrapping the exterior of the building on 3 sides is a custom designed antique bronze screen or lattice, inspired by Moorish design and used strategically for the formation of the Porte Cochere. It acts as a shielding device for the drop off, but also from the street thus creating a point of mystery for the passers-by revealing the hotel, but at the same time shrouding the hotel.

The drop off contains a cluster of antique columns, placed as art objects from old Malay houses- the first reference to the home.

Lower Ground floor

The Birdcage



Inspired by a large birdcage, the first room you enter from the Porte Cochere is a transition zone before arriving into the main Grand Salon of the hotel. The birdcage is a dramatic rotunda of alternating and interlaced glazed and non-glazed terracotta. Centred within the space is a handcrafted custom made bronze water vessel. The vessel contains

small water spouts during the day, so there is moving water on arrival, and flickering candle light at night- giving the birdcage one character during the day (one of life, vitality and movement) and a subsequent more calmer environment at night (one of tranquility).

The Grand Salon

Running the breadth of the building from east to west is the 30m x 7m Grand Salon. The salon is entered in the centre of the space- the reception is to the right whilst the bar and the library are to the left.

The Grand Salon's ceiling is clad entirely in copper with extruding light fixtures that drop like stalactites over the top of the bar and reception counters. The ceiling is reflective to expand the vertical perception and drama of the space, and folds down upon the 'combed' stone walls. These walls are cut in sections along the length of the Grand Salon that reveal and give a glimpse to the spaces beyond. The whole composition is an enfilade sequence of spaces, that are both, open and closed, intimate and public but most importantly welcoming and inviting- your first introduction to your home in Kuala Lumpur.

The Library



Off the main salon as an extension of the bar, is the library. This library will contain books about architecture, design, fashion and Malaysia, but also an array of vintage magazines and books. It will provide an insight into Kuala Lumpur of today and Kuala Lumpur of yesteryear. Nestled within the books will be a collection of models and other items, providing a small vignette of the history of design of the region. The Floors will be in encaustic tiles referencing the grand old homes of a bygone era. The lamps will be vintage Gras Lamps, the cushions will be finished in vintage batik from the 1960's.

The Grand Staircase



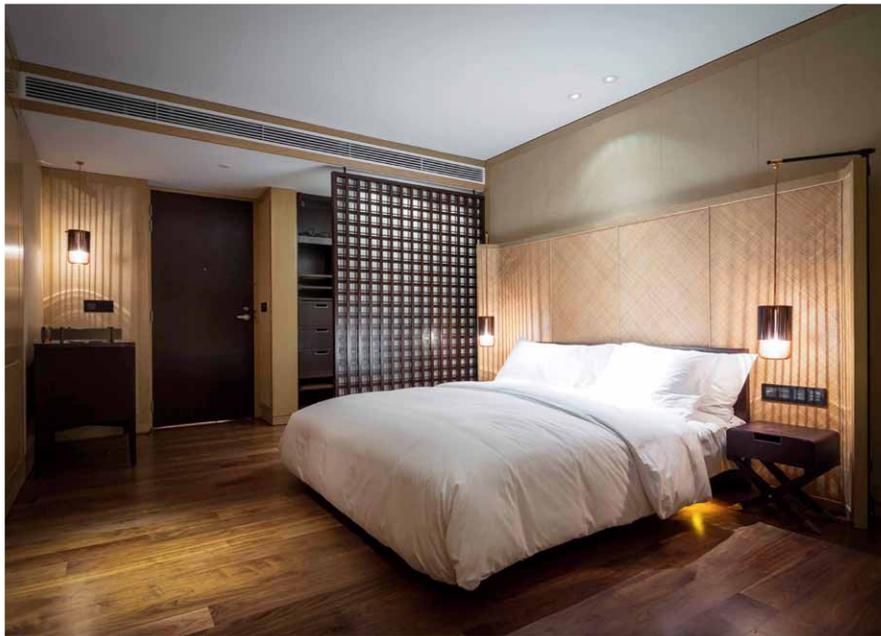
Paying tribute to the grand old staircases of old Colonial houses, the lobby is dominated by a single staircase flight that splits into two spiraling volumes that penetrate through the copper ceiling. The staircase is both grand whilst maintaining a domestic quality. The staircase and the opposite walls will contain commissioned art work from Malaysian artists.

Mezzanine

The Restaurant



The hotel has only one restaurant- a space that is flexible for creating buffet breakfasts as well as more formal fine dining for lunch and dinner. The interior will have a timber clad waffle like ceiling, and like the reception ceiling, will fold down on to the walls. The tables will be a collection of white and grey marble, complete with a mixture of rattan dining chairs- a modern twist on the Straits, Peranakan past.



Level 6

Unlike most hotels, the pool area, the gym, the bar, the meeting facilities and the spa is to be considered as one fluid space, where the boundaries between all the different functions are fused together.

The Pool Area

Cantilevering over the edge of the building the black and gold pool will have domineering views over the Kuala Lumpur skyline. The seating area will be a relaxed mixture of sofas, tables and a large custom designed daybed.

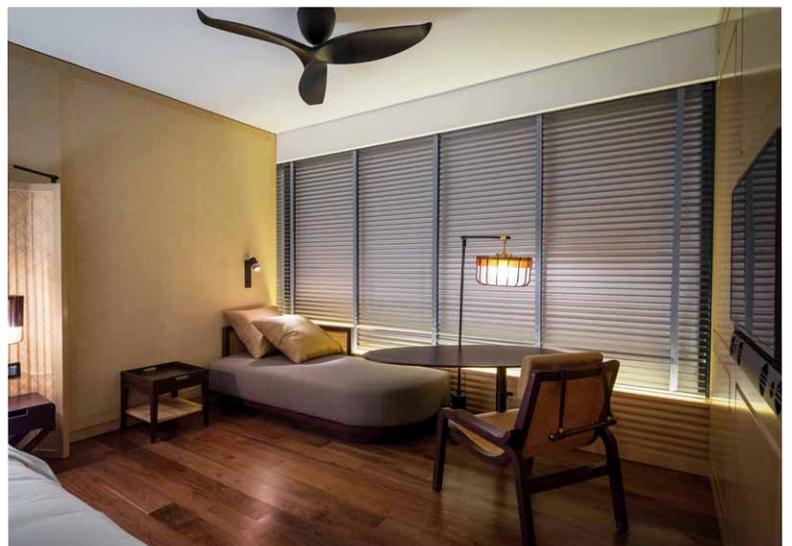
The Spa

There will be 6 treatment rooms, a small beauty area with a reception and retail space. The spa corridor and the treatment rooms will have a ceiling and wall finished in Kelerai screens which will be used as a back lit light fixture that will create textured shadows to the ceilings and the floor.

Rooms

The room is your home in the city and the space has been designed to feel open. The room is a modern take on Malaysia's Colonial past- there is extensive panelling on the wall with local timber, along with the furniture being finished in rattan. The walk-in closet decorative screen is based on the traditional Kelerai patterns found on Malaysian articles of clothing.

Continuing the handcrafted quality of the hotel in general, the sinks within the bathroom are handmade



from copper and bronze. The fixtures and fittings are custom coloured. Placed above the dressing table is a custom-made batik bowl using the traditional methods of colouring and application of lacquer. Set within the niches of the bathroom are also small moments or vignettes of old Malay buildings.

And finally.....

" I will always be a part of the RuMa Hotel, and its ongoing growth and development. I hope that through the integrity of the design and the service offered, The RuMa Hotel delivers on two fronts: firstly, that there is a sense of place (the hotel can only belong in Malaysia), and secondly that there is a sense of domesticity (that the hotel is truly your home in Kuala Lumpur). "

Andy Hall,
The RuMa Hotel & Residences interior architect

PROGRESS INTELLIGENCE ON THE RUMA HOTEL AND RESIDENCES

In the last issue of CiTi-ZEN (Issue 36), much of the construction activity was centred on Level 8. Since then, structural works at The RuMa Hotel are completed up to Level 18 using the now established Mivan Aluminium Formwork which is a speedier and more efficient process (fully explained in Issue 36).

Reaching this level has taken four and half months, with the contractor achieving 8 days cycle per floor; and this is even with the local authority imposed working time restrictions. There is no doubt the Conventional Formwork System would have taken much longer.

Architectural works for The RuMa Hotel are progressing up to Level 11, mechanical and electrical works up to Level 9, with a mock-up room being constructed at Level 8.

Work on The RuMa Residences has also commenced, with structural works progressing up to Level 18A.

We look forward to providing you with further progress on The RuMa Hotel and Residences in the next issue.



i-ZEN PRIVILEGES

IT'S OUR PRIVILEGE!

As an i-ZEN card member, you are the selected few invited to indulge in exclusive shopping, dining and pampering experiences with the premier merchants we have lined up with you in mind. We want to ensure that the experience is attractive and especially for you, presenting special offers and discounts.

Your i-ZEN Privilege Card is welcomed in any of the outlets below and there is no expiry date as we believe your benefits should be timeless! Just show them your card and enjoy the discount privileges today

For more information on your i-ZEN Privilege card, contact Rene Anthony, Customer Relations on +603 6411 6388 (ext. 6887) or email to enquiry@i-ZEN.com.my



<<<

Scan this with your QR code application or visit www.i-zen.com.my/privileges.htm for more information on the full member privileges available in year 2016/17



THE i-ZEN PRIVILEGE CARD GIVES YOU ACCESS TO EXCLUSIVE OFFERS AT YOUR FAVOURITE SPOTS

SHOPPING



EDUCATION



BEAUTY & WELLNESS



ACCOMMODATION



HOME & DECOR



DINING



Please log on to www.i-zen.com.my/privileges.htm for full information on partner merchants and their participating branches (where appropriate) for your convenience.