

ISSUE 44 • January - March 2018

CITi-ZEN

Living Life Large



*The Unstoppable Force In
Fashion Design Partnership*

**VOON POH LAI +
JONATHAN CHENG**


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 *The Unstoppable Force In Fashion Design Partnership, Voon Poh Lai And Jonathan Cheng*
- 4 *Behind The Scene of Luxury - The RuMa Hotel Team*
- 8 *Progress Intelligence On The RuMa Hotel And Residences*
- 9 *KaMi Preview Proved To Be Popular With i-ZEN Buyers*
- 10 *Another Milestone For City International Hospital (CIH), Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam*
- 11 *IREKA CARES - A Fun Tour Of The National Science Center*
- 13 *Kopitiam News - Goa By Hubba*
- 14 *Kopitiam News - MINDSPACE - So Much More Than Meets The Eye*
- 17 *Kopitiam News - Steven Shorthose - A New Learning Environment*
- 18 *i-ZEN Privileges*

GREETINGS TO OUR CiTi-ZEN READERS!



Happy New Year! I wish you and yours a healthy and fulfilling year ahead. It's hard to believe that 2018 is finally upon us and we have no say in the matter. What is in our hands however, is what we want from the year and how we intend to shape it. Here at Ireka, we have some exciting property development plans that will take shape throughout the year ahead. Our luxury RuMa Hotel & Residences development will be unveiled in mid-2018. I am looking forward to working with world renowned Urban Resorts Concept to deliver a first-class and refreshingly new concept of luxury hotel in Malaysia. We will also be starting works on our latest residential project under our iconic i-ZEN brand, KaMi Mont' Kiara which is expected to be completed by 2020. You can read about the preview held in November. Again, the completion of this project will be another significant milestone for Ireka's development portfolio.

I am delighted that in our first issue of CiTi-ZEN for 2018 we have an interesting range of articles to share with you. To kick-start the year, we have featured two entrepreneurial and exciting fashion designers, Lai Voon Poh and Jonathan Cheng sharing insights into a world that few of us know what really happens behind the scenes because the end result is always flawless and glamorous. Then we bring you a flavor of education with information on MindSpace, a learning community based in 1MK Mall and a new international tuition centre to open in Mont' Kiara in February. Enjoy reading all about them.

Until the next issue, celebrate what 2018 brings you by living life large!

Warmest greetings,

Datuk Lai Voon Hon
 Group Managing Director
 Ireka Corporation Berhad

THE UNSTOPPABLE FORCE IN FASHION DESIGN PARTNERSHIP, VOON POH LAI AND JONATHAN CHENG

We are so proud that 2018's first issue of CITi-ZEN features not one, but two entrepreneurs who are hitting the big time with their dynamic mix of creative flair and business acumen. The duo, **Voon Poh Lai** (right on front cover) and **Jonathan Cheng** (left on front cover) are entrepreneurial fashion designers and here is their story. It is no small feat that they have been around for the last 8 years because emerging designers can be darlings of the fashion world one moment, tossed aside the next. The fashion industry is notoriously fickle.

Voon Poh and Jonathan are all about fashion. They are the founders and creative directors of women's contemporary ready-to-wear brand **UnitedWood** and men's underwear, swim and active wear brand **Stud**.

This Malaysian partnership started about 10 years ago when they met at the then Malaysian International Fashion Alliance (MIFA) Fashion Week at Avenue K. Voon Poh attended Jonathan's runway show and was struck by his amazing collection. They then discovered that they shared the same interests, ambition and passion to start a new brand and strike out on their own.



Voon Poh lives in i-ZEN@Kiara1 (and Jonathan in Ampang). The former has lived in Kiara 1 for close to 7 years and describes Mont' Kiara as a unique enclave with all the buzz and convenience of modern living. The condominium being only 10 minutes away from their studio is a big plus. Voon Poh says, "I have always loved the modern and urban setting of Kiara 1 and with 1MK only a stone's throw away, I feel totally connected to all kinds of amenities."

IN THE BEGINNING . . .

Voon Poh was born and brought up in KL, and Jonathan was born in Johor. Voon Poh took a more circuitous route to being a fashion entrepreneur and designer, starting out as an Architect in both the UK and Malaysia. Jonathan, however, studied design at the La Salle International Design School, Singapore and was First Runner up of the Young Asean Designer Award 1996. He has been a fashion designer for the last 15 years.



Lady Kitty Spencer | UnitedWood
BFI Film Festival Opening Night | 04.10.16

Despite his love for architecture, Voon Poh knew something was missing, career wise. He wanted to start his own business with some friends in London, but the venture did not materialise. This prompted him to return to Malaysia to be closer to family and after practicing as an interior architect in KL for a few years, he set out on his own in this exciting new venture with Jonathan.

Before his partnership with Voon Poh in **UnitedWood** and **Stud**, Jonathan had his own namesake brand Jonathan Cheng, and the designs for both women and men sold in boutiques carrying his own collections and in department stores in Kuala Lumpur. A recognised figure in the Malaysian fashion scene, Jonathan belongs to the generation of designers like Melinda Looi, Khoo Hooi and Villiam Ooi, who all bring vibrancy and excitement to the local fashion industry with their eponymous clothing lines; each known for their bold and funky mix of colours, fabrics, prints, patterns and styles.

“We are driven by passion and the conviction to create something that we can call our own. Without these ingredients, nothing will happen and I think this is how entrepreneurs begin. Well, this is certainly the start of our business and I am proud that it is in its eighth year,” says Voon Poh.

He goes on to say that although they both design for the two brands, **UnitedWood** and **Stud**, their roles can sometimes overlap, a case of having to especially when the work gets busy and intense.

As a rule however, Voon Poh focuses more on the sales, branding and marketing side of things whereas Jonathan is more involved in the design and production. This division of labour has served them both well, and you might even say is a winning formula.

THE TWO BRANDS – UNITEDWOOD AND STUD

With both brands, it was a conscious decision to focus primarily on the international wholesale market from the outset and as a result, their designs, aspirations and branding have all leaned in that direction.

“We feel the potential is so much bigger abroad. We have always been taught to aim big since young so that has definitely influenced the way we see the world at large. Also we feel that both brands would have much more added value if we already have good presence overseas should we intend to ‘import’ both brands into Malaysia.”

For the younger, 2-year old **UnitedWood**, brand, the products are sold wholesale to stockists in the USA, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Japan and China. For **Stud** which has a longer history at 8 years, it is the distributors selling their collections in



Ophelia Lovibond | UnitedWood | Film Awards | 08.12.16

the USA, UK, Australia, Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore and Japan. These international and uber fashion savvy markets have been developed by Jonathan and Voon Poh through sheer determination and resilience, but the most important thing at the end of the day, are the products offered because they must be good and as described by Voon Poh, "have a point of difference". Both Voon Poh and Jonathan are convinced that regardless of which market they target, they have to balance the core elements of design, quality and competitive pricing.

They see no compromise on any one of these areas and in fact are adamant that all three must be achieved.

They are inspired by everytvcultural sponges", expressing what they see and experience in their designs.

For their women's wear brand **UnitedWood**, the philosophy is always about combining modern elegance with edgy femininity. It is a signature style that has come to define the brand from day one. This is why they have celebrities such as. Lady Kitty Spencer (Princess Diana's niece), British actress, Ophelia Lovibond and Chinese actress, Zhao Liying proudly wearing their collection. It is no wonder that copies of their designs have already reached some high streets and don't they say that "copying is the highest form of flattery!"

For **Stud**, the brand has a very strong, sporty fun-loving image which combines bold colours and prints. They are also one of the pioneer brands that uses a stretchable denim fabric in their underwear which has since become Stud's signature. When asked about why venture into men's underwear design, the business answer is because when they started 8 years ago, it was a small market that catered for men (mainly Calvin Klein and Armani) and so it was the right time to fill this gap. The cheeky response from Voon Poh is, "And also, if women can have fun with their lingerie, why not men too?"

It is clear from all their designs that the creative process and the satisfaction of creating collections which others appreciate is what drives them forward. Jonathan reflects that as entrepreneurs, "the desire to create and be captains of our own ship is what fuels us. Our gut instinct, resilience and self-belief that nothing is impossible remain our touchstone. We also seek entrepreneurial longevity and will always work hard to preserve this."



THE CHALLENGES

It is no secret that the fashion world is a competitive and fickle one where it really is survival of the fittest. As Voon Poh and Jonathan's business are almost 100% engaged overseas, the exposure to the vagaries of international business and navigating these is their biggest challenge. Maintaining ties with business partners from all over the world can be tricky as everyone has different ways of doing business and with different expectations. Being based in Malaysia can feel isolating, as their main markets are outside the country, so cultivating and maintaining relationships continually is critical in order to remain relevant. Yet this has not put them off.

"Our hope for the future has remained the same over the years and that is to continue propagating **UnitedWood** and **Stud** to more markets overseas, not for the sake of it but to introduce Malaysian design to the world out there."

BEHIND THE SCENE OF LUXURY – THE RuMa HOTEL TEAM

The much heralded RuMa Hotel is due to be operational from mid-2018 and the senior team is already in place to take charge of the pre-opening work programme. Between them, they have a wealth of experience in the hospitality industry which they clearly love; and one thing is for sure, they are all about the guest experience. You can get to know them better and read about their plans for their new roles in The RuMa Hotel.



GUIDO FARINA,
General Manager

Originally from Italy, Caravaggio near Milan to be precise, Guido started off studying medicine and soon realized that the hospitality industry is what he describes as “providing real meaning.” And thus, the hotelier journey began in 1991

and he has not looked back since, having worked in over 5 continents in the range of hotel types from cities to island resorts. Married to a Malaysian and with a young son, Guido now calls KL home.

As captain of the ship and with his employee number fittingly numbered 001, Guido will be responsible for setting up the hotel’s administration and getting it fully operational for mid-2018.

Guido is attracted to The RuMa brand, finding it unique and he says that it brings him back to what genuine hospitality is all about – uncomplicated and authentic. “With my team, I aim to create the best hotel in KL for service and quality right from the start.” His work around the globe has given him the privilege to meet people of various cultures and being immersed in their customs has helped him develop a unique mindset which he shares with his team to inspire them to embrace differences.

Being responsible for establishing The RuMa brand is both exciting and a challenge at the same time, and Guido has ambitions to cater to the sophisticated traveller, setting it apart from the rest as quickly as possible.



JAYA NAZREEN,
Executive Assistant Manager

Originally from Penang and married with 3 daughters, Jaya has over 25 years’ experience in the hospitality industry. He has held senior managerial positions in some top iconic resort and city hotels like

The Datai Langkawi, Four Seasons Langkawi, E&O Penang, St Regis Maldives and G Hotel Penang. In his new role at The RuMa Hotel, Jaya will be responsible for the day to day operations of the hotel, maintaining perfect co-ordination between all the departments and controlling their operations in accordance with company standards, for the highest comfort and satisfaction of the guests.

Jaya is proud to be associated with the hotel’s operators, Urban Resorts Concept because of what they have achieved with The PuLi, their flagship property in Shanghai. Being able to sustain the calm and serene feel of a resort hotel in the middle of a bustling city is an incredible feat, according to Jaya and he also welcomes their insistence of using Malaysian heritage influences in The RuMa and giving it a modern twist.

As a long-term goal, Jaya would like to contribute as much value as possible drawing on his vast experience in the industry. Despite the competition of ever more new hotels establishing themselves in KL, Jaya is confident that The RuMa offers a unique product saying, “The natural designs of the hotel and the warm Malaysian hospitality that is the core foundation of our service will set us apart from our competitors.” Jaya goes on further to say that even with the shortage of talent in the KL hotel industry given the competition around, The RuMa’s professional development opportunities and staff welfare schemes will make them the most preferred employee in town!



KARTINI FLETCHER,
Director of HR

Kartini’s 22 years’ experience of the hospitality industry provided her the opportunity to work with international brands like Park Royal, Shangri-La, IHG and ACCOR. This is not her first experience of being part of a pre-opening team and she is

determined to bring value to The RuMa with her HR role which is to ensure that right fit candidates are hired for their passion to work in the industry. Kartini is determined to create an environment that becomes the employees’ preferred choice and she also wants to support the team to ensure that daily operations run smoothly.

Born in Penang, Kartini spent her childhood in Kedah, before returning to Penang to continue her schooling. She did her Diploma in Hotel & Catering Management in KDU College, Petaling Jaya and her first job in the hospitality industry was as a Guest Service Agent. She had 11 years' experience in the operational department, mainly in the Front Office before venturing into Training and eventually HR.

"I believe it is important to have confidence in yourself and will always try to push my boundaries. I believe in The Law of Attraction and that brings me to where I am now!"



**TYSON GEE,
Executive Chef**

Originally from Vancouver, Canada, Tyson has spent the last four and half years in Melbourne as chef de cuisine in the Park Hyatt there. In Canada, he worked in various restaurants and hotels, including the Hyatt. Tyson's culinary

skills were discovered some years ago, winning competitions at a young age. He was even invited to captain Culinary Team Canada and the most notable competition entered was the Culinary Olympics held in Germany and the team took 8th place in the world. The team also took second place in South Korea, first place in Peru and second place in Ireland.

In his new role as The RuMa's Executive Chef, Tyson is looking forward to creating unique food and beverages exclusive to the hotel and residences.

"I want to create or better yet, recreate Malaysian cuisine from an outsider's perspective, taking classic dishes, deconstructing it and putting it together in a contemporary, modern style. In other words, familiar tastes presented in an unfamiliar way."

It is clear that Tyson wants to put his own stamp on Malaysian favourites, what he describes as "handcrafting my own product".

After visiting the PuLi hotel in Shanghai last year and being able to experience at first-hand how different their approach to hospitality was, Tyson knew he wanted to be part of their next project and to bring his unique skill set to the table, so to speak. "I want to be able to really create Malaysia's first modern Malay restaurant, offering guests a unique special experience that is genuine, hand crafted and unlike anything that is on the market currently."



**SHARON TEO,
Director of Sales
& Marketing**

Sharon's working background is in fast-paced five-star hotels with established international brands such as Starwood, Marriot and the Shangri-La groups. Her new role as Sales & Marketing

Director means being responsible for marketing communication, planning and implementing sales and product development programmes. She is looking forward to KL being introduced to a very bespoke level of hospitality experience and The RuMa hotel being the must-visit place for visitors and locals alike.



**MICHAELA BRASE,
Director of Rooms**

Michaela hails from Bremervoerde, a small town in the northern part of Germany between Hamburg and Bremen. Having worked in the Starwood Group for most of her career, in places like Germany, Spain, Qatar and most

recently in Langkawi, Michaela wants to expand her horizons to work with a totally different hotel group. The RuMa's concept of bringing resort living into a city hotel grabbed Michaela's attention immediately. She wanted to be part of bringing it to life!

"I like the challenge that a pre-opening brings, with the constant adjustments and changes to get things right. Setting up something that you are not able to physically experience yet is a great way to use your imagination and creativity. I am looking forward to the end result and to seeing The RuMa come to life, because we would have all, as a team, built something from scratch."

As the Director of Rooms, Michaela will be in charge of Housekeeping, Front Office, Concierge and Butler services at the new RuMa hotel. This means being responsible for the first and last touch point of the hotel guests, ensuring they have everything that they need to make their stay a comfortable one throughout. Her experience of living and working in Europe, the Middle East and now, Asia will hold Michaela in good stead for her new adventures in downtown KL.



**BALAN MANIKAM,
Director of Engineering**

• • •
Balan is a Penang boy who has worked with the Starwood Group around Malaysia and with Fraser Hospitality in Qatar. His family (wife and 2 daughters) are still based in Penang but there are plans to relocate to KL in 2018 which they are all looking forward to.

As the hotel's Director of Engineering, Balan will be responsible for the entire building's operations, maintenance and repair of the hotel's equipment, tools and facilities. He wants to be in at the beginning of a new hotel group's opening in Malaysia and also to be part of the pioneering, luxury RuMa brand. When asked about the secret of his success, Balan firmly says, "Simplify the challenges!"



**DANIYAL NG,
Financial Controller**

• • •
Born in Terengganu on the east coast of Malaysia, but a KL resident for the last 14 years, Daniyal has worked in the hotel industry for 16 years with big brands like the Swiss Garden Hotel & Resort, Hilton, Starwood and Marriot Groups. In fact,

Daniyal is not new to Ireka either having worked in Aloft KL and Four Points Sheraton in Sandakan, totaling over 4 years.

Daniyal will be responsible for overseeing The RuMa's operational standards and maintaining control over the hotel's income, expenses and assets in order to maximize profit for the hotel.

What attracted Daniyal to The RuMa Hotel was not only the fact that it is a new luxury hotel brand in town offering a bespoke guest experience, but it is the sophisticated use of Malaysian heritage throughout the hotel which caught his attention. The Kelarai screen designs on some of the wall panels remind Daniyal of his Terengganu roots.

The big hotel brands in the central KL vicinity, like the Grand Hyatt or the Four Seasons will prove a welcome challenge because this makes for a competitive market. The secret of Daniyal's success is not being afraid to fail and to pursuing his passion.



**WAN SHAHRIMAN
BIN WAN ABDULLAH,
Director of Safety
and Security**

• • •
Wan hails from Kedah in north Malaysia and has a big family of 8 children (4 boys and 4 girls), all of them working. He had a spell in the Malaysian police force before resigning to join his father in the re-conditioned car

import business. Thereafter, in 1990, Wan left to work in Indonesia for a New Zealand construction company as Head Representative for the toll road in Jakarta. When he returned to Malaysia 3 years' later, Wan's journey in the hospitality industry began. For 22 years, he was Director of Safety and Security at The Datai Langkawi and in 2014 was transferred to Desaru Johor to work at the Themed Attraction Resorts & Hotels in a civilian role. There, Wan was appointed Inspector in the Auxiliary Police Force where he remained until joining The RuMa in November this year.

Wan feels proud to be able to contribute his 22 years of knowledge to the new hotel where he sees the safety and security of guests and staff alike as being the number one priority.

"I really want to see The RuMa Hotel creating its own name in the globe and I am a proud Malaysian to be part of the pre-opening team."

Wan believes it is never too late to achieve anything because at the tender age of 56, he enrolled with Open University to do an MBA course which he graduated from in 2017.



**BENJEMIN YEAP,
IT Manager**

• • •
Originally from Perak, raised in Selangor, Johor and Pahang only to settle down in KL after earning a degree in IT from HELP College, Benjamin started his hospitality career with the Berjaya Group. Two years later, he joined the Starwood Group

and rose through the ranks over 3 different Starwood brands before joining The RuMa.

Benjamin is excited about his new role managing every aspect of The RuMa's IT and wants to ensure that the technology will complement the artful concept of the hotel to enhance the guests' experience of The RuMa Hotel.

The guest's technology experience at the hotel is unseen but critical because the challenge is to ensure that the IT systems are user friendly and intuitive enough so guests feel right at home with technology at their fingertips. Benjemin says that it is important to get this absolutely right for them. When asked for the secret of his success he confidently says, "Communication and Google. Everything can be found simply by googling and it can open a whole new world of knowledge. Communication is key as it minimizes surprises and with that, good decisions are made."



With the dynamic team at the helm of The RuMa Hotel, we can look forward to a first-class hotel with first-class service!



THE RUMA

HOTEL AND RESIDENCES

PROGRESS INTELLIGENCE ON THE RUMA HOTEL AND RESIDENCES



There is a lot of excitement about because the finishing line is in sight and with The RuMa Hotel's pre-opening team on board now, everyone is busy getting ready for handover.

Structural works has progressed up to the Fin Wall, measuring 54M in length and 12M in height, at the top-most floor, with completion expected to be in the first quarter of 2018.

The architectural works is now up to Level 36, with the mechanical and electrical works now fully completed up to Level 35. Internal works at The RuMa Residences have commenced and have progressed to Level 20.

We were proud to announce in the last issue that The RuMa Residences was awarded the GBI Provisional Gold Rating having successfully met all the GBI Criteria for Energy Efficiency (EE), Indoor Environment Quality (EQ), Sustainable Site Planning & Management (SM), Materials & Resources (MR), Water Efficiency (WE) and Innovation (IN). Since then, we have achieved another milestone in **The RuMa Hotel being awarded the GBI Provisional Gold Rating**, also satisfying all six criteria. These achievements are significant for Ireka's initiative to expand its green building footprints and delivering 'Green Building' projects that positively lay claim to 'Sustainability and Environmental Excellence'.

We look forward to sharing more news with you about progress on The RuMa Hotel & Residences in the next issue of CiTi-ZEN.

KaMi PREVIEW PROVED TO BE POPULAR WITH i-ZEN BUYERS

Ireka's latest development project, KaMi in Mont' Kiara previewed at the end of November to enthusiastic Ireka staff and i-ZEN buyers. This Japanese inspired interior design is by award-winning, Tokyo-based, designer Morinobu San. There will only be 168 units on this site. KaMi is expected to commence construction in January and targeted to be completed by end 2020.



ANOTHER MILESTONE FOR CITY INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL (CIH), HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM



CIH, with a total capacity of 320 beds, is one of the largest international standard private tertiary care hospitals in Ho Chi Minh City. It is the flagship hospital within the International Healthcare Park (IHP) which is being developed by Aseana Properties Limited in joint venture with Hoa Lam Group. IHP is also Vietnam's first and only premier international healthcare development that features a fully integrated healthcare, business, education and community environment for medical professionals and patients. It is strategically located in the Binh Tan District, approximately 15km from the CBD of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's largest metropolis.



The hospital is proud to be opening its cardio vascular treatment centre called the Angiosuite. The Angiosuite will be equipped with the state-of-the-art Artis zee® system, a major advance in interventional imaging that will enable CIH to enhance patient outcomes and remain at the cutting edge of medical care, with greater speed, efficiency and precision. Its innovative new Artis zee® imaging chain offers a range of key advances that enhance both 2D and 3D imaging. This allows the doctors at CIH the flexibility and confidence they need to tackle increasingly diverse medical case mix, make better clinical decisions and deliver more effective patient care.

The hospital has obtained a new Digital Subtraction Angiography (DSA) which is new radiographic technology used in diagnosing vascular disease. DSA is able to obtain images of arteries in various parts of the body has proven especially useful in the identification of vascular abnormalities and aneurysms.

This diagnostic technique is commonly used to diagnose a variety of blood vessel diseases such as diagnosis of obstructive vascular diseases that are caused by blocks or narrowing in the arteries and veins, diagnosis of brain aneurysm (especially intracranial aneurysm), bleeding vessels, arteriovenous malformations (abnormal connections between arteries and veins), and to study the blood vessel system of cancerous tumours. The angiography also provides a visual guide for interventional procedures needed to re-open blocked arteries such as angioplasty, arterial stent, nephrostomy, and biliary procedures.

The Angiosuite will be led by Dr Mahen Nadarajah, an internationally practicing Endovascular Neurosurgeon and Diagnostic Neuroradiologist, with over 20 years in the field. His expertise is in the treatment of stroke and conditions affecting the blood vessels in the brain. Trained in the United Kingdom where he worked for 10 years before moving to Australia and then Singapore

where he is now based. He is a visiting Consultant at the National University Hospital in Singapore.



Dr Mahen continues to practice in the UK, Singapore and Vietnam as a Senior Consultant; and sits on multiple clinical and academic boards in the region.



A FUN TOUR OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTER

After more than two years of closure for massive renovation works, the National Science Center has finally reopened its doors to the public in mid-October 2017. To make it a memorable last school day of the year 2017 for 19 children from Open Hands Home, Kajang, IREKA CARES volunteers organized a fun trip to the National Science Center for them.



For IREKA CARES' 2017 finale event, held on Monday, 27 November, volunteers and 19 children from Ireka's adopted home, The Open Hands Home had a fun, scientific and adventurous learning tour at the National Science Center. There is a lot more packed into the new-look Science Centre which the children loved so it didn't matter if they had been there before. The children enjoyed all of it!

During the tour, the children had a fascinating walk through the "underwater" gallery at The Aquarium, and managed to enjoy a spectacular view of up to 80 different species of tropical and fresh water fishes. At the Wonderspark, the children also got to learn more about elements of nature like water, light and wind through interactive exhibits demonstrated on the spot. The next stop was Eureka, where the mathematical and physical concepts such as sound, wavelength, and music are introduced through experimental instruments and demonstrations.



Afterwards, it was time for lunch, but this time, IREKA CARES volunteers made it slightly different from previous outings. IREKA CARES volunteers organized a "Meet & Greet Luncheon" at Ireka Corporation Berhad's Headquarter Offices in Mont' Kiara, to enable the senior management and the children to spend time together.

The children were introduced to a Dutch game, "Sjoelbak" after lunch. Though it was the first time for most of the children and volunteers to play Sjoelbak, all of them showed their enthusiasm for this game and enjoyed themselves.

This marked another successful finale for IREKA CARES, now in its eighth year. During the luncheon, Datuk Lai Foot Kong, Ireka's CSR Steering Committee's Chairman who personally heads and takes a keen interest in Ireka's CSR programme said, "I am so delighted as we are able to meet up with the children today, and I am truly proud of our volunteers who are willing to sacrifice their time to organise this meaningful event and spend time with the children. Keep up the good work and let's make our eighth year another successful one!"



KOPITIAM NEWS!

The i-ZEN & zenZ Community Page

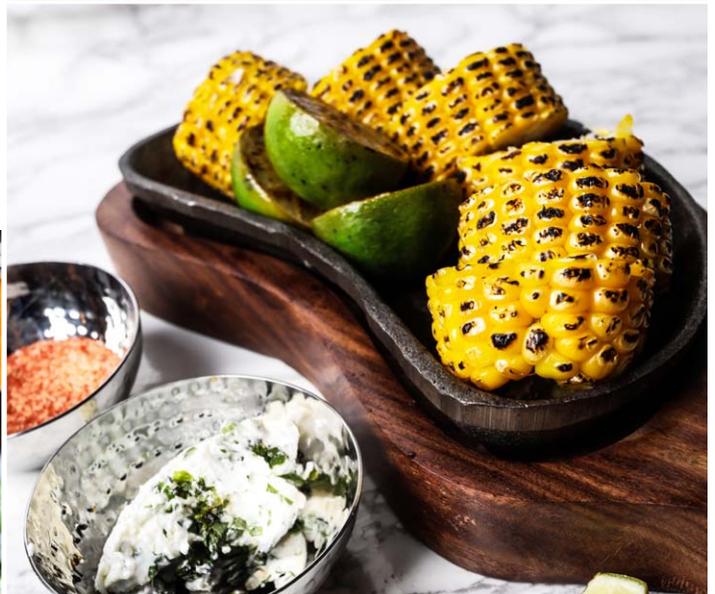
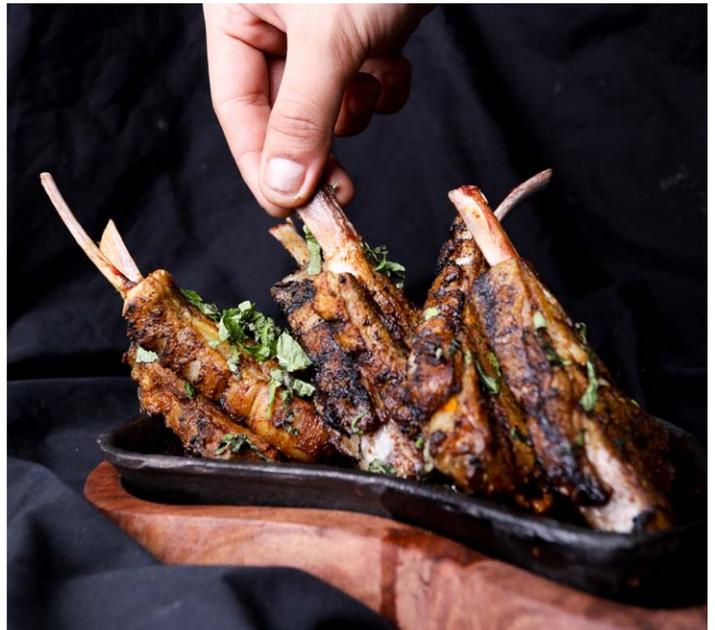
Hubba at **SENI Mont' Kiara** is the place to go when we are seeking mouth-watering food in a laid back, cheerful and friendly atmosphere, where you are made to feel instantly at home. They are also proud to unveil their newest eatery, **Goa by Hubba** set in happening Changkat Bukit Bintang. Read all about it here first!

GOA BY HUBBA

Goa by Hubba, located just off bustling Changkat Bukit Bintang, is an oasis of Sins & Spices, and begs one to experience exotic New Indian Cuisine and Goan Inspired Cocktails. A rustic, indigenous atmosphere with blue tie-dyed drapes, floral centerpieces, mandala art, heightens that Goan adventure.

Celebrity Chef Sapna Anand's menu is a veritable feast for the senses! Dishes like Kashmiri Lamb Chops, the heavenly Mutton Floss Mantao, the luscious Grilled Cauliflower with Smoked Sauce, the mouth-watering Chowpatty Fire Roasted Grilled Corn and much more pay tribute to simple yet delicious Goan street food. Sapna has deftly put her touch to bring out the vibrancy of the many spices and herbs used in the food. To complement this bold menu, its mixologists present cocktails resplendent of spices that will transport you to hot and humid Goa.

Local Goan fare like the rasam, raita, lassi have been given Hubba twist and baptised with exotic names such as Kinky Kokum, Masala Mantra and Ass Whopping Chai Masala. Familiar yet different, it's a taste that's hard to forget. The usual suspects are also available from the bar with the likes of beers, spirits and wines and champagnes at trade prices.



Address: 1 Bukit Ceylon (Ramada Suites KLCC),
1 Lorong Ceylon, 50200 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 017 786 7611 (Reservations)
Email : goa@hubba.asia
Website : www.hubba.asia

Business Hours: Mondays - Sundays : 7am till closing

KOPITIAM NEWS

MINDSPACE – SO MUCH MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE!



There is so much more to **MINDSPACE** than meets the eye because to call it a community meeting point would not do it enough justice because they pack in so much under this heading. And yet, this is exactly what it is because its founders, **Andrew** and **Yuki Coomby** created MINDSPACE as a place for the community to meet and where their learning and development needs can be addressed. It is a rare gem right in the heart of Mont' Kiara, on the top floor of 1 Mont' Kiara mall to be precise, that exists to welcome everybody whether they want to have lunch, require special needs education, discover artistic talents, to make travel arrangements, hire a space for a social dance event or simply to buy some plants.

Yes, it really is as diverse as that but with an unequivocal mission, "Actively seeking to meet the needs of communities around us by providing holistic and inclusive services and programmes in a financially sustainable way."

So how did it all start?

Andrew started his career in theatre design and wife, Yuki still has a successful travel agency business. Having their own children was the catalyst for them to reflect on the education they wanted for their daughters and this also provided an opportunity to give back to society. Thus in 2015, the MINDSPACE education programme was established and the top

floor space in the 1 Mont' Kiara mall provided the ideal opportunity to expand from.

"We see that everyone has talent that can be shared and harnessed for the wider good of the community because each of us has an important role to play," says Andrew.



PHILOSOPHY

Their philosophy is all about community engagement, building inclusive programmes and solution seeking. Put simply, MINDSPACE is all about finding a way to connect with everyone - young and



old; disabled and able bodied - through a series of activities, initiatives and services. Andrew is adamant to turn on its head the well-trodden path of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objective by engaging local communities on their terms rather than them fitting into the plans of the corporate CSR programme. 20% of what they earn at MINDSPACE goes to support their CSR initiatives.

It might seem that all MINDSPACE's activities and initiatives are separate entities but they are in fact, separate components connected to each other. It is no accident that the SPACE in their title is an acronym for "Special Place for Active Community Engagement."



CREATING A CENTRE FOR LEARNING

Seeing a gap in special needs schooling and providing inclusive activities for all children led the Coombys to set up MINDSPACE in the first place. The learning centre provides a safe setting and today has over 100 children with a range of learning and physical differences.

Recognising that providing an education is only one step in the right direction, MINDSPACE is also aware of the importance of equipping these children with independent living skills for when they one day become adults, something their parents worry about constantly. To this end, a certified vocational training programme (in collaboration with Open University Malaysia Institute of Professional Development) is the next stage of development with the aim of training special needs trainers and this pool of educators will equip the children with skills to gain the level of independent living they want.

The centre also has children who have left mainstream school through bullying and are now regaining their confidence at MINDSPACE. Their unique approach to working with children has drawn interest from local colleges such as SEGI and Sunway who send their students to intern with the staff and children at the learning centre.

Another gap in the local education market is providing an education for expatriate children for whom international schools are a prohibitive option because of their steep costs and so a growing number of these children are also being educated at the centre. Andrew feels strongly that the MINDSPACE learning centre should also bridge the economic gap and as a result has designed a programme where 25% of the student body are on some form of scholarship.

CREATING A CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

The organisation is currently working on getting the community, and especially children to appreciate the different arts medium because according to Andrew, they will be tomorrow's audience. The MAD (Music, Arts and Drama) programme is underway to get children to "experience" the arts for themselves at first hand – for example, an afternoon programme for kids with a focus on personal development through learning arts. They have recently completed their holiday programme themed around an Interstellar Warrior Academy that saw students making costumes, dancing, singing, learning their scripts, learning self-defence, baking space cupcakes at the same time as having fun getting to know each other. Another activity is the Culture Syiok platform which provides a stage for various talents to



come together and provide a variety show through presentations by singer-songwriters, Indie bands, dancers, live artists, poets, story tellers and comedians. This is an inclusive event that also provides a platform for people of different abilities the chance to perform. 2018 will see additional programmes being launched focussing on audience development in the local arts scene. This will be one to watch!!

SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH

How is all this sustained? The Will You café and rooftop garden selling their own grown plants generate an income for the school and together with the landscape contract for the 1 Mont' Kiara mall, MINDSPACE is able to sustain itself.

The other thing MINDSPACE does so well is to offer a platform for the community to use and to date there have been a variety of activities ranging from social dances, live art classes to travel presentations. Andrew welcomes more use of their space to bring people together.



FUTURE PLANS

The future will undoubtedly be a busy one, but then Andrew is clearly not frightened of a challenge or of hard work. MINDSPACE opens its second centre in Oasis Damansara in January 2018 where the premises are larger, so hosting seminars, conferences and even entertainment will be commonplace.

In December 2017, MINDSPACE launched their corporate training programmes to create mindset change in business for the new generation; medical camps to co-ordinate and provide a platform for doctors to help displaced peoples and even currently developing homes and programmes for senior care. We look forward to hearing more about these in the future.

Andrew's "I WILL" approach to everything is clearly visible as you look around their Mont' Kiara premises. The vision of creating community awareness and community engagement is certainly no rhetoric. So, we can definitely with confidence say, "Watch this SPACE!".

>>> www.mindspace.my

KOPITIAM NEWS

STEVEN SHORTHOSE - A NEW LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



Tutoring is a way of life for parents and children in Malaysia; and in fact, the culture of tutoring is already very much part of the mainstream now. Around RM4bn a year is spent in Malaysia on tutoring. Tuition centres are mushrooming everywhere because these centres are no longer regarded as somewhere for the weaker student to brush up on learning, but a place to provide children with that extra competitive edge. "Good Enough" is clearly not good enough as parents want the best for their children's education and tutoring is now very much a part of Malaysian culture.

WHAT'S BEING CREATED?

So, the time and place is right for Steven Shorthose to open the brand new International Tuition Centre in Mont' Kiara in a stand-alone building ideally situated on the Jalan Kiara main road and it is also perfectly located within easy reach of two international schools. Steven's ambition is to create a "Google style" tuition centre which he describes as being a serious place of learning with an informal edge such as a chill out space filled with bean bags for the children, a café selling healthy food, within an upbeat and colourful environment.

HOW DID HE ARRIVE HERE?

Steven has lived in Asia for 21 years, most of those in Malaysia. In that time, he taught Mathematics, Additional Maths specifically, at the Manila English International School, Garden International School and Alice Smith International School – he was Head of Year 11 as a pastoral leader at the two Malaysian schools. He is very proud that during his time there, the only subject that Alice Smith ranked top in the world for was in Additional Maths which the school had the honour of receiving twice, two years running...

THE INTERNATIONAL TUITION CENTRE

This centre has ambitions of offering a lot to the community such as English lessons to business and corporations. Initially however, its bread and butter will be offering small class and one to one tuition for secondary school aged children across the range of subjects, with the core being English, Maths and the Sciences. Steven himself intends to be hands on and will be going back to his roots and teaching the Maths. Class sizes will be a maximum of 8, and both full-time and part-time teachers will be employed to devote 100% of their time and attention to the students. It will also be open at the weekends. Although the name suggests it, the centre is not

exclusively for international school children and in fact all secondary school children are welcomed. At this stage, there is no intention to cater for primary school children but the door is definitely not closed on this idea.

What will be new is to have a demand led system of tutoring where students will place their wish list on the website and if it's feasible, teaching will be arranged around this. For instance, if enough students request for Bahasa and Chinese classes, Steven will try to meet this demand.

The on-site café will have a health bar for both children and adults alike. Steven is keen for the children to interact with each other and not isolate themselves in their tuition classes.

The International Tuition Centre will share its premises with the Progressive Pre-School who already have a license to operate. Added to this, security will be a strong feature of the centre because the safety and security of the students, as well as their education is paramount.

There is no doubt tutoring is an effective way of learning. It comes with powerful advantages, not least as it's the means to get better grades at school, and maybe improve life prospects.

Giving Steven the last word, "I want the International Learning Centre to be a market leader in the tuition world and hopefully branch out beyond Mont Kiara, which by the way will proudly be our flagship centre. I can see that the centre will be a flexible learning space which, I believe, is fundamentally conducive to learning."

The International Learning Centre will open in February 2018.

For more information, contact **Steven Shorthose** on **012 687 5275** or checkout their website **intuition.com.my**

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.

We are delighted to introduce you to a new merchant. **SOMBRERO**© which serves authentic Mexican delights with colorful and refreshingly tangy, spicy and warmth Mesoamerican-Spanish taste for our diners. They pay attention to using as natural (minimally factory processed) quality and authentic halal ingredients as possible. The outlets serve taco, burrito, enchilada, churros and carne asada. i-ZEN card holders are entitled to 10% off the bill in their Bukit Jelutong, Bangsar and TTDI branches.

For more information on your i-ZEN Privilege card, contact **Priya, Customer Relations** on **+603 6411 6388 (ext. 6889)** or email to **enquiry@i-ZEN.com.my**



<<< Scan this with your QR code application or visit <http://www.i-zen.com.my/privilege.html> for more information on the full member privileges available in year 2018



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

SHOPPING



EDUCATION



BEAUTY & WELLNESS



ACCOMMODATION



HOME & DECOR



We Don't Just Clean. We Sanitise.



AFFORDABLY COMFORTABLE

DINING



HEALTH



Please log on to <http://www.i-zen.com.my/privilege.html> for full information on partner merchants and their participating branches (where appropriate) for your convenience.



THE RUMA
HOTEL AND RESIDENCES
@ KUALA LUMPUR CITY CENTRE



WHAT YOU LOVE ABOUT THE PULI HOTEL AND SPA, SHANGHAI –
SOON IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA.

A hotel managed by **URBAN RESORT™**
concepts

www.urbanresortconcepts.com