

ISSUE 58 • October - December 2021

# CITI-ZEN

Living Life Large



## True Grit

> Dato' Muhammad Azizulhasni Awang



**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 [www.ireka.com.my](http://www.ireka.com.my)  
E [enquiry@i-zen.com.my](mailto:enquiry@i-zen.com.my)

## Contents

- 1 ..... *True Grit*
- 4 ..... *Property Outlook by  
Previndran Sathurgasinghe,  
Zerin Properties Group*
- 8 ..... *Bringing Back Tomorrow -  
Reflections from  
CiTi-ZEN Contributors*
- 17 ..... *Home Ownership Campaign  
2020-2021*
- 18 ..... *The RuMa Hotel Promotions*
- 21 ..... *Hubba Mont Kiara - Dishes Up  
The Best of Comfort Food*
- 22 ..... *Thank You!*



## Greetings to all CiTi-ZEN readers!

I hope that you and your family are all continuing to keep safe and well; and who would have thought that the world still continues to be disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

After 13 years introducing you to many interesting individuals and bringing you some fun stories, it is time to say goodbye. Ireka Corporation Berhad, which has

brought you CiTi-ZEN, has new shareholders and I, alongside the current top management team at Ireka Development Management are in the process of restructuring the property development division under a new entity. In the meantime, we will be terminating the publication of CiTi-ZEN. Am I sad about CiTi-ZEN ending? Yes, but it has been a terrific run and I am truly proud of it.

CiTi-ZEN wouldn't be anywhere without the contributors whom we have had the privilege to interview over the last 13 years and I want to take a moment to thank all of them for entrusting us with their stories. They share our philosophy of Living Life Large! We have called on a few of you to work a little harder for us, and in this issue, they share what the last tumultuous year has been like for them. One message comes through for each of them – resilience! Resilience seems to have been the driving mechanism to keep heads high for these illustrious individuals moving forward against some difficult odds brought on by the pandemic. Talking of resilience, we are honoured to feature silver medal winner in the Men's track cycling event at the recent Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, Dato' Muhammad Azizulhasni bin Awang, aka Pocket Rocketman. Talk about saving the best to last! Property guru, Previn also shares his outlook for the property market in 2022. He is definitely worth listening to.

To our CiTi-ZEN readers, I want to thank you for your company. We will be leaving this and all previous copies of the magazine available on the Ireka website so you can still read them, and we hope you will continue to find value in it.

Until next time, Live Life Large!

**Datuk Lai Voon Hon**  
Ireka Development Management Sdn Bhd



# | True Grit

**Azizul Awang**, in full Dato' Muhammad Azizulhasni bin Awang, nickname Pocket Rocketman, multiple medal winner, won silver medal at the recent Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games in the Men's Keirin final of the track cycling event at the Izu Velodrome on August 8th, 2021. Five minutes into one of my favourite interviews for CiTi-ZEN, I had already arrived at a title for the article because Azizul's grit shone through during the entirety of our time together.

This Malaysian professional track cyclist, Olympian and elite sportsman oozes confidence, courage and strength of character. A person with true grit has commitment, passion and perseverance; when goals are set and followed through. Azizul has these in the bucketload, evidenced by his impressive trophy cabinet that includes the aforementioned silver medal for Team Malaysia, bronze from the Rio Olympics, 2016 (where he became the first Malaysian ever to win a track cycling medal), gold medal at the 2017 UCI Track Cycling World Championships, and numerous podium medals also at the World Championships, Asian and Commonwealth Games. No wonder he was crowned Malaysian Sportsman of the Year two years running in 2009 and 2010.

So how did it all begin?

## *Growing up cycling in Dungun, Terengganu*

The second youngest of 9 siblings, Azizul says that he was always described as an "active" child; and participated in almost every activity at school – sports and even traditional Malay dancing – because he actually enjoyed the challenge of learning new things and the discipline of competing. He received his first bike when he was about 4 years-old, a gift from his late father, and his mum



regales that it didn't take him long to get rid of the stabilisers. His older brother introduced him to mountain biking and thus began a new chapter in Azizul's life – he was 12 years old. Azizul joined the Dungun Mountain Bike Club and has not looked back. He saved up his pocket money, used his Duit Raya\* and worked in his uncle's shop to earn extra money to graduate from his second-hand bike and to buy himself a brand new mountain bike. His father had also promised to contribute towards the bike fund if he did well in his Standard 6 exams, and not one to back down from a challenge, Azizul did just that.

\* (Duit Raya – money received during special festivals given in green packets)

## *Pursuing a career in Cycling*

Azizul decided that he wanted to be a professional cyclist when he was 15 and his late coach, Razini Omar, whom he admired greatly, would bring him to Kuala Lumpur for races and it goes without saying that he won most of them.

"I just wanted to race. I was very excited arriving at the Cheras Velodrome for the first time with my mountain bike and quickly realised this was not the right equipment when I saw all the fancy bikes around me. The National Sports Council lent me a track bike, and knowing that I loved to compete, my coach told me to just race. Without any track bike training, I jumped on and had lots of fun. I won!"

At one of the races in Kuala Lumpur, the National Sports Council's talent scouts spotted Azizul's potential following his defeat of the then junior champion rider, and offered him a place at the Bukit Jalil Sports School. After completing his Form 3 studies, Azizul took up the offer in order to chase his dreams to be a national athlete. Incidentally, he also had ambitions to become a doctor and promised his parents that cycling would not get in the way of his studies. The gruelling training programme put paid to that dream but no regrets, because it certainly propelled his career to becoming a Malaysian elite cycling star with two Olympic medals to his name.



Training meant rising early to do 60km cycle rides (he was used to 20km – 30km in Dungun) before lessons started at 9am and yet more training after school. Throw in the gym strength work and the tournaments to compete in, there was little time left for much else. Azizul admits that he had to toughen up with the goal of being a national athlete in his sights at all times. Incidentally, he did well in his Form 5 SPM exams too. Throughout this time, Azizul pays tribute to his late coach who was never far away with the good advice, and attended the tournaments with him to provide support. This eased the home sickness that Azizul was also contending with because it was the first time, he had left his family (and Dungun) behind.

### ***Secret of Azizul's Success***

Spotting his cycling talent to take the sport further, Azizul was sent by the National Sports Council and the Sports Ministry

to Melbourne to train with coach and Australian cycling legend, John Beasley. Under Beasley, Azizul won an impressive seven world championship medals, 10 Asian championship titles and two Olympic medals.

Azizul remembers his first time in Melbourne as a 19-year-old, having to adapt to another culture and living even further away from Dungun. He recalls, "Bukit Jalil was tough going but Melbourne was a whole other level of toughness. John Beasley, both my coach and a father figure, set out a rigorous programme for me, taught me to change my diet and always motivated me to take responsibility for my development as an elite cyclist, reminding me that it is all in my hands." Azizul never took his eye off the prize, i.e. to be Malaysia's number 1 track cyclist so he gave 100% at all times, training in rain or shine. This is exactly the grit I am talking about!

The sacrifices paid off. After only a year of being in Melbourne, Azizul got the call telling him that he had made the Olympic team and he admits this was a dream come true and his proudest moment. Some in the sceptical press were not sure whether he might have peaked too early and even wondered whether he was ready to perform at this whole new level. Azizul proved them all wrong of course. Taking part in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, at only 20 years, ranked as one of the greatest moments in Azizul's career, with the added honour of being asked to carry the flag for Malaysia's national delegation in the Parade of Nations at the opening ceremony.

### ***Keeping the Wheels Well Oiled for Paris 2024***

Train, eat, rest, repeat; cut and paste for the next day...and the next. This is Azizul's life when he is in training for any race which takes months of preparation.



Training involves gym work, race tactic discussions with John Beasley and road cycling for around 2-3 hours a day. Rest, sleep and the right micro and macro diet also play a huge part in Azizul's training regime to allow the body time to recover and to avoid injuries. He was advised to sleep in until 6am (instead of getting up at 4.30am) and to take power naps because sleep encourages muscle mass. This is a difficult habit to get into but it had to be done.

"Paris will be my last Olympics to go for, so I have to be careful and smart with my training regime. I plan to make small changes for big results."

The psychological part of the training is equally important and belief in his ability to be the best athlete is never in doubt. This self-confidence is what Azizul admits gets him through and he says this with utmost humility – he wants to win with every fibre in his body and not winning is non-negotiable. Even when he was hit by a car during training which put a pause on his cycling, this was accepted as an obstacle and not the end of a career. Azizul says that he charted his own direction of travel to be a world class cyclist from the SEA Games to the Olympic Games right from the beginning. I would have said mission accomplished, but Azizul says definitely not!

Training for the Paris Olympics in 2024 (his fifth) starts soon and it will be as rigorous as ever because, Azizul has the gold medal firmly in his sights.

## Tokyo 2020 Cancelled

I asked Azizul how he felt when the Tokyo Olympics were postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Azizul sage-like style, he says, "When the Olympics were cancelled in 2020, Melbourne was in lockdown so when the news came, I initially felt demotivated. My coach and I decided this is precisely the time

to focus only on what we can control, to continue training and to do our best. It was hard not knowing but I wanted to continue training hard and to use the time to my advantage as extra time to prepare and improve performance." Training and workouts continued at home with gym equipment and on a stationary bike. Eventually, the Australian Government allowed for athletes to train on the velodrome track before the Olympics.



## Tips for Amateur Riders

Giving 100% in training is a must. Azizul says that it sounds obvious but from experience, he knows that sometimes it might feel that you are training to your full capacity, but there is always more to give. He warns against dismissing the mental agility and strength required to be an elite sportsperson. "Do not be afraid to dream big and never limit your dreams. Always stay humble and remember your roots because no matter how talented you are, there is always a long way to go. Don't get lulled into the superstar mentality because this will be your undoing!"

## Representing your Nation

Azizul is the first Olympian I have had the honour to meet and it had to be asked. "How does it feel to stand on the winners'

podium winning a medal for your country?" Azizul says that the pride felt is like no other and to see the Malaysian flag raised and hearing the national anthem played is "simply amazing". Azizul is a patriotic athlete and he was proud to honour his beloved Malaysia by draping the flag over his shoulders on the winners' podium. Interestingly, Azizul also says that seeing the Malaysian flag raised high raises awareness about the country and puts it on the map.

## And finally...

Azizul remains single-minded in his pursuit of success in the sport of cycling which he has loved since he was 12-years-old; and for his country. We wish this Olympian and world champion every success for the Paris Olympics in 2024.

Dato' Muhammad Azizulhasni bin Awang, it was an honour and a privilege!

## Achievements

(courtesy of Wikipedia)

### Track Cycling World Ranking

- 2008/09 - 1st Keirin
- 2010/11 - 1st Keirin

### World Championships

- 2009 - ○ Sprint
- 2010 - ○ Keirin
- 2015 - ○ Keirin
- 2016 - ○ Keirin
- 2017 - ○ Keirin (won Rainbow Jersey)
- 2020 - ○ Keirin
- 2020 - ○ Sprint

### Asian Games

- 2010 - ○ Keirin
- 2018 - ○ Sprint
- 2018 - ○ Team sprint
- 2018 - ○ Keirin

### Commonwealth Games

- 2010 - ○ Team sprint (with Josiah Ng and Mohd Rizal Tisin)
- 2014 - ○ Keirin

### Olympic Games

- 2016 - ○ Keirin
- 2020 - ○ Keirin

○ - GOLD  
○ - SILVER  
○ - BRONZE

# Property Outlook by Previndran Sathurgasinghe, Zerin Properties Group

## Z E R I N P R O P E R T I E S

**Previndran Sathurgasinghe**, usually goes by Previn, is the founder and CEO of award-winning Zerin Properties Group which he founded in 2002. A titan of the property market, there is nothing that Previn won't know about the business, having started his career with JLW before joining Tenggara Capital Bhd in their property development division. Previn's last place of employment was as Chief Marketing Officer at Signforce Sdn Bhd, a boutique hotel management company. Currently, he is actively involved in the corporate real estate market in Malaysia with hands-on transactions in the office, retail, industrial and hospitality sectors, with over RM4B worth of transactions under his belt.

As well as running a successful company, he is also the Chairman of CoreNet Global, a non-profit association and the first corporate real estate (CRE) focused association in Malaysia which aims to enhance the local CRE-industry by bringing together the end users (corporate tenants and occupiers) and service providers (strategic or outsourced).

Previn still leaves a bit in the tank to support youth development and community-building activities by contributing to rugby, cricket and soccer (his 3 sporting passions) junior development mainly via KL Saracens and the Royal Selangor Club, Kuala Lumpur.



### About Zerin Properties Group

This firm, which started out as a one-man show is today one of Asia's leading real estate mergers and acquisitions team with top-drawer deals that include the sale of Four Seasons Langkawi, Intercontinental Hanoi and Landmark Office Assets in Cyberjaya; earning them numerous international awards along the way.

Since its humble beginning in 2002, Zerin Properties today operates in Singapore, Sydney, New Delhi, London and Penang, offering a range of real estate investment services such as merger and acquisition services, private real estate wealth investments, expatriate lifestyle services and marketing consultancy services. Zerin Properties Group also provides services such as property management, corporate transactions and corporate valuations.

# Global Reach, Local Knowledge, Personalised Service

Experienced, customer-focused team with deep  
local knowledge and wide global networks

LEARN MORE ABOUT US

Their portfolio includes assisting the likes of Tune Hotels, Santa Hotels, Four Points by Sheraton, Marriot Courtyard, Vanguard Hotels amongst others, in their merger and acquisition requirements in South East Asia. Zerin Properties Group were also instrumental in bringing in Kempinski Hotels S.A. to Malaysia. These achievements have established Zerin Properties as notable dealmaker in the hospitality industry scene.

So, we have definitely asked the right person for his expert take on the property scene in Malaysia and the outlook for 2022 which is presented here in Previn's own words.

## *What do you consider to be the good factors for property investment in Malaysia?*

- i. Decent rental yield and capital appreciation for those looking into medium to long term investment.
- ii. Value for money – great bargains in the market as developers are rethinking new launches where some are opting for price adjustments and/or attractive sales packages.

- iii. Wider options for financing with historically low interest rates.
- iv. Favourable Government incentives i.e. Home Ownership Campaign (HOC), stamp duty exemption.

- v. Attractive market for foreigners such as lower price threshold for strata properties (varies by state) and opportunity to own landed and freehold properties.

- vi. Emergence of new specialized investment assets with growing demand for the healthcare and e-commerce sectors i.e. industrial, logistics.

- vii. Good infrastructure and quality of living – enhancement to connectivity with upcoming MRT Circle line, LRT Line 3 and numerous highways.

## *What has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the rental, commercial and residential markets? How is Malaysia's property market coping with the COVID-19 fall out?*

The onset of the pandemic led to an overall slowdown across

the property market as decision making in relation to property transactions and investments were delayed due to the varying degrees of restrictions imposed under the various Movement Control Orders (MCO) resulting in a 'wait and see' approach. Price adjustments particularly for properties in the least strategic locations and with poor designs were observed. Landlords and tenants of commercial spaces (office and retail) sought amicable solutions through rent waivers or deferment periods and even rent reductions.

There were fewer new launches as developers chose to delay launches whilst others embraced digital platforms and social media, incorporating virtual tours, active chatbots and the like to sell their products online with attractive incentives and deals. Notwithstanding this, landbanking activities and acquisition of industrial assets were prevalent during the MCO period as developers took this opportunity to plan for future expansion and prepared to diversify into the industrial and logistic sectors, driven by the rapidly growing e-commerce sector.



## ***If you are a first-time home buyer, what factors should you consider in 2022?***

Residential units within Transit-Oriented Development areas (TOD) or Transit Adjacent Development (TAD) are good options for first time buyers (with a small household) as it promotes the live, work and play concept synonymous with their lifestyle needs and provides a cheaper option to commute using public transportation. It also offers good appreciation in the future if they decide to upgrade to a bigger home. There are some good TOD/TAD projects that are within the affordability range of the M40 and B40 categories and some of these projects will only be ready in one or two-years' time.

First-time buyers should also be on the lookout for numerous incentives and rebates being offered by the Government and developers aimed at them:

- Penang government plans to extend the Home Ownership Campaign (HOC) for another year until June 30, 2022.
- Stamp duty, MOT and legal fee exemptions.

## ***Do interest rates in Malaysia impact buying power?***

To a certain extent, the record low interest rates do influence the purchasing decision as homebuyers and property investors who have been contemplating purchasing properties for their affordability, are expected to utilise this opportunity to secure mortgages at attractive rates, resulting in increased property transactions.

## ***Does the unpredictable political situation affect buying decisions?***

Yes. Political instability creates uncertainty and generally is not favourable to the country's

economic performance. It weakens investors' perception of acquiring property rights owing to the fear of loss of the investment value. Especially in the current market, political uncertainties coupled with the COVID-19 crisis, would force developers and property buyers to hold back and rethink their plans and strategies before they embark with their buying and investing decisions. Political instability also reduces the growth of private funding. The availability of funding is an important factor in property investments or acquisitions.



The property market is very much tied to economic sentiments, so strengthening the economic fundamentals will inevitably drive the property market forward. It is imperative for the Government, political parties, leaders, along with stakeholders to work towards reducing all forms of political uncertainty by adapting wholesome and honest long-term approaches in the interest of the people, commerce and the nation at large.

## ***Should buyers buy new launches/properties under construction or sub-sale properties?***

That is a subjective decision. Firstly, the buyers need to know the purpose of the purchase, i.e.

whether it is for their own stay or for investment purposes. For those looking for a property for their own stay and use, buying a newly launched property is great for peace of mind (well, in the first few years anyway) as the units and facilities are new and still in good condition. The information about the property can be easily found and buyers can always go to the showroom to gain more information about the property.

Buyers would also have the flexibility in choosing the unit type, layout, orientation, floor plan etc. Normally, properties in the primary market come with attractive rebates to encourage ownership. However, buyers may run the risk of construction building being delayed and long waiting time to the completion. It will also take some time to build up the community in the neighbourhood.

Nevertheless, in some cases, buying sub-sale properties is more ideal for buyers who prefer to be in a specific location where the properties are already in a mature neighbourhood and centralised location. If the location is quite established and matured, buyers can rest assured that there won't be new developments springing up that will affect their way of living. Due to land scarcity and high demand, some areas such as in Petaling Jaya and particular areas within Kuala Lumpur such as Damansara Heights, Mont' Kiara and Bangsar will remain as hotspots for sub-sale properties due to the extensive amenities and excellent connectivity provided.

## ***Property prices seem to be going down, when is it expected to bounce back? Will property prices increase in 2022?***

Overall, property prices across the board are expected to remain stagnant for at least the next 18 months as the market adjusts to the post MCO period in line with the country's transition into the proposed endemic phase by end



of October, 2021. Notwithstanding this, the logistics and industrial sectors are expected to rebound at a faster rate as these particular sectors remained robust with the rise in e-commerce activities.

### ***Where are the hotspots for property investors to look at now and in 2022?***

Selangor and KL remain popular among property investors. The affluent neighbourhoods such as Bangsar and Mont' Kiara remain sought-after residential areas especially among expats. KL North, in particular, which includes areas such as Kepong, Selayang and Sentul are becoming more popular among residential owners and investors. These areas are surrounded by mature neighbourhoods and developed with a myriad of options between landed and high-rise residences.

Kepong, for example, has attracted investors with its strategic location, infrastructure development, excellent connectivity and ideal mix of commercial and retail spaces. The upcoming mass rapid transit (MRT) 2 which includes four stations – Metro Prima, Kepong Baru, Jinjang and Sri Delima are together expected to serve a population of over 450,000. The Kepong area is also seeing increased demand from a younger demographic due to its easy accessibility to KLCC, KL Sentral, Bukit Bintang and the

forthcoming Tun Razak Exchange. Areas in Cheras, Sungai Buloh, Kajang, Shah Alam and Klang, especially those close to MRT stations and LRT Line 3 stations, will be highly sought after. Semenyih is also a popular choice due to ease of accessibility and proximity to amenities, such as schools, hospitals, parks and shopping malls.

### ***What is the ray of hope in the current property market and the general outlook for 2022; and is it a good time to invest?***

The National Property Information Centre's (NAPIC) 1H2021 Property Market Report already shows that there are a lot of property transactions taking place with an increase of 21% in volume and 32.1% in value were recorded compared to the same period last year. There is pent-up demand among investors who refrained from investing last year. I think 2022 will be an exciting year and more resilient than the current market. With the increase in vaccination rate to achieve herd immunity and the gradual opening of the economy, I'm optimistic that the property market will have a positive rebound, with hopefully stronger demand in the market as it will remain attractive to both purchasers and tenants with appealing sales and rental packages coupled with the low interest rates.

# Bringing Back Tomorrow – Reflections from CiTi-ZEN Contributors

Over the last 13 years, CiTi-ZEN has featured some amazing individuals who have made it their business to make an impact at every opportunity and to lead by example, with their many accomplishments, and all achieved with the utmost humility. Their on-the-go lifestyle might feel like a lifetime away by now, forced by the Coronavirus pandemic which hit the “pause” button on their busy lives. So, this was the perfect time to ask these inspiring individuals for their personal reflections on the last year and where they see themselves in 2022. CiTi-ZEN thanks them for sharing their thoughts candidly and although lives have been forced to change by the pandemic, they each manage to find inspiration and the energy to remain at the top of their game.

## *Datuk Professor Jimmy Choo OBE*

A man who needs no introduction, **Datuk Jimmy Choo**, world renowned fashion designer known for his handmade shoes is continuing to dazzle with his creations and remains a worldwide household name. His iconic designs have been featured in Hollywood movies, worn by Will Smith, Madonna, Jennifer Aniston and a favourite of the late Princess Diana. Yet, Datuk Jimmy Choo's proudest moment is having his biography included in a Malaysian Year 3 school textbook which he modestly describes as bringing him great happiness because he is delighted to be doing his small part in inspiring young students to work hard and to chase their dreams.

This is precisely the legacy that befits his passion for supporting educating today's youth. When I interviewed him 8 years ago, he memorably said, “Always open your eyes and learn from others to create your own style, accept critical comments graciously and never be too proud to learn more. You are not always the best in the world.” It is this humility that I regard as Datuk Jimmy Choo's enduring brand!

### *Top 3 takeaways from 2021 :*

- Family is all important to Datuk Jimmy Choo. 2021 was predominantly about staying safe, working from home and keeping in touch with family members and friends online. “We always call each other to catch up and provide moral support.



I appreciate and treasure the time spent with family members very much as the pandemic further highlights that life is fragile.”

- Taking care of mental health is just as important and the COVID pandemic has certainly shone the spotlight on this. Perhaps pre-pandemic we might have thought that keeping physically fit was more important but we know today, as COVID-19 continues to rage fiercely around the world, that our mental health directly affects our physical health. Therefore, staying in touch with family and friends; and exercising to maintain fitness levels are the answers to maintaining good physical and mental health.

- Keeping a positive mindset throughout the various lockdowns and restrictions brought on by the pandemic was critical for Datuk Jimmy Choo, in order to continue to be creative with his world-famous designs. He never stopped creating new designs that he calls “new stories” for clients, including





The Atelier Couture, a Shanghai-based high-end evening dress and wedding gown brand, where he has been Creative Director and design mentor for the last 5 years. Datuk Jimmy Choo already has design plans in the pipeline for when the world opens up.

### *Vision for success in 2022*

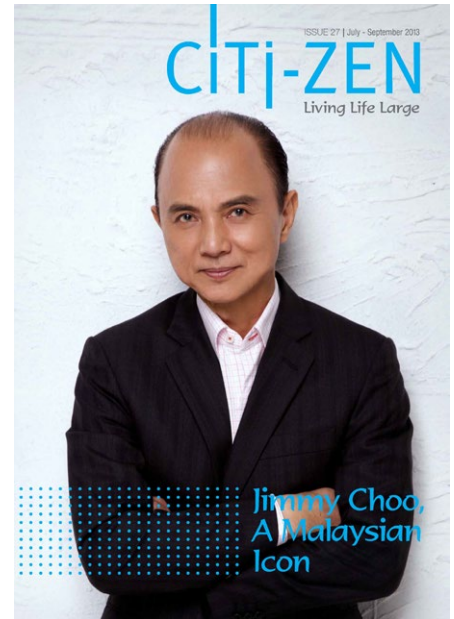
"I am confident that our economy will improve with more countries opening up gradually with the eventual reduction in the spread of the pandemic."

Datuk Jimmy Choo's focus for 2022 is to promote creative design education and tourism in Malaysia. He is passionate about

training more young designers and to pass on his skills, talent and experience to them, to grow the haute couture industry and according to Datuk Jimmy Choo, it is his way of "giving back to my country".

He was Malaysian Tourism Ambassador for many years and wants to continue to promote Malaysia on the international stage at every opportunity because he says, "Malaysia has so many beautiful and unique places coupled with our multi-racial society, and the vast variety of food waiting for everyone around the world to discover."

*(Datuk Jimmy Choo was interviewed for Issue 27, July - September 2013)*



## *Michele Kwok*



You cannot claim to claim to know Kuala Lumpur if you have not eaten in the ever popular SOULed Out, Hubba Hubba or WiP restaurants. **Michele Kwok** is co-founder of the Soul Society Group which has these restaurants in its collection; each with their distinctive and unique experiences. Over 25 years' experience at the top of her game in the F&B business in Malaysia will have given Michele

well-earned permission to put her feet up, but instead, her relentless energy and dynamism led her to co-founding, in 2019, another business arm, this time focusing on the Puras brand of premium essential oils. An essential oils convert for many years, Michele believes it is a wonderful way to achieve balance, harmony and wellness.

Michele is optimistic (and adamant) that the world will learn from what the pandemic has robbed from many of us and will rise from this adversity; even turning adversity into opportunities, with determination to reconfigure our lives for a better tomorrow. This is what makes her most proud.

### *Top 3 takeaways from 2021 :*

"People say you learn more from your failures than your successes. If that's the case, then 2021 made me a genius! Well, not quite.... dazed for sure, but grateful that many of us are pulling through, still looking out for that silver lining and what is truly important and necessary to keep afloat and go on living."

- Michele admits that the whole start-stop lockdown experience over the last 18 months had been a bumpy ride, navigating one hurdle after another, but it provided a truly valuable lesson in embracing change – either adapting quickly or at times, even changing her business and personal outlook entirely. These unusual times forced her to look at how (and with whom) she chose to spend her time and resources. Michele captures this perfectly saying, "While we may not be able to stop change, we can determine how we respond to it. I choose to see it as establishing new norms in order to carry on living a full and meaningful life." One example was whilst walking around her neighbourhood to relieve cabin fever, Michele began to appreciate and observe her community and surroundings, realising that what seemed new to her eyes had been there all along, but she had literally missed them in her busy-ness!

- For sure, the pandemic gave Michele a crash course on the freedom of having time, and being forced to practise what retirement might be like - no



more rushing to and from work; and definitely no more rushing from one social engagement to the next. Zoom was her new best friend for both work and connecting with people dear to Michele. She admits that it took a global pandemic to realise how important and critical “allyship” is to keep going; and to keep sane!

- Michele is no stranger to offering proactive support to many charities over the years, but these pandemic fraught times have brought home to her the chasm created between the haves and the have nots. I will leave Michele to explain it in her own eloquent words, “A recent drive with a friend around the white-flagged neighbourhood\* to deliver meals to those in need, made me see for myself how great a struggle it is for those poor people who have to fight just to survive, despite living in a “rich” country like ours. My biggest worry is that this pandemic has made it so much harder for people to get the basic necessities that they need and deserve, like proper healthcare, education and financial security.”

She is determined to do all she can to give back and has pledged to reach out to as many allies as possible to work for the communal good, firmly believing that even small actions can have a compounding multiplier effect.

*\*The #WhiteFlag or #BenderaPutih movement, calls on those in need of assistance such as food and essentials, to raise a white flag outside their homes to signal to others in order to receive help.*

### **Vision for success in 2022**

The last year is one for the history books and enforced time for reflection is a positive outcome. Michele is determined that 2022 will be her year of action! She clearly sees that the year ahead can be a better one for everyone if we pull together in the same direction and the biggest lesson from the recent tumult is that people need each other to survive.

“I have faith that this crisis will serve as a wake-up call for all Malaysians to rediscover once again the true spirit of being Malaysian: that we are and remain as one nation; that

irrespective of our differences, we belong as a part of a larger circle. We won't make it as long as there is a split between “us” and “them”. More than anything else, this is truly what it takes for us to be successful as a country as a people and as individuals, not just in 2022 but beyond.”

*(Michele was interviewed for Issue 34, July - September 2015)*





## Datin Nona Azlan

**Datin Nona** is an expert educationalist, especially in early years learning, and is founder and Managing Director of 6 Montessori schools in Kuala Lumpur. These schools are a success story in themselves. Educating young minds is her love and passion which is why Datin Nona is also Chairman of Private Education Entrepreneur Association Malaysia (PEEAM) and is SEGI University's Industry Advisor. It is the business of education that drives Datin Nona. She speaks from a position of knowledge, having achieved a Diploma in Montessori Education – her compelling belief is that education should be totally child-centred and the adults are there to provide the planned environment with the appropriate learning materials.

This is why she is particularly proud that her teaching team have expressed their determination and eagerness to make up for the loss time experienced by the children in playing and learning, over the last 18 months. They want the children to be happy in school once again and to continue to develop holistically.

### Top 3 takeaways from 2021 :

- Clear communication and consulting with stakeholders in the education industry were paramount in handling the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that the safety of the children at school. Datin Nona and her staff consulted with others in education throughout in order to minimise the inevitable disruption to the children, parents and staff. In other words, the island mentality for everyone could no longer prevail.

- The pandemic changed the way of teaching and educating young minds. The COVID-19 crisis pushed teachers to become better equipped at using computers, mobile phones and other forms of technology in



order to deliver and improve virtual online home learning; especially using these multi-channel strategies to hold the attention of their young charges. The challenge now is to conduct both in-person classes as well as online home learning sessions with the aim of minimising learning time loss and at the same time continuing to make lessons engaging and interesting.

- The important lessons and skills learnt from the months of lockdown prepared Datin Nona's teachers to integrate the best practices taken from online home learning with those from the in-person learning practices for their preschool children. Children's education around the world was one of the casualties of the terrible pandemic and the challenge for Datin Nona and her preschool community was to ensure that learning continued despite the disruption of prolonged school closures and the uncertainty of opening dates.

### Vision for success in 2022

For Datin Nona, 2022 must see more collaboration and team working between educationists, parents and policy makers to build a stronger education system,

to put in place an environment and learning processes that will help children to go back to their previous routine of play, working with friends and adults; and with freedom of movement in consideration of their emotional well-being too. Datin Nona hopes that policy makers will address internet connectivity and device gap issues across the country so that everyone is prepared should anything like the COVID-19 crisis ever hit again. Datin Nona urges that policymakers must look into the socioemotional well-being of teachers so they do not experience burnout.

"COVID-19 has changed how we live, work and learn. As we work on combating the immediate effects of the pandemic, we must also look at the future of education and prepare our children for the kind of skills, knowledge and competencies they will require as future leaders. At the end of the day, while we help prepare our future generation to be resilient and adapt to challenges, we, as adults need to urgently take steps to make possible pre-schooling learning that is creative and developmental at the same time, preferably through in-person schooling."

*(Datin Nona was interviewed for Issue 36, January – March 2016)*



## Carol Lee



**Carol Lee**, former Mrs Universe, model and TV personality, today spends most of her time working hard to improve the Mont' Kiara community where she is a prominent local resident, and leading figure on the Mont' Kiara Consultative Council. She has been invaluable in keeping the Mont' Kiara community updated on the latest Government requirements and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to keep everyone safe. Carol had also arranged for free sanitising and Rapid RT-PCR testing for numerous local condominiums, which also included the local police station and fire station. She has been campaigning for Mont'

Kiara residents to be vaccinated at a faster rate and organised a community vaccination programme for over 1,000 people. Carol is an asset to the Mont' Kiara community and her liaison and relentless campaigning on its behalf is what she is most proud of.

### Top 3 takeaways from 2021 :

- Making the most out of the challenging situations presented over the last year and especially during the movement restrictions imposed to stop the curb of the COVID-19 virus.
- Carol made the best of the pandemic restrictions and appreciates the people around her, and is always grateful for what she has.
- Technology was Carol's lifesaver, as she realised there was so much that could still be achieved to make a difference from enforced staying at home.

### Vision for success in 2022

In the year ahead, Carol would like

to be able to maintain a balanced life through constant self-reflection in order to ensure that she is on the right track. Carol's hope is that people who have been helped during the pandemic would pay it forward by helping others too. This action will then inspire a ripple effect of kindness that continues to grow and create real impact for all those who experience it.

(Carol was interviewed for Issue 40, January – March 2017)



## Tyson Gee

Canadian chef, **Tyson Gee** has left us in no doubt that he is indeed one of Kuala Lumpur's best. Executive Chef at the ATAS Modern Malaysian Eatery, set within the luxurious RuMa Hotel, Tyson is passionate about exploring the different nuances of Malaysian cooking, using local ingredients sourced from around the country to produce the most creative fine dining dishes. Where else can you find Charred Calamari made with Keladi rice, blue tiger prawns with betel leaves or pandan crème caramel? This gastronomic craftsmanship has won him and ATAS recognition from **The Worlds 50 Best Restaurants: Discovery**. According to Tyson, "This isn't an award per se, but it's great



international recognition by one of the most prominent food and beverage leaders in the world, judged by experts in the industry. I am proud that the team's hard work and dedication to what we strive for has not gone unnoticed."

<https://www.theworlds50best.com/discovery/>

### Top 3 takeaways from 2021 :

- It's ok, not to be ok. Tyson thinks this is a common theme for most people especially within the hospitality industry. There are so many varying factors that are out of our control due to the ongoing pandemic.



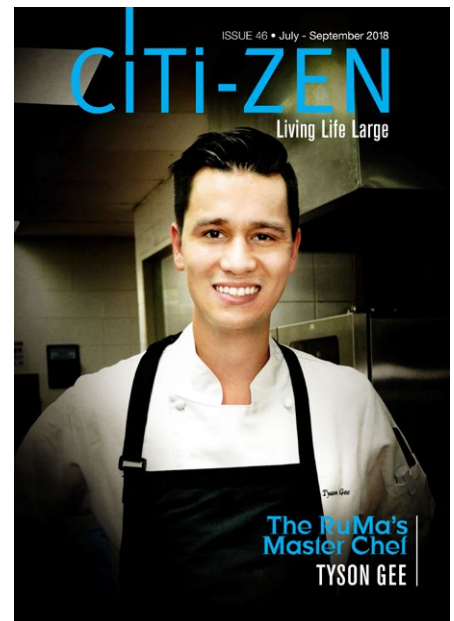
- Mental health is just as important as physical health. There is no shame in asking for help or advice from friends and family. Sometimes we can take what we have for granted.

- Lastly, enjoy life! Tyson reflects that we will never know what will happen. "Pop that bottle of champagne, grill that big steak, have an extra slice of cake. Do what makes you feel happy."

## Vision for success in 2022

Looking ahead to 2022, Tyson says that he wants to remain happy and healthy. He also wants to ensure the continued success of ATAS restaurant and The RuMa Hotel, to be one of the best in the nation.

(Tyson was interviewed for Issue 46, July - September 2018)



## Razif Hashim



**Razif Hashim** has come a long way since starting his career as an actor, having trained at the East 15 Acting School in London and GITIS in Moscow. Today, he is a familiar face in the Malaysian film and TV scene, especially well known for his wit as a TV host and emcee. Among his TV shows are Jeff's Place and Gol & Gincu where he plays leading man, Haikal. His popularity rose as host for Asia Food Channel's (AFC) Best in the World series which ran for five years, where the mission was to search for the best and uniquely Malaysian street food and dishes. Razif is a foodie and enjoys working around food of all ethnicity, the latest one being **Wayang Kitchen**, a programme that is all about entertainment, art and food; and where Razif is the creative director. He is especially proud of **Wayang Kitchen** and enjoys working with the project

team and partners whom he says are able to rise above any challenge they are faced with to make dreams happen.

"I am proud of our ability to quickly generate ideas and adapt to any situation, which is a very Malaysian thing."

Check out [wayangkitchen.com](http://wayangkitchen.com)

## Top 3 takeaways from 2021 :

- Razif encourages us to do things properly, cryptically saying, "If you take the backdoor to the top, you'll find yourself being ushered out quite unceremoniously."
- The Japanese got the greeting gesture right! The Japanese culture involving a bow or a nod to acknowledge each other, with no hand shaking, hugs or kissing is probably here to stay.
- The world is changing and Razif is clear it's never going to be the same as before, and warns us not to be too quick to get comfortable and authoritative with the term 'The New Normal' because mankind is, in fact, still adjusting and figuring out what that means.

## Vision for success in 2022

Coming from business industries that rely heavily on the ability to host live events, it is not surprising that Razif's projects and indeed the entertainment industry worldwide were hit hard. He predicts it will take a couple of years to get back to normal or in Razif's words, "to find its groove."

"We have to be modest and honest with ourselves when dreaming big. Therefore, my goal for 2022 is to increase business by 30% - 40% by creating an online version for my existing value offerings."

(Razif was interviewed for Issue 47, October - December 2018)



## Professor Joe Choo



Joe Choo is an award-winning international Feng Shui consultant, author, speaker and coach. The Shanghai Jiao Tong University awarded Joe her professorship in Environology and today, she is a consultant to various corporations in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Singapore to advice on the Feng Shui of their buildings and businesses.

Given Joe's passion for Feng Shui, it is hard to believe that she started off a sceptic, but is today convinced of the wisdom this ancient practice can provide and is always amazed by the continued relevance of this ninth century tradition in our lives. Joe says that Feng Shui's long and honoured tradition has been used in architecture for thousands of years in China. This

ancient practice of arranging our environment to welcome good energy to our spaces for health, harmony and well-being remains influential and relevant today. Joe takes pride in being able to give people hope, especially at these challenging times.

"I am able to give them that hope to move on in life, which money can't buy but positive words and vibes are able to move the hope."

### Top 3 takeaways from 2021 :

- Being truly thankful for family and friends, and not taking their collective good health for granted, is one thing Joe is grateful for. The support offered to each other over the trying period of the pandemic was also much appreciated.
- Digital technology has been a godsend for Joe during lockdown and travel restrictions, because it enabled her to keep in touch with family and friends from her home in Perth, Australia. She says, "I learned to listen to others with my heart, spoke with my heart and saw with my heart even though we were far away from each other; I understand myself better too through listening to others."
- Learning (or being forced) to do without a lot of material things in daily life nor needing a big space during the past 18 months has taught Joe that she can survive perfectly well and could even be persuaded to be a minimalist!

### Vision for success in 2022

Joe is determined to craft a better future for the younger generation, helping them explore their inner strengths and talents through her expertise in Feng Shui readings based from their date of birth; and she also wants to work with institutions in Malaysia and beyond, to provide learning platforms on how to enjoy, and to make the most of their environments.

(Joe was interviewed for Issue 49, April – June 2019)





## David Chin



Award-winning musician and conductor, **David Chin** is the founder and Artistic Director of Bachfest Malaysia, and conductor of the Malaysia Bach Festival Singers and Orchestra. As you can probably gather, David is very passionate about the music of seventeenth century German composer, Johann Sebastian Bach - so much so that David started Bachfest Malaysia in 2015 to promote the music of Bach in Malaysia and beyond. He recently produced **Encountering Bach**, a comprehensive documentary on the life and music of the great maestro and David was also appointed to translate the latest biography on Bach by renowned Bach scholar, Michael Maul from German into Chinese. He is particularly proud that his Christian faith has pulled him through the recent trying times of the pandemic, just as his favourite composer, Bach did when he faced the many challenges during his lifetime.

### Top 3 takeaways from 2021 :

- David says that our attitude, more than anything, defines who we are-this includes how we

react to the people and situations around us, especially at these unpredictable times. He advises that we should always observe our own words and actions (and reactions!).

- To be alone does not necessarily mean being lonely. We tend to seek happiness and fulfilment in others, and rely on their understanding and affirmation of us, but we will never truly be content until we are willing to claim the ownership of these things. Happiness comes from within, fulfilment comes from the progress we make on our own, and the only affirmation we need is that from the understanding of ourselves. We might not have the choice to be alone or not, but we can definitely choose not to feel lonely.

- Let go the fear of the unknown, as there is nothing much in the world which we can have control over, including our own future. We should always be alert, but not to worry over things which are yet to happen and let those thoughts dominate our current lives. Cherish and appreciate life the way it is now.

### Vision for success in 2022

David made so many plans prior to the pandemic, such as preparing for a grand concert tour with the Malaysia Bach Festival Singers and Orchestra to three different cities in Central Germany and throughout Malaysia, organizing the first ever international Bach festival in South East Asia, and many other conducting engagements. Of course, the pause button had to be pressed on all these projects.

This won't stop David from continuing to create opportunities as he has done in past years. Book of Changes-among the oldest of the Chinese classics- "If one could rejoice in and act according to any circumstances without being carried away, and would know and accept his fate; hence he has no anxieties." David is determined to take this wisdom with him into the year ahead.

(David was interviewed for Issue 51, October – December 2019)



## Lini Kazim

**Lini Kazim** is a sporting powerhouse!

She is a triathlete who has led her country as National Coach for Triathlon Malaysia at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Australia, at the Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires, Argentina in the same year; and Team Manager for the South East Asian Games, 2019 held in Manila, Philippines. She is currently a member of the National Sports Council, Malaysia and a World Triathlon Mentor. Lini became an elite sportswoman late in life after spending over 10 years as a procurement specialist for multi-national companies like Shell, SNC Lavalin and Bombardier.

Lini does not hesitate to state that her daughter is the one thing that makes her most proud because at the tender age of 19, she completed her UK law degree with flying colours and would not let the small matter of



the pandemic put her off pursuing her Bar qualifications at Middle Temple Inn, London. Academia aside, Lini is especially proud of her daughter's strong family values and made time to spend with her parents during her gap year in 2020/21.

### Top 3 takeaways from 2021 :

- The last year has been a grim one with the COVID-19 virus and the many sad deaths that followed, which monopolised the headlines on a daily basis. The fragility of life made Lini appreciative of her own and she has resolved to live life to the maximum.
- Lini admits that limited physical social interaction, not being to shake hands or give even loved ones a hug has left a hole in her soul and she says, "the only way I know to fill it up, is by making every effort to be kind to everyone, even if it is just with a hello."

- The most fundamental lesson for Lini over the last year is that regardless of the curve balls life throws, as long as we are willing to evolve, we can overcome any challenge. According to Lini, the pandemic has definitely exposed human nature as being both fragile and resilient at the same time.

### Vision for success in 2022

2021 will pass with Japan organising the successful Olympics Games, against all the odds. Lini is absolutely confident that all, particularly triathlon races will be back on the agenda in 2022. Her professional vision for 2022 is to win a medal for Malaysia in one of the Major Games. We wish her every success with this goal!

(Lini was interviewed for Issue 55, January – March 2021)





# Home Ownership Campaign 2020-2021

The Malaysian government's Home Ownership Campaign (HOC) 2020-2021 is an initiative started in 2020 to increase home ownership among Malaysians and to help curb the problem of property overhang (i.e. residential properties that have received their Certificate of Completion and Compliance but have remained unsold for 9 months or more). The initiative applies only to residential properties sold between 1st June 2020 to 31st December 2021; and only two residential properties in the primary market (new or completed), purchased directly from Developers with a valid Advertising Permit and Developer License (APDL).

The HOC has been well received which is why the Government has extended the initiative to December 2021. This extension offers buyers more time to consider purchasing a property. Homebuyers taking advantage of the Stamp Duty exemptions and savings will help boost the property market during these challenging times and also help to bring down the property overhang stock, encouraging much needed sales of unsold properties nationwide.



## *Dwi @ Rimbun Kasia*

Dwi @ Rimbun Kasia is a joint-venture initiative with Japan's Hankyu Hanshin Properties Corp, and is a green-living concept development comprising 382 units (53% of which are dual-key homes) aimed at the mid-market segment. Dwi @ Rimbun Kasia is strategically located, surrounded by ample and ready amenities such as shopping malls, educational and healthcare institutions. The easy access to Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and several highways also makes the Dwi @ Rimbun Kasia development an attractive place to live and invest in.

Dwi @ Rimbun Kasia is registered under the Home Ownership Campaign 2020-2021 and offers potential homebuyers many benefits and attractive packages including:

- Up to 10% discount
- Stamp duty waiver on Memorandum of Transfer (MOT)
- Stamp duty waiver on buyers' Loan Agreement

(note: Stamp duty exemption is applicable to properties selling within the range of RM300,001 to RM2.5 million)

Since registering with the HOC, the sales team has received positive responses and been able to close sales which is encouraging.

# | The RuMa Hotel Promotions

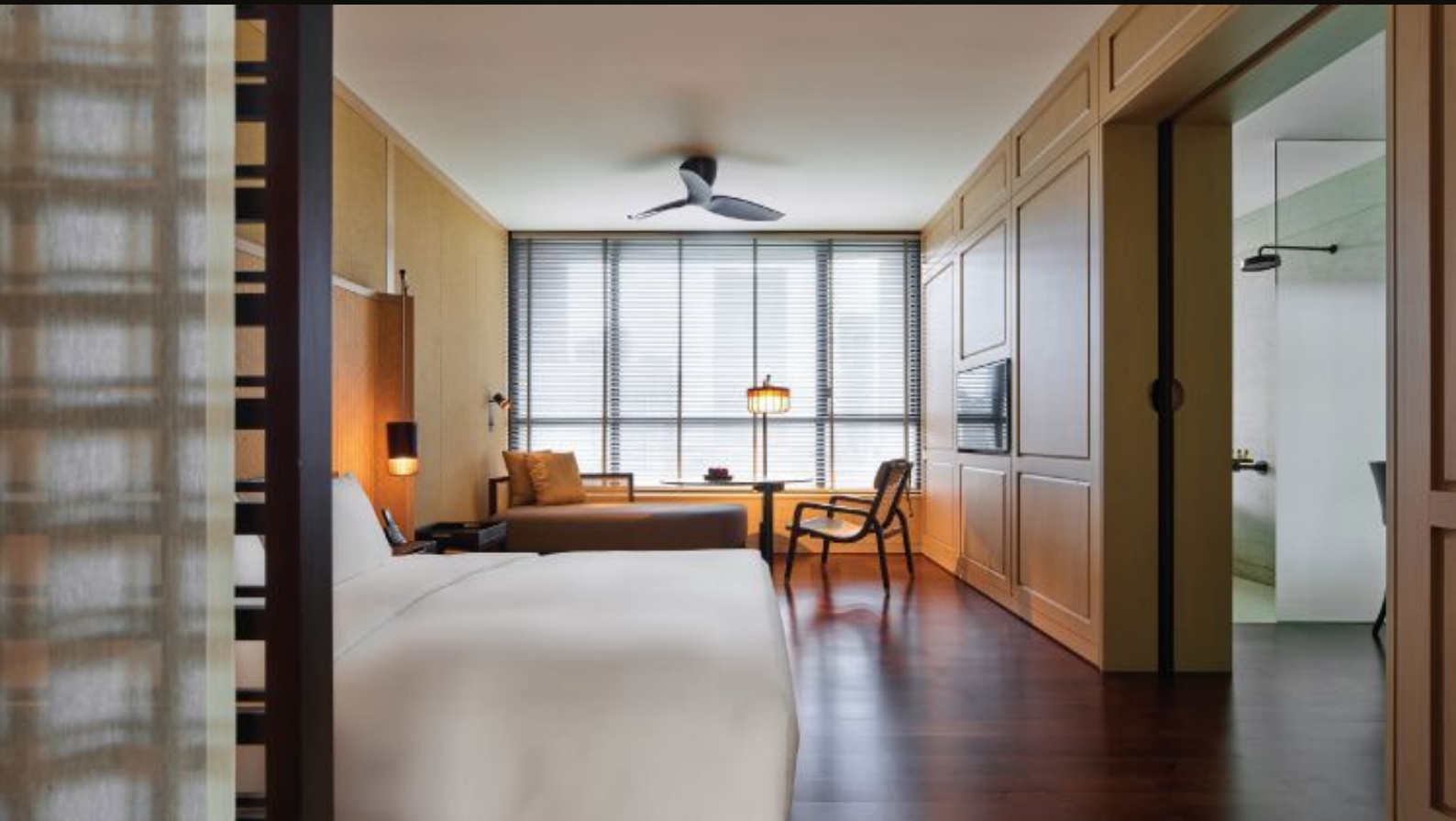


## *Afternoon Tea*

Afternoon Tea is given a quintessentially local twist with an array of delicate savoury and sweet treats infused with local ingredients and flavour profiles.

**Saturdays and Sundays: 14:30 – 17:30**





### *Urban Escape in Kuala Lumpur*

Experience handcrafted luxury complete with additional curated inclusions for the ultimate escape in the heart of Kuala Lumpur.

#### **Limited Time Offer:**

Book by October 31, 2021, to enjoy the following additional inclusions:  
 Early check-in at 11:00 and late check-out at 18:00  
 Complimentary Afternoon Tea for 2 persons

All Urban Escape in Kuala Lumpur bookings will include:

- Breakfast for 2 at ATAS or any time in your guest room
- MYR200 F&B credit per night
- Complimentary daily evening cocktails and canapes at SANTAI for 2 persons
- Complimentary one extra bed for children (applicable for selected room categories only, maximum 1 child under the age of 12 years old per room)
- Unlimited dining (all meals) for 1 child below 12 years per room (maximum of 1 child per room)
- Complimentary pressing of 3 pieces of laundry per day (minimum 2-hour turnaround time)
- Complimentary fully stocked minibar with daily replenishment
- Best in class Wi-Fi throughout the hotel
- Complimentary parking (1 car per room)
- Complimentary local calls

Enjoy flexible cancellation of up to 24-hours prior to arrival. Terms and conditions apply.



### *Happy Hour at SANTAI*

Find your spot and soak up the city's magnificent skyline with exclusive drink offers at SANTAI.

Daily from 17:00 – 20:00

50% off selected cocktails, premium spirits and wines by the glass

All Day

5 Glasses of Carlsberg for MYR55

5 Glasses of Kronenbourg 1664 Blanc for MYR65

Carlsberg Draught by the glass at MYR12

Kronenbourg 1664 Blanc Draught by the glass at MYR15



# Hubba Mont Kiara - Dishes Up The Best of Comfort Food

Food, Family & Friends...this is Hubba Mont Kiara's mantra that is the heart in all we do. An ever-cosy ambience that's perfect for friends and family to relax whilst catching up over good food and drinks. You will feel like you're at a home away from home as you are welcomed by name.



Feeling hungry? We've got fabulous news for you! Our menu has been refreshed and there is a myriad of new dishes to try. The comforting Chicken Lasagna is packed with creamy bechamel and bolognaise sauces and tons of cheese.

What about the umami filled Portuguese Seafood Rice? Filled with gobs of seafood, this is sooo satisfyingly rich. In the mood for a burger? Laden with chicken, cheese, onion, gherkin, jalapeno peppers, Romaine lettuce, arugula, BBQ & mayo.....we dare you to wrap your mouth around the behemoth Crispy Chicken Burger. Craving a simple fried rice? Taste the wok hei of our Beef Fried Rice, it's good to the last grain of rice! Feel like fish? The perfectly cooked Pan Fried Barramundi hits the right spot when served with mash, sautéed bak choy, tomato salsa and a delish honey mustard sauce. Don't forget that we also dish up a delicious variety of 15inch pizzas.

Complement your meal with a great range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks from our bar.....pssstttt.... by the way, our Mojitos are legendary! We are now open for dine in, and through November 30th 2021, flash this for a 10% discount off on our ala carte food menu. Deliveries are also available within a 5km radius. The magic number to buzz is 012 205 0442 for reservations or takeaways.





# Thank You!





# Thank You!

