



BY ALYSSA J. OON

WHEN it comes to interior designing, a bigger space is naturally more in demand as many believe that a bigger “canvas” allows room for more creativity. But bigger living quarters are not only expensive these days, but limited in quantity as many developers are, quite literally, looking high and low for answers to providing enough housing for a growing nation, yet at a reasonable profit.

This is where apartments and studios come in. Despite their usually smaller size compared to condominiums and duplex apartments (as well as whatever fancy names given high-rise living spaces these days), this type of housing units are on a steady rise to becoming the number one choice for homeowners of the 21st century. With living spaces that can top at 300 to 450 sq ft, they are just right for working adults and small families who are on-the-go, in and out of their homes going about their busy lifestyles.

While some see this limited space and small confines equivalent to depressing and cramped sardine-box living, the reason their apartments are left scarcely decorated or as some say barren – with only the bare necessities; living small should not come with an excuse for bare interiors and snow white walls. Below are tips on how to go about decorating big in small spaces.

PREPARE YOURSELF

The first step before decorating your new petite-sized apartment is to forgo all previous notions of how to decorate a home. Small spaces call for a whole different ball game



PHOTO: HOME-DESIGN.COM

Big things *for* small spaces

> A home is what you make of it, no matter big or small

as most interior design principles are catered to bigger homes. Having said that, one should be unafraid of implementing groundbreaking ideas for small spaces.

SET UP ZONES

A home should be able to accommodate various activities. Identify which activities are important and allocate zone sizes accordingly. Most apartments would have this sorted out with rooms as a form of setting boundaries, but open-concept apartments (otherwise known as studio apartments) leave the lines to be drawn by its owner. Use a bookshelf, large chest of drawers or sofa as a “partition” or “wall” that marks the zones between a bedroom and the living area for example.

DON'T SHRINK THE FURNITURE

Just because your home has a small space does not mean the furniture should follow in size. It is better to have one large anchor furniture piece than all tiny pieces to make up for it.

Too many small pieces of furniture will result in a home looking cluttered or messy. In a piece by MyDomaine, designer Trip Haenisch said: “Big furniture could work if you use fewer pieces. Smaller furniture tends to be uncomfortable and I am reluctant to sacrifice comfort.” Go for pieces that are sleek, narrow and slender if you’re worried about them looking too chunky or taking too much space.

PURPOSEFUL PIECES

Furniture pieces that are carried through that front door should have more than one duty to carry out. Save on space by using furniture that has the additional perk of being a hidden storage space. The most common pieces would be beds and sofas, where they are elevated so that boxes can be slotted underneath and a skirt is placed to cover them up while sporting a chic look. Colourful or wicker baskets are great additions to a country-themed home as a decoration that works as hidden storage. Instead of armchairs, purchase ottomans to serve as seating for guests or as a coffee table when you are home alone. For those not much of a TV junkie, skip out on purchasing one and go for a larger desktop monitor which can be used for both work and movie nights.

WANDERING EYES

Bring optical illusions into play by drawing guests’ eyes upwards towards the ceiling. This makes the room “feel” bigger. The most popular trick in the book is to hang ceiling-to-floor curtains by the



PHOTO: APARTMENTTHERAPY.COM

window, but there are also a host of other options to try. For instance, make use of bare walls and curate a gallery of artworks or get tall furniture pieces such as an armoire (classic cabinets) in accent colours so that they stand out in the room. MyDomaine writer Julia Millay Walsh advises to add unique vases or artworks on top of a bookcase or mantel. On the other hand, one could also go with low-slung sofas or beds. When seated down on low-slung furniture, the ceiling appears to be much further away thus provides more white space on the walls for a less cramped feeling.

SHINING BRIGHT

Probably the most important of any home is the lighting. Natural light for starters is important in maintaining the airiness of a room. Avoid restricting the natural light sources such as windows with thick, heavy curtains. When bringing in



PHOTO: HOME-DESIGN.COM

artificial lighting, do not conform to traditional notions of lighting fixtures. In a bedroom, for example, night lamps are traditionally placed on the bedside table. In a small home, the space taken up by the bedside lamp can be used for other more important uses so opt for a slim standing lamp or a hanging sconce instead. When all else fails, place mirrors opposite windows and doors to reflect any natural light that streams in while functioning as a decorative piece.

A PART OF YOU

Lastly, never let a home be dressed as someplace you would not live in. Always throw in personal touches that represent who you are. Be it bold accent walls made of bright colours or striking wallpaper, even mini succulents in geometric pots or a ceiling-to-floor bookshelf – it can work even in a limited space. According to interior designer Christine Gachot: “Whatever happens to be your personal style, make sure you scale it to the space. Not simply in plan, but in every dimension. Whether you love Louis XVI or mid-century modern, it’s critical that you make sure it all physically fits.” So small living spaces do not warrant only petite-sized decorations, furniture and fittings. There are a lot of big things one can do to make small spaces attractive. One thing’s for sure, home will be a lot cosier.



PHOTO: REDERTAINMENT.BLOGSPOT.MY



PHOTO: HOME-DESIGNING.COM



PHOTO: IEMO.JP.COM

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SINCE mid year, Malaysians along with many other cities around the globe have been busy playing Pokemon Go. Some three months on and one can't help but notice the many new-found hotspots, from parks to malls, cemeteries, places of worship, as well as housing estates. We've heard of parents having to drive their kids around as families look high and low for specific Pokemon species in the aim of capturing and evolving all 151 Pokemon. While the number of hotspots i.e. "Pokestops and gyms" have flourished, it was interesting to find out how Pokemon Go has affected the property industry. This article from Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) highlights the game's impact in Japan.

POKEMON GO IN JAPAN

The popularity of Pokemon Go has plateaued somewhat after the mobile game's shattering launch in July in Asia Pacific. Still, thousands stampeded through the streets in Taiwan in search of "Snorlax". As this augmented reality (AR) game with animated monsters led many to venture afar in the real world, does this footfall bring any value to real estate?

According to Article 86 of the Civil Code in Japan, Pokemon's birthplace and Asia's biggest real estate market by sales volume, real estate refers specifically to "the land and the fixture" of the area under scrutiny, indicating that it is up to the landlord, in the context of profitability, to appropriately "dress" a property to attract as many people as possible, according to JLL head of research in Japan

Virtual impacts reality

> Does Pokemon Go add value to real estate assets?



PHOTO: NAVITIMEJAPAN.COM

Takeshi Akagi.

By collaborating with Google Maps, Niantic's use of AR has drawn attention to its utilisation of GPS and locational services technology as a key driver of the game's real-time features. Niantic has a major stake in Pokemon Go. Specifically, the technology is used for "Pokestops" and "Gyms" that appear in the app's internal map, which are essential for users to train their Pokemon, as well as progressing through various levels by beating Gym leaders.

"The details of the gameplay

relates to real estate due to the nature of the real estate industry's valuation and business models," says Akagi. Because the tangible side of real estate is physically rooted in the land, any sort of additional value attached (i.e. proximity to train stations, aesthetics of the building, adequate utilities, etc) is inherently part of its overall property valuation, he explains.

THE IMPACT ON LAND VALUES

"While it remains far-fetched to

consider that placing Pokestops and Gyms will add any asset value, the increased footfall and traffic allow property owners and developers a chance to cash in," says Akagi. Not only will it further attract people to these checkpoints, the popularity of the game could influence land values by making them hot-spot landmarks for gamers. Business establishments surrounding these destinations will also become exposed to the increased traffic of gamers to reap its potential benefits, he adds.

HINTS AND HAUNTS TO CHECK OUT

- Places to catch 'em all, along with Poke Stops, Poke Gyms, Poke Balls and more.
- 1) KLCC Park - map area
 - 2) Taragon Puteri YKS mini water fountain
 - 3) Megan Avenue 2
 - 4) Horizontal pillars fountain, Ambank Jalan Ampang
 - 5) Ambank golden horse
 - 6) Menara Ambank
 - 7) The Waves sculpture, Jalan Ampang
 - 8) Wisma Selangor Dredging
 - 9) Rocky fountain of koi, Menara BSN
 - 10) Suria KLCC - F1 car, Modest David, Black horse lamp head
 - 11) KLCC Twin Towers
 - 12) Lake Symphony and KLCC Park entrance
 - 13) Mandarin Oriental - Mosaic cafe water feature

[Information retrieved from Property Guru online article. Do note that it is an offence to cross private property. People are not allowed to roam the KLCC Park after midnight.]

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New Launch
Double Storey Terrace Houses
Built-up area: from 2,225 sq.ft Price: from RM373,000

20'x75'/80'

Phase 7.3(1) artist impression

Nature in the Midst of living

Phase 7.3(2) artist impression

Double Storey Terrace Houses
Standard lot size: **24'x80'** Price: from RM480,000
Built-up area: from 2,625 sq.ft

Phase 6.1A(1) artist impression

Double Storey Semi-Detached
Standard lot size: from **40'x90'** Price: from RM798,000
Built-up area: from 3,375 sq.ft

Special Feature

- 1,254 acres of integrated township development
- Own auxiliary police force
- A green leafy pleasant suburb with Ipoh City's charm
- Located approximately 4km from Simpang Pulai interchange
- Freehold virgin land
- 2 recreational lake parks (32 acres Eco Park 1 and 24 acres Eco Park 2)
- Security features
- Practical and functional design with renovation free concept

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Weekday (10am-6pm) • Weekend / Public Holiday (10am-7.30pm)



Condo conundrums

PART 4

> Strata owners rights and responsibilities

LAST month we ran a series of articles on issues and problems faced by owners and residents of strata-titled residences. We covered the dilemmas of those living in apartments, condominiums, serviced apartments, studios, duplex units and such. Having received many queries and much feedback, we feature today an informative article by Chur Associates founder and managing director Chris Tan (via an iProperty.com online piece) highlighting strata owner's rights and responsibilities.

BURGEONING OF STRATA

Strata living is fast becoming a way of life in Malaysia. Currently, about 30% of the country's population is reported to be residing in strata-titled buildings.

The term "strata" was legally introduced in 1985 in response to the growing number of multi-storey structures as a result of urbanisation in major cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Johor Baru.

Strata-titled buildings were put



PHOTO: REALESTATE2BUY.BLOGSPOT.MY

under the spotlight when the Strata Management Act 2013 (SMA 2013) was implemented in June 2015. It replaced the Building and Common Property (Maintenance and Management) Act 2007 (BCPA 2007). The new enactment stood to correct the limitations of its predecessors, providing clearer and more stringent provisions on the

management of stratified-titled buildings in Malaysia, covering residential, commercial and mixed-use development.

STRATA IN BRIEF

Many owners of strata properties however, are still unaware of the meaning of strata and the rights the SMA 2013 provides them with.

Dispelling the common misconception that strata properties refer only to high-rise units, Tan clears the air, informing that strata properties are not limited to condominiums and apartments. "Gated and guarded landed developments are in fact, also known as 'horizontal strata' and fall under this category as well."

As Tan once mentioned during a Malaysian Property Expo (Mapex) fair where he delivered a talk and made an analogy between strata owners and shareholders of a public listed company. He said that both were no different.

"This is because the value of their residence (strata property) is dependent on its upkeep and condition. Similar to how a well-run company will see climbing share

prices, a well maintained and properly managed residence will see appreciation in value," he said. And how the maintenance is supported is by the service charge (SC) and sinking fund (SF) collected from residents.

STRATA IN THE SPOTLIGHT

SC is explained as the monthly payment owners of strata properties need to provide towards maintaining common facilities and common property in the development such as swimming pools, elevators, security services, etc. The SF has nothing to do with one's property sinking, instead, it covers future capital expenses,

which are not as frequent, such as the painting of the facade and refurbishment or replacement of fixtures. These funds must be sufficient to cover all the development's expenses and are usually collected in advance. A charge of 10% of the service charge is customarily applied.

However, in Malaysia, strata residents have yet to adopt the "community living" concept as Tan shares that many shirk from their duties in settling their SC on time. He even provided statistics informing that only 50% of strata residents in Malaysia pay SC on time and pointed out that there are some property owners who, at times, cannot afford to pay their SC, which causes the strata management to fail to perform the necessary repairs and other facelifts due to lack of funds.

With the SMA 2013 enforced, Tan says that the Joint Management Bodies (JMB) and the other group of strata owners can rejoice. "Errant strata owners can no longer get away scot-free as the SMA 2013 saw to the establishment of the Strata Management Tribunal (SMT), which states that any strata owner who fails to pay their SC can be brought before the SMT for an order to pay up."

As the SMA 2013 presents a clear outline of the responsibilities and limits of authority among developers, local governments and residents, Tan feels that strata owners should be made aware of their rights and responsibilities, now more than ever.

"As developers will not be managing the strata property forever, the onus lies with the owners who will need to take full responsibility for the entire building, eventually."

With the responsibility in the hands of the owners, follow our article next week where Tan shares the 10 basic rights and obligations of a strata-titled property owner.



PHOTO: METROHOMES.COM.MY

Pantai Sentral Park phase two opens for booking

THE 10 to 15-year project by IJM Land called Pantai Sentral Park is already taking shape. Known as "Kuala Lumpur's One and Only Urban Forest City", the landmark development nestled upon 58 acres consists of seven residential and six commercial phases. The second residential phase within this township called Secoya Residences offers two distinct interior design concepts of generously-sized units that come with breathtaking views.

FOR CLASSY CHIC LIFESTYLES

Secoya Residences spans across 3.47

acres and comprises 243 residential condominiums of between two and four-plus-one bedrooms. These are strategically built within a 41-storey tower offering wide frontage living spaces.

While Type A units exude a "young and energetic" concept in its two-bedroom design that runs across 1,050 sq ft – its interiors of sporty chic emanate an avant-garde flair, ideal for the budding professional or newly married couple. Home buyers with larger families will be drawn towards the 1,670 sq ft four-plus-one bedroom Type C units. Interior design here

emits a vintage feel treated with modern textures and expressions. Cosy and compact, the retro-modern theme carried right through the home offers warmth and a family atmosphere, fitting families with teen or young-adult children.

Starting at RM850,000 each unit, Secoya Residences will be ready by early 2019. Drop by IJM Land's Centre of Excellence or ICE Gallery at Pantai Sentral Park for a multi-sensorial feel or more information.



Pantai Sentral Park sales and marketing manager Grace Foo standing next to a scaled-down model of Secoya Residences.

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Condo conundrums

> Strata owners' rights and responsibilities PART 2

HAVING run a series of articles on the plight of condo dwellers, we end our series with advice from Chris Tan of Chur Associates.

Strata owners should be aware of their rights and responsibilities now more than ever, Tan stresses. "Developers will not be managing the strata property forever, hence, the owners will have to take full responsibility for the entire building eventually," he reasons.

Furthermore, with the new Strata Management Act 2013 (SMA 2013) redefining the basis of strata living and warranting self-management and self-sufficiency, Tan feels strata owners should be aware of their basic rights and obligations as owners of this property type.

10 BASIC RIGHTS OF STRATA OWNERS

1) Provide mandate direction to the management

A Joint Management Body (JMB) is tasked to manage and maintain the common property in strata developments from the time of delivery of vacant possession by the developer to the purchasers until the Management Corporation (MC) is formed. The MC can only be established after strata titles have been issued and at least, a quarter of the aggregate share units have been transferred to the owners. This gap in time of forming the MC is also meant to be a grace period for the owners to learn the trade of managing their own property while holding the hand of the developer.

As a strata owner, you effectively own a part of the "company", hence, you have a say in its matters. Strata owners should attend their Annual General Meeting (AGM) as the condominium (strata property) is their investment, and they should play an active role in appointing the board of members and the representatives for condo owners. As an owner, you will have access to the financial accounts and if you are unhappy over a matter, operating manner or other issues, you are able to do something about it collectively. Another important reason to attend the AGM is the meeting will also see the tabling of the maintenance budget for the following year.

Owners will want to ensure that a good budget is planned - one which will generate sufficient income collection of service charge (SC) in order to accommodate the



PHOTO: PENANGPROPERTYTALK.COM

required maintenance works in the year.

2) Right to request for an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

To provide timely intervention in any issues, the chairman of the committee council shall convene an EGM within six weeks of receiving requisition in writing from strata owners who are together entitled to at least a quarter or 25% of the aggregate share units.

There have been instances where owners are disgruntled due to biases such as the awarding of maintenance work contracts to family members/friends of the management and the misuse of funds.

If the management does not oblige or entertain the request for an EGM, owners can then seek help from the Commissioner of Building (COB) or the Strata Management Tribunal (SMT).

3) Right to request for inclusion in the agenda

Owners also have the right to voice their opinions and discuss any matter they find important, by requesting for an inclusion in the agenda of an EGM or AGM, provided they hand in a notice at the management body's registered office no less than seven days before the meeting.

4) Right to vote during AGM and EGM

In order to exercise this right, owners will have to settle all their outstanding service charges prior to the AGM or EGM. Those who fail to do so will not be allowed to vote for any resolution. Each parcel of land (unit) will be entitled to one vote, on a show of hands, and on a poll, the number of votes shall correspond with the number of share units or provisional share units attached to the parcel or provisional block.

A co-strata owner may vote by means of a jointly appointed proxy or by appointing any one of them. For example, a proxy who is representing his wife who owns a unit will be able to cast a vote on her behalf. One matter to take note, however, is the proxy is not allowed to be a committee member if he is not an owner.

5) Right to request for review of SC and SF

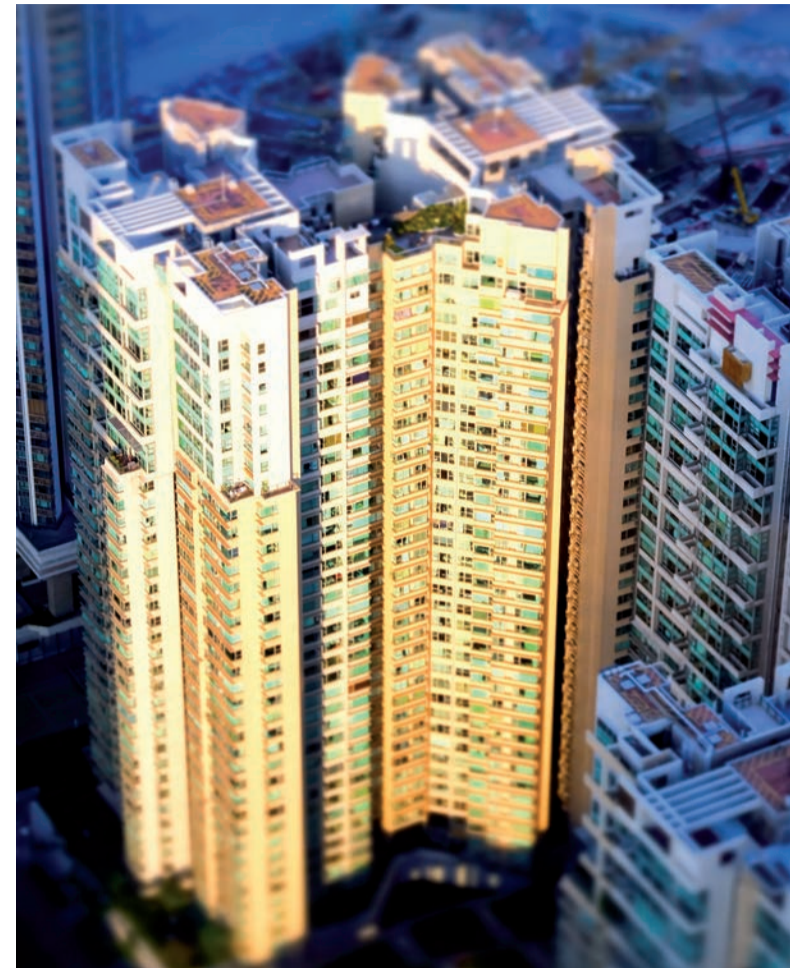
In the event owners are dissatisfied with the service charge or sinking fund (SF) being implemented by the management, where they do not agree to an increase in SC, they could apply for its review to the COB. The COB will then determine the right amount that should be charged or get a registered property manager to recommend an amount.

6) Statutory presumption

Should there be any inter-floor leakage like dampness, moisture or water permeation on the ceiling or any furnishing material attached to the ceiling, the owner of the upper floor shall be responsible in the absence of proof to the contrary. This means that the owner of the above unit will have to foot the bill for repair works.

7) Right to file a claim under the SMT

Every strata owner's rights are protected under the SMT, where any dispute related to strata management falls under the



jurisdiction of the SMT. Established under the Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Ministry, the SMT was formed to provide feasible solutions to disputes on the failure to perform a function, duty or power imposed by the SMA 2013.

With a pecuniary jurisdiction up to RM250,000, the SMT enables for the solving of disputes at minimum cost



as no legal representation is allowed (thus eliminating high legal costs) and it has cheaper filing fees compared with a court proceeding.

Strata owners will be glad to know that an award will be made without delay and where practical, within 60 days from the first day of a hearing.

Another plus point is there is no time frame in filing a dispute claim. Strata owners are eligible to claim for the recovery of charges

or for any defect at any given time.

8) Right to file a claim against common property defect account

Common property has a defect liability period of 24 months for residential property, similar to the one for your strata unit. Strata owners have the alternative to claim for any defect in their common property such as leakage or faulty elevators within the defect period.

Before the handing over of units, developers will have to submit 0.5% of the estimated construction cost or RM50,000, whichever is higher, to the COB. This amount is to be deposited into a statutory account as a provision for any possible defect in the development. Should the sum be insufficient to cover any expense, the developer must remit the remaining amount.

9) Right to set up a Subsidiary Management Corporation (SMC)

The MC may establish SMCs to represent the interests of a particular group of parcel proprietors who are entitled to the exclusive benefit of a limited

common property. These areas must be clearly defined and marked on a special plan, which must be submitted to the director of survey.

This is especially useful for mixed developments, where the owners of commercial units do not utilise certain common property. For instance, an office unit owner will not use the swimming pool facility. Hence, it would be feasible to assign separate sub-management corporations which will be in charge of the respective group, besides enabling the implementation of specific SC for residential, office and retail owners respectively. A sub-MC could also be created for the limited use of a common property. For instance, the allocation of a private rooftop garden for the use of penthouse owners only.

10) Right to dispute the legality of attachment of moveable property

The COB has the right to issue an attachment for strata owners who fail to pay their service charge on time.

A Warrant of Attachment (Form A in the third Schedule of the SMA 2013) will be issued, following which the COB will hire people to confiscate the defaulter's removable property (car, settee, television etc). If the attachment is done in error, however, owners can then apply to a magistrate's court for the release of their property within 14 days from the date of attachment.

With that, Tan concludes with this simple but "weighty" piece of advice for owners of strata property - Love thy neighbours!

"The community of strata residents must realise the importance of living in harmony and cooperation, besides taking charge to protect the very investment that they live in. After all, a "company" will function optimally only when all its owners participate," he says.

Follow our column next week for more news and articles on property and real estate.

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The Q4 outlook

> Local property landscape and what to expect

GENERALLY, things have been chugging along as usual one could say but look harder and you will notice that retailers, property developers included, have been coming up with all sorts of clever bargains and promotions to spur consumer spending. The economy is sluggish some say, and why not especially with many receiving the golden handshake sooner than expected and some being laid off.

According to a recent report from the Malaysian statistics department, Malaysia's Leading Index (LI), which monitors the country's economic performance in advance, showed a decrease. It also stated that our Coincident Index (CI), which measures current economic activity, also declined. Overall, Malaysia's Consumer Price Index (CPI) has risen by 1.5%. Prices of most things have shot up - the people are cautious, hence, the economic growth in Q4 is expected to trudge along at an even slower pace. With that, we explore how the upcoming sloth-like scene will affect the property and real estate market, if it hasn't already.

VIEWES AND COMMENTS

According to the grapevine on the property scene, interest will remain high, but there will be doubts when it comes to the actual buying. The property market in Kuala Lumpur is anticipated to be subdued. One website stated that although the numbers are holding up, there is not much action, transaction-wise. Apparently, buyers with intention to sell claim they have not much choice as prices in well-connected areas are not attractive, unless they sell and move out of KL.



Sunsuria City.

However, according to Knight Frank, Malaysia, the Malaysian market offers the best market value for global real estate investors. It records the highest yields and the least volatility across the markets in the Asia Pacific. The global real estate consultancy firm's Malaysian office managing director Sarkunan Subramaniam suggested that buyers and sellers look at the step up on the local transport infrastructure development which increases mobility and improves connectivity throughout Greater KL. While Sarkunan viewed this development as giving the city an edge, many expect the new MRT and LRT stations to transform area dynamics and more.

Malaysia Property Incorporated general manager Veena Loh, however, felt that local real estate

agents need to get familiar with cross-border property investment knowledge and embrace globalisation. In this light, we take a look at some developers who have actually taken it in their stride to develop projects and market their developments abroad.

FOREIGN INTEREST

Many developers are seen to be reaching out to foreign buyers and consumers of the higher-income bracket. An example is Sunsuria Berhad which teamed up with Taiwan-based Welcome Global Co Ltd. The partnership will see the rise of a Korean-themed integrated project being developed on an 8.48-acre plot in Sepang, Selangor. Called Sunsuria Provence Village in Sunsuria City, the project will offer serviced apartments, a wedding house with a themed garden, a Korean-inspired shopping mall and a boutique hotel. There is also I-Bhd, the developer of 8KiaPeng@KLCC which reports that a large percentage of its buyers are foreigners from China, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Similarly, another developer which has managed to attract foreign investors and high-end property buyers is the developer of The Ritz-Carlton Residences, located in Jalan Sultan Ismail. Its developer Wangsa Tegap Sdn Bhd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Berjaya Corporation Berhad, recently held a media sneak preview of its luxury suites that come in three design concepts under the globally renowned and award-winning Peter Silling & Associates label.

The soon-to-be launched residences have already received a 30% take-up by Taiwanese buyers. According to Wangsa Tegap director Datuk Francis Ng, the company hopes for a 50/50 take-up of foreign and local buyers. Structure-wise, the project is already completed. Minor interior touch ups and systems are being

addressed as this article is written.

In the southern regions of the country, it makes sense for Singaporeans to invest in property. An online website also reported that the mainland Chinese are huge investors of Malaysian property, followed by Indonesians and Indian nationals.

CONCLUSION

No doubt, times may require Malaysians to tighten their belts. However, for the foreigner whose local currency is strong, the cost of living in Malaysia is awfully cheap. However, overall, an online property research portal claimed that growth in the country's construction sector is set to moderate over the coming years, decelerating into 2017. But like all things that go up must come down and vice versa, the transport segment will bring hope and drive overall growth, while the non-residential segment will leverage on this growth.

The above is not the best piece of news yet still, property investors long in the industry will tell you the coming period makes good a time to

buy. What more with news reports claiming foreign investors have returned to Bursa.

While unaffordability remains an issue for majority of the locals, prices have somewhat moderated slowly but surely. People are also starting to look at property again and looking at it with more realistic expectation plus with a fine-toothed comb. Developers are said to have begun to put in more effort in listening to what the people want, adding value to what is on the table. The situation has also led people to become more acceptable to living further from the city for the sake of lower housing prices, or living in smaller built-up living spaces.

On the whole, while some developers tap into the foreign market to attract buyers, others delve into providing more affordable homes and some offer more attractive rebates and promotions. Overall, the market is still expected to be sluggish.

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LRT station.

SOME SOCIO-ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES THAT MAKE MALAYSIA ATTRACTIVE TO FOREIGN HOUSE PURCHASERS.

1. Relatively low living costs compared to other developed countries.
2. Tourist friendly environment that is welcoming to all nationalities.
3. English is widely used in communication in general.
4. Infrastructure, transportation and global connectivity is relatively good.
5. Peaceful and safe place to live in.
6. Free from natural disasters.
7. Healthcare and hospitals provide modern and up-to-date services.
8. Variety of food caters to global tastes.
9. Availability of international and private schools and higher education institutions.
10. Housing and property ownership schemes open to foreigners.

Precast construction project wins award

SETIA Precast Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary under S P Setia Berhad, recently received a special award under Industrialised Building System for the construction of its Seri Jati affordable apartments in Setia Alam. The award was presented at the Malaysia Construction Industry Excellence Award (MCIEA) 2016 organised by the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) at the Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur.

The award is presented to developers who deliver quality workmanship that scores high in

the area of industrialised building systems, innovative construction management with minimised construction waste, cleanliness and high safety levels, efficient usage of materials and labour, and completion within schedule.

At the ceremony to receive the award was S P Setia Berhad executive vice-president Kow Choong Ming, who accepted the accolade from the Works Ministry secretary-general Datuk Sri Zohari Akob. "We are greatly honoured to receive this award as MCIEA is the most credible and respected award in

the construction industry. For us to win in the IBS category for our affordable apartment project speaks volumes. It articulates our commitment towards excellence in delivering quality products, even in the affordable category," said Kow.

Affordable apartments in S P Setia's Setia Alam and Setia EcoHill developments are constructed using the precast construction system. Upon completion, the system is found to deliver lesser defects thus reduces rectification costs and inconveniences. The system also requires less labour as most of the structural components can be prefabricated off-site.



Team Setia along with Kow (holding the award) and its consultants gather for a group shot to celebrate its win at MCIEA 2016.