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## Island getaway

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YOU ARE looking for an 'over seas' holiday hideaway, desperate to get far from the madding crowd, what do you do? We'd be doing you and the local economy a favour by directing you to Rebak Marina Resort, on the 'still-idyllic' island of Rebak, off Langkawi.

Getting there is easy as AirAsia flies twice daily to Langkawi from the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah airport in Subang. Upon arrival, it is a short hop by boat for the transfer from the Langkawi airport to Rebak.

This holiday lets your cares melt away and leaves your worries behind in the office. Be prepared for all the corny jokes about television island holidays the moment you alight from your speedboat on to the welcoming bussom of this self-styled maritime holiday attraction. It's part of the fun!

Why should you want to spend good money to holiday in Rebak Marina Resort? It has to be the precious quietude one can't find anywhere within a Proton Wira full-tank of bustling Kuala Lumpur. Rebak Marina Resort is very much an idyllic resort at the moment perhaps because a huge portion of its proposed development, comprising corporate bungalows, hotels, trading outlets, training institutions, sailing school and boat repairs quay, has been put on hold because of the unfavourable economic situation. A re-telling of the recent corporate history of Rebak is in order here. Way before Langkawi attracted so much interest, some enterprising fellow bought Rebak with the view of turning it into a timeshare holiday resort. The development did not take off as planned, and ownership passed to the DRB-Hicom group.

This 'do-anything, do-everything' conglomerate then embarked on an ambitious plan to 'enhance' Langkawi's image. The result is Rebak Marina Resort, a project meant to crystallise Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's vision of Rebak as the catalyst which promotes marine tourism in Langkawi. 'Our goal is to turn Rebak into the Carribean of the East' says Zakariya Musa, Glenmarie Hotels and Resorts director of marketing. (Glenmarie Hotels and Resorts manages Rebak Marina Resort and its sister property, the Tasik Kenyir Golf Resort in Terengganu.

There are two classes of guests at Rebak - sailors (or 'yachties' in sailing parlance) and landlubbers. The yachties, as the name suggests, are those peripatetic souls who brave the seven seas sailing the globe for pleasure. The landlubbers are guests like you and me, those who are bound to get queasy even on the short boat transfer to the island.

One gets into the maritime holiday mood the moment one sets foot on the island. Rebak Marina Resort provides 128 sailboat berths (or 'pens' in nautical jargon) for yachties who break their seaborne odyssey for whatever reason. One of the largest yachts 'parked' at the marina belongs to a Dutch millionaire who wanted to spend the greater part of June and July supporting his team in this year's World Cup soccer tournament. As the month-long football carnival took place in the midst of his sailing trip to the South Seas, he conveniently lowered his sails on the island and flew home.

The home ports of the boats (read from the names painted on the stern) berthed at the marina, testify to the sailing community's attraction to Rebak Marina Resort. Fibreglass ketches from the Australian home ports of Freemantle and Cairns can be seen bobbing up and down next to American sloops from San Francisco and racy German catamarans from Bremerhaven. If

you feel particularly friendly, make the effort to strike up an acquaintance with these 'boat people'. It's a shame if both yachties and landlubbers exchange no more than the cursory 'Hi!' when bumping into each other at the quay side.

For the landlubber, what's in Rebak to pack your days and fill your nights? Not much if you don't want to, and that's the attraction of the place. For the period of July 15 to Oct 31, the resort is introducing the 'Kawan-Kawan' package. It is particularly suitable for close friends who have gone their separate ways - say, when pursuing their tertiary education - but who wish to renew old friendships in a quiet holiday setting. A three-day/two-night sojourn costs RM146 nett per person on a triple sharing basis. For the newly-married, there is the 'Naturally Romantic' three-day/two-night package which is on till March 31, 1999. You can just laze by the pool, slouch on an easy chair in the well-appointed verandah of your chalet-type accommodation, potter about the place, go fishing or swim in the sea. Getting to the beach requires a bit of a trek to another part of Rebak. This is because what beach there is fronting the chalets is tidal and carpeted with dead coral. The resort has plans to reclaim this portion to create a 'proper' beach for the convenience of guests. That trek notwithstanding, Rebak Marina Resort allows those in search of solitude to while away the hours in complete tranquility and peaceful bliss.

Retiring to one's room is a great pleasure too. The chalet interior was designed to give a kampung ambience but with modern furnishings and fittings. A good night's rest is guaranteed considering you'd be resting your weary head on a huge four poster bed. The bathrooms do not come with a bath but a shower which may rankle overseas visitors. Newer chalets being built by the resort will have both bath and shower facilities. These chalets, 48 in all, will be ready in October.

Since a huge portion of the island is still in its natural jungle setting, pesky mosquitoes come out to play in the early evening. The resort is quite prepared though. Placed strategically all over the place are a variety of mosquito-repelling devices. It may be disconcerting to the 'townie' but one gets used to the buzzing which thankfully, abates as the evening wears on. It helps if you paint yourself with liberal lashings of insect repellent.

Here, you can get to do some of the things you've always wanted to do in the big city but just did not get round to doing. Fancy a lesson in snooker? There are two full-sized tables which go for RM10 an hour for you to pot the black and place the colours till you get it right. Volleyball strike your fancy? Just call the front desk and announce you'd like at least 10 others to make up the numbers and the helpful gang from the resort's sports and recreation department will turn up. They are a rather lively bunch and eager to please as most of them are Sports Science students from Institut Teknologi Mara (ITM) doing their practical training.

But, should you harbour nautical ambitions, ask for sailing lessons. The resort has a number of topper sailing craft for this purpose, or if you are more adventurous, they'd tutor you on the intricacies of windsurfing. Curious about the state of undersea life in the Andaman sea? Hop on to one of the resort's charter boats and embark on a diving expedition which will take you right up to the maritime border with Thailand. It is the open sea here so its advisable that this adventure be undertaken only if you are a competent diver.