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Feature-Resort  
MARINA BAY RESORT: A PART OF HEAVEN ON EARTH

By: ROSLIWATY RAMLY

PANGKOR ISLAND: It's just like a scene out of the TV programme "The Lifestyle of the Rich and Famous".

The opulent tranquility, idyllic beauty and soothing environ -- all these should best describe Marina Bay Resort, a nine-estate enclave that blends luxury living in pristine, stylish and quiet elegance in one of the Pangkor group of islands.

The latest jewel in the YTL Corp Bhd stable, this RM50-million resort was recently officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

YTL Corp Bhd also owns Pangkor Laut Resort, the classic Ritz-Carlton Kuala Lumpur, The Vistana Kuala Lumpur, J.W. Marriot and The Eastern & Oriental Express Train (E&O) which carries passengers on one of the world's great journey between Singapore and Bangkok via Kuala Lumpur and Chedi Phuket.

"Our unique island resort has lured visitors for years, but we felt there was further opportunity to accomodate those seeking the ultimate in privacy and exclusivity," says Tan Sri Francis Yeoh Sock Ping, managing director of YTL Corp Berhad.

"High class society, top-notch and jet setters are our target market. These people make a lot of money but have very little time to spend. Marina Bay is a place for them to rejuvenate," says Francis.

"The resort is marketed on a minimum scale. It's by word of mouth and it stands on its own merit," he says, adding that though expensive it's worthwhile as it is one of the few resorts in the world set in a two-million-year-old virgin jungle environment.

Francis explains that it took three years to complete this estate which adhered to a sensitive approach to environment, where excavation was done manually.

In the construction process, great care was taken to preserve the environment where no trees were felled unless absolutely necessary and every tree was marked, recorded to maintain the area's pristine state.

"And today, eight estates specially designed to be family oriented, of 10-12 people, are available for tenancy. Come and experience the exotic charm of the resort's oasis of tranquil beauty, adorned with rich flora and fauna," Francis welcomes visitors.

Mark Yeoh Seok Kah, Pangkor Laut Resort's executive director asserts that Marina Bay Resort would epitomise the final link in Pangkor Laut's development.

"Having just returned from the World Travel Market in London where these estates had been launched, the response has been overwhelming and we feel quite confident that these estates would again propel Pangkor Laut and Malaysia into the forefront of holiday destinations of the world," he says.

Seeing is believing. Marina Bay Resort will transport the visitors back to the days when living was inextricably linked with nature but with a difference.

It incorporates all the comforts of modern living.

Located on a privately owned island, it's an enchanting paradise as you'll be dazzled by the composition of a sandy white beach, a bay of changing emerald hues and two encircling promontories that enabled it to take advantage of the sea, sand and sky views.

To optimise privacy, four estates are located by the beach and five are situated amongst the trees on the east and west promontories. The estates

comprise two, three or four bedrooms and living areas, outdoor baths, lounging and dining pavilions, freeform or infinity-edged pools and tropical gardens.

Its interior is Southeast Asian in design with indigenous materials and craftsmanship used wherever possible.

Visitors can witness exotic animal life such as macaque monkeys, yellow pied hornbills, monitor lizards and white belly fish eagles glide on rising thermal currents.

Another unique feature: two professional cooks who specialise in a wide range of home-cooked delicacies will prepare your meals, serve snacks and refreshments to your heart desires as well as addressing housekeeping requirements.

As for resort facilities and recreations, Marina Bay Resort visitors have the privilege of an unlimited access to Pangkor Laut Resort facilities and services, seven minutes away by complimentary transportation.

The 180-villa Pangkor Laut Resort received the prestigious 1997 Resort Hotel of the Year Award from the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) UK.

An extensive array of watersports awaits to challenge the visitors -- diving, water skiing, wind surfing, deepsea fishing, snorkeling or picnics at secluded spots.

Or, one could relax in the open air jacuzzi, swimming pools, spa or stay in shape at the fitness centre.

The health-conscious will definitely sweat it out at the fully-equipped gymnasium while the pampered ones will enjoy a relaxing massage by the resort's team of masseurs.

Landlubbers can play golf, squash and tennis.

If that's not lure enough, the stunning view of the turquoise green waters and sun-kissed beaches of Emerald Bay, listed among the world's best, will prove irresistible.

Or just laze under a palm tree, relax and absorb the soothing vibes of the surroundings along with the tropical breeze.

In short, a holiday at Marina Bay Resort which exudes unequalled tropical charm, leaves one basking in its pleasures.

After all, it's a place where the wonders of the nature harmonise with luxury.

And of course, the rates per night of a luxury villa which offers a view of a cool, shimmering sea and lush, well-maintained gardens, range from US\$1,500 (RM5,700) to US\$2,000 (RM7,600) depending on the estates.

If you have that kind of money to spend, give a tinkle to YTL Hotels and Properties, at 03-444-6500 or fax: 03-444-6800. -- Bernama

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