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More style, greater ambience at the Awana

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AWANA Porto Malai Langkawi has come a long way since playing host to the maritime component of the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition for the first time in 1997.

Located on the southwestern tip of the island, the resort hotel, which opened for business in October that year, exudes a Mediterranean ambience and features.

During its association with the event, the sea-fronting hotel had entertained royalty, foreign dignitaries, military and government brass with much grace and style.

The bay, which fronts the hotel, had also been filled with warships and shipping vessels flying foreign flags which had come to take part in the event.

This time around, the resort is set to offer a more elegant and comfortable setting by unveiling its new refurbished look.

Its general manager Shamsul Kamar Ahmad said the resort had undergone extensive renovation costing RM27 million to give it a new look for the event, which has been billed as the largest.

The work, which started from early this year, was completed in time for the opening of Lima on Sept 30 to be performed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"We have been with LIMA for the past four events and it is growing bigger and larger everytime. We need to grow with it too, hence our new look," he said.

The renovation saw the old convention block demolished and a new five-storey building built on the site.

The new block comprises a banquet hall which can accommodate 500 people, seven meeting rooms, a 1,000-square-metre exhibition hall and two new swimming pools plus adding 43 new rooms and suits, making the total number 210.

Another addition is the porte coche or a long porch lined on both sides with reflection pools filled with fish, lotuses and lilies.

Upon arrival, guests will be taken along the porch into the grand lobby which opens out to the boardwalk and the sea.

"Often, our guests were so mesmerised by the beautiful view of the sea, they would take a walk along the boardwalk rather than go into the room upon checking in."

The refurbishment also covers the RM4,800 grand presidential suite which include three bedrooms, a large living area, gym, sauna, jacuzzi with a private access to the resort's newest attraction: a light house.

He said Dr Mahathir was the one who mooted the idea for the seven-storey light-house with the two-storey observation deck, which accommodates 60 people.

"The new lighthouse has not only enhanced the ambience, it also allowed our guests to savour the panoramic view of Tanjung Malai and the bay area," he said.

He credits Dr Mahathir with the resort's daily ritual of fish feeding off the boardwalk at 6.30pm.

"It been a favourite ritual as our guests will take loaves of bread provided by our staff to feed the fish. The view is superb."

He said the resort's team of 30 chefs and cooks was prepared to serve local and international culinary dishes during Lima.

It is also running a catering service to the exhibitors and mega yacht owners berthed at the marina.

"So far, we have received orders to cater to two mega yachts owned by local tycoons."

He said the resort had also roped in help from its sister hotels, the Awana Genting Highlands Golf and Country Resort and Awana Kijal Golf and Beach Resort, to cope with the work at Lima," he said.

The resort is owned by Resorts World Bhd through Awana hotels and resorts.