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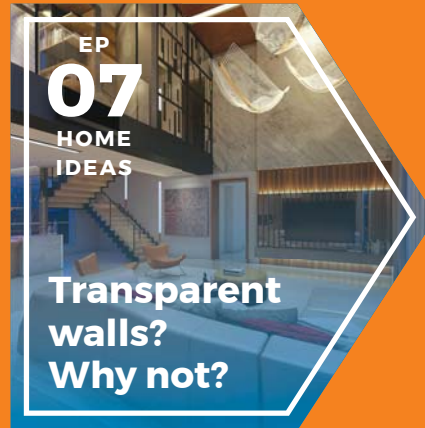
MRCB plans commercial hub in Bukit Rahman Putra

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INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS = HIGHER PROPERTY PRICES?

With demand for international schools rising in the country, do homes near them command a price premium? See Pages 4 and 5.



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States should offer land for affordable homes, says Zuraida

State governments should offer their lands for the development of affordable houses, said Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin in Parliament on Tuesday.

She explained that this should not affect the pricing of affordable housing, or the compliance cost.

"The state governments have the responsibility to ensure that the people will live comfortably. So [we] will come out with a policy where the state government should offer their lands, which are big enough and have enough infrastructure around them," she said.

Zuraida was replying to a question by Permatang Pauh MP Nurul Izzah Anwar.

Azman Mokhtar clocks out of Khazanah after 14-year stint

Tan Sri Azman Mokhtar clocked out of Khazanah Nasional Bhd for the very last time on Tuesday after 14 years of service as the managing director (MD) of the strategic investment fund.

CIMB Group Holdings Bhd chairman Datuk Seri Nazir Razak posted a picture of Azman being flanked by Khazanah staff, all of them holding their mobile phones to capture a picture of Azman before his final exit from the building.

"Final exit. TS Azman leaves Khazanah's office for the last time. Emotional scenes, reflecting how much staff adore and respect him. Great professional and wonderful person. Wishing him all the very

MRT3 to be revisited when country's finances improve

The government will revisit the Mass Rapid Transit Line 3 (MRT3) project if the country's financial situation improves, said Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng.

He reaffirmed that the MRT3 project has already been cancelled.

"The prime minister has already said that the MRT3 project is scrapped," he told reporters in Parliament on Tuesday.

On May 30, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the MRT3 or Circle Line, estimated to cost RM40 billion, will be discontinued due to the government's burgeoning debt.

Earlier, Transport Minister Anthony Loke Siew Fook had said major projects, such as the MRT3 would be given priority when the country's financial position recovers.

"The government's priority is to



reduce the rate of national debt first.

"When the country's financial status recovers, it will certainly be given priority to be reviewed," he told Dewan Rakyat.

He was replying to a question from Khairy Jamaluddin (Barisan Nasional-Rembau), who asked the ministry to state the rationale and implication of scrapping public transport projects such as the MRT3.



best for the future," Nazir said in an Instagram post.

Azman, 57, was appointed Khazanah's MD on June 1, 2004.

EcoFirst targets higher sales for FY19

Property developer EcoFirst Consolidated Bhd aims to hit a sales target of around RM240 million in

its financial year ending May 31, 2019 (FY19).

According to group CEO Datuk Tiong Kwing Hee, the company achieved sales of about RM180 million in the last financial year, with contributions from two ongoing projects; namely LIBERTY@ Ampang Ukay and Upper East@ Tiger Lane in Ipoh.

"[The property market] is quite challenging and many developers are facing issues in property sales due to loan rejections. We are no different from them as LIBERTY@ Ampang Ukay faces a loan rejection rate of about 40% to 50%," he told reporters at a briefing on Monday.

**LAUNCHES + EVENTS**

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If you have any real estate-related events, email us at editor@edgeprop.my. Events listed here will also appear on www.EdgeProp.my.

**PRIMA Open Day in Seremban****Date:** Aug 3 to 5 (Fri to Sun)**Time:** 10am to 7pm**Venue:** Aeon Mall Seremban, 112, Persiaran S2 B1, Seremban 2, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan
Contact: (03) 7628 9898

Find out how you can own a PRIMA home in Negeri Sembilan. There will be agents on hand to help you register and apply for a home.

Amazing Thai Nite**Date:** Aug 4 (Sat)**Time:** 6pm to 10pm**Venue:** Suasana Suites Cafe, Level 33A, Suasana Iskandar Malaysia, Johor Bahru
Contact: (016) 775 2747/ (07) 213 2233

Join UM Land at its Amazing

Thai Nite in the newly opened Suasana Suites Cafe located in Suasana Iskandar Malaysia, Johor Bahru. Guests will experience a special meet-and-greet with Miss CosmoWorld 2017. Other event highlights include a traditional Thai dance, live band and puppet performance.

UK property showcase and talk**Date:** Aug 4 and 5 (Sat and Sun)**Time:** 10am to 6pm (Talks at 11am and 3pm)**Venue:** Iris and Hibiscus room, One World Hotel, First Avenue, Bandar Utama City Centre, Selangor**Contact:** (016) 228 8691
Organised by CSI Prop International Properties, the talk is titled: Why Malaysians should invest in UK property. The event

will also feature the pre-launch of City Point, a UK commercial student property in Liverpool.

**Artezza show unit opening****Date:** Aug 5 (Sun)**Time:** 2pm to 4pm**Venue:** EcoWorld Gallery @ Eco Sanctuary, Lot 41296, Persiaran Eco Sanctuary, Telok Panglima Garang, Selangor
Contact: (03) 3344 2525

Eco World Development Group Bhd will be showcasing its latest project Artezza at Eco Sanctuary; featuring an avant-garde concept combining the comfort of landed living with a resort experience, to deliver a limited edition of low-rise luxury residences.



"Nevertheless, we still enjoyed a 95% take-up rate for the project, despite the challenging market," he added.

The developer plans to unveil phase 2 of Ampang Ukay in the second half of next year which will comprise large condominium units across three towers with an estimated GDV of RM523 million.

Klang River to run crystal clear by 2020

Federal Territories Minister Khalid Samad said the Klang River should be clean enough for people to wash their clothes in, and hopes to achieve this by 2020.

Part of the previous administration's initiatives, the River of Life project has been working since 2011 to transform eight rivers in the Klang Valley. These include the Klang River, Sungai Jinjang, Sungai Keroh, Sungai Kerayong and Sungai Gombak.

The River of Life project aims to transform Klang and Gombak rivers into vibrant waterfronts with high economic and commercial value, and is almost 70% complete. Phase 1 involves seven precincts from Masjid Jamek to Daya Bumi.

The RM4.4 billion project includes river cleaning, river master planning and beautification and river development. RM3.4 billion was allocated for cleaning the river, and the remaining RM1 billion is for landscaping.

Cat Fiesta and terraced house launch**Date:** Aug 12 (next Sun)**Time:** 10am to 4pm**Venue:** D'Mayang Sari show unit, Taman Desa Mayang Sari, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan
Contact: (06) 799 2218

Seri Pajam Development is organising a cat fiesta with fun activities, including a cat fashion show and face painting. There will be free flow of candy floss and popcorn. Lunch will also be served. Guests will also have the chance to preview the developer's new terraced homes.

Malaysia Furniture and Furnishings Fair**Date:** Aug 10 to 12 (next Fri to Sun)**Time:** 10.30am to 9pm**Venue:** Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Jalan Pinang, Kuala Lumpur City Centre
Contact: (03) 6140 1202

The fair, organised by the Malaysia Furniture Council, will feature hundreds of exhibitors showcasing the latest in home, office and kitchen furnishings.

MRCB plans commercial hub after launch of Alstonia in Bukit Rahman Putra

BY RACHEL CHEW

SUNGAI BULOH: Malaysian Resources Corporation Bhd (MRCB) will introduce a hybrid residential development in Bukit Rahman Putra, Sungai Buloh, Selangor this September.

Dubbed Alstonia, the 4.11 acres of freehold gated-and-guarded strata development comprises a mix of 31 units of 3-storey garden villas called Alstonia Garden Villas, and 214 condominium units in a 24-storey tower called Garden Heights. Alstonia has a total GDV of RM243 million, said MRCB property division sales and marketing vice president Angeline Neoh.

Each unit of Alstonia Garden Villas will have a land size of 24ft by 75ft and indicative selling price from RM1.8 million. The condos come in a choice of five layout designs, with built-ups ranging from 1,001 sq ft to 1,431 sq ft. The average selling price psf is RM630, Neoh told EdgeProp.my.

Residents at Garden Heights and Alstonia Garden Villas will share common facilities; this includes the swimming pool, children's pool, gym, multipurpose hall, sunken lounge, landscaped walkway, stepping streams, hammock garden, reflexology path, and reading corner.

"We planned the project according to the natural contours of the sloping land. We designed an easy landscaped walkway from the main entrance leading up to the swimming pools and condominium. The pools will feature a stepping stream design," she said.

Neoh explained that the key design concept of Alstonia is based on the "kampung" (village) resort feel.

"The villas come with a backyard of at least 10ft long. Besides that, the noise and view from the facilities area will be screened off by thick shrubs and trees planted along the entire walkway," she said.

Each linked villa will have a porch that can house two cars, while a basement carpark fitted with panic buttons is provided for condominium residents and visitors.

The development's multi-tier security sys-



An artist's impression of Alstonia.

The plot 3 development is poised to be the commercial hub of Bukit Rahman Putra.



tem includes camera screening to capture visitor car plate numbers and driver photo upon entry, access cards, CCTV surveillance and intercom.

Although a soft launch of the project is planned for September, it is currently open for registration. The handover to buyers is expected by the third quarter of 2022.

According to Neoh, Alstonia is on one of three plots of land held by MRCB in Bukit Rahman Putra. Kalista Park Homes was launched in early 2016 on the first plot.

"The low-density Kalista offers only 18 units of 3-storey semidees and 28 units of 3-storey superlink houses," MRCB sales and marketing senior manager Chong Hong



Neoh: After Alstonia (on the second plot of land), we will be launching the development on the 4.55 acres of the third plot of land.

Lim said, adding that as at mid-July, all the non-bumi units have been sold.

Bukit Rahman Putra is a matured area with many existing aged, but premium landed homes such as semidees and bungalows.

"Kalista is an upgraded version of the existing homes in the area, with better security, planning and design. The homes have individual titles, but are designed as a gated-and-guarded community," Chong said.

"After Alstonia (on the second plot of land), we will be launching the development on the 4.55 acres of the third plot of land, just next to Alstonia by end next year," Neoh reveals.

An integrated commercial development is planned, akin to Solaris Dutamas in Kuala Lumpur which features the Publika Shopping Centre.

"We are still getting approval and that will easily take another nine months. It will comprise shop units, retail podium and one block of serviced apartments," Neoh said.

The estimated retail space will be up to 200,000 sq ft.

She added that the development will focus on pedestrian-friendly connectivity between different components within the development.

"It is poised to be the new commercial hub of Bukit Rahman Putra. As we have done in our previous developments, MRCB will own and manage all the commercial units so we can control the tenant mix and make sure it caters to local needs," said Neoh.

Iceland wants foreigners to stop buying its land

BY RAGNHILDUR SIGURDARDÓTTIR

REYKJAVÍK: A little over a century ago, a young woman named Sigridur Tomasdóttir threatened to throw herself into the icy gorge of Iceland's iconic Gullfoss waterfall in a bid to stop English businessmen from turning it into a hydroelectric dam.

In the end, the proto eco-warrior was able to hold on to her life — the leasing contract was cancelled, allegedly because the money failed to turn up on time — and the Golden Falls are today one of the country's biggest tourist attractions.

Iceland's first environmentalist prime minister, Katrín Jakobsdóttir, has now picked up Tomasdóttir's baton by railing against foreign investors who have been purchasing vast swathes of the north Atlantic island's pristine wilderness.

The 42-year-old prime minister, who heads the Left-Green Movement, wants

"further restrictions" on land ownership, but says she will first wait for studies currently being carried out at four different ministries. Their conclusions are expected by the end of the summer.

"First and foremost I want to defend the nation's sovereignty," Jakobsdóttir said in a telephone interview in Reykjavík. "It matters to us that we can decide how the land is developed and utilized."

As a member of the European Economic Area (a free trade zone linked with the European Union), the government has limited space for manoeuvre. Jakobsdóttir says she's seeking "restrictions based on the size and number" of plots owned. Iceland can already bloc purchases by non-Europeans, as it did in 2012, when it prevented Chinese billionaire Huang Nubo from snapping up a 300-square kilometer piece of land in the north.

Her government is responding to growing complaints from farmers, many of whom

resent the superior purchasing power of foreigner buyers and also question their motives. Iceland only achieved full independence from Denmark in 1944, and patriotic feelings continue to run high. Jakobsdóttir's ruling coalition is reliant on the support of the conservative Independence Party and the Progressives, the party of choice for farmers.

British billionaire Sir Jim Ratcliffe and his associates own a total of 39 plots rich in fishing rivers, according to Icelandic newspaper Morgunblaðið, while Sweden's John Harald Orneberg and Switzerland's Rudolf Lamprecht are two other fishing enthusiasts with deep pockets who have bought land on the north Atlantic island, according to local media reports.

Ratcliffe has said his main interest is in the local salmon population and that any tightening of the rules may prompt him to reconsider his future plans. "No one wants to be operating against the will of the au-

thorities in a country," said his spokesman in Iceland, Gísli Ásgeirsson.

One of Ratcliffe's Icelandic neighbors, a farmer named Ævar Rafn Marinósson, remains unconvinced.

"They say they want to protect the salmon, but that's not a very believable explanation," he said. "You don't need to own land to protect the salmon."

Though much of it is inhospitable, Iceland's land is still cheap (prices range from around US\$500,000 (RM2.03 million) to US\$5 million, depending on their size and the kind of resources they offer, and can get way higher if the plot hosts a famous tourist attraction).

Jakobsdóttir insists this is not about "banning foreigners," but rather about "the concentration of ownership" (in Scotland, for example, less than 500 people reportedly own half of all private land) and about ensuring the land is put to its best use. — Bloomberg



Do international schools impact PROPERTY VALUES?

BY NATALIE KHOO

To seek your interest, marketing materials of property projects often highlight nearby amenities in the area. They will mention things like “only 10 minutes’ drive to hypermarket” or “less than 3km from the LRT station”. And you would have noticed that of late, proximity to international schools have been added to the list too.

So, do schools really raise the appeal of an area among property investors? Do international schools in particular, impact property yields and price growth?

International schools on the rise

Data released in March last year by ISC Research, a provider of English-medium K12 international school intelligence, trends and data, showed Malaysia leading South-east Asia (SEA) with the highest number of students with 71,589 students enrolled in premium English-medium international schools. In terms of schools, the country recorded the third highest number in SEA with a total of 170 international schools, just behind Indonesia (190 schools) and Thailand (181 schools).

It was also noted that the demand for international schools in the region among middle-income families are on the rise.

ISC field researcher Sam Fraser said in an ISC Research report earlier this year that “the mid-fee international school sector has development potential throughout the [SEA] region, but to date, has remained relatively untapped. Due to the increasing number of expatriates with trimmed benefit packages, and the growing number of local families seeking out international education options, there is a real need for such schools which more people can afford from their own salaries,” Fraser had shared.

The nearer the better?

With the observed rise in demand for international education in the region including Malaysia, do properties located near international schools fare better than others in terms of demand as well as price and rent growth?

There is no doubt that new townships that are being developed today often include an international school in their overall master plan as one of their amenities.

EdgeProp.my selected five international schools in the Klang Valley and three non-landed homes within a 2km radius of each of the schools to see whether they commanded higher average price psf than those further away from the international school.

The data used is based on the latest average annual transacted price collated by EdgeProp.my.

Taylor's International School Kuala Lumpur

At about 1.5km away from Taylor's International School KL at off Jalan Pria Taman Maluri, Kuala Lumpur is G Residence. It commanded an average price of RM653 psf in 2017, higher than Axis Residences which is 1.6km away (RM306 psf). The older Menara POLO condominium has an average price of RM350 psf and is located about 1.7km away.



TAYLOR'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL KUALA LUMPUR



Beaconhouse Sri Inai

Over in SS2 Petaling Jaya, the more-than-two-decades old Jasmine Towers, which is located 1.37km to Beaconhouse Sri Inai on Jalan SS23/6, Taman Sea, had an average price psf of RM507 psf in 2017 while the newer and higher-end Ameera Residences in the same vicinity commanded RM735 psf. Puncak Damansara, which is 1.57km away, recorded RM322 psf.

Japanese School of KL

In Seksyen U2, Shah Alam, where the Japanese School of KL is located, based on transactions in 2016, the high-end Amaya Saujana condominium just 287m away from the school commanded an average price of RM538 psf.

During the same period, the average price psf for the older Puncak Seri Kelana condominium was RM437 psf. It is located slightly further away from the school.

However, the Bungaraya Condominium which is located furthest at 761m away, recorded an average price psf of RM536 in the same period. The average price in 2016 was used in this example as there was no transaction recorded at Bungaraya Condominium in 2017.





Average price psf of non-landed residences surrounding five international schools

	DISTANCE (M)	AVERAGE PRICE PSF (RM)		
		2017	2016	2015
Beaconhouse Sri Inai*				
Jasmine Towers	1,370	507	511	494
Ameera Residences	1,420	735	701	711
Puncak Damansara	1,573	322	395	348

	DISTANCE (M)	AVERAGE PRICE PSF (RM)		
		2017	2016	2015
Japanese School of Kuala Lumpur*				
Amaya Saujana	287	570	538	577
Puncak Seri Kelana	341	446	437	448
Bungaraya Condominium	761	—	536	521

	DISTANCE (M)	AVERAGE PRICE PSF (RM)		
		2017	2016	2015
Sri Emas International School*				
Ridzuan Condominium	656	311	306	333
Belvedere Residensi Laguna	790	—	285	445
Boulevard Subang Jaya	915	501	454	486

	DISTANCE (M)	AVERAGE PRICE PSF (RM)		
		2017	2016	2015
Taylor's International School Kuala Lumpur*				
G Residence	1,547	653	597	731
Axis Residences	1,595	306	317	340
Menara POLO	1,731	350	361	406

	DISTANCE (M)	AVERAGE PRICE PSF (RM)		
		2017	2016	2015
St Joseph's International School**				
Casa Tropicana	719	574	567	554
Riana Green	1,028	546	524	565
Palm Spring	1,168	415	417	440

* Properties nearer to international schools do not have a higher price psf

** Properties nearer to international schools have a higher price psf



Sri Emas International School

About 656m away from Sri Emas International School at off Jalan SS7/2, Petaling Jaya, Ridzuan Condominium had an average price of RM306 psf in 2016, which was higher than Belvedere Residensi Laguna (RM285 psf) serviced apartment located 790m away. Meanwhile, Boulevard Subang Jaya, which is just 259m apart from Ridzuan Condominium, commanded an average price psf of RM454, which was 48% higher than Belvedere. The 2016 data was used as there was no transaction at Belvedere Residensi Laguna in 2017.



St Joseph's International School, Tropicana, Petaling Jaya

Meanwhile in Tropicana, Petaling Jaya, where St Joseph's International School is located, Casa Tropicana commanded a higher average price of RM574 psf compared with Riana Green (RM546 psf) and the more affordable Palm Spring (RM415 psf). Casa Tropicana is located 719m away from the school while Riana Green and Palm Spring are located about 1km and 1.17km respectively, from the school.

SUHAIMI YUSUF | THE EDGE



"The presence of international schools in a neighbourhood will attract expatriate tenants and in the process, may bring better rentals and higher prices for the property."
— Tang

The verdict

So, is proximity to international schools correlated to property prices? The simple answer would be, no. After all, the price of a property depends on many factors and apple to apple comparisons would be difficult.

Laurelcap Sdn Bhd executive director Stanley Toh points out that while having an international school in your township may make the development more marketable, it does not mean a property near an international school will automatically command a higher price than other similar developments without that institution.

"In today's property market, there are many new developments introducing international schools but the pricing remains competitive. Thus, I would say it helps with marketing the project but not so much the value or prices," says Toh.

Henry Butcher Malaysia chief operating officer Tang Chee Meng concurs. According to him, the presence of international schools in a neighbourhood will attract expatriate tenants and in the process, may bring better rentals and higher prices for the property. But there are also other factors that contribute to the value of a property, which must be taken into consideration.

"Factors such as location, accessibility and availability of public transport, design, maintenance, age of building, state of the economy and the overall property market should be looked at in totality. Proximity to international schools alone may not bring about better prices. The student enrolment as well as household income levels of the foreign students will also affect the rental budgets and hence indirectly, the property prices," says Tang.

According to him, private international schools would be located on land approved for commercial use, which means that the developments in the immediate vicinity would probably be commercial in character.

"This means that the apartments located along the same street as the international school would more likely be serviced apartments or Small-office Home-office (SoHos) which are typically smaller in size and quite often though not always, higher in price on a psf basis compared to larger condominium units built on residential land," Tang shares.

Increased appeal for the neighbourhood

While an international school does not raise property prices, it can raise the appeal of a development, says Laurelcap's Toh.

"I would think that developers would have done some studies before they conceive the idea to introduce an international school in their development. As international schools are associated with expensive school fees, naturally the development has to appeal to the affluent group of people. Hence the properties they offer in the development have to follow in tandem," Toh offers.

SUHAIMI YUSUF | THE EDGE



"Entry into international schools in this country is not geographically-based. You can live in Damansara Heights and send your kids to school in Subang Jaya as long as you can afford it."
— Toh

He raises the point that not everybody can afford to send their kids to international schools. "As it is, for the majority of the public, the rise in cost of living is still a primary issue. There are alternative options for a child's education. Hence, whether an international school is present or not in the development would be secondary to most homebuyers," says Toh.

Nevertheless, the neighbourhood in which the international school is located plays a big part in influencing the price of properties located there. For example, Tang says that property prices in Mont'Kiara, which has a number of international schools, are higher than those in Subang Jaya as Mont'Kiara is viewed as a more prestigious residential area.

"Secondly, the convenience of being able to walk to school instead of depending on public transport will give a property an edge over those which are located further away. However, other factors will also influence the price of the property, for example, the age and condition of the building and the standard of maintenance. A property which is poorly maintained may fetch a lower price even if it is located closer to an international school.

"Generally foreign expats with school-going children are prepared to pay a bit more for better quality accommodation for their family. As such, properties that they select tend to fetch good rentals," Tang highlights.

On the other hand, Laurelcap's Toh believes that proximity to international schools would help with the letting out of a property but it does not mean the rental will be better.

"For international schools, most of them, if I am not mistaken, have contract foreign teachers which stay for two to three years, and then a new batch would replace them. It is seasonal, so if your unit is not ready to be rented out, or if there is too much competition, you would have missed the boat. Therefore, I don't think there is a direct correlation between proximity and rental yield," Toh explains.

Unquantifiable impact

Toh opines that ultimately, it is the branding that helps promote lifestyle and wholesome living in a particular development.

"Having said that, entry into international schools in this country is not geographically-based. You can live in Damansara Heights and send your kids to school in Subang Jaya as long as you can afford it," he notes.

For Tang, generally the presence of an international school will carve a more positive and prestigious image for an area and hence help to generate better rental yields for property owners there.

"Investors are keen to invest in properties in the area due to the higher rental demand and better rental yields. However, no study has been carried out and it is not possible to quantify the impact international schools have on property values in an area," Tang concludes.

The neighbourhood in which the international school is located plays a big part in influencing the price of properties located there.

FEATURE



Ardence Labs is the first lifestyle lab project introduced by EcoWorld.

Experience the intangible

BY TAN AI LENG

Most developers use various media channels, brochures, show units and salespersons to help buyers imagine what their potential homes will look like.

Taking the whole thing up a notch, Eco World Development Group Bhd (EcoWorld) have been promoting a new tool, that allows customers to experience what it feels like to live in their developments. To this developer, lifestyle is not just about facilities and building aesthetics, it is also about ambience and place-making.

Lifestyle labs are the brainchild of EcoWorld executive director and Eco Ardence divisional general manager Liew Tian Xiong.

Many of the labs are housed in shipping containers. Liew explains: "It is durable and easy to move around. We drove all the way to Port Klang to choose suitable recycled containers, brought them back and refurbished them to become our labs. They are flexible and reusable."

He explained that the idea is to showcase brand personality and the envisioned future lifestyle of their townships in a cost- and time-efficient way.

"We can experiment with incorporating different elements in the township, to see whether it is viable, as well as to let people experience it before they purchase a unit or move in," he tells EdgeProp.my, and emphasises that nothing beats experience.

The developer also intends to provide a space for start-ups or existing operators to do try-outs before they decide to venture into a new market, or start their own business.



Liew: The lifestyle labs concept allows us to experiment with different elements and let people experience the lifestyle that we promote.



Spring Labs in Eco Spring is designed to reflect the season when flowers bloom.

EdgeProp.my



WATCH NOW
A walk through Eco Majestic with EcoWorld president and CEO Datuk Chang Khim Wah

Not of the common mall fare

The first full-scale operating lifestyle lab — Ardence Labs — is located right opposite the Eco Ardence sales gallery in Setia Alam, Selangor.

It has 28 lots ranging from 290 sq ft to 2,000 sq ft. Within Ardence Labs, there's an 8-acre lake with jogging paths, an edible green house and a children's playground.

Visitors can find unique F&B offerings, as well as retail brands which are not commonly available in most shopping malls. Among them are Laughing Monkey Café, U-MAI Noodles Shop, Balloon Lab, Aroi Mak Mak Thai Restaurant, Bamboo Biryani, i1 Fitness, Cocomomo Urban Pets Hotel and Mich'sology.

"The tenants we are looking for are those which are just beginning to grow. Most of the F&B operators are new to the industry or are single outfits that are locally popular.

"We hope they could have a presence at EcoWorld townships and grow together with us," he says.

According to Liew, the lifestyle labs concept has been well-received by retail and F&B operators. For instance, Ardence Labs is currently 86% tenanted. The tenants were attracted by EcoWorld's idea of creating a unique place offering unique experiences to the public.

Ardence Labs attracts large crowds during weekends. It is estimated that more than 100,000 people visit Ardence Labs monthly since operations began in February.

This was followed by Spring Labs at Eco Spring in Johor and Grandeur Labs at Eco Grandeur in Puncak Alam, Selangor. Every Lab is designed in line with the theme of the respective townships.

For instance, the 22-acre Ardence Labs which fronts a lake, sports a contemporary theme that fits into Eco Ardence's concept. It aims to be an art and cultural commerce centre.

Grandeur Labs, which sits on a 14-acre site, was designed with a retro modern concept, which corresponds to the township's Victorian theme.

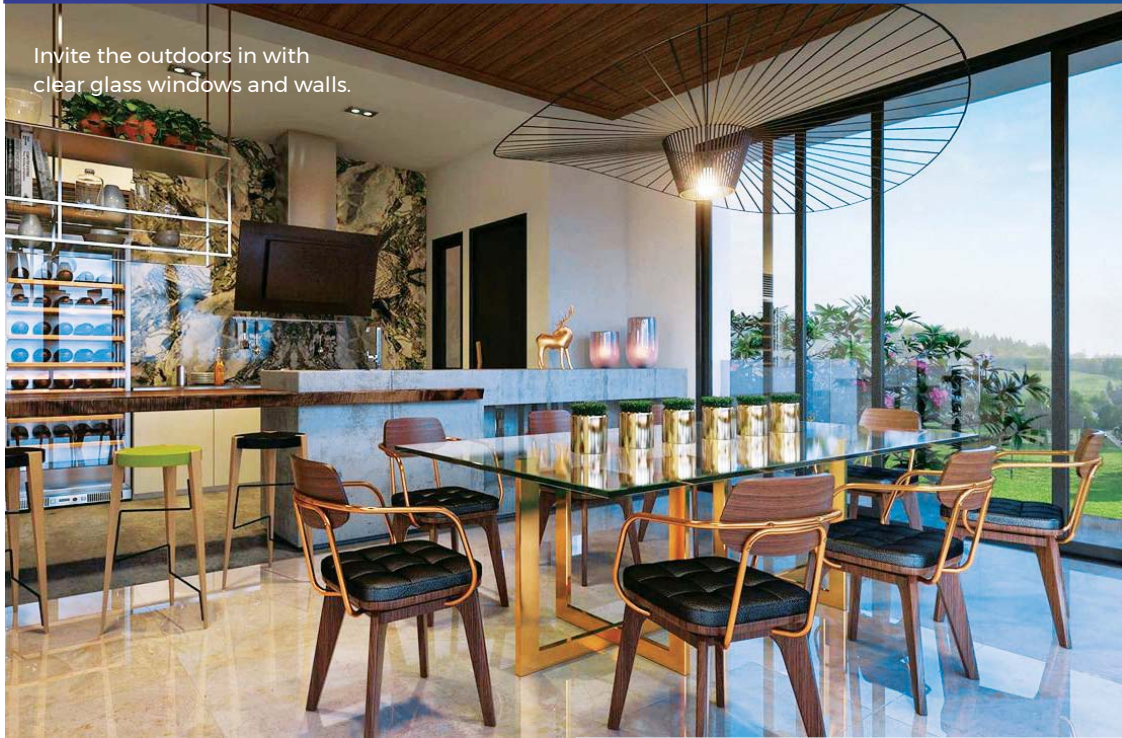
Grandeur Labs has seen 60% of the 15 retail spaces on offer rented out. The retail lots have built-ups of around 970 sq ft each.

Spring Labs which began operations last December, is designed with the season of spring in mind. The bright and colourful facade of the 12 retail lots have a vibrancy that complements the flower gardens in Eco Spring.

Moving forward, the company is looking at rolling out new lifestyle labs in Eco Forest, Semenyih, in November this year.

Tentatively, Forest Labs will have a "cabin in the woods" concept. It will offer seven units in two sizes — 387 sq ft and 774 sq ft.

"Through the lifestyle labs, we intend to stay connected with our customers, understand their needs and build new relationship with future residents, not just those in the township, but also residents in the neighbouring communities as well," Liew concludes.



Invite the outdoors in with clear glass windows and walls.



Natural light fills the entire duplex, through the half glass walls.

BY **RACHEL CHEW**

Space is a luxury for most city folks, which is why urban homeowners are constantly cooking up creative ways to enlarge their living space, if not in square footage, at least visually.

A common trick is to line walls with mirrors, but let's take a look at what clear glass can do in conjuring up the illusion of spaciousness indoors.

"We have seen the trend of using clear glass in interior design growing in recent years, especially as partitions, replacing the conventional concrete wall," Think Studio PTL executive director Calvin Ting and design director Linda Ngu tells EdgeProp.my.

Ting notes that a mirror is a kind of glass, which has been commonly used by homeowners for decades to create a sense of broadened space. It also offers interesting reflection effects to the design.

"I believe the rise in the use of glass has something to do with the fact that the built-up sizes of new homes have been getting smaller," he says, adding that the trend is also most likely inspired by hotel room interior design where mirrors are often used to make rooms look larger.

Meanwhile, the use of clear glass to replace solid wall partitions was inspired from modern commercial buildings, including offices and hotels, says Ngu.

A compromise for the open concept layout

"Many homes have adopted the open layout concept design nowadays. One of the reasons [for the open concept] could be to save on construction cost," Ngu says.

However, some homeowners may not like the open concept layout.

"We have many clients who insist on having a clear demarcation of spaces, either by using different colours on the walls, different tiles on the floor or by having partitions," she says.

Clear glass partitions offer the best of both worlds — a sense of spaciousness, while clearly differentiating the zones.

Transparent walls? Why not?

LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my



Above: Ting (right) and Ngu say the trend of using glass in interior design is growing.

Below: Master bedroom looks small? Maybe it's a good idea to replace the wall between the bedroom and bathroom with glass to create a hotel suite-style bedroom.

"Because glass is thinner and is see-through, it can make a place look larger.

"Beyond clear glass, there are also many coloured glass choices. Besides, glass is easy to maintain," explains Ting, adding that one could clean the glass using anti-fingerprint and anti-dust glass cleaning products once a month.

Other glass cleaning tips that he offers include using a solution of white vinegar and water to be sprayed onto the glass to dissolve any mineral deposits that have built up on the surface. The glass should be rinsed immediately with clean water and excess water should be removed from glass surfaces with a squeegee.

Ting also advises homeowners against installing glass panels themselves.

"Clients have asked if they can DIY. It is very important to understand that the installation of glass must be done carefully, to make sure it is safe.

The process requires special installation skills and techniques, Ting says, and it is not advisable to install them without those skills.

Besides glass partitions, Ngu says glass can also be used to create interesting interior design features.

"For instance, if the dining area shares a wall with the kitchen area but is only divided by a clear glass panel, you can paint the wall on both spaces the same colour and it will make both spaces look bigger," she says.

Practicality issues

Commenting on the safety aspect of using glass, Ngu says most glass features used for home interiors are made from tempered glass, which is strong, long-lasting and easy to maintain.



The clear glass partition divides the kitchen and dining spaces, but they look unified, with the same colour extending across both rooms.

"Of course it will still be damaged if great pressure is placed on it. However, in many cases, it will only be cracked, not shattered," Ngu notes.

For families with pets, children, or the elderly, she suggests the use of coloured or shaded glass to avoid accidents with the see-through glass due to visual confusion.

Ting also advises homeowners to avoid clear glass for external walls if the wall is going to receive direct sunlight.

"After all, Malaysia is a tropical country with lots of sunlight.

"Many people install glass walls in their dining area so they can enjoy the morning sun during breakfast, but be aware that glass can crack if it receives too much direct sunlight.

"Allowing sunlight into the interiors will also increase indoor temperature. It may look beautiful but is not really comfortable for the occupants," counsels Ting.



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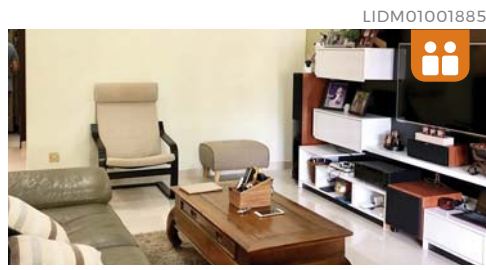
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LIDM01001885

RM789,000

Bukit Rimau, Shah Alam, Selangor

Type: Terraced house **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 2,100 sq ft **Land size:** 1,650 sq ft
Bedrooms: 4 **Bathrooms:** 3



LIDM01009179

RM2,190,000

Temasya Citra, Glenmarie, Selangor

Type: Terraced house **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 4,760 sq ft **Land size:** 3,358 sq ft
Bedrooms: 6 **Bathrooms:** 5



LIDM01008558

RM4,500,000

Damansara Heights, Damansara, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Bungalow **Tenure:** Leasehold
Built-up: 4,823 sq ft **Land size:** 2,530 sq ft
Bedrooms: 6 **Bathrooms:** 6



LIDM01009278

RM2,500,000

St Mary Residences, KL City, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Condominium **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 1,614 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 3
Bathrooms: 3



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LIDM01009285

RM1,400,000

Marc Residence, KLCC, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Condominium **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 907 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 2
Bathrooms: 2



LIDM01009318

RM1,250,000

Saville, Pantai Dalam/ Kerinchi, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Condominium **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 1,614 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 4
Bathrooms: 3



LIDM01009418

RM818,000

Parkfield Residences, Tropicana Heights, Semenyih, Selangor

Type: Terraced house **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 2,203 sq ft **Land size:** 1,650 sq ft
Bedrooms: 4 **Bathrooms:** 3



LIDM01008508

RM5,900,000

The Mines Resort City, Seri Kembangan, Selangor

Type: Bungalow **Tenure:** Leasehold
Built-up: 9,322 sq ft **Land size:** 7,600 sq ft
Bedrooms: 8 **Bathrooms:** 8



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LIDM01009446

RM710,000

Soho Suites, KLCC, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Office **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 877 sq ft



LIDM01009152

RM980,000

Wickham Manor, Ampang Hilir, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Condominium **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 2,080 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 4
Bathrooms: 4



LIDM01039127

RM1,900,000

The Northshore Gardens, Desa ParkCity, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Condominium **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 2,200 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 4
Bathrooms: 4



LIDN01390305

RM11,000,000

Damansara Heights, Damansara, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Bungalow **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 8,800 sq ft **Land size:** 9,127 sq ft
Bedrooms: 6 **Bathrooms:** 7



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LIDM01003911

RM980,000

Cascadium, Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Condominium **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 1,088 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 2
Bathrooms: 2



LIDN01275953

RM1,750,000

Damansara City Residency, Damansara, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Condominium **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 1,200 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 2
Bathroom: 1



LIDM01009916

RM3,900,000

Jalan Terasek, Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Terraced house **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 2,064 sq ft **Land size:** 5,300 sq ft
Bedrooms: 4 **Bathrooms:** 3



LIDM01010570

RM2,200,000

Medan Damansara, Damansara, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Link bungalow **Tenure:** Freehold
Built-up: 2,500 sq ft **Land size:** 1,920 sq ft
Bedrooms: 4 **Bathrooms:** 3



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