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**SPECIAL REPORT**



A SPECIAL REPORT BY TheEdgeProperty.com

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# TAPPING INTO THE FUTURE

Netccentric Ltd co-founder Timothy Tiah moves from digital media into his first real estate foray, creating office spaces everyone would like to work in. See pages **4 & 5**.

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**Still a market for luxury homes over RM10 mil**



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**Connectivity — the pulse of the city**



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The Edge Malaysia

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## Phase 2 of MRT 99% completed

The construction of Phase 2 of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line is 99% completed and will be operational by next month as scheduled, Bernama reported. Prasarana Malaysia Bhd president and group chief executive officer Datuk Seri Azmi Abdul Aziz as saying on Wednesday.

The 30km Semantan-Kajang stretch (Phase 2) is currently undergoing various tests to ensure smooth operation of the train service, Azmi said.

"When Phase 2 of the MRT is launched this July 17 by the Prime Minister [Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak], the 51km Sungai Buloh-Kajang line will be fully operational by then.

"If we see [MRT] trains in Kajang, [that means] these trains are undergoing tests," he added.

Phase 1 of the MRT project, which involves the 20km Sungai Buloh-Semantan stretch, has been in operation since December 2016.

On the progress of the Light Rail-way Transit Line 3, Azmi said that the award of the main tender would be finalised next month and scheduled to be completed in August 2020.

## Global Oriental and Malton in JV for mixed development

Global Oriental Bhd is teaming up with Malton Bhd for a mixed development project on 38.34 acres of land in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur.

Global Oriental's wholly-owned subsidiary Fame Action Sdn Bhd signed the deal with Malton's whol-

## Bangsar residents concerned over redevelopment of Sri Pahang flats

The redevelopment plans for the Sri Pahang flats in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur have raised concerns among residents in Bangsar, especially over the increase in density and the possible impact on traffic flow in the area.

In early March this year, a signboard was put up at the Sri Pahang flats in Jalan Bukit Bangsar describing the proposed redevelopment plan for the 3.97ha site owned by Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) and the Transport Ministry. The proposed redevelopment comprises eight blocks of apartments with a total of 3,257 units. The redevelopment will increase the site density from 20 persons per acre to 1,327 persons per acre.

Bukit Bandar Raya Residents Association (RA) advisor and immediate past president Datuk M. Ali told TheEdgeProperty.com that there would be a need for



LOW YEN YEING | TheEdgeProperty.com

proper planning of the drainage system as well, considering the huge increase in population in the area and the fact that the area had experienced flooding during heavy downpours.

Meanwhile, the president of Bangsar Park's RA, Nitesh Malani, told TheEdgeProperty.com that some 60 residents living in the area have written to DBKL to voice their concerns on the redevelopment and DBKL has responded that it will look into the matter.

ly-owned unit Layar Raya Sdn Bhd on June 23.

The seven plots of freehold land are to be developed at the absolute discretion of Fame Action as the developer, said Global Oriental.

Layar Raya is entitled to 18% of the net development value of the project, "which shall not be less than RM65 million", it said. The development is expected to be carried out and completed in phases over a five-year period from the date of the development order being approved. Subsequently, the deal can be extended for a further two years subject to market supply and demand conditions. "At this juncture, the development is still at the planning stage and the details of the mixed

development components have yet to be finalised," Global Oriental said.

## S P Setia signs conditional agreement to take over I&P Group

S P Setia Bhd has signed a conditional share purchase agreement to acquire I&P Group Sdn Bhd from its controlling shareholder Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB) for RM3.65 billion cash.

S P Setia is proposing a cash call plus private placement to raise the required funding.

"This synergistic acquisition will further strengthen Setia's brand presence in Malaysia and help pave the way for the creation of greater shareholder

value for S P Setia. I&P's landbank is located in the Klang Valley and Johor Bahru, and mostly in areas where S P Setia had established a stronghold with its Setia brand," said Datuk Khor Chap Jen, president and chief executive officer of S P Setia, in a statement.

PNB is the largest shareholder of S P Setia, holding approximately a 62.3% stake, including shares held by its equity trust funds, like Amanah Saham Bumiputera (26.27%) and Amanah Saham Malaysia (3.53%). I&P Group has 4,276 acres (1,730ha) of landbank, which when combined with the landbank of S P Setia would total 9,417 acres, making S P Setia the third-largest property developer in Malaysia by such a measure.

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## LAUNCHES + EVENTS

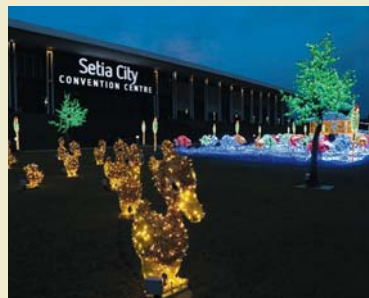


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If you have any real estate-related events, email us at [propertyeditor@bizedge.com](mailto:propertyeditor@bizedge.com). Events listed here will also appear on **TheEdgeProperty.com**.



### Raya LED Light Decoration

**Date:** June 25 to July 24 (Sun to Mon)

**Time:** 7pm to 12am

**Venue:** Setia City Convention Centre, Jalan Setia Dagang AG U13/AG, Setia Alam Seksyen U13, Shah Alam, Selangor

**Contact:** (03) 3359 5252

Enjoy a depiction of a rural village made from brightly lit LED lights set up specially for the festive season by S P Setia Bhd at the Setia City Convention Centre. Themed "Kampungku", the LED lighting decorations were used to construct the different elements of a "kampung" scene such as the village house, animals and "lampu pelita" (oil lamps). Admission is free.

### 'Slide the City' at Forest City

**Date:** June 23 to July 23 (Fri to Sun)

**Time:** 2.30pm to 7.30pm (weekdays), 10.30am to 7.30pm (weekends)

**Venue:** Forest City Country Garden, Forest City 1, Pulau Satu, Gelang Patah, Johor Bahru, Johor

**Contact:** (013) 700 1199  
Organised by Country Garden, everyone is invited to Forest City to experience an exciting 1,000 ft water slide. Children must be seven years old and above, or taller than 110cm. Tickets can be purchased online or at Forest City Harbor commercial street.

### IJM Land Hari Raya open house

**Date:** July 1 (Sat)

**Time:** 10am to 5pm

**Venue:** Level 1 & 16, Menara IJM Land, 1, Lebuhr Tunku Kudin 3, Penang

**Contact:** (04) 296 1288 / (04) 296 1333

Join IJM Land in a month-long celebration of Aidilfitri across the country. This weekend, the developer invites all to its

festive open house celebration at its Penang office. Food and beverage will be served.

### Bukit Banyan Hari Raya open house

**Date:** July 1 (Sat)

**Time:** 10am

**Venue:** Bukit Banyan Eugenia 3 show unit, 225, Sungai Petani, Kedah  
**Contact:** (04) 441 3388  
Paramount Property is hosting a Hari Raya open house at its latest Eugenia 3 @ Bukit Banyan show unit. Besides food and beverage, the developer will offer tours of the development's hill park as well as free family portrait services.

### Kerjaya Prospek Hari Raya open house

**Date:** July 8 and 9 (Sat and Sun)

**Time:** 10am to 5pm

**Venue:** Setiawangsa Residency Sales Gallery, Bukit Dinding, Kuala Lumpur  
**Contact:** (03) 6277 5192  
Kerjaya Prospek invites all to its Setiawangsa Residency sales

gallery. Light refreshments will be served. Setiawangsa Residency is located in Setiawangsa and consists of 300 apartments with built-ups ranging from 1,196 sq ft to 1,491 sq ft.

### Astetica Residences roadshow

**Date:** June 26 to July 9

(Mon to Sun)

**Time:** 10am to 10pm

**Venue:** AEON Mall Cheras Selatan, Lebuhr Tun Hussein Onn, Balakong, Selangor

**Contact:** (03) 6188 4488

Hua Yang Bhd invites all to drop by and find out more about Astetica Residences at its road show. The project is located in Seri Kembangan, Selangor and offers 520 units of serviced apartments.







# Matrix Concepts riding on Kluang's growth

BY TAN AI LENG

SEREMBAN: Matrix Concepts Holdings Bhd is hoping to gain from the growth potential of Johor's southern corridor with its Impiana Square development, also known as Kluang Southgate.

The 80-acre freehold commercial development, which carries a gross development value (GDV) of RM190 million, is located in the developer's 900-acre Bandar Seri Impian township in Kluang.

Impiana Square is poised to be the new commercial hub within the Kluang district owing to its strategic location that directly connects it to the newly proposed Gemas-Segamat-Kluang-Pasir Gudang Highway, said Matrix Concepts managing director and chief executive officer Datuk Lee Tian Hock at his office in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. It is also easily accessible via the Jalan Kluang- Bandar Tenggara road with proposed connections to interchange/exit points to the new highway.

"In future, the distance from Bandar Seri Impian to Tuas, Singapore will be around 70km, which means that within one hour or slightly over one hour, residents could reach their destination in the Iskandar region or Singapore," said Lee.

Impiana Square comprises 192 units of 2-storey and 12 units of 2½-storey shopoffices, measuring 20 ft by 70 ft with built-up sizes starting from 2,640 sq ft. The selling price of these shopoffices is from RM888,000 onwards.

Launched last year, Impiana Square has so far seen a take-up of about 40%. Lee disclosed that the Kluang Station restaurant has bought a corner unit at Impiana Square.

As road connectivity improves,

Lee also anticipates growing demand for homes in Bandar Seri Impian from buyers outside Kluang as the township offers affordable landed homes amidst a quality living environment away from the bustling town centre.

"This is already reflected in our recent sales, which saw buyers from both from and beyond Kluang, especially those who are working in Singapore, buying houses in Bandar Seri Impian," he noted.

Situated about 9km away from Kluang old town, Bandar Seri Impian serves as an alternative for homebuyers who want to purchase a modern home in a new township, said Lee.

"Development in Kluang in the past was more towards the west side in the Ayer Hitam direction in Batu Pahat. Bandar Seri Impian is in the south of Kluang so development is moving southeast, more towards the Kota Tinggi direction," he explained. With this, he added, the new township has opened up more business opportunities to those who want to expand to the southern corridors of Johor and in the Iskandar region.

Located in the centre of Johor, the Kluang district spans 2,851 sq km, with Segamat in the north, Batu Pahat in the west and Mersing in the east. On its southern borders are Pontian, Kulai and Kota Tinggi.

## Bandar Seri Impian

The Seremban-based developer has built a strong presence there since it was established in 1997. Its flagship development is the 5,233-acre Bandar Sri Sendayan. However, it is no stranger to local residents in Kluang either.

In fact, Matrix Concepts has been a developer in Kluang since 2005 after signing a joint-venture



LOW YEN YEING | TheEdgeProperty.com

An artist's impression of Impiana Square.



**The new township has opened up more business opportunities to those who want to expand to the southern corridor. — Lee**

development agreement with Koperasi Kemajuan Tanah Negeri Johor Bhd to develop a former plantation site into what is now known as Bandar Sri Impian.

Lee said the township started off as Taman Seri Impian but was renamed two years ago as the development has expanded and its population has grown rapidly.

The company has delivered 4,600 units of properties in the township with an occupancy rate of 77%. It currently has around 300 acres of undeveloped land

left, which have been allocated for another 2,000 units of properties with an estimated GDV of RM1 billion.

"The residential properties in this township are in the affordable range from around RM400,000 to around RM500,000 for double-storey terraced houses and RM200,000 to RM300,000 for single-storey terraced houses," Lee said.

In the first half of 2017, the developer has launched five projects (a mix of residential and commercial) in Bandar Seri Impian, including Impiana Square, Impiana Damai 1, Impiana Casa 3B, Impiana 2 and Impiana Indah, with an average

selling price of between RM245,488 for a single-storey terraced house and RM518,888 for a double-storey terraced house.

According to Lee, all these new launches have received good response in general with around 75% to 80% take-up rates.

Moving forward, Matrix Concepts is eyeing to launch Casa 3A in July, which carries a GDV of RM70 million, offering 138 units of double-storey terraced houses measuring 20 ft by 70 ft with selling prices from RM438,000. It also plans to unveil more residential properties at Impiana Bayu 3A and Impiana Damai 2 in the second half of this year.

# Beijing tweaks property rule in bid to boost housing supply

BY YAWEN CHEN AND RYAN WOO

BEIJING: The city has made it easier for property developers to start selling housing projects under construction, a move that might boost supply and help cool soaring prices in the crowded Chinese capital.

Authorities unveiled some new "pre-sale" rules, which analysts see as giving opportunities for struggling small developers to quicken sales. Many of them face a liquidity squeeze with sales slowing sharply since stringent property curbs were imposed in late March.

Left unchanged is a rule, widely deployed in China's real estate sector, under which developers can get a certificate to start selling units after they have spent 25% of their total investment.

One rule that has changed could



REUTERS

Buildings are seen against the dawn sky in Beijing. The city has pledged to supply one million units of residential housing and 500,000 units of rental housing in the next five years.

sale certificates to be issued, and lowered the bar for applying for the certificate.

The new rules would speed up projects for sale by three to six months, said Guo Yi, market director at Yahao, a Beijing real estate consultancy.

Guo urged small- and mid-sized developers to take the opportunity presented by the new policy.

"It's more important to get the sales revenue and avoid a bankruptcy," she wrote in a blog post.

At present, many developers have been reluctant to sell, likely due to price caps imposed by the government on new units.

The Beijing government's latest move is part of its plan to curb property prices in the capital of 22 million.

It has pledged to supply one million units of residential housing and 500,000 units of rental housing in the next five years. — Reuters

help speed up sales for developers, who often offer parts of projects in different stages.

Under the change, developers who obtain a needed construction certificate now can use it to get pre-sale permission twice, instead of

just once, facilitating a quickened sales pace.

A survey by the Beijing housing authority found 389 housing projects — either still being constructed or with no construction after a successful land bid — were

unqualified to be pre-sold under previous rules.

To accelerate market launches, the Beijing Municipal Commission of Housing and Urban-Rural Development on Tuesday introduced three measures to allow more pre-

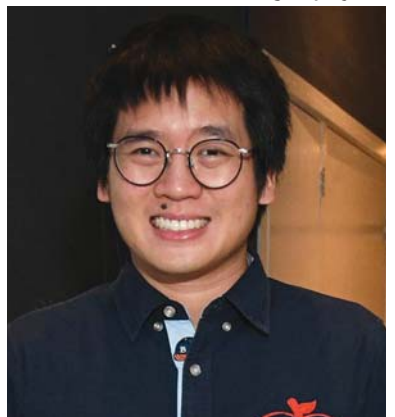




# Creating workspaces of the future

BY NATALIE KHOO

LOW YEN YEING | TheEdgeProperty.com



**I hope Colony raises the bar of what an office should be like — Tiah**

**D**uring weekdays, most working adults spend about eight hours a day at work, amounting to 40 hours a week — almost half of our waking time is spent in the office. For that amount of time, is it too much to ask for a working environment that makes us feel great and more productive?

“When you ask people what kind of office they would like to work in, a very common answer is the Google office! And why is that so? Because offices like Google’s offer a good working environment. Some of the Google offices around the world feature playgrounds in the building, different themed meeting rooms, nice cafeterias, and even slides and poles for employees to get from one floor to another.

“But if you have a small team, it makes no economic sense to bring in facilities like a gym or café. So, this is where I see an opportunity to build a great working environment to address the needs of this group of people,” executive director of Colony Space Asia Timothy Tiah shares with TheEdgeProperty.com.

Tiah is a well-known name in the world of social media. He was the chief operating officer of Netccen-

tric Ltd, a digital media company that he co-founded in 2006 before taking a step back from the active management of the company to start on a new venture last year. Net-centric is the parent company of a few subsidiaries such as global blog advertising community NuffNang, social media advertising company ChurpChurp, and mobile blogging application Dayre. He remains as a director, adviser and shareholder of the company.

Tiah is also a popular blogger who often writes about his family life, personal interests which include gadgets and sports, and life in general. Many have been trying to figure out what Tiah’s next venture was. After embarking, in a rather secretive manner, on the new project for about eight months, Tiah finally reveals what he has been working so passionately on — a shared workspace or co-working space called Colony. The first Colony will be in Kuala Lumpur city centre and is set to open its doors on July 15 with the official launch on July 27.

## A lifestyle workspace

The first Colony spans 18,000 sq ft and is located at Vipod Business Centre on Jalan Kia Peng. It took Tiah a lot of research and

“hunting” before he found this space.

“The space was an existing serviced office but I found out that it wasn’t doing too well. So, I went over and spoke to the landlord to propose a deal to him,” recalls Tiah. The landlord agreed to lease the space to him as well as to inject some money (fit-out cost) into the company, Colony Space Asia, on a profit-sharing basis.

To date, the company has spent some RM5 million including the funds the landlord has put in for renovations. “I also raised some money from several investors of Netccentric who told me they are in on any new business venture I am going into,” Tiah says with a laugh.

But why move into the business of shared or co-working spaces? Tiah believes this is the workspace of the future. He notices that people often associate work with sacrifices they have to make.

“We sacrifice a lot of things when we go to work. For example, if you ask me, ‘do you work out during the weekdays?’ the normal answer would be, ‘I have no time.’ So why do you have to sacrifice your time for work all the time?”

And so, he asked what a working

person wants in their day-to-day work — from how they commute to offices to what kind of meals they eat.

“In some offices, you put a Nintendo Wii or an Xbox with a really cool pool table and some beanbags and that is termed ‘cool’. Colony is nothing like that. These games rooms, people don’t even use them — they are just white elephants. It is not about that cool pool table or that gaming room but about a new work lifestyle,” Tiah remarks.

He wants to create a space where people do not have to worry about what time they should leave the office because of the traffic. “They can spend time in the gym or the swimming pool while waiting for the traffic to ease. Colony (at Vipod Residences) is also very close to the Pavilion KL, so it is really convenient if you need to grab something,” he adds.

He has also roped in Espresso Lab and The Healthy Food People to set up their outlets so tenants will be able to enjoy healthy food and good coffee when they work here. “A lot of office workers can be seen coming back from lunch holding a cup of coffee or a bubble tea in their hands and these are little treats that light up their day,” he says.

He also noticed that many work-

ing mums have to rush to pick up their kids after work and immediately head home and cook or stop to pack food for the family.

“What we plan to do with the food operator is to provide nice, colourful tiffin carriers that the food operator can pack every day for the mums to take home to their families without any hassle. The next day, they can just bring the tiffin carriers back and return them to the food operators,” he shares.

## Components of Colony

Built-ups of the rooms at Colony at Vipod are based on the number of seats. Two-seater rooms are around 84 to 89 sq ft each, 3-seater rooms are 106 to 122 sq ft, 4-seater rooms are 134 to 178 sq ft, 5-seater rooms are 176 sq ft and 6-seater rooms are 200 sq ft. There are a total of 50





(From far left) One can sit in the lounge area to work; the nap room for those who want some quiet time; another lounge area that can be converted into an event space; a meeting room. (All images are artist's impressions)

rooms in the shared workspace.

There will be seven packages to cater to individuals with different needs. Prices for private offices start from RM1,988 per month, while reserved desks are from RM818 per month — for those who enjoy working with others but need a fixed desk to work on. The open “hot desk” which allows individuals to work anywhere — from the available rooms to the lounges — costs RM528; pre-paid time passes for 100 hours are tagged at RM338 for those who need to pop in to office sometimes, and the price is RM50 per person for meeting rooms and event spaces. For an RM88 membership fee, you get four days per month access to an open hot desk. One can also have a virtual office mailbox starting from RM118 per month.

“We have lounge areas for the millennials who like to work in different environments at different times. They can just move around with their laptops. We also have nap rooms where people can take a short 20-minute power nap or for those who find it more productive to

work on their own for a while. There is even a massage room, and I am thinking of introducing a manicure and pedicure service so people can work on their laptops when their nails are getting done,” he says.

“There is a full-fledged gymnasium and swimming pool on the top floor. There will also be a lactation room for breastfeeding moms. For parents with children who want to bring their kids into the office, we also have a playroom where they can leave their kids. In the future, I am thinking of setting up a nursery in the office,” he offers.

#### Design of the workspace

“For this wonderfully designed space, I have to credit my wife. She is really good with details and design. She taught me about design and themes. When we wanted to have a theme for the workspace, she told me it must not be made so blatant so it becomes cliché. Our theme for this office is The Gentleman’s Club, but the theme cannot be so full blown that it alienates people,” he offers. Tiah’s wife

is popular blogger Fourfeetnine, or Audrey Ooi, and they have two children.

Help in fitting out the classy yet classic interiors also came from Hoe & Yin Design Studio, a KL-based interior design company.

Along the main corridors of Colony, there will be rooms that Tiah intends to design and fit out in different themes such as “fashion” or “IT” and will serve as a catalogue for potential tenants of the private offices. “If they like it, we can design the rooms for them and they will just have to pay the cost of the design,” Tiah remarks.

#### A study on where people want to work

Much of the offerings at Colony were based on the results of a survey Tiah had conducted via his blog asking readers what is important for them when it comes to choosing a work place.

“I always thought that people will try to avoid the city centre because it requires travel and people have to be stuck in jams. But the fact is that people want to work at busy buzzing places that are connected to a mall and to public transport. And there are three places in Klang Valley that

fit such requirements — the KLCC area, the Mid Valley area and the Sunway Pyramid area in Sunway City. And then maybe the Bandar Utama area,” he offers.

And those are exactly the places he would like to expand Colony. Part of the agreement inked with investors is that he has to open at least another co-working space by next June.

“Everywhere people talk about office glut and how offices have very low occupancy now. But when I was looking for an office space in the three areas (mentioned above), it was so difficult to find a space. Either that, or the rates were too high. In the KLCC area, the average rental is going for between RM6 and RM9 psf while in Mid Valley, the cheapest rate was RM6.30 psf at Menara IGB, and that is an old building. In Sunway City, we are talking about offices that are not even directly connected to Sunway Pyramid like Sunway Pinnacle, which does not have a single unit for rent! What office glut are we talking about?” Tiah asks.

#### In pursuit of creating great working environments

“I hope Colony raises the bar of what an office should be like. And

hopefully in the next five years, this is what a typical office would be. Generally, if you show these kind of offices to employees, they will be like ‘Yeah! This is where we want to work!’ But it is a tough thing to convince the bosses. For bosses, it all drills down to the bottom line and results.

“What we can offer to them is staff retention,” he says, noting that many millennial workers are willing to take a pay cut for a good working environment. This eventually leads to cost savings for the company. “When a company has a high turnover rate, it is costly. The hiring process is costly. Sometimes, bosses ask, ‘why are my workers leaving even though I am paying them more?’ Well, are you providing a good working environment?” Tiah says.

While he is only at the start of his journey, he is giving himself five years to find out if his ideas have succeeded. His idea of success is when he sees others copying and coming up with similar office spaces.

“That is when I know I have succeeded and raised the standards of what a great working environment should be. It may take some time, but I believe I can do it,” Tiah opines.



JUST IN!

## Panasonic expands Home Entertainment and Home Network System product lines

BY LUM KA KAY

Panasonic Malaysia has come up with even more choices for those looking to fit out their homes with the latest home entertainment and network systems.

“With the introduction of this new line-up of Home Entertainment and Home Network Systems, we would like to give our consumers more options to choose from,” said Panasonic Malaysia managing director Cheng Chee Chung in a press statement following the recent launch of the new systems.

Panasonic Home Entertainment covers all home entertainment devices, from high definition TVs to speakers and players, aimed at providing users with superior picture and sound quality in devices that boast sophisticated, sleek and convenient designs.

The new line-up includes Panasonic’s latest 4K Pro HDR OLED TV, the EZ1000, which unlocks the full potential of Panasonic’s latest OLED screen technology for deeper blacks and more accurate colours.

The EZ1000 is complemented by the new 4K Pro HDR TVs including 4K UHD and Full HD models, as

well as the latest generation LED TV series including the EX750, EX600, ES630, and ES500/ES501.

Meanwhile, the Panasonic Ultra HD Blu-ray Player renders fine details thanks to their high 4K resolution. “This provides lifelike depth effects and vivid colours through high contrast between dark and light areas, and always displays sharp and beautiful images enhanced by smooth motion,” said the company.

As for its audio system, the Urban Audio Series has three new speakers: the SC-UA7, SC-UX100 and SC-UA3. Each speaker provides expansive, smooth, interference-free sound in a stylish design that fits easily into any room.

On the other hand, the Panasonic Home Network System is a line-up of four sleek safety monitoring and automation packages to protect your home. This range of clever devices and kits allows users to remotely activate electrical appliances around the home, and monitor from inside and out.

“Users will be able to easily sync and expand the security system to their homes and connect indoor and outdoor cameras, digital cordless handsets, and other devices including smart plugs, motion sensors and window/door sensors.”



Cheng (left) and Panasonic Malaysia deputy managing director Hiroyuki Muto.



## FEATURE



# Still a market for luxury homes over RM10 mil

BY LUM KA KAY

**M**alaysia has seen eight transactions on the secondary market for landed residential properties over RM10 million in 2016. Yes, you read that right — over RM10 million.

According to the National Property Information Centre's 10 Million Ringgit Property Deals of 2016 Report, these properties are located in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Penang.

Most of these expensive homes are located in KL — in the premium addresses of Bukit Tunku (or Kenny Hills), Ampang Hilir, Taman Duta and Bukit Bandaraya. Malaysians would recognise these areas as among the most exclusive addresses in the country for high-end landed homes.

According to Savills Malaysia Sdn Bhd chairman Datuk Christopher Boyd, these luxury neighbourhoods are “long-standing high-end neighbourhoods”, most prominently known for their expatriate communities.

“Ampang Hilir caters to the expats working at the International School of Kuala Lumpur (ISKL), diplomats and embassy staff, as well as high-net-worth individuals who had long ago bought plots and built their own standalone detached homes.

“Bukit Tunku doesn't cater to the same crowd, but one similarity in the demographic of both is the local high-net-worth individuals who built their own bungalows there, as it was known as one of the premier addresses in town,” Boyd tells TheEdgeProperty.com.

Nawawi Tie Leung Real Estate Consultants Sdn Bhd managing director Eddy Wong concurs, saying that these established top-tier residential areas in KL will continue to be favoured for their prestige and central locations. The homes in these areas are also very spacious and sizeable to commensurate with their owners' lifestyle.

Topping the list of RM10 million deals last year was a double-storey detached home in Kenny Hills or Bukit Tunku that was sold at a whopping RM22 million. The house sits on a 5,919 sq m (63,711 sq ft) freehold plot.

This was followed by a RM15 million 3-storey leasehold semi-detached house in Ampang Hilir with a land area of 1,100 sq m.

## Beyond KL

Also attracting the affluent are houses in Tropicana Golf & Country Resort in Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

Last September, a 3-storey detached home on a 13,552 sq ft plot in the luxury residential enclave was transacted at RM10 million. The last time a property here made it to the RM10 million and above list was back in 2013 when a 3-storey detached home and a 2-storey detached home were sold for RM10.6 million and RM13.2 million, respectively.

The Tropicana Golf & Country Resort is a 625-acre township, anchored by the 380,000 sq ft Tropicana Clubhouse, with the 27-hole East and West championship golf courses adjacent to it.

Wong says the fact that the guarded-and-gated community is located within a golf resort makes it “very appealing” to wealthy homebuyers, aside from its ac-

cessibility to KL city centre.

“It is already one of the most desirable addresses in Klang Valley. However, if you were to compare it with Bukit Tunku or Taman Duta, Tropicana Golf & Country Resort offers a wider range of residences such as high-rise apartments and linked houses, which slightly dilutes its exclusivity,” he says.

Meanwhile, Boyd notes that Tropicana Golf & Country Resort capitalises on a lifestyle that offers a sense of escapism away from the hustle and bustle of city life.

“But this perhaps means it won't be one of the most top-end [addresses] in the future although it has its own niche market.

“Similar developments like Gamuda Land's Valencia also see good potential as high-end homes that are slightly more affordable than Taman Duta, Bukit Tunku and Ampang Hilir areas, due to their distance from the city and the seclusion factor,” he says.

## Up, up, up in Penang

Beyond the Klang Valley, the northern state of Penang has also managed to make its way into the list with a double-storey detached home sitting on a 12,174 sq ft site in Seri Tanjung Pinang, which was sold at RM11.6 million last year.

The gated-and-guarded, well-landscaped and well-planned Seri Tanjung Pinang, which was developed by Eastern and Oriental Bhd in 2005, is the first township development in Penang with a marina and well-managed lifestyle mall to cater to the needs of its residents.

Moreover, it is located close to the famous Gurney Drive promenade and other prime shopping centres such as

Gurney Plaza and Gurney Paragon.

“This area is perceived by the locals as one of the most liveable upmarket residential areas on Penang island. Overall, the landed home prices in this township appreciated at least 250% over the last 10 years,” says Henry Butcher Malaysia (Penang) Sdn Bhd asset valuation senior vice-president Shawn Ong.

He adds that a similar development to Seri Tanjung Pinang's houses is the Water Villa of The Light Collection at The Light Waterfront development in Gelugor, Penang by IJM Land Bhd. The 3-storey water villas that come with a basement and a roof terrace carries a RM15 million price tag.

## Luxury home market

According to Boyd, there is always a market for extremely high-end properties but these type of property transactions are never in high volume.

“A handful to a couple of dozen would be transacted each year, as only an elite few can afford these properties. These transactions should be considered separately from any speculation of the general residential property market and not likely to have much effect on the general public's need for their own homes.

“This [luxury] market sector has been

hit badly by the general downturn in the [property] market and the last two years have been tough. However, it has always been a cyclical market and will undoubtedly swing back,” Boyd says.

Wong is of the opinion that due to limited supply, the luxury homes segment will continue to enjoy constant demand due to the homes' exclusivity and central locations. Hence, prices are expected to remain stable.

“Its market dynamics is quite different from the general residential property market, so any spillover effect will be limited,” he adds.

SUHAIMI YUSUF | TheEdgeProperty.com



Boyd: There is always market for extremely high-end properties but transaction are never in high volume.

MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM | TheEdgeProperty.com



Ong: Seri Tanjung Pinang is perceived by the locals as one of the most liveable upmarket residential areas on Penang island.

EDDY WONG



Wong: Luxury homes will enjoy steady demand due to the homes' exclusivity and central locations.

SOURCE: NATIONAL PROPERTY INFORMATION CENTRE

## Top residential property deals in 2016

Location	District/State	Tenure	Land area	Built-up	Property type	Transacted price
Kenny Hills	Kuala Lumpur	Freehold	5,919 sq m	1,440.3 sq m	2-storey detached home	RM27 million
Ampang Hilir	Kuala Lumpur	Leasehold (99 years)	1,100 sq m	1,660.54 sq m	3-storey detached home	RM15 million
Ampang Hilir	Kuala Lumpur	Freehold	1,697 sq m	488.9 sq m	2-storey detached home	RM13 million
Raja Mohar Scheme (Kg Datuk Keramat)	Kuala Lumpur	Leasehold (99 years)	1,618 sq m	1,592.18 sq m	2-storey detached home	RM13 million
Bandar Tg Pinang	Penang island	Freehold	1,131 sq m	713.21 sq m	2-storey detached home	RM11.6 million
Taman Duta	Kuala Lumpur	Leasehold (99 years)	1,369 sq m	728.31 sq m	2-storey detached home	RM10.3 million
Bukit Bandaraya	Kuala Lumpur	Freehold	1,044 sq m	703.93 sq m	1- to 1.5-storey detached home	RM10 million
Tropicana Golf & Country Club	Sg Buloh, Petaling district	Leasehold (99 years)	1,259 sq m	1,080.14 sq m	3-storey detached home	RM10 million





# Connectivity — the pulse of the city

BY RACHEL CHEW

One of the most important attributes of a liveable city is undeniably its connectivity and accessibility. In TheEdgeProperty.com-Lafarge Happiness in the City Index 2017 survey conducted recently, the 1,796 respondents from the Klang Valley, Penang and Johor Bahru had ranked the existence of an integrated transportation system as the most important attribute of a liveable city, ahead of other aspects including high-quality housing, beautiful buildings, being environmentally friendly and having higher income and job opportunities.

That result should not surprise us as more than 80% of the survey respondents also revealed that they are currently depending on their own transport in the form of personal cars to travel around the cities they are living in. Among the Klang Valley respondents, only 7% of them used public transportation, such as the light rail transit (LRT), taxis and buses. To say that public transport is still not widely used in the country's most established major urban centres of Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Johor Bahru is perhaps an understatement.

While the reasons for low public transport usage in the city could be varied, transportation planning consultant Goh Bok Yen tells TheEdgeProperty.com that the core reason, in his opinion, is that the masses themselves have never given the public transportation system a good chance to grow.

"A good transportation system is important to a city because it has a direct impact on the mobility of its citizens. It also has an impact on national economic growth. It is more impactful than

many would imagine," Goh says.

"As the capital of Malaysia, KL's public transportation planning has been neglected for decades. If you ask what the consequences of poor public transportation planning are, look at KL today. This is the accumulated consequences of the past 25 years."

He points out that the public has been encouraged to use personal transport with affordable automobile prices, subsidised fuel/petrol, easy access to car parks and with more highway projects being approved and built, over the past 25 years. "Our society is so comfortable using their own mode of transport to travel around until now when more and more people are moving into the city and the road system can barely cope with the amount of traffic."

In 2010, the government announced the Greater KL public transportation master plan under the 10th Malaysia Plan, aiming to boost more public transport usage by introducing the mass rapid transit (MRT) lines, the extension of the existing LRT lines and by enhancing the city bus system.

The first MRT line or the Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line is 51km long and has 31 stations. It will be fully operational by July 17, 2017. The first phase from Sungai Buloh to Semantan with 12 stations was completed and has been in operation since December 2016.

Besides that, the LRT Kelana Jaya Line has added 13 new stations while the LRT Ampang Line has added 12 new stations since June 2016.

While more transit lines and new stations have been added, the Klang Valley traffic does not seem to have improved.

"We are talking about a problem that has been accumulating for the past 25 years. It will be a miracle if the traffic congestion on our city roads can be resolved in the next five to 10 years. For me, if we can achieve the national target of having 40% of the



Goh: The public transportation system... will only work if every module plays its role in the right position.

public use public transport in the next 20 years, that would already be a great achievement," Goh says.

## Balance and coordination

Goh points out that the public transportation system should not be implemented in a silo and should not be the only focus in efforts to solve the traffic problems in the major cities of Malaysia including KL, Johor Bahru and Penang.

"A good transportation system is more than just about its public transportation alone. The first thing that the government should do concurrently when building more transport infrastructure is to divert private transport usage to public transport," he shares. To do that, he suggests that the cost of owning private transport and the cost of parking in city centres should be increased gradually. New highways should also not be approved without careful consideration. And most importantly, the current public transport quality has to be improved.

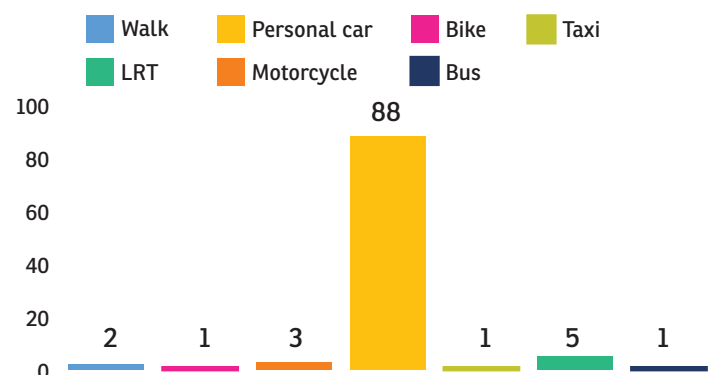
"The MRT, bus or LRT transport systems will not be effective forms of public transport if they are not connected to each other. The MRT should not be seen as the saving grace. It will not work well if it is not well connected with feeder buses or if the feeder buses are not on time or well-coordinated with the timing of the train stops.

"It will also not work well if the number of private cars in the city centres continue to go up. The public transportation system is a system — it will only work if every module plays its role in the right position," Goh stresses.

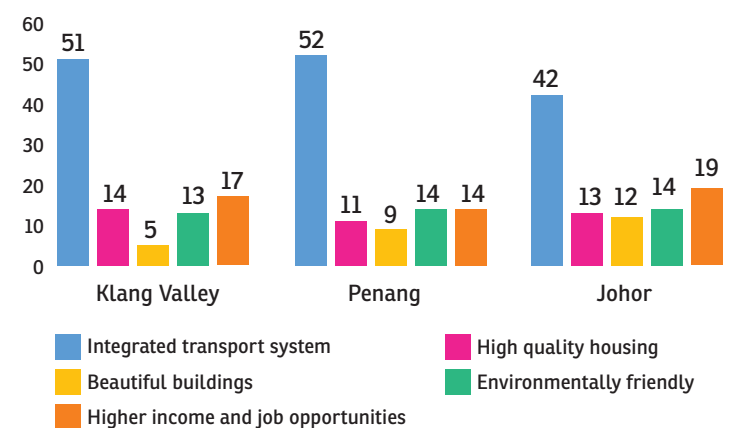
Hence, to have an effective public transport system, there is a need for precise coordination and connectivity.

He warns that the Greater KL transportation master plan may fail if the above-mentioned adjustments are not implemented by now. "We may end up like Bangkok, which has an amazing mass transit line route but

## Most used transport in Klang Valley (%)



## Important attributes of a liveable city (%)



the road traffic is still bad."

There is no denying that one of the main stress factors among urbanites is having to deal with traffic.

Traffic congestion and the constant din and mess from road and public transport infrastructure construction works can negatively affect the mental health of road users.

"About four years ago, I predicted that KL city centre will be a huge construction site that is noisy, dusty, messy and congested due to poor road system. It is definitely not a good environment for its citizens to work and live in," Goh says.

TheEdgeProperty.com-Lafarge Happiness in the City Index 2017 found that about 54% of respondents in the Klang Valley feel stressed out living there. Interestingly, re-

spondents from Penang and Johor Bahru are experiencing comparatively much less stress at 7% and 17%, respectively. There are many possible reasons for that, but that's another story. The main thing to note is that a majority of respondents in all three states agree that an integrated transport system is critical to a city's liveability.

"A successful transportation system is something that every citizen would welcome. At the same time, green spaces and green environment should not be sacrificed. After all, we are formulating a system and an environment for better city living and a happier city life for the next generation," offers Goh.

It is thus imperative that we take action now to make the city a happier place to live in.

54%  
Klang Valley

7%  
Penang

17%  
Johor

Feel stressed out  
living in the city



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A SPECIAL REPORT BY

TheEdgeProperty.com

JUNE 30, 2017



“

We believe in challenging the norm to better serve all our customers and the industry.

At Nippon Paint, it is our culture to strive for perfection in all our endeavours – from product innovation to provision of support and services – so as to ensure that we leave our customers and partners with lasting smiles.”

—Yaw Seng Heng, Group Managing Director,  
Nippon Paint (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd



**INSPIRING  
GREATNESS**



## SPECIAL REPORT



# The chronicles of Nippon Paint Malaysia



The Edge Property Malaysia



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The most powerful brand names are so strongly associated with the products which they represent that consumers automatically think of specific brands when they have a product in mind. Today, when you think of paint, you think of Nippon Paint.

This power of association does not happen overnight. It is established primarily through years of market pre-eminence with the provision of quality products, innovation and reliability, and of course, through the strategic employment of branding tools. In the case of Nippon Paint, chances are that the mere mention of this brand name evokes bubbly images of a cluster of multi-coloured and lively Blobbies clambering and sliding over surfaces, chuckling merrily as they transform any commonplace surface into a vibrant reincarnation of its former self.

Yet even as recently as a decade ago in Malaysia, Nippon Paint did not enjoy this coveted power of association between brand and product. Today however, Nippon Paint (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd is not just a household standard but stands proud as the country's No.1 Total Coatings Solution provider, a position that has been hard-won, well deserved and held since 2008.

Since its humble beginnings in Osaka, Japan in 1881, Nippon Paint has organically grown into Asia's No.1 coatings manufacturer and now enjoys a solid presence in 16 countries across Asia. Meanwhile in Malaysia, Nippon Paint adopted a simple strategy upon its incorporation in 1967 – dig in deep and take root. As such, the company focused on selling primarily inexpensive paint to achieve the desired sales volume in order to ensure its continued survival. Since then, Nippon Paint has effectively evolved from selling inexpensive paint to supplying premium innovative paint. Sited in Larkin Industrial Estate in Johor Bahru, the first Nippon Paint factory was approximately 11,000 sq. ft. in size and numbered only 50 employees.

A half century on, the current Nippon Paint headquarters located in Shah Alam, sits on a site measuring a whopping 25 acres with a labour force totalling 1,050 employees. From an initial sales revenue of less than RM4 million in 1971, the organisation today boasts an annual turnover of more than RM1 billion and has emerged as a regional powerhouse within the coatings industry having firmly staked its foothold in countries such as Pakistan, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Thailand and Indonesia.

## Inspiring Greatness

Throughout Nippon Paint's rich history an entre-

preneurial attitude has been matched by a culture of hard work, open communication and stakeholder engagement. "In my formative years, I was greatly influenced by my carpenter-turned hardware shop owner father. What he taught me was that good people management, strong interpersonal skills and, above all, honest endeavour are vital components in managing a successful business," says Yaw Seng Heng, Group Managing Director of Nippon Paint (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd.

"Everyone aspires to achieve the ideal work environment which is easier said than done given the various internal and external factors that influence the day to day operations of a company. Acknowledging that the ideal work environment is never a constant, we must always work to improve ourselves, our environment and ultimately

**I started my career in Nippon Paint in the protective coatings division. In the course of my 32 years in the company, I have met countless fabricators, architects, contractors and other stakeholders. People who started off as clients have become friends. It is a way of doing business that has been inculcated among the employees of Nippon Paint and makes us feel very much like we are all part of a growing family. — Yaw**

our business so that the company will continue to move forward. Continuous improvement and optimisation of our work processes is a mantra we live by at Nippon Paint," adds Yaw.

It is these core principles which underpin the philosophy that has propelled Nippon Paint to such heights within a relatively short period of time and the company's drive to continuously push the envelope, elevate its customers' quality of life and "Inspire Greatness" has influenced all aspects of its business. In order to harness the focus on its primary business objectives and the overriding goal of serving customers by providing premier coating solutions through an array of products and across multiple industry segments, Nippon Paint undertook a brand and corporate repositioning exercise to bring clarity and definition to its role and value in the market. This culminated in its simple yet spectacularly successful transformation from 'The Paint Expert' to 'The Coatings Expert'.



**We have been Nippon Paint's customer for the past 25 years. Over this period, we have observed the company's rapid growth especially in the past decade. Rather than waiting to adapt, the company actively seeks out new opportunities, embraces critical questioning and strives for continuous improvement." — Dato' Leong Chee Kong, Managing Director, Chee Kong Engineering & Construction Sdn Bhd**



**Nippon Paint's versatility in adopting new processes and technologies has propelled it to evolve from a conservative paint company into a complete coatings provider. Today, the company serves as the technical centre and is responsible for the transfer and sharing of technologies to their regional affiliates – it is indeed a great achievement! Having supplied raw materials to Nippon Paint since 1992, we are proud to be involved in some of their projects and look forward to supporting each other and growing together." — Teoh Weng Chai, Group CEO, WWRC Malaysia Sdn Bhd**



**Synthomer, through its subsidiary company Revertex (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd started supplying paint binders to Nippon Paint from 1985. We see Nippon Paint as a company continually increasing its focus on growth and innovation and together, our companies will continue to create exciting synergies from this long term partnership." — Derick B. Whyte, Executive Vice President Asia, Synthomer**



**Our partnership with Nippon Paint goes back to 1974 when my father was heading the business. During this period, we have witnessed the company's rapid business growth via disruption in the retail market through use of its groundbreaking Colour Creations Machine and continuous optimisation of production. Nippon Paint is also a company that takes very good care of its partners." — Andy Lew, General Manager, Mechon Engineering Sdn Bhd**





# Spurring growth

Nippon Paint has actively engaged the market in a push-pull strategy to stimulate end-user consumption whilst cultivating a close association with its external stakeholders. Through trade-shows, exhibitions and workshops, Nippon Paint continuously interacts with building and construction sector players such as developers, architects, contractors, interior designers and dealers to update them on the latest coating advances and technologies. In this way, the company seeks to nurture its existing consumer and retail relationships.

Says Group General Manager, Gladys Goh, "We do not just offer paints, we offer solutions to the building and construction sectors. We constantly rethink, recreate and push boundaries to generate coating solutions that perform on surfaces from floor to roof and everything in between. With our coating systems, we can solve many problems faced by the building and construction sectors such as hairline cracks, efflorescence, discoloration and others. Besides that, our innovative products can also offer different coating solutions such as design solutions – using paint to replace other materials to achieve a similar finish – as well as offering wellness solutions such as eco-friendly and anti-bacteria paint." This emphasis on providing solutions rather than simply selling products is one of the bedrocks of Nippon Paint's commercial strategy.

In the same vein, instead of just advancing Corporate Social Responsibility programmes, Nippon Paint instead advocates the concept of Creating Shared Value thus ensuring that its entire value chain, from its suppliers and manufacturers to its dealers, are committed to environmentally sustainable standards. The company firmly believes that it is incumbent upon them to challenge fellow market players to provoke development in the industry and attain greater success.

Consequently, to augment its role as a responsible thought leader and market innovator in the building and construction sectors and to effectively channel its involvement, Nippon Paint has undertaken a series of inspiring initiatives to trigger networking, encourage cross-sharing of ideas and innovations, and, to instigate the evolution of new trends.



## 5 COLOUR CREATIONS MACHINE

Nippon Paint conceptualised and fabricated the Colour Creations Machine to aid its retail partners in their inventory management. Previously, dealers had to stock up paints in different colours thus compromising their inventory efficiency. With the Colour Creations Machine, dealers just need to maintain a stock of Nippon Paint's base products and can tint the customer's colour of choice within seconds. Currently, Nippon Paint has the ability to tint thousands of colours through its colour tinting machine.



## 1 TREND BEYOND COLOURS

Nippon Paint has taken the lead in driving colour trends by conceiving a new range of exhilarating colours to entice the Asian palette. Created by Asians for Asians and inspired by the region's gorgeous landscapes and rich cultures, these formulations have been concocted by a select group of professionals from across Asia Pacific in an annual Trend Beyond Colours Forecasting Workshop. Every year's pick of vibrant and tropical hues are then unveiled in an annual colour forecasting publication aptly called Trend Beyond Colours.

## 2 FUTURE FORWARD FORUM

In collaboration with REHDA Youth, the Future Forward Forum is a platform that brings together associated industry players to share knowledge, forecast trends and spawn innovative thinkers. "As Asia's No.1 coatings expert, we are championing innovations in the property industry in the region. Hence the Future Forward Forum is to equip the existing and the upcoming generation of property industry leaders with insights into property trends, emerging ideas and predictions in design, projects and innovations. By the conclusion of the Forum, these industry leaders are updated on the latest ideas and trends within the region. They are also provided with other valuable insights on areas such as branding, technologies, lifestyle patterns, sustainability, new media and design, which will improve their business competitiveness. Thus through the Future Forward Forum, it is with great excitement that we are anticipating new possibilities and innovations in the market," divulges Goh.

## 3 THEEDGEPROPERTY.COM MALAYSIA'S BEST MANAGED PROPERTY AWARDS & SYMPOSIUM

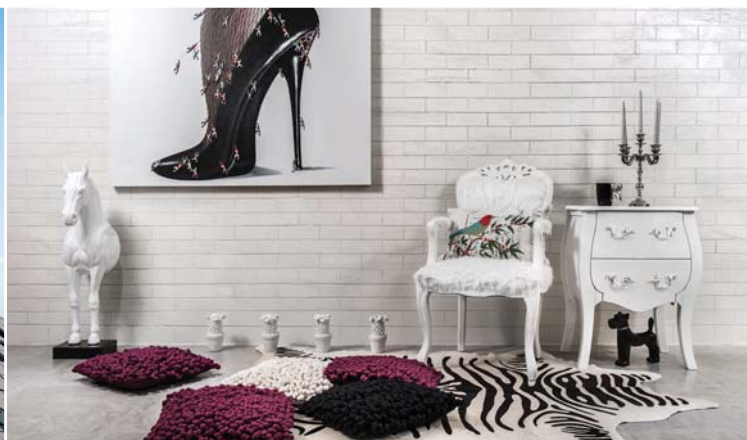
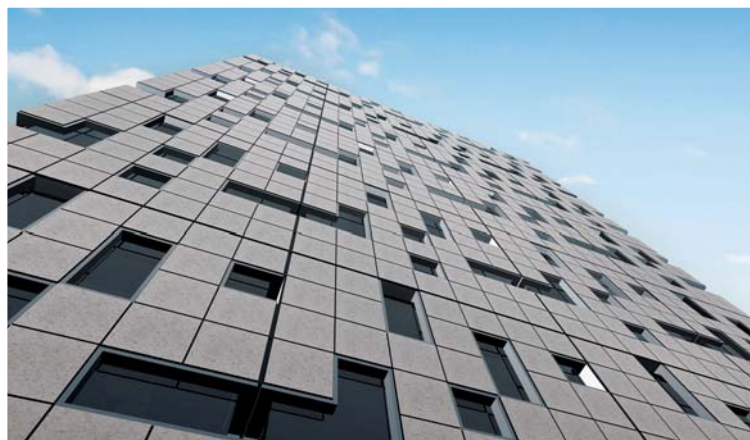
The Awards and Symposium were conceived to educate the public on the importance of quality property management. It endeavours to highlight world-class property management practices to all affiliates including authorities, developers, property managers, investors and consumers, and, strives to drive awareness that a well-managed property will enhance capital appreciation.

## 4 GREEN SEMINAR

Motivated by its Total Solution philosophy, Nippon Paint has pioneered numerous eco-friendly and sustainable coatings. By introducing water-based and mercury-free solutions which are also low in Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), the company has formulated safer products for its consumers as well as engineered a tangible reduction in adverse environmental impact. Collaborating with the Green Building Index and the Malaysian Green Building Confederation, the company conducts seminars to highlight its functional coating systems which promote sustainable management practices for various new and existing building types such as hospitals, factories, shopping malls and hotels.



## SPECIAL REPORT


**THE  
COATINGS  
EXPERT®**


Clockwise from top left: Textured coating revitalises a building's exterior via Nippon Paint Stone Art, Royal Stone and Classic Tile; The Nippon Paint Momento series offers exciting solutions as a substitute to other materials; Protective heavy duty coating protects steel structures from corrosion; Automotive refinishing with Cyglaz technology that boasts self-healing mechanisms

# Raising the bar

It is said the company that builds a culture of innovation is on the path to growth whilst the company that fails to innovate is on the road to obsolescence. Having come to this realisation early on, Nippon Paint took this tenet deep to heart and has since prioritised Research and Development (R&D) programmes, cultivating an impressive record of leading edge innovations that have significantly challenged the archetypical norms.

However, Nippon Paint believes that innovation is only of merit if it is tailored to meet the specific needs of consumers. For example, its automotive refinishing uses Cyglaz technology which comes with a self-healing mechanism. Another notable innovation is its use of a protective or heavy duty coating to protect steel structures from corrosion.

Leveraging on insights gained from its extensive network of dealers and distributors, the company has come up with a '3-Solution' policy which serves as its guiding principle in formulating technological advances. The policy focuses on 'Health', 'Design' and 'Smart' elements to create unique solutions featuring functional capabilities that can cater to any segment of the market.

In their 'Health Solution' for instance, Nippon Paint offers a low volatile organic com-

pound (VOC), water-based range of functional coatings that are anti-viral, inhibits the growth of H1N1 and Hand, Foot & Mouth diseases, abates harmful formaldehyde and refreshes the air. Indeed, it was Nippon Paint that first pioneered and introduced coating systems that improves indoor air quality and promotes consumer wellbeing to the Malaysian market.

By way of their 'Design Solution', the company offers the latest paint makeover ideas for consumers who prize individuality and seek statement interiors with bold finishing touches. Instead of opting for traditional paint colour, end users can now indulge in richly textured, special effects solutions from the Nippon Paint Momento series. These textured solutions are also available for exterior facades by way of the Nippon Paint Stone Art, Royal Stone and Classic Tile coatings.

The 'Smart Solution' meanwhile, addresses cost effective ways for consumers to protect their property investments without having to endure expensive facelifts. Consumers are offered coating solutions that are able to paint a variety of materials such as tiles, wood, cement, slate, and, even glass. The various products can be used for a wide range of applications from heat insulation to resuscitation of old or shabby tiled surfaces, all of

which provide value added lifestyle solutions.

However, Nippon Paint has not limited its creativity only to its delivery of cutting-edge solutions. It has adopted the approach of 'pushing the envelope' in all aspects of the business. For example, its most successful marketing initiative to date must surely be the unveiling of the iconic Bloopies. These popular and lively characters effectively communicate the company's intent and are so synonymous with Nippon Paint that the company has succeeded in building upon its brand equity through its Bloopies.

Likewise, the company has focused on service differentiation as a fundamental asset to complement its product initiatives in order to deliver a holistic advantage to its customers. "Our engagement with business partners has definitely evolved in a way that we treat our business partners as part of our family. For instance, we assist our dealers in their business practices by providing them with continuous training so that they are able to provide a competent and pleasant consultation to consumers," states Lim Kha Tuan, Assistant General Manager of Retail Sales.



“

My father and I have been using Nippon Paint products for more than a decade. Without fail, the company has provided us with reliable technical support, as well as always delivering a consistent quality finish. With Nippon Paint, we not only benefit from early job completion but also gain happy customers!" — **Lee Kok Weng, Timax Innovation & Design Enterprise**



“

We have been a dealer of Nippon Paint for almost 25 years owing to its excellent product quality and variety of choices. Besides possessing a powerful brand, the company also offers strong support through continuous training, which in turn has helped our business to grow." — **San Yoke Kee, Director, Ju Seng Hong (M) Sdn Bhd**



“

We have been in partnership with Nippon Paint since 1978. In the past, dealers had to stock up on the numerous paint options but with the introduction of Nippon Paint's Colour Creations Machine, it has considerably simplified our stock management process. Besides, the machine tints colours beautifully with minimal to no variances." — **Sim Seng, owner, Syarikat Sim Seng Sdn Bhd**



“

Nippon Paint has a defined and well-honed business ecosystem that promotes business growth for its partners. The company fields an accomplished team that is continuously at hand to offer ready advice and assistance on any of its products." — **Low Chung King, Director, Hock Hong Hardware Trading Sdn Bhd**



“

From the very start of our business relationship, Nippon Paint has been nothing short of supportive. They have been enthusiastic with their assistance, from helping us with our store image and supplying us with Point Of Sale Materials (POSM), to even solving problems faced by our customers." — **Eric Ng, Syarikat Sheong Huat Auto Sdn Bhd**



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Nippon Paint is an innovator that has created a stunning range of top quality decorative finishes for both interior and exterior surfaces. The company also provides coating solutions to serve multi-segments including automotive and protective coatings. Therefore, with such an extensive array of coating solutions to offer, Nippon Paint has significantly contributed to the growth of our business." — **Lew Kok Loong, Director, Shong Heng Paints & Hardware Sdn Bhd**



“

Nippon Paint products have benefitted my customers and I. I am very happy with the cooperation and service given to me by Nippon Paint. The company tries its best to meet their customers' needs in line with changing trends. It also upholds quality in each of its product." — **Mohamad Hashim Jamal, owner, Ashem Painting**



“

My customers are from different industries and Nippon Paint's innovation allows me to meet customers' requirement. I appreciate the support given to my company such as training and technical support that allows me to serve my customers well." — **Zulzafri Kosnan, General Manager, Zainal and Din Construction Sdn Bhd**



# Bringing progressive change to communities

In order to implement a cohesive and meaningful CSR strategy, Nippon Paint has undertaken assignments that are in line with its core values – focusing on under-served communities with specific emphasis on educating beneficiaries and empowering them with knowledge as well as skills that they can fall back on in the long term. By recognising the importance of education in empowering the recipients of these initiatives, Nippon Paint has devised a CSR strategy which avoids quick fixes and instead emphasises sustainable gain.

## Colourful dreams

In 2013 Nippon Paint launched its flagship CSR wing aptly titled Colourful Dreams — “Create Joy for Today, Hope for Tomorrow” — that aims to create a positive impact in the community through sustainable projects and activities.

The primary objective of Colourful Dreams is to boost the self-development of underprivileged children and their surrounding communities. In addition, it is also motivated towards physically transforming such communities to create safer and more conducive living environments. Designed to lend a hand

**“It was a pleasure to be involved in the Colourful Dreams Art Camp. We learnt about teamwork, tolerance and solidarity, and also discovered how each of us is unique in our own special way. The students now understand how to work together as a unit and to accept each others’ weaknesses. The Camp has contributed immensely in the students’ character building and Nippon Paint will be welcomed back with open arms! — Siti Sukmawati, a teacher from the SDS IT Mambaul ‘Ulum School in Batam, Indonesia**

to disadvantaged families, this programme empowers the breadwinners by equipping them with painting skills through a series of training sessions which then increases their chances of securing work.

Through its Colourful Dreams Art Camp, Nippon Paint engages the whole community, from coaching teachers and educating children, to conducting upskilling workshops for parents.



The Colourful Dreams Art Camp - art and craft activities help children to develop cognitive skills, encourage creativity and offer opportunities for self-expression.



Colourful Dreams Community Outreach programme trains villagers to paint and build community homes



Colourful Dreams Art by Children, for Children Exhibition aims to help raise start-up funds through art, creating a small measure of financial support for the children until they are able to find employment



**AYDA is an important platform for students as it provides us with an opportunity to showcase our work to industry professionals and the public. Participants gain invaluable professional feedback and develop both intellectually and emotionally during the course of the competition. Winning the award has boosted my confidence as a designer.”**  
— Chai Min Li, AYDA 2016 Platinum Award Winner in Interior Design category



**What is special about AYDA is that it gives student participants the chance to promote themselves on a formal stage. Participants are presented with ample opportunity to challenge themselves, inspire and be inspired, as well as to network and build links. Through this competition, I gained the courage to try out new things and to build the confidence to share my opinions and designs with others.”**  
— David Nee Zhi Kang, AYDA 2016 Gold Award Winner in Architecture category

## Asia Young Designer Award (AYDA)

Another of Nippon Paint’s successful CSR initiatives is the annual Asia Young Designer Award (AYDA). Acknowledging the abundance of talent in the creative industry, Nippon Paint decided to provide a platform to groom aspiring young designers by nurturing their talents through exposure to cross-cultural learning experiences and by providing training in different fields. AYDA engages industry professionals to coach and

lecture the participants on topical matters with emphasis being placed on values such as individuality, environmental sustainability, future forward design and heart for the community and the people they design for.

AYDA is currently Asia’s premier design competition and in 2016 it attracted more than 4,500 regional entries from across 15 countries, as compared to the modest count of 87 entries when it first kicked off in 2008.

AYDA’s aspiring designers of the future





## SPECIAL REPORT



# United in harmonious purpose

Just as no man is an island, so too it is implausible that the success of an organisation can be attributed to any one person. Whilst there are many cogs in the wheel of a business, ultimately it is the employees who are the life blood that flows through the veins of any successful company. This is especially true in the case of Nippon Paint.

Conscious that its 1,050 members of staff define the spirit and soul of the company, Nippon Paint has taken great pains to prioritise staff engagement, encourage empowerment and foster a work culture that not only inspires but also rewards distinction.

Having an attractive remuneration scheme is necessary to entice talent. Yet if loyalty is the definitive measure of employee satisfaction, then the Nippon Paint family is clearly a contented group since approximately 45% of its staff has served the company for more than ten years. In an age where high turnover is the norm, this represents an astonishing statistic that bears testament to the strength of Nippon Paint as an employer.

So how has this allegiance to the compa-

ny been secured? To start with, the company has cultivated an environment of genuine camaraderie through empowerment, accountability and the sharing of responsibility and authority. Coupled with its guiding spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation, this collegial culture has helped to stimulate the growth of the company's corporate identity through retention of people who truly understand and live the values of Nippon Paint.

"We ensure that the skills, knowledge, experiences and tools which we impart to our employees empower them to make decisions that are aligned with our business strategies. This tangible association between learning and implementation is a powerful motivator. An engaged leadership and a culture of open communication further feeds their sense of purpose," explains Jason Ho Lai King, Assistant General Manager for Group Human Resource & Corporate Affairs.

Simply put, happy and motivated employees who are passionate about working for their organisation will share their convictions with end customers. To sustain this enthusiasm, Nippon Paint has set about creating

a strong sense of brand affinity to further fuel its employees' commitment and sense of ownership.

"Our Nippon Paint family is thrilled that we are the No. 1 coatings brand in Malaysia. To get them excited about something new, we introduced our 'vision for dominance' concept. We began the journey by changing our vision from simply being the No. 1 paint company to becoming the dominant coatings provider within the markets we operate in. This new strategic objective injected a fresh boost of energy, excitement and motivation to our employees.

Coming from being a challenger brand to successfully attaining the No. 1 total coatings solutions position, our staff know that anything is possible so long as they set their hearts and minds to it. This vision is the cornerstone that dictates our actions and drives us to work together towards a common goal," adds Ho. It is apparent that creating a sense of investment in achieving a long term objective has successfully galvanised the employees and fostered a very real commitment to their company's cause.

“

At Nippon Paint, we empower our employees by providing them with the skills, knowledge, experiences and tools that allow them to make decisions that are aligned with our business strategies." — Jason Ho, Assistant General Manager for Group Human Resource & Corporate Affairs



## Reminiscing with the Nippon Paint Family

“The staff work well, happy and helpful together irrespective of seniority and rank, thus strengthening the ties with each other and between the different departments. By providing us with training and varying job functions, we are also given the opportunity to learn, grow and challenge ourselves.” — Ghazali Kasim, joined 12 May 1983, Executive (Technical)

“I started as a Process Worker under Mr Tan Ming Kian who was an inspiring mentor but the turning point in my career at Nippon Paint was joining the IT Department as a Junior Programmer. In my earlier years, we had a manual inventory system using simple stock cards. Today, we have a state of the art SAP system that is even supporting the Malaysia Group of companies. The management, meanwhile, recognises and values the contribution from its employees which encourages us and consolidates our sense of belonging.” — Damodaran Karunakaran, joined 19 May 1987, Manager (Systems)

“I started in Quality Control when the office was much smaller and was located in Section 15 in Shah Alam. While we receive good remuneration and benefits, it is the working environment which promotes friendships and teamwork that has persuaded me to stay on. When I was transferred to the Technical Sales Department in 2009, I had the honour of being the first sales staff to bag the Proton tender.” — Roslidali Mat Saari, joined 2 August 1993, Senior Sales Executive



Standing from left: Damodaran Karunakaran, Ghazali Kasim, Siew Chin Wah, Ng Siew Choo, Faizal Wahid, Hairi Eberahim. Sitting from left: Mahamud Mohamad, Roslidali Mat Saari, Mohd Hanafi Idris

“One of the inspirational things about our company is our CSR activities. We have developed significant and constructive relationships with orphanages, single mothers and the under privileged. However, the most meaningful aspect of working in Nippon Paint is that from management to staff, we care for each other as if we are family!” — Siew Chin Wah, joined 1 December 1985, Assistant Production Manager

“As the business grew, so did the number of staff. Previously, there were only 2 to 3 computers per office whereas today, each staff member is allocated their own computer. The company logo has also undergone several variations though the letter 'N' has remained constant. Nippon Paint has been a great employer offering many opportunities for personal growth. In fact, my first overseas trip was courtesy of the company when we went to Indonesia to launch the SAP system.” — Rostina Jono, joined 1 January 1991, Executive (Administration)

“Opportunity for promotion, opportunity for growth, enticing remuneration and a caring management makes Nippon Paint a favourable work place. It is my hope to work for this company until I retire. One of my favourite job functions is serving as a member of the Emergency Response Team (ERT).” — Mohd Faizal Wahid, joined 6 August 2003, Store Assistant (Logistics)



## Advocating continuous professional development

Aside from investing in top notch systems and technologies such as Systems Applications Products (SAP) to increase employee productivity and enhance efficiency, Nippon Paint prides itself on being a fulfilling place for talents to thrive. The company endorses career growth and development through numerous schemes including training, secondment opportunities and the

Management Associate Programme (MAP).

MAP is a 12-month fast track business and operational skills development programme that exposes and familiarises fresh graduates to all functions and divisions within the company, thus providing Nippon Paint with a ready talent pool equipped with the required knowledge and experience to drive its business growth and expansion.

“

The MAP is not just a syllabus but doubles as a self-advancement lesson. It taught me to adapt to varying conditions and provided me with a golden opportunity to learn first-hand the differing management styles in the various departments. Through this programme, I learnt how all aspects of the business connected with each other and how each department played a vital role in delivering the company's holistic goals. The MAP offers marvellous exposure to fresh graduates!

— Sean Tan, MAP 2009, Manager, Project Division



From left: Roslina Jono, Mohd Shahrin, Mohd Fuad Masood



“

I have the honour of being one of Nippon Paint's oldest employees. I started off as a general worker in the old office and never contemplated leaving the company primarily due to the inclusive and enjoyable work environment.” — Mahamud Mohamad, joined 16 September 1979, Chargehand

“

I started as a store supervisor. Thanks to Nippon Paint's career development opportunities, today I am the Logistics Manager that controls the company's supply chain.” — Mohd Alis Jabana b. Ramli. Joined 1991, Logistics Manager

“

We truly are like family to each other. When I had an accident, I received concerned support from the General Manager and all my colleagues which went a long way in aiding my recovery. Such is my rapport with my colleagues that I have had the privilege of representing them as the Union President for almost 18 years.” — Mohamad Fuad Masood, joined 5 July 1994, Storekeeper

“

It was very fulfilling and exciting for us, the staff, when the company extended its reach to regional countries within a mere decade. With the company's policy of prioritising continuous learning and career advancement, employees now have the opportunity for cross-border secondment and training.” — Ng Siew Choo, joined 18 March 1985, Manager (Group Human Resource)

“

Amongst other things, the company has provided me with lucrative annual salary increments and comfortable working hours from 8am to 5.15pm. I started my career in Nippon Paint at the canning lines. However, with the training provided by the company I have now advanced to the position of a colour matcher.” — Hairi Eberahim, joined 2 November 1995, Colour Matcher II

“

Having worked 21 years in the Johor Bahru branch, my treasured memory is when the Emergency Response Team and I undertook a bonding and character building exercise in Tasik Chini. We had to trek through the pitch dark jungle at night and were prohibited from using torches to light our way. Instead, we worked together as a team and safely completed the trek. Furthermore, during our hike in the jungle, we were escorted by lovely fireflies. It seemed as if the insects were showing us the way out of the jungle which added to the whole experience!” — Mohd Shahrin Mohd Sahid, joined 27 May 1996, Manager (Safety)

“

Nippon Paint has provided me with job security. Through the company's Recreation Club, I have also had the opportunity to travel and visit places such as Langkawi, Medan, Bandung and Phuket.” — Mohd Hanafi Idris, joined 1 November 1990, Canning Hand II




**THE COATINGS EXPERT®**

# Striding into the future

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In order to look forward we must build on our successful past. So, as we have always done, we will continue

to strive for customer satisfaction through product innovations such as providing different coatings for multi-substrates (from floor to roof and everything in between) and multi-segments (architectural, protective, industrial, marine and automotive). We also aspire to be the one-stop painting solutions provider so that our customers can benefit from an easy and hassle-free painting experience,” says Yaw Seng Heng, Group Managing Director of Nippon Paint (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd.

“I have enjoyed my time at Nippon Paint, which is precisely why I have been with the company for more than three decades. During my tenure, there have been many challenges and highlights as we have navigated the demanding journey which has seen our evolution from challenger brand to market leader. Along the way, we have picked up numerous awards which validate our hard work and offer the team tremendous encouragement. I hope that I have helped to establish a strong foundation in terms of culture, skills development, processes and systems to propel our company and brand to even greater heights. I want Nippon Paint to be the dominant coatings solution provider not just in Malaysia, but also in Thailand, Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines,” he sums up.

Anchored by a distinguished past and inspired towards an even brighter future by the adoption of progressive goals and a strong sense of corporate integrity, there is no doubt that Nippon Paint is well placed to cement its place as a central player in the coatings industry over the next decade and beyond.

