

BY WILLY WILSON

MALAYSIANS, as we all know, love to eat. We would happily tell people that we live to eat as opposed to eat to live. Some Malaysians would not even think twice about travelling long distances for food as a weekend adventure. Not surprisingly the common belief is that you won't go wrong if you invest in the food business because whatever economic state we are in, people still need to eat.

Food and beverage business operators looking to tap into a lucrative new market should consider investing in Dataran Kemuning Senawang, a commercial project in Seremban dedicated to F&B. It is positioned as a food destination for locals and tourists alike.

But you're wrong if you think it will be just another hawker centre selling local delicacies and Seremban *Siew Pao*, as a few reputable F&B businesses are already making their way there.

"Dataran Kemuning Senawang is set to become a leisure hub, with F&B outlets as its main attraction," says LTS Properties managing director C.A. Lau. "Therefore, our marketing effort has been focused on attracting F&B operators—both established names as well as independent players."

A self-styled "food heaven", Dataran Kemuning Senawang consists of 55 shop units built on a five-acre land. The asking price starts from RM550,000 for a two-storey unit and RM700,000 for a three-storey unit. According to Lau, the price tags are reasonable, considering that the development is on a freehold land.

"I firmly believe that we offer competitive and value-for-money investment



opportunities, especially considering the fact that Dataran Kemuning Senawang is built on freehold land," says Lau.

Perhaps a major factor that would ensure the success of Dataran Kemuning Senawang is its strategic location. According to Lau, there are 53 housing estates surrounding the development, located within a five-kilometre radius from the commercial centre.

Lau: "Thanks to the economic improvement, what was once a sleepy town is currently undergoing a rapid urbanisation process."

strategic location provides a valuable base for businesses," Lau says, adding that excellent inter-city transportation networks such as North-South Expressway, and the recently completed Senawang and Sungai Gadut commuter stations, make it possible for out-of-

Food heaven in Seremban

> The development will set a new benchmark for the F&B industry



An artist impression of Dataran Kemuning Seremban that is located near 53 housing estates, and positioned as a food destination for locals and tourists alike.

towners to access the development.

"What it means is that if you run a business in Dataran Kemuning Senawang, not only can you market your products and services to 30,000 Seremban households, but also the residents of surrounding towns such as Paroi, Port Dickson, and Kuala Pilah. They are your potential customers."

Accessibility and strategic location aren't the only winning ingredients that make Dataran Kemuning Senawang an investment hotspot, it seems. Lau says there are some valid social and economical reasons too. Following the arrival of multinational companies such as Samsung, Nippon and On Semiconductors, Seremban has seen a major economical improvement. And as the Negeri Sembilan capital becomes more prosperous, there will no doubt be a bigger demand for urbanisation.

It has been reported that there are

approximately 300,000 customers who patronise Giant, Senawang's largest shopping complex. This is perhaps the closest Seremban folks can get to urban shopping experience.

Lau says that if the number of visitors in Giant is any indication of the purchasing power of the local market, then it is safe to say that the local residents are ready to become active consumers of urban products and services.

"Thanks to the economic improvement, what was once a sleepy town is currently undergoing a rapid urbanisation process," says Lau, noting that the spending power of local residents has progressed along with the improving economy.

Having successfully developed Taman Kemuning Senawang and Taman Tunku Ja'afar, LTS Properties (M) Sdn Bhd isn't a new player in Seremban. But unlike its previous ventures which saw a combination of residential and commercial properties, Dataran Kemuning Senawang is focused solely on commercial properties.

With the full support of the local government, Lau believes that the development will set an optimistic tone to the social and economic development of Seremban.

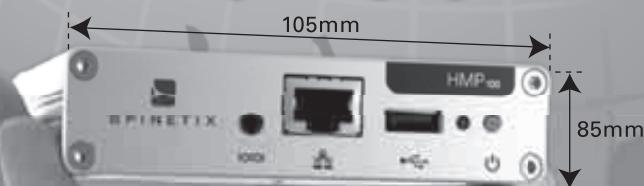
The recent groundbreaking ceremony of Dataran Kemuning Seremban was officiated by state executive councillor for Housing, Local Government, New Villages and Public Transport Dato' Siow Chen Pin. Senator Datuk Dr Yeow Chai Thiam and National MCA Wanita chairman, Datuk Yu Chok Tow, were among the VIPs who attended the event.

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Property inspection for asset protection

BY AR. ANTHONY LEE TEE

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ARCHITECT Centre, a subsidiary of Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia or PAM, was set up three years ago to assist the general public and property owners with independent property inspections. The centre would arrive at findings at

the pre-purchase or pre-renovation stage to gauge the extent of repairs and renovations or improvements required of a property. This would be similar to a physician's report on the general health of a person before he or she takes on strenuous exercises or a change in lifestyle.

Interestingly, Architect Centre has received a surge of cases from a range of clientele for independent inspection reports of new properties to help them resolve disputes related to building defects. In general, clients include individual property owners of residential, institutional and commercial properties. The centre would assist such clients to deal with disputes with developers or contractors relating to defects.

Other clients include joint management bodies (JMB) of stratified properties who would ask the centre to investigate recurring defects in the Common Property areas and conduct building audit on unresolved defects before acceptance from the developer as the Management Corporation (MC).

Architects and developers also make up the centre's clients; they would seek the centre's assistance to resolve disputes with purchasers on clarifications of specifications and status of workmanship.

Most of the complaints received by the centre are for new properties ranging from RM5 million and above for individual house units to condominium residential units costing more than RM1 million.

Numerous complaints to the Ministry

of Housing and Local Government, and the National House Buyers Association also indicate that property ownership in Malaysia regardless of location, value, landed or stratified, has its fair share of unhappy owner experiences mainly

due to the lack of quality workmanship. Purchasers have related unpleasant experiences of sub-contractors and unskilled laborers entrusted to carry out defects rectification. The slow and haphazard manner in addressing a response to the properties' defects, faults, cracks, leaks can quickly change a "dream home" ownership into a nightmare, in the process destroying the reputation of the developer.

Whilst reputable developers associated with the Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association (REHDA) and the International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI) Malaysia are taking measures to maintain professionalism and high standards of development by their members, there are many properties that are being sold to the general public by inexperienced developers that may carry a higher risk of defects and faults.

Despite measures being implemented by authorities, the million dollar question is: Are we tackling these issues at the root level?

Let us examine the three most common categories of defects and faults in our properties and their major impacts. Firstly, shoddy workmanship leading to cracks, leakages, and dampness which are costly to repair, exacerbated by slow and incorrect remedies from the developer and their contractors. This results in repeated visits and recurrence when the root cause of the fault is not correctly identified.

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