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and three-bedroom suites come with walk-in closets, and both wet and dry kitchens.

Chan talks about the approach to Quayside. "This is probably one of the last few prime locations in Malaysia, where you have a big area to develop a project. We thought, 'let's look at today's lifestyle and market — what do they demand?' People live in condos for security reasons and facilities like a pool — that's how condos started a niche market for homebuyers. Over the years, this has evolved. Condo buyers not only demand better security with CCTV, lobby touch card and so on, but also more facilities — gym, Olympic-sized swimming pool, library, meeting rooms, a concierge welcoming them. Condo living has evolved. We thought, 'why don't we bring that evolution to the next level?'"

This evolution, the inklings of which were seen in Malaysia in the various properties in Mont Kiara, Kuala Lumpur, is on a par with worldwide trends in luxury condo living, adds Chan.

Aside from unrivalled facilities, pay-on-demand concierge services are also offered to all residents, a first in Penang.

Mike Saxon, director of hospitality and lifestyle for E&O Bhd, elaborates: "We're trying to go one step further by setting up concierge services, like an extension of the services of E&O Hotel offered to the residents of Seri Tanjung Pinang. Residents can walk into our office and request any services they need, such as housekeeping, help in renting out their unit, gardening, security. If they're away, they can call us to settle their bills, ask us to set up the mini-bar, put some necessities of groceries so when they arrive, it's all set up for them. We can organise cocktail parties, food from the outlets delivered to them — basically, anything the hotel offers, we can offer the residents."

"We can do anything as long as it's legal," he concludes.



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Over and above raising the bar in the quality of property developments in Penang, projects like Seri Tanjung Pinang and others that have been launched since Alila Horizon, Skyhome by the Beach and Springtide Residences have helped boost the property and tourism market in the island as well as foreign investment. For instance, people from 13 nations have bought into Quayside. ■

Top: Seaside villas Martinique

Above: The interior of a suite at the Quayside seafront resort condominium



Many firsts in Straits Quay

Located next to Quayside is Straits Quay, Penang's first marina retail enclave, conceived as a lifestyle destination. It features an exciting mix of outlets and attractions, from a wide selection of boutiques and restaurants with alfresco dining to boat rides from the pier, a promenade and lighthouse.

"Instead of the regular stuff you see in major shopping malls, we hope to bring something unique, something fresh," says Emily Teh, senior manager of Straits

Quay retail division. "Part of the reason is that our place is rather intimate in size — only 270,000 sq ft of lettable area with about 100-odd shops — and we aim to be a little bit more unique rather than compete in size."

"Majestic" is one word to describe the architecture of Straits Quay, which is inspired by the island's grand colonial heritage. Visitors enter through a grand skylight dome and the classical facade and spiral staircases are ornamented with

wrought-iron filigree work reminiscent of Penang's iconic E&O Hotel. Inside, intricate marble tiles are arranged in classic geometric designs. The promenade and marina, with beautiful views of the sea, are perfect for a stroll in the evening.

Above the retail space are 217 serviced suites, all of which have been sold out. They are outfitted with kitchen cabinets, appliances like refrigerator, oven, hood and hob, as well as split air-conditioning units, ceiling fans and lights. Residents who live here are entitled to the pay-on-demand E&O concierge service.

As Straits Quay was launched only last November, only a handful of outlets have opened. A number of Klang Valley-centric F&B outlets opened their first branches outside of KL in Straits Quay, such as German bistro Weissbrau, Healy Mac's Irish Bar & Restaurant, Finnegan's Irish



Food — Berlin's Bier Houz



Fashion — Bran Et Daguet



Fun — Sugar, a baking store that holds sugar art workshops



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Weissbrau German Bistro director Yoon believes Straits Quay is the next hot spot

Pub, Melium Group's Aseana Cafe and Delicious Cafe.

"When asked about the decision to open Weissbrau in Straits Quay, director Wayne Yoon says, "Looking at the future, this will be the hot spot of Penang for many years to come."

Other eateries include Hong Kong restaurant Cheeky Duck Chinese Restaurant, and establishments started by locals such as Agua, Mediterranean restaurant Blue Reef, a fish and chips joint and Italian restaurant Marina Aperitivo.

Other exciting attractions include Penang's first full-fledged Performing Arts Centre, a joint venture with The Actors Studio in KL, as well as The Royal Selangor Visitor Centre, the company's first outside of KL. The centre is designed to provide an environment where visitors can appreciate and experience the

history of pewter in Malaysia as well as the brand, and it will include the School of Hard Knocks' pewtersmithing workshop.

On why the company chose Penang, and specifically Straits Quay, to open its second visitor centre in the country, Royal Selangor Marketing Sdn Bhd general manager Chen Tien Yue says: "Penang has always been an important market for Royal Selangor. With the new visitor centre, we will have four stores in Penang, and we believe there is still tremendous scope for growth in retail and tourism. Penang's focus on heritage tourism helps differentiate the island as a tourist destination, and Royal Selangor is proud to be adding to the heritage attractions in Penang."

"The distinctive design, the wonderful seaside setting of a marina, and E&O's commitment to make this location an icon give us the confidence that Straits Quay will become a major attraction. We want to be a part of this exciting project and we will work together with E&O to make this a success."

Retail-wise, Versus — Versace's diffusion line — has a store here, alongside local fashion designer Brendan Tan's label Bran et Daguet. Tan makes dresses that are of simple, classic silhouettes but with unusual, beautiful fabrics, which he says he sources from all over the world. Another delightful store is Sugar, a baking goods and homeware store that holds sugar art workshops in the kitchen located at the back and where customers can come in to decorate their cakes, on their own or with assistance from store owner Wee Nee Tan. WAF Fine Art Gallery, which specialises in Latin American art, is also located here. — Elaine Lou