

refine

BUILDING

TOMORROW'S

LANDMARKS TODAY

BRDB

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to a very special edition of *refine*, one that is a celebration of BRDB's 48 year old association with the neighborhood we call home. This issue is also an introduction to Serai, our exclusive luxury condominium located on Jalan Medang Serai in Bukit Bandaraya.

This residential landmark is poised to be the most desirable address in our property portfolio and I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to view our stunning show home located at the BRDB Sales Gallery on Jalan Penaga.

This show apartment showcases the elegance of space with a luxurious built up area of 6,913 square feet. The design was undertaken by Hospitality & Leisure Asia (HLA), an international multi-disciplined design firm specializing in hospitality and leisure interior design.

To commemorate the launch of Serai, we also commissioned a special artists series that pays tribute to Bangsar's heritage. The series features three celebrated Malaysian artists; Jalaini Abu Hassan, SC Shekar & Dr June Ngo who have brought to life their interpretation of Bangsar through their medium of specialty. Their completed works are also on display at our Sales Gallery.

It is my hope that you cherish this special issue of *refine* as we have endeavored to capture the best of Bangsar; its history, its homes, its different communities, and most important, its people. We reached out to as many individuals as possible and share with you their inspiring stories and fond recollections.

Thank you for all your support in 2012. On behalf of BRDB, we wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas & a Fulfilling New Year.

KC CHONG
Chief Marketing Officer

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BRDB

For information on *refine* or for advertising details, please contact:

MALATHI PILLAY
Assistant General Manager,
Communications, BRDB
malathipillay@brdb.com.my

Editorial Team:
KC CHONG, MALATHI PILLAY,
ANUSHA K., LISETTE SCHEERS

Design Team:
LA SCHEERS CO SDN BHD

Photography:
JAVAD TIZMAGHZ
TIAN XING FROM
SHOW UP PICTURES

OUR TRIBUTE TO BANGSAR

“A healthy social life is found only, when in the mirror of each soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the whole community the virtue of each one is living.”

Rudolf Steiner

This special edition of *refine* is our tribute to KL's most enduring neighbourhood, whose unique cosmopolitan spirit bears testament to BRDB's skill in community building.

We open the issue with the amazing transformation of BSC, from an evergreen neighbourhood mall to a living, breathing, contemporary lifestyle destination. The present generation will certainly be awestruck by the archived photos of the centre when it first opened more than 20 years ago while the older generation will look upon them with fondness, recalling the halcyon days of their youth. Our most celebrated development, BSC is truly deserving of the moniker **Bangsar's Shopping Centre**.

Now & Then is a series of conversations with 4 distinguished pioneer residents who share with us their candid observations

on the progress they've witnessed in their beloved community. It is a poignant piece, at times nostalgic and melancholic but mostly reflective.

In **Interview with An Architect**, we connect with Mr Kam Pak Cheong, a long-time associate of our brand, Mr Kam's association with BRDB began way back in 1996 with the development of Sri Penaga and we are privileged to have him share his valuable industry insights with us.

My favourite piece must surely be **We (Heart) Bangsar**, a feature on 5 incredible personalities whose lives have been shaped by their roots in this neighbourhood and who have in turn made an impact in the community. Baida Hercus's generous spirit, the easy banter between the charming Kavita Sidhu and her eminent father, Dato' Dr Joginder Singh, the witty recollections of

the unpretentious Shuhaimi Baba and the daunting intellect of Eddin Khoo, theirs are the stories that firmly establish Bangsar as the true microcosm of Malaysia.

We also take the opportunity with this issue to trace BRDB's developmental history in Bangsar and to unveil our latest residential landmark, Serai Bukit Bandaraya. We mark the launch of this luxury development with a special artistic tribute to Bangsar simply titled **The Artist Series**.

Other interesting reads in this issue include the light hearted **Bangsar Bubble** and the refreshing **First Impressions**, portraying Bangsar through the eyes of the uninitiated. And finally we end with a spread of **Bangsar's Best Bites** as voted by the man in the street.

In the making of this issue we unearthed interesting discoveries like the fact that Dato' Dr Ronald McCoy, featured on page 16



was the gynaecologist who delivered Eddin Khoo featured on page 32 or the existence of a 1971 BRDB print advertisement offering single storey terrace houses for sale in Bangsar for RM18,750. Thank you En Mumtaz Ali for sharing this treasured piece featured on page 18 with us. New partnerships were also formed with BRDB pledging to donate a brand new food truck to the Pertiwi Soup Kitchen featured on page 24.

We all have our own special Bangsar story. Whilst my own childhood was spent in Brickfields, oft viewed as Bangsar's less illustrious neighbour, I too have my share of fond Bangsar memories. From Maths tuition under the fearsome Mr Santokh Singh in Lucky Garden to my first date as a naïve 15 year old at Jalan Telawi's McDonalds, life seems to have come full circle now as I have spent the last 6 years building my career with Bangsar's premier developer.

Through this special edition, we have endeavoured to capture as much as we can the allure and magic of Bangsar, yet there is still a treasure trove of charms waiting to be discovered. Perhaps another special edition when BRDB turns 50 in 2014.

Our sincere appreciation to all who helped us realise this commemorative issue by generously sharing their time and their tales. ✨

MALATHI PILLAY
Assistant General Manager,
Communications



BANGSAR'S SHOPPING CENTRE: A NEW BEGINNING

How BSC evolved from a neighbourhood shopping centre to a hip, happening hotspot.

Written by Dinesh Ranawaka

Things change; that's an inevitable part of life. And landmarks often don't. But when a landmark changes in line with you, and grows as you grow, its relevance only grows stronger. There's an entire generation that's had Bangsar as a focal point of their lives – from first outing, to first date, to first beer. This isn't their story, but it's about where all their stories happened.

In 1990 when BSC opened its doors to the then relatively young Bangsar community, it was an integral part of BRDB's masterplan. Being one of the first shopping centres in the area, it served an important function as a convenient location for the surrounding suburbs to shop, dine and socialise. BSC complemented the increasing number of residential developments as a lifestyle mall, a concept that was relatively new for a neighbourhood shopping centre at the time.

Over the next 20 years, BSC continued to serve its community as its faithful

neighbourhood mall. It kept up with the times – its restaurants changed to suit the palates of its patrons and its retail outlets became more refined and more niche as management grew to better understand the needs of the community. BSC's entertainment options also reflected the changing social landscape; from bowling alley and arcade, to cinema, to performance theatre.

If viewed as a time-lapse sequence, you could almost see the evolution of BSC as a direct reflection, not only of the developing tastes of its community, but the growth of a generation. There are many people today who have grown up alongside BSC and can attest to the way in which it has served their different needs over the years.

But as the neighbourhood and number of residents grew larger, more sophisticated, more affluent and more culturally diverse, BSC's evolution was always reactive. It had kept pace, but not as predicted.

As competition increased with a number of malls opening in the surrounding area, BRDB realised that it was time to take a strong pro-active approach. After a 20-year existence, the time was right for BSC to undergo a complete transformation, putting it ahead of the competition and readying the evergreen neighbourhood mall for the next 20-years of its life.



Opposite page: The newly built Bangsar Shopping Centre in 1990. Above: Festive decorations adorn the façade for Hari Raya.



The target market was no longer just the residents of the immediate neighbourhood. The net was cast wider to encompass a larger audience of sophisticated, worldly, savvy patrons exposed to global trends and offerings.

BSC's management realised that shoppers today were very global in their outlook and tastes, and that if BSC did not use this refurbishment opportunity to look ahead and predict what the Bangsar of today and tomorrow would need BSC to be, it could fade in the minds of the community.

With this epiphany and the needs of the community in mind, BSC set out to reinvent itself as a lifestyle hub for a more global KL. More than just a superficial enhancement of the physical building, the premise of the redevelopment exercise was to establish BSC as a living, breathing, contemporary destination that would act as the heartbeat of the community. The end result was a product that broke the



The addition of BSC's second wing in 1995.



mold of neighbourhood shopping malls, setting design and retail benchmarks previously unheard of for neighbourhood malls without compromising its long-standing role as a “home away from home”.

The new BSC has been designed to cater to the entire cross-section of the neighbourhood’s new demographics as well as that of greater KL. From the loyal residents who have been around since the beginning to the affluent middle-aged, professional industry movers and shakers, expatriate families, high disposable income earners and even the trend-following children. It is about establishing a ‘sense of belonging’ across generations, and fulfilling the social relevance of each generation.

In BRDB’s vision to develop Bukit Bandaraya, they knew that to create a holistic community, they had to provide all the elements

to create the lifestyle their community desired. And with BSC they have succeeded not only in developing a mall that has stood the test of time, but has raised the bar in community building. The BSC as you know it today is one of the trendiest and most social malls in KL. While it still serves the neighbourhood’s daily needs, it attracts patrons from not only all of KL, but the world over. Sitting in one of the many cafes or restaurants in BSC, you can easily see one of the most cosmopolitan communities in Malaysia. A true melting pot of people, cultures and experiences. Still a home away from home, but to a larger, richer, and more vibrant community. ✓

All black and white pictures courtesy of The New Straits Times Press (Malaysia)



The refreshed BSC in 2010.



2012

NOW & THEN

What was Bangsar like before urbanity crept in? We speak to the people who were here when Bangsar began.

Written by Choo Ai Ling. Photography by Tian Xing.

PATRICIA WONG AND MAGGIE EE, ROCKY COFFEE SHOP

Our mother bought this shop lot in 1969 and no one wanted to rent it even after we furnished it as a coffee shop, so in December 1974 we moved in and decided to run it ourselves. It was named Rocky because we were studying North American geography at Assunta Girls School and when our father asked us for a name, we named it after Rocky Mountains because it's big and strong.

In the good old days, it was just this row of shop houses and the rest were all rubber plantations. Jalan Maarof ended where BSC

is now and Jalan Bangsar was just a bridge. This was a very quiet residential place so we were just serving the local community. We knew nearly everybody, where they stayed, how many children they had and what they did. In fact, we once had a very old man who came by taxi to visit his son but had no address or phone number and was illiterate. The taxi left him here and all he needed was to tell us the name of his son and we drove him to his son's house. Back then, Rocky was used as a landmark. The streets were not very well lit so whenever anyone in the residential area was expecting visitors, they

would ask us to switch on the spot lights which lit up our signage so that the visitors would know where to make the turn.

When we used to stay upstairs, many University Malaya or Taylor's College (which used to be around the corner) students would come here. During festive seasons like Chinese New Year when all the shops were closed, if they couldn't return to their hometowns because their exams were around the corner, they would eat upstairs with us. These are the people who still come back to see us. A lot of people around the area also grew up with us. Although



some of them may have left Bangsar, they still come back for old times sake. They are always delighted that this establishment has not moved on and they bring their children here and reminisce of the old days. We have many notable clients, some of them come with bodyguards but they still eat here comfortably.

“OUR BUSINESS ISN'T SO MUCH ABOUT MAKING MONEY.”

For the last 10 years, Rocky has been a non-smoking shop. We don't sell cigarettes nor serve beer. I think it makes it a nicer place to be. We get a mixed crowd but they're very nice and well behaved. Because we own the shop, we're not hit by the increase in rentals which is why our hours are very short. We don't do nights and observe a six day week. We start serving at 7.30am and

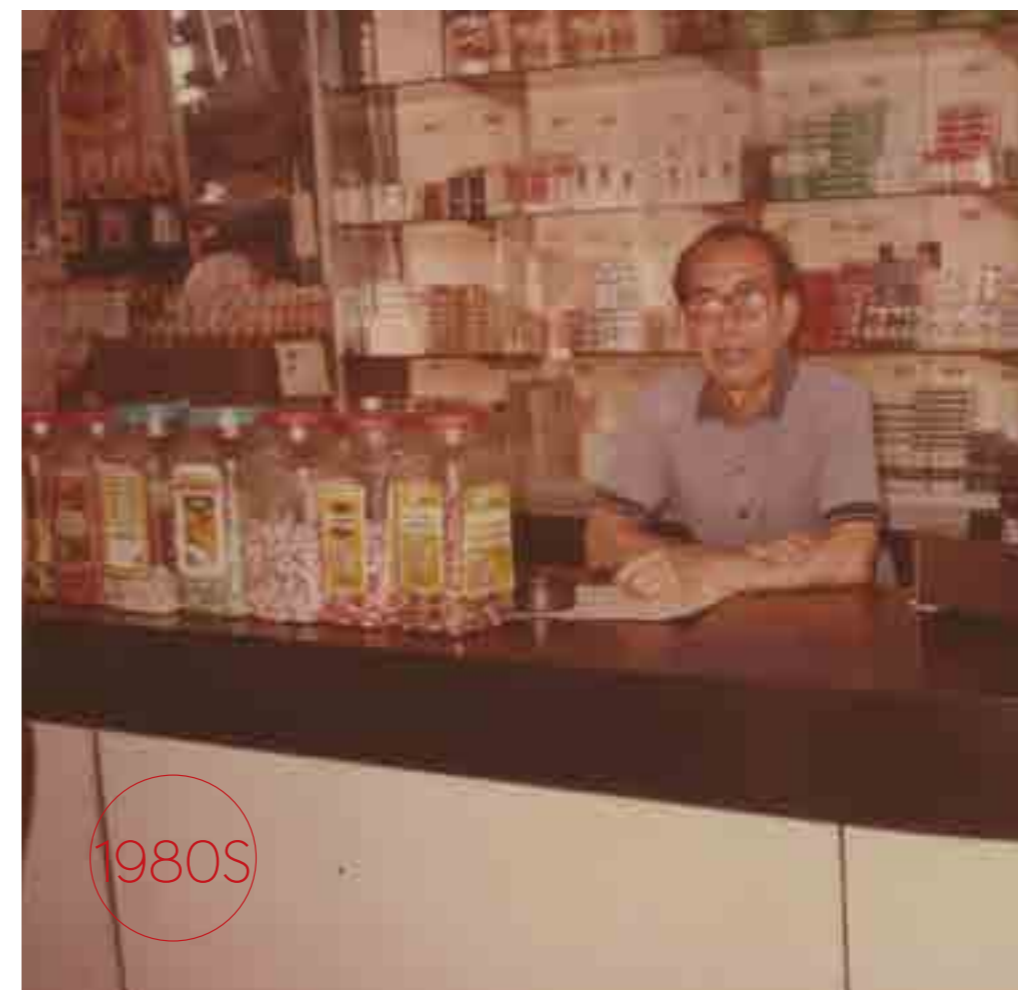
usually by then we have our regulars waiting patiently inside while they read the papers or work on their laptops.

Our business isn't so much about making money, if we wanted to make money, we would have rented it out. That is why we still keep our doors open because we see a lot of needs around us - people who are lost or need direction in their life – and we try our best to help. Rocky is also a way of life for our mum who's 85 and our dad who passed on last year. This was the place where their friends came to see them and where their friends came to meet up with other friends, so it's very precious in that sense. We call our mum The Empress Dowager. She's still in charge of the kitchen and does the final seasoning of the food.

It's great how Bangsar has changed. Bangsar used to be so full of bars and drinking places but now we seem to have a retail crowd with a lot of boutiques and family restaurants. It's a safer place to be although it can get better. The parking problem needs to be addressed and security could also be improved. The best thing

about Bangsar is the people. We like seeing new people here and we welcome them as warmly as we did the old timers before. We still have our older customers who price their own food. They still pay the old price for drinks and food and we just let them pay what they want. For us it's not about profit margins but serving the community and most of all, serving God.

Previous page (L-R): Maggie Ee, their mother and Patricia Wong. Top: Maggie Ee (left) & Patricia Wong. Bottom: Rocky's famous Penang Prawn Mee. Opposite page: Maggie and Patricia's parents in the restaurant during the 1980s.





**DR. T THINAKARAN,
KLINIK BANDARAYA**

We started as a group practice in Imbi Road but when one of the senior partners heard that the first shoplots in Jalan Telawi were completed, he decided that we should expand here. This was during the mid-70s and Bangsar wasn't very popular at that time because the main road was always flooded and there were only a small number of

houses developed along Jalan Maarof and Bangsar Baru. This changed as government servants started moving here because the houses were cheap and everyone started buying.

When we moved here, Jalan Maarof didn't initially go right to the end. It just stopped at the top of the hill. It was only after BRDB developed the other side, Bangsar became the place where the action was

because it was strategically located between PJ and town. I remember that it was impossible to get anything done after 5 o' clock because the mobile stalls would start operating and this went until 3 to 4 o' clock in the morning. You could get any sort of food – *Mamak Mee, Bak Kut Teh, Hokkien Mee*, all mobile stalls – it was very *muhibbah*. Also there were lots of pubs which sprung up in the late 70s and early 80s. The crowd



would always avoid the Lucky Garden part but come to the Maarof area because this was where the food and drinks were. The rats then moved in and after a lot of complaints, Dewan Bandaraya finally got rid of the stalls by relocating them to the area next to the Police Station, near Jolly Green Giant.

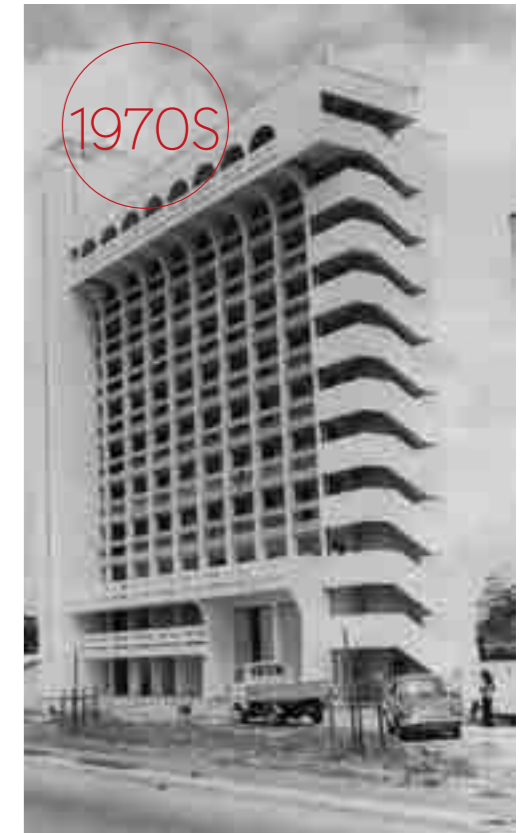
Since we've been here, we have moved three times. At first we were opposite the road at 10, Jalan Telawi 5 which is now a jewelers. Thereafter we moved two doors away with the dentist upstairs and took numbers 6 and 8 respectively, which is where TM Point is now. Then this building, number 7 which used to be McDonalds HQ, went up for sale around 1985, so we bought the shoptlot and the dentist took the upstairs while we occupied downstairs.

When the recession hit, it became a problem to repay the loan. So another group bought the building and since one or two of the doctors here had shares in that company, we were given a special rental

rate. That's the main reason why we're still here after almost 40 years. We would have never survived for so long if the rental was at market rates. Especially because business is very slow nowadays. We used to treat whole families but now all the babies are adults and have moved out of Bangsar. And because the prices have risen so sharply, the parents that own properties here have rented the places out and are staying somewhere else.

Now, all we have are some really old patients who started coming to us since we started. They are now senior citizens in their 80s. In my opinion, Bangsar grew too fast and everything has become so urban and congested. Parking is a big problem because when this row of shophouses was built, the developers never thought of where people would park.

Dewan Bandaraya has limited it further by expanding the five foot way and only allowing parking on one side of the street. That has



Above left: Shops in Taman Ghazali Shafie along Jalan Bangsar in 1981. Above right: A view of the 10-storey Bangsar-Pantai Baru fire station in 1978.

created a problem for me as people can't walk up to the clinic because there isn't any available curbside parking - the only parking lot is towards Bangsar Village which is a fair bit to walk if you're sick. Bangsar has only

**“Bangsar
grew too
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improved for the people who invested in the buildings and houses back when it was cheap, I believe the prices have shot up nearly ten fold. In a way, I miss the Bangsar then because it was so easy to park and everybody knew each other. Today it has become more sterile and urban. Even my regular pub, Canteena has closed.



“Today Pantai Hospital continues to grow because it had a good beginning.”

**DATO' DR. RONALD S. MCCOY,
ONE OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS
OF PANTAI MEDICAL CENTRE**

The idea of building the first private hospital in Kuala Lumpur percolated for a while and finally reached fruition when myself (I was then attached to Assunta Hospital) and a small group of doctors formed a private company, called Medical Specialists Centre. We looked for a piece of land which we thought should be located between KL and Petaling Jaya, as most of our patients would come from those two urban areas. We finally found and bought a piece of land on a slope on Jalan Tandok (near the New Straits Times) in 1967.

We hired an architect and he completed the design of a 100-bed hospital by 1968-1969. Then came the shock of 13 May 1969 and our plans went into cold storage. I think it was by chance that, at a Hari Raya party at Tan Sri Dr Ismail Majid's house in 1970 or 1971, we learnt that a group of Bumiputra doctors had formed a company, Pakar Ubat Sdn Bhd, and had bought a piece of land in Jalan Bukit Pantai. But they were unable to put together a plan to build a private hospital, as they didn't have a group of interested medical specialists, as we had.

Finally, it was agreed to form a third company, Pantai Medical Centre, made up two shareholders, Pakar Ubat and Medical Specialists Centre. Pantai Medical Centre was built and it opened on KL City Day, 1st February 1974, and I delivered the first baby to be born in the hospital two days later.

When the hospital opened, the Bangsar/Pantai Hill area was already an established residential-shopping area, but was much smaller and less congested. It has since changed, of course, and is much more built up now. I don't think my move from Assunta Hospital to Pantai Medical Centre brought any change in my clientele. It continued to include wives of government servants, as they were still able to afford the hospital charges at Pantai Medical Centre and my fees, which remained unchanged.

I don't think that would apply today, because the hospital charges and doctors'

fees at the 'new' Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur and at other private hospitals are exceedingly high by comparison.

I retired from practice in 1996, when I was appointed to the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons by the Australian government of Prime Minister Paul Keating, having been involved since 1986 in the nuclear disarmament movement of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, which won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Today, Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur continues to grow because it had a good beginning and a good reputation. It was built and financed by doctors for the sole purpose of providing a modest hospital environment. All we wanted was a place in which we could ethically practise a high

standard of professional care, without the influence and values of the business world. In other words, health care was not a commodity for sale, but instead a service for an affordable fee.

We recognised that medicine is a vocation, not just a job, and we were conscious that if medicine became a business, then doctors would become businessmen. The nature of private hospitals began to change when business corporations commercialised medicine for profit. With no national health care funding, businessmen have seized the opportunity to privatise health care, which has stimulated a brain drain of doctors from the public sector to the private sector and deprived the average Malaysian of affordable, quality health care.



Top: Police beat base at the Jalan Bangsar and Jalan Riong junction in 1971.
Bottom: The current Pantai Medical Centre.



**EN MUMTAZ ALI, PRESIDENT
BUKIT BANDAR RAYA
RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

I moved to Bangsar in the mid 70s. In those days, Bangsar was a harmonious place to live in and a peaceful haven to return to after a hard day's work. At that time, the Rukun Tetangga (Community Watch) was another avenue for interaction in the neighbourhood. Bukit Bandar Raya Residents Association (BBRAYA) was registered on the 28th of June 1976. I was the Deputy President for over two decades after which I was elected President in 2012.

Since then the salient role of BBRAYA has evolved from taking up issues with developers over delayed handover of keys to homes. Today besides handling issues relating to infrastructure, the core role of BBRAYA continues but with more emphasis on security and safety especially with the increase in commercialisation and over-development of high rise buildings (even on slopes and hill sites). We are trying to find a balanced and sustainable pace of development while trying to minimise inconveniences to the residents.

This involves liaising with DBKL and related authorities to ensure Bangsar continues to be a livable housing community, seeking ongoing improvement in the areas of amenities and constantly following up with the authorities and agencies.

Through persistent efforts and closely liaising with DBKL and other agencies, BBRAYA has been able to meet most of the needs of its residents in terms of greening and maintaining the area, making recreational parks and community centers available for public use, among other things. However, there are some areas where we haven't been able to meet the expectations of residents particularly when authorities blindly approve over-development and conversion to commercialisation of premises originally meant for residential purpose and even overturning decisions against conversion after they have been made.

Even though Bangsar has become congested, over commercialised, and



suffers from poor city planning, moving out of Bangsar has not crossed my mind yet! What I love best about living in Bangsar is its strategic location and easy access to any part of Klang Valley. The basic local facilities for the community are easily accessible and available and there are still some concerned and conscientious people around to keep the community spirit alive.

With the unchecked development in Bangsar and its surroundings, the "quality of life" in Bangsar has plummeted compared to when I first moved here. The city planners must consider long-term objectives to work towards sustaining Bangsar as a desirable residential community. They must not get caught up with the so called "development" without taking into account the majority of residents who have used their life savings to purchase their homes to live in rather than as investments for speculation purposes.

Also overzealous developers and business operators must prioritise the community's interests rather than being only profit driven. Corporate organisations in Bangsar should play a proactive role towards

the community. As a start, they should consider installing CCTVs and security related peripherals for the benefit of the community under their CSR programmes.

The DPBRKL 2020 (Draf Pelan Bandar Raya Kuala Lumpur 2020) consultants have recognised Bangsar as a fully mature,

**"WHAT I LOVE
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LOCATION."**

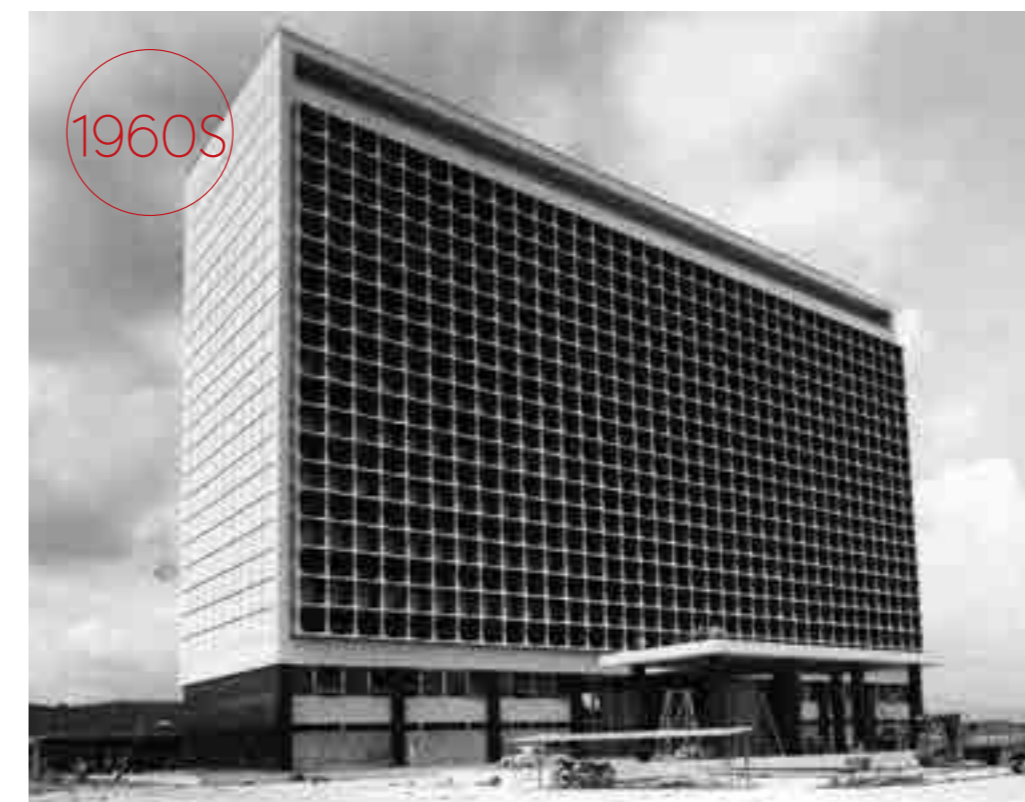
established housing estate. Therefore the city planners must acknowledge this fact and take steps to ensure the sustainability of Bangsar as a livable residential community for now and the future. For starters, the authorities must link up the Bangsar housing estates with existing LRT stations (Bangsar

and Abdullah Hukum) with small feeder buses operating clockwise and anti-clockwise so that the buses not only serve the LRT commuters but act as local inter and intra transport systems connecting the various housing estates.

In addition, DBKL must consider connecting the Bangsar LRT station and various housing estates with convenient and covered pedestrian walk ways. This will encourage more people to use the public transport system and cultivate walking habits when they move around within the housing estates, which ends up being better for the environment in the long run.

If the city planners do not wake up and start looking into the long term welfare of the Bangsar residents, then I am doubtful that Bangsar can be held up as being an ideal housing estate. With the massive development taking place in and around Bangsar, the quality of living, safety and many other interests of its residents will definitely be compromised. ✘

*All black and white pictures courtesy of The New Straits Times Press (Malaysia)
Left: The National Electricity Board head office building on Jalan Bangsar in 1966. Above: The troughs along Jalan Bangsar in 1975.*



IN+TERVIEW

WITH AN ARCHITECT



refine speaks to Kam Pak Cheong, Director of BEP Akitek Sdn Bhd about why good architecture is always about people first.

Iconic buildings, a rich storied legacy and a surfeit of firsts, it's no exaggeration to say that BEP Akitek has played an integral role in shaping Malaysia's architectural landscape. BEP's first incarnation as Booty & Edwards in 1920 gave pre-independence Malaya gems like the art deco Odeon cinema and the Rubber Research Institute. The firm then transitioned to Booty, Edwards & Partners and finally BEP Akitek Sdn Bhd, the first architectural firm to be incorporated in Malaysia in 1969. The firm ushered in modernism with buildings like Universiti

Malaya's Dewan Tunku Chancellor, the first fair-faced concrete building in the country and was instrumental in master planning Damansara Heights. More recently, BEP racked up more prestigious FIABCI awards for heading the master planning of Sierramas and Desa Park City.

Veteran architect, Kam Pak Cheong has spent practically his whole career at BEP. He started at the firm after passing his RIBA Part 1 with flying colours under the tutelage of Julius Posener at Technical College, Kuala Lumpur. After several years of study and work at the University of Melbourne in the 60s, Kam returned to Malaysia filled with youthful idealism and spent some time building social housing in Kota Bharu.

Realising that he missed the buzz of the city, Kam rejoined BEP and threw himself into the firm's golden era of development with landmark projects like Hilton Hotel KL (now Crown Plaza Hotel), Desa Kudalari and the old Subang Airport, to name a few.

"As an architect, you try to build something which will ensure that the people using it will enjoy it as well because the social life comes in only when you can build the surroundings to suit it," he stresses. But while Kam is emphatic that his *raison d'être* has never been only about meeting the client's bottom-line, many of BEP's projects have been wildly successful precisely because of BEP's commitment to benefiting those who use it.

"When we built Ara Hill, although our client didn't make much profit because of the abundance of community space and landscaping, it has commanded tremendous

resale value because it feels like an oasis," he reveals. "Then of course there's Seni which is the biggest condo in town but we made sure there was plenty of landscaping and that it never felt cramped. Now it's the most popular rental place in Bukit Kiara for expats."

The BEP reputation for attracting the best and the brightest has not wavered through the years and this is due to the firm's commitment to nurturing talents with their rigorous training and methodology. Kam believes that this philosophy of education has contributed to the firm's longevity: "BEP has always been a training ground for architects. I think a lot of them like to work here not just for the stylish buildings we build but how BEP instills in them about what the essence of architecture is all about."

BEP's association with BRDB began with Sri Penaga, which despite what Kam reveals were some trickiness with elevations and technicalities, was a resounding success. The architects solved the issue of traffic noise by ensuring that the focus was on the lush landscaping within. Impeccable planning also meant that despite the development's relative density, once within, one is transported to the tranquility of a holiday resort.

Another notable project was Palmrya which fused BEP's environmental sensibilities with BRDB's predilection for modernity. "I vetoed making it too modern because all that glass doesn't work for low rises. Better to do overhangs and use plants to soften the hard edges," says Kam. "My vindication came when Dato Sri Akhbar Khan and I made a trip to look at his unit and he said to me: I think we've given plenty of paradise to the buyers."

When pressed about a recent satisfying project, Kam's choice was not among BEP's award winning nor groundbreaking projects but the Bukit Bandaraya Community Centre. "BRDB was generous enough to donate the land so we had the budget to splurge on some landscaping. We purposely built it as a

low rise so that it would be very friendly to the neighbouring Palmyra and we had lots of fun doing things economically but well," he enthuses.

After a lifetime in the industry, the commitment to BEP's ideals still burn brightly in Kam. "Architects must never forget that buildings are made for people to use and while the appearance is important, we must never forget about its function," he states. "An architect must always feel like he has tried his best even against the odds so that he'll be happy. And a happy architect does good work." Indeed it is Kam's dedication to the humanistic side of architecture that makes him one of BEP and the industry's driving forces. ✎



Top: Sri Penaga, BEP's maiden project with BRDB. Bottom: BRDB generously donated the land and contributed RM5 million towards the building of the Bukit Bandaraya Community Centre.





WE

(HEART)

BANGSAR

SOME WERE BORN AND RAISED HERE,
WHILE SOME WORK AND PLAY HERE. WE TALK TO
A HANDFUL OF PERSONALITIES WHO WILL ALWAYS HAVE
A SPECIAL PLACE IN THEIR HEARTS FOR BANGSAR.

WRITTEN BY ABDUL AZIZ MOHAMAD DRAIM.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAVAD TIZMAGHZ.



Clockwise from top left: The poor and homeless enjoying their food from the PERTIWI Soup Kitchen in Kotaraya; Dr Kumaran offering medical treatment to the homeless; medical supplies ready to be dispensed to the homeless and poor; Puan Sri K Johari making her famous pandan sirap, which is very popular amongst the homeless and poor. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Munirah Hamid, founder of the PERTIWI Soup Kitchen and the Soup Kitchen volunteers arranging packed food in the PERTIWI Soup Kitchen truck; Baida Jane Hercus; the PERTIWI Soup Kitchen truck on the way to its first stop behind Tune Hotel KL; a happy homeless man after receiving his food and drink.

BAIDA JANE HERCUS

PERTIWI Soup Kitchen

Baida was only six years old when her family moved to Bangsar in September 1983. "It was fun living in Bangsar," she recalls. "We were living in Pantai Towers – it was the only condo back then."

Bangsar in the early '80s was a laidback neighbourhood, safe enough for Baida along with her brothers and friends to spend their childhood walking to the nearby shops and fast food joints when they were just in their early teens, something she won't let her kids do now. "I miss the quieter Bangsar. Now, the traffic on Jalan Maarof is a nightmare on some days (as is the parking!). But then again, we get a wonderful selection of products from all corners of the world here. Bangsar is a trendy place with great meeting points serving fabulous food."

Serving food is actually what Baida is known for as she helps to manage the PERTIWI Soup Kitchen her mother founded. "My mother used to help her mother feed the homeless even from when she was 5 years old. So when she and her friends wanted to start a charity project to give back to society, one of her friends suggested a soup kitchen."

The PERTIWI Soup Kitchen does more than just distribute food and drinks to the homeless and the poor. "Our presence is something they look forward to. We feed them so that they do not have to sleep on an empty stomach. We befriend them and they feel less rejected by society. We also provide free basic medical service every Monday and Wednesday night and try our best to arrange for medical treatment where necessary. We offer a help desk service every Friday night and try to arrange for job interviews too."

When asked if there was anything she'd like to change in Bangsar, Baida offered these suggestions. "I'd like better footpaths and closed drains. I often walk to BSC but I have to walk on the road most of the way and it is dangerous. I'd also love to go on a blitz planting fig creepers on unsightly walls – if anyone wants to help, let me know!"

To learn more about the PERTIWI Soup Kitchen, contact Munirah Hamid at 012-2363639. You can also follow the PERTIWI Soup Kitchen on Facebook.

To make a financial contribution to this project, kindly make your payments in favour of 'PERTIWI', RHB Account Number 2-14035- 10201591. All donations are tax exempted pursuant to Section 44(6) Income Tax Act 1967 and Government Gazette No 2607/67.





KAVITA KAUR

Model, Actress



Kavita's father, Dato' Dr Joginder Singh, receiving the Queen's Scout Certificate from the High Commissioner.

Like most of those who grew up in Bangsar, Kavita recalls fondly how she used to walk down to the shops in Telawi – a mere 10 minute walk from her house – to hang out with friends. “And Saturday night’s *pasar malam* was the best!” she enthuses. “But of course, TMC with mum was a regular stop, and Bangsar Shopping Centre. It feels so strange that I am a regular at BSC till today. How it has changed. I kind of miss the old BSC but our lifestyle has changed too, so it does suit me perfectly.”

But it wasn't just the shops that she loved going to. “We had the best Tuition Centre here called Bangsar Tuition Centre in Jalan Telawi. And I would not have excelled in my studies if not for Mr. Alope. He was the best. I will never forget him. I would go there

every day after school with my two older brothers. We even had a ‘prom’ night party every year and it was so much fun!”

Currently, this former beauty queen is busy with acting gigs and is even trying her hand at fashion design. “I would love to have my own store in BSC – which is something I’m working on!”

When asked about the best advice her father has ever given her, she leaves us with this: “To wake up at dawn which is what he has done all his life. He used to say he has already earned a thousand *ringgit* by the time I wake up in the morning!” she laughs.

“But that was years ago when I was still living with my parents. I now live 15 minutes away in Taman Duta. And I do wake up fairly early.”





DATO' DR JOGINDER SINGH

Consultant Radiologist

When Dr. Joginder Singh first bought his house in Bangsar in 1973, the 10,000 sq ft bungalow was only RM68,000 at that time. "Imagine that!" he exclaims. "However, RM68,000 was a lot in those days and as my wife and I were just beginning our medical careers, the home seemed a perfect fit for us."

Attached to University Hospital since 1966, the good doctor moved on to Pantai Medical Centre in 1984 where he would go on to pioneer the setting up of the newer radiological modalities such as MRI, CT and Ultra sound scanning. "I established that department and it gives me tremendous joy to see how it has benefitted the people of Bangsar. I have even treated many Prime

Ministers and dignitaries and today, the department has grown even bigger and better."

His wife, Datin Dr. Prabha, worked at the Public Health Institute in Jalan Bangsar from 1971 to 1986 as head of the Maternal and Child Health department before becoming Acting Director of her department. She later joined University Malaya in 1986 as a lecturer of the Faculty of Medicine and has since retired. "So you see, Bangsar has been good to both of us. We have both lived, worked and brought up our children in this wonderful community but as it goes in life, things change and we have to keep moving forward, innovating and growing, for better or for worse."



SHUHAIMI BABA

Film Director

Though she no longer lives in Bangsar, Shuhaimi Baba – or Shumi, as she is known – is never far away from the neighbourhood. “My favourite restaurants are in Bangsar, so how to keep away *lah?*” she says. Best friend Kavita Sidhu adds, “She always goes to British India in BSC to buy birthday presents for her family, friends and staff. Which is like every month! She also loves going to Vineria for their food.”

Bangsar has been a regular haunt for Shumi dating back to her student days in Universiti Malaya. “I lived in Bangsar from my first job onwards. After graduation, Bangsar was the centre of energy for many young people and the yuppies of the time. We were the *‘warongies’*. The *‘mamak’* food stalls opposite McDonalds was a happy hunting ground for us. You were bound to meet people you know there. If they were strangers at first they will soon become your

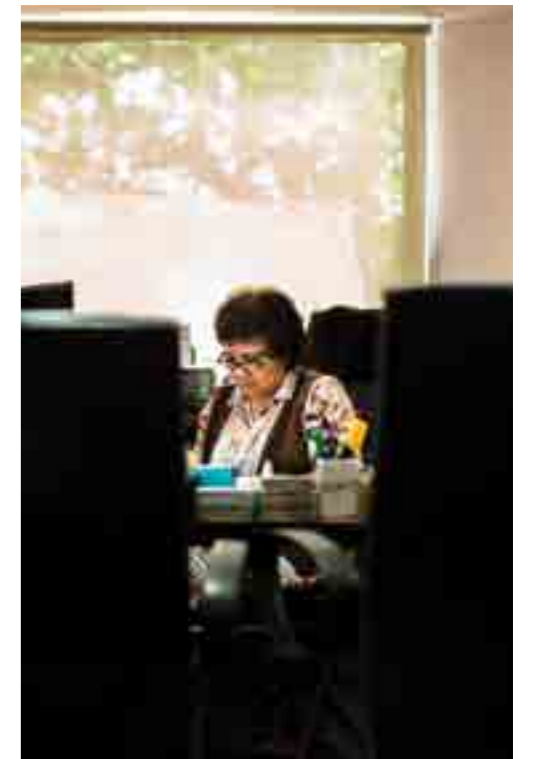
friends. Most of us theatre and TV people then needed Bangsar stalls for late night food, such as curry mee .”

Not only was Bangsar where she held the auditions for her directorial debut, Selubung, the suburb has also appeared countless times in her movies. “Bangsar has always featured in my dramas and film – until things started to cost an arm and a leg. The cultural mix makes it attractive as a location for foreign production too. I still love having Bangsar as my location and backdrop. I don’t think that will change.”

Even though her office has now moved to another neighbourhood, the director still finds herself gravitating towards Bangsar for work due to its practical location. “I still hold quick meetings here. Bangsar is a cool place for most of us who don’t care to brave the city traffic – it’s very centralised.” Still, she isn’t without discontent. “I wish

some places would have better parking and better internet wifi or broadband services. I think it’s high time for Bangsar to have business centres with meeting rooms.” Even when she’s not having appointments, she’s normally here for inspiration. “Most artistes and production people I know would descend on places in Bangsar to wind down. The cafés and *‘lepak’* areas are such great observation posts for ideas. People of all types and the energy they bring with them – I find that inspiring.”

“My stories will find their way just by me sitting and walking around the Bangsar malls because the energy moving around here is so vibrant with different colours of faces, laughter, politeness , people sitting quietly in their corners, people chatting , people gossiping , excitement in young people over their cup of latte... it’s all infectious and good for me.”





EDDIN KHOO

Founder of PUSAKA

Much like the neighbourhood he loves most, Eddin Khoo is a cultural melting pot. “My father is Peranakan Chinese and my mother is Indian of Jaffna Tamil ancestry. I was raised by a Malay woman who lived with us along with her family so naturally my background was and always has been wonderfully diverse and cosmopolitan.” His family moved to Pantai Hills back in the ‘70s, a time when Bangsar was largely populated

by government civil servants. “Back then, the place was quiet and intimate. What I remember most about Bangsar when I was growing up was the abundance of space, and my own sense of real freedom within that space.”

“What distinguishes Bangsar from other neighbourhoods is its geographical compactness. It is located right at the centre of Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya yet still



has a 'native' residency. But most of all, what distinguishes it from other neighbourhoods in the Klang Valley, is that it is simply "mine."

Eddin founded PUSAKA more than two decades ago when the traditional arts of Kelantan were threatened by political and religious developments. As a journalist, he was fascinated by Kelantan's rich tradition and was inspired by his relationship with the shadow puppeteer Abdullah Ibrahim, also better known as Dollah Baju Merah. "He taught me so much about what it meant to have tenacity, humour, dignity and a sense of self. Nothing could be inspiring and motivating than that..."

PUSAKA is committed to researching and documenting the ritual arts of Kelantan, and aims to provide a deep intellectual understanding and context to these traditions. They help organise performances at national and international levels to generate interest. "We have also been successful in gaining the interest and attention of the young within Kelantan itself and today have successfully trained a new generation of performers, not just in the practice of the art, but also in what it means." ✍

Visit www.senipusaka.com to learn more about PUSAKA.



Photograph of Eddin's maternal grandmother when she was a child with her siblings.

INVESTING IN BANGSAR

Will purchasing a bangsar property get you a golden ticket?
Previndran Singhe analyses the market.



Bangsar, encompassing Bangsar Baru, Bangsar Park, Lucky Garden and Bukit Bandaraya, has always been an exceptional investment location.

Double storey terrace homes are most in demand, with a preference towards Bangsar Baru and Bukit Bandaraya, especially non-split level homes and those with bigger frontages. Prices now start at a minimum of RM1 million to RM1.1 million for even a basic run-down house. Single

storey homes are also in demand for the “first entry” purchase with prices starting at about RM800,000 to RM900,000.

Demand is strong in all three locales that have single storey homes i.e. Bangsar Baru, Lucky Garden and Bangsar Park. Semi-detached homes are now becoming more attractive as families who have lived in Bangsar begin to expand or need more space. The higher parts of Terasek are the most favoured option and prices start from RM2.5 million onwards.

Detached homes are limited in supply and this fact has been slowly driving prices up. Bukit Bandaraya is at the top of the wish list of purchasers looking for their dream homes and has seen some healthy price increases followed by Bangsar Baru and the Medang Tanduk area. We have also seen a strong penchant for detached homes in Bangsar Park especially the ones closer to Bukit Travers. In Lucky Garden, detached homes bordering Bukit Pantai, which are elevated and have views are also in high demand. Prices for

detached homes are of course varied, starting from RM4 million onwards.

We have experienced a strong shift in real estate investment in recent years. There is a very obvious move towards condominium living for owner occupation and prices have inched up past RM1000 per square feet which was unheard of before in Bangsar. Nevertheless there are still investment options from about RM500,000 onwards for a condominium unit and of all the residential options; we see the strongest upswing in condos in the coming years. Other trends we have seen in Bangsar recently are the advent of gated developments, low rise condos cum townhouses and multi generation living units.

Over the years, Bangsar has become more connected and this is the most significant quality that has made Bangsar the ultimate address and investment choice. With the extension of Jalan Damansara (now Sprint Highway) the

Top: Prices of detached homes in Jalan Medang Tanduk have steadily increased over the years. Bottom: BRDB's highly successful One Menerung set benchmark prices matching condominium prices in KLCC.



Bandar Raya

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An original 1971 print advertisement featured in the New Straits Times.



The thriving, bustling commercial street of Jalan Telawi has contributed to the increase in value of Bangsar Baru.

elevated link to Mid Valley, the Bangsar LRT, plus proximity to Kerinchi Link and Penchala Link, Bangsar has become tremendously accessible to all parts of the Klang Valley. We also believe then and now, the fact that it straddles Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya makes its location even more strategic.

With the growing population and prosperity, there was and is a strong demand for commercial activity and services. From just a couple of streets of two and three storey shops, the commercial area in Bangsar has grown to rows of three to four storey shops with hip retailers, three chic Shopping Complexes and even stylish office buildings, that attract not just people from the neighbourhood but around the Klang Valley.

This commercial content and the convenience it offers in terms of shopping, dining, play and leisure adds to the DNA of Bangsar and its success story.

With scarcity well set into Bangsar, (there is very limited land supply) we will see more money chasing good assets, and this will further inch up prices in Bangsar over the long run.

Unfortunately, being such an attractive proposition has also caused parts of Bangsar to be congested, mainly in the commercial areas. This has to be addressed to ensure the long term sustainability of Bangsar as a living community. Simple solutions such as pedestrianising some lanes during weekends, electronic parking indicators, more enforcement by traffic police on double parking can actually help contain and reduce this problem.

Our top two investment choices in Bangsar are the terrace homes (as demand outstrips supply) and well-built condos (as we see a shift towards this lifestyle). With scarcity setting in, infrastructure getting better and maturing of the commercial content, Bangsar will remain to be one of the top real estate investment choices in the coming years. ✎



Previntran Singhe is the CEO of Zerin Properties, a Malaysian based Estate Agency with international offices in Singapore, Sydney, London and India. He has been in the business for 24 years with the past 10 years in Zerin Properties which he formed in January 14, 2002.

BANGSAR BUBBLE

Bangsar seems to be the centre of the universe for many, it's time to investigate why.

Written by Iqbal Abdul Rahim.



From the large picture windows on the first floor, Snow Ng peers out onto Telawi 3 and sees the comings and goings of the street that has been her playground since she was a student not long ago. Snow manages one the most progressive galleries in KL and she's seen the changes down below. Just as the exhibits and artworks change in the gallery, so do the boutiques, cafes and restaurants on the streets below. Some things never change in Bangsar and that, to her, is the charm of the place.

People moved here four decades ago and there are still pockets that look like the '60s. She recalls the years when Telawi 3 was the hip strip but still likes the more sedate road it has now become. It still has a lot to offer: loads of places to eat, shop and get a foot massage. Everyone I spoke to agrees that Bangsar's greatest asset is its convenience, the proximity to both KL and PJ makes Bangsar KL's playground.

For someone like Snow, the 'golden triangle' of the three Mamak restaurants is a life saver. When overseas artists come to exhibit, she makes it a point to take them to Dinty's for a taste of old, crazy KL. And, of course, she takes them across the road to Lucky Garden for a taste of real local food. When it comes to shopping, Snow has a soft spot for CzipLee, the wonderland of stationery. "Sartorial is also a little gem. They make such fab suits for men", she adds.

At the other end of Bangsar, lives the wondrous Datin Azanin Ezane Ahmad, the doyenne of Malay dance. It was she, more than anyone else, who put Mak Yong in the forefront of Malaysian theatre. Just like Snow, she too has a soft spot for all that is Bangsar. Azanin opened her dance studio in Plaza Damansara at the end of the '70s, just as Bangsar and BSC were being planned.

She would drive the short hop from her studio to Bangsar to shop and have a coffee. But since the opening of BSC, it's been hard to find her anywhere else. "I like this centre", she says simply. "It has everything I need and something for everyone. There are places to chill at for every mood. Of course, I particularly like Alexis for their



cakes", she says with a guilty laugh.

"And Dancing Fish for their delicious Indonesian cuisine." BSC is where Azanin goes for everything she needs now: from cheeses to pastries to the hairdresser and for the hard to find grocery items. "But Bangsar really lacks anything cultural. It does need a theatre which it used to have. That made such a difference. I could shop, get my groceries, watch a play and go home happy." It is true that cultural pursuits really are tough to find in Bangsar. After all, art and culture are the signifiers of a truly affluent society.

One Bangsar resident who's played a part in promoting Malaysian culture in film is 'Puteri Gunung Ledang' director, Saw Teong Hin. A Bangsar resident for about four years, Saw moved from Ampang to Bangsar for the neighbourhood feel of the suburb. "It's easy to walk to places here and there's a sports centre with a swimming pool and a gym. It's all so easy."

Thanks to the proximity of so many cafes, meetings and discussions are easy to arrange



Top: Datin Azanin Ezane Ahmad
Bottom: Snow Ng



Top: Ann Ibrahim
Bottom: Saw Teong Hin

in Bangsar: everyone has a favourite spot. "I find there's a nice balance of everything here: from the shops to the eateries, there's something to suit every pocket. You get to see a really dynamic cross-section of KL society. And it's all these elements that make Bangsar such a great place to live in." The only thing missing in Bangsar for Saw is a cinema. "I know the nearest is Midvalley but we are so used to walking in Bangsar that it would be nice to be able to walk to the movies."

Ann Ibrahim is a life long Bangsar resident. A midwife by training and profession (facebook.com/mybidan), Ann's never lived anywhere else in KL. Her parents were some of the earliest residents in the then new suburb connecting KL to PJ. She remembers streets that had nothing but grass verges and trees. Would she ever move away? "Not likely", she smiles. "I like it here. Bangsar is such a microcosm of KL. Everyone's here. If they don't live here, they visit Bangsar. And because so many people take a morning or evening stroll, the

neighbourhood has essentially remained friendly and fun." Like everyone else, Ann finds Bangsar's location a boon for her when it comes to setting up meetings with expectant mothers. There's always a café in Bangsar that's someone's favourite and it makes my job that much easier when people are relaxed".

When she's not busy looking after her three children, Ann makes time to discover little things about Bangsar that keep her here. One of her favourite finds is Baba Low's near Jalan Riong that serves the best curry Mee (*laksa*). At weekends, the family heads off to BSC for groceries, pet food and a meal. "We've been BSC fans for the longest time and my kids love it here. There's always something to do and see."

Like every parent, Ann's constantly on the hunt for places for her kids and her little secret gem is the play park on Jalan Bangkung. There, kids can cycle and run up and down the hill and get lots of fresh air. The play park's in the middle of her route from home to BSC so a stopover is always likely to happen be it on the way to or from BSC. "I wish though, that there were more green spaces.

People in Bangsar love to walk and a few more green spots wouldn't go amiss." For someone who's seen Bangsar grow and grow, Ann loves the little shops along Jalan Bangsar with the old style barber, watch shop repairers, kopitiam and the car workshops. "That's KL all over. These little shop houses are where the whole family lives upstairs and everyone's involved in the business".

The magic of Bangsar lies in the array of what it offers. People from all walks of life enjoy it and feel at home here. Yuppies love it for the cafes and lifestyle offerings. Young families find almost all of their needs met with the parks and shops that offer most of everything.

And the more senior residents appreciate the elegant neighbourhood roads lined with mature trees as they stroll around, taking in all that is Bangsar. ✎



From the true blue Bangsar-ian to the occasional tourist, Choo Ai Ling discovers that KL's favourite neighbourhood attracts all sorts.

Is Bangsar best? For a relatively “young” neighbourhood, its fans are legion. These people are willing to overlook the fact that getting curbside parking along the Telawi strip is like hitting the lottery and that here, zoning laws carry as little weight as a Kadarshian marriage.

For Alizakri Alias, Bangsar is in his blood: “I’ve lived in Bangsar since I was like yay high so I’ve seen it from all its various stages and it keeps on growing and growing. It now has an interesting community with its own unique energy.”

Alizakri readily admits that despite Bangsar’s oft vaunted convenient location, instead of using that to access the other parts of the Klang Valley, he shops, eats, relaxes here and to top it off, all his friends come to him, rather than the other way around. Indeed even for people who don’t live in the neighbourhood, the siren call of Bangsar is hard to resist.

Janet Lee, who lives in Jalan Ipoh, traverses traffic jams to make the pilgrimage to Bangsar at least once a week. Drawn by its central location, Janet also loves the fact that her expectations are always met at the cafes she frequents: “It’s getting to be a no brainer. Like, *Aiyah... you hai* Alexis (translation: Alexis, again)? The quality of

food is established so it’s safe and people are not likely to complain about food.”

Apart from locals, Bangsar has always attracted its fair share of expats. Claire Matthews, 47, and her family who have just moved to Damansara Heights from the Middle East reveals that Bangsar has become a second home. “We’re probably in Bangsar most days because I’ve got a family to look after so I’m always doing the shopping, one sort or another, whether it’s food shopping or anything else,” she says. “I go to Jasons, we eat at BSC and my son comes here to fence upstairs.”

Added to this mix of people is the occasional tourist, despite Bangsar being quite removed from the usual touristy sites. Australian George Chan says: “Every time I come to KL, I will come to Bangsar at least once as all my friends live around here.”

For Aimi, who moved to Damansara Heights from Puchong, the mystique of Bangsar lies in its cachet. “I guess Bangsar has the name lah. You know, it’s like Bangsar (in a posh tone), it’s not like Kota Damansara. If it’s Kota Damansara then it’s like (bored tone) ok, Kota Damansara,” she laughs. “Bangsar has that sort of impression of being more high-end, or elitist.”



Clockwise from top: Claire Matthews and her children, Aimi, Janet Lee, George Chan and Alizakri Alias

THE SERAI ARTIST SERIES

THE ARTIST SERIES COMMEMORATES THE LAUNCH OF BRDB'S CROWN JEWEL, SERAI BUKIT BANDARAYA. THIS EXCLUSIVE TRIBUTE WAS COMMISSIONED TO BRING TO LIFE THE VIBRANCY AND SHEER JOIE DE VIVRE OF KL'S MOST ENDURING NEIGHBOURHOOD, SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF THREE CELEBRATED ARTISTS.

CELEBRATING HERITAGE THROUGH ART

"Art is a reflection and expression of a society. Art and its heritage are fundamental to a country's collective identity and vital to our history, our creativity, our expressive voice and our aesthetic heritage. BRDB has always been a keen supporter of the local arts fraternity and the launch of Serai presented an opportunity for us to mark our legacy in Bangsar with an artistic milestone."

The Serai Artist Series depicts the works of three celebrated Malaysians, each bringing to life their artistic interpretations of Bangsar through their medium of speciality. The artists are SC Shekar,

an internationally renowned photographer, Jalaini Abu Hassan, one of the most established fine artists in the country, and Dr. June Ngo, a pioneering innovator of the art of Songket.

The completed works of the artists can be viewed at the BRDB Sales Gallery in Bangsar and will ultimately grace the hallways of Serai. "We are privileged to have these three distinguished artists be a part of this tribute. Their individual pieces have immortalised Bangsar in a highly symbolic, artistic, beautiful, and timeless manner, a fitting homage to Malaysia's most enduring neighbourhood."

- Dato' Jagan Sabapathy, CEO, Bandar Raya Developments Berhad

SC SHEKAR DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHER

"This whole project for me is a tribute to the people that have made this unique community what it is. It's my way of thanking them. And I think Bangsar thanks them too".

A long time resident of Bangsar, SC Shekar has captured the people of Bangsar in a series of photographs that offer an illuminating insight into the rich heritage of this vibrantly eclectic and cosmopolitan neighbourhood.



SC Shekar is widely known in the Asia Pacific region for his portraiture and ethnographic images work and his ability to portray his subjects with great empathy and sensitivity. His images have appeared in magazines, books and numerous commissions.

Mr. & Mrs. Lim
Proprietors of the only store of its kind in Bangsar since 1972, this couple and their children still live above their two storey grocery store. While they have seen generations come and go, time seems to stand still over here. This poignant photograph of them could have easily been taken when they first opened.



Jalaini Abu Hassan is one of the most established and renowned fine artists in the country. Jai's work is known to evolve around contemporary objects and issues and has been exhibited in private and public art spaces around the country as well as abroad.

JALAINI ABU HASSAN

PAINTER

"You can't progress without knowing your past, your history, your roots. My piece uses the rubber plantation landscape as its background and I added a collage of canvas cut outs of city buildings emerging from its undergrowth, capturing the spirit of Bangsar's development from plantation to a cosmopolitan suburb."

Fondly referred to as 'Jai' in the Malaysian art scene, his interpretation is a bold and sweeping homage to the evolution of Bangsar.

At a glance, Jai's masterful painting is an expressive timeline that traces the progression from the rubber plantation it used to be to the cosmopolitan and affluent Bangsar of today.



Dr June Ngo is instrumental in pioneering the transformation of songket into contemporary handmade textile. Her role in ensuring the sustainability of the songket legacy empowers the young by providing an economic lifeline through traditional crafts.

DR. JUNE NGO

TEXTILE DESIGNER

"What inspired me most in the making of these pieces is Bangsar's rich history and its evolution from a rubber plantation to the most up-market suburb in Malaysia. The grids of the *songket* represent the blueprint of Bangsar showcasing profiles of the different building designs that make up this well developed neighbourhood and the different colours of the grids represent the people from various backgrounds, the soul of the community."

Inspired by the grid-based, abstract forms of Mondriaan, Dr. June's interpretation weaves together the thoughtful master planning of Bangsar in a series of modern contemporary Songket pieces. This exquisite series is a beautiful, luxurious and fitting tribute to the crowning jewel that is Serai.

The Bangsar Series - Night
Here, the navy blue colours accent the bustling and eclectic Bangsar of the night, woven into a songket of rare sophistication.





UNVEILING THE MOST COVETED ADDRESS IN BANGSAR



“At BRDB, we are dedicated to creating inspiring places for people to live, work and grow in. This takes imagination and creativity, the kind that comes from a deep understanding of people’s ever-changing modern lifestyles. We know that creating the ultimate in urban lifestyle does not stop when a building is finished. We continue to care for the people who live and work in the spaces we create. Nowhere is this more evident than in the cosmopolitan neighbourhood of Bangsar.

Our heritage in Bangsar started with our first community here in 1964. Our continuous investments in the Bukit Bandaraya locality have resulted in properties that stand the test of time and continue to appreciate in value. Our long-term commitment to this community is perfectly encapsulated in this new luxury development that is Serai. A fitting tribute to the neighbourhood we call our home.”

Dato’ Jagan Sabapathy, CEO, Bandar Raya Developments Berhad



Celebrating space as the basic tenet of luxury, Serai exceeds the highest standards of function and form for home living. Designed to resemble the grandeur of high-end bungalows, individual unit sizes start from 4,000 square feet to a royal 12,000 square feet in the penthouse. These luxuries are further elevated by grand landscaping, spectacular panoramas of the city skyline and the attentive service of the Concierge, Security and Management Team.

“Serai marks one of our most luxurious and ambitious developments to date, a landmark residential icon that celebrates our brand values of intelligent design, uplifting aesthetics and cosmopolitan living. Each of these values has been artfully crafted to create these exclusive private residences that are set to challenge the conventional expression of luxury. Complemented by the premium BRDB brand name, Serai is set to stamp its mark as the most desirable address in our property portfolio.”, says Dato’ Jagan.

Space, light and luxury are the hallmarks of Serai. At the heart of these homes are signature Bulthaup designer kitchens and expansive living areas that flow onto

spacious balconies. Luxury appointments include Poliform wardrobe systems in the bedrooms, Gaggenau professional kitchen appliances, Bosch wet kitchen and laundry appliances, whilst your bathroom will feature designer European fittings.

Serai is a gated and guarded community that features the latest and comprehensive state-of-the-art security technology – a multi-tiered computerised system with 24-hour CCTV monitoring. A fibre optic perimeter alarm system features night time infrared illumination. Two ultra modern guardhouses facilitate all pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Every home owner has smart card access. Each unit is furnished with an intercom unit for convenient communication with security personnel.

Serai Bukit Bandaraya is an address that speaks for itself; a distinctive development that captivates all its beholders in the way it elegantly dignifies an established residential enclave with its redefinition of fine living. ✦

Serai’s brand new show home is now open. Please call +603 2095 4088 for an appointment to view.

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Recreational podium featuring a heated 50 metre saltwater pool, world class gym and a fully fitted private dining room.

Fitted Bulthaup kitchen with Gaggenau appliances and Poliform wardrobes.





HISTORY & GROWTH

Charting the fortunes of Bangsar through BRDB's property developments.

Written by Dinesh Ranawaka

It's impossible to look at the history of Bandar Raya Developments Berhad (BRDB) without looking at the history of Bangsar. The two lineages are so closely intertwined, their names are often interchangeable.

So it makes sense to understand a little about Bangsar, so that we can better understand BRDB. You probably have an idea that Bangsar was, at some point, a rubber plantation. But what you may not know is that its name is believed to have come about as a result of an amalgamation of the then estate name. The estate was called the Bunge-Grisar Estate, but by the time the British firm began selling off the land for development it was known as Bangsar.

Now, Bangsar didn't immediately bloom into the cosmopolitan hub of life that it is now. Its suburbanity actually had a rather tame beginning with primarily government housing and buildings. The current Tenaga Nasional Berhad had their staff quarters here, there was a Public Health College and a Nurses Training School, as well as a number of companies that housed their staff and families due to what was even then a convenient location.

Before we head into the point at which BRDB and Bangsar meet, we should take a look at BRDB's origins. BRDB was incorporated in 1964, and began work on some housing projects around the Klang Valley. With these successes in hand, BRDB's management decided to expand, and start work on creating housing developments that would form a larger community. To aid this effort, BRDB was listed in the KLSE in 1968 – making it one of the first developers to be listed in Malaysia.

In the early 1970's, BRDB entered the small community of Bangsar. This is when Bangsar began to take shape – BRDB completed their first housing development, the first phase of link houses and bungalows in Bukit Bandaraya, and Eng Lian Enterprises began developing what is now Bangsar Baru.

The 70's saw Bangsar develop into a thriving business community and with that came an influx of baby-boomers and encouraged it to form into a housing suburb.

BRDB continued to expand on its housing offerings in Bukit Bandaraya and they cemented their plans to focus on turning this into a prosperous neighbourhood.

As BRDB saw their projects grow and draw attention, in 1978 they decided to enhance it by building the road that connects Jalan Maarof to Bukit Damansara, an already established upmarket neighbourhood. This not only improved transport, but created a link to the future BRDB had envisioned.

BRDB: AN INTERESTING HISTORY

One of the earliest condominiums in Bangsar was built by BRDB – Bangsar Aman. A low-rise development, the success of this project opened BRDB's eyes to the allure of condo living.

By this time, Bangsar was already seen as a trendy neighbourhood to live in. As part of BRDB's vision to create an integrated neighbourhood, they knew that they needed to enhance the image they desired with a lifestyle option that would complete the neighbourhood. Thus, Bangsar Shopping Centre was born in 1990.



Opposite page: Bangsar Hill is Bangsar's first gated and guarded community. Top: Inara Bangsar sits on the highest point of Bukit Bandaraya. Bottom: The iconic neighbourhood shopping centre in 1995.





The Roman inspired columns of Tivoli Villa continues to hold its charm.

The first phase of BSC brought not only the conveniences of nearby amenities, but the equivalent communal aspects of a clubhouse. Residents could now socialise and dine out within the neighbourhood they called home. As people from other neighbourhoods visited BSC, they saw the ease and comfort that the Bangsar lifestyle offered, and demand for housing soared.

Already no strangers to success, BRDB responded in kind. Menara Bangsar was launched in 1985 and Bangsar Puteri was completed in 1987. One of the first high-rise condominiums in the area, Menara Bangsar broke the mould for residential developments. Rental prices for Menara Bangsar were double that of landed terrace houses in the area, and have remained profitable to this day, due to its strategic location.

Wanting to maintain their reputation for developing quality homes, BRDB's next projects were landed low-rise; spacious

and elegant. These developments were designed to cater to the increasing number of affluent customers who wanted to live in the fashionable neighbourhood. 1988 saw the first phase of the Verona Town Villas completed – multiple floored terraced homes on Jalan Medang Serai.

The Tivoli Villas low-rise condominium project was completed in 1990 and was very well received by the market, with a concept design that featured majestic Roman inspired columns, colonnades and arches. What set this development apart, and firmly placed BRDB in the luxury property segment, was the surrounding concourse that was filled with fountains, trellised alcoves, gazebos, birdbaths all set amidst lush gardens.

In line with these two new developments, and the fact that their community was growing, BRDB knew that they had to continue to refresh the lifestyle aspect of their neighbourhood. So in 1995 the West Wing of BSC was opened to not

only cater to the growing demand, but also to fulfill the community's increasing retail and lifestyle needs.

In 1991 BRDB completed Desa Bangsar Ria which sits on the hilltop of Bukit Bandaraya. With only 46 units, this was an exclusive condominium address and featured a stunning view of the KL skyline.

Sri Penaga, with two tower blocks opposite BSC, was completed in 1996. In 2003, BRDB launched Bangsar Hill, a gated and guarded landed development that featured individually-designed bungalows. One of the first gated and guarded housing developments in the area, Bangsar Hill commanded premium prices due to its safety, location and stylish designs.

In 2004, BRDB underwent a brand refresher exercise in which it developed a brand new logo and corporate identity. The new logo, identity and messaging all reflected the changes that BRDB had undergone – its focus on the luxury property segment, its emphasis on creating cosmopolitan communities, and



Top: Sri Penaga. Bottom: Bangsar Aman, one of BRDB's first developments.



its positioning as one of the top property developers in Malaysia.

The next condo that BRDB developed was Palmyra Bangsar, a Balinese themed condo opposite Tivoli Villas. Shortly after this came Inara Bangsar which sits on the highest point of Bukit Bandaraya. After these two developments, BRDB focused its efforts in other areas, as it planned for the next stage of Bangsar's development.

In 2009, One Menerung was launched, adjacent to BSC. Many people acknowledged this as the defining BRDB development in Bangsar, and this is true not only because it is the most recent, but because it's a truly spectacular development. A lush green

enclave, marked by stylish architecture and excellent amenities.

With One Menerung standing proudly next to it, BSC began to look a little dated. The timing was apt, and BRDB decided to reinvigorate BSC to bring it in line with the Bangsar of today. BSC's facade was redesigned as was its interior, a retail annexe was added and Menara BRDB was built adjacent to it. The refreshed BSC opened its doors in 2010.

Next, BRDB will be launching Serai, its most luxurious Bangsar development yet. 121 private luxury units nestled over 6 acres of prime real estate in Bukit Bandaraya. A fitting tribute to the neighbourhood it calls home. ✎



Top: The Balinese-themed Palmyra is a calm tropical retreat in bustling Bangsar. Bottom: One Menerung, widely acclaimed as the defining BRDB development in Bangsar.





FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Two intrepid travellers reveal what it's like to encounter Bangsar for the first time.

Written and photographed by Seton Beggs and Carine Middeldorp.

HIS Story...

>> We begin our hike across Bangsar in calm tree lined streets, here we talk to locals while they hang their clothes to dry, catch whiffs of delicious aromas of meals being prepared through open windows, and command the attention of endless dogs.

On local advice, we descend some stairs and find ourselves in a noisy market square behind TMC supermarket - the first of a series of imperceptible 'boundaries' we find in this neighbourhood with abrupt transitions.

We stop a man pushing a large heavy cart and he tells us that his father and him have been selling vegetables here everyday beginning at 3am for so long he can't even remember exactly when they started.

What strikes me most is he says this with a smile on his face, and has an air about him that life was hard, but pleasantly worth it. In the same square, we meet "Mr Apom", a 12 year veteran in the field of making peanut and sweet corn pancakes with a slow, but steady stream of customers. While making us an Apom, he explains that he is happy with his job and loyal to this location - and that what he makes is good. It is.

Mahbub at the corner proclaims that it serves the 'best Briyani in town', I take them up on their claim by sampling a fair amount of it. As I contently loosen my belt after lunch, we make our way through Bangsar Village 1 and 2, and emerge on the other side to a different world. We seem to have crossed another border again - here upmarket bars, beauty parlors and boutiques



From the top down: The man behind the counter in Mahbub; shop shutters; a family home near Bangsar Shopping Centre; a red Volkswagen beetle parked in front of the Bangsar Shopping Centre; shopping carts in front of TMC supermarket.



made it quite different to what we had just encountered on the other side of the mall.

Starting up the incline, we pass another invisible boundary where we're back in a suburban setting alive with lush greenery but this time, there is an air of money. Things are cleaner, streets are quieter. We hardly smell any home cooking and windows are shut tightly suggesting air-conditioned rooms. Cats, not dogs rule here and they lounge languorously under cars in the shade.

However, turning left at a junction reveals a grassy neighbourhood park, complete with benches, basketball court, and play frames - all being used by kids and adults of all ages. Here, we meet 'the community'. We chat with some well-spoken teenagers who were emphatic that Bangsar will always be home - even while they pursue further educations abroad.

At the end of the day, we arrived at the holy grail of luxury. The sweet cherry literally on top of Bangsar, Bangsar Shopping Centre. Greeted by cars you only see in showrooms or in movies, an air of haughtiness permeates this immaculately maintained consumer heaven. And this superior air is not only due to the cars, shops and clientele, its also because that it perches close to the highest point of Bangsar, coming second only to luxury condos and villas overlooking the entire city. We were at the top of Bangsar, and they let us tired, contradictory but it works. Here the people of Bangsar have created a truly unique biosphere and one that I look forward to frequent during my time in KL.



From the top down: A rooster patrolling the neighbourhood; a close up of the new Gaya condominium; the appom seller who has been there for twelve years; a blue-eyed family cat on the street; two friends we met in the park who generously shared their drinks with us.



HER Story...

>> We must stick out like sore thumbs - two Europeans wandering through the back alleys of Bangsar, an area where tourists don't usually frequent.

A tiny fluffy dog notices us and starts barking incessantly through the fence. A friendly Chinese man and his wife apologise, the tiny dog is just trying to do his job of protecting its owner. Well, he's certainly good at his job.

We start chatting to the Chinese couple and find out that they've been living on this narrow street for the last 30 years. The wife has been hanging out the washing at this same place for at least three decades. I find this revelation incredible, they must really love Bangsar. And they're not alone. A street vendor near TMC supermarket has exchanged his delicacies for money in the exact spot as where he started twelve years ago.

Two fish market stallholders have gotten up at the crack of dawn every day, for the last twenty-three years. The *pasar* mini tucked into a street corner has been frequented by their regulars for the last thirty years. I'm adding all the years up in my head and the evidence is mounting, there must be something keeping them here.

Time has not stood still though. There's a certain welcome contrast to the place and the gap between old and new is evident in every block. On the one hand, the area is definitely an old KL neighbourhood with residents and entrepreneurs who have been here for decades. But there is another side to green and leafy Bangsar, the newer side, with shopping malls, swanky condominiums and expatriate restaurant bars.

I relish the juxtaposition. You can go from seeing your reflection in the marble floor of a shopping mall with a Maserati parked in front, to buying fruit off an old lady who is a true local. Ultimately, that's what makes Bangsar great - the locals have stayed, but it does not shy away from the new. It's a fine balance. ✨



Mr. _____ Bill No. 2074

Bangsar's Best Bites

| Qty | Description | Unit Price | Amount |
|----------|-------------|------------|--------|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6. | | | |
| 7. | | | |
| 8. | | | |
| 9. | | | |
| 10. | | | |
| Total RM | | | |

They have been around for generations, but their authentic taste still holds true. Check out these hidden gems of Bangsar for a true taste of Malaysian cuisine.

Authorized By: _____ Received By: _____



ROCKY'S CHAR KUAY TEOW

OWNER: Madam Lee
 Rocky Coffee Shop
 Jalan Telawi Bangsar Baru,
 Bangsar, 59100 Kuala Lumpur

Expect a plateful of Penang *Char Kuey Teow* filled with delicious bits of cockles, shrimp, beans sprouts and chives. The very thought of the smell is enough to get your stomach rumbling.



CHELO'S APPAM STALL

OWNER: Slochana Paramasivam
 Lucky Gardens Hawker Stalls,
 Lorong Ara Kiri 3, Bangsar,
 59100 Kuala Lumpur

Chelo's Appam Stall in Lucky Garden, Bangsar, is just one of the few places in town that serves authentic *appam* and other traditional Sri Lankan food.



MOHAMED IBRAHIM'S ROJAK & CENDOL STALL

OWNER: Arif Sultan
 Petronas Station on Jalan Maarof,
 Bangsar, 59000 Kuala Lumpur

This is where you get the typical "*Mamak rojak*" with soft tofu, crispy crackers, peanut sauce and topped with a handful of crunchy peanuts. Ask for an additional topping of *sotong* (squid) for extra oomph!





AUNTY CHRISTINA'S SARAWAK LAKSA

OWNER: Christina Jong
Kedai Makanan Nam Chuan
2-4 Lorong Ara Kiri 2, Lucky Garden,
Bangsar, 59100 Kuala Lumpur

The secret to a delicious bowl of Sarawak Laksa lies in the soup. Aunty Christina's has just the right amount of sweet, tangy, sour and salty. Perfectly complemented with fresh, succulent shrimps.



ANUAR'S FISH HEAD CURRY

OWNER: Anuar
Lucky Gardens Hawker Stalls,
Lorong Ara Kiri 3, Bangsar,
59100 Kuala Lumpur

Don't be alarmed if you see a long queue every afternoon at Anuar's Fish head curry. The secret lies in their authentic fish head curry, which has a perfect blend of *tumis* (spices) and just the right amount of spiciness. Best eaten with piping hot rice.



MADAM VISALATCHI'S CURRY PUFF & VADAI

OWNER: Madam Visalatchi
Jalan Telawi Bangsar Baru
(up the road from Pelita Nasi Kandar),
Bangsar, 59100 Kuala Lumpur

For generations the humble curry puff stall along Jalan Telawi in Bangsar has been there serving up delicious morsels of curry puffs, filled with the perfect blend of spices and potatoes.

