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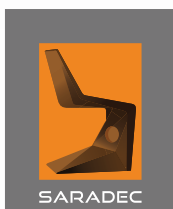


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DATUK SEBASTIAN TING
Deputy Minister of Tourism, Creative Industry and Performing Arts Sarawak (MTCP)

Welcome to Sarawak, welcome to Borneo

With our borders now open for international travel again, I would like to invite everyone to take this opportunity to come discover Sarawak's many tourism gems.

The two-year downtime has allowed the local tourism authority to breathe new life into some of Sarawak's existing attractions, making them even better, with experiences such as never before offered to visitors in the past.

Attractions such as the Sarawak Cultural Village has been beautifully refurbished and is now better equipped. Bau's Fairy Cave has also reopened on March 11 after a months-long refurbishing exercise, with facilities that better cater to the needs of visitors.

There are also new attractions, such as the new Satok suspension bridge, which is a splendid sight to behold. At night, specially curated brilliant LED graphic displays affixed to the suspension cables of the bridge add splashes of colour to enliven the surrounding area.

The Borneo Cultures Museum is the latest and greatest icon not just for Kuching but for Sarawak as a whole. Largest in Malaysia (2nd largest in Southeast Asia), the museum is a world-class attraction, with carefully curated exhibits that incorporate new technology, engaging story-telling, and interactive features.

With Sarawak's capital Kuching accepted to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) in the field of gastronomy in 2021, it is only fitting that visitors go on a culinary adventure here as well. Don't miss out on culinary icons such as Sarawak Laksa, Pansoh Manok, and Kolo Mee, just to name a few. Also try some wild produce fresh from the jungle, such as terung asam, tepus, and ensabi, as well as sweet traditional kuih and the must-try Sarawakian beverage namely 3-layered Teh C Peng Special.

While in Sarawak, take the opportunity to fully experience its Culture, Adventure, Nature, Food and Festivals (CANFF). The choices are plenty, from gorgeous waterfalls and villages above the clouds to Sibu's grand Borneo Cultural Festival and Miri's pristine beaches. It's all here for you to enjoy!

On top of those experiences, Sarawak also offers educational tourism, and is home to several well-established institutions of higher learning, such as Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), a leading public university that is also among the Top 1000 universities in the world.

So come on over to Sarawak, where there is so much More to Discover!

UNIMAS' 30-YEAR JOURNEY TOWARDS EXCELLENCE

*Vice Chancellor,
Prof. Datuk Dr Mohamad Kadim Suaidi*



For Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), 1992 was a defining year. It was in December of that year that the public university first took shape. UNIMAS now ranks as one of the best institutions of higher learning in Malaysia.

When interviewed in conjunction with the university's 30th anniversary at its chancellery building, Vice Chancellor Prof. Datuk Dr Mohamad Kadim Suaidi shared that with only two faculties in its formative years, namely Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities as well as Faculty of Resources Science and Technology, UNIMAS welcomed its first batch of students in July of 1993.

Starting from zero

UNIMAS was an entirely new university at the time - not a branch campus of an existing university nor was it affiliated with any other public university.

"Because we started fresh, we could do things that had not been done before by the universities of the day. We introduced technology into our classrooms, and a "borderless library" of electronic books. We were one of the first universities in the country to use IT in our teaching and learning, as well as in our research and innovation activities. These initiatives made us very different," Kadim enthused, adding that because of that, they were able to move from physical classroom to online classroom very quickly and seamlessly without many problems.

The Vice Chancellor believes that what also makes UNIMAS unique from other universities in Malaysia is its location on the island of Borneo, which is exceptionally rich in biodiversity.

"Our strengths are in biodiversity, environmental conservation and indigenous knowledge. Knowing that Sarawak is home to more than 40 ethnic groups with distinct languages, customs, and cultures, which are sources of knowledge for people who are interested to study them," he told Borneo Talk.





Enduring challenging times

The early years were especially challenging for UNIMAS. With the limited resources that it had; the university ran from a temporary campus for about 14 years.

“There were very big challenges, while having a small campus we were working hard to expand our academic programmes, growing our offerings in terms of research and innovation, and increasing the number of students,” Kadim shared. When UNIMAS finally moved into its current permanent campus in 2006, the university was able to expand in several areas, such as its post-graduate programmes. He indicated that, “right now UNIMAS is one of the best in the country.”

Besides all these challenges, a more recent one was the COVID-19 pandemic. “We thrived, we persevered, and we overcame it. We learned a lot from all that, and we will be much more prepared in the future,” he went on to say.

Approach to education and beyond

UNIMAS’ projects and programmes are in line with the United Nation’s (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). They include academic programmes, research programmes, and innovation programmes that are very much community driven, thus making the university’s presence felt by the community that it serves.

“Five years ago, we introduced the tagline “Sustainability for Diverse and Disperse Community.” In Sarawak, there are a lot of communities that live far from the city, and we wanted to bring them together through technology and create a positive impact on them,” the Vice Chancellor said, adding that he was happy to see that the State Government is also adopting the approach that UNIMAS have had been doing for the past few years.

UNIMAS also established the Centre for Renewable Energy, which it upgraded into the Institute of Sustainability and Renewable Energy in 2021. Coincidentally, a new Ministry was also established recently, namely the Ministry of Energy and Environmental Sustainability, that correlate with the university’s initiatives and plans.

Next chapter

Since its first graduation ceremony in 1997, UNIMAS has produced almost 52,000 alumni, with international

alumni coming from 51 different countries from around the world.

UNIMAS has grown from having just 2 in 1992 to 10 faculties, a business school and a centre of pre-university studies today.

“We plan to add another one or two faculties within the next five years, and more programmes at post-graduate level,” said Kadim.

UNIMAS is also building its new, 300-bed ultra-modern, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) teaching hospital slated for completion in 2025.

“In 2023, with the teaching hospital partially ready, we will be able to bring in research students to do their medical degree, and train doctors as well as specialists in their different specialisations,” he disclosed.

UNIMAS is currently involved with the Sarawak Infectious Disease Centre (SIDC), which the State Government is building outside its campus. The university’s Institute of Health & Community Medicine is helping the Government to train the necessary manpower for SIDC. For the last two years, UNIMAS has also been working very closely with the State Government to control COVID-19.

As for upcoming events, UNIMAS together with Europe’s World Counselling Body and other partners from all over the world will be organising the World Counselling Programme in November. Some 1,000 participants, largely psychologists from all over the world, will be attending.

Inspiring others

“I’m very touched and fortunate to have very good people around me with whom I can work together, and I can inspire them to work together with me to bring UNIMAS to where we are now. It has always been about teamwork and team effort. It has never been about me,” Kadim shared.

Today, UNIMAS ranks among the top 600 in economics & business and social sciences, top 800 in life sciences and top 1000 in engineering and technology for the last four years.

“So, it’s something we can be very proud of coming from Borneo, despite all the challenges and disadvantages that we have,” the Vice Chancellor concluded.

A UNIVERSITY FOR A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

As the world reopens, global researchers and learners begin to return to their quest to seek knowledge and experience across the globe. Discerning eyes turn towards Borneo, the heart of the Malay Archipelago, a land that beckons adventurers and scholars alike.

Nestled in the district of Kota Samarahan of Sarawak is Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). A university with a sprawling 2,200-acre plot; a sustainable campus sporting its own lake; a lush academic centre surrounded by wooded wetlands. It is a bastion of learning, research, and innovation located within the richest hub of biodiversity and indigenous knowledge.

For 30 years since its inception in 1992, from a humble beginning of 118 students and two faculties to almost 17,000 students and 10 faculties, UNIMAS has been crossing frontiers; making waves not just locally but globally as a viable institution of learning that attracts researchers and learners who desire a sense of adventure in all the riches that Borneo can offer.

Over the years, UNIMAS has been recognised as a university that is geared towards sustainable community-based projects. This effort is globally acknowledged in the Times Higher Education (THE) Asian Awards. In 2020 and 2022, UNIMAS was shortlisted amongst the Top 8 in Asia for the International Strategy Award Category with regard to our student and community mobility programmes.

Our mobility and edutourism programmes are designed for global citizens. These uniquely crafted programmes provide participants with authentic lived-in experiences which are not only fun and interactive but encourage cultural exchanges between the students and Sarawak's local communities, thus allowing for bonds to



be established between international and local participants.

There are 11 edutourism paths to venture: Agriculture and Veterinary, Arts and Social Science, Business and Entrepreneurship, Culinary Arts and Hospitality, Environmental and Health Science, Food, Culture and Heritage, Language and Communication, Leadership and Management, Nature and Adventure, Science and Technology, and Sports. These internationally-recognised programmes leave an everlasting imprint on the global stage, marking UNIMAS as a community driven university for a sustainable world.

In UNIMAS, we believe in rich learning experiences outside the confines of a classroom. It harkens back to the days of old when seekers of knowledge would congregate in the great outdoors to study nature and listen to thinkers expound their thoughts. It celebrates the explorer who charts new paths through a rugged wilderness, opening

new lands for all to enjoy. And for this, UNIMAS is unique amongst academia in Malaysia. There is no other like it — where one can truly have a life-changing experience amongst communities of people who are inclusive and forward-looking, working hand in hand towards crafting a sustainable world for all.

The charm of UNIMAS may not be able to be felt nor expressed in the writings of this unknown writer. It is best experienced as you listen to the whispers of ancient rainforests, explore verdant hills and valleys, and dance to the songs of the indigenous communities from our highlands. Or as you stand amongst the hustle and bustle of the charming and quaint old China town in Kuching city. Or felt, as your feet sink into the sands of the southernmost Bornean beach at Teluk Melano.

This is part of what makes us *Uniquely UNIMAS*, a Community Driven University for a Sustainable World.

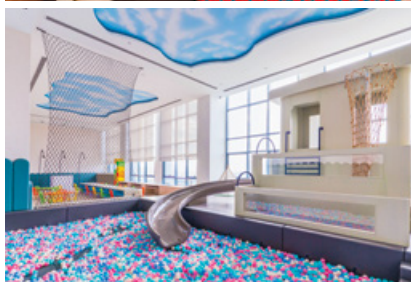
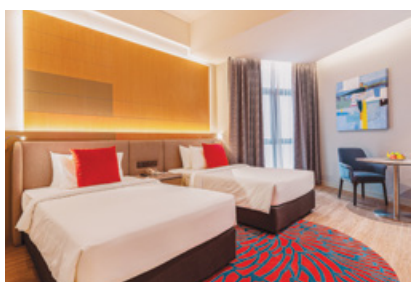
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for events both intimate and large. The rooms are located across three floors, all of which are accessible via escalators and each offering elegant, modern foyers. Whether you're looking to hold conferences, meetings or weddings, experience a lifestyle of modern luxury only at AVANTÉ Hotel.

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John 3: 16-17

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SARAWAK TOURISM BOARD
☎ +60 82 423 600 🌐 www.sarawaktourism.com

(Note: Event dates are subject to change without prior notice. Kindly call the Ministry of Tourism, Creative Industry & Performing Arts Sarawak for further information)

LAWAS BIKE WEEK

at Hotel Seri Malaysia Compound, Lawas

Lawas Bike Week is aimed at promoting the district of Lawas, and stands as a symbol of bilateral strength, unity and cooperation of countries across Borneo Island.

LAWAS LEGASI RESOURCE
☎ +60 19 6933 007

CELCOM AXIATA MALAYSIA OPEN

at Stadium Perpaduan, Kuching

The most important badminton event in Malaysia under the HSBC BWF World Tour Series. All the world top players will be playing to gain vital World Tour points to qualify for the Grand Final in Guangzhou at the end of the year.

BADMINTON ASSOCIATION OF MALAYSIA (BAM)
☎ +603 2011 2655

XCM: BINTULU MTB CROSS COUNTRY MARATHON - NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

at XCM Track, Kampung Jepak, Bintulu

16-17 JUL

A jointly organised event with Malaysia MTB Bureau and the Sarawak Cycling Association.

DNA SPORTS
☎ +60 19 8550 311

17-18 JUL

KARNIVAL KOMUNITI SEBUYAU

at Pekan Sebuyau

SEBUYAU SUB-DISTRICT OFFICE
☎ +60 83 467 121

BUNG JAGOI DAY

at Bung Jagoi, Bau

16 JUL

Located on a saddle of the 1,600 foot Mount Jagoi, the village is a melting pot of cultures for the Jagoi dialectal group. Bung Jagoi and its old settlement would certainly be worth considering for formal listing as Sarawak natural and historical sites.

JAGOI AREA DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
☎ +60 14 8849 694



MIRI RAFT RACE

at Miri Waterfront-Pengkalan Lutong Jetty

MIRI CITY COUNCIL & LEMBAGA SUNGAI-SUNGAI SARAWAK
☎ +60 85 433 501

BORNEO CULTURAL FESTIVAL

at Dataran Tun Tuanku Bujang, Sibul

19-23 JUL

Borneo Cultural Festival (BCF) is an annual cultural event organised by Sibul Municipal Council. The richness of culture heritage of Borneo Island comprising multiracial beliefs and practices hence enhancing the uniqueness of Sarawak. The main objective of the event is to promote "Beauty in Ethnic Diversity" showcasing diverse and multi cultures of Borneo to the world.

SIBU MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
☎ +60 84 333 411



SERIAN RAFTING CHALLENGE FESTIVAL

at Kampung Tema Mawang, Tebedu & Pekan Tebakang, Serian

22-23 JUL

An annual held event since 2011 comprises of two main events; A 25KM race on rafting along Batang Kayan and Batang Sadong River and a local traditionally-dressed pageant competition called Ratu Bilanting. Other activities also will be held such as singing competition, traditional games and local produce sales.

SERIAN DISTRICT COUNCIL
☎ +60 82 874 154

PESTA NUKENEN

at Rurum Kelabit, Bario

23 JUL

One of the most unique ethnic food festivals in Malaysia, the Bario Food and Cultural Festival.

MIRI RESIDENT OFFICE & MIRI CITY COUNCIL
☎ +60 85 433 501

PESTA FAIRY CAVE BAU

at Fairy Cave, Bau

22-23 JUL

To promote local cultures and the surrounding nature of the area, giving visitors the chance to take part in adventurous activities.

BAU DISTRICT OFFICE
☎ +60 82 763 211

BINTULU 21KM RUN

at Bintulu Town

22-23 JUL

Bintulu 21 KM Run is a unique half marathon run. Its offer the spectacular view or beach along Tanjung Kidurong and Bintulu town. While running, the runners will experience the sunrise along the beach and the beautiful scenery along the route.

BINTULU DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
☎ +60 86 332 277

23-31 JUL

PESTA LIMAU BINTANGOR

at Bazaar Bintangor

To promote the local cultures and traditions through local arts and contemporary activities, local produce and cuisine and sports activities.

MERADONG DISTRICT OFFICE
☎ +60 84 693 245

PESTA LADA JULAU

at Julau Town

24-29 JUL

It is the most awaited event in Julau. It consists many activities such as sales and exhibition, entertainment and cultural performance, beauty pageant contest and many others.

JULAU DISTRICT OFFICE
☎ +60 84 734 371

PESTA SELANGAU

at Selangau Town

27-30 JUL

Known as "Cowboy Town" due to its strategic location following the completion of Trans Borneo Highway in the 1960s. Pesta Selangau was initiated by Sibul Rural District Council in year 2012 to promote water sports, cultural performances and local sports to the visitors.

SIBU RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL
☎ +60 84 336 077

KUCHING FESTIVAL

at Kuching South City Council (MBKS) and it's vicinity

29 JUL - 21 AUG

Kuching Festival is an annual event organised by Kuching South City Council to commemorate Kuching being elevated as city status on Aug 1st, 1988 and it is held to boost local tourism and food industry. Ample activities are lined up for the whole month to attract local and tourist alike, with the food fair being the most anticipated event besides the nightly entertainment, garden show and many more.

KUCHING SOUTH CITY COUNCIL (MBKS)
☎ +60 82 354 200



TANJUNG MANIS FISHING SAFARI

at Bandar Baru Tanjung Manis

This event is held to promote Tanjung Manis as an eco-tourism destination especially the fishing site.

SARAWAK TIMBER INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
☎ +60 82 473 000

SEPADANG TAGANG FESTIVAL

at Kampung Semadang, Padawan

Held along the Tagang area of Sarawak Kiri River near Kampung Semadang, about 30 minutes from Kuching, this festival has offers water activities and sports, fishing competitions and Kayaking among others.

PADAWAN SUB-DISTRICT OFFICE & KAMPUNG SEMADANG TAGANG SYSTEM COMMITTEE
☎ +60 13 8286 887

FIESTA SUBIS

at Bekenu, Miri

Fiesta Subis is the main event organised by Subis District. This event aims to celebrate the Subis Day 2022 and to encourage the community participation on the tourism programmes, social development among local community and so on.

SUBIS DISTRICT COUNCIL
☎ +60 85 719 018



MAKAN TAHUN PERDANA

at Kampung Sayung, Limbang

The traditional yearly feast by the Kedayan community which normally takes place after the end of every harvest season and act as a thanksgiving.



KEDAYAN LIMBANG ASSOCIATION
☎ +60 19 8554 858

PESTA DABAI SONG

at Song Town, Kapit



Among the activities slotted for the festival are the Dabai exhibition, cultural and various performances, cooking contest and sporting events of many kinds.

KAPIT DISTRICT COUNCIL
☎ +60 84 796 266

KUCHING MARATHON

at Padang Merdeka, Kuching



Kuching Marathon (KM) is an annual event which brings runners from all over the world to the beautiful city of Kuching. This is a road race competition which consists of full marathon of 42KM and a half marathon of 21 KM. There are also the 10 KM category.

KUCHING MARATHON ASSOCIATION
🌐 www.marathonkuching.com

PESTA PAKAN

at Pakan Town, Sarikei



The festival will features various activities such as sports competitions, cultural performances, food and stalls selling agricultural products and handicraft.

PAKAN DISTRICT OFFICE
☎ +60 19 4869 419

PESTA PANTU

at Pekan Daerah Kecil Pantu, Sri Aman

Known previously as Pesta Tapah, this festival highlights local foods, jungle produce and handicrafts. Various activities will be organized such as Ratu Pantu, singing competition, traditional dance, Pantu Fun Run and food bazaar.



PANTU SUB -DISTRICT OFFICE
☎ +60 14 8842 030

BINTULU TANGLUNG CARNIVAL

at Bintulu Town

This festival showcases foods from various ethnic groups and races. Amongst the events incorporated and will be highlighted including Maju Run, Harmony Ride, Borneo Traditional Lion Dance Competition and many others.



GABUNGAN PERSATUAN CINA BERDAFTAR BINTULU
☎ +60 86 312 181



REGATTA SUBIS

at Batu Niah

Regatta Subis is the main event organised by Subis District. This event aims to instill sport interest among local community as well as to promote the event into international level.

SUBIS DISTRICT COUNCIL
☎ +60 85 719 018

PESTA BEDERUN

at Balingian Waterfront

“Bederun” simply means gathering in the local dialect is a time for the local community to gather and having fun while enjoying the festival.

BALINGIAN SUB-DISTRICT OFFICE & MELANAU BALINGIAN GENERATION ASSOCIATION
☎ +60 19 8158 147

35th Irau Aco Lun Bawang Festival

at Dataran Bandar Lawas

An annual celebration to mark the end of the harvest season. Folks from far and near gather to celebrate the art, culture and tradition of the Lun Bawang people.

LUN BAWANG ASSOCIATION SARAWAK
☎ +60 19 8773 871



THE 19TH KUCHING INTERCULTURAL MOONCAKE FESTIVAL

at Carpenter Street & Ewe Hai Street, Kuching



The 19th Kuching Intercultural Mooncake Festival, part of Kuching Old Bazaar annual events will take place along Carpenter Street and Ewe Hai Street in Downtown Kuching. This annual festival brings together participants from all races, cultures and walks of life to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival. The Festival features food, music and cultural performances along a lantern-lit scenic street, one of Kuching's oldest streets.

KUCHING OLD MARKET COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
☎ +60 16 8661 711

LE TOUR DE SEBAUH

at Sebauh Town, Bintulu



A cycling event which offers both fun ride and also sprint race category to the participants.

SEBAUH DISTRICT OFFICE & DNA SPORT
☎ +60 86 422 118

SIBU INTERNATIONAL BASE JUMP & CARNIVAL

at Wisma Sanyan & Dataran Tun Tuanku Bujang, Sibu

Organised by Sibu Tourism Task Group with technical support by the Malaysia Base Jump Association, this event will have participants base jumping off the second tallest building in Sarawak- Wisma Sanyan.

SIBU RESIDENT OFFICE
☎ +60 84 330 202



PESTA TASIK BIRU

at Tasik Biru, Bau



To showcase the local cuisine, cultural performances, water sport event known as “Jong”, handicraft and exhibitions.

BAU DISTRICT OFFICE
☎ +60 82 763 211

PESTA BATANG KAYAN LUNDU & REGATTA BATANG KAYAN

at Waterfront Lundu



An annual event with a combination of festival and Regatta Batang Kayan is the highlight of this event that held for three days. Providing varieties of programmes such as showcase, food bazaar, performances, games and competitions with the aims to promote Lundu as an ecotourism spot in Sarawak.

BATANG KAYAN FESTIVAL MAIN COMMITTEE & LUNDU DISTRICT OFFICE
☎ +60 82 735 008

KANOWIT FESTIVAL

at Dataran Kubu Emma, Homestay Rantau Kemiding & Tebingan Sungai Rajang, Kanowit



A week-long Kanowit Festival is a celebration of culture and goodwill. The highlights would be the Power Boat F2000, Remote Control Boat, Regatta, Traditional Cultural Events, Beauty Contest, Food Fair, Funfair, Handicraft promotion and exhibition, Karnival Usahawan Desa and many others.

KANOWIT DISTRICT COUNCIL
☎ +60 84 752 093

BAU BIKE GATHERING

at Tasik Biru, Bau



A motor show as a platform to gather the bikers as a public exhibition of current automobile models, debuts, concept cars, or out-of-production classics.

GOLDTOWN RIDERS COMMUNITY
☎ +60 12 8941 798

BENAK ROAD-TRAIL RUN

at Bandar Simanggang, Sri Aman



Runners will experience the ambience of running along through villages, jungle trail and Simanggang Town, and most importantly along the Batang Lupar river where they can admire the tidal bore phenomenon. The routes consist of a 10KM challenge under ‘men/women veteran’ and ‘men/women open’ categories, as well as the 5KM fun run.

JABATAN KERJA RAYA SRI AMAN DIVISION
☎ +60 13 8244 111

BELAGA REGATTA

at Pekan Belaga, Kapit



The event will feature a variety of activities such as mini regattas, powerboat races, paddle boat races, beauty pageants and traditional performances.

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IMMERSE IN LOCAL CULTURE AT BCF 2022

Sibu, the gateway into the Central Region of Sarawak, is a splendid place rich in culture. It has an ethnic makeup consisting of Chinese (mainly Foochow), Iban, Malay, Melanau as well as small percentages of other ethnic groups. As a result, Sibu today boasts an exciting mix of tourism attractions for those who are especially interested in cultural discoveries. Among them are the Iban longhouses along the rivers of Sibu and the old Mee Sua manufacturing facilities that still stand to this day.





To give a taste of what Sibü has in store in terms of its offerings to tourists looking for cultural immersion, Sibü Municipal Council (SMC) introduced for the very first time in July 2005 the Borneo Cultural Festival (BCF) - a week-long celebration of Sibü's rich cultural multiplicity represented through food, music, and dances. Its main objective centred on the promotion of "beauty in ethnic diversity" in Borneo to the rest of the world. Today, BCF has grown to become the biggest and prestigious event in Sibü showcasing the culture and traditions of its people.

Borneo Cultural Festival takes place every year at the beautiful Sibü Town Square, which is the biggest town square in Malaysia. It is also the venue for many other big scale events in Sibü, such as Sibü International Lantern & Food Festival, Sibü International Dance Festival, and the spine-chilling Sibü BASE Jump.

For BCF, Phase 1 of the Town Square is where all the main activities are usually held. Visitors will find the main festival ground set up with ethnic pavilions namely the Dayak Pavilion, Melayu/Melanau Pavilion, and Chinese Pavilion, among others. On these pavilions, visitors will be able to witness showcases of traditional music and dances of the respective ethnic groups, as well as a variety of contests, beauty pageants, demonstrations, and exhibitions.

Fringe events and activities are concentrated at the second phase of Sibü Town Square. Expect food of all sorts, as well as stalls selling anything from clothes and accessories to souvenirs and home appliances. There are fun activities for kids and adults alike. No wonder the event draws visitors by the thousands every year!

BCF returns

After a two-year hiatus, BCF finally returns this year. From July 19 to 23, the Sibü Municipal Council (SMC) will once again host the iconic festival.

In a press conference on March 30, SMC's deputy chairman Bujang Abdul Majid said that the festival would only be held for five days this year instead of the usual 10 days. He added that the council was delighted to bring back the festival this year.

The latest edition of Borneo Cultural Festival will carry the theme, 'Beauty in ethnic diversity'. Such an apt theme for a festival that celebrates the vast culture of not just Sibü but Borneo in general.

There will be various activities and showcases, including the main ethnic pavilions and the side events. However, this year's celebration will still be in compliance with the latest standard operating procedure (SOP) to ensure everyone's safety.





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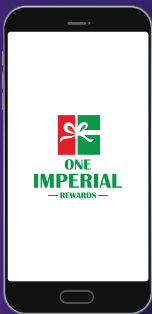
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*Borneo Cultural Festival*

Explore Sibü

While in Sibü, take the opportunity to discover the town and its surroundings to further immerse yourself in local culture and lifestyle. Walk the streets to discover old shops that contrast with flashy shopping precincts, iconic foods that remain hugely famous amidst the rise of modern F&B trends, murals that capture the essence of life in Sibü, museums and memorials that preserves the town's history as well as heritage, and the architectural landmark Wisma Sanyan, once the tallest building in Sarawak.

The Sibü Central Market is a mammoth of a market, while the express boats made out of decommissioned aeroplanes are iconic modes of transport before road networks were built to connect Sibü to other parts of Sarawak. Make your visit even more worthwhile with a trip to the Iban longhouses at Bawang Assan or to a traditional mee sua factory to see mee sua hand-made from scratch.

*Wisma Sanyan**Sibü Central Market**Master Ting's traditional mee sua factory*



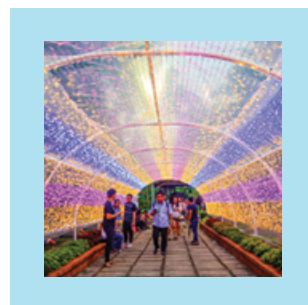
CELE- BRATE KUCH- ING CITY





Just as everything else is springing back to life, so is the Kuching Festival, which is scheduled for Jul 29 to Aug 21 this year. In case you've sort of forgotten what it is, Kuching Festival is one of the biggest festivals held in Kuching. It has been held annually since the late 1980s to commemorate Kuching being elevated to city status in 1988.

In years past, Kuching Festival included huge celebrations, with the main event being a grand parade held along the Kuching city streets. There would also be concerts, exhibitions, fun fairs and so much more. But this year, the organiser is doing things slightly different in ensuring everyone's safety and wellbeing at Kuching Festival.



Kuching Festival returns

The return of Kuching Festival this late July has been highly anticipated by the citizens of this beautiful city, as well as visitors who have also longed for its comeback. Festivalgoers can look forward to exciting stage performances, musical concerts, exhibitions, contests, and competitions.

One component everyone is excited for also is the garden show. A designated area within the MBKS compound will be transformed into beautiful garden displays. Some would go as far as creating streams, ponds, waterfalls, and board-walks to make their garden stand out from the rest.

The garden show is among the major attractions, especially among those looking for inspiration to transform their own yard into their private oasis. And of course, the garden displays are a hit with those looking to add to their selfie collection on the "Gram".



Let the feasting begin

This year's festival carries the theme 'Kuching's Best Creative Food and Culture', which aptly befits Kuching being named one of UNESCO's Creative Cities of Gastronomy. It is also fitting seeing that Kuching Festival's chief attraction is its food fair.

In the past, the food fair will have the MBKS compound and surrounding areas abuzz with so much activity every year without fail. Visitors would come by the thousands each night to crowd more than 200 stalls offering food and beverages of all sorts!

From delightful Japanese ice-cream, colourful cotton candy, deep-fried jumbo-sized squid, Taiwanese sausage and delicious BBQ chicken to outright bizarre selections like poo-shaped cheesecake in a "toilet bowl" serving dish, the choices were always just mind-blowing!

This year's food fair will feature a targeted 250 stalls, showcasing a mix of local, regional, and international

cuisine. All food and beverages are expected to be even more creatively prepared than before, in keeping with this year's theme. It is definitely something to look forward to.

MBKS Mayor Datuk Wee Hong Seng said that this year's festival would give vendors a chance to earn some



additional income, after having largely been affected economically by the two-year pandemic. The food fair will also allow dine-ins, albeit with a set of SOPs imposed to ensure public safety.



The new norm

While Kuching Festival is set to excite and entice visitors once again, it will not be back in its fullest form. On top of standard operating procedures that will be put in place for public safety, some components will be left out this year.



According to the organising chairman of the festival, Goh Tze Hui, the usual trade fair will not be included this year. Since the start of the festival, the trade fair has been one of the main attractions as well. Visitors were able to browse and buy a wide variety of products from household items and gardening essentials to electronics and even cars.

In keeping with the new norm, the festival will also include delivery services in partnership with selected delivery companies. Therefore, visitors who prefer not to dine at the festival venue itself can still enjoy all the great food available at the fair via drive-through zone for pick-ups.

The City of Kuching

The capital city of the State of Sarawak on Malaysian Borneo, Kuching was officially granted city status on Aug 1, 1988, after meeting certain prerequisites and having gone through several procedures. It is unique from all other cities in Malaysia in that it is governed by two municipalities, both of which were established after Kuching received its city status.

The north side of Kuching city falls under the administration of Kuching North City Hall (DBKU), whose jurisdiction encompasses an area of 369.48 square kilometres. The south of Kuching is administered by Council of the City of Kuching South (MBKS) and covers an area of 61.53 square kilometres.

Today, there are many reasons to celebrate the City of Kuching. For one, the city has won many accolades, including national and international recognitions. It recently received the ASEAN Clean Tourist City Standard 2022-2024 Award (national level) from the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC), along with the city of Miri and town of Sibu.

In 2019, Kuching was awarded “World Craft City” status by the World Crafts Council, joining the ranks of more than 20 other world crafts cities including those in Indonesia, China, India, and Thailand, to name a few.

The year 2011 saw the city becoming one of only two Asian winners for the “Tourist City Award” organised by the United Nations, World Cities Scientific Development Alliance and Sister Cities International.

One achievement Kuchingites are very proud of is the inclusion of Kuching in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) in the field of gastronomy last November. Deservingly so, seeing how Kuching with its vibrancy of culture, is also massively rich in its gastronomic offerings. From traditional food and heritage cuisine to fabulous fusion and international fares, Kuching has it all!



Come one come all

Since its inception, Kuching Festival has always captured everyone's keen interest and has grown to become one of the city's biggest, most significant annual events to date. Besides being a celebration of the great city of Kuching among the local citizens, the festival has also become one of the city's major tourist attractions for the month of August.

In fact, in 2019 the festival recorded its biggest number of visitors yet (around a million visitors). Past years have also seen the festival receiving as many as 700,000 to 800,000 visitors every year. That's incredibly encouraging indeed. Among those visitors were tourists from Singapore.

Now with the borders reopened, the organisers are optimistic that the festival will be able to draw at least 500,000 visitors to this year's Kuching Festival.

The availability of direct flights between Kuching and Singapore is one of the contributing factors to the good number of tourists from the Lion City coming to the festival. With flights between the two destinations now reinstated, tourists from Singapore will once again be able to come join the festival.

Kuching is a city of contrasts, where cultures and old traditions live on amidst modern structures and current lifestyle trends. It is a city that moves in tandem with the waves of development while having a firm grasp on its roots. Having a celebration like Kuching Festival is therefore deserving of a city as vibrant and as diverse as Kuching.



The Mooncake Festival, also known as the Mid-Autumn Festival, might not be a public holiday in Malaysia, but is widely celebrated on the 15th day of the eighth Chinese Lunar month, sometime between the second week of September and the second week of October.

As one of the most important holidays in Chinese culture, (second after Chinese New Year!) the Mid-Autumn Festival has been celebrated since the Shang dynasty, as it is believed that on this day, the moon is at its brightest and fullest size, and the Emperor of China worshipped the moon for bountiful harvests.

Today, Chinese people uphold customs and traditions by visiting temples and offering prayers to the Chinese Moon Goddess, Chang'e for luck and safety, as well as give thanks for a bountiful harvest.

During the festival, lanterns of all shapes and sizes are carried and displayed, as a symbolic beacon of a prosperous journey to good fortune. Traditional paper lanterns are most common, but are risky fire hazards; children often carry battery-powered ones instead.

KUCHING INTERCULTURAL MOONCAKE FESTIVAL



These lanterns are a beauty to watch once the sun sets, as you can see children walking around local neighbourhoods and parks, happily carrying them in all their shapes and sizes.



Mooncakes are also traditionally eaten during this festival. Traditional mooncakes consist of a rich dense filling, encased in thick, chewy pastry skin. Lotus seed paste is found in most types of mooncakes, along with sweet bean paste, jujube paste and mixed nuts. Most of them may contain one or two whole salted egg yolks in the centre, which symbolise the full moon.

The annual Kuching Intercultural Mooncake Festival is undoubtedly one of the biggest Mid-Autumn celebrations in Sarawak. Taking place along Kuching's Carpenter Street and Ewe Hai Street, it brings together people from all races, cultures and walks of life in a celebration of food and light.

Throughout the festival, Kuching's oldest street is closed to vehicles, and stalls are set up on both sides of the street. Local patrons are advised to park at Plaza Merdeka Shopping Mall or Kuching Waterfront and walk the rest of the lantern-lit way.

You can see how the heart of Kuching Town illuminates during the Mooncake Festival, from Padungan to Waterfront and Carpenter Street, with traditional red lanterns as well as colourful paper ones. As you walk through the lantern-lit streets, feast your eyes on the wide variety of street food, lanterns as well as mooncakes on display while being serenaded by live Chinese orchestra performances.

Delight in delicacies such as fried dumplings, traditional ice-cream goyang, apam balik, Chinese mocha, oyster pancakes and many more! You might even spot some unique mooncakes along the way, like jelly mooncakes and kek lapis mooncakes!

An important part of the festival is the nightly performance by people of all walks of life, including



traditional Dayak, Malay and lion dances, street magic, sape performance and a live orchestra. There are even live demonstrations and workshops from professionals doing calligraphy, paintings and even the process of making mooncakes.

Other activities include children's colouring competition, lantern-making competition, mooncake making competition, lantern quiz, art exhibitions, photography competition and many more!

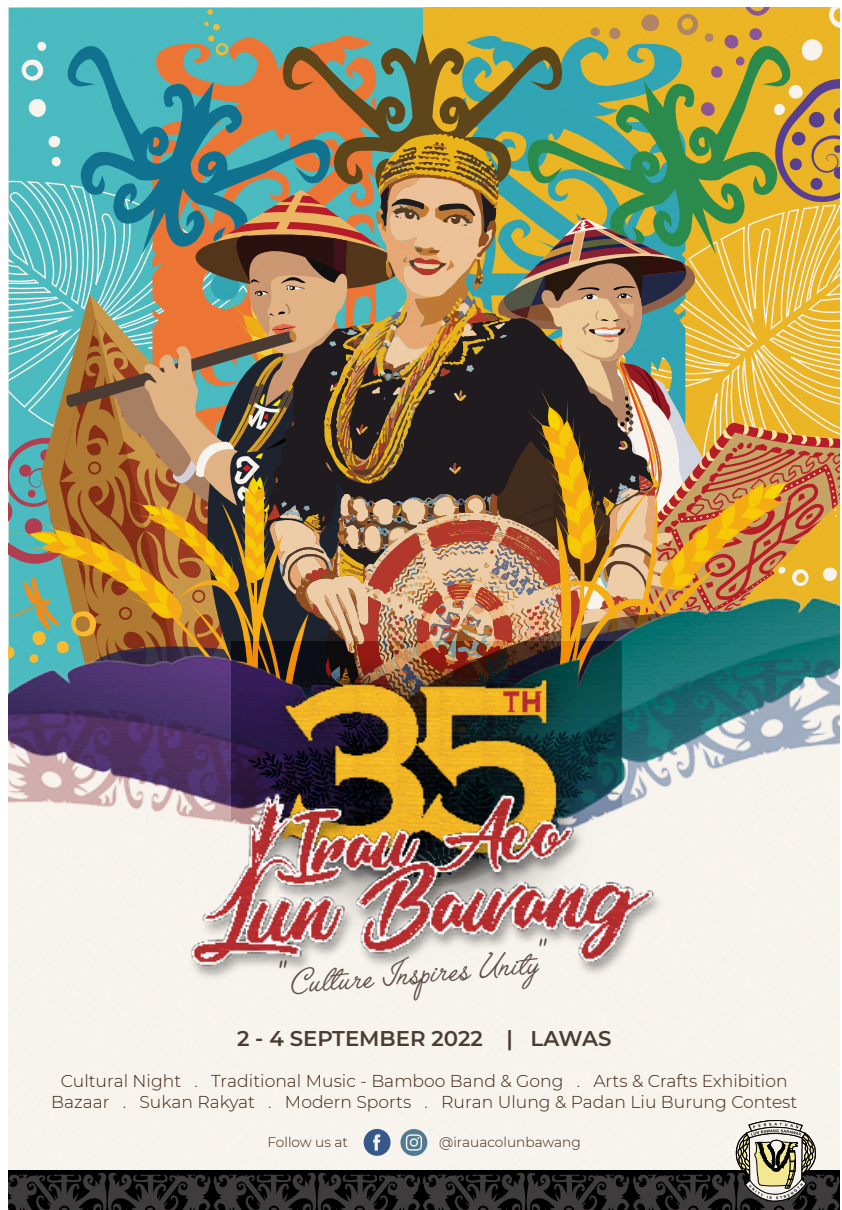
Kuching's Intercultural Mooncake Festival brings together all kinds of people, with many non-Chinese locals joining in the fun not just as visitors



and patrons, but also as performers, vendors and participants, making the event a beautiful representation of Sarawak's multicultural nature.

This year's Kuching Intercultural Mooncake Festival will take place on Sept 3 to 11, along Carpenter Street and Ewe Hai Street.

Lun Bawang Festival or Irau Aco Lun Bawang is the grandest and most highly anticipated of all festivals and celebrations observed by the Lun Bawang community. The cultural spectacle is held since 1987 as an annual festival that takes place in the month of June, in conjunction with the yearly Gawai Dayak celebration. However, the latest edition of the grand festival has been moved to a later date, to be held from Sept 2-4 instead and will continue to return to its usual period next year. The 35th Irau Aco Lun Bawang edition will also coincide with the Merdeka Month and Hari Malaysia celebration.



CELEBRATION OF LUN BAWANG CULTURE



Cultural spectacle

The Lun Bawang people are considered as one of the sub-ethnics of the Orang Ulu. They mostly occupy Central Northern Borneo including regions of Sabah, Brunei, and North Kalimantan. In Sarawak, the Lun Bawang reside in the division of Limbang, more specifically Lawas.

While many of them today are studying, working, and living outside of Lawas, the Lun Bawang traditionally engaged in agricultural activities and farming, such as planting rice, as well as rearing pigs, poultry, and buffaloes.

Every year, the Lun Bawang people will come together to celebrate Irau Aco, which like the annual Gawai Dayak celebration traditionally marks the end of the rice harvest season. Today, the celebration has grown into becoming a much grander affair, with the Lun Bawang Association Sarawak organising the annual Irau Aco Lun Bawang on a large scale at Dataran Bandar Lawas. And while the festival originally celebrated the end of the rice harvest, today it is a celebration of the beautiful culture and heritage of the Lun Bawang community.

The objective of the festival, which celebrates the culture and arts of the Lun Bawang community, is to place it amongst other prominent festivals and happenings listed in the annual Sarawak calendar of tourism events. It is also aimed at uniting the local population through invitation to community-centric activities, giving encouragement to relevant industries such as tourism, culture, and creative industries as well as small businesses, and to help revive the local economy through “refreshers” and exposure.

A host of activities are held over the course of the celebration, catering to people of all ages and preferences. Not to be missed is the array of traditional food such as nuba laya (mashed rice wrapped in leaf), telu baka (preserved meat), and narar baka (smoked wild boar), among many other exotic delicacies. Cultural showcases and sporting activities are also held, along with Ruran Ulung beauty pageant for the ladies and Padan Liu Burung warrior contest for the men, trade fair, live music, and many more.

With the exception of 2020 and 2021, Irau Aco Lun Bawang has been the largest gathering of Lun Bawang folk every year. And it brings together not just members of the Lun Bawang community residing in Limbang, but also from Sabah and Brunei, as well as visitors from West Malaysia and beyond.

The 35th edition of the Irau Aco Lun Bawang was originally scheduled to be held in June as usual. However, for a number of reasons, the grand celebration had to be rescheduled to a later date.

One of the reasons for the postponement is the need for the association to monitor the current situation during the endemic phase. This will enable their newly elected central executive committee to come up with a strategic plan in ensuring a safe environment for both the local community and visitors of Irau Aco as the festival makes its comeback after the pandemic.

The postponement was also a result of the closing of the Bruneian border. The Irau Aco Lun Bawang 2022 organising committee, led by its newly appointed chairman Jude Benjamin Lisa, is also



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hoping that by the time the festival is held in September, the Bruneian authority will have some leniency so as to allow easier logistics movement of the Lun Bawang community in the Northern Region to travel from Limbang and Miri to Lawas.

A festival to look forward to

Although to be held at a much further date than usual, the 35th Irau Aco promises to be just as grand. Slated to be held at the usual venue namely at Dataran Bandar Lawas, the festivity will include the colourful art and culture of the Lun Bawang folks over the three-day period, from Sept 2-4, with two days dedicated to sports and games.

The 35th edition of the festival is expected to draw 3,000 attendees and will include participation from Limbang, Kuching, Bintulu, Miri, as well as Sabah (Kota Kinabalu and Sipitang), Brunei, and Indonesia (Kalimantan).

Being at the festival is such an enriching experience. It is during the festival that everyone comes out in full traditional costumes that are so colourful and so vibrant. It just fills your heart with warmth and joy. You can also discover traditional elements of the Lun Bawang community at the festival grounds, including the ulung, burung, suit mengai, and a traditional stove known as tetel.

One feature that has been a huge hit every Irau Aco is the live bamboo band performance, whereby Lun Bawang ladies dressed in traditional costume band together to perform mesmerising tunes on their bamboo flutes. If you have not experienced it, this year would be a great year to do just so.

More entertainment can be expected during the cultural nights over the duration of the festival. There will be showcases not just by the Lun Bawang performers, but also dancers, artistes, and musicians from the Iban, Kedayan, Orang Ulu, and Bisaya

communities. Expect also special appearances from visiting guests all the way from Indonesia at the festival.

And of course, the festival would not be complete without the Ruran Ulung beauty pageant and Padan Liu Burung warrior contest. These will see the young women and men of the Lun Bawang community giving their very best as they vie for the title trophies of the respective competitions.

Expect some action as well, with traditional games and sporting events that will have the contestants going all out as they battle their way to victory in their respective sports and competitions. See them climb slippery wooden poles to retrieve the red cloth on top. Watch as groups of men show their strengths as they partake in a tug of war. See how a traditional game of gasing (top) is played, or witness as players try to score in the intense games of football, volleyball, and badminton.

For those looking for interesting finds at the festival, the bazaar is a must. You might just find yourself some amazing traditional handicrafts to bring back home with you or get the chance to taste some bizarre snacks that you might find yourself falling in love with. Exhibition booths and workshops are available as well. Instagrammers and TikTokers will also find some surprises waiting for them at the festival grounds. There's just so much to experience at the festival.

Irau Aco Lun Bawang is definitely a must, especially if you're looking for total cultural immersion in a place that is quaint yet extremely charming like the beautiful town of Lawas. See you there!

For more information, contact the festival's Organising Chairman Jude Benjamin Lisa at lisa.judebenjamin@gmail.com.



TASTE OF THE WILD



It's lunchtime in a village somewhere in Sarawak, and inviting aromas fill the air as you walk past the houses along a narrow street. You step inside one of the houses to find a mother carrying a bowl filled with terong asam soup and placing it on the dinner table for her family to enjoy. On that same table are other bowls and plates filled with various vegetable and meat dishes such as pansoh manok, sambal serai, and stir-fried tapioca leaves. Each of the dishes give off a different and unique set of smells that make your mouth water.

Surely most Sarawakians, as well as those who have been to Sarawak, are familiar with the wonderful array of local dishes such as those mentioned above. Those of you who have tried them love their taste and their aroma, but have you ever wondered what ingredients are used to give them their uniquely distinctive taste and smell?

For centuries, the local population especially the indigenous folks have depended on the jungle for many things, including food. Sarawak's jungles are rich in many varieties of plant species that can be used either as main ingredients, such as bamboo shoot, jungle ferns, and wild mushrooms, or as flavour and aroma enhancers. We list some of them here:



Tepus

Also known as tuhau or upak kechalak among the locals, Tepus (*Etlingera coccinea*) is a particularly versatile wild herb that has grown to become a favourite among many. It grows wild in the jungles of Sarawak, although the tepus has found its way into people's gardens where they are kept as decorative plants.

Incredibly aromatic, tepus is often eaten raw with sambal belacan, along with a serving of white rice. That alone is adequately satisfying. But the tepus can be enjoyed in many more ways than one.

The tepus shoot is also crushed and stir-fried along with tapioca leaves and anchovies, or cooked with meat, poultry, or fish in soups and pansoh dishes. The amount used in these dishes really depends on one's personal preference. Some don't mind just a hint of its aroma and taste, while some prefer a huge dose in their dishes. Remember though, that tepus has a rather pungent smell that some have likened to an insect the locals call kesing (*Pentatomoidea*), so it's not really everyone's cup of tea.



Isip leaf

It is scientifically known as *Phrynium maximum* Blume – a rather lengthy name. But to the people of the beautiful Kelabit Highlands, it is simply known as Isip leaf. Commonly found in the wild, Isip leaf is also being cultivated, particularly around Pa Dalih area in the Kelabit Highlands.

Isip leaves are commonly used by the Orang Ulu to prepare their iconic wrapped rice known as Nuba Laya. Cooked Bario rice is first mashed while still piping hot. The mashed rice is then wrapped in a single Isip leaf before it is served along with other dishes. The result of this is a fragrant mashed rice that also has an "enhanced" flavour.

Terung Asam

The name simply translates as sour eggplant, and it is also called terung Dayak perhaps because it is a common ingredient used by the Dayak folks in Sarawak.

Unlike the common aubergine, terung asam is round and has dark green skin that turns yellow when the fruit ripens. The flesh is firm and bright yellow in colour, while the soft central cavity contains small seeds that can be easily scooped out and discarded.

Rich in vitamin C, calcium, fibre, phosphorus, and potassium, terung asam is sour with a hint of sweetness, making it perfect for soups. Cut up some and throw it in a pot of water with some lemongrass, chilli, ginger, and your choice of protein (fish, poultry, or meat) and you've got yourself a delicious Sarawak-style sour and spicy soup. Some like to use smoked fish to give their soup a more intense flavour.

Another popular way of eating terung asam is by grilling it over an open fire until the skin gets charred, and the flesh turns soft. The flesh is then pounded in a pestle and mortar along with belacan (shrimp paste), chilli, anchovies, and other ingredients to make it into sambal. Perfect over steamed white rice.

Today, you can even find terung asam flavoured ice cream, although it is a rare item.



Asam Embang

Scientifically known as *Mangifera pajang*, this wild mango endemic to the island of Borneo goes by several different names. Asam Embang is what the Malay of Sarawak call this fruit. Another Malay name for it is Bua Embawang. The Iban folk call it Bua Mawang. The Bidayuh call it Asom Bawang.

Asam Embang is distinctive in a number of ways. Firstly, the fruit is round and about the size of a cannonball. A single fruit can weigh up to 1kg.

Unlike most mango species that have yellow or reddish skin when fully ripened, Asam Embang has thick brown skin. When ripe, the flesh of the Asam Embang is not overly sweet and has a more unique flavour compared to the common mango. Its flesh is also very fibrous as opposed to that of the common mango.

Asam Embang can be enjoyed as is, juiced, or mixed with belacan, dried anchovies, chillies, etc. to make sambal. It's not just delicious to eat, but its rich antioxidant content is also good for the skin, protects against coronary heart disease, and has anti-cancer properties.



Ensabi

This one's not for those who can't handle intense flavours. Ensabi (*Brassica juncea* (L.) Czern. var. *Ensabi*) is basically local mustard, and a very bitter one! Like a lot of the unique vegetables in Sarawak, the ensabi thrived in the wild but is now being cultivated by the indigenous communities here, primarily the Iban and Bidayuh. They can also be found in farmers markets all over Sarawak.

Ensabi leaves are often bruised and stir-fried with just garlic and anchovies. A substantial amount of salt can be added to counter the intense pungency and bitterness of the ensabi leaves. Some add fried pork fat bits for texture and extra flavour.

A popular way to enjoy ensabi is to preserve it in some salt and water from boiled rice. Some add sugar for a tiny bit of sweetness. After several days of fermentation in a well-sealed jar, you have yourself some kasam ensabi (preserved ensabi). Simply stir-fry with some garlic, anchovies, and chili for a satisfying meal!



Asam paya

Asam paya is a type of palm that thrives in swampy areas. Its fruit is also known as maram fruit or asam kelubi. It appears almost 100 percent similar to the sweet salak fruit. They both have scaly skin and are about the same size. But don't let its familiar appearance fool you.

Peel off the skin to find that the flesh of the asam paya (*Eleiodoxa conferta*) is slightly brownish in colour. And instead of being sweet, the flesh of the asam paya is extremely sour! But that sourness is something the locals just can't get enough of. In fact, a mere mention of asam paya can induce drooling in avid fans of the fruit!

Asam paya is often made into sambal, with some belacan (shrimp paste), anchovies, sugar, and chilli. Submerge the fruit in sugar water and let it sit for several days, and you'll have a delicious sweet and sour snack. The Melanau folk in Igan traditionally use asam paya to make their ceviche-like fish dish called umai. No onions, ginger or other ingredients necessary.

Besides the ones mentioned here, there are plenty other wild flavours of Sarawak that are a delicacy to the locals, such as kepayang, midin, paku, umbut, engkala, terap, as well as the unique durian nyeka and durian isu. Some are seasonal while others can be found all year round. Now that travelling is possible again, do feel free to come to Sarawak and experience these uniquely amazing wild flavours yourself. They might just turn out to be your most favourite foods ever!





kuih bongkol



kuih keria gula apung

kuih penyaram

kuih takir



tapai



kuih celorot



kuih jala

Making sweet and sumptuous kuih (bite-sized snacks, cakes, and desserts) was one of those favourite pastime activities among the communities of Sarawak in the olden days. It was then that some great recipes were also created. Some were adaptations of existing recipes from elsewhere, with local twists added that make them Sarawakian.

These great recipes are handed down through many generations and today continue to whet everyone's appetite for sweet, sumptuous Sarawak kuih. The ingredients required for these kuih are simple and can be found in markets and even supermarkets. Some ingredients like pandan can be planted in the backyard and harvested to extract the juices from its leaves. Rice flour can be processed by pounding or milling rice at home such as practised in the olden days.

SWEET AND SUMPTUOUSLY SARAWAK

We list here some of Sarawak's famous traditional kuih, cakes and other treats that are still being made today, that you should try if you haven't done so.

■ Kuih Celorot

This cone-shaped delicacy is a favourite for many for its sweet, creamy flavour with a soft and smooth texture. It is made by mixing rice flour, thin coconut milk, thick coconut milk, a tiny bit of salt, gula apong (nipah palm sugar) and pandan leaves for aroma. The mixture is poured into a cone shaped mould made from palm leaves and steamed for about half an hour. Once cooked, let it cool down before serving.

Kuih Celorot is traditionally prepared by the Malay of Sarawak to be served at breakfast, or during festive seasons as well as special occasions. Today, kuih celorot is served at some restaurants that offer Sarawak specialties or sold by Malay food vendors at the market.

■ Kuih Takir

This particular kuih is popular around the Muslim fasting month, and can be found sold at some Ramadan bazaars throughout Sarawak. In fact, some hotels and restaurants do serve this traditional sweet treat as part of their Ramadan buffet for iftar or the breaking of fast. But fret not. Kuih takir is also available at other times, sold by Malay kuih makers at roadside stalls or the market.

Kuih Takir is easily discernible by the boat-like shape of its palm leaf mould. The recipe for this delicacy calls for only five ingredients, namely rice flour, coconut milk, gula apong, salt, and pandan leaf. In fact, the ingredients are more or less like those used to make kuih celorot. But the slightly different techniques and measurements result in a dessert with its own unique taste and texture. While the taste of gula apong is more distinct in kuih celorot, kuih takir has a creamier, more delicate flavour, and is such a delight to the taste buds.

■ Kuih Jala

This is perhaps one of the most famous traditional kuih of Sarawak. Crispy, sweet and fragrant, it is highly sought after especially around Gawai Dayak time when the Iban and Bidayuh folk serve it to visitors at their open house.

Although requiring only rice flour, sugar (or gula apong) and water as the ingredients for its batter, the process of making kuih jala is rather time consuming and requires more effort to make sure that they don't burn while being deep-fried in a wok.

Traditionally, Dayak women used a coconut shell with holes punched in it to let the batter drip down into the wok in a circular motion to form a circle. Once the batter is cooked through, it is folded in half, taken out of the wok, and left to cool/crispen up.

■ Kuih Penyaram

The quintessence candidate when it comes to traditional Sarawak kuih, the penyaram is also called "Kuih Topi" by the locals. This famous delicacy requires only simple ingredients to make, namely wheat flour, rice flour, gula apong, white sugar and water. Some people add salt, while modern day kuih makers add baking soda into the mix. One useful tip is to leave the mixture overnight to achieve better result when you fry the batter the next day.

Penyaram gets its rich taste from gula apong, and when eaten fresh off the wok, the crunchy parts on the rim of the circular kuih are such a joy to bite into. Eat it for breakfast or late afternoon over some hot tea or coffee. Delicious!

■ Kuih Bongkol

Available all year round but especially easy to find during Ramadan, Kuih Bongkol is another favourite with the locals for its sweet and creamy taste. The recipe calls for a longer list of ingredients and trickier preparation methods, especially the making of its banana leaf mould.

Three mixtures are prepared. The first is a rice flour mixture, which will be combined with a coconut milk mixture. This combination is then poured into the mould which already contains some gula apong. Lastly, an egg-based batter mix is poured on top. The banana leaf mould is sealed and the kuih is steamed for about 30 minutes or until the leaf has wilted and darkened.

■ Kuih Keria Gula Apong

This doughnut-like snack is not even half the size of its larger, more popular doughy cousin enjoyed the world over, but it packs a unique punch in terms of flavour and texture. Kuih Keria is made in the same method as the doughnut, except sweet potato is used in addition to wheat flour.

The Kuih Keria mixture is shaped into small hoops and deep-fried until golden brown. Once cooked, it is coated in delicious gula apong syrup.

■ Tapai

This traditional Malay delicacy is sweet fermented rice, and is famous either around breakfast or afternoon tea, and during weddings as well as celebrations. Tapai is made from cooked white rice that is mixed with ragi (yeast) and sugar. The mixture is wrapped in nipah palm leaf and left to ferment at least overnight. The longer it ferments the better it tastes.

MUARA TEBAS SEAFOOD AND SIGHTS

The fishing village of Muara Tebas is a 45-minute drive from Kuching and fronts the estuary of the Sarawak River, which leads to the South China Sea.

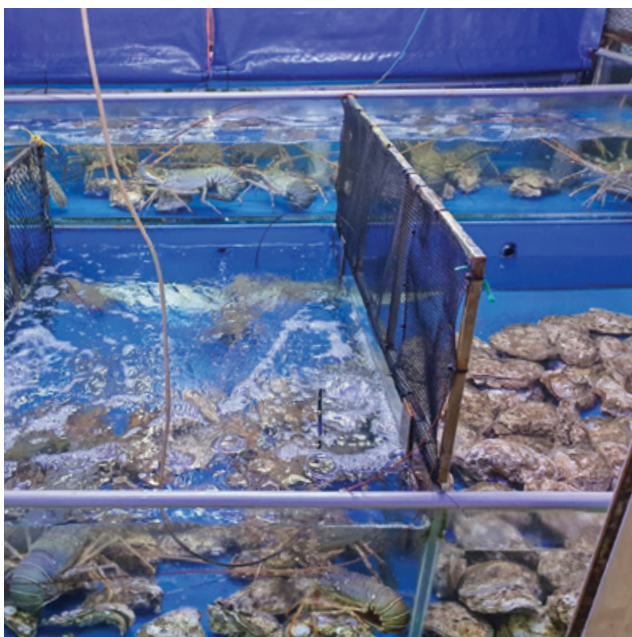
Popular with Kuchingites especially for day trips, this Malay village is known for its fresh seafood, brought in by the local villagers daily, as well as the majestic 200-year-old Ching San Yen temple, which is seen as a symbol of harmony for the village community.



The temple majestically rests atop a hill and might seem out of place in the midst of mostly traditional Malay-style wooden houses. But for decades, the people have lived together peacefully and the temple is often frequented by Buddhists from all over Sarawak looking to visit the ancient spot where travellers gave thanks after safely crossing the South China Sea centuries ago.

The temple is open to the public at daytime and is a beautiful place to explore, boasting wall paintings, sculptures, carvings and even a small water feature.

Besides the temple, the village of Muara Tebas is also known for its seafood. Muara Tebas Seafood and Sin Soon Lee Seafood have both been a part of the village for decades, and are run by the few Chinese people living there.



We had the chance to speak to Irene Tan of Muara Tebas Seafood, who had run the place for the last decade. This seafood restaurant, which started out 50 years ago as a sundry shop, is considered one of the best in Kuching. Sin Soon Lee Seafood next door is also quite popular with patrons and is known for their more traditional style of cooking.

Leading up to the seating area, you'll find yourself mesmerised by the live seafood aquariums, filled with large oysters, clams and crabs. Only fresh seafood here in these parts!



Situated mere steps away from Ching San Yen Temple, Muara Tebas Seafood is probably most well known for their white clam soup and their one-of-a-kind Assam Laksa crabs.

The fresh white clams are one of the best seafood options on offer, especially if you're tired of fish or prawns, they're delightfully juicy and tender and does well with many cooking styles. Their signature White Clam Soup comes in a delightfully gingery and peppery broth and is great for cold days. We immensely enjoyed their Steamed White Clams too, as recommended by Irene, which is topped with an addictive blend of garlic and herbs.

The Steamed Prawns come with both the head and tail in addition to the garlic blend, which elevates the

fresh, juicy taste of the prawn meat. If you're not a fan of fresh oysters, then their Steamed Oysters are the way to go! Also topped with that garlic blend, the oyster meat is amazingly tender yet firm.

However, if you are a fan of Fresh Oysters, don't miss out on theirs! Their oysters are huge and have a firm yet velvety texture. Served with a slice of lemon and a bottle of Tabasco sauce, it is a fascinating flavour, not too briny and is slightly sweet, making them great for anyone who hasn't had them before.

Other amazing dishes we tried out are the Fried Noodles with Fish as well as the Ginger Egg Crabs, which had sweet thick crabmeat and a delicately balanced ginger and egg flavour.

*Steamed Prawns**Fried Noodles with Fish*

One thing to look out for: the parking situation. Roads are pretty narrow in this small village, and you might be approached by ‘attendants’ asking for a little fee (RM5 – RM10) for helping you find a parking spot since it is so limited. We recommend going down towards the end of the road to the temple’s parking if it’s empty.

Less than 10 minutes away from Muara Tebas Village is Bukit Batu Selabat, a popular hiking spot with one of the best views in Sarawak. Located at the edge of Bako National Park, this rocky hill is more of a climb than a hike, with ropes assisting people along the way.

Experienced hikers may find themselves conquering this peak in a mere half hour, but

for others who aren’t the most physically fit, it can take up to an hour. The view at the top is magnificent though, offering a 360 view of both the South China Sea in the distance and the vastness of Bako National Park below, as well as some magnificent skies above!

Muara Tebas Seafood, 17, Jalan Kampung Muara Tebas, Sungai Buda Kecil, 93010 Kuching, Sarawak.



THE EVOLUTION OF TEH C PENG SPECIAL

It is sweet, creamy, fragrant, and cooling. It's the ultimate Sarawakian thirst-quencher. We are talking about Sarawak's iconic beverage lovingly known as Teh C Peng Special. Who knew that this humble sweet tea would one day find its way in cafés and restaurants outside of Sarawak? In fact, it has even been called a Malaysian specialty drink with Sarawakian origin.

What's in the name?

Teh C Peng Special is essentially a special variant of the popular Malaysian beverage Teh C Peng. The word "teh" here is Malay for "tea", which is the first component of this drink. Black tea is used to make this drink.

The letter C is often associated with the use of milk in Malaysian beverages, for example Teh C, Kopi C or Wheatgrass C. It is believed that the letter C in these beverages could have originated from the use of popular evaporated milk brand Carnation for making milk tea in the past.

The word "Peng" is Hokkien for "ice". So, when you order any beverage with the word "peng" in it at a café or restaurant, expect the drink to be cold. Also, while it's perfectly normal for you to just order Teh C, Kopi C if you want them hot, Teh C Special is not something you'd want to order with no ice.

In any case, the "Special" in Teh C Peng Special comes from the addition of palm sugar to sweeten the milk tea instead of using sweetened condensed milk or white sugar. More specifically, "gula apong" is used. Gula apong is processed out of the sap of "nipah" palms, which grow abundantly in Sarawak's coastal areas. To describe the taste, gula apong is sweet with a hint of saltiness, with an almost caramel-like flavour, but more fragrant and slightly nutty. It's a special kind of sweetness that is hard to resist.

From a humble drink stall to hotels and restaurants

Most argue that Teh C Peng Special had its humble beginnings at Fresh Food Court in 7th Mile (Kota Sentosa), Kuching, and that the food court still serves one of the best Teh C Peng Special around.

Who would have thought, however, that this simple palm sugar milk tea would later become one of Sarawak's most iconic drinks!

A typical Teh C Peng Special comprises three layers, namely tea on the top layer, evaporated milk on the middle layer, and gula apong at the bottom. For this reason, the drink is also known as 3-Layer Teh C Peng. However, these days you can also find five-layered tea. And for the three layered ones, some use pandan-flavoured gula apong syrup to give the drink more aroma with hints of vanilla and almond.

Teh C Peng Special has also earned a special place in menus of various restaurants and hotels, as well as F&B outlets in West Malaysia, particularly Kuala Lumpur. And most recently, this iconic Sarawakian drink is made available in convenient cans, making it more easily accessible to consumers who can purchase some from major supermarkets and convenience stores.

Make your own Teh C Peng Special

If canned Teh C Peng Special is not convenient enough for you, how about easily making some yourself at home? Some Sarawak-based beverage manufacturers have also come up with Teh C Peng Special syrups that are available in convenient bottles at major supermarkets. Variations include just plain gula apong, or pandan flavoured gula apong. Alternatively, you can also buy gula apong syrup that is also available these days in convenient bottles. Just add milk and black tea and voila! Of course, how sweet your Teh C Peng Special is in the end depends on your syrup to tea and milk ratio.

But if all that don't do you justice, simply head out and order a glass of Teh C Peng Special from your favourite kopitiam, café, or restaurant and you're good to go.





Scan me to the location!



IT'S ALL IN ONE

1 Utama Shopping Centre, which boasts over 700 stores, is the largest shopping mall in Malaysia, and is the seventh largest shopping mall in the world. 1 Utama is a mecca of a premier lifestyle, with the best of shopping, entertainment, and dining all under one roof.

Located in Bandar Utama, the mall is spread over 519,000 square metres and was opened in 1995, with a second phase added in 2003 and an additional expansion of 1 Utama E in 2018. With departmental stores, specialty attractions and entertainment galore like no other, here are some of the best things to do at 1 Utama!



Shopping and food

This multiple award-winning regional mall has more than 700 shops, houses 2 departmental stores: AEON and Parkson Elite, and 2 cinemas: TGV and GSC Cinemas under one roof. There are also round-the-clock events and happenings taking place daily. For easier navigation, 1 Utama has various themed zones: Highstreet, LUXE, Oval, Promenade, Centre Court, Rainforest, and 1UE.

1 Utama is also home to over 150 eateries from all over the world, like Kyochon, Teppanyaki, Absolute Thai, TGI Friday's, Little Nyonya, Pho Vietz and more! With over 14,000 car park bays, shoppers can opt to park at 1 Utama's multi-storey car park, open-air Dataran car park, or even at adjoining office towers and hotels.



FlowRider 1 Utama

Ever thought of surfing in a shopping mall? Now you can with the double-lane flowriding and surfing simulator venue in 1 Utama Shopping Centre. FlowRider® 1 Utama is a hybrid boardsport combining the techniques of surfing, snowboarding, skateboarding, wakeboarding and skimboarding. Whether you're a beginner or an expert, one can surely catch a perpetual wave with the guidance of their professional instructors!

For more information, check out www.flowrider1utama.com.my

Windlab Indoor Sky Diving

WINDLAB Indoor Skydiving is the simulation of an actual 14,000 feet outdoor skydives. Everyone who has dreamed of flying can come to 1 Utama and experience the thrill of flight. Safe and fun for all ages from 3 years up, the Indoor Skydiving simulates the free-fall component of outdoor skydiving, without the plane, or parachute. Just lean into the wind assisted by their expert instructors and start flying.

For more information go to www.windlab.my or WhatsApp [+60 12 224 4342](tel:+60122244342).



Camp5

Camp5, Asia's Premier Climbing Gym, offers city slickers the unique experience of "The Great Outdoors". Camp5 is housed within 24-metre floor-to-ceiling windows, providing air-conditioned climbing comfort and panoramic views of the city below. Camp5's 2,000 metres of varied and challenging surfaces engage the enthusiastic novice to seasoned advanced climbers. Professional care and instruction will ensure a safe and memorable climbing experience.

For more information, contact [+60 3 7726 0410](tel:+60377260410).

Petaling Jaya Performing Arts Centre (PJPAC)

PJPAC is a dedicated arts precinct situated inside 1 Utama's newest extension, 1 Utama E. Fully owned and operated by 1 Utama, PJPAC comprises a 686-seater, fully equipped proscenium theatre (Stage 1), a black box (Nero Event Space) as well as a talent and creative incubator space (Incubator). Its objective is to provide premium quality spaces and facilities and to cultivate gifted performers and talent from the arts, social media and entertainment industry.



Rainforest

Take a break from shopping at 1 Utama's Rainforest, a specially conceived area that features koi ponds, suspension bridge and lush foliage, right at the heart of the mall. Relax in a calm setting replete with fresh water fish swimming in our expansive aquarium. A first-in-Malaysia feature, the Rainforest gives new meaning to alfresco dining in a mall. After a long day's shopping and walking, this is the place where you can sit down and rest. With a great selection of cafes and restaurants surrounding the zone, taking time to appreciate Mother Nature over a cuppa has never been better.



Secret Garden

Take a stroll through this 30,000 sq ft high-tech rooftop sanctuary 35 metres above the ground – the largest in Southeast Asia. Secret Garden is an elaborate showcase of 600 species of exotic flora. Each plant is specially created on a bed of bio-carbon soil and meticulously nurtured by a team of renowned botanists.

It was developed in secret for five years before it was opened for public viewing on 25th May 2009. This floral haven and award-winning Tourism Malaysia attraction plays an important part in 1 Utama's green efforts to promote sustainability and raise environmental awareness. The experimental garden adopts high performance technologies such as chilled water irrigation and rainwater harvesting. Admission is free, with visiting hours from 10am-10pm every Saturday, Sunday and public holidays.

Saranghae Bridge

Saranghae Bridge is a place that does not require any extreme activities. This place is great for unwinding and admiring the beauty of magnificent LED lights, particularly at night. Visitors can also 'secure their love' by locking padlocks onto the fences here. For those who like to take pictures of a romantic atmosphere, you can stop by here!

Don't forget to apply for a **ONECARD** membership for privileges, loyalty points and preferred parking access when you shop at 1 Utama. For seamless transactions, go cashless and link you **ONECARD** with **IPAY** digital wallet via the 1 Utama SuperApp! Can't get enough of 1 Utama? Check out **www.oneshop.com.my** and shop 1 Utama from the comfort of your own home!

BIG THINGS COMING UP

The dedication and hard work by the young designers in the Sarawak Young Designers (SayD'Signers) programme are finally paying off, as their furniture designs will be produced and made available commercially.

Deputy Premier Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hassan said recently that several furniture companies had agreed to produce furniture based on the creative designs of the talented SayD'Signers.

The SayD'SignersSarawak programme began in 2018 with the first intake of fresh graduates from UNIMAS. The programme was enhanced through collaboration with Indonesia's Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), with customised syllabus and curriculum for the SayD'Signers Furniture Training Programme specially developed by ITB.

Speaking on the commercialisation programme, Chief Executive Officer of Saradec Management Sdn. Bhd., Dayang Nena Abang Bruce said that four STIDC vendors and four timber manufacturing companies who are members of the Sarawak Furniture Industry Association (SFIA) will select the prototypes by the SayD'Signers and manufacture them for sale. Each piece is unique in their design, boasting Sarawakian flair and inspired by each of the SayD'Signers' surrounding.

"These products will make their debut during the launching event of SayD'Signers Sarawak products by Datuk Amar Awang Tengah in July," she disclosed.

SLIM programme

Meanwhile, Saradec's incubator programme, which started in October last year, sees 15 SayD'Signers undergoing a one-year programme to gain entrepreneurial skills and knowledge. The SayD'SignersSarawak Link and Match (SLIM) was introduced in January as part of the incubator programme. This allows the incubator programme participants to be linked and matched with 12 furniture companies who are members of SFIA, as well as STIDC vendors.

"The programme participants will come up with totally new product designs that accommodate the needs of the companies. Equipped with the necessary entrepreneurship skills, they will also be able to set up their own design studio and run their own business, and have dealings with the companies whose contact they would have already had through their participation in the SLIM programme.

The finished products will also be launched in July during the SayD'Signers Sarawak product launch event.

An exciting debut

The launching of SayD'Signers Sarawak products on July 26 will be officiated by Tengah, after which they will go on sale over a one-week period. The public is cordially invited to come over and view the creativity of our young designers. Admission is free.

"There will be 47 products to be launched altogether. Thirty-five of these products are from the SLIM project, while the other 12 are under the commercialisation programme," Dayang Nena told BorneoTalk in a recent interview at her office in Kuching.

She added that the sale of the SayD'Signers products was targeted primarily at local and international architect firms as well as developers, citing Saradec's aim of putting the design of their products in the right position.



"These products are truly unique, truly one-of-a-kind. Besides their nature and life-inspired designs, the SayD'Signers furniture are manufactured using exotic timber species of sustainable supply from the tropical forest of Sarawak. Each timber is specifically hand-picked by the SayD'Signers to match their unique creations as certain designs only work with certain types of wood," Dayang Nena continued, adding that the products would also be promoted at INDEX Mumbai in August.

A major event to help promote SayD'SignersSarawak and showcase the designs created by the young designers in the programme will be the Sarawak Design Week, which is scheduled for Nov 7-10. All are welcome to come see the exclusive designs created by our very own young designers. Admission is free.

Sarawak Design Week, will be an exciting one-of-its-kind event in Sarawak, with plenty of activities to look forward to. More details will be revealed when Sarawak Design Week is announced in conjunction with the SayD'Signers product launch event.

For more information, contact Dayang Nena at dayangnenasaradec@gmail.com

COZY Chair (B3S106.)



ULIN Chair (B3S102.)



RASUNG Chair (B3S102.)



LIFVA Chair (B3S108.)



K.BANG Chair (B3S104.)



PALMA Chair (B3S101.)



CARRA (B3S105.)



BOT Chair (B3S106.)



SPOONBILL Chair (B3S105.)



VALENTINE Chair (B3S103.)





Iwan Hamdan

Born in Sambas Kalimantan Barat, Indonesia, Iwan Hamdan has been a part of SayD'Signers Sarawak since 2018. For him, SayD'Signers Sarawak is a bridge towards his goal of being a professional designer.

Iwan completed an undergraduate degree in Design Technology at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), with a major in Industrial Design while interning as a designer for Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC). During that time,



he was a part of two exhibits, the Malaysia International Furniture Fair 2017 and the Sarawak Timber & SMEs Expo 2017.

He then trained at Samling Housing Products in Miri, and was part of multiple international exhibits, like INDEX Mumbai 2018, Australia International Furniture Fair 2018 and Downtown Dubai 2018. Iwan then furthered his studies by being a Design Trainee at Bandung's Institute of Technology, where he had the



opportunity to visit creative facilities in Musashino University and Chiba University in Japan.

Iwan's designs take inspiration from various patterns found in culture and wildlife, such as patterns from the Pua Kumbu and various coral species clumping together on the ocean floor.

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Yeen Ayu Rosita

Holding onto the words of Max Bill, an industrial designer in the Bauhaus era, this designer lives by the philosophy that every design should "stand out as fresh, unique and wholly modern."

Born and raised in Kuching, Sarawak, Yeen Ayu Rosita, better known as Yeeni, is one of six trainees in the third batch of the SayD'Signer Sarawak programme. Yeeni is currently pursuing her Masters Degree in Industrial Design at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), after majoring in Industrial Design in her Design Technology undergraduate degree.




During her Masters, Yeeni conducted extensive research on material experimentation and is one of the research assistants at UNIMAS' Institute of Design and Innovation. Yeeni has also been active in academic writing, with her papers entitled "Preliminary Production of Material Compound from Sago Waste" published in the International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences and "Alternative Sago Waste Compound Material for Automotive Model Modelling" published in the International Journal of Innovative Design, Creativity and Social Sciences.



In strengthening her skills as an industrial designer, she has attended several courses provided by Sarawak Design Centre (SaraDEC). Yeeni joined the SayD'Signer programme in hopes of becoming a successful young designer, and to someday stand in line with other international-level designers.

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DABAI

THE UNDERUSED TREASURE OF SARAWAK

No, they aren't actually olives. They're Dabai, an exotic fruit unique to Sarawak. It's also known as the 'Sibu Olive' and is a seasonal treat that can fetch between RM28 to RM80 per kilogramme.

Scientifically known as *Canarium odontophyllum*, Dabai have a thin dark purple to black-coloured skin similar to that of a black olive, but with a distinctive circular yellow scar where the stem was once attached. Dabai trees can grow up to 21-metres high and are dioecious. Young dabai fruit is white in colour and turn black once it's ripe. The black skin is paper-thin and covers a layer of yellow flesh enveloping a large seed.

Eating dabai can be a little tricky especially if you haven't had one before. If you bite into one without preparing it properly, you'll find yourself chomping on something akin to an olive-flavoured rock.

With a simple preparation step, Dabai fruits have a smooth butter-like texture with a rich taste, like a mix of buttered olives and carrots with a slight cheese-like funk. Some even compared it to the creaminess of avocados!

You will want to clean and then soak the fruits in warm water until the flesh softens. This should take about half an hour so give them a soft pinch to check. Alternatively, you can cook them by drying them out under the hot sun for one to two hours; this will result in a more intense flavour.

You can try adding salt, sugar or soy sauce for extra flavour. The skin has a stronger olive-like flavour that some people might find too intense, so you can either eat it with the skin on or partially peel it instead.

Don't throw away the seed though! Crack it open and have a little taste of the kernel inside, which has a nutty almond-like taste.

Rarely eaten outside Sarawak, Dabai has the potential to become a specialty fruit unique to the State. Dabai is a favourite among the locals for its decadent taste and nutritional value. Research has also suggested that Dabai is suitable as a source of healthy oils and even contains anti-inflammatory properties that aid digestion.

Rich in amino acids, unsaturated fats, antioxidants, fatty acids, calcium and iron, Dabai has long been underutilised, partially because of its high-perishability. It's in season every June and December and has a shelf life of two to three days, limiting its distribution. The export market is currently limited to nearby towns in Sabah and Brunei.

However, it can be pickled, frozen or made into dabai paste. Dabai pickled in salt can be stored at room temperature for up to a year. If frozen properly, the flavour of the fruit can be maintained longer than a year. It is hoped that with proper product development and advancement in storage, more people will be introduced to the goodness of Dabai. Today, Dabai is being cultivated all over Sarawak, and with technology, commercialisation has proved to be promising.

So far, Dabai has been used as an ingredient in pizzas, desserts, juice, mayonnaise and dipping sauces, among other things, and Dabai paste is a key ingredient in the popular Dabai Fried Rice, which can be found round the year throughout Sarawak.







This Sarawakian gem even has its own festival!

Held in Song, Kapit since 2018, the three-day Pesta Dabai attracts people in the thousands. It features a Dabai exhibition as well as a cooking competition, games, colouring contests, futsal competition, performances, food fair and many more. It's also where you can expect to find different types of Dabai from all over Sarawak.

This year's Pesta Dabai will take place from Aug 5 to 8 in the town of Song, Kapit. For more information on the event, contact the Kapit District Council at +60 84 796 266.

With many health benefits and decadent flavour, the Dabai fruit is an underused treasure of Sarawak that deserves to be as well known as the durian. Have you tried one before?



TRADE NEWS



ANOTHER MILESTONE... Sarawak Tourism Board (STB) on May 10 introduced its online data management platform, STB InTel and an E-learning platform with Lotus Voyager Group (LVG). Launched by Minister for Tourism, Creative Industry and Performing Arts (MTCP) Dato Sri Haji Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah (2nd from right), the digital initiatives are part of STB's ongoing efforts to digitalise the tourism industry.



SARAWAK UPS VISIBILITY IN INDIAN TRAVEL

MARKET... STB on Apr 5 participated in ITB India Virtual to boost Sarawak's visibility in India and South Asia. The virtual event saw STB as well as local travel and tour operators from all over Sarawak networking with traders via the Sarawak stand housed in Imperial Hotel, Kuching between Apr 5 and 7. "The Indian tourists' arrivals to Malaysia showed a positive trend with a 15% growth rate pre-pandemic in 2019. India scored the 5th place in terms of visitor arrivals to Sarawak which marks the significance of tapping into the Indian market," said STB CEO Sharzede Datu Haji Salleh Askor. ITB India Virtual offered three full days of virtual business appointments and digital conference programme.



WELCOME BACK... On Apr 3, Sarawak welcomed back its first batch of international travellers to Kuching after nearly two years of closing its borders due to COVID-19. Deputy Minister of Tourism Datuk Sebastian Ting greeted 157 passengers arriving at Kuching International Airport aboard Scoot Airlines from Singapore, with MTCP's Permanent Secretary Hii Chang Kee and STB's deputy CEO Suriya Charles Buas. Of the 157 passengers, 65 were transiting through Singapore.

EXPLORE SIBU IN 24 HOURS

So you've only got 24 hours to explore Sibu? We list here some of the things that you can experience in this charming Sarawakian town.



In the A.M.

Get your breakfast on with some of Sibu's iconic foods! Most local kopitiams (coffee shops) serve a hearty breakfast of Mee Sua and the infamous Kompia. Mee Sua is a dish of fine noodles in rich herbal soup often containing red wine and chicken. Kompia is a Sibu staple, and is basically a Foochow bagel-like pastry with sesame seeds on top. It can be eaten plain or with fillings like minced pork or kaya!

Head on over to Sibu's famous Tua Pek Kong Temple and Goddess of Mercy Pagoda and admire the oldest and best-preserved Chinese temple in the city. It was founded around 1890 and rebuilt in 1897 with the

7-storey pagoda. The pagoda is said to be one of the most perfectly proportioned pagodas outside Mainland China. Visitors are welcome to go up the tower for an amazing view of Sibu.

Alternatively, check out Sibu Central Market! The sheer size of it can be daunting, but you can take your time exploring the wide array of products on both floors. The ground floor has a variety of wild produce, fruits, seafood, dried products and kuih stalls for snacking. The first floor sells clothes and is also home to a massive hawker centre popular with locals.

At Noontime

Head to Soon Hock Café for one of the most popular noodle dishes in Sarawak, Kampua Mee! It's basically noodles tossed in fried onion and pork lard, garnished with spring onions and slices of pork. We recommend adding dark soy sauce and chilli to it, just ask them to 'tambah kicap dan cili' to your order. Add a side of Bian Nyuk for a hearty meal. Bian Nyuk is basically wonton tossed with similar ingredients to the Kampua Mee. Similarly, you can have it with soy sauce and chilli.

Spend your afternoon at the Sibu Cultural Heritage Centre, which offers an insight into the town's history. Housed in the former Municipal Council building, the

heritage centre hosts a museum on the upper levels that displays the rich cultural heritage of various ethnic groups of the Central Region of Sarawak. The museum also features taxidermy of animals from around the world and a collection of Chinese porcelain.

Alternatively, you can head a little way out of town to watch how Mee Sua is made. Watch how traditional Mee Sua is made at the hands of expert, Ting Cheng Sieng at 6½ Miles, Jalan Oya, 96000 Sibu. While most noodles are now factory produced, Mr Ting still does it the traditional way, by hanging out the noodles to dry in the sun.



Mee Sua



Kampua Mee



Kompia



Bian Nguak

In the P.M.

There's nothing quite like a sunset stroll down Sibü's Sungai Merah Heritage Walk. There are souvenir shops along the walkway too if you feel like taking home a piece of Sibü. As the sky darkens, the river lights up with a bright, colourful displays along the bank, making it a perfect spot for pictures!

One of the main attractions in Sibü is the famous Night Market, which runs daily at the centre of town from 6pm onwards. With hundreds of stalls along Market Road, the night market can be divided into two categories, food and non-food. The rows of street food sell local favourites like Kompia, satay, barbecued meat, dim sum and steamed buns. We recommend getting a few snacks before getting

to the non-food part of the market, which sells everything from children's toys to shoes.

If you're looking for a nightcap, look no further than ACE Bar. ACE Bar is a chill place with great tasteful atmosphere that specialises in mixed drinks thanks to their professional mixologist.

And that's it! We hope you enjoyed this roundup of things to do in Sibü if you ever find yourself here in this charming city. See you soon!



Sibü Pek Kong Temple



Night Market



Sibü Heritage Centre



Sungai Merah Heritage Walk



DESTINATION: RELAXATION

Stress

is something everyone has to deal with on the daily. And whatever the magnitude of your problem is, sooner or later you are going to want to just drop everything you're doing, pack your bags and find somewhere to escape to for some peace of mind.

In any case, Sarawak is never short of great locales for an idyllic escape from reality. Here are some suggestions (in no particular order) you might want to take into consideration when planning your next relaxing escape in Sarawak.



Mulu National Park



Escape to Mendung, Bau



Popular with those looking for a change of scene and peace of mind, Mendung Escape is a small house located atop a hill in Bau. To get there, you will need to take a 700-metre hike up for about 30-50 minutes, depending on your fitness level. Remember to bring along proper hiking needs and some water.

While getting there does take some effort, you will be rewarded with spectacular views once you arrive at the house.

The accommodation itself is clean and cosy, with some modern amenities for your convenience – we’re talking about water heater, fan, fridge, freezer, gas cooker, even kitchen utensils.

The real showstoppers are the surrounding nature and the awe-inspiring vistas. Late evening and early morning views are especially breath-taking from the “escape”. At night, the wilderness sings you beautiful lullabies while the moon and the stars have little trouble commanding your attention towards them. Who needs smart devices?

At Mendung Escape, you can enjoy an absolutely relaxing time with your friends or loved ones. A BBQ session under the stars? Yes, please!

Relaxing boat ride at Loagan Bunut

If you want to experience the wilds of Loagan Bunut National Park in the most relaxing way possible, opt for their boat ride across Sarawak’s largest natural lake. It’s the perfect way to get up-close with nature without having to endure long hours of trekking and hiking if those are not your cup of tea.

Contact the park’s headquarters to arrange a boat trip that would take you on an exploration of the beautiful lake and its lush surrounding forests. Early morning trips offer the best sights and sounds. The lake is blanketed in mist at this time, creating an enchanting atmosphere.

As the mist dissipates, an epic surrounding of tall trees and lush vegetation slowly reveals itself. There is a chance that you might catch sight of wildlife along the lake and its tributaries as this happens. Birds flying, wading or diving for fish. Squirrels and monkeys moving from one tree to another. Hornbills and kites soaring up above. To be able to see all of that will be such a rewarding experience. But even if that’s not the case, to listen to nature’s soothing sounds would be just as mesmerising!

Expect to find interesting contraptions called ‘selambau’ along your journey. They are traditional scoop nets set up by the local fishermen along the lake to catch fish, and are some of the major attractions at Loagan Bunut.

As the day comes to an end, expect to see birds making their way back to their nests. That would be such a sight to behold and a great ending to your relaxing getaway into the wilds of Loagan Bunut.



Disconnect at Nanga Sumpa



Deep within Batang Ai National Park lies Ulu Ai, one of many tributaries of the vast 24 square kilometre Batang Ai Lake. It is one of several strongholds for the area's wildlife, and home to Orang Utans, hornbills, gibbons and many other wild species.

Within Ulu Ai is the village of Nanga Sumpa, one of many longhouse villages in the area. Just across the Nanga Sumpa longhouse is Nanga Sumpa Lodge, which is connected to the longhouse via a wooden bridge.

For those seeking rejuvenation and relaxation, this is the ideal place. After almost half a day's journey from Kuching to Batang Ai jetty, you'll need to go on another 1-hr, 30-min to two-hour journey across Batang Ai lake to Nanga Sumpa on a longboat. The ride is breezy and very relaxing, with some excitement awaiting upriver, as you move closer towards Nanga Sumpa Lodge on the banks of the Delok River.

The lodge is an award-winning village stay type accommodation established in 1987 with the people of the



Nanga Sumpa Longhouse lending a hand to help build it and in its daily operations. This in turn provide sustainable income for the longhouse folks.

Basic accommodation and amenities here offer you a village-life experience. Modern conveniences such as Internet connectivity and 24-hour electricity may be lacking, but who needs those if you have so much to do and see? Going for a dip in the river just below beats watching a series on your mobile device any day! And if hiking isn't your thing, perhaps you'd prefer just lounging at the common area, enjoying the breeze, the sounds of nature and the refreshing views right in front of you! If you like picnics, how about one by the river near the beautiful Enseluai Waterfall?

There are many activities to enjoy here. But if the more adventurous ones are not to your liking, feel free to stick to your ultimate relaxation experience at the lodge, a relaxing stroll along the Nanga Sumpa Longhouse just across, mingling with the longhouse folks, and a host of other relaxing activities to be had.

Unwind at Miri Marina

Built on reclaimed land, Miri Marina is where everyone comes to relax. It is the perfect quick escape from all the stresses at work or in life. A place where you can just wind down and enjoy the sights, the sounds, and the serenity.

Of course, different people have their different needs fulfilled here as well. Those with a taste for adventure can go on voyages out at sea on board a yacht or a boat from the docks at the marina, the young "socmed" generation will find the views here worthy of their Instagram or TikTok posts, and the health-conscious can go on their routine jogs and walking exercises here.

For relaxation and rejuvenation, head to Ulu Mulu at the very edge of the marina. It is a public space where people can relax on the tables and benches as well as the wooden platforms under shady trees, overlooking the ocean. Here, you can enjoy the gentle sea breeze, soothing sounds of the ocean with the waves rolling onto shore while the leaves on the surrounding trees rustle with each gust of wind that hits them, and views that are hard to say "no" to. And of course, there's the giant sea horse lighthouse too!



As the sun makes its descent into the horizon, the sky turns a brilliant dark blue and deep orange with a hint of purple and yellow. What a perfect time to enjoy some food and drinks from the stalls set up just nearby. Alternatively, you may head to Coco Cabana for some drinks with a bit more kick to them. There's a restaurant there too if you prefer.

The new Miri Central Park at the marina is also perfect for relaxing walks, with plenty of benches to get some rest if you're tired from walking.

Admire the Dragon Jade Temple, Sibul



Located over 25km away from Sibul town centre, Yu Lung San Tien En Si, or Dragon Jade Temple, is a massive Chinese temple complex where three religions come together under one roof, namely Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

Everyone, regardless of their belief, is invited to explore the temple complex. The architecture is impressive, with intricate carvings that have made the temple a favourite among photographers and videographers.

But beyond all that, there is a sense of serenity and peacefulness surrounding you as you stand in the compound of this vast complex.

Stay on an island at Bakun Lake, Belaga

Mebong Cove Villa, located some 25 minutes away by boat from Bakun jetty is a quiet, cosy eco-friendly wooden lodge on an island at Bakun Lake, which is about the size of Singapore.

The view from the lodge is splendid. Sit outside on the patio and admire the gorgeous landscape of the emerald lake that disappears into the horizon, and the surrounding hills that used to be mountain tops before Bakun Lake took form. The sound of birds and other wildlife calling out from the distance is like a perfectly composed symphony delivered immaculately by nature's orchestra.

There is very little, or most likely no mobile connectivity at all, which means more time to relax and reconnect with nature. Swim in the shallows of the lake just below the villa itself. Better yet, take a trip to Belanum Waterfall just 15 minutes away. Interestingly, if you go in for a dip, you might just see some fish jump out to escape to the other pools of the waterfall or into the lake below.

Other relaxing activities include trips to Uma Belun Leo Dian Kayan longhouse back on mainland at Sungai Asap or to the local weekend market at the jetty to see the unique produce for sale, and the interesting people that patronise the market. Cap off the night with some "burak" (a version of tuak) and dance to traditional Kayan sape music.



MAGIC HOUR

BEST VIEWS OF SARAWAK

Magic hour, often used interchangeably with golden hour, is that time of day when the sun is low on the horizon, and only occurs during a short window of time twice a day, during dusk and dawn.

Golden hour is more specific to the first hour after sunrise and the last hour before sunset, which produces a warm diffused light that illuminates the sky and everything it touches with a golden hue.

Magic hour is different in the sense that it occurs right after sunset and just before sunrise, enveloping the skies in hues of pinks, violets, blues and gold instead of the intense warm rays of golden hour. Magic hours are harder to chase than golden hours though, as they usually don't even last a full hour most of the time.

Here are some of the places where you can experience for yourself the most magical views across Sarawak.

Kampung Selayang



Kuching

For a stunning view of Kuching City, look no further than the Kuching Waterfront's Darul Hana Bridge that spans over the Sarawak River. Located in the heart of Kuching City, the highest point of the bridge offers an amazing view of not just the city and the river, but also iconic landmarks such as the Floating Mosque and the State Legislative Assembly.

Bako National Park is probably one of the best places to be for nature lovers, and one of the best views come from the Telok Pandan Kecil and Telok Pandan Besar trails, which end on a cliff top overlooking a secluded beach and the iconic Bako sandstone Sea Stack.

Kampung Sting, located in Padawan and near the Bengoh Dam, has a charming nickname - the Cloud Village. A 30-minute uphill hike from the banks of the Bengoh Lake, the canopy offers breath-taking views of the rainforests and lake below.



Miri

Located an hour away from Miri town, Tusan Beach is one of the most pristine beaches in the area. During the day, it boasts stunning skies. At night, it is known for the blue glow of bioluminescent planktons brought in by the waves.

For a vantage view of Miri, look no further than Canada Hill and the Grand Old Lady at the top. The Grand Old Lady is the first oil well in Sarawak, and is situated atop Canada Hill, a sandstone ridge overlooking the town. From the hill, the sunsets are magnificent, and you can even see oil rigs scattered in the distance.

Tanjung Lobang Beach is nearer to town and is more popular among locals and tourists. There are two piers extending out to the sea, as well as rocky parts of the shoreline that makes for gorgeous views and photographs.



Tusan Beach



Tanjung Lobang Beach



Canada Hill and Grand Old Lady



Permai Lake Garden

Sibu

Sibu's Permai Lake Garden is a green hub on the edge of Sibu town and is a popular recreational spot for locals, which has seen many stunning skies, mirrored onto the surface of the lake.

Bintulu

The sunsets from Tanjung Batu Beach in Bintulu are one of a kind. With the presence of one of the few tidal islands in Sarawak as well as many pine trees along the sandy beaches, Tanjung Batu remains a favourite sightseeing spot among locals.

Tanjung Batu Beach

Mukah

Pulau Bruit, Daro is the second largest island in Malaysia and is one of Sarawak's hidden gems. The mostly undeveloped island has the best sunsets over the rows of paddy fields.

Pulau Bruit

BIRTH OF ORANG UTAN BABY A WELCOME SIGHT

sarawakforestry.com •  sfcsarawak

Early this year, Orang Utan fans in Sarawak received a piece of very good news. In fact, the news came at such a apt time as we began to see signs of recovery from the pandemic. It was a happy news that carved a big smile on the faces of many Sarawakians.

At just a little bit after 3pm on Jan 23, one of the staff members at Semenggoh Wildlife Centre in Siburan caught sight of something rather unexpected on that day. There,



around the feeding platform area, came one of the female Orang Utans known to the centre. It was 26-year-old Analisa, the first offspring of fellow resident Orang Utans Seduku and Bujang Senior.

As she moved about on the tree just above the feeding platform, the staff noticed a cute tiny

baby Orang Utan clinging onto Analisa. The staff alerted the others, who then gathered round to witness the amazing sight. Some videos and photos were taken to record such





an important moment for everyone at Semenggoh Wildlife Centre.

The umbilical cord was still attached to both the baby Orang Utan and its mother. That led the staff of the centre to believe that the newborn Orang Utan might have been born either on Jan 22, a day prior to their appearance at the centre to feed, or earlier on the morning of Jan 23. The fact that Analisa last made a lone appearance at the centre on Jan 21 also led to the believe that she had given birth between that date and earlier on Jan 23.

The birth of the newborn Orang Utan at the centre marked another successful effort by both the Sarawak Government and Sarawak Forestry Corporation on the conservation of Sarawak's precious primates.

Analisa is the first female Orang Utan to be born in Semenggoh. Aside from her newborn baby, she has three other offspring. If you would like to show your support and love for Analisa and her offspring, as well as other Orang Utans at Semenggoh Wildlife Centre, you may do so by going to <https://semenggoh.my/adopt-orangutan/>.

BRIGHTER DAYS AHEAD FOR SARAWAK MUSEUM



The Sarawak Museum Department has been busy of late, carrying out refurbishment and restoration works on existing museums while at the same time trying to keep up with heavy demands for the very popular new Borneo Cultures Museum (BCM) since its opening in March this year.

BorneoTalk sat down with **Director of Sarawak Museum Department, Tazudin Mohtar** recently for a chat on how the BCM was doing so far and what's new for the Museum Department.



Borneo Cultures Museum has been a huge success since its opening earlier this year. How many visitors has the museum received thus far if you don't mind sharing?

I am so elated; I am so happy to note that since its opening on March 9, 2022 until now (May 9), we have received 121,713 visitorship. That's around 2,000 visitors per day on average. It's a figure that we need to maintain.

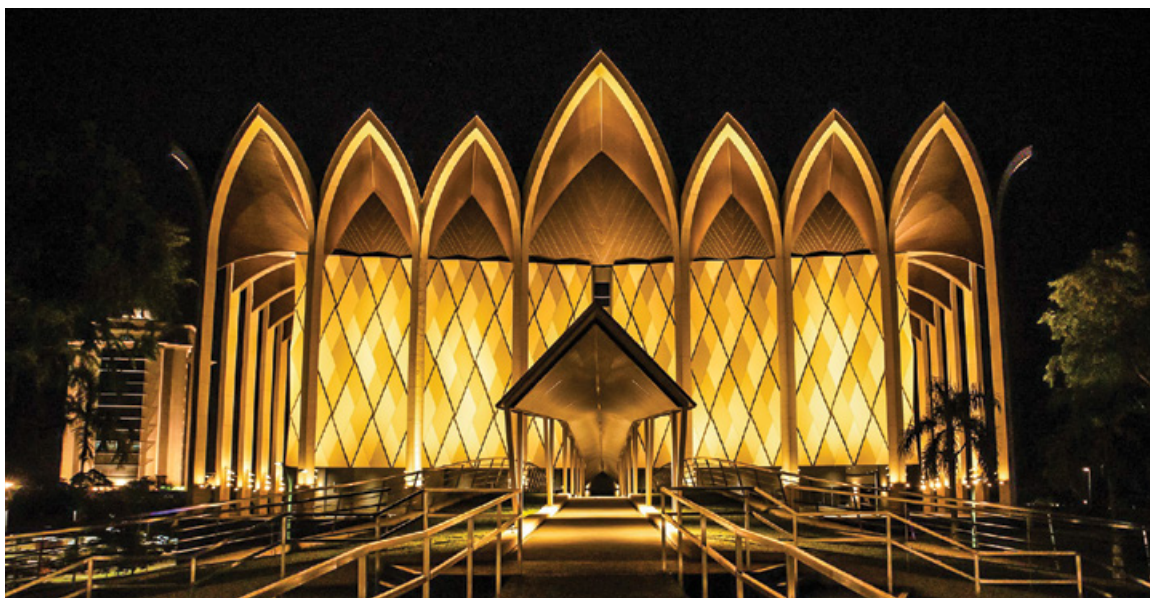
The Romanian ambassador was one of the first few visitors to BCM. In late March, we received a visit from the Raja Permaisuri Agong, who was very impressed with BCM that Her Majesty even recommended it to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong during a visit to Kuching over Ramadan.

What is the formula for BCM's success? What makes it so appealing to the masses? BCM has one of the most outstanding architectures in Malaysia at the moment. It's a huge building

with five floors, three of which are devoted to permanent thematic exhibitions, and one floor houses the children's gallery.

We use technologies like those used in museums around the world, such as our special showcases that we imported from Singapore. As for the exhibits, we wanted something that would leave a lasting impression on our visitors. So, we played with the lighting, the ambience, and many other aspects to create a museum unlike any other, one that would appeal to the public. And we have been receiving positive feedback on BCM not only from the community but also from our colleagues all over the world.

So fortunate of us to have a visionary leader like our Premier, Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari Bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg as well as our Tourism, Creative Industry



and Performing Arts Minister Dato Sri Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah, Assistant Minister (Creative Industry and Performing Arts) Datuk Snowdan Lawan, and our Permanent Secretary for always supporting us and helping us get things going.

I'm also very fortunate to work together with new curators that are very enthusiastic and creative, as well as good content developers, researchers, and a team that can really build the museum in such a way that it can become a centre of attraction.

Another factor is our ideal location right in the middle of Kuching City Centre. We're within walking distance from hotels, shopping centres, the nearby kampung, and other places of attraction. We're also located near the upcoming Hikmah Exchange.

In addition to our permanent installations, we will also have temporary exhibitions where perhaps we can work together with other museums around the world such as the Natural History Museum in London to have some of their collections exhibited here. But of course, their requirements are very high. Good thing BCM has all the world class facilities required.

There are so many things we can do to keep the museum interesting for the people, and I think we're going down the right path so far.

What is the progress of the other projects undertaken by Sarawak Museum thus far? In terms of fort refurbishment and restoration projects, we've finished conservation works on four of them, namely Fort Hose, Fort Lily, Fort Brooke, and Fort Emma. We are currently getting designer to work together with us because we want to set a standard. Each and every fort will tell its own story so visitors will be able to learn more about the forts' history.

The Old Museum looks fantastic. Can we expect an even better curated museum compared to

the original once the Old Museum reopens?

That is the museum I am most passionate about and I've been looking forward to the most. Not just me but many Sarawakians as well. It's the first museum in Sarawak and natural history has been its cornerstone. The European curators appointed during the Brooke era to work at the museum at the time were mostly naturalists, and I feel that the museum still best serve as a natural history museum.

We have a lot of natural history specimens such as butterflies, birds, reptiles, etc. My favourite item in the Old Museum is the whale skeleton, which I believe will remain one of the museum's most attractive exhibits, especially among students and little kids.

We've also planned to transform the park around the museum, along with the plant house, the aquarium, and the summer house into a natural history and green park to complement our natural history museum and create a holistic experience for the visitors.

Are all the museums under restoration/refurbishment exercise going to have the same high-tech features such as those available at Borneo Cultures Museum? Certainly not all of them. The museums housed in older buildings, for example, aren't optimised for such advanced technology and gadgetry. But where we need to use technology, we will do so.

What is the Sarawak Museum Department doing to future-proof its museums? The museum needs to adapt and adopt new ideas. It cannot stay unmoved. The society is evolving, and their wants are ever-changing. And we'll have to take into consideration the requirement of the society, especially the youths. And what they want is technology. But at the same time we have to remember our roots. In other words, we simply need to keep up with what's current in order to stay relevant, but also remember who we are and where we came from.



THE 8-YEAR JOURNEY OF THE BORNEO CULTURES MUSEUM

We recently sat down with **Yasmin Khalid Nicholls**, Curator and Head of Sarawak Museum Department's Museum Services Division, to chat about the long eight-year journey that is Borneo Cultures Museum (BCM).

Can you tell us how Borneo Cultures Museum came to be? We wanted to create a museum that does justice to the rich culture and history of Sarawak. The journey started in 2014. We were working with empty floor plans, having to come up with exhibitions for the museum. It was a challenge on how to fill up all this space in a way that meets your expectations of a world-class museum.

We had a total of three super intensive workshops with other museum people and stakeholders, in which we discussed what kind of museum that we wanted to be. We went back and forth between different themes, topics, storylines and objects that we wanted in this museum.

One of the ideas we had was sort of an ethnic-based museum but at the end we decided that would not work. There were too many variables and that would create too many problems. We finally decided on themes, different ones for every exhibit, which is a more modern way of doing museums. After two whole years of planning, constant brainstorming and analysing output from the workshop, in 2016, we finally came up with a storyline for each level.

Can you elaborate on the different storyline for each level? Okay so every level is different in the sense that they have their own design approach and feel, which results in different experiences for visitors.

Level 3: In Harmony With Nature is all about the connection the people of Sarawak have with a particular environment, whether it's the coasts, rainforests or highlands of Borneo. We want to evoke that feeling of actually being in that environment, so the sounds and projections reflect that.

Level 4: Time Changes is more historical-based. The objects in this exhibit are more archaeological, so we're talking about archival books and documents that illustrate the history of Borneo.

Level 5: Objects of Desire feels the most different on purpose. When you walk into the exhibit, it feels more like an art gallery, due to the closed ceilings. Level 3 and 4 both have open ceilings and feel spacey. Level 5 doesn't have as many interactive exhibits for a reason. We want visitors to have a closer interaction and deeper appreciation of the objects themselves and understand why these particular objects are so valued, whether it's for the craftsmanship, status or exploration of values.

Level 2's Children Gallery is a purely interactive space, with no artefacts on display. We do, however, have another space for activities or exhibitions. Our Children's Gallery is unique. We worked with a designer from Amsterdam, who had a lot of experience with this sort of interactive experience.

After the two-year planning, how long did it take to bring out the concept in each floor?

The best practice is to go through the proper stages and putting yourself in the mind of the visitor in everything you do. Does it make sense? Is it confusing? If I put this exhibit here, does it make sense with this artefact here? Does it add to the visitor experience?

In 2016, we started working closely with designers in Singapore. We presented our plan and storyline and they started working on the concept design. We started on overall concepts, layouts, the feel of the space and how to arrange objects, up until 2017.

In 2017, we focused on the schematic design. It was a very intense process; we worked very closely with the designers. We started laying out the showcases, where they're going to be, what sort of graphics go with each showcase and what to put where.

2018 is very exciting year as we're in the final design stage. This is when we finalised what the showcase will be and where each artefact and interactive exhibit will be located. This is when we started arranging pieces of the story, by properly planning the space. The interactive exhibits and the Augmented Reality (AR) components were in the works simultaneously with the space planning.

When it comes to a significant amount of artefacts, it's important to keep visitors engaged. After looking at a lot of objects, visitors will start feeling fatigue, so we break it up with interactive exhibits. These exhibits have to integrate seamlessly into the rest of the exhibit in a way that enrich the visitors' experience. Too many is overwhelming.

2019 was mostly administrative work. We had to prepare bill of quantities for fabrication for panels and showcases. Once we reached an agreement on costs with contractors, we decided on-site work in 2020.

2020 was....incredibly challenging, to say the least. We were so close towards the end, and we were at the portion of the journey where we absolutely needed to do physical work, right on site. Our fabrications and showcases were due to arrive, and we were supposed to complete the final fabrication process by December 2020. However, as we all know, things happen. We went into lockdown. It was all quite a nightmare honestly.

In 2021, we started on the final fabrication. We finished up the walls, the lighting, the showcases and graphics and started installing the artefacts. To install the artefacts, we needed to make mounts, which we worked on with a specialist company from Singapore.

It was really challenging because sometimes, literally halfway through installing a showcase, we had a close contact alert. We had to drop everything, and I do mean everything, and quarantine for 14 days and go through multiple swab tests.

We worked on the mountings until December 2021 and put the final touches in January 2022. From then until the opening in March, we finalised the caption panels and made sure the numbers match.

Wow, that's a lot! Yes, eight years is a long time! I was so stressed out, I nearly resigned....twice! I sometimes sit there and think to myself, "Wow, I actually survived this journey."

Which is your favourite exhibit? That's a hard one. I would have to say Level 3: In Harmony With Nature because in a way, it was such a unique challenge professionally. I was trying to do something quite ambitious, I was trying to combine different types of artifacts in one exhibit. I was going about combining ethnography, taxidermy, and botanical elements with interactive ones as well as elements from the unseen world like cosmology and intangible history.

Are you looking to implement something like tour guides in the future? I think so! We've been looking into it and talking with the Tour Guide Association. There are a lot of other things that we have planned for the future, but in a way, we are only just recovering.

Not just from the pandemic, but also the opening! We had to change the way the museum works and its approach. We had to drastically increase the number of staff. The museum has to be able to engage with a larger audience. It would take a bit of time, but our gallery staff has underwent quite an intensive training period. They're quite terrified at first but they're okay now, and they can even give small tours now, which is good for international groups and school students on day trips.

We talked about how the museum's journey, what about your own? After I finished my Masters in Gallery Studies, I worked for five years at the Imperial War Museum in London. I came back to Sarawak in 2010, I spent my first few years here working on small projects. In 2014, I was offered to consult on the new museum. It was my first time working on such a large project.

In 2019, I was offered the position of Curator. It came out of the blue, but I accepted it because of this project. We had completed the planning and designing process, and the fabrication process was next. I knew that if I didn't stay on until the end, that process would fail. People usually underestimate how complicated it would be.

So, I thought to myself, if I had this senior position, as opposed to merely being a consultant, I would have more influence on how things are done. I could push for certain things that I couldn't previously. With negotiations, I could have a say in the things we needed and what we needed to include in the scope of work.

When I started, I didn't even know if I would be staying until the end of the project or whether I would have to pass on my work to someone else, but call it fate or destiny, this museum and I were probably always meant to be.

BAMBOO RAFTING AND ALL ITS FUN

EXPERIENCE SARAWAK IN A
WHOLE NEW WAY WITH ONE OF
THE MOST UNDERRATED WATER
ACTIVITIES: BAMBOO RAFTING!

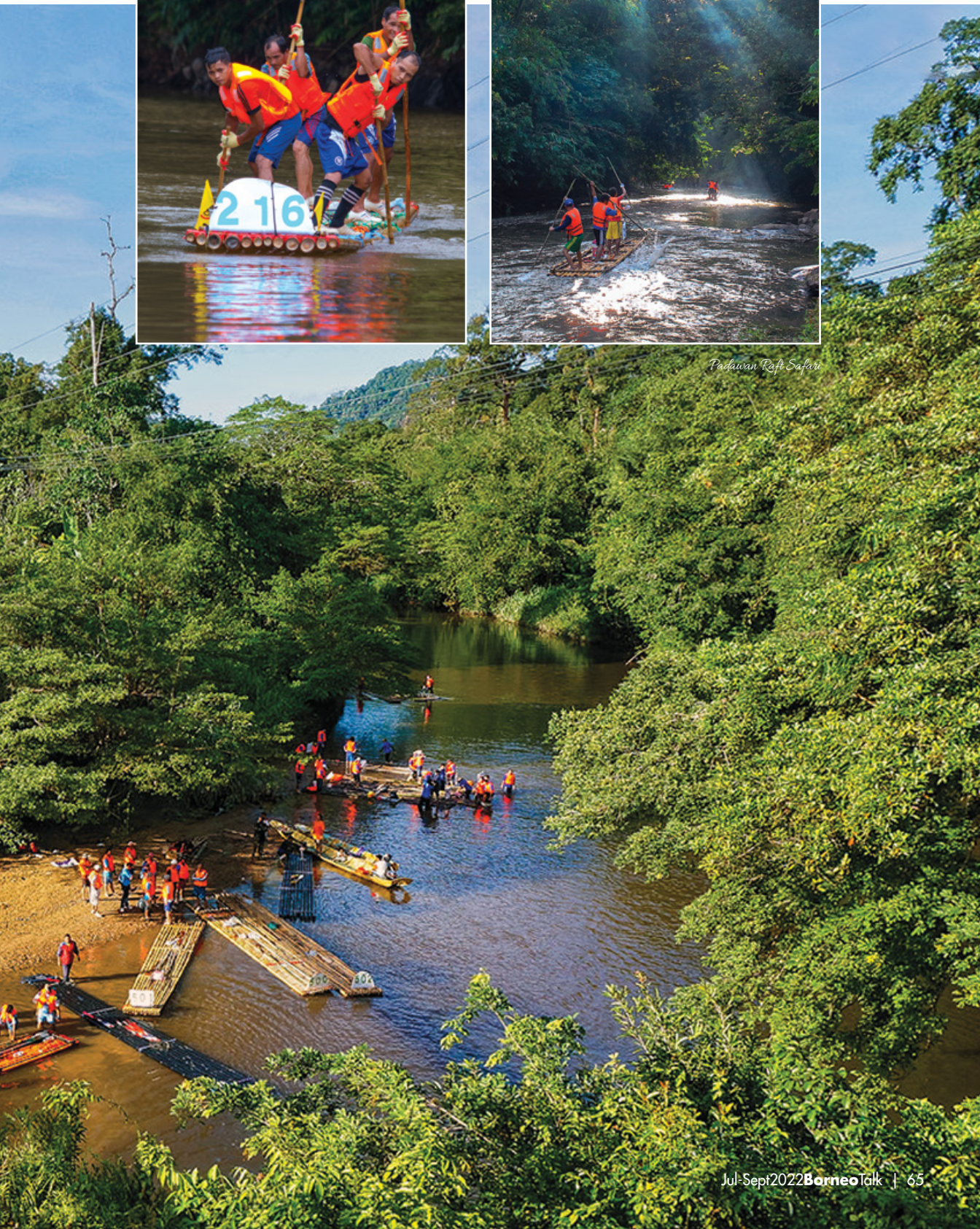


A traditional alternative to white water rafting and kayaking, bamboo rafting is an old mode of river transportation still used by the indigenous folks in the deeper reaches of Sarawak. With each raft measuring about seven metres long and one metre wide, they are sturdy and functional, but are not waterproof by any means, so expect to get wet!

Bamboo rafts are made by tying together approximately 10 bamboo tubes with bamboo vines, rope or cable ties. Paddles are sometimes used, but experienced rafters often rely only on a long piece of wood or bamboo stalk to push and propel the raft along the river.



Padawan Raft Safari



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Bamboo rafting is popularly used in bodies of water that are more quiet and shallow. The weather plays an important role too, as the rafts won't be able to hold in windy weather or against strong currents, which is why bamboo rafting is usually done on a calm day, and in narrow rivers surrounded by rainforests.

While inflatable rafts are more common, bamboo rafting offers a more thrilling and exciting experience for tourists looking for a closer connection to nature. They can be a little harder to navigate, but fret not, your guide will assist you if you encounter any difficulty.

Popular spots for bamboo rafting include Semadang River and Kampung Peraya in Padawan as well as Kayan River in Serian. Semadang River is 1.5 hours away from Kuching, along Jalan Puncak Borneo, and is one of the most popular choices for rafting in Sarawak. There is even a small limestone cave you can explore as well as large boulders scattered throughout the riverine landscape.

Peraya Homestay, located in the Bidayuh village of Peraya, offers a picturesque downriver rafting journey through a beautiful narrow river with pebble beaches.

Avid rafting enthusiasts can even take part in various rafting events held in different parts of Sarawak throughout the year, but the biggest one to look out for is the Serian Rafting Challenge Festival.

After a two-year absence, the annual festival will take place on July 23 to 26. The 25-kilometre race starts at Kampung Tema Mawang, ends at Kampung Tebakang Dayak, and offers attractive prizes for winners of each category. There are five categories being contested in total; Youth Open, Ladies Open, Men Open, Mix Gender (Hotel/Tour Agencies) and Mix Gender (Government Department/Agencies).

A side activity of the festival to look forward to is the Raja and Ratu Bilanting pageants, which feature contestants from all over Serian, as well as karaoke contests, exhibitions, food stalls and lucky draws. To register, contact +60 82 874 154 or check out <https://seriandc.sarawak.gov.my/>.

Pesta Selangau will also take place this year from July 27 to 30 at Sibul's Selangau town. Since the introduction of the Rafting Challenge in 2016, it has been the main highlight of the event! Pesta Selangau aims to promote water sports, cultural performances and local sports to visitors.

Other popular annual bamboo rafting events are the Padawan Raft Safari, which took place on June 26 and the Baleh Kapit Raft Safari, which took place on May 14. Even though both events have passed, keep an eye out for next year's!

Whether you enjoy cruising along a quiet river or racing with other rafts, bamboo rafting is one of the best ways to experience the beauty of Sarawak's rivers and forests! So, give your legs a rest, grab a bamboo stick and let's paddle!



BEADING OF THE BIDAYUH: TRADITIONAL TO MODERN



Historically, beads have held cultural significance in many ethnic groups around the world.

They were once used as currency and symbols of wealth and status and were originally made out of animal bones and teeth, as well as shells.

Today, the most common bead materials are wood, plastic, glass, metal, and stone.



Even though they are no longer used for the same purpose, the colourful beads of Borneo remain as a means of cultural expression and identity for many Sarawakians. They're one of the most prominent and abundant forms of craft that have found their colourful ways adorned on traditional clothing, woven onto baskets, necklaces, bracelets, and even household decorations.

The Bidayuh are well known for their intricate beadwork, most of which were reserved to pair with their traditional attire, but have over time evolved into modern statement pieces suitable for events, dinners and even daily use as a proud beacon of the Bidayuh heritage.

The Bidayuh's pangieh necklace is probably the most recognisable piece of Sarawakian jewellery. In modern times, the elder generation reserves traditional beadworks for Gawai, but the younger generation often uses it to accessorise for special events and dinners. It comprises five or six rows of small beads tightly bound together, with the centre of the necklace dispersed in layers.



Another prominent beadwork of the Bidayuh is the sombon, which is a long beaded piece worn across the body. It is made of large glass beads, interspersed with charms like wild boar tusks, teeth, brass bells, bear claws or ancient coins. The sombon is a spiritual item, worn by priestesses for healing ceremonies or harvest offerings. The modern sombon's charms are strictly ornamental.

Today, Bidayuh beadwork isn't just restricted to the pangieh and sombon. Bidayuh patterns have found their way into earrings, bracelets, anklets and even sashes. Every piece takes up so much time, patience and focus to produce. It's no wonder why people pay top dollar for an intricate custom piece!

We had the chance to sit down and chat with Angela Johiam of Bidayuh Traditional Collection as well as Haddrien Atay from Kampung Jagoi Pinomu to better understand what goes into making these masterpieces and how Bidayuh beadwork has evolved with time.

ANGELA JOHIAM

We first met Angela at her shop, Bidayuh Traditional Collection, located at the first floor of Pasar Tamu in Bau Town. Besides beadwork, Angela also makes custom traditional Dayak attire. She showed us around her works and the three traditional Bidayuh patterns most often used in her craft, the 'mata burung punai', the 'trajab' and the 'lembing'.



Angela, who has been active since 2012 is all for modernising traditional pieces and incorporating Bidayuh jewellery into daily use, instead of just wearing them during Gawai. As a twist to her beadwork, Angela incorporates patterns from other ethnic groups like the Iban and Orang Ulu into the Bidayuh's pangieh necklace, as well

as more modern colours apart from the traditional combination of red, black, white and yellow beads.

"I used to stick to only Bidayuh patterns and colours! Some people would even come to me and ask me why all my pieces look the same," Angela laughs. Since then, as evidenced by what we saw in her shop, she had incorporated more colours and patterns from different ethnic groups while still maintaining her Bidayuh identity.

Angela showed us how beadwork has evolved, from the traditional criss-cross method, to the finer loom method, which allows for more intricate patterns with smaller beads and more rows. She even showed us some of the sombon she made, reassuring us that the charms were strictly ornamental and that a lot of her pieces are made for wear and as a fashion statement, not kept to wear once a year.

A self-taught master of the craft, Angela is a pioneer in the field, and often passes on her knowledge through classes, giving birth to newer generations of craftspeople and ensuring that the beadwork of the Bidayuh don't die out.

Her apprentices are part of her shop, as she distributes and sources out orders to several of them to not only help cater to increasing demands, but to also help them generate extra income. A lot of her students are stay-at-home moms. However, it remains her responsibility to complete all the beaded pieces with metal clasps and finishes, as a measure of quality control.



Contact:

Angela Johiam

Bidayuh Traditional Collection, First Floor, Pasar Tamu Bau, Jalan Bau Lama, Pekan Bau, 94000 Sarawak. • Operating Hours: 8am – 4pm (Daily) • ☎ +60 12 870 4038



HADDRIEN ATAY

Haddrien from Kampung Jagoi Pinomu, Bau is also an advocate for modernising Bidayuh beadwork, and has incorporated Bidayuh patterns beyond just necklaces, to earrings, mask chains, anklets, bracelets and headbands. She even puts her own signature twists on the traditional pangieh, by using metal coils to accentuate the patterns.



When interviewing Haddrien at her home, she even showed us how to work the loom, noting that even with the loom, it doesn't make much difference when it comes to finishing up a piece faster. However, it does result in gorgeous, detailed patterns.

"They also last longer, as they're tighter, less fragile and won't get undone as easily. However, some people do still ask for the more traditional style, as it's a different look. The beads are also of better quality and more uniform, so the colours remain quite vivid and shiny even after years," said Haddrien. She also

plays a part in uplifting the local beadwork scene, by conducting classes and sharing her knowledge. She even goes to villages in Padawan and Siburan to teach traditional beading.

During our chat, Haddrien lamented about how we had lost a lot of our heritages to time, and how people should really hold onto crafts from their grandparents' era. "It's sad when we don't even have a picture of a specific beaded craft, so we can't even recreate these beautiful pieces. All we have is someone's description of them."

Both Angela and Haddrien are pillars of the traditional beading scene, and are part of the reason why Bidayuh beading is and will remain an iconic part of Sarawakian handicraft. With them passing their knowledge and skills onto the next generation of craftspeople, as well as through the power of social media and technology, this integral part of Bidayuh culture will continue to live on.

Contact:
Haddrien Attay  @Lynn Rynns  +60 11 1403 3450

SARAWAK ACHIEVES CARBON STOCK TRADING STATUS WITH NEW FOREST BILL

Forests have long been associated with timber industries in Sarawak and are main contributor to the State's economy during the early years but this practice is now changed, especially after the introduction of the Sarawak's Forests (Amendment) Bill 2022 passed by the Sarawak Legislative Assembly (DUN) in May 2022. Under the new law, forests are now part of the carbon stock for Sarawak, effectively strengthening forest management while also increasing their potential income through green economic activities.



"Sarawak has now achieved a first in Malaysia; a law to regulate carbon activities of our forests through the amendment to our Land Code and Forests Ordinance passed by the DUN recently," stated Deputy Premier Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah who is also Second Minister of Urban Development and Natural

Resources (MUDeNR) as well as Chairman of the Sarawak Timber Industries Development Corporation (STIDC). According to him, the new law has enabled Sarawak to engage in carbon stock trading activities involving forests at the international level which has been active for over a decade. Through this amendment, the Sarawak Government will now be able to conduct trading using the Carbon Standards that is part of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) reporting recognised internationally. It should also be noted that the new amendment includes inland waters as part of the overall carbon stocks, inclusive of rivers, lakes, ponds, reservoirs, dams and other water bodies within the boundaries of Sarawak. Additionally, the amendment will also mean that logging activities in native forests will be reduced while reforestation and restoration activities will now be given priority as the more forests we have, the more our carbon stock will be, hence increasing our potential value for trading purposes.

To participate in the international carbon stock market, other aspects like accounting, registration, verification and accreditation, periodic monitoring and others will need to be observed prior. In taking this important step towards forests protection, Sarawak has pioneered the move to be acknowledged as being proactive in coming up with innovative means to further increase the value of our forests. Hence, this amendment is indeed a far reaching statement from Sarawak to the world that conservation of our forests is not just for show; it is part of our law and show that Sarawak is serious in addressing issues involving the lost of forests, habitats and other environmental concerns by putting in place the necessary law to show the world that our forests are indeed being protected.

It should also be noted that the Sarawak Government will engage with all those involved in the timber industry activities in the State before any activity involving carbon stock trading. These include natives who make use of the forests, timber

related companies and those in the agricultural sector. This is to ensure that there will be clear understanding between all parties concerned which will facilitate the smooth transaction of activities of concern with forests and its related parts. Earlier in 2019, Sarawak has already initiated the Forest Management Certification Policy, which mandated all logging companies to obtain forest management certification status that is crucial for the sustainable management of forests here. More importantly, the forest certification is recognised at the international market level, which means that timber products from Sarawak meet international standards and practices. Another programme implemented by Sarawak is the Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) or now known as Greening Sarawak campaign, which started in 2021 and has on record shown that Sarawak has planted 12,247,189 trees, again the highest recorded planting in Malaysia. These plantings include Government reserve land, logging areas, forests plantations, NCR (Native Customary Rights) land also privately owned lands.

Timber industry revenue increase for 2021

While the world is still recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, Sarawak’s timber industry has shown an increase of 4% in terms of export value for 2021 when compared to 2020, reaching RM3.9 billion (RM3.7 billion). This augurs well for the industry especially when so many other countries are still suffering from economic stagnation and Japan was the main market, registering about RM2 billion of total export earnings from timber products. India accounts for RM119 million of export earnings in 2021 followed by the United States of America (RM61 million), Taiwan (RM41 million) and The Philippines (RM41 million). Overall, plywood contributed RM2.1 billion or 55% of total export value of timber products in 2021 while for the first quarter of 2022, export value has surpassed RM1.04 billion whereas in first quarter 2021 the export value was only RM826 million. Sarawak remains optimistic that timber based products will continue to increase in value as the emphasis will be on high value-added products like furniture, engineered wood and glulam products as well as bamboo-based products through more R&D efforts. Based on the Research and Markets US 2022, world furniture market value is expected to reach USD945 billion by 2030 and engineered wood products is expected to reach USD400 billion in 2030.

In view of these potentials, the Government is encouraging local industry players to further enhance their products, especially high value products such as furniture, wood engineering products and bamboo products as well as intensifying research and development (R&D) efforts with increase usage of IR4.0 and digital technologies to achieve their full potential. Apart from that, the Government through relevant agencies will continue to assist the industry to provide the necessary infrastructure facilities, such as furniture testing laboratories, industrial sites such as Furniture Park in Demak Laut and Tanjung Manis as well as established collaborations.

PCDS 2030 - Strategies towards recovery

As the world starts recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, many new innovative measures are necessary to revive economies, and Sarawak has put in place strategic recovery plans for the forestry sector. Foremost, sustainable practices of the forestry sector must be the main factor with biodiversity conservation in synergy with all aspects of the industry going forward. A number of goals have been identified for the sector. Firstly, 4.5 million ha of long term forest licence area and 178,000 ha forest plantation under the Malaysian Timber certification Council/Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification and Forest Stewardship Council will be established during the period; secondly, an increase in forestry to tourism through conservation and sustainable management by working with 50 community based ecotourism and conservation Totally Protected Areas. Thirdly, the forestry sector is expected to increase downstream processing of timber and non-timber wood forest products with earnings of RM8 billion by 2030 with the establishing of Furniture Parks and fourthly to identify new revenue streams from forest resources in the advancing years.

To achieve the above stated goals, the forestry sector will be focussing on balancing the rate of deforestation and growth, increasing productivity yield and enhancing services derived from forests. In addition, 200,000 ha of degraded areas will be replanted with forest whilst the Carbon Credit Programmes will be implemented to oversee the management of forests in Sarawak. Bamboo will continue to be emphasised as part of the forestry long term plan to establish an industry especially in rural communities to enhance growth and development as well as a revenue earner. Forests and their by-products have contributed much to the wealth and development of Sarawak since independence; the industry is now poised to achieve greater heights with the advancements made to the sustainable management practices being put in place in line with global practices. Through the long term strategic planning envisioned by the Sarawak Government, the forestry sector will continue to contribute to the growth of the State and its people for the foreseeable future.

STIDC’s continuous improvement, development and service delivery

As part of its continuous drive towards improvement, development and outstanding service delivery, STIDC has again achieved many notable awards in recognition of these accomplishments. STIDC was awarded the Sarawak Chief Minister’s Quality Award, Sarawak Federal Secretary’s Cup Champion 2017, winner of the 2018 Key Focus Activities Award for Log and Wood Products Transfer project at ICQS Merapok, Gold Award International Convention on QC Circle Tokyo 2019 and others.

WHAT IS CATARACT?

by DR MATTHEW TONG JONG HAW
Resident Consultant Ophthalmologist • Eye Specialist
MD (UMS), MMED (USM)



Cataract is the most common cause of preventable blindness. According to World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 94 million people are diagnosed with cataract.

Normal Eye



A healthy lens allows for all parts of the retina to receive the image

Cataract Eye

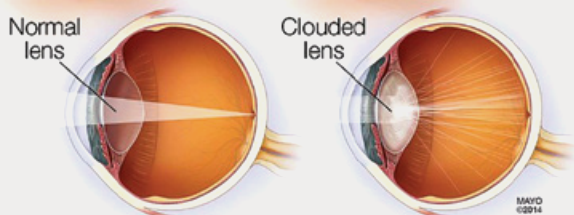


A cloudy lens scatters light, causing an image that's out of focus and hazy

Picture credit: Get to know about cataract, Falgoust Eye Medical & Surgical (<https://falgousteye.com/cataracts/>)

Normal

Eye with cataract



Picture credit: Faces looking blurry? Seeing halos at night? Could be cataracts | The Daily Courier | Prescott, AZ (dcourier.com)

How does cataract occur?

Cataract happens when the clear natural crystalline lens in our eye becomes cloudy. Clear crystalline lenses are important as they help to focus rays of light on the fovea for clear vision. When cataracts develop, the clear crystalline lens gradually become cloudy, thus causing scattering of light.

Among some of the risk factors and causes of cataract are:

1. Ageing
2. Medical conditions such as diabetes
3. Past ocular trauma or inflammation
4. Medication such as steroid
5. Previous eye surgery
6. Family history of cataract at young age
7. Smoking

Symptoms:

Cataract usually begins as a progressive and painless blurring of vision. Thus, you may notice some changes to your vision where the image quality and contrast is reduced to foggy or even cloudy vision. You may also notice difficulty in driving at night because of the glare from headlights or street lamps. Bright lights and sun rays will also be uncomfortable when you are exposed to them. Some may notice improvements in vision with changes to eyeglass prescriptions, however, this is often a temporary solution.

Diagnosis:

Cataract can be diagnosed during regular eye examination. During your visit to the ophthalmologist, a baseline measurement of how well you can read viewing a chart with progressive smaller letters will be performed. This is your baseline visual acuity. Examination of the cornea, iris, lens, retina, and pressure of the eye will be documented. The degree and severity of the cataract can be determined with the slit lamp examination. Possible cause or risk factors will also be examined in detail. Next, an ocular biometry will be taken and a suitable intraocular lens can be chosen for surgery.

Treatment:

If your cataract is very mild, changing your glasses prescription may temporarily help to improve vision. You may consider cataract surgery when the cataract begins to affect your quality of life and interferes with your daily activities such as driving, reading, or working. You can discuss with your ophthalmologist regarding types of intra ocular lens and which is the most suitable treatment plan to suit your lifestyle and preference.



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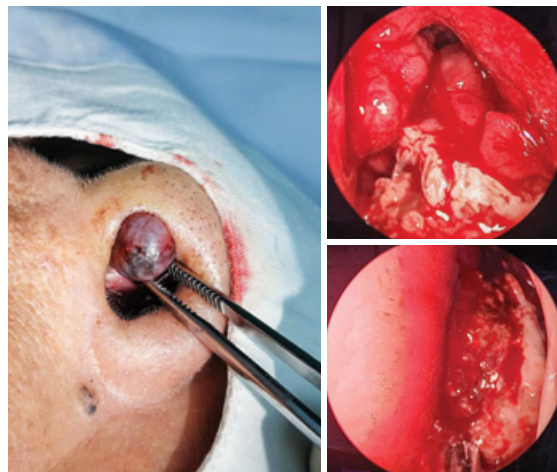
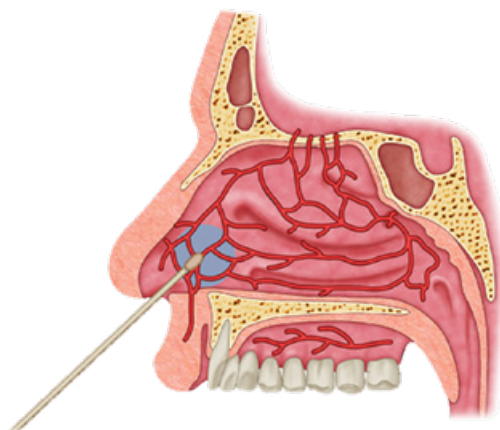
Almost every person has had at least one nosebleed in his or her lifetime. Medically known as epistaxis, a nosebleed is the loss of blood from the tissue lining inside your nose. It can flow from one or both nostrils, and can be heavy or light, lasting anywhere from a few seconds to a good 15 minutes or more.

Prolonged nosebleeds are dangerous though, and you should seek an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) assessment even though you are stable at the moment. Nosebleeds are no small matter, and shouldn't be treated as such.

Even the types of nosebleeds can vary from minimal blood discharge, foul-smelling brownish nasal mucus to a sudden outpour of copious fresh blood.

They can be caused by dry air or nose picking and can be a symptom of underlying issues. There are plenty of cases presented to the emergency unit or outpatient clinics are usually taken lightly, but consequences could be severe and complicated.

Your nose is complex! Bleeding don't just come from the nasal cavity or nasopharynx, they can arise from sinuses, throat, mouth, ear or even the brain. The bleeding could even flow down to your throat, stomach or the lower airway.



Regardless of whether it's a minor or massive bleed, nosebleeds are an alarming sign. It's best to rule out any underlying issues like malignancy or cancer. In children, parents need to be aware of foreign bodies and objects.

First Aid: Trotter's Method

1. Sit upright and lean forward slightly. Do not lie down or lean backward.
2. Pinch the bridge of your nose firmly for approximately 20 minutes. If it doesn't stop, please head over to an emergency unit.
3. In the meantime, keep breathing through your mouth and apply ice compression over your forehead.



When should you see an ENT Surgeon?

Severe nosebleeds need proper nasal packing with correct technique and instruments. A specialist would perform a nasoendoscopy as well as a complete ENT examination plus a Head and Neck examination. For cases where surgical procedures are necessary, an ENT specialist will proceed with cauterisation, biopsy, tumour excision or vessel ligation.



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Hemisphere Corporation Sdn Bhd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sarawak Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) and is responsible for the upgraded grandeur of the iconic Puteri Wing. With carefully designed new rooms and suites to refined dining experiences, Puteri Wing promises new elevated experiences, right in the heart of the vibrant Cat City of Kuching.

Flexibility in function

No matter what the occasion, from an international conference to state-of-the-art presentation, from a lavish charity ball to romantic wedding, Riverside Majestic offers extensive and flexible function space and modern equipment to cater to your needs. The Sarawak Chamber ballroom seats 900 persons for banquets and 1,400 persons theatre style.

Luxurious experiences

Puteri Wing promises elevated and more efficient guest experiences using cutting edge contactless technology. With this put in place, it will be easier for guests to engage in leisure activities or get work done from the comfort of their hotel room. From checking in via phone or the Web to purchasing of food and beverages and getting room services, all experiences here will be contactless through Insiders Club.

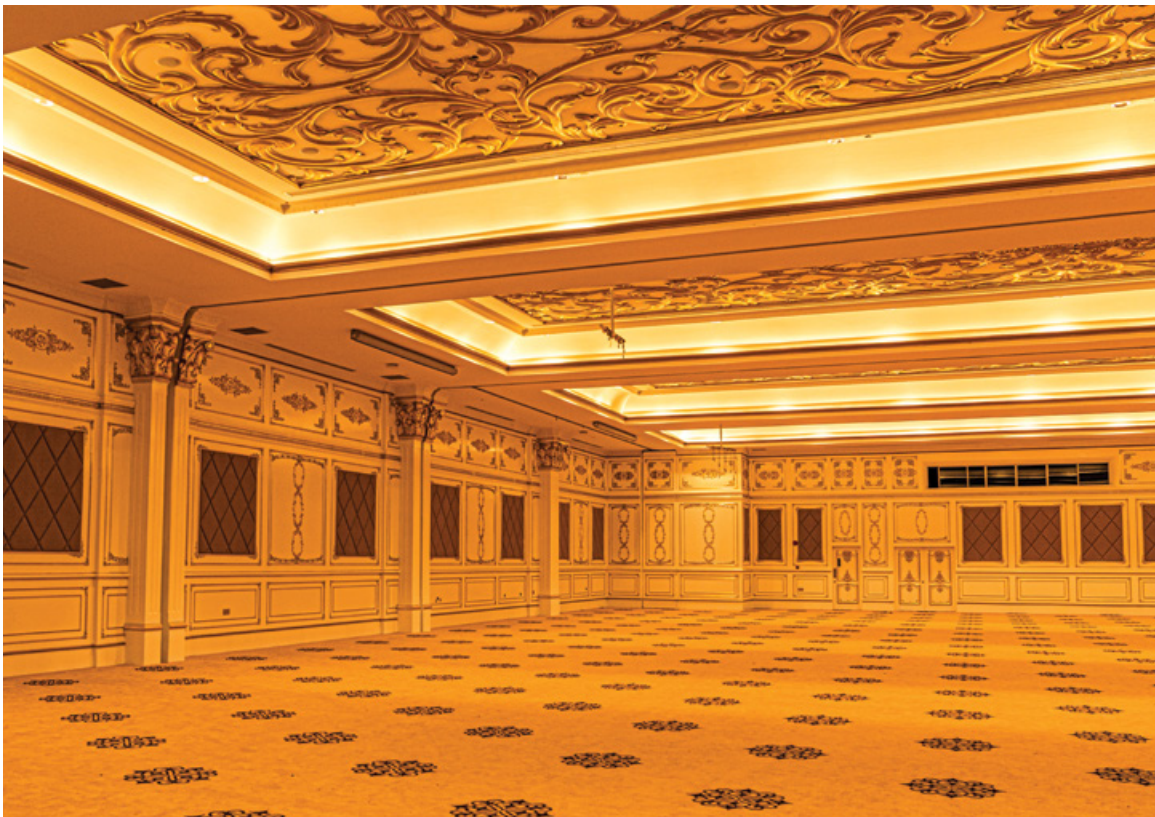
Majestic Interior

Themed “Royal Majestic”, the refreshed suites and guest rooms at Puteri Wing boast interiors that aptly befit its very name. The introspective layout, high-end decorative panels, exquisite lighting, and sumptuous furniture are set to make every stay here an intimate moment worth taking. Check in, relax, reconnect and immerse yourself in a sanctuary of absolute peace and luxury. All suites and rooms come with king or queen-sized beds, en-suite bathrooms, and all the amenities for your absolute convenience and comfort.

Premium Restaurant

Your immersive stay at the all-new Riverside Majestic Hotel Puteri Wing will include a whole new dining experience. A must indulgence, albeit optional. Savour delicate and refined F&B offerings, celebrating global cuisines and local culinary creations that match the hotel’s opulent setting.

The River Palace Cantonese Restaurant will feature authentic Chinese cuisine in a luxurious twist, with Chinese Executive Chef Fung at the helm. There will be an addition of private dining rooms for those looking for a more exclusive experience as well as enhances hospitality from the restaurant staff, anticipate a gastronomic experience like no other.



Get more with ‘Insiders Club’, a loyalty and reward mobile app that lets guests enjoy a more enriching stay at Riverside Majestic Hotel Puteri Wing. Visit www.riversidemajestic.com for more details.

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