



# SEEKING A MORE BALANCED LIFESTYLE

Rustic Ipoh has much to offer in terms of housing and living

**M**OVING into the big city seems to be a global trend. In this age of intensive urbanisation, people are seeking a better life in the big cities where money, services, wealth and opportunities are centralised.

However, like most developments of human history, urbanisation has its dark side as well. While metropolitan Kuala Lumpur has not lost its allure, not all who live in the capital are willing to put up with the huge crowd, traffic jam, and noise and air pollution that often come with an urban lifestyle.

In the latest StarProperty.my ABC series (Away from the Big Capital), we looked into the property market of some of the smaller cities or suburbs that have seen a recent boost in migration, with the old mining town of Ipoh becoming the focus of our first story.

Voted the top nine best places to retire in the world and the third most affordable city in the world in foreign media, Ipoh has successfully made its mark through a combination of revitalised heritage streets and buildings, hip cafes and – in case you have been living in a cave – good food.

Relationship manager Shashwini Poorana Chandran, 26, said the high cost of living, security concerns and traffic congestion were among the reasons why she moved back to Ipoh from Kuala Lumpur.

Besides a more budget-friendly lifestyle, one of the biggest perks of living in

Ipoh is that she is less reliant on public transportation.

Project engineer Veylan Krishna Kumar, 26, also said that traffic in the big city is the main reason he is planning to move back to Ipoh – and it seems that ultimately there's no place like home when it comes to food.

## Mining Ipoh's potential

According to Rehda Perak branch chairman Tony Khoo Boon Chuan, 80% of property development in Perak is residential, and it is a self-sustaining market in which most buyers are local.

"The single-storey terrace house is the most sought-after property type in Perak. With an average price of RM250,000, it provides a lower threshold for buyers to enter the property market.

"Besides, it is easier to maintain a single-storey house compared to other property types, making it a good choice for a retirement home," said Khoo.

"The Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) scheme attracts foreign buyers from Japan, Korea and China to move to Perak, and they are focused on luxury properties such as semi-detached and bungalow priced RM350,000 and above," he added.

Landed properties have long been a favourite among the Ipoh community.

However, high-rises can be seen towering in the city of late. One such development is The Octagon situated right in the happening part of town.

As one of the renowned local developers in Ipoh, TI Homes managing director Tan Fun Kwai noted that Ipoh residents have a different attitude from Kuala Lumpur folk when it comes to buying their house.

"I would say that Ipoh is a conservative market. Whenever we launched a new project, the standard take-up rate would be between 20% and 25%.

"The reason is that Ipoh homebuyers like to see the projects being completed first before they go in. They want to see the end products themselves, and be reassured that the developers can deliver the projects well," said Tan.

This demographic of the Ipoh property market ensures that developers have enough funds to complete their projects, notwithstanding the expected income from when they launch the developments.

Collectively, developers have quoted RM300,000 to RM400,000 as being the affordable range in Ipoh.

In an interview with StarProperty.my, Kinta Real Estate Sdn Bhd managing director Datuk Poo Tak Kiau mentioned that the government's affordable housing scheme PRIMA in Perak is a huge boon to the housing market in Ipoh.

"The construction of PRIMA units is of top quality and the scheme is making it easier for first-time homebuyers to own properties in Ipoh."

He further mentioned that one of the most expensive residential neighbourhoods in Ipoh is Canning Garden because the mature neighbourhood is in a very



Tony Khoo Boon Chuan



Datuk Leong Kin Kun



Datuk Poo Tak Kiau



Tan Fun Kwai

convenient location, Sri Anika Group managing director Datuk Leong Kin Kun said that 2010 to 2015 was the best period for the Perak property market because the price soared 50% within a decade.

"In the late 1990s, a double-storey home in Perak was selling for RM150,000. The price increased to RM200,000 in the years 2000 to 2009. After 2010, similar properties are now priced above RM300,000," he said.

However, Leong added that 2018 would be a flat year for the property market because most of the industry players are slowing down construction since there is no catalyst for the market.

"This is a period for review and planning for the future.

"Moving forward, our strategy is to split the projects into smaller phases and launch on a small scale," he added.

According to Numbeo.com, the average rental rate of a one-bedroom apartment in the city centre is RM700 a month while the rate for a three-bedroom apartment is RM1,450.

Currently, the average selling price per square metre of an apartment in the city centre is around RM5,099. ☺

**THE SINGLE-STOREY TERRACE HOUSE IS THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER PROPERTY TYPE IN PERAK. WITH AN AVERAGE PRICE OF RM250,000, IT PROVIDES A LOWER THRESHOLD FOR BUYERS TO ENTER THE PROPERTY MARKET.**

### Average property price in Perak

Type	Price
One-storey terrace	RM250,000
Two-storey terrace	RM350,000-400,000
One-storey semi-detached	RM400,000
Two-storey semi-detached	RM650,000-800,000
Bungalow	RM850,000 to RM1.5mil

### Comparison index

Index	Kuala Lumpur	Ipoh
Price to Income Ratio:	11.07	10.00
Loan Affordability Index:	1.19	1.39
Price to Rent Ratio - City Centre:	24.80	31.26
Price to Rent Ratio - Outside of Centre:	22.72	34.49

Source: Numbeo.com



Shashwini Poorana Chandran



Veylan Krishna Kumar