



Datuk Tracey Lai in the 260.4sq m (2,803sq ft) show unit which exudes class and opulence

A PERFECT FIT

The Pavilion lifestyle is coming to Damansara Heights

By **SONJA MUSTAFFA**
Photo by **AZMAN GHANI/The Star**

"Details are important in whatever we do. You have to look at the small things to make the ordinary extraordinary," says Datuk Tracey Lai, director of sales and marketing at 1 Pavilion Property Consultancy Sdn Bhd, to her team often.

When I arrive for our interview at the double-storey Pavilion Damansara Heights sales gallery in Jalan Beringin, I can see this philosophy exquisitely reflected in the plush surroundings.

Well-mannered doormen direct visitors to lifts that will take them up to lavishly-appointed show units. Fresh flower displays and a profusion of butterfly orchids every-

where in the building perk you up, as does the brewed coffee or tea proffered by black-suited staff.

Lai has a preference for a certain way cushions should be arranged, so pillows are duly plumped and propped up just so in the many corners of the airy gallery where buyers and sales people convene.

Lai is looking immaculate, too, wearing a teal sheath dress, silver stilettos and jade and diamond jewellery for a photoshoot in the bigger show unit. After Azman the photographer has wrapped up his session, Lai and I get comfy on a sofa where she opens up about the latest Pavilion project which

fills her with pride.

Pavilion Damansara Heights consists of two parcels of development occupying 6.47ha (16 acres) in a 18.6ha (46 acre) allotment once occupied by government offices. The buildings were recently demolished to make way for new growth. The project will be completed in stages till 2022 when it will be ready with 10 corporate blocks, five residential towers and an exciting mall.

The project will be linked to the MRT Line 1 via the Pavilion Damansara Heights-Pusat Bandar Damansara station. From here, you are just two stops away from KL Sentral – the city's rail transportation hub and gate-

way to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport – and five stops away from the Pavilion Bukit Bintang station which leads to another shopping paradise.

The integrated development with a gross development value of RM9bil is a joint venture with the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB).

At the project unveiling on Sept 27, Lai announced that 85% of sales have already been secured for the office blocks, influenced not just by the rail connectivity but also the elevated highway from Petaling Jaya to Pavilion Damansara Heights (including several ingresses) being planned to manage traffic appropriately, as well as the good advertising prominence that comes from facing the SPRINT highway.

The mall, too, is excellently positioned to capitalise on a catchment that comes with being surrounded by affluent neighbourhoods.

Just as with the under-construction Pavilion Bukit Jalil mall, it's hoping to benefit from Pavilion Kuala Lumpur's good reputation. Malton Bhd, the owner-management of the Pavilion Group, is developing Bukit Jalil City where the mall will be.

The concept for an integrated development

Everybody can talk about offering a luxury development or an integrated development. Our advantage is beyond that. We have been able to cater to the needs of every component that we offer. We have come together with solutions and value-adding, and that is very important.

– Datuk Tracey Lai

is not new, says Lai, as Pavilion Kuala Lumpur is also a mixed development linked to a premium luxury residence tower that has become a sought-after address.

Once built, Pavilion Damansara Heights will offer 139,354.5sq m (1.5 million sq ft) of office space while the mall will have 108,696.5sq m (1.17 million sq ft) of retail space split between a five- and seven-storey development and could shape up to be a retail sweet spot.

Lai credits the success of Pavilion to the owner-management's vision and foresight. She says their views align when it comes to providing good value to customers.

"You feel very rewarded when your buyers have that trust and faith in you. It's even better when you can see on their faces that they're happy and making money," she explains. "It upsets me a lot when things are not right and the buyers regret their purchase."

To avoid this situation, feasibility studies and market research are constantly being done locally and overseas to understand taste and make use of a fantastic opportunity.

"They are savvy investors with a portfolio of property all over the world. They buy one product after another," Lai says, mentioning upscale projects like Pavilion Banyan Tree, Pavilion Hilltop and the most expensive real estate in Malaysia, Pavilion Suites whose starting price per square foot was RM3,500 with the smallest unit at just 67sq m (718sq ft).

"They sold well because they are in premium locations and close to malls," she states, adding that "for Pavilion, luxury is about meeting needs, wants and expectations".

Lai says she derives job satisfaction from serving an organisation that is responsive and understands current needs, which in today's fast-paced world is having everything at your doorstep and conveniences aplenty.

"I love working for the Pavilion group because the owner-management travels a lot and brings back ideas and shares concepts," says Lai. "We appreciate things like that. You're not kept in a small box; your thinking is allowed to grow. I am able to travel with my team so they get exposure. You have to nurture that passion, the wanting-to-learn attitude in people."

She says that luxury today is no longer about material things. "What we defined as luxury is what we take for granted today. How do you keep pace with the desire for luxury? I'm very alert to it especially in this line," she says.

She interprets real luxury as having time for loved ones, to be free of worry in terms of home security, to have access to good house-keeping and other special services, and to be able to enjoy a high standard of living.

"Everybody can talk about offering a luxury development or an integrated development. Our advantage is beyond that. We have been able to cater to the needs of every component that we offer. We have come together with solutions and value-adding, and that is very important. If you don't have that, you're just an ordinary development," Lai says.

This kind of confidence, Pavilion's high posi-

tioning and trusted name has attracted buyers to Pavilion Damansara Heights.

"We're being compared to Elements in Hong Kong and ION in Singapore for the lifestyle being offered," Lai says. "They are successful integrated developments in terms of pricing and take-up."

Indeed, "take-up has been very, very strong and simply quite amazing," she says of the two blocks of serviced apartments in Pavilion Damansara Heights currently being offered to buyers.

"Investors are buying for their children, grandchildren ... they're buying more than two units. This is the buying pattern. It's an encouraging sign that people are still buying local," Lai says.

The units range in size from 56.2sq m (605sq ft) to 260.4sq m (2,803sq ft), with an average price of RM1,800 per square foot.

"We originally wanted to launch just one block comprising 581 units because we thought we'd just focus on investors: 50% investors and 50% owner-occupied. Then we discovered an interest in the bigger units (there are 165) from people in surroundings areas who are downsizing and attracted to the conveniences," says Lai, letting on that an event hall with a state-of-the-art kitchen like in a Michelin-rated restaurant is being included for tenants to use for weddings, parties etc.

Investors also like that Pavilion Damansara Heights is near amenities such as international schools, recreational facilities and a huge range of restaurants.

Here, the profile of and potential for tenants is good too, with Lai forecasting many coming from the surrounding neighbourhoods, embassies and multinational corporations who want to offer their managers a home near their workplace.

"The brand's sustainability, nurturing and development has all come into play in the success of Pavilion," insists Lai.

Enterprising by nature and not one to rest on her laurels, Lai thrives on feedback from the people she meets and hopes her team is the same.

"You learn to become detailed because that is important in moving things forward. If you overlook the small things, you forget the big things as well," she adds.

A meticulous person, she knows the importance of growing through constant improvements.

She cut her teeth in real estate at age 23 after graduating from Monash University. "Australia is where I learnt to do real investments and where to be careful," says the marketing graduate, remembering the era when banks were lending freely and how the property market crashed. Nevertheless, the property market still excites her, while sales and marketing is her passion and love.

"It is constantly evolving. It also taps into your conscience. You know you have to give something good because it's an investment of a lifetime, someone's hard-earned money saved for their children," says Lai of being a property buyer.