



Headquarters



THE ASSOCIATION
MAGAZINE

#87 *BUILDING BRIDGES
IN THE MEETINGS
INDUSTRY*
FEB
2019

Overcoming barriers to
innovation at associations

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*Challenging people
to be creative*

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Innovation & Creativity

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MAGAZINE

BUILDING BRIDGES
IN THE MEETINGS
INDUSTRY

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Penang: Pearl of Asia

Penang has two pearls in its crown. The locals fondly call it 'Pearl of Asia'. The second pearl is a striking building, the Setia Spice Convention Centre, which is also called "Pearl of the Orient". But do you know where Penang is? This island province is situated on the northwest coast of Malaysia, and is Malaysia's fast-rising second-tier congress destination.

Marcel A M. Vissers reports

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

When visiting a new destination, I always try to get a better idea of the city's layout by looking at it from above. I find it's the best introduction to a new city, especially when you lack good orientation skills (like me). There are two places where you can do this in Penang.

Your first option is the top of Penang Hill (otherwise known as Bukit Bendera), which is 821 metres above sea level and Penang's highest point. An unrivalled view of the island awaits you at the top, as far as the eye can see, with Penang Bridge in the distance and ships in the harbour. On a clear, sunny day, you can even see the other end of Penang Bridge, where it meets Peninsular Malaysia. If

you don't feel like hiking all the way to the top, the dedicated funicular train service will take you there in less than 5 minutes.

The other option is KOMTAR, a 65-storey high rise tower in central George Town and one of the most prominent landmarks in Penang. The lower floors are occupied by a lot of local shops. You can take the elevator to its sky bar at the top level which offers views of the island and across the straits to Penang's mainland.

A WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE SITE

For many years I actually thought Penang was also a city but this is a misconception. Colonial George Town is the island's actual capital and a UNESCO World

Cultural Heritage Site. I would love to visit this city again because there is so much to see and do. It is also the food capital of South East Asia and a real paradise for foodies. Here is a list of highlights I thought to share with you, a few places delegates can visit when they have some time during or after their congress.

Penang is mainly popular because of its cultural highlights, the many attractions, the delicious food and the modern shopping malls. In addition to several good food courts, it also has plenty of good (and luxurious) restaurants, where you can delicious and cheap food (*'That Little Wine Bar' in George Town, for example, is very popular*). The CEO of Penang Convention Bureau is not really joking when he laughs that there is only one



diet on the island, namely eating.

Some of the more popular attractions on the island are the Tropical Spice Garden, Entopia by Butterfly Farm, Peranakan Museum, the Burmese temple, Kek Lok Si temple, Penang national park, The Habitat on Penang Hill, the Escape Theme Park, Wat Chayamangkalaram and Clan Jetties. Personally I really enjoyed the colonial walk in the city, as well as my visit to the lovely house of Yeap Chor Ee. One of the highlights of my trip was definitely The Habitat.

According to research, George Town is the best place to live in Malaysia. It is one of the most popular cities with expats and foreigners who stay in Malaysia under the MM2H (Malaysia My 2nd Home) programme. The city has excellent facilities for foreigners who live and work there or who are visiting. The medical facilities especially are very good, which explains why the island is the hub for medical tourism in Malaysia. And naturally Penang is the premier destination for medical congresses. It's also a great place for walks, a place where you might suddenly find yourself in the kind of house where you could easily spend two hours.

So who brought all this splendour to Penang? Yeap Chor Ee was a Chinese

immigrant, who came to Penang in 1885 as a penniless 17-year old. When he died, he was one of the richest people in Penang. The House of Yeap Chor Ee was the house of the Grand Old Man of Penang (*a nickname given to this dynamic businessman*). It has since been transformed into a museum which showcases his collection of antiques, which is managed by his descendants. The colours of his beautiful collection of glassware are forever etched in my memory!

THE HABITAT PENANG HILL

Albert Einstein was probably right when he wrote: *"Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better"*. One of the most memorable visits for BE @ Penang 2018 delegates was probably the canopy walk in the world's oldest forest, which is 130 million years old. The Habitat attracts conventions about nature conservation and raising awareness to protect biodiversity and ecosystems to Penang. Environmental preservation undoubtedly is one of the most important themes in the history of mankind. The Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau has established a special cooperation with the administrators of this stunning nature reserve. Find out why a visit to educational rain-forest experience is a real must for congress delegates.

THE HABITAT TREETOP WALK

At 13 metres, the Tree Top Walk is the highest public viewing platform on Penang Hill and the island, located on the plateau just above the Mid-Point Rest Area and Museum. Designed to handle up to 120 people at a time, it offers mesmerising 360-degree views of Penang, including George Town. On a clear day the islands of Langkawi can be seen in the distance, and if you look just in front of you, you can spot Bel Retiro (the Governor of Penang's mansion) in all its splendour.

ABOUT PENANG CONVENTION & EXHIBITION BUREAU (PCEB)

Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) is a state bureau established to develop the Business Events and meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) industry in Penang. PCEB aims to position Penang as the preferred location for Business Events activities in the region. With its rich UNESCO heritage, thriving multicultural society, state-of-the-art facilities and vibrant natural attractions, Penang offers a truly eclectic tropical experience.



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