

Headline : Belum Rainforest Resort Gateway to nature
Media Title : Malay Mail
Date : 8 May 2014



Belum Rainforest Resort: Gateway to nature

GRIK — Nestled in the tropical paradise of Banding Island, Grik, in Perak, the Belum Rainforest Resort (BRR) should be on the wishlist of holiday-goers seeking an adventure-filled escapade.

One of Malaysia's premier eco-tourism holiday destinations — owned and managed by Emkay Group — BRR offers holiday-goers a chance to experience the beauty and mystery of the jungle, which has remained untouched for centuries.

BRR acts as the facilitator towards positioning Banding Island as a premier heritage destination on the world eco-tourism map as it is the gateway to the 130-million-year-old Belum-Temengor Tropical Rainforest (popularly referred to as Belum rainforest) which sprawls over a 3,000,000ha pristine area.

It is believed to be the oldest rainforest in the world, even older than the Amazon and Congo Rainforests.

Aiming to attract a wide spectrum of travellers, the country's first Sirim-recognised eco-resort has added to its existing 70 rooms another 36 deluxe suites, six traditional chalets and a base camp to its product range.

The resort can now cater to travellers seeking affordable as well as luxury accommodation.

The deluxe suites offer a completely different look from the existing rooms which displays an earthen feel and wooden finish.

The new suites offer a contemporary yet minimalist feel with cement and wooden flooring.

Adventure seekers can opt for the Banding Base Camp. Primarily designed for team-building initiatives and group camping trips, the base camp can accommodate 45 people at a time and offers a dormitory, kitchen, a common area and bathrooms.

Travellers out for a taste of luxury can stay at the "kampung"-inspired traditional chalets which come with modern facilities overlooking the serene Temenggor Lake. The traditional chalets — with one, two or three bedrooms — make a great choice for families.

Guests can frolic in the swimming pool or experience the majestic view of Temenggor Lake from the resort's rooftop viewing deck which is available for private dining.

The resort also boasts a houseboat that can accommodate 16 people. The houseboat takes guests around Banding Island and is the perfect option for group and corporate vacations.

For nature and outdoor enthusiasts, there is a plethora of activities to immerse in including fishing, camping as well as visits to the Orang Asli villages, jungle trekking, boating, bird watching, hornbill sighting, wildlife and Rafflesia spotting as well as bamboo rafting.

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The Belum rainforest is known as an angler's paradise where there are larger-than-usual freshwater fish while also being recognised by Bird International as an important bird area.

It's everything nature-lovers and holiday-goers expect in a getaway destination: complete relaxation, serenity, stunning views and surroundings, adventure and the chance to get close to nature.

Built with sustainability in mind

GRIK — The Belum Rainforest Resort (BRR) was built with an underlying theme of sustainability.

The development of the resort was planned around existing buildings with minimal land clearing. With 80 per cent of its existing structure retained, BRR was built based on United Kingdom's benchmark on sustainable design called Breeam. This is the world's leading design and assessment method for sustainable buildings. At the time of the project in 2007, there was no benchmark in the country on sustainable design.

Breeam sets the standard for best practice in sustainable building design,

construction and operation and has become one of the most comprehensive and widely recognised measures of a building's environmental performance.

Among the sustainable features one would find in the resort include "huru-hara" brick walls constructed out of recycled bricks salvaged from existing buildings

on site, "sapling" screens harvested from fast growing sustainable somah wood for ventilation and glare control, a "safari roof" using a ventilated air-gap as a natural insulating layer for ventilation and a heat recovery system for hot-water from air-conditioning units.

Rooms in BRR were designed and built to allow natural ventilation to take place. Natural daylight is encouraged through saplings screens and open corridors.

The rammed earth wall in the resort's Sidai Restaurant located outside is made from soil. The wall has high thermal mass, where heat is absorbed during the day and released at night. This moderates daily temperature variations and reduces the need for air conditioning and heating.

Among the unique finds in BRR includes a chandelier in the resort's Sidai restaurant that is made from branches of fallen trees woven together to resemble a bird's nest. One can also find used bottles being utilised as light diffusers.



An aerial view of Pulau Banding. — Pictures by Emkay Group

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The back-to-nature feel of the lobby.



The bird's nest chandelier made from fallen branches.



The cosy Kampung House Villa.

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The houseboat can accommodate 16 people.

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The Banding Base Camp is primarily designed for team-building initiatives and group camping activities.