RACING towards the SKY

BY **SHAWN NG**

2018 saw the completion of several skyscrapers in the country. According to The Skyscraper Center — the global tall building database of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH) — notable skyscrapers that were completed during the year include Four Seasons Place Kuala Lumpur, Southpoint Tower in Mid Valley City, W Hotel Kuala Lumpur and Tropicana The Residences, Elite Pavilion, Equatorial Plaza (all in KL), The Astaka in Johor and Arte S in Penang.

Unsurprisingly, most are located in KL's Golden Triangle and are all mixed or integrated developments with retail, hotel, offices and serviced residences with the exception of the Arte S and the Astaka condominium project.

Four Seasons Place Kuala Lumpur is the tallest of the recently completed skyscrapers, at a height of 343m. This 65-storey mixed development made up of a retail podium, hotel and serviced residences was completed by Venus Assets Sdn Bhd in October 2018.

It was also exciting to see the completion of The Astaka in Johor and Arte S in Penang. The Astaka is a residential twin-tower project at the RM5.3 billion One Bukit Senyum development which is being undertaken by Singapore-listed Astaka Holdings. Said to be one of the tallest residential towers in Southeast Asia, it comprises a 70-storey and a 65-storey tower of 278.8m and 255.6m respectively.

Arte S, on the other hand, was developed by Nusmetro Group and consists of a 49-storey tower and a 27-storey tower that houses 480 serviced apartment units. The 49-storey Tower 1 is 186m tall and is said to be the tallest building on Penang Island.

Looking ahead, the skyline of major cities in Malaysia is expected to grow even more on the vertical axis, as the country ushers in more skyscrapers. In Kuala Lumpur alone, at least five are slated for completion over the next four years, namely Merdeka PNB118, Exchange 106, 8 Conlay Kempinski Hotel & Residences Kuala Lumpur, SO Sofitel Hotel and Residences Tower in Oxley Tower and M101 Skywheel.

The most anticipated one is probably Merdeka PNB118 and the Exchange 106, which are expected to be completed in 2020 and 2019, respectively.

Upon their completion, the 492m-tall Exchange 106 and the 630m-tall Merdeka PNB118 will surpass the 452m-tall Petronas Twin Towers, which has remained the tallest skyscraper in the country for over 20 years and the tallest twin towers in the world. When ready, Merdeka PNB118 will become the tallest building in the country, followed by Exchange 106 and Petronas Twin Towers.

Let's get to know some of these imposing architectural giants in our midst.

ASTAKA PADU SDN BHD

Five notable skyscrapers completed in 2018

NO.	BUILDING NAME	LOCATION	HEIGHT (M)	FLOORS	USE
1	Four Seasons Place Kuala Lumpur	Kuala Lumpur	343	65	Residential, retail & hotel
2	The Astaka Tower A	Johor Bahru	279	70	Residential
2	The Astaka Tower B	Johor Bahru	256	65	Residential
3	Southpoint Tower	Kuala Lumpur	244	56	Residential & office
4	W Hotel Kuala Lumpur and Tropicana The Residences	Kuala Lumpur	235	55	Residential & hotel
5	Equatorial Plaza	Kuala Lumpur	229.7	50	Office & hotel

SOURCE: THE SKYSCRAPER CENTER, RESPECTIVE DEVELOPERS AND SAVILLS MALAYSIA

The Astaka

The Astaka is a twin-tower luxury residential project in the RM5.3 billion One Bukit Senyum development within Johor Bahru.

With a gross development value (GDV) of RM1.4 billion, the twin-tower project — made up of the 70-storey Tower A (278.8m) and the 65-storey Tower B (256m) — offers 438 luxury residences. According to Astaka Padu Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of developer Astaka Holdings, The Astaka was completed in June 2018 and is currently 70% sold.

Four Seasons Place Kuala Lumpur

Currently the second tallest building in Malaysia next to Petronas Twin Towers which stands adjacent to it, Four Seasons Place Kuala Lumpur is a 65-storey 343m-tall mixed development.

Developed by Venus Assets Sdn Bhd, the building comprises a 6-storey luxury retail podium, a 209-key Four Seasons Hotel, 27 units of hotel serviced residences and 242 units of Four Seasons private residences.

According to the developer, the building was completed in October 2018 and the private residences have enjoyed a take-up rate of more than 70% to date.

Southpoint Tower

Southpoint Tower is the final phase of the iconic Mid Valley City development in Kuala Lumpur by IGB Corporation Bhd.

Anchoring the southern tip of Mid Valley City with a gross floor area of 2.26 million sq ft, the 56-storey mixed development features a double-volume lobby, Grade-A offices, serviced residences, a grand ballroom and 1,600 car park bays.

The 244m-tall office tower features a connecting walkway linking pedestrians to the Abdullah Hukum LRT (light rail transit) station and covered pedestrian bridges to The Gardens Mall and Mid Valley Megamall.

LOW YEN YEING | **EdgeProp.my**

IGB CORPORATION BHD

W Hotel Kuala Lumpur and Tropicana The Residences

Located on a 1.28-acre freehold site on Jalan Ampang, W Hotel Kuala Lumpur and Tropicana The Residences is just a stone's throw away from the Petronas Twin Towers.

According to its developer Tropicana Corporation Bhd, the 55-storey building is a 235m-tall mixed development consisting of 150 hotel suites and 353 serviced residences. The hotel opened its doors in August this year.

The building was designed by renowned architecture firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP which also designed the current tallest building in the world – the Burj Khalifa in Dubai.

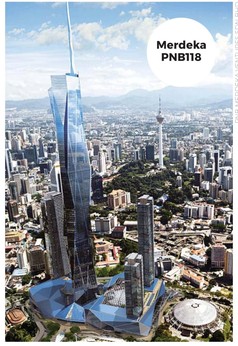
Equatorial Plaza

Equatorial Plaza is another exhilarating skyscraper that has risen up from the site of the former Hotel Equatorial Kuala Lumpur at Jalan Sultan Ismail.

Consisting of 23 levels of office space and 21 hotel levels, the 50-storey Grade A building stands 229.7m from the ground. The office component was completed in September this year while the hotel is at the tail end of the construction as at end December 2018.

With a net lettable area (NLA) of about 460,000 sq ft, the office component has recorded an occupancy rate of some 45% to date with the entry of the world's largest co-working space provider WeWork, fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies and international banks, according to Savills Malaysia, the leasing consultant for the building.

Five tallest upcoming skyscrapers (as at end-2018) in KL



PNB MERDEKA VENTURES SDN BHD

Merdeka PNB118

Expected to be completed in December 2020, Merdeka PNB118 is poised to be the tallest building in the country and in Southeast Asia at 630m.

Being developed by PNB Merdeka Ventures Sdn Bhd, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB), Merdeka PNB118 is a 118-storey tower consisting of 83 floors of Grade A office spaces, 16 floors of a luxury hotel, three floors for an observation deck (including a restaurant) and 16 floors of sky lobbies and amenities, according to the developer's website.

It also aspires to be a model for workplace safety and sustainability. The tower is part of the Warisan Merdeka development comprising the tower, a retail mall and three blocks of serviced apartments within the vicinity of Stadium Merdeka in KL.

Exchange 106

The Exchange 106 is the crown jewel of the RM40 billion Tun Razak Exchange (TRX) development in KL.

Standing 492m-tall on 3.42 acres of land, the 106-storey building has a total NLA of 2.6 million sq ft, which will be made up of office spaces, retail podium and sky bars.

According to its developer Mulia Property Development Sdn Bhd, the building is expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2019. It will be directly connected to the SMART Tunnel, the Maju Expressway, the TRX MRT (mass rapid transit) station and pedestrian links to adjacent offices, park and retail centres.

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Five tallest upcoming skyscrapers (continued)

KSK LAND SDN BHD

Five tallest upcoming skyscrapers in KL

(as at end-2018)

NO.	BUILDING NAME	HEIGHT (M)	FLOORS	USE	ESTIMATED COMPLETION
1	Merdeka PNB118	630	118	Office & hotel	2020
2	The Exchange 106	492	106	Office & retail	2Q2019
3	SO Sofitel Hotel and Residences Tower in Oxley Towers	341	78	Residential & hotel	2023
4	M101 Skywheel	319	78	Residential, retail & hotel	2022
5	8 Conlay Kempinski Hotel & Residences Kuala Lumpur	309	68	Residential & hotel	2021

SOURCE: THE SKYSCRAPER CENTRE, RESPECTIVE DEVELOPERS AND WEBSITES

OXLEY HOLDINGS (M) SDN BHD

MULIA PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT SDN BHD

8 Conlay Kempinski Hotel & Residences Kuala Lumpur

Sitting at No. 8, Jalan Conlay, the 8 Conlay integrated development will introduce another sky-high landmark in the city, the Kempinski Hotel & Residences Kuala Lumpur, by 2021.

Comprising 260 hotel rooms and 300 serviced suites, the 309m-tall, 68-storey building is Tower C of the RM5.4 billion tri-tower 8 Conlay development located on a 3.95-acre site, said developer KSK Land Sdn Bhd.

8 Conlay also features lifestyle retail quarters and two towers of branded residences dubbed YOO8 serviced by Kempinski which are expected to be completed in 2020.

SO Sofitel Hotel and Residences Tower in Oxley Towers

Another skyscraper that is set to change the KL skyline in the next few years is the 78-storey SO Sofitel Hotel and Residences Tower at Jalan Ampang.

Slated to be ready by 2023, the 341m-tall, mixed-use tower is part of the Oxley Towers development by Singapore-listed developer Oxley Holdings Ltd.

Sitting on a 3.11-acre freehold site, the project has an estimated GDV of RM3.5 billion and consists of three soaring towers, namely the SO Sofitel Hotel and Residences; the 49-storey Jumeirah Hotel and Residences Tower (233.6m); and the 29-storey Signature Office Tower and retail podium (155.5m).

According to Oxley Holdings (M) Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Oxley Holdings, the project has incorporated the concept of Malaysian "weaving" arts into its design to create sustainable, high performance and efficient buildings with the use of state-of-the-art technology in construction and operations.

M101 Skywheel

While it may not be the tallest building on the list, the 78-storey M101 Skywheel will have something else to stun everyone when the 319m-tall building is completed in 2022.

Upon completion, the iconic project by M101 Holdings Sdn Bhd will see the world's highest ferris wheel — Sky Ferris Wheel — on the 52nd level, offering a vantage point 220m above the ground.

On top of that, the RM2.2 billion project will also feature the world's highest shopping experience with a SkyMall from the 50th to the 52nd level offering over 200,000 sq ft of retail and the first Planet Hollywood Suites in Asia.

M101 HOLDINGS SDN BHD