

Anoldconcept givennewlifein

While co-living seems innovative, it is not new. A stepping stone are the tulou buildings — ancient circular structures

by connecting like-minded individuals, which in some ways creates a "tribe".

In Malaysia, the modern concept of co-living has assumed several forms. There are houses that have been converted into co-living accommodation and there are developers who are incorporating co-living spaces into their integrated developments.

Tan & Tan Developments Bhd, for instance, derided to convert an existing project off Jalan Ampang (behind The Ampwalk building) into a fulllged co-living space called Co-Coon Coliving @

"Damai Residence was designed for apartments to be sold. We stopped the selling of the units and started working on plans for Co-Coon — on creatng the penthouse level, the workspaces, the room 'esigns and all that," says Tan & Tan chief market-

The 20-storey tower sits on a 0.514-acre freehold plot and was completed last year. The fitting-out of the interiors cost about RM4 million, according to Ng, while the gross development cost of the entire building amounted to RM60 million.

Ng recalls how, in 2017, he and CEO Tan Yee Seng met for drinks and started talking about co-living and the trends they had noticed on their travels and from speaking to friends.

"A lot of my peers and those younger were hesitant to buy apartments," says 38-year-old Tan. "They said they couldn't even plan what they would be doing the following year, let alone take on a 30year loan to buy a home. They were also undecided on which country they wanted to settle in. And we thought [Co-Coon] would be a place for them to figure things out. They want the fun, the perks and a lot of 'toys'."

find their own space. But they might not want a provide is very central," says Ng. long-term tenancy agreement for an apartment. [Co-Coon] would allow them to be in a nurturing environment, in which they could think about the strengthen their wings and fly away.

"The name Co-Coon, which took a lot of brain- and The Intermark Mall.

For young people, this could be a place where they can be nurtured before they move on to 'adulting'."

Tan adds, "This is something we take seriously everybody gains from each other. That is why we have a community manager for the building. The soft side is very important for the concept to work."

Co-Coon targets local and international students and young professionals aged 18 to 35. Its team expects about 50% to 60% of the tenants to be young professionals; 30%, students; 10%, early career pro-



The building's security system uses a mobile op that is easily downloaded to a smartphone and lows access to the main building, the communal spaces and facilities, and living spaces.

Furthermore, Co-Coon has a "plug and play" model, where residents pay just one amount for room rent, utilities and WiFi. The rooms are movein ready, that is they come with a bed, wardrobe, desk and chair, while the duration of the rental contract is flexible, ranging from three months up to a year. The contract is also renewable.

Potential tenants have to fill out a questionnair and fix an appointment to tour the building. All details are shared, including Co-Coon's objective, to ensure that potential tenants are aware of what

This allows the segregation of women and men if

While the communal facilities are open to all Co-Coon is all about, thus ensuring the growth of the project's ecosystem.

cult? Ng explains that the tenancy agreement con-





with legal protection.

s about community building," he says.

Some bedrooms come with attached bathrooms and for those that do not, the tenants have to share a bathroom. Each apartment comes with a kitchen, a communal area and a balcony.

Level 19 is where the communal spaces with a fully fitted-out kitchen, co-working spaces, play area and dining area are located. Level 20 is the sky deck where there is a yoga/meditation deck, table, chair and wardrobe barbecue area and outdoor lounge.

"The facilities are created to encourage interaction," says Ng. "We kept the bedrooms minimal tains all the house rules and provides the company because we want to encourage people to come up to the Co-Coon Hub on Level 19."

"There will be difficult tenants. But at least we The Hub has various spaces for tenants to conhave some form of filtering. It is hard to profile gregate at. It has a hip and happening vibe coupled someone but we make it very clear that Co-Coon with modern furnishings and colours. The social spaces include the lounge area with a pool table, The building is divided into different sections dining area with tables for people to have their with the ground level housing the guardhouse, the meals, the kitchen for cooking and the Chill Zone coin-operated laundry room and the lounge. The where people can binge-watch their favourite semezzanine floor has a small gym for tenants to use. ries or play computer games.

On Level 4, there is an outdoor gym and garden Attached to the social spaces is a co-working for people to work out and relax. The living spac- area for tenants to run their businesses, hold meetes called Living Pods - 30 apartments divided $\,$ ings, print out documents and brainstorm their evenly between two wings — are on Levels 4 to 18. latest projects.

necessary. Each apartment has a built-up of about the tenants without any charge, there are some 2,000 sq ft and has six bedrooms that are 91 to 403 components that they need to pay to use. These What happens when the tenants became diffi- sq ft in size. In total, there are 174 bedrooms and include a linen starter pack, the coin-operated the one-fee payment starts at RM800 per month. laundry machines, the barbecue area which the



On Level 19 of Co-Coon is

meet new people;

The outdoor gym and

out and relax;

garden for tenants to work

rent that comes with bed,

"First off, we will collaborate with the nearest businesses to try to build a community in the local environment. There are a lot of food places around

here," says Tan. "Other things we are thinking of doing include organising tours and road trips for the foreigners living in Co-Coon."

nstagram, and there are enquiries from embas-

or as short as three months, which is the general

was the lack of benchmarks. "There is no product yours will work. It took some research, testing and a bit of trial and error. Some of it was trusting the with it. And now that we are live, we can fine-tune

tive from now until the end of February, in which those who book rooms for six months or more will get one month rent free.

According to Metro Homes Realty Bhd executive director See Kok Loong, the co-living concept is a potentially viable product to be introduced in Kuala Lumpur. "It is for the individual for whom the cost of city living is too high, which will be reduced by sharing facilities. Kuala Lumpur is becoming too expensive to live in and we notice several parties already starting co-living spaces

here," he says. For the concept to work, says See, several factors are necessary: good security, proper screening of tenants and good management of the building and facilities.

Furthermore, he sees co-living offering an alternative to the current rental market.

"This gives the landlord another option, provided he is willing to handle more than one tenant. It also offers young professionals from other cities an alternative instead of the traditional renting of an entire apartment. This concept is not new as it is like students renting an apartment near a university and sharing the rooms and so on. The only difference is that this co-living product comes with a management and is much better."

At the time of writing, two tenants had already started living in Co-Coon and its future does look promising. Only time will tell how this new old concept transforms the rental property market in Malaysia.

Sheffield Academy, HELP College of Arts and Technology, Berjaya University College, Open University

UCSI University and SEGi College. Its location is ideal for newcomers to the city who may not know what to do and where to go. "If someone lands in KL and needs a place to establish himself, find his way around and then move Ng concurs. "They want to fly the nest and to another place, this place will suit him. What we

Co-Coon is within walking distance of Ampwalk Mall, which is directly in front of the building and offers many conveniences and F&B outlets, while next steps to take. I know millennial friends who, across the road is Hock Choon supermarket. The even after getting their apartments, live in them Ampang Park LRT station is just a 15-minute walk for a year and then want to sell them. Co-Coon away while the HSC Medical Centre and Gleneais a hassle-free space for them to find their feet, gles Hospital are a five-minute drive away. Nearby shopping centres include Suria KLCC, Avenue K

Ng (left) and Tan at the sky deck, which offers splendid