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## Opinion: The magic is still present – Why KLCC will continue to thrive in an increasingly competitive landscape

*Contributed by AREA Management Sdn Bhd chairman Datuk Stewart Labrooy*



Designed to be a “city within a city”, Kuala Lumpur City Center (KLCC) is a 100-acre site that hosts the tallest twin towers in the world, a shopping mall, office buildings and several hotels. It is also home to a public park and mosque which is open to the public.

The site, which is much larger in size in contrast to the Tun Razak Exchange (TRX) is a brilliant example of developing a master plan for a modern central business district.

It has acted as the catalyst for the surrounding land with excellent office architecture, five-star hotels and apartment buildings mushrooming since.

Anchoring KLCC is the Petronas Twin Towers. According to the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat official definition and ranking, the Petronas Twin Towers were the tallest buildings in the world from 1998 to 2004 and remains the tallest twin towers in the world.

They define Kuala Lumpur's skyline along with the nearby Kuala Lumpur Tower which has attracted tourists from around the globe.

Argentine architect Cesar Pelli designed the towers using a distinctive postmodern style which reflects a 21st-century icon for Kuala Lumpur. The construction of the superstructure commenced on April 1, 1994. On New Year's of 1996 interiors with furniture were fitted into the building, while the spires of Tower 1 and Tower 2 were completed on Mar 1, 1996.

The first batch of Petronas personnel moved into the building on Jan 1, 1997. It was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad on Aug 31, 1999.

Adjacent to the Petronas Twin Towers is Suria KLCC which opened their doors in May 1998. It is a shopping centre that comprises of a six-storey building at the foot of the Petronas Twin Towers.

Created in 1999, it was soon the talk of the town because it introduced a new level of style to the city with its vast array of haute couture stores.

Likened to Manhattan's Barney's and Saks Fifth Avenue, the mall is famous not only for its strategic location and upscale stores but also because of its tourist attractions such as Aquaria KLCC, Petrosains; a science discovery centre and Aquaria, an oceanarium targeted at kids located beneath the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

Besides that, the mall is also home to the Dewan Filharmonik Orkestra (Malaysia's first concert hall) and the Petronas Art Gallery.

With its light rail transit (LRT) station set adjacent to the KLCC Park and the KL Convention Centre, the mall is easily accessible to the public.

Despite its modern design, Suria KLCC features little touches reminiscent of classic European malls, including plenty of greenery, white geometric-patterned marble floors with exposed glass panels that let in natural light.

What makes KLCC becoming an attraction is the fact that it has the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre as part of its planning. It is Asia's only AIPC (International Association of Congress Centres) Gold Standard venue.

Since opening in June 2005 through to Mar 31, 2017, the Centre has hosted over 12,276 events, bringing into Kuala Lumpur over 20.9 million delegates and visitors.

The Twin towers have become a magnet for some brilliant new architectural wonders that have sprung up around the KLCC site.

The new Prestigious Four Seasons Private Residences built next to the Twin Towers is a landmark in its own right and underlines how developers and occupiers view the importance of this iconic KLCC landmark.

Also, another development around the KLCC site; the Platinum Park has provided KLCC with some impressive architectural marvels, not to mention Norman Fosters Troika residences- his firm's first foray into Malaysia.

KLCC brings together a fantastic concentration of the best hotels, restaurants, a prime convention centre, entertainment venues and shopping experiences with two of Malaysia top shopping destinations – Suria KLCC and the Pavilion in its footprint.

What makes this even more remarkable is that all the buildings are appropriately maintained and updated. It debunks the myth that Malaysia is good at building expensive projects and not managing them. The Twin Towers look as good now as they did 25 years ago.

However, KLCC's iconic status was under threat recently with the sprouting of other projects such as KL118, TRX Signature Tower, Bukit Bintang City Centre (BBCC) Signature Tower and Bandar Malaysia in Klang Valley.

It is going to change when the proposed development at Lot L, M, N (Lot 164, 165 and 166) is finalised as KLCC Property Sdn Bhd is planning to build the tallest tower in Malaysia at 145-storeys (taller than KL118) with a six-storey retail podium and access to an MRT station.

Despite all the hype surrounding these new developments, KLCC has a competitive advantage over the rest because much of it existed before the land prices started to skyrocket in KL.

Its high occupancy levels in today's challenging leasing market are a testimony to this.

Our Prime Minister then (who is also today the country's newly elected Leader) had the vision to spearhead the building of this iconic development and its resounding and enduring success.

He has given the Malaysian people a skyline in their capital city to challenge any of the great cities in the world.

(Source: <http://www.starproperty.my/index.php/articles/property-news/opinion-the-magic-is-still-present-why-klcc-will-continue-to-thrive-in-an-increasingly-competitive-landscape/>)