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DECEMBER 2019

## LUXURY LIST 2019

GALA CELEBRATION  
30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
HIGHLIGHTS

PURSUIITS & PLEASURES  
THE YEAR'S  
ULTIMATE MUST-HAVES

MEET THE CHAIR MAN  
DAVID KING ON  
FURNITURE THAT LASTS



## MAN OF THE HOUSE

PERDANA PARKCITY'S  
DATUK JOSEPH LAU  
TAKES LIVING  
BEYOND FOUR WALLS





# CREATING PLACES TO BELONG

PARKCITY GROUP'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
DATUK JOSEPH LAU REVEALS THE SECRET BEHIND  
BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES EVERYWHERE.

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**G**lobally-renowned research and consulting powerhouse Savills recently published its findings about what potential homebuyers around the world look out for when investing in a home.

In this, Savills discovered that the two of the most important key words for people searching for a home are the 'neighbourhood' and the 'appearance'. Data from the said research also suggests that the very design attributes that are often correlated with the most provably popular neighbourhoods are just not present in too many new developments of late. In a globalised age, it now seems that people seek compensation in a strong sense of place.

And this overwhelming human desire to belong somewhere is what Datuk Joseph Lau, the Group Chief Executive Officer of ParkCity Group, wants to build on when it comes to the sustainable development of the diversified business group's jewel in the Klang Valley – Desa ParkCity.

It all began in 1999 when ParkCity acquired the 473-acre former quarry mine adjacent to Bandar Menjalara, situated between Damansara and Kepong in Kuala Lumpur. Today, the township consists of landed products and condominiums, commercial sections like The Waterfront and Plaza Arkadia, plus a private hospital – ParkCity Medical Centre – and The International School @ ParkCity. There's also the pet-friendly, tree-lined Central Park with a lake at its centre, a very popular jogging and chill out spot with residents and visitors alike.

"Your life doesn't just revolve around your home really," says Datuk Lau over coffee at the well-appointed lakefront show units of Desa ParkCity's latest high-rise residential project – Park Regent by the Water – recently. "We at Desa ParkCity are not just selling brick and mortar to potential homeowners; you have to remember that there are a lot more things to consider when one's investing in a place to live."

"Here at ParkCity, we have effectively built around the concept of community living," he continues. "You obviously want to buy into a comfortable, safe, dynamic, fulfilling and pleasing lifestyle too, and not just a home... am I right? You want to live in a place with lots of greenery, good education opportunities, and excellent retail offerings. You know, the many things that you can build a wonderful community around, you might say".

So, this desire to build a place where a comfortable community life could flourish meant putting ears close to the ground, and listening to what homebuyers were looking for in the first place, reveals Datuk Lau. "That's how we designed Desa ParkCity as not just another place with blocks of houses and apartments. We looked at the potential customers and asked ourselves – Who are these people? What do they want in life? What would they need to be comfortable? What would their children look forward to? This is the recipe that we have somewhat perfected here at Desa ParkCity and if we stick to this way of doing things, I don't see any reason why the success we achieved with South Brooks cannot be repeated time and time again

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for our future developments.”

When launched for bookings back in 2017, South Brooks Condos comprised a total of 920 units in two towers with built-up areas ranging from 876 sq ft to 1,537 sq ft. The selling price started from RM535,000 or an average of RM700 psf. "Potential buyers saw that it wasn't just the individual apartments that were well designed, but also the wealth of wonderful opportunities that the surrounding area held," Datuk Lau recalls. "That's why we saw 76% of its units taken up during the Priority Sales events itself!"

Just walking around the ample, shaded walkways leading up to the gorgeous lakefront at Desa Parkcity, one realises why this address is high on the 'want' list of many potential homeowners. This new age township's design is based on a unique concept that integrates colonial shophouse architectural flair with a modern contemporary twist. Its main thoroughfare, Plaza Arkadia for instance, was envisioned to create a distinctive and stylish destination that would surpass the past offerings of traditional shops, office and SOHOs. There's also an open central courtyard which serves as the development's focal point, a gathering place for the community, and an ideal staging area for every type of open-air event.

Datuk Lau continues: "We wanted a place where visitors can move around easily, in a pedestrian-friendly and safe environment. That's why our walkways are tree-lined and measure 9-foot-wide, built in loops ranging from 1km to 2.3 km long. Back in 2005, thousands of trees and more than 45,000 shrubs were planted to give the place the convincing look and feel of a tropical holiday resort. This means when you're in this neighbourhood, leave your





car at home or in a parking lot and do some walking, jogging or cycling instead! You'll stay healthy, the environment stays green and everyone's happy!"

From the design of the high street shops to the elevated courtyard links and public spaces, visitors to Plaza Arkadia can also enjoy boutique style retail and lifestyle F&B on safe, open-air sidewalks and streets that link seamlessly. "Yes, everything seems relaxed here, doesn't it? But look closer and you'll also see security personnel always discreetly patrolling on bicycles, on foot and occasionally on motor vehicles. There's a double tier of security arrangement in place at all times – as you enter at any of the only two main gates, and at the entrance of every apartment or cluster of homes within."

A familiar chain of events have now begun with the recent launch of Desa ParkCity's latest enclave of Park Regent by the water. The RM1.1 billion GDV project spanning some 5.6 acres of freehold land is a joint venture between ParkCity and Singapore's CapitaLand, and saw an 80% take-up within just one month of its launch at end-July this year. Being the most prestigious roll-out in Desa ParkCity to date, Park Regent is not just stamped with all of DPC's trademarks, but also boasts a list of fresh innovations that bring a new level of distinction to the aspired address.

Datuk Lau feels that living in an era of compact households, many potential homeowners out there often forget about some of the luxuries that people used to have back in the day, such as roomy balconies to lounge, ample storage, ventilation and light, a yard and a spacious kitchen. "So yes, Park Regent is all about returning to that sort of luxuries, the ones that we have left behind in modern-day city living."

"Working with CapitaLand was invaluable indeed as from them; we picked up on designing and building high-end apartments with a world-class team comprising Christopher Lee of Serie Architects London, working in collaboration with Multiply Architects Singapore, celebrity interior designer Peter Tay and landscape architect COEN Design International. Yes, Park Regent is set to be an awe-inspiring structure, indeed," revealed Datuk Lau.

He also goes on to say that the company is in the midst of planning the Desa ParkCity Town Center, where so far, its two main components have been locked down. "We haven't decided on all the components yet but right now, we are looking to expand the international school, first. Next, we are looking at more homes for seniors. These will be designed independent living units and located close to the hospital. Yes, Desa ParkCity will be the place where seniors can enjoy independent living, and not be restricted to the usual senior home-type environment. These two new components have been firmed up and will begin construction shortly."

But what about the challenges posed by a somewhat stagnating Malaysian economy, one might ask? Will the noticeably slowing headwinds in the property market dampen Desa ParkCity's forward momentum at all? Datuk Lau explains that ParkCity's strategy is to remain innovative and introduce differentiated products that suit current lifestyles and market trends. "We continue to engage and listen to our customers, and ensure we meet their needs. And we will continue to raise the bar in our product offering, like we have done

with Park Regent, which brings a new level of prestige to our already reputable and desired address" says Datuk Lau. ParkCity defied market trends by successfully launching its Park Regent in a soft property market.

"We have several things going for us – a self-sustainable, strongly integrated development that continues to meet the evolving needs of both our existing residents, as well as those in the market seeking an integrated lifestyle address to call home. We also have a significant number of amenities like The Central Park, The Waterfront and Plaza Arkadia that continue to attract a constant flow of visitors." He elaborates that the master plan for Desa ParkCity was created to be a lifetime community – for all ages and people of all walks of life; it is about creating a strong sense of place and belonging. Desa ParkCity was designed to be the true embodiment of the 5 key values that are most important to the people who would like to live here – Family, Neighbourhood, Community, Connectivity and Convenience, he added.

Once completed, the township will have 7,000 residential units and 3.7 million sq m of commercial space. "The estimated gross development value of the project will be in the region of RM7.5 billion," reveals Datuk Lau, adding that it will take at least another 10 years for the full potential of the township to be fully realised.

Datuk Lau certainly knows a thing or two about giving the market what they want. He joined Perdana ParkCity in 2010 as executive director and eventually took over as Group CEO in late 2016. An accountant by profession, the good Datuk was attached to IKEA Retail as its General Manager for 15 years before venturing into real estate development and was instrumental in the setting up of IKEA in Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, Thailand. Looking back, he fondly recalls the early days of Desa ParkCity. "Without oversimplifying things, you could say that selling property is almost like selling popular, consumer goods – you just have to figure out what the market wants first before anything else happens!"

"The ParkCity brand has been defined by the success of our master planned township Desa ParkCity, so much so that a lot of people only know us as Desa ParkCity and not the ParkCity Group, as the master developer behind it. We look at this as a positive thing as it represents a strong track record of what we can deliver. We introduced the first landed strata homes in the country back in 2000 and took great care of our quality and detailing to realise the vision to create one of the best community living spaces in the Klang Valley," he says.

Datuk Lau also revealed that because of the desire to create a very liveable development with the Desa ParkCity project, the place has become a bit of a living laboratory of sorts. "Through stringent resolution over the years, ParkCity has, in fact, created such a successful master-planned community that it has drawn study groups ranging from members of the real estate fraternity to Kuala Lumpur City Hall policy makers, and even foreign delegates," says Datuk Lau proudly.

Looking ahead and beyond Desa ParkCity, the ParkCity Group is already busy with two other master-planned projects – the 190.3-acre ParkCity Hanoi in Vietnam and the 551-acre Marina ParkCity in Miri, Sarawak. "These two projects will keep us busy for the next 10 to 15 years," reveals Datuk Lau with a smile. "Plus, we're also looking for opportunities in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok, Thailand and also in Melbourne, Australia." 