

# PHILEA RESORT AND SPA

Luxurious Green in a Natural Setting

For people in Singapore or Kuala Lumpur Philea Resort and Spa, just a few hours away from these capital cities, make a great Weekend Escape surrounded by nature, the soothing sounds of flowing water in a green environment that also strives to be Green, writes **Floyd Cowan**.



I was upset with myself for not having booked a hotel earlier as I had relatives in town and they wanted to visit the historic city of Malacca, Malaysia. It was the end of the Chinese New Year and everything in the city was booked. Finally we found Philea Resort and Spa and I was at first delighted to have found a room.

## Logging In

Then I wasn't so happy as I learned that Philea was not in Malacca, but 20 minutes away, in Ayer Keroh, and was a big sprawling resort. However, all the things that I was worried about turned out to be advantages that lead to having a delightful stay at what is the "largest log resort in Malaysia."

We took a Golden Coach coach from Key Point in Singapore and had a comfortable journey up the North – South highway, undisturbed by the weekend traffic flowing in both directions between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. As soon as the coach pulled off the highway, just past the toll booth, the driver let us down near the entrance to the Philea. From there it was a short walk. When we left the staff drove us back in the buggies they use for conveying guests around the 15 beautifully landscaped acres.

Philea Resort & Spa, owned by Majestic Hotels & Resorts, opened in June 2010. Its brochure says "our smiling friendly staff are ready to serve and please you at any time." And from the moment we arrived until we checked out, the staff validated this claim.

## Great Room Service

We arrived late and by the time we got settled in our rooms the restaurant was closed for the evening. We hadn't yet had dinner so we ordered from the Room Service menu. Eating my hamburger while

watching TV was more relaxing than going out and finding a restaurant at that time of night.

In the morning my brother and sister-in-law were up early, taking a walk around the paths around the resort. Another advantage of being where we were was that there were side roads where I could go jogging in a quiet environment where there were few cars.

We enjoyed the buffet breakfast at the Cravo Cravo restaurant off the lobby, just one of five F&B outlets. We could have also enjoyed a Continental dinner there had we not been in the city and had more time. Though we wanted to get into Malacca to see the World Heritage Buildings we felt no need to rush.

### Green Award

While the family was enjoying a leisurely cup of coffee I had a chat with Tee Mei Fong, Philea's Marketing Communication Executive. She pointed out how the owners had incorporated green elements wherever they could. Materials, such as railway sleepers from an abandoned line, were used throughout the resort in innovative ways.

"We have done many things to create a deluxe natural setting," Mei Fong pointed out. "The waterfalls were there and the designers worked them into the pool setting with the stream running through the property."

In November 2011 the Resort won the Best Green Hotel Award – 2010-2011 from Malacca Tourism Association. At the time, General Manager Ron Choong stated: "Corporate sustainability is a key priority to the resort and we are indeed proud to receive this accolade as a testament of this commitment. At Philea Resort and

Spa everyone has a role to play in saving the Earth, and we will forge on with our dedication to environmental conservation whilst ensuring the guest experience remains uncompromised."

### Uncompromised Luxury

By the time we returned from our long day exploring fascinating Malacca we needed a little uncompromised luxury. The 201 rooms are elegantly furnished with contemporary décor and as it merges with the beauty of finest quality pine log it makes a unique ambience that you will find in no other place in Malaysia. It was a great place to chill after a long day of walking the streets and alleys of the city that was built by Portuguese, Dutch and British while the Malay and Chinese influences add more unique dimensions.

The Resort has three different types of rooms. The Pavilion Rooms, in which we were staying, feature individual verandas off the lower rooms while the second floor rooms have private balconies. Philea Suites are spacious and complete with an exquisite bathtub. They are located in the middle of the valley offering spectacular views of the landscaped pool and waterfall.

The Royal Villa is where guests are given the royal treatment such as in-villa arrival and departure assistance, entertainment,

wellness experience, a plunge pool as well as an option to dine in the privacy of the villa.

### In the Pool

We didn't get to use all of Philea's facilities such as the spa, gymnasium, pillarless ballroom, meetings rooms, kids' room and the other recreational facilities. There are three beautiful golf courses within minutes of the Philea. But we did get into the pool – which is wonderfully spacious – allowing us to splash about without bothering the other guests – too much. **AJ**



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