

Nicol David is the face of Penang

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Iconic Penangite: Nicol after receiving her memento of appreciation at Eastern & Oriental Hotel in George Town. — LIM BENG TATT /The Star

GEORGE TOWN: Eight-time world squash champion Datuk Nicol David will be the face of Penang's tourism promotions worldwide.

The 38-year-old Penang-born, who was appointed Penang Tourism Ambassador 2022, said the recognition and opportunity was a huge honour and a dream come true.

"Whenever I travel, there is a sense of pride when mentioning Penang, my hometown.

"This is an opportunity for me to give back to Penang, where I grew up and belong, and to make the state proud.

"Although I've tried almost everything there is in Penang, the title will allow me the chance to try out new things.

“I will definitely put in my best to promote Penang, which is also well known for its food,” she said after receiving a symbolic memento from the Yang di-Pertua Negri Tun Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak at the Eastern & Oriental Hotel yesterday.

Nicol said in the past few weeks, to familiarise herself with the role, she had gone on thrill rides at theme parks, visited the beautiful rainforest of Penang Hill and enjoyed the stunning views of suburban areas such as those in Balik Pulau.

Present to witness the ceremony were Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow, Penang state secretary Datuk Dr Ahmad Jailani Muhamed Yunus, Penang tourism and creative economy committee chairman Yeoh Soon Hin, Penang Global Tourism (PGT) chief executive officer Ooi Chok Yan and Consul-General of Japan in Penang Orikasa Hiroyuki.

The tourism promotion carries the tagline “My Hometown, Penang Welcomes You”, and Nicol will play a role in helping to boost the image of Penang as a top tourism destination, both at domestic and international levels.

She will be highlighting places of interest and things to do in Penang, from her own perspective.

Expect to see Malaysia’s squash queen roaming around the streets, tasting delicacies and trying out various attractions in Penang.

Chow in his speech said the state has allocated RM50mil to aid efforts and to revitalise Penang’s tourism industry next year.

“We are both proud and honoured to have Nicol, an iconic Penangite, as the face of the state’s tourism next year.

“Owing to her global popularity and contribution to the nation and state, I am confident that by bringing her on board, it will help further propel the state’s tourism revival efforts,” he said before thanking Nicol.

Nicol’s parents Desmond David and Ann Marie David, both 74, were present at the ceremony.

Being an eight-time world champion and arguably the greatest player in the history of women’s squash, Nicol was No. 1 in the world for a record-breaking 108 months until September 2015.

In February, she was named the World Games’ Greatest Athlete of All Time after topping a poll conducted by the International World Games Association.

Throughout an illustrious career that spanned nearly 20 years, Nicol won the World Open a record eight times between 2005 and 2014.

She also won the British Open five times, two Commonwealth Games gold medals and seven Asian Games titles.

The Professional Squash Association Tour competitions saw Nicol collect a total of 81 titles.