

STAR METRO INFO BASE

KEDAH EMERGENCY

POLICE & AMBULANCE	999
FIRE	999
TELEPHONE DIRECTORY	103
ENQUIRIES/FAULTS	100
INTERNATIONAL OPERATOR	101
RESCUE	999

FIRE & RESCUE DEPT ALOR SETAR

JALAN TUN ABDUL RAZAK (ALOR SETAR)	04-734 4444
JALAN RAJA (LANGKAWI)	04-734 9307
JALAN KISAP (LANGKAWI)	04-969 3004
PERSIARAN PUTRA	04-966 4444
BUKIT KAYU HITAM	04-922 2350
JITRA	04-917 1444
KUALA NERANG	04-786 7584
GUAR CHEMPEDAK	04-468 6444
SUNGAI PETANI	04-421 4444
SIK	04-469 5216
BALING	04-470 1444
TIKAM BATU	04-438 8444
KULIM	04-490 4444
SERDANG	04-407 7444
KULIM HI-TECH	04-403 4444

USEFUL CONTACTS

KTM	04-733 1798
ALOR SETAR MUNICIPAL COUNCIL	04-730 4908
SUNGAI PETANI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL	04-421 2205
TMPOINT (GENERAL LINE)	100
JPJ	04-733 9812
PRISON	04-730 2544
CUSTOMS	04-775 1212
MUSEUM	04-733 1162

PUBLIC SERVICE

SUNGAI PETANI HOSPITAL	04-421 3333
IMMIGRATION	04-421 0302
CIVIL DEFENCE	04-732 1043
TENAGA NASIONAL	04-733 3737
KEDAH WATER BOARD	04-740 0500
RELIGIOUS DEPT	04-733 3288

POLICE STATIONS

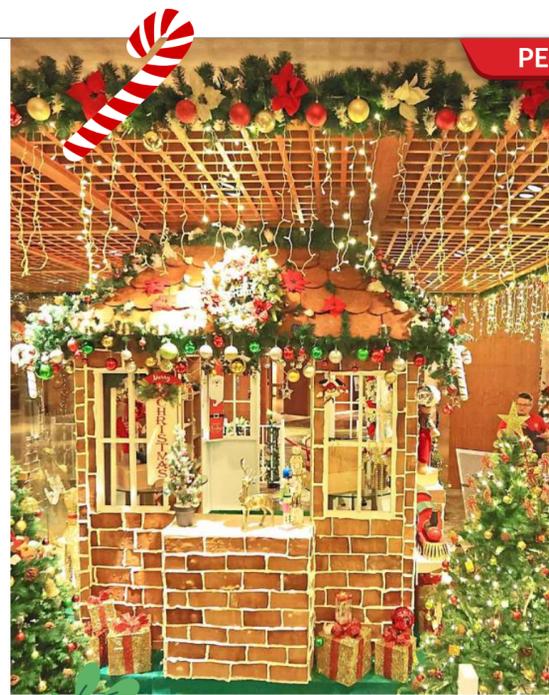
BALING	04-470 6999
BANDAR BARU	04-407 7222
KOTA SETAR	04-732 1222/04-732 6999
KUALA MUDA	04-421 2222/04-423 6999
KUBANG PASU	04-917 2222/04-917 6999
KULIM	04-490 6222/04-491 6999
LANGKAWI	04-966 3999
PADANG TERAP	04-786 6222
PENDANG	04-759 3073
SIK	04-469 5222
YAN	04-465 5222

OTHERS

SULTANAH BAHIAH HOSPITAL	04-740 6233
KEDAH YOUTH AND SPORTS COMPLEX	04-733 4616
WISMA DARULAMAN	04-730 1957
KEDAH TOURISM ACTION COUNCIL	04-735 1030
PADI MUSEUM	04-735 1315
LANGKAWI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY LANGKAWI CABLE	04-966 7186
CAR	04-959 4225
KEDAH STATE LIBRARY	04-733 3592

#OPBANTU WHATSAPP

BALING	019-5238244
BANDAR BARU	011-10417711
KOTA SETAR	011-58613546
KUALA MUDA	019-6757656
KUBANG PASU	019-2176885
KULIM	011-11924436
LANGKAWI	017-3114456
PADANG TERAP	019-5924592
PENDANG	019-8296482
SIK	019-4177796
YAN	013-7402022



PENANG



(Left) A life-sized gingerbread house at Shangri-La Rasa Sayang with an assortment of seasonal goodies. (Right) Shoppers taking photos in the Enchanted Christmas Village at Sunshine Central Penang. — Photos by LIM BENG TATT, CHAN BOON KAI, ZHAFARAN NASIB, JEREMY TAN/The Star



Shoppers admiring Gurney Paragon Mall's Illuminating Christmas centrepiece decorated with stained glass panels.



Families enjoying the play areas at Sunway Carnival Mall's Christmas Colourama setup.



The red-and-gold ornaments on the Christmas tree at Eastern and Oriental Hotel.

Yuletide joy in the air

Enchanting Christmas wonderlands in malls, hotels take hearts and minds to special places



By JEREMY TAN
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CHRISTMAS brings lots of wonderful things, from quality time with loved ones to great food, presents galore and whimsical decorations at malls.

Each year, retail establishments conjure up enchanting wonderlands that not only warm the hearts of bustling holiday crowds but also whisk their imagination away to special places.

While giant conifers, twinkling lights and cheerful characters are common elements, each scene is crafted thematically and provides ample photo opportunities for visitors.

With Christmas carols echoing in the background, all who explore these festive displays are sure to feel merry.

Here is *StarMetro's* round-up of the most eye-catching decorations in the northern region.

In Penang, Queensbay Mall thrills shoppers with a luminous "Christmas Fantasy" centred around a regal town square with shades of white and gold.

Venture through a chandelier tunnel and you will find a rotating tower with cute holiday characters. Interspersed between snow-frosted trees are jolly snowmen, polar bears and reindeer.

Up above, shooting stars blaze long, sparkling light trails.

There is also a walk-in Christmas tree to be explored, as well as a life-sized snow globe and cascading waterfall. Queensbay Mall manager Lee



Aman Central's decorations featuring a cornucopia of colourful candy and sweet treats.

Sue Ling said the mall's team had families in mind when creating the holiday backdrop, complete with snow showers.

"Over the years, our elaborate decorations have made us the place to be during major festive celebrations.

"Christmas is a magical season and this year, we go for a scene that encapsulates its wonders that will bring joy to the young and young-at-heart alike," she said.

Step inside Gurney Plaza and the balmy tropical surroundings quickly give way to a wintry scene specially

created for "The Arctic Christmas" festivities. The Northern Europe-inspired display features several cosy wooden cabins, each decorated with crackling fireplaces, gift boxes, classic clocks, teddy bears and boughs of holly. Put on a jacket, snap a photo and you might convince some that you are on a Scandinavian holiday.

Majestic polar bears and curious reindeer also "roam" the cobblestone-paved setting, as giant glowing snowflakes

appear to rain down from above. CapitaLand Malls (Penang and Pahang) general manager Peter Chan said this year's concept was to let visitors experience the frosty holiday magic typically felt in northern climes.

"The cabins recreate the warmth and joy of celebrations with family while the chilly landscape



A shopper taking a selfie with the Christmas Fantasy decorations at Queensbay Mall.

evokes the pristine beauty of that region.

"Coupled with engaging events and activities like live snowfall, we hope it leaves every visitor with a smile and lots of cherished memories," said Chan.

Newly-opened Sunshine Central Penang's festivities revolve around an "Enchanted Christmas Village" that is also filled with snow-covered conifers and wood cabins.

One of them is Santa Claus' own retreat. You will find him reading letters from children across the world while his iconic red suit hangs beside a fireplace. Just outside, his faithful reindeer are resting beside his sleigh while vibrant red poinsettias add colour to the icy scene.

The shopping centre's marketing communications manager Bryan Wong said the mall wanted to let shoppers of all ages experience wintry holiday cheer.

"We invite everyone to come meet Santa, share their wishes

and feel the magic that makes Christmas special.

"And for the first time in Bandar Baru Ayer Itam, it will also be 'snowing!'"

Sunway Carnival Mall has reimagined the season's wonders with a captivating mix of dazzling lights and vibrant hues under the "Christmas Colourama" theme.

There are baubles and ribbons in red, blue and gold, conifers of various sizes with giant presents stacked high atop a chamber containing a kaleidoscope room and shadow play room.

The display also incorporates the "Mattel Holiday: Give the Gift of Play" experience which brings beloved toy brands to life through interactive play areas.

The mall's general manager Chai Wen Yew said each zone was designed for children to explore their creativity and curiosity, thus affording families precious opportunities to bond.

"We hope this Christmas will

feel both familiar and new. Play is a gift that keeps on giving and such experiences are sure to enhance everybody's holiday celebrations."

Gurney Paragon Mall's Illuminating Christmas festive decorations make clever use of stained-glass panels.

These enliven its centrepiece, a 10m-tall walk-in Christmas tree in a square. Beside that is a larger-than-life gift box and several kaleidoscopes with infinity mirrors.

Gurney Paragon marketing communications head Loo Ai Leen said instead of the usual yuletide greenery, the team found inspiration in the mall's three-storey-high atrium.

"The vast expanse of windows bathes the space in natural light. When this hits the stained-glass panels, it brings the myriad colours to life.

"We believe this fun and engaging setting will allow visitors to capture treasured snapshots."

At 1st Avenue Penang, its "Presents For All" festive display sees a giant gift box overflow-

ing with dozens of smaller presents.

On the main stage, more gift boxes surround bright red-and-green Christmas trees. Several golden reindeer add shine to the scene.

In Kedah, Aman Central is making the holiday season an eye-popping affair with its "Sugar Rush Christmas" decorations featuring a pastel-coloured array of sweet treats.

There is a giant cupcake with a walk-through mirror tunnel, all topped by a 15m-high Christmas tree enrobed in candy ribbons and hard candy swirls.

Completing the display are oversized lollipops, candy canes, hanging doughnuts, marshmallow stars, pink-coloured trees, glowing orbs and cascading lights.

The mall's assistant general manager Ken Chin said the team worked hard to bring an imaginative, multi-layered holiday experience to life for shoppers.

"Christmas has always been a time for indulging in sweet confectioneries, so it was the perfect theme to craft our festive decorations around.

"We hope this sweet interpretation will bring shoppers a sense of joy, wonder and community."

Spreading cheer to tourists

Travellers staying in most of Penang's hotels will feel the holiday spirit, thanks to the glittering embellishments at common areas.

At Shangri-La Rasa Sayang, a life-sized gingerbread house adorns the Garden Wing lobby. Within it are an assortment of seasonal goodies, from cakes to cookies and stollen.

Nearby, there are half a dozen Christmas trees, several jolly snowmen and twinkling lights, all of which entice guests to pause and snap a selfie or two.

"Our culinary team built the structure then covered it with gingerbread tiles and frosting. The house doubles up as a bakery offering creations by our new pastry chef.

"As we have guests from around the world spending Christmas with us, we enliven our spaces with classic holiday motifs so they would miss none of the seasonal joy," said the hotel's communications director Datuk Suleiman Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Penang Marriott Hotel has a Christmas tree decked out with traditional baubles and ornaments, but with cute teddy bears.

This is for its "Bearly Merry Charity Bear" campaign, which allows the public to adopt a bear for a fee. Entire proceeds go to The Children's Protection Society, a non-profit organisation serving underprivileged children in Penang.

Complex general manager Subash Basrur said over 500 of the cuddly plushies had been adopted to date, far surpassing initial targets and illustrating the generosity of the local community.

"Teddy bears symbolise warmth, comfort and unconditional love - values that align with the true spirit of Christmas.

"By bringing smiles to children who need a little extra magic, we can spread compassion and hope. It's about sharing the joy of the holidays with those who deserve it most."

Eastern and Oriental Hotel has continued a long-standing practice of dressing up a 6m Christmas Tree at its Heritage Wing lobby in shades of red and gold.

There are baubles that glisten and reflect the light from thousands of tiny bulbs.

Oversized gift boxes fill up the base of the tree.

Hotel general manager Alison Fraser said the tree's lighting ceremony at the start of this month had been a tradition for 19 years and it's something that brought the community together in a special way.

"Moments like these remind us of the joy of giving and togetherness, while illustrating the magic of the holiday season," she said.



Graphic: Vectezy