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Experience a Living Malaysian Heritage

Standing majestically with its modern urban design, Royal Selangor Visitor Centre is the go-to place to experience pewter-both as a beautiful piece to be admired and as a craft, closely bound to Kuala Lumpur's colonial past and kept alive through the passion and imagination of its artisans.

“We started the visitor centre in 2004 to share the story of Malaysian pewter crafting and how it became part of Malaysian history with locals and the rest of the world,” said Yong Yoon Li, executive director of Royal Selangor International. His great-grandfather Yong Koon started Royal Selangor in 1885 when the country was the world's largest tin producer in the 19th century.

Upon arrival, curious visitors are whisked into The Gallery by a friendly guide. The past in which tin was a prized commodity, the triumphs and challenges of Yong Koon and his family are revisited in startling detail - through the narration of the guide and displays of Yong Koon's tools, his personal effects and pewter artefacts. The star of The Gallery is Yong Koon's lucky teapot – an artefact which saved a man's life.

“My grandfather's teapot saved Ah Ham's life. He was a villager scrambling for rice in the abandoned godowns during world war 2 when he spied something shiny on the ground. As he bent to pick it up, a bomb fell and shrapnel whizzed past his head. He was so stunned that he promptly took home the teapot instead of the rice, which earned him a scolding from his wife, I reckon! Since then, he considered it his lucky teapot.” explained Datin Paduka Chen Mun Kuen, the hearty granddaughter of Yong Koon who still mans the showroom today, sharing her family's story with the visitors.

It was a while before her grandfather's teapot returned home. Ah Ham finally relented and returned the teapot to the family. Today, it sits proudly in The Gallery while its descendents grace the homes of many tea connoisseurs.

Impossible to miss is the replica of the Petronas Twin Towers. Assembled from 7,062 Royal Selangor pewter tankards, both towers stand over two storeys high. Visitors also get a tantalising glimpse of fine sterling silver pieces through the Comyns Archive which also houses 35,000 patterns, drawings and moulds of the 300 year old sterling silver brand

acquired by Royal Selangor in 1993.

Following The Gallery tour, visitors are ushered by the guide directly to the factory, the heart of Royal Selangor's brand of pewter crafting. Here, visitors acquaint themselves with the processes of the craft. The more adventurous are welcome to challenge themselves by hammering small uniformly sized dimples on a cylindrical pewter sheet- the same process used by Royal Selangor artisans to create the classic hammered finish. Once they are done, they are offered a privileged glance at the Royal Selangor factory floor where real-time manufacturing takes place. The tour also includes a brief look at the craft of fine jewellery by Selberan, another Royal Selangor company.

To truly experience pewter as a living craft, visitors are encouraged to enrol in the centre's popular experiential workshops- The School of Hard Knocks (SOHK) and The Foundry. A short fun-filled half-hour session, SOHK participants learn to create their own take-home souvenir, a pewter dish using traditional tools, similar to those used by pewtersmiths more than 100 years ago. Those keen on a unique memento of their visit should join The Foundry. Under the watchful eye of the experienced instructor, The Foundry participants craft their own take-home pewter accessory using fundamental pewter crafting processes – casting, polishing and decorating, with options to create something freehand or from existing moulds.

The visitor centre houses a showroom filled with a wide variety of pewter pieces that complement contemporary or classic styles. It also contains a Selberan and Comyns boutique. Visitors looking for a place to relax may adjourn to the Café which serves cakes and coffee, among other light snacks and beverages. For memorable pictures, family and friends may head outside to post at the giant 2-metre tall Giant Tankard. In 1987, Royal Selangor was officially presented with the certificate from the Guinness Book of Records acknowledging it as the largest tankard in the world.

The Royal Selangor Visitor Centre is open from 9.00am to 5.00pm every day, including weekends and public holidays. Admission to the Visitor Centre is free, and complimentary guided tours are provided.

For further information, visit www.royalselangorvisitorcentre.com or call 03-4145 6122. E-mail enquiries can be directed to visitorcentre@royalselangor.com

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