



# PROPERTY

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**FORMER TIN-MINING SETTLEMENT**

## Growing homestay potential in Bentong

SHAREN KAUR

**B**ENTONG is formerly a tin-mining settlement in the western part of Pahang, opposite of the Titiwangsa Range.

According to old stories, Bentong was formerly known as Kapong. Back then it was centred around the market area at the confluence of the Repas and Perting River. It became the focal point of attention when tin was discovered in both rivers.

Tin miners had built a ridge known as Ban for the mining of ore to get more profitable outputs. It became the talk of the town for outsiders who started calling the place "Ban Untung" (profitable ridge).

The name Ban Untung became more popular than Kapong and over time it was known more as Bentong.

The tin-mining activities in Bentong expanded when a prominent figure, Loke Yew, was offered some 1,619 hectares of tin-mining land in 1897.

Details on the historic past of the town and what it was like during the mining era are available at the Bentong Gallery in Jalan Loke Yew.

Bentong Gallery was formerly an old shophot

owned by Loke Yew where he operated his business activities. It has been refurbished but the original facade still stands.

The gallery provides information on tourist attractions throughout Bentong, such as Bilut Valley Bee Farm, Bilut Extreme Park, Jimmy's Durian Orchard, Chamang Waterfall, Bentong Hot Spring, Botanical Garden and Bentong Market.

There are also many heritage buildings like Chinese Town Hall and Kwong Fook Temple, as well as old villages.

In recent years, Bentong has become increasingly popular for homestays.

According to Jimmy Loke, founder of Jimmy's Durian Orchard, developers and investors have been buying up agricultural land in Bentong as an investment.

"They are building homestays or planting fruit trees, especially durians. Some are also taking the opportunity to buy land in Bentong because the price is cheap compared with Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, to build a retirement home. People want to escape the hectic city life and the hot and dusty air when they retire. I understand land prices are slowly inching up in Bentong," he told NST Property.



Jimmy's Durian Homestay is located within a 8ha durian plantation.

Jimmy's Durian Orchard is situated on about 8ha of land right alongside the Karak highway near the Selangor-Pahang border.

"I started this orchard when I was 28 years... that is more than 30 years ago. I planted Musang King, XO, Tekka and 101 varieties. There are about 200 trees and I've been reaping the fruits of my labour for many years now.

"My aim is to turn this farm as my retirement home. I'm currently building homestays for local and foreign tourists," he said, adding that the homestay will have 13 rooms, two dormitories, a dining area and lounge.

Loke is investing about RM1 million to build the homestays which will open their doors soon.

"Staying in a hotel or resort costs a bit of money, so people are resorting to homestays as their weekend getaway, especially when they travel in a big group. The unique selling proposition for homestay is that you get to enjoy the environment, have your own little heaven, and you're away from the hustle and bustle of city life," said Jimmy.

Homestay is a popular form of hospitality and lodging whereby visitors stay at the residence of a local in the city they visit.

**“ Developers and investors have been buying up agricultural land in Bentong as an investment.**

**JIMMY LOKE**  
Jimmy's Durian Orchard founder



Chinese Town Hall is one of the famous landmark in Bentong.