

BY JEREMY THESEIRA

# JOHOR'S SOUTH COAST

## TRANSFORMS INTO AN INTEGRATED TOURISM HUB

For many years, the coastal area of Southeastern Johor was primarily popular with the locals for its beach that runs for 17 kilometres, facing the South China Sea.



Today, Desaru has become the nation's latest premium integrated destination and has been rebranded as Desaru Coast.

Tasked with its redevelopment, Desaru Development Holdings One Sdn Bhd (DHI) will have completed the first phase by the end of the year consisting of globally renowned hotels, resorts and villas, an entertainment and retail hub, conference centre, championship golf courses and a fun-filled adventure waterpark.

Of the many components in that phase, the first to be completed was The Els Club Desaru Coast which opened its doors in September 2016.

The Els Club Desaru Coast is a premium golf club that features course designs from two World Golf Hall of Famers, Ernie Els and Vijay Singh, with a combined seven Major championships altogether.

Overlooking the South China Sea, the Ocean Course comprises of three nine-hole courses – Lakes, Coast and Ridge – that were designed by Ernie Els Design, each layout different from the other with its own unique character.

Jointly developed with Ernie Els Design, the Vijay Singh's Valley Course is a beauty to behold with its undulating fairways and over 180 bunkers littered across 18-holes.

Across the Ocean and Valley courses, the Bermuda Tifeagle greens and 419 fairways are kept in immaculate condition, along with golf carts that are fitted with the latest state-of-art GPS system, which provides distance information, score tracking, and even caters for food and drinks order anywhere on the course.

In two different but not distant locations, each course features a massive contemporary clubhouse, luxurious changing rooms, a pro shop, restaurants, viewing balconies and terraces to soak

in the magnificence of The Els Club Desaru Coast.

A short 10-minute drive away is the Hard Rock Hotel Desaru Coast. The 365-room property is operated and managed by Hard Rock International and delivers the true essence of the Hard Rock experience.

Catering to families as well, the Hard Rock Hotel Desaru Coast is connected to Adventure Waterpark.

One of the largest in the world, Adventure Waterpark features more than 20 wet and dry rides, slides and attractions that cater to all ages, including being the home of the largest wave pool in the world.

For business travellers, The Westin Desaru Coast Resort sits adjacent to the Hard Rock. A 275-room, five-star resort that is managed by Marriott International, it is connected to the Desaru Coast Conference Centre with a 1,000 capacity at its fullest.

By the end of the year, the Desaru Coast Riverside – an entertainment and retail waterfront village – will be operating in full swing, as well as the addition of the luxurious Anantara Desaru Coast Luxury Resort & Villa and One&Only Desaru Coast Resort to round up the offerings here.

Currently, the area is reachable by driving 90 minutes through the Causeway, or a 30-minute ferry ride from Changi Ferry Terminal, followed by a 30-minute drive, with pick-up easily arranged via the hotels or golf course prior to arrival.

Within the first half of next year, a new ferry terminal situated a 10-minute drive from Desaru Coast will be completed and new ferry route options will be available from Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal.

The Valley Course at The Els Club (above) poses a serious challenge with a staggering 187 bunkers across 18-holes while the Coast layout of the Ocean Course (below) offers sweeping views of the South China Sea.



The Mandala Guitar at the entrance of the Hard Rock Hotel Desaru Coasts is the largest of its kind in the country.