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Tan Sri Lee Kim Yew's humanitarian work earns him a place in our list of Asia's Most Influential

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Reverie By the Sea

Luxurious experiences greet you at every turn at Anantara Desaru Coast Resort & Villas

By Tania Jayatilaka



Like a mystical doorway to a world of tropical bliss, the lobby at Anantara Desaru Coast Resort and Villas frames an azure backdrop of sky, sea and sand—a welcoming sight for the beach-loving traveller. In one sweeping glance, you'll see lush gardens, rustic pool villas and azure lagoon pools flanked by palm trees and cabanas, all blending seamlessly into stylish contemporary residences with the beach as the backdrop.

Enter the luxurious lodgings at Anantara Desaru Coast. The property boasts 13 standalone double storey one-bedroom and two-bedroom lagoon villas, which are styled after traditional Malaysian kampung houses but with a more opulent twist. Overlooking the ocean and the lush green grounds, 90 lavish en-suite deluxe hotel rooms in the main building are also lovingly designed with uniquely Malaysian and Southeast Asian elements—merging wicker furnishings and woven textiles with more contemporary trappings for a refined finish. The Deluxe Seaview Corner Room is a particularly cosy and perfect spot for couples or small families. The view from its elegant wrap-around balcony will make you want to

curl up in your outdoor chaise longue and people-watch till the sun sets right in front of you.

Of course, if your idea of 'cosy' includes having your own little portion of paradise by the beach, consider Anantara Desaru Coast Residences. These 20 expansive beach residences—ranging from three-bedroom to four-bedroom villas with infinity pools—are situated just a stone's throw from the water, the ultimate spot for families and small groups to enjoy the wind and waves in their own private getaway.

Gourmands at Anantara Desaru Coast will not be disappointed. Sea.Fire.Salt, the resort's unique seafood and grill concept, lets you enjoy your steak and lobster in style, either at the beachfront or near the show kitchen where you can watch the chefs in action. Notable favourites here include the signature Grilled Seafood Platter, the zesty Gambas al Ajillo (spicy Spanish garlic shrimp tapas that go perfectly with Sea.Fire.Salt's delicious focaccia bread) and the hearty tomahawk steak, all boasting flavours that are powerful and distinct in subtle ways. This nuance in taste is probably why the



Clockwise from top: Deluxe Sea View Corner Room balcony; One Bedroom Lagoon Pool Villa; the 4-bedroom Anantara Beach Residence living room; Grilled Seafood Platter at Sea.Fire.Salt. **Opposite page:** Dining By Design at Anantara Desaru Coast Resort & Villas

steakhouse has over 12 varieties of in-house prepared salt, from herb-infused grains to spicier flavours with a kick. For diners who enjoy a more interactive element in the mix, there is the Spice Spoons experience. From piping hot Johor Laksa to traditional Malay desserts drenched in gula Melaka, roll up your sleeves and cook up your favourite local dishes under the watchful eye of a master chef, later enjoying your culinary creations by the sea.

Speaking of dinner by the sea, a truly exceptional bespoke dining experience awaits with Anantara Desaru Coast's famous Dining by Design experience—anything from sundowners at sunset to a specially prepared dinner in a tent on the beach or at other unique locations on the grounds upon request.

Located just a 45-minute drive from Senai International Airport in Johor Bahru, Anantara Desaru Coast has much to offer every kind of traveller, from families with small kids to couples and urban nomads in search of some long overdue vitamin sea. Even if you've planned a day of golf at a nearby course or prefer to while away the hours with a relaxing dip in your villa's infinity pool, don't miss the chance to hop on any of the resort's bicycles and get lost for a while among the green gardens and winding paths—there's never been a better place to lose track of time than right here. ┘

