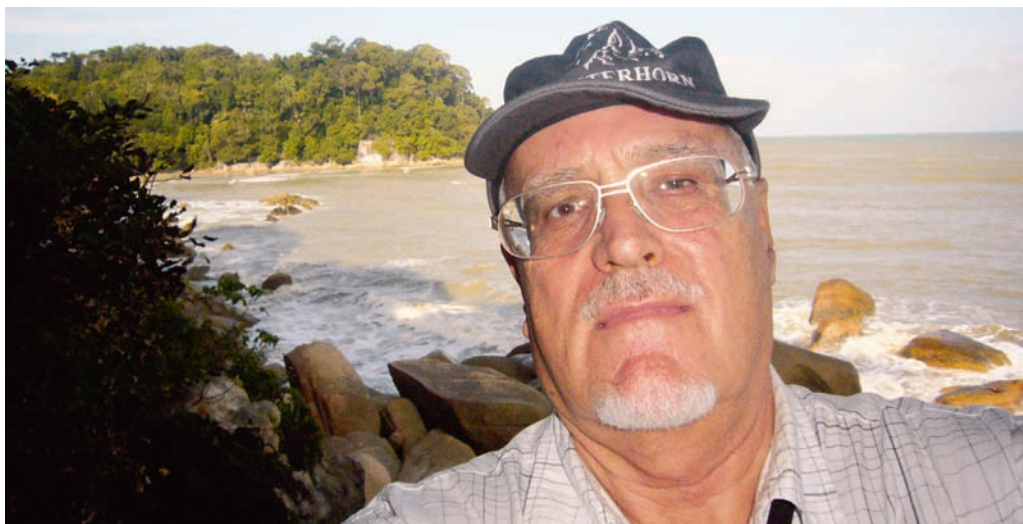


The MM2H Interview: Thomas Semadeni



Thomas Semadeni enjoys taking road trips around Malaysia. The 62-year-old Swiss has lived in Malaysia under the Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) programme the past five and a half years and absolutely loves it here. “In the olden days, travel and communication were cumbersome. Today, Malaysia is a top tourist destination. I enjoy travelling by car on the beautiful highways and trunk roads almost every month, I go to the many excellent tourist destinations within a day’s reach from Kuala Lumpur. I also try to visit the towns and villages of Sabah and Sarawak when I can,” he adds.

When he joined the programme was called the Silver Hair programme, it was actually recommended to him by a Malay friend in Kuala Lumpur. “There was little information about that programme available at the time, but I was confident that this would be an ideal way to settle down in South East Asia,” Thomas says.

Having worked in financial services in Switzerland since he was 18, Thomas spent some time in Malaysia on business and holiday during the time he was stationed in Singapore in the 1980s. “I studied Sinology and Japanology after my MBA in Switzerland and then worked for many years in Asia after that. For me Malaysia is the focal point for three major

Asian cultures and offers ample possibilities to live in these cultures and also visit the countries with their historical sites within short flying distances.” Were there any other countries you considered before settling on Malaysia? “I looked at India, Thailand and countries in North Africa, but the living standards, economic and political stability as well as the excellent infrastructure for a permanent living base were the factors that ultimately made me choose Malaysia as a home,” he explains.

Like many expats living in Malaysia, Thomas has had his share of favourite holiday experiences here. “One of my favourite holidays was spent in Langkawi, which is much more beautiful than any island in Thailand or Indonesia, in my opinion. In Sabah, the diving is great. I went to Sarawak two times to visit the National Parks and then to Kuantan, Redang Island, Penang, Ipoh, Cameron Highlands, Johor Baru, Terengganu and on numerous occasions to the Genting Highlands. It is so convenient to travel by car in Malaysia and I would highly recommend all these places and more to other expats,” he regales. So how is KL different from other cities in the world? “Kuala Lumpur for me was the town I could always imagine spending my retirement life to the fullest and it was easy to get a flat and bring all

my household goods either by ship or a moving company. I had made a few Malay friends before I settled here and many more good friends in several social associations in KL.”

Being so far away from home, do you miss some of your favourite things? “When I am not there for Christmas and New Year, I really feel like I have missed out on something in my life. Swiss food is my favourite, however, I do get regular visits from home and I get the usual specialities from there, which is very important for me. But very often I just go to a Swiss restaurant in KL to really enjoy a good bite of my home food.”

So what specifically drew you to join the MM2H programme? “As I have a need for a permanent home in Asia, this programme has everything from the point of view of real estate investments, banking services and needs for a pleasant and well organized retired life. This long-term visa gives assurance for a stable lifestyle, which can hardly be found elsewhere with its unique features. I’d definitely recommend the MM2H programme to others, if they are prepared to make the necessary adjustments in their lives when they come here, in terms of climate adjustments and social changes.”