

THE NEW EUROPE

August - September 2011

www.theneweurope.co.uk

POPULARITY STRUGGLE

GERMAN CONSUMER BOOM YET TO BENEFIT ANGELA MERKEL

A RACE FOR THE PLANET

THE WORLD SKY RACE TO FLY THE FLAG FOR HUMANITY

TIMBERLAND INVESTMENT

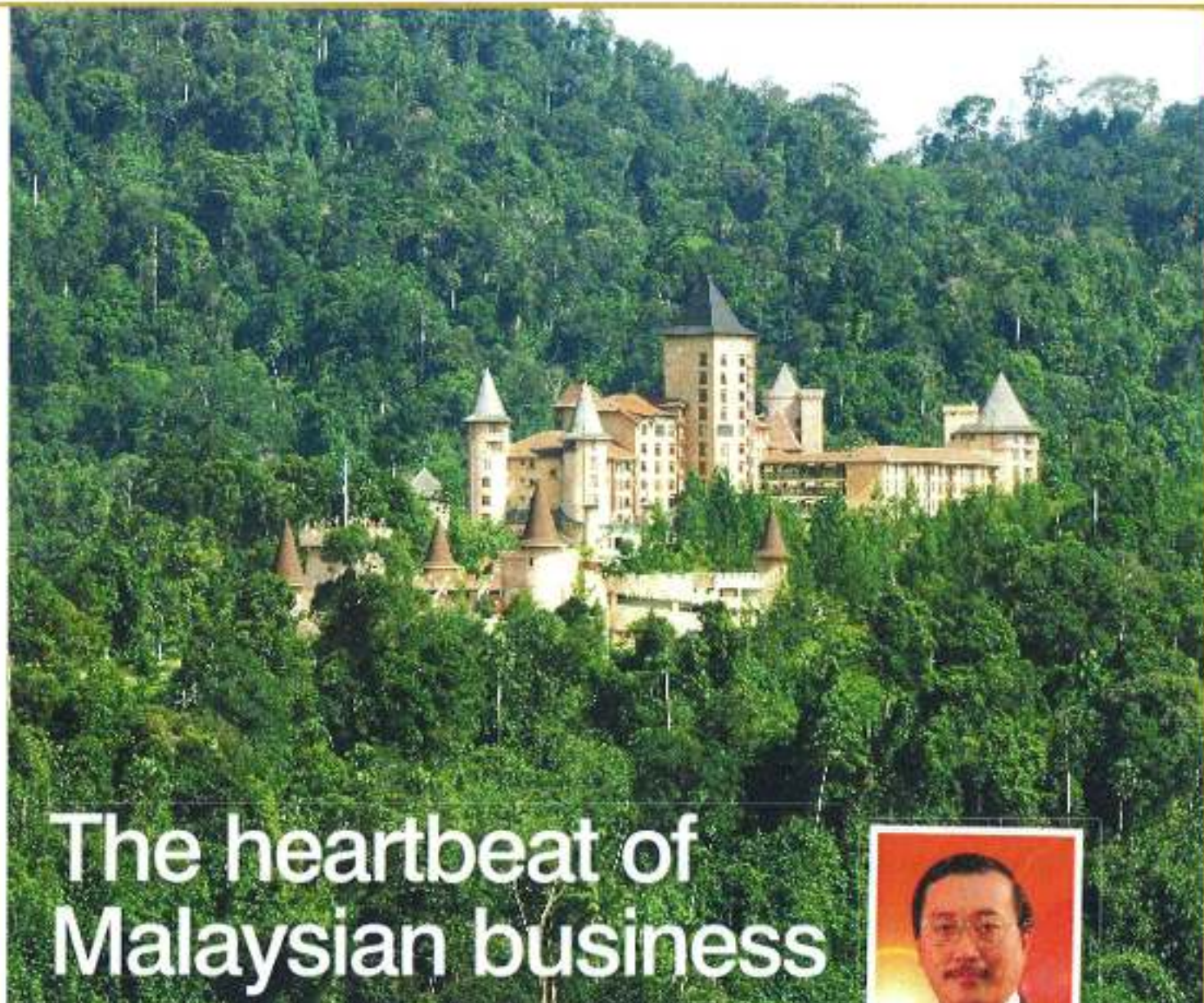
UNDERSTAND THE RISKS TO MAXIMISE THE GAINS

THE HEARTBEAT OF MALAYSIAN BUSINESS

TAN SRI DATO' SERI VINCENT TAN CHEE YIOUN'S LATEST VISION BRINGS FRENCH FLAIR TO THE EAST

UK £3.95
Europe €5.10

INSIDE: MARKETS & TRADING • EXECUTIVE EDUCATION • AVIATION • TRAVEL • REAL ESTATE



The heartbeat of Malaysian business



Tan Sri Dato' Seri Vincent Tan Chee Yioun's most recent venture sees French-inspired luxury in the rainforests of Malaysia...

Set within tropical rainforest in the Berjaya Hills of Malaysia is a unique hotel and health spa. The Chateau Spa & Organic Wellness Resort, as the name suggests, has a distinctly Gallic feel and is home to the world's first completely organic health spa, La Santé. The New Europe caught up with owner Tan Sri Dato' Seri Vincent Tan Chee Yioun, to discuss The Chateau and find out how he has become one of Asia's most successful business people.

The New Europe: You are known as the person behind Berjaya Corporation of Malaysia. Tell us a little about how this group began, and where it is today...

Tan Sri Dato' Seri Vincent Tan Chee Yioun: Berjaya Corporation started way back in 1984 when I acquired a controlling stake

in a steel company known as Berjaya Kawat Berhad. There were many areas of business that I was keen to pursue and Berjaya Kawat was the vehicle through which I could grow my business. Over the years, and through a series of acquisitions and organic growth, Berjaya Kawat has grown into Berjaya Corporation.

Berjaya Corporation, today, is a diversified conglomerate in Malaysia that is listed on the Malaysian stock exchange and has total revenues exceeding RM6.5 billion (approximately U.S.\$2 billion). Its core businesses includes consumer marketing and direct selling, financial services, property investment and development, hotels and resorts and recreation development, gaming and lottery management, food and beverage, development of sanitary landfill, motor assembly and distribution.

TNE: The hospitality industry in Malaysia faces many challenges – what do you see as the most significant?

TSVT: The most significant challenge for the hospitality industry in Malaysia, in my opinion, is the shortage of human resource. As a result of the opening of many new hotels in the region (Singapore, Thailand, Bali, Macau and China), there has been a great demand for skilled workers which has led to many skilled workers in our local industry being drawn away to these countries. The pull factor is great given the competitive packages offered by these new hotels and the high regard for their locations as preferred tourist destinations. I see this outflow of resources continuing until such time Malaysia improves its standing in the hospitality industry.

To gain a higher footing in the international hospitality industry, more needs to be done to promote Malaysia as a tourist destination of choice in this region. At the moment, we trail behind Thailand and Bali and several other locations as preferred holiday destinations. We, the hotel owners and operators, as well as our Malaysian Tourism Board, need to each play our part in making this happen. I have invested in The Chateau as I believe the unique concept it offers will provide the required pull factor to draw in tourists from abroad.

TNE: The Chateau in Berjaya Hills is a bold concept – why do you think it will be successful?

TSVT: I believe that The Chateau is going to be successful as it is the first in the world to offer a complete organic experience. The Chateau has also drawn interest from around the world. In line with the direction of the global leisure industry moving into spa resorts and destination spas, we are definitely poised to be at the forefront, especially in Asia. Incidentally, we are also the first European concept spa in Asia. In our pre-opening phase, we featured on over 40 websites globally and in many international travel magazines. This is very encouraging for us, and I think we are on the right path to position The Chateau as one of the very top unique wellness destinations.

TNE: Giving back to people has been a huge part of your life – what brought about your philanthropic activity? We understand you have plans to donate half your wealth to good causes such as scholarships...

TSVT: I was not born into wealth and had to work very hard to get to where I am today. I am fully aware of what it is like to be without the material comforts of life. Indeed I consider myself very blessed to have received the opportunities that have allowed me to succeed in life from a material standpoint. In a sense, I believe I have received much from God and I should in turn give back to society

by helping those who are less fortunate and in need.

In my early years I contributed what I could to various charitable causes. In 1995, I decided to start a charitable foundation known as VTCY Foundation (now known as Better Malaysia Foundation) to provide aid and relief for medical and charitable purposes. I take great satisfaction in the knowledge that the foundation has, over the years, been able to help and touch the lives of many people who were in need. As for the donation of half my wealth, it was a pledge I made in April this year after reading 'The Giving Pledge' initiated by Bill and Melinda Gates. The Gates, together with Mr Warren Buffet, have been a great source of inspiration for me, as they have donated most of their wealth for the benefit of mankind. These are people who not only understand the power of their wealth and the higher purposes for which it can be used, but also take it as their duty and responsibility to see that it is used accordingly. There is only so much a person needs for himself and his family, and for those whose wealth exceeds a certain level, it makes sense that a large part of it be applied and used in a meaningful way. And there's no better way than to help those who are in need and to make the world a better place. It is my hope that the pledge I made will also inspire others to think of the good they can do with their wealth and to accordingly contribute to worthy causes and to help those in need.

TNE: Which areas of your work are you most proud of?

TSVT: I enjoy my work and the process of building my businesses, but what I am proud of is the impact these businesses have on the lives of people both through the jobs that are created, and the products and services that we offer. I am also proud of how these businesses have contributed to form a part of the social and economic growth of our country. But most of all, I am proud that I am able through my success in business to help others through my philanthropic efforts. At the end of it all, what is important is how we have touched the lives of others around us.

TNE: What is your outlook for the Asian economies?

TSVT: My outlook is optimistic as I believe most Asian governments have built up strong foreign reserves. Furthermore, I believe that the Asian economies will continue to recover and expand in 2011 and 2012 as I expect the high growth to continue despite the modest recovery from the major industrial economies. ■

Contact Details

For information on The Chateau and La Santé spa please visit: www.thechateau.com.my



Above: The Chateau offers French-inspired luxury with tropical views

Below: La Santé spa is uniquely organic

Inset: Tan Sri (Datuk) Seri Vincent Tan, CEO Yous

