

The return of KLGCC brand

Malaysia's top club to maintain its legacy as it bids farewell to PGA Tour

SIME Darby Property Berhad has officially changed the name of its flagship golf destination back to Kuala Lumpur Golf & Country Club (KLGCC).

This was confirmed in an exclusive *TeeUp* interview with Sime Darby Property Group Managing Director Datuk Azmir Merican, who said that the decision was taken after careful deliberation and made to "focus on creating a fresh synergy between the club's brand identity and the overall KLGCC Resort Township Development project".

The move brings to an end to the last bastion of the US PGA Tour in Kuala Lumpur.

Azmir said they would now continue the club's legacy with the return to the KLGCC brand and added that the name change would become official tomorrow – in the same year that Kuala Lumpur Golf & Country Club celebrates its 30th anniversary.

"We are positioning KLGCC as a top destination for avid golfers, as well as their family and friends with a slew of activities and ambience that suit multi-generational needs," said Azmir.

"The club is a home away from home for our members and we will continue to ensure that their experience at KLGCC is set on the same high standards as they had enjoyed all these years.

"On October 1, 2021, the club introduced the KLGCC mobile app to enhance the members' experience, allowing them easy access to the service bookings for golf, food & beverage outlets, other facilities and more.

The KLGCC app is available on both Google Play Store and Apple App Store," said Azmir.

Following are excerpts of the interview:

Q: Is it correct that the name change of the club was brought about by the expiry of the agreement with the PGA Tour, and when exactly was this?

A: The agreement between the club and the PGA Tour under the TPC network umbrella was based on a 5+5 years brand licensing contract that was subject to renewal. It was officially signed in 2016, with a renewal due in 2021. However, after careful deliberation by senior management with the Board of

Sime Darby Property Berhad, a decision was made to focus on creating a fresh synergy between the club's brand identity and the overall KLGCC Resort Township Development project. The refreshed look of the new Kuala Lumpur Golf & Country Club brand, under the collective master brand of KLGCC Resort Township Development, is to leverage on the premium value of the destination across all of its business entities – unifying them and creating a single brand that will carry its characteristics and prestige to events, as well as home ownership. This year also marks KLGCC's 30th anniversary and we aim to restore the historical legacy of the club by bringing back the prestigious and classic KLGCC brand that represents an exceptional modern and refreshing experience for our club members.

Q: KLGCC was positioned among the best golf destinations in Asia, and the premier local club, why then was the TPC partnership taken up in the first place?

A: Back then, following international exposure through the hosting of major golf tournaments, steps were taken to further elevate the club's global recognition and standards. Being part of the TPC network would further strengthen that status and positioning. Within 18 months after officially joining the TPC network, the club's West Course was ranked 78th on the list of the World's 100 Greatest Golf Courses and was further recognised as one of the Top 100 Golf Courses in Asia and Top 100 Platinum Golf & Country Clubs of the World 2020-2021. We will now continue the legacy with our return to the KLGCC brand.

Q: What benefits were there in place for the membership?

A: Through the TPC partnership, our club members had additional access to all 30-plus TPC clubs in North America.

Q: More than a year was lost to Covid-19, did the club receive compensation?

A: Although the normal activities were halted during the pandemic, the club continued to leverage on the brand association with the TPC network in commercial activities.



Kuala Lumpur Golf & Country Club's name change takes effect tomorrow.



Azmir confirmed the change.

Q: What sort of impact has the pandemic had on the club and the industry as a whole?

The pandemic certainly impacted the club, but we must remember that the situation, however, is not just unique to KLGCC. Every golf club in Malaysia, and many around the world, was affected by the multiple lockdowns that were necessary to curb the spread of the coronavirus. There was the inevitable loss of revenue for the club as well as the golf industry globally throughout this period. However, the pandemic gave us time to recalibrate and re-evaluate our responsibilities towards the members, hence our calculated move to refocus on the brand. We believe that with the excellent national immunisation rate we can enjoy a new version of normalcy starting with the return of our members to KLGCC.

Q: Do you agree with those folks who say that the pandemic in its own way, allowed golf course and their surrounding natural wild habitats to reinvigorate themselves?

A: As much as it would be simpler to take the easy route and focus only on the adverse impact the pandemic had on our lives, it would only be fair to also take note of the positives it brought. The pandemic definitely forced the world to stop and take stock, and during this period it gave our environment the rare opportunity to thrive without any human interference. That is almost once in a lifetime chance for nature. The constant stress on the greens was significantly reduced, allowing more maintenance care to be carried out on the courses. So yes, the pandemic gave the golf courses and their surrounding wild habitats a chance to reinvigorate in the last year or so.

Q: With this, what is the general condition of the two courses at your club?

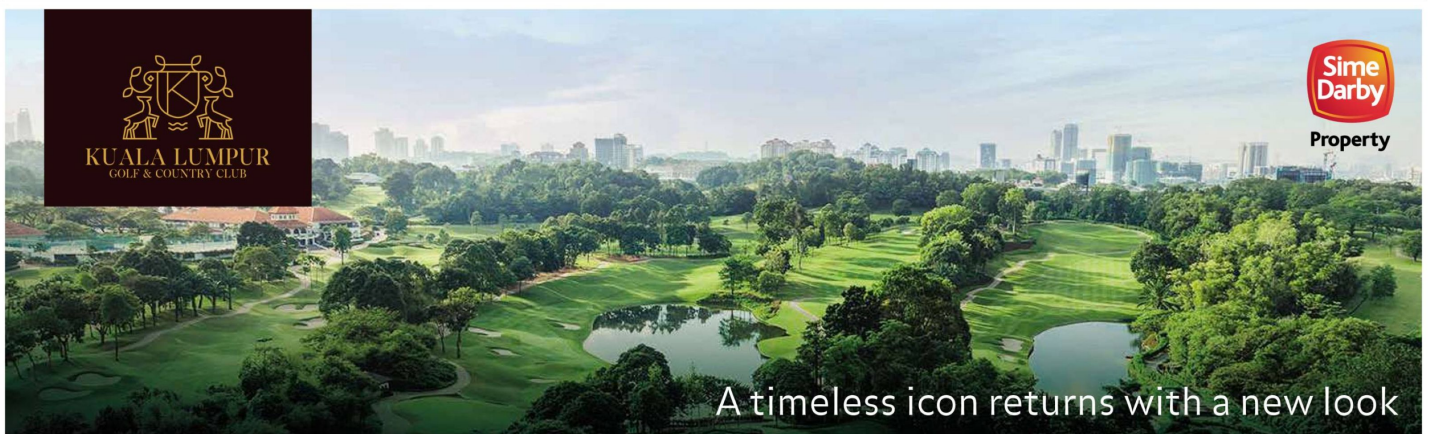
A: Regular maintenance with limited manpower capacity were still ongoing during the lockdown periods to ensure that both courses are well-kept for when the club reopens and our members return to KLGCC.

Q: KLGCC has for a long time being a popular venue for local corporate tournaments – and now with opening up again for events, you must be pleased?

A: Of course, we are very pleased with the easing of restrictions, which allows us to plan and organise more tournaments. We have already received plenty of enquiries for corporate and charity golf games from event organisers who are keen for KLGCC to play host to their events. The monthly medal events for club members resumed this month and the slots are filling up fast as our members are keen to return to their regular golfing schedules.

Q: What are the chances of the club hosting big international tournaments like you did when you had European, LPGA and PGA Tour events held at KLGCC each year?

A: As a club with internationally certified golf courses and with the invaluable experience of running world-class events in the past, it would only be prudent for KLGCC to continue the legacy with more such tournaments. We are optimistic that the gradual reopening of international borders and steady recovery of the global and local economic sectors will allow us opportunities to host major events at KLGCC. Our golf courses are equipped to host international tournaments and we are fortunate to have experienced personnel to manage such high scale events. When the opportunities present themselves we will be more than ready to play host to the top golfers from around the world and mark our return to the international tournament scene.



A timeless icon returns with a new look