

Remembering Flamingo

HOLLER! HOLLER!

Finally, some updates of my birthday getaway trip to Pulau Redang! Sorry for not keeping you posted earlier as there was no net access on the island or in Kuala Terengganu except for that short DotA stint at Dinosaur Cybercafe! Back home, I didn't go online because I was tired from running in and out of the hospital where my granny was admitted, and from hanging out with the gang.

We left for Redang on a wet Tuesday night after starting an hour later than expected. We would later stop for petrol and dinner at McDonalds. A healthy Grilled Chicken Foldover with a not so healthy Vanilla Coke.

Vince was already in KT, so the five of us packed into Alton's newly serviced car (with four new tires and all, costing a whopping 630 bucks) and sped off for a ... terrifying car ride.

The journey from Subang to Karak was smooth, and so was the ride to Kuantan on the new East Coast Highway. The ECH is a four-lane highway stretching from Karak to Kuantan, and is mostly straight and thus good for speeding. Alton drove rather fast, but the most frightening part of the drive was yet to come, as we later found out during our 250km double lane trunk road stretch from Kuantan to Kuala Terengganu. With my balls rolling all over Alton's car floor, I pulled my cap over my eyes and tried, unsuccessfully, to catch some winks.

Some of the memorable sights and towns we passed along the way were the Petronas refineries and plants at Gebeng, Teluk Kalong and Kerteh. Kerteh was magnificent. The clear night sky was set ablaze with naked flames shooting out of the towers at the refineries. The town looked like a giant glittering golden city in the night. I can't think of any other way to

describe the sight. We drove pass all those towns that I only previously read about in text books and in the papers.

I suppose we reached KT sometime close to 4am, arrived at Vince's house and crashed onto the bed, before resuming our trip in less than 2 hours! The car journey was tiring, consuming almost seven hours, and Alton drove all the way. Super stamina and superb driving indeed!

May 18th, Wednesday: We left for KT bus station after a simple but delicious breakfast at Vince's favorite coffee shop. The resort van was already waiting at the station, and we departed for Merang.

We hopped onto our ferry to Redang Island after enjoying some coconuts by the jetty. I managed to catch forty winks during the ride despite the rather choppy water. Alton was impressed that I could sleep EVERYWHERE when he could hardly close his eyelids even after seven long hours on the road.

We arrived on the island at about 11am. After registration, we were able to check into one of the two connected rooms. The room had four beds, and according to arrangements, BJ and I would take the second room next door. However we found out that the second room was also able to accommodate four people, so Alton eventually abandoned his room and came over to join us.

We had lunch and our first of two snorkeling trips near one of the islands next to Redang. My first snorkeling experience. It was also my first time 'floating' in the sea with the help of a life vest. I swallowed some very salty sea water, but that was all forgotten when I came across beautiful coral and fishes swimming within inches of my floating self!

It rained on the night of my birthday, and going to dinner proved to be a hassle. Alton, BJ, Esq and I had a small birthday toast in the room after dinner on what was an otherwise gloomy evening. I made my birthday wish over a sip of Vodka-Sprite-Coke concoction.

Remembering Flamingo

19th May: The second day was more eventful, and certainly the most memorable one. We started the day with a buffet breakfast at the resort's restaurant before heading over to the Marine Park for our snorkeling trip. This time the coral were more beautiful, and also more alive! We had fishes nibbling off our hands when we fed them with bread, which was kinda cool. I enjoyed floating in the sea, without a care in the world under the hot blazing sun. To me, that was fun. I didn't really swim or explore as far out as the rest, but there was a moment when the coral came so close to me I was almost afraid of stepping on them!

We had some good lunch at the restaurant before retiring for a short nap in preparation for our evening beach escapades. Evening came, and we had a jolly good time at the beach, snapping some memorable pictures, including Vincent's Magnificent Sand Castle and Vincent the Mermaid.

After dinner we strolled along the beach, before ending up at the disco for my first ever shorts and slippers dance mania!

What happened later was somewhat not expected although it was planned by the gang. We gulped down a few glasses of Vodka-Sprite. I had two, while Alton knocked back seven. My tummy couldn't hold all the liquor very well and I soon threw up in the toilet. Alton and Esq started to get a little high and our loud commotion woke poor BL from his slumber.

I snoozed off at around 5am and woke up just before noon for a quick soak in the Jacuzzi to sober up after the night's 'events'. While massaging myself on the pulsating water jets, I felt something being trapped between my toes and it was, believe or not, a dollar note. That was the only souvenir I brought home from Redang after being discouraged from taking any coral back to the mainland. Alton suffered a terrible hangover, while the rest of us seemed ok, except for minor sunburns here and there.

Our ferry ride back to Merang jetty was VERY nauseating, thanks to the fact that we were seated behind. It is probably

the best place for your stomach to get whipped and churned by the waves till you puke. And I really puked!

We reached Vince's place in the evening before taking a rest and having dinner. We ate loads of keropok lekor "deep fried fish cakes" while in KT. We also happened to observe how they made lekor, and the process was, well, horrid. Most of the time, we were just enjoying the beach view around town. Thanks Vince, for being such a marvelous host!

We were in KT for two nights before returning to KL on Sunday evening after an early dinner. Two cars departed KT slightly after 730pm, and I drove Alton's car from Kuantan to Subang, stopping at a Kerteh plant to snap more pictures and grabbing burgers from McDonalds before continuing our journey home.

A very funny incident happened when we stopped at Maran for a toilet break. It was pouring and on the way back from the loo, Alton ran in the rain toward the car. He opened the door and accidentally hit his head against the door frame while rushing in. He cried out in pain. I was shocked and looked at Harv. Harv looked at me. We both panicked. We thought it was serious until Alton turned and looked at us, spotting a grin. CCB!

Five minutes later when we were back on the highway, Alton saw blood on the tissue he had used to wipe his forehead. Initially, he thought it was rainwater and didn't realize he was actually bleeding. Harv administered first-aid and that was how a cute flamingo plaster found its place on Alton's forehead.