

# Pom Pom Island

**W**ith a name like Pom Pom, it's hard to forget this gem of an island located on the east coast of Sabah. Our trip to Pom Pom Island was already an adventure by itself – The pelting rain followed us on the boat ride all the way from Semporna; by the time my team and I arrived, we were drenched but happy to see land! Thankfully, nothing but sunshine paved the way for the rest of our trip.

Pom Pom Island Resort is located some 40 minutes by speedboat from the town of Semporna, Tawau. Originally the island was named Pom Pong but over time, the name Pom Pom proved to be more catchy and easier to remember. The resort is built on 40 acres of land with a sprawling frontage. The long stretch of beach offers ample sunbathing spots for you to soak up the sun! However, the first thing that caught my eye was the huge dining and reception area. Never before have I seen such a massive wooden structure at an island resort – it is a beautiful piece of architecture and I was fascinated with the detail. As I further explored the resort, I noticed the attention to detail in each of the structures. There are currently three types of accommodation: Water Bungalows, Beach Villas and Garden Villas. A combination of natural materials was used to construct the buildings, from coconut tree bark for the walls, selangan batu timber for the floors and for the ceiling, the very sturdy belian wood. I was also impressed with the tasteful décor in each room – simple with an elegant touch, giving the rooms a 'clean' look with very little clutter.

Our friendly guide Ronnie gave us a tour of the resort. The Beach and Garden Villas are for everyone, from travelling friends to honeymoon couples on – not only are they spacious but I loved the idea of having the beach literally at your doorstep. I spent a good portion of my afternoons falling asleep on a hammock, listening to the gentle lapping of the waves. But for the ultimate luxury, stay at the Water Bungalows. Imagine diving right into the ocean at your own personal 'jetty' and enjoy the marine life swimming right below you. Located nearby is a special bungalow that provides much-needed body massages and heavenly reflexology sessions. All this with a fantastic view of the sea!

Back on land, we were given a tour of the island's very own vegetable and fruit garden. Ronnie explained that the resort supplies its own fresh produce where possible. We saw a colourful combination of eggplant, chillies, bananas, papayas and even dragonfruit just begging to be on the kitchen table. Another unique aspect of the resort is the use



A trip to the nearby Buhay Dulang

of RO (reverse osmosis) water. This means that the water supply is filtered several times, making it purer than what is normally found in our household taps. According to Peter Loong, the owner of the resort, Pom Pom is the first resort to implement the use of RO water. We further traipsed the resort and found it well-equipped with a meeting room, a games room for a round of billiards and darts, a souvenir and convenience store and internet services. Plenty to do should you ever decide to peel yourself away from the lure of the beach!

Scuba divers are well taken care of by the experienced divemasters working here. Apart from the surrounding marine attractions of Pom Pom, divers can opt to explore nearby

diving sites, such as those of Mataking, Timba Timba, Kalapuan, Pandanan and Bohey Dulang (which is part of the Tun Sakaran Marine Park).

As the sun begins to set, nothing beats a walk along the starfish-studded beach. Divers flock to the common area come dinner time to share their amazing underwater photos and exchange dive experiences. Need a drink? Nothing the friendly bartender can't fix. Whether you wish to explore the oceanic wonders of the East Coast or escape the humdrum of the city, the pleasures of Pom Pom will not disappoint. For more info, visit <http://pompomisland.com> or call 088-233966/959 or fax 088-234088. E-mail [info@pompomisland.com](mailto:info@pompomisland.com)