

No Dull Moments on Malaysia's Duty-Free Island

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In 2006, when Allan Callaway, 68, sailed his boat from Australia to Langkawi, Malaysia, via Indonesia, he had no idea he was sailing into his future.

It's not hard to fall in love with Langkawi. "The scenery around here is superb," says Allan. "The weather is perfect, and expats can buy homes easily. The island has duty-free status. There are no import duties or sales tax, which makes living here extremely affordable. The cost of living is a good 50% lower than in Australia. What's not to love?"

It's not just the living expenses that are economical. "Mooring is also very affordable, the cheapest in the region. In Langkawi, unlike Thailand or Singapore, you can leave your boat moored for as long as you want without restrictions. You never have to take your boat into international waters, unless you want to," says Allan. "Even fuel is cheap, around \$2 per gallon."

The affordable prices and laidback rules are what make Langkawi a hotspot for the global yachting community. It also helped make it a top contender for Allan's retirement, but he still had a few years of work in front of him.

Allan was no stranger to the expat lifestyle.

His career in the mining, power generation, and marine industries provided him with a lot of opportunities for overseas travel. But in 1993, when his company offered him the opportunity to relocate to Bangkok, he jumped at the chance. It was his first foray into the expat lifestyle, but not his last.

"I loved the idea of raising my kids overseas and providing them with an international education," says Allan. "We started in Bangkok and then moved to Jakarta, Shanghai, Dubai, and Vietnam, all for work."

In 2009, Allan decided to retire, and Langkawi was calling his name. "We also considered retirement in the South Island



Drop anchor and head out to explore—Langkawi is Malaysia's island paradise.

of New Zealand, but climate and cost of living were our final determinants," says Allan. Langkawi checked all the boxes.

He moved to Langkawi and enjoyed island life for a while until work came calling again, and he took a job in Vietnam for two years.

"After moving back to Langkawi in 2012, I was finished being an employee. But I still needed to do something and stay active. I wasn't going to sit back and vegetate," he says.

Since the marine industry was such a significant part of his life, his friends kept pressuring him to start a boat brokerage. At first, he was hesitant, but finally, he decided to go for it. "Starting Latitude 6 was a great decision. I'm glad I gave in to the peer pressure."

Now, Allan spends most of his workdays at the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club working from his office, a 52-foot motor launch. Or he is in Rebak, a neighboring island, where he opened up his second branch of Latitude 6. It's no tedious office job for Allan. His days are spent checking out powerboats and superyachts in some of Malaysia's most beautiful panoramas.

Allan's company provides comprehensive and bespoke services to any vessel

moored or sailing into Langkawi. Latitude 6 is a one-stop-shop for the community's yachting needs.

"The greatest benefit of buying and selling boats in Langkawi is that there are no taxes or stamp duties. We also assist with immigration, customs, and port authority clearances, insurance, equipment sales, towing, vessel delivery, and bunkering," says Allan.

If it has to do with marine vessels, Latitude 6 can help. When superyachts come in from Thailand to get fuel, alcohol, and supplies, Allan takes care of all of their needs and assists them with their documentation. If they need something from another country, he can help with freight forwarding as well.

A few months ago, he assisted a 62-foot, 67-ton motor yacht from Phuket, Thailand, to its new home at the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club.

There's never a dull moment; those kinds of contracts keep it thrilling for Allan.

When he's not towing yachts and supplying superyachts with 130,000 gallons of duty-free fuel, he's pleasure cruising around on his powerboat.

Langkawi is an archipelago that consists of 100 islands, so there is a lot to explore in very close proximity.

"We do a lot of day trips. We love mooring in the marine park and seeing all the sea life. Not long ago, we saw Bryde whales and their calves feeding. We see dolphins all the time, and the landscape is magnificent," Allan says. Or they go to the famous Pregnant Maiden Island, where the water is crystal clear for snorkeling and fishing.

A couple times a month, he plays golf. He can choose from a couple different courses on the island. The award-winning Ernie Els course at the Datai Hotel has a million-year-old rainforest as a backdrop – for a round of golf, it costs RM450 (\$107).

Another option is the Gunung Raya Golf Resort. That course is designed by famed golf architect, Max Wexler, and a round costs RM318 (\$76). No matter where he plays, the views are outstanding, and it is a fraction of the price it would be in Australia.

Between Allan's work, golfing, and boating, he's a pretty busy man. The fact that he gets to do it all on a tax-free island with some of the best panoramas in Southeast Asia makes his "retirement" even better. As Allan says, "What's not to love?" ■

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