

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MERDEKA DAY MARVEL!
YTL HOTELS TRIUMPHANTLY RETURNS RESCUED TURTLES BACK TO SEA**



Valentine



Barbara



Covid

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 31 August, 2024 – In a heartwarming celebration of Merdeka Day, YTL Hotels proudly announces the triumphant return of three rescued and rehabilitated sea turtles to their natural habitat. This symbolic event underscores our unwavering commitment to wildlife conservation and the preservation of Malaysia's rich marine biodiversity. The release of these turtles at Gaya Island Resort and Pangkor Laut Resort was witnessed by representatives from the Sabah Wildlife Department, the Marine Research Foundation, WWF veterinarians, MARECET, other distinguished dignitaries, media, influencers, and in-house guests.

Gaya Island Resort: The Journey of Covid and Barbara

At Gaya Island Resort, the spotlight shines on the release of two rehabilitated Green Sea turtles, affectionately named Covid and Barbara. These resilient creatures have overcome tremendous odds, thanks to the unwavering dedication and expert care provided by our Marine Centre team.

Covid's recovery journey began in March 2020 during the pandemic, which inspired its affectionate name, Covid. It was found struggling near a water village at Pulau Gaya, severely weakened, malnourished, and with a damaged carapace, leaving its chances of survival slim. However, after years of intensive treatment—including multiple surgeries, medication, acupuncture, and buoyancy therapy—Covid made a remarkable comeback. Today, it returns to the sea with a satellite tracker, allowing us to monitor its progress and contribute vital research for future turtle rescues.

Interestingly, after swimming for a while, Covid made a surprising U-turn and returned to Gaya Island Resort, perhaps drawn by the attention it receives from our staff and guests. Covid will continue its journey with us at the resort indefinitely, and we are thrilled to welcome it back.

Barbara's story began on the east coast of Sabah in March 2023. Rescued near Mabul Island, she arrived at our Marine Centre with symptoms similar to Covid's but less severe. Barbara received the same diligent care, and after months of rehabilitation, she too has shown significant improvements. Both Covid and Barbara spent their final months in a specially designed sea cage, re-acclimating to the ocean environment before their long-awaited release home.

Pangkor Laut Resort: The Resilience of Valentine

Meanwhile, at Pangkor Laut Resort, another touching story unfolds with the release of Valentine, a critically endangered Hawksbill Sea turtle. Valentine's journey to recovery began on February 16, 2024, when local residents found him in distress on Pangkor Island. Malnourished and chronically debilitated, Valentine was transferred to our Conservation Centre, where he received life-saving care.

Through a combination of medication and careful feeding, Valentine's condition improved dramatically. His weight increased, his vitality returned, and today, he is ready to swim freely once more in the ocean that is his home.

A Commitment to Conservation

These releases are not just a testament to the resilience of these remarkable turtles but also a reflection of YTL Hotels' ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship. As we celebrate Merdeka Day, we are reminded of the importance of protecting our natural heritage for future generations. The release of Covid, Barbara, and Valentine symbolises hope, perseverance, and the enduring connection between humanity and nature.

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About YTL Hotels

YTL Hotels owns and manages a prestigious collection of award-winning resorts, hotels, boutique experiences and Spa Villages with a hospitality footprint across Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Australia, France, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom, including Pangkor Laut Resort, voted the World's Best Resort in 2003 by Condé Nast Traveller UK and top 20 Best Resorts in Asia in 2023 by Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards US. The Gainsborough Bath Spa, a part of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World's collection of legendary hotels, was named in the 2017 Condé Nast Traveller Awards World's Top 100 and listed amongst the Best Hotels in the UK as well as the Top Destination Spa Resorts in the World in the 2022 and 2023 Condé Nast Traveller Readers' Choice Awards. The Ritz-Carlton, Koh Samui was named in 2023 by Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards US as one of the top 15 best resorts in Thailand.

The portfolio, which embraces the brand promise of Treasured Places, Treasured Moments, also encompasses the ownership management of Marriott International properties in Australia and Kuala Lumpur as well as properties under the brand's distinctive Autograph Collection banner. Properties under the Marriott International partnership include The Ritz-Carlton, Koh Samui as well as Higashiyama Niseko Village, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, named in TIME's World's Greatest Places 2021 list and also the first Ritz-Carlton Reserve in Japan, complementing YTL Hotels' master plan for Niseko Village.

With each new experience that it presents, the company strives to embrace and highlight the natural essence of culture, character and tradition of its surroundings. YTL Hotels is the hospitality arm of YTL Corporation Berhad. Visit ytlhotels.com for more information and follow us on our social media platforms for #YTLTravels.

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For high-resolution images, please visit [YTL Hotels Media Gallery](#). For reservations and enquiries, please contact YTL Travel Centre at +60 3 2783 1000 or email travelcentre@ytlhotels.com

FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

Geraldine Dreiser

Vice President – Marketing & Communications
geraldine@ytlhotels.com

Cynthia Peris

PR Consultant
cynthia.peris@ytlhotels.com