

A spin in zero gravity

Four Malaysians travel to Amsterdam for an out-of-this-world space adventure

Dateline: KUALA LUMPUR

By BAVANI M
bavanim@thestar.com.my

AWESOME! Amazing! Unforgettable! These were just some of the adjectives used by the three lucky winners of the Heineken "Legendary Travellers" contest who won a chance of a lifetime to experience space travel in Amsterdam, Netherlands recently.

I can attest to every word and more because I was there with them enjoying the ride every step of the way.

The Ultimate Voyage contest, held late last year, allowed winners to undergo flight training as well as space voyage.

This was part of the beer brand's global Voyage campaign that encouraged individuals to become explorers and travellers instead of tourists, in line with its Man of the World theme.

Heineken believes that there is a legendary traveller waiting to be unearthed within each person, inspiring people to push their boundaries and step out of their comfort zone.

The space voyage included a unique astronaut training mission organised by Space Expedition Corporation (SXC), Amsterdam — the same training real astronauts go through.

"Through our Voyage campaign, we want to inspire people to be resourceful and open to the world. We are rewarding a select few to

go beyond their borders by taking them on the ultimate voyage — an experience that truly allows them to journey to new frontiers," said Heineken Malaysia marketing manager Jessie Chuah.

The four of us, including Jerry Siau, Kimberly Lay and Mah Soon Sin, were more than inspired. We got to don space suits (complete with our names and country flag), co-pilot a plane, and experience a flight simulator of a space craft.

When the winners initially got the call informing them of their prize, some were suspicious.

"I thought someone was playing a mean trick on me," said Mah a 29-year-old lawyer.

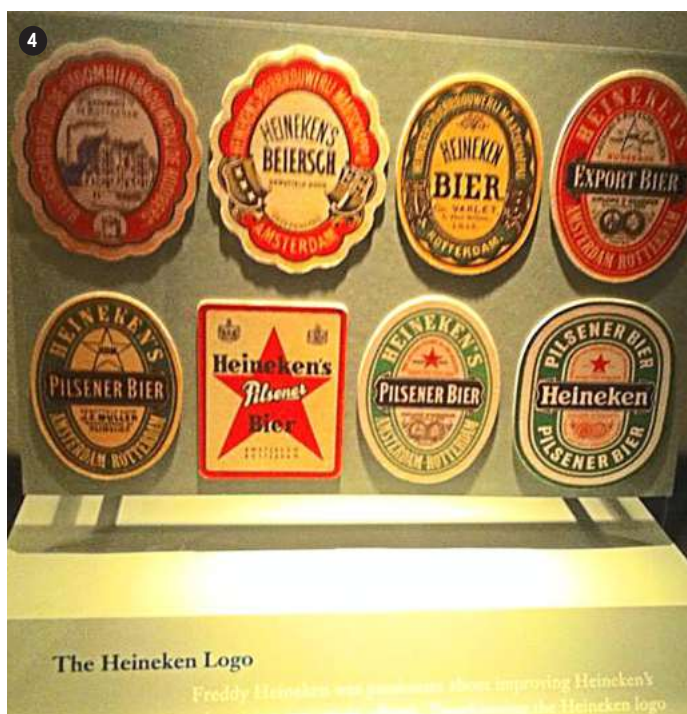
Both Siau and Lay, a 34-year-old car salesman and 33-year-old product manager respectively, dismissed the calls when they were first told the good news.

"Things like this don't happen to me. So I was very sceptical," Siau said.

Surprisingly, all four of us were *Star Trek* fans, so it was indeed a bonus to enjoy a holiday and at the same time get to live out our childhood dreams as "pilots" and "astronauts".

We arrived on a cold morning at Schiphol Airport Amsterdam after a 13-hour flight from Kuala Lumpur. After going through immigration and baggage, we were transferred to the NH Amsterdam Centre Hotel, a four-star hotel conveniently located in the heart of the city.

Lay was shrieking with excitement when we found out where we were going to stay. We were located in the centre of the enter-



Selamat Datang - Herzlich Willkommen

Terima kasih - Danke

register now!

Intake now: German Language Classes

July - December 2014

A1a: once a week

Monday, evening 7 - 10pm
Wednesday, afternoon 3pm - 5pm
Saturday, afternoon 1pm - 4pm

A 2a: once a week

Saturday, afternoon 1pm - 4pm

Full A Level (A1a+A1b+A2a+A2b):

Morning Class or
every Monday - Thursday, 9:30am - 12:30pm

B 1.1: once a week

Friday, evening 7 - 10pm

B 1 Intense

Morning Class or
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 9:30am - 12:30pm

A1b: once a week

Tuesday, evening 7 - 10pm
Saturday, morning 09:30am - 12:30pm

A 2b: once a week

Saturday, morning 9:30am - 12:30pm

in 6 months

Evening Class

every Monday - Thursday, 7pm - 10pm

Evening Class

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 7pm - 10pm

NEW

NEW

NEW

TALK: STUDY IN GERMANY TUITION FREE

by Dr. Guido Schnieders, DAAD

Thursday, 19 June at 6pm

www.mgs.org.my

tainment, fashion and dining district with the best of shopping and nightlife.

It was a short stroll to the city's top destinations like the Van Gogh Museum, the high-end PC Hooft shopping street, and the Vondelpark.

But the real surprise came when we finally checked into our rooms. There sitting on the bed was a beautiful Heineken backpack. And inside was a stunning astronaut/pilot suit in dark blue with our respective names emblazoned on it together with the country flag. And it was in my size! It was simply

gorgeous.

The suit was an indication of the fun that we were all going to experience and it made me giddy with anticipation.

G Force

It took almost two hours to get to Seppe Airport from our hotel in Amsterdam the next day. All four of us were suited up in our uniforms and could not wait to fly. Yup, you heard me. We were going to fly.

We were ushered into a room and there were given a briefing on

1 (From left) Siau, Mah, the writer and Lay with pilots giving the thumbs up after passing flight training.

2 A screen shot of Mah inside the Desdemona simulator.

3 The Desdemona is a state-of-the-art simulator to train pilots and astronauts.

4 The Heineken logos over the years.

► SEE NEXT PAGE