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Travelling Dutchman

Verkuil has no complaints about his nomadic lifestyle



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 Photos by **LIM CHENG KIAT**

WHEN Hugo Verkuil was transferred to Kuala Lumpur for work, he was happy and excited to begin another journey in a different country.

"Travelling has always been a part of my life. When I was a college student, it was a norm to be away from my country and going on holidays.

"We will make plans and backpack our way around. The longest break I had was one year when I travelled around the United States," said Verkuil when met at his office in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur.

When he was posted in Rome, Italy for two years, he said there were times when he would have to travel out of the country every other month.

That was when he saw himself visiting up to 35 different countries over the two-and-the-half-year stint in Italy.

Prior to Italy, he was in Istanbul, Turkey where he oversaw the Middle Eastern and African ice-cream markets.

"My mother told me that I would never marry because I travelled so much and but I proved her wrong.

"It is also funny as my wife, who is also Dutch, has been working and living abroad for some time too," he said.

In their home in Bukit Damansara, Verkuil's two boys aged three and five have adapted well to the Malaysian climate and lifestyle.

His wife has her hands full teaching English to refugee children as well as attending to parent-teacher association meetings and sending the children to extracurricular classes.

"Last year I took my family back home to the Netherlands and we were greeted by snowstorms and freezing temperatures of -10°C.

"It was the first time my boys experienced snow. They went out to play and within a few minutes they were yelling and crying to be brought back in," Verkuil recalled.

Besides travelling, the 38-year-old spends time with his friends playing field hockey and mountain biking at the Forest Research Institute Malaysia.

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To 'cool' off after a hard day's work, Verkuil enjoys a stick of ice-cream in his office. After all he has been working with ice-creams for close to a decade.

In his free time, he takes a drive out for a quick fix of Malaysian delicacies – satay is his favourite.

"The taste and smell of the chunky peanut sauce is just too good to resist, I will wake up for satay, anytime," he said before heading off to an evening meeting.



Winding down: Verkuil enjoys a stick of ice-cream every day without fail after a hard day's work.