

YTL *life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine

Spread of Love
Pleasures of a
Highland Pique-Nique

Of Nature
and Nurture
Life on Gaya Island

New Journey
of Luxury
Debuting the
Kasara Brand

MUSE Bath Townhouses • Highland Hot Pot • Fall for Niseko



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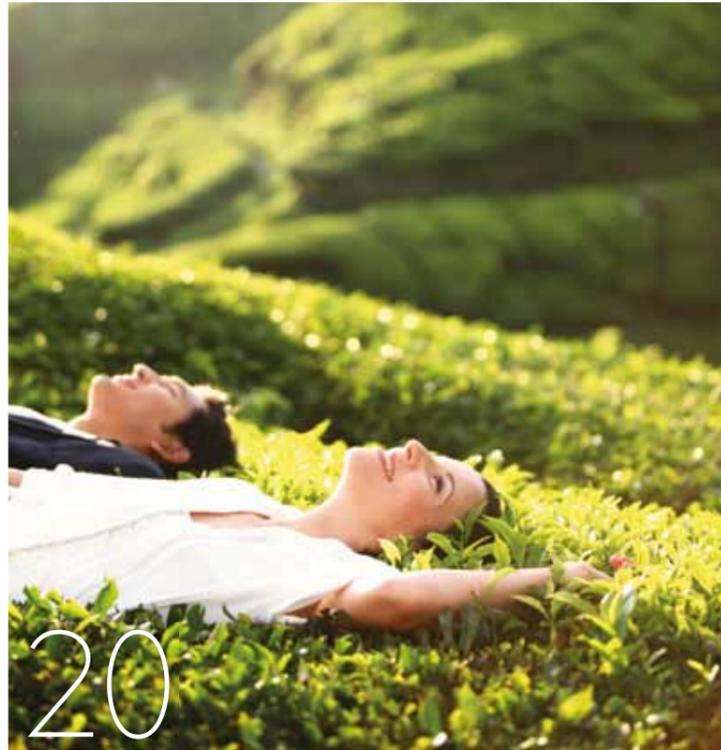
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Official Hotels:



A WATCH AND JEWELLERY SHOWCASE

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YTL *life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine

Published By

YTL Hotels
11th Floor, Yeoh Tiong Lay Plaza, 55,
Jalan Bukit Bintang,
55100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Produced By

Blu Inc Media Sdn Bhd
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Lot 7, Jalan Bersatu 13/4, Section 13,
46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia
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38, Jalan SS26/11, Taman Mayang Jaya,
47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

Printed By

Percetakan Zanders Sdn Bhd
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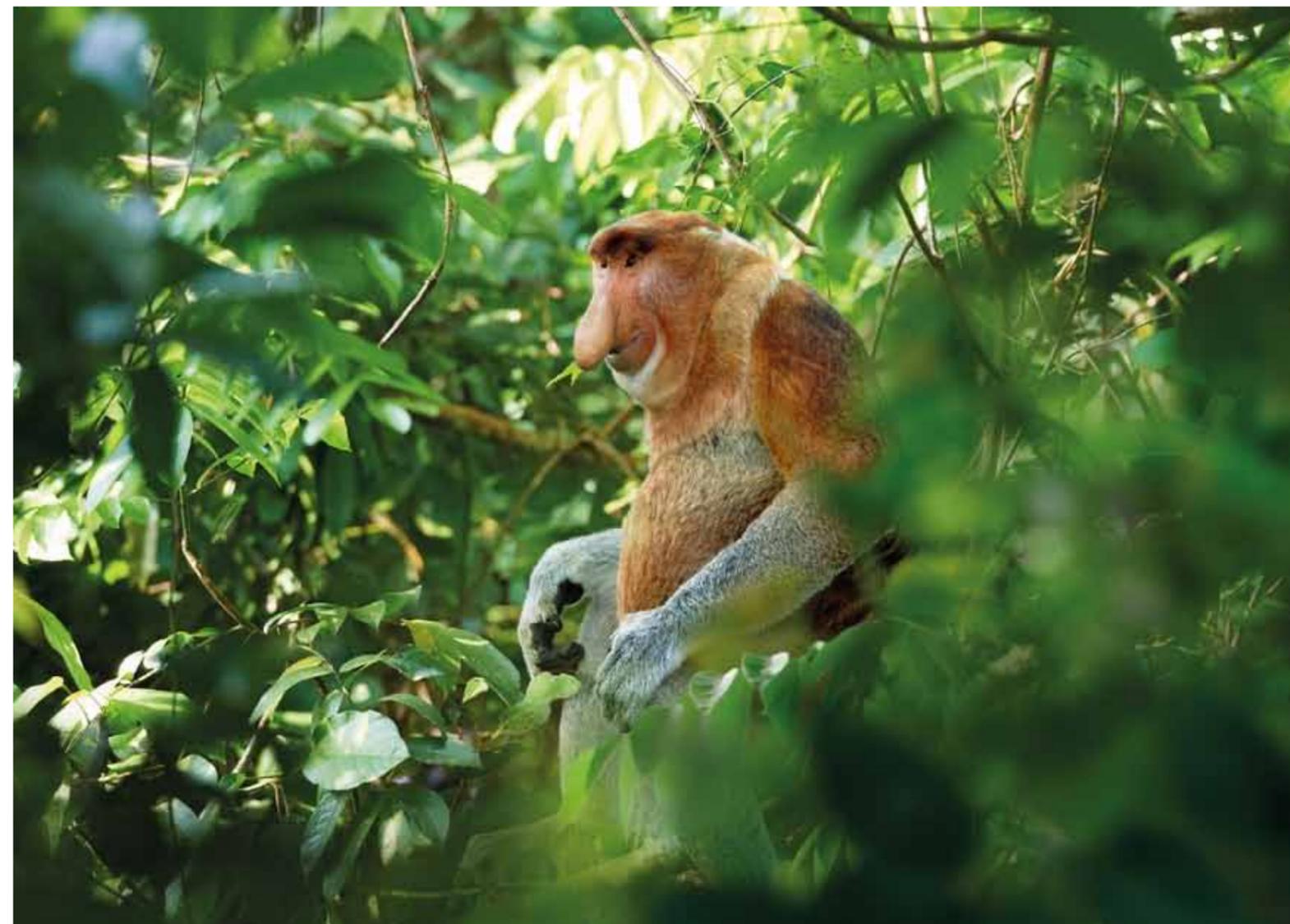
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Your eyes lock with a Proboscis monkey's for the first time.

It makes a strange noise.

And you don't know whether to stand in awe or run.

Your moment awaits.

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YTL HOTELS
Treasured Places, Treasured Moments

A Note from Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh



Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh
Managing Director,
YTL Corporation

The YTL Hotel experience is multi-faceted but eating well is certainly a given. I am pleased to say we have recently reinforced that notion with Kuala Lumpur's iconic Shook! Restaurant winning gold in the city's prestigious Mayor's Tourism Awards, recognising our efforts, not only as an esteemed restaurant of culinary repute, but also as a destination that does its part in reinforcing Kuala Lumpur, and Malaysia, as a global gourmet capital. After all, Shook!'s unique dining concept was the first of its kind in the country and is the perfect reflection of Malaysia as a vibrant and multi-faceted destination. If you have yet to try it, I strongly urge and invite you to do so post-haste.

Further afield, in Beijing, at the annual Gourmand World Cookbook Awards, YTL Hotels also did all of us proud by picking up three awards at the prestigious event, which is likened to the Oscars for cookbooks. Attended by award-winning authors, publishers, culinary television personalities and top industry professionals, I am grateful for yet more awards and honours; this time for *Zwei Freunde*, a joint effort between the celebrated Michelin-starred Johann Lafer and Wai Look Chow, YTL Hotels' corporate executive chef, and *A Perennial Feast* by Kim Inglis and acclaimed photographer, Jacob Termansen.

This quarter also marks the beginning of yet another exciting journey for YTL Hotels. Having just launched the all-new KASARA brand in the region, we are proud to announce yet another unique collection of luxurious hotels, resorts and residences targeted for Asia and beyond. In tandem with this is also the unveiling of The Village, a new retail, food and beverage development, that will add further vibrancy and energy to Niseko, giving each guest and visitor the luxury of even more choice, enjoyment and experiences than ever before. After all, this is in line with what we at YTL Hotels have always set about to achieve – unforgettable leisure experiences that are out of the ordinary. I invite you to discover the new verve of Niseko this winter.

God bless.

THE GREEN *gb* LEAF Niseko Village



PERFECT POWDER SKI HAVEN

Niseko Village rests at the base of Mount Niseko An'nupuri, Japan; a land of powder white slopes, natural onsen and dramatic landscapes. The Green Leaf Niseko Village is a vibrant ski-in ski-out hotel, contemporarily redesigned to embrace the creative touch of renowned local artists.

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Fostering Ties

The perfectly formed private island of Pangkor Laut proved to be the idyllic location for a short getaway, hosted by YTL Corporation's Executive Director, Dato' Yeoh Soo Min, together with her husband, Dato' Robert Tan, for lady members of Malaysia's diplomatic corps. The party travelled by car from Kuala Lumpur on the short three-hour journey to Marina Island Pangkor on the west coast, where they were transferred, deftly and in style, by private yacht to the island. A welcome lunch was laid out at the Royal Bay Beach Club, followed by a sunset cruise and dinner at the award-winning Fisherman's Cove restaurant. 🍷

1. All smiles at Pangkor Laut Resort's jetty. 2. HE Maria Isabel Rendon, Ambassador of Argentina to Malaysia. 3. Dato' Robert Tan, Philippe Garnier, HE Judith St George, High Commissioner of Canada, Dato' Yeoh Soo Min, Feodor Ozarenov, HE Lyudmila Vorobyeva, Ambassador of Russia, Michelle Gyles-McDonnough, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Representative to Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei, HE Maria Isabel Rendon and HE Martine Dorance, Ambassador of France. 4. Michelle Gyles-McDonnough and HE Martine Dorance. 5. Philippe Garnier and HE Martine Dorance.



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Black volcanic sand. Green towering peaks. Blue Bali sea.

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1



2



2



Private Island Gourmet

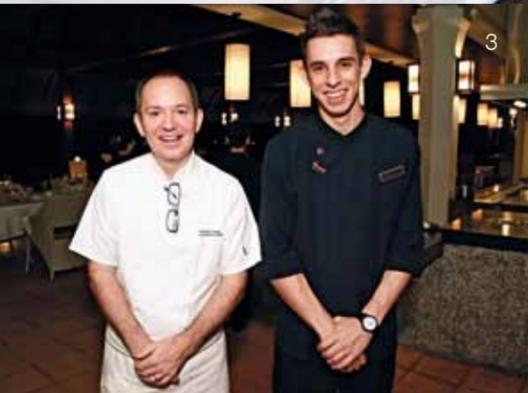
It was an unforgettable gastronomic journey for members of the Perak chapter of the Confrérie de la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs as they came together for food and wine at the luxurious Pangkor Laut Resort recently. The three-day-two-night event, inclusive of a stay in a Hill Villa, daily breakfast, spa treatments, sunset cruise and customised dining experiences, kicked off with lunch at the Feast Village. From the sandy paradise of Emerald Bay, members of the

international gastronomic society were treated to a specially crafted barbeque dinner by the resort's new Executive Chef, Stevie Jones.

On the menu was a spit-roasted whole lamb that celebrated the Chaîne's origins as an association of roasters in 1248. On the second day, a leisurely loll at the pool and beach culminated in a delectable dinner prepared by Chef de Partie Jérémy Blanchot at the Fisherman's

Cove restaurant, accompanied by select wines. The evening saw guests dressed to the nines and the night was punctuated with joyful toasts. For the Chaîne gang, the celebration brought them closer together and also underscored the notion that food was truly the best way to experience the soul of a destination such as Pangkor Laut Resort. **✶**

1. Wendy Lewis, Elizabeth Lee and Ming Ho.
2. Doris Heer and Klaus Heer. 3. Stevie Jones and Jérémy Blanchot. 4. Ajmal Khan, Mubina Khan, Wendy Lewis and Ken Lewis. 5. Ming Ho and Christina Leveille. 6. Gwee Sze Kiat and Serene Seah. 7. Dato' Steve Day and Datin Su Day.



3



4



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6



7



Photography Ian McIlgorm



Ode To The Press

The traditional art of printing is alive again, thanks to support from Yayasan Sime Darby. The Royal Press was recently awarded a RM1.76million grant by the foundation to set up the country's first printing press museum. The three-year sponsorship will help establish one of the world's rarest polyglot presses in the historic enclave of Malacca.

Other key exhibits in the museum — which occupies a double-storey shophouse along Jonker Walk — are the silent letterpress and linotype machinery, liquor bottles with old printed labels, bus tickets and ancient invoices. Historian Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dato' Dr Khoo Kay Kim joined print veterans, their family members and other guests to witness the historic moment in the 75-year-old printing industry. ▮

1. Ee Soon Wei and Ben Quah, General Manager of The Majestic Malacca. 2. Nancy Chan and Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Dato' Dr Khoo Kay Kim. 3. Vincent Ee, Ee Joo Guat and Leong Juan Lai. 4. Eddin Khoo and Arifah Sharifuddin. 5. Ee Mei Chin and Melissa Chan.



(Sports) Stars In Their Eyes

Playing host to the exceedingly prestigious Laureus World Sports Academy Dinner, held for the first time in South-East Asia, was The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur. The dinner is part of the annual Laureus World Sports Awards. A stellar line-up of sporting stars had travelled to Malaysia for the event, which included the Awards Ceremony itself as well as a unique football challenge match, the Laureus All Star Unity Cup. Players included Johan Cruyff, Fabio Capello, Christian Karambeu, Hidetoshi Nakata, Quinton Fortune, Steve McManaman, Ronald de Boer, Gaizka Mendieta, Paulo Ferreira, Antonios Nikopolidis, Luis Milla and Victor Baia. Several young local players experienced an unforgettable day when they got a chance to rub shoulders with famous former international footballers in the football friendly at the Royal Selangor Club. Tan Sri Francis Yeoh, Managing Director of YTL Corporation, said: "It is indeed a great honour for Malaysia that Kuala Lumpur has been chosen as the host city for the prestigious 2014 Laureus World Sports Awards Ceremony. It is an exciting chapter for both Laureus and the country." ▮

1. Ilie Nastase, Tan Sri Francis Yeoh and Nadia Comaneci. 2. Back row: Marvin Hagler, Sean Fitzpatrick, Mark Spitz, Edwin Moses, Tony Hawk, Dawn Fraser, Mome du Plessis, Mick Doohan, Steve Waugh, Yaping Deng, Daley Thompson, Robby Naish and Michael Johnson; Front row: Nadia Comaneci, Tan Sri Francis Yeoh, Bobby Charlton and Ilie Nastase. 3. Michelle Moses and Michael Johnson. 4. Daley Thompson and Sean Fitzpatrick. 5. Dr Edwin Moses and Tan Sri Francis Yeoh.





The 50th anniversary of the British Malaysian Chamber of Commerce concluded in grand style with a gala dinner held at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur. Close to 1,000 guests attended the dinner, including prominent industry leaders and politicians. The evening also witnessed the support of both Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Razak, who launched the Bilateral Trade Support Initiative, and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom David Cameron, who penned a message to honour the occasion. Guests feasted on a lavish gourmet meal, before they were entertained by a series of performances, ranging from duets to drum shows, as well as an impressive sand art show highlighting the bilateral ties Malaysia and Britain have shared over the years. The surprise presence of former Manchester United star Andy Cole stole the show, as he presented the Barclays Premier League trophy to the Prime Minister, witnessed by Chairman of the British Malaysian Chamber of Commerce, Dato' Larry Gan, and Minister of International Trade and Industry, Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed, ending the anticipated night on a suitably high note. **W**



50 Great Years

1. Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed, HE Simon Featherstone, British High Commissioner, Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Razak and Andy Cole. 2. Datin Caroline Gan and Dato' Larry Gan. 3. Rajiv Bharatan, Joanne Webster, Prof Paul J Loosley, Jennifer Chan and Tan Sri Megat Najmuddin Khas. 4. Dr John Rogers and Dr Shyamala Rao. 5. Teh Leong Kok, Puan Sri Beth Rahman, Tan Sri Razali Rahman, Diana Khoo and Osman Morad. 6. The sand artwork, showing bilateral ties between Malaysia and Britain by sand artist Loong Bee is presented to the Prime Minister, marking the official launch of the Bilateral Trade Initiative Support. 7. Gail Featherstone, HE Simon Featherstone, British High Commissioner and Andrew Sill. 8. Mansor Tun Abdul Aziz and Emran Ismail. 9. WM Jauhari Ismail and Nik Tasha Nik Kamaruddin. 10. Dato' Khadar Merican and Datuk Mike Krishnan.





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04



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06

01

Shook Wins Again

YTL's **Shook! Shanghai** restaurant won yet another award during Shanghai Restaurant Week. Occupying the penthouse level of The Swatch Art Peace Hotel, the restaurant sits pretty amidst the property's chic interiors and Renaissance-style architecture and design. Organised by *DiningCity*, the leading international restaurant guide, Shook! Shanghai won the accolade of third best restaurant for dining in the cosmopolitan city often referred to as the 'Paris of the East'. This adds to its already well-decorated cap, as it had previously been rated the top restaurant in Shanghai by leading travel website, TripAdvisor.

02

Hear Me Roar!

With only 3,500 wild tigers left in the world, of which around 300 are Malayan Tigers, now's the time to come together for *Inspire – The Majestic Tiger Reception & Dinner*, to be held in Kuala Lumpur on 3 October 2014 at **The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur**. An impressive fundraising event in aid of the charity Save Wild Tigers, the event will be graced by HRH the Sultanah of Pahang and will have a special Crystal Tigress, created by Lauren Baker using over 50,000 Swarovski crystals, auctioned off that evening. International visitors and celebrities aboard the special Eastern & Oriental Tiger Express train journey will also be joining the dinner, including UK fashion personality Gok Wan and Professor Dato' Jimmy Choo.

03

Treat For The Senses

Immerse yourself in the beauty of Bali's unspoilt, magical north at the **Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali** over a rejuvenating journey known as the *Senses Retreat Experience*. Based on a minimum five nights' stay, this uplifting renewal getaway includes daily meals, a welcome foot bath ritual, a daily deluxe 50-minute spa treatment, a 25-minute Heaven on Earth massage in an outdoor balé, a cooking lesson, a celestial Starlight Gazing experience, as well as tours of Old Bali, an art village or to Tegalalana and Kintamani, all of which will return you to your real life uplifted, renewed and totally rejuvenated.

04

Gobble, Gobble

Celebrate the American Thanksgiving holiday in style at **The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur** where a special Thanksgiving Dinner will be held at The Lobby Lounge on 27 November, 2014. Amidst the hotel's elegant interiors, sit down to an exclusive five-course set menu tailored especially by the Executive Chef with turkey, naturally, playing the role of the main course. You can, of course, expect all the traditional (and delicious) trimmings that accompany the big bird. The menu is priced at RM140++ per adult for the set menu only while it is RM185++ if paired with the house wines. The children's menu will be priced at half that of the adult's, beverages excluded. Get ready to give thanks!

05

A Touch Of Tiffin

Relive the halcyon days of colonial Malaya at **The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur** with **Colonial Café's Sunday Curry Tiffin Lunch**. This indulgent set, which starts in September, includes classics such as Hainanese chicken curry, mutton *varuval*, egg *masala* and fried fish *masala*. The set is complemented by accompaniments including mango chutney, fish *puttu*, salted egg, marinated cucumbers, toasted coconut and banana slices. The meal ends perfectly with a serving of *sago gula melaka*, salted *lassi* and *masala* tea. All you need now to complete the colonial experience would be a gin *pahit* at the nearby bar since there's no tea dance party to crash.

06

Love Is In The Air

Yes, we do realise Valentine's Day is a long way away but who said love has to be celebrated on just one day each year? Treat the special person in your life today to a romantic getaway on one of Malaysia's most perfectly formed private islands, **Pangkor Laut Resort**. From just RM1,250++ per room per night, enjoy a romantic candlelight dinner at the award-winning Fisherman's Cove or a sunset cruise aboard an Oriental teakwood junk. Bliss out over a deluxe 50-minute spa treatment for two while you feel energised after an exhilarating jungle walk with the resort's resident naturalist. Ask for the *Romantic Retreat* package when booking. ■

For more information on YTL Hotels' events and promotions, go to www.ytlhotels.com



Kasara Niseko Village will offer a world-class alpine destination that combines subtle Japanese touches and contemporary Western sophistication.

Que Sera Kasara

YTL Hotels launches the all-new Kasara brand, a collection of unique and luxurious hotels, resorts and residences, the first of which is scheduled to open this December, amidst the snow, ski and sublime alpine setting that is Niseko, Japan's premier year-round integrated resort, in Japan's north.

With over 20 luxurious properties and travel experiences to its name, including the award-winning Pangkor Laut Resort in Malaysia and The Surin on Phuket's perfect Pansea Beach in Thailand as well as the legendary Eastern & Oriental Express that chugs gently along from Singapore through Peninsular Malaysia and up to Bangkok, it's safe to say that YTL Hotels knows a thing or two about what the world wants when it comes to the leisure market. Hence, it recently unveiled its hugely-anticipated Kasara brand – a new collection of unique and luxurious hotels, resorts and residences in exotic locations that looks set to complement YTL Hotels' existing portfolio beautifully.

The first Kasara experience may be enjoyed this winter as the Kasara Niseko Village Townhouse opens on 1 December 2014. "The Kasara Niseko Village Townhouse and new retail and dining experiences are the realisation of the first stage of the unique and exclusive developments under YTL Hotels' Niseko Village masterplan," said

Luke Hurford, Vice President of Sales & Marketing for YTL Hotels. "All these elements will continue to create a world-class alpine destination, with the unique touches of Japan and Hokkaido subtly interwoven with contemporary Western comforts and sophisticated dining and entertainment."

Its very name, Kasara (Sanskrit for 'lake'), conjures up images of serenity. And visitors privileged enough to visit the first property in the Kasara collection in Niseko Village this winter will be welcomed with a unique experience that encompasses luxury, comfort and enjoyment, all the while embracing the pursuit of *shibumi* – a Zen term that denotes aesthetic ideals in art, architecture and landscaping, as well as great refinement. Eight exclusive townhouses, each crafted in an honorific nod to Edo period heritage homes, stand gracefully at the base of Mount Niseko Annupuri, making it the perfect base from which to enjoy all the exhilaration of Hokkaido's white season. The ski runs and lifts are a heartbeat away, while the village, a new shopping and dining experience, is just, literally, around the corner. Add to this the warming comfort of the geothermal *onsen* (hot springs) that abound in the area and you might find it making good sense to invest in a townhouse for the family. "Niseko Village has evolved to become Asia's hottest ski destination over the past 10 years and it excites us to push it to even greater heights with Kasara Niseko Village. Asia's best *après-ski* experiences – powder snow, Michelin-starred food and beverage options and, now, tasteful retail and residential additions – we are bound to deliver an experience that is on par with the best resorts in Europe and North America," adds Hurford.

For those who will experience (and fall in love with) the Kasara brand this winter, do know that other locations for the brand include Koh Samui in Thailand and Pulau Tiga in Borneo. Watch this space. ■

Kasara Niseko Village Townhouse is already taking short- and long-term bookings for the 2014/15 winter season, beginning at USD2,000 per night for a three-bedroom townhouse. These residences will also be available for exclusive preview and immediate ownership. For further information, visit www.kasara.com

HIGHLAND FLING

In the genteel and tranquil surrounds of the Cameron Highlands Resort, nostalgia and tradition is the order of the day in this part of Malaysia known as 'the little corner of England in Asia'. **Ong Chin Huat** checks into this picturesque highland hideaway and experiences a picnic set among the rolling hills of a tea plantation which takes his breath away.

Photography **Sam T**



When Mary Alexander, our personal guide, drives down the slightly steep and winding rocky trail that leads to our picnic spot at the BOH Tea Plantation located in Sungei Palas, Cameron Highlands, she does so with such effortless dexterity, you're confident she knows this neck of the woods like the back of her hand. "This whole area is private and not open to the public," Alexander says as soon as we turn off the tarred road and enter a dirt one. "It's owned by BOH Plantations and only accessible to guests of the Cameron Highlands Resort who book the *Signature Picnic Experience*." At 1,500m above sea level, and a cool and refreshing 23°C, the plantation is the ideal spot for a picnic.

One of the great pleasures of a highland getaway would be to indulge in a luxurious picnic, surrounded by emerald-hued tea plantations, prepared to perfection by the team at Cameron Highlands Resort.

Our day at the Cameron Highlands Resort starts with breakfast in the resort's elegant Dining Room. Offering a cascade-style breakfast with a wide selection of freshly baked pastries, fruit, cereal and yogurt, the hot items on the menu are also a temptation – with aged Brie de Meaux, smoked salmon and chives omelette, corned beef hash topped with fried onions and two fried eggs, and buttermilk pancakes layered with rich apple compote, crisp pineapple fritters, honeycomb nougat and thick double cream looking the most appetising. We were also in luck that morning as the chef prepared a *spécialité du jour* for the early risers – cronuts! Lightly fried with oozing strawberry custard, this pastry, (a cross between a donut and a croissant) definitely set us off on the right foot for the day.

Genteel and tranquil, this quaint resort boasts a colonial ambience with a mock Tudor façade, making it both a nice nostalgic weekend sojourn as well as a welcome escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. With its arched French doors, wooden-beamed ceilings and marble fireplaces, the Cameron Highlands Resort is both charming and inviting, comfortable enough to curl up on one of its deep leather sofas with a good book and a cup of warm tea or, if you are feeling more adventurous, sign up for one of the many fascinating activities on offer. With the tagline, 'Trails, Tales and Traditions',





attached to its name, the resort doesn't disappoint when it comes to the diversity of trail excursions on offer. Among them, the Jim Thompson Mystery Trail, retracing the actual steps the Thai silk king took on the fateful day he disappeared, sounds the most compelling.

Today, however, we decide on something more educational and civilised – the *Signature Picnic Experience*. This exclusive experience comes highly recommended and it fits our mood perfectly – not too strenuous or physically demanding. We are picked up by Alexander and transported to the BOH Tea Centre in Sungei Palas, about 30 minutes away. When we arrive, we wander around the plantation among the tea bushes and learn how tea is grown, harvested and produced. With a cantilevered café perched on a hillock, with sweeping views of the tea gardens and valleys below, the BOH Tea Centre is a focal point for many tourists who come to these highlands. At the adjacent tea factory, we are escorted around the processing plant to see, first-hand, how tea leaves, which are freshly harvested from the nearby tea plantation, are brought in and processed into the final product. The first stage of withering, followed by rolling, fermentation, drying and, finally, sorting transforms the green shoots into dry, dark brown tea leaves that are packed in air-tight canisters, ready for sale and consumption. A shop which sells all the different varieties of BOH teas, as well as other tea paraphernalia, is located in the tea centre and is also a major attraction as some blends, such as the light and flowery Palas



Friendly yet unobtrusive service makes this cozy resort an ideal place to unwind and recharge; the Jim Thompson Lounge is the perfect spot to end your day in; enjoying the house specialty, a Strawberry Daiquiri in front of a crackling fireplace always helps.





life on the cover //

Nothing is more civilised than the time-honoured tradition of English afternoon tea, which has become a daily ritual at the Jim Thompson Tea Room.

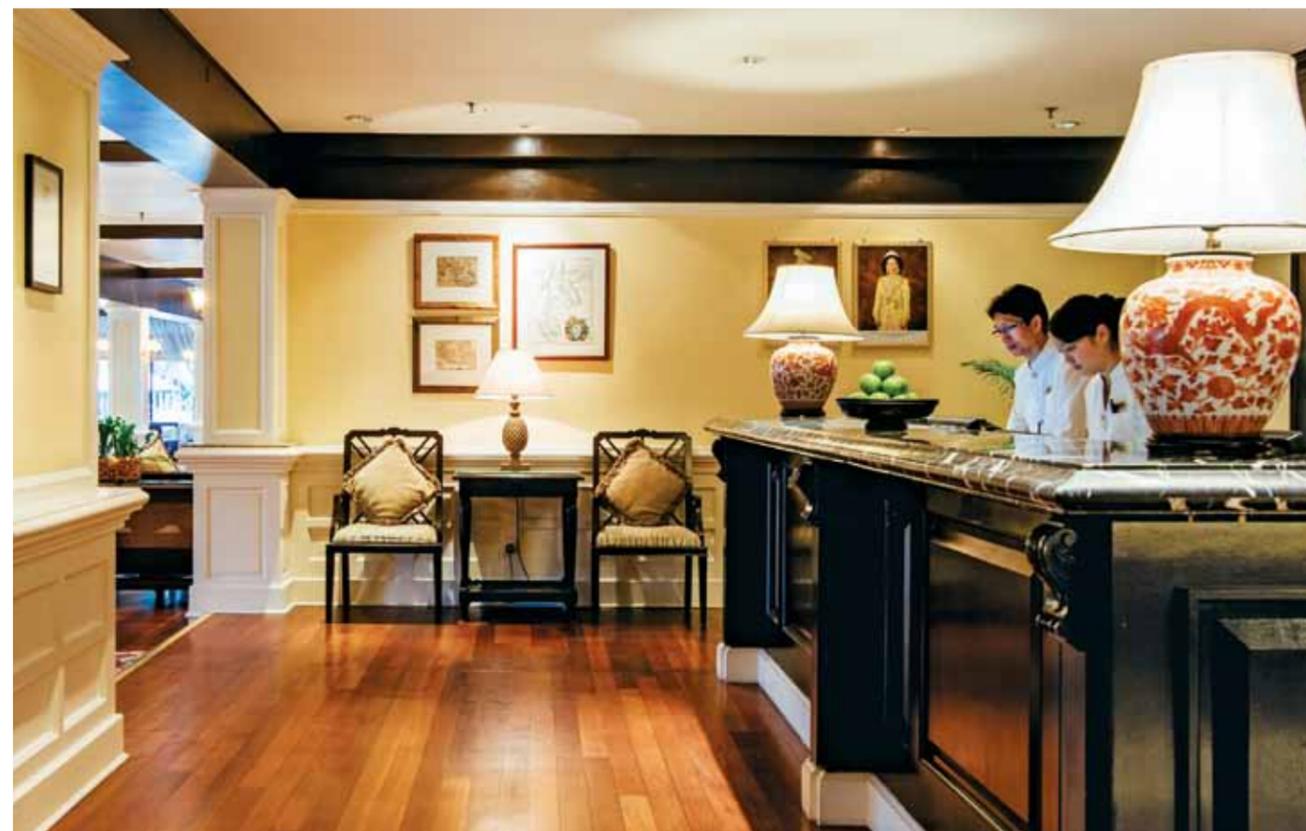
“Genteel and tranquil, this quaint resort boasts a colonial ambience with a mock Tudor façade, making it a nice nostalgic weekend sojourn.”



Supreme or the robust Bukit Cheeding No 53, are only available here. A tea-tasting is an eye (and palate) opener, as the subtle aromas and tastes of different grades, varieties and characteristics of BOH tea are revealed.

At around noon, we leave the BOH Tea Centre and head to our secluded picnic spot located at a scenic locale – the edge of a bluff with commanding views of the green hills and valleys surrounding the area. Alexander manoeuvres her vehicle carefully and tackles the sharp bends on the single track trail. “If a tractor comes the opposite way, we will have to reverse all the way back to the bigger road,” she tells us. Luckily for us, there was no tractor in sight. When we arrive, Rimal, our butler, greets us, hand on heart and with a huge smile. He has already laid out a sumptuous spread on the carpet, complete with flowers and strawberries. Settling down on the rug, we grab the comfy cushions scattered about to prop us up while we admire the serene vista in front of us. Overlooking verdant tea bushes and the lush valleys below, the differing green shades of the tea bushes, Alexander tells us, is indicative of the areas which have been recently harvested – the darker ones have older leaves and thus have been recently harvested, whilst the lighter greens still have young shoots.

Our attention is soon distracted by the delicious fare laid out before us. Assorted pastries and cakes, a selection of sandwiches – smoked salmon, tuna, egg and watercress, and cream cheese and cucumber – all prove too tempting and are quickly demolished. Freshly baked scones, clotted cream and the Cameron Highlands Resort speciality, home-made strawberry jam, proved to be the most popular as are the vegetarian wraps, potato salad and, for dessert, fresh highland strawberries served with a chocolate dip. Of course, being in the heart of the BOH Tea Plantation, the obvious choice of beverage was the Cameronian Gold Blend tea but there was also a chilled bottle of Laurent-Perrier



Brut champagne to quench our thirst. There can't be many other experiences to rival sipping bubbly al fresco in the cool and temperate climates of Cameron Highlands, with a gentle breeze blowing and the soft warmth of the sun shining. With the added bonus of the breathtaking views of the undulating hills and valleys of the plantation in front of us, this is definitely an experience to be savoured and treasured, something not to be rushed through.

As much as we would have liked to stay on, our picnic came to an end and it was time to head back to the resort. Afternoon tea at the Jim Thompson Tea Room beckoned but, having just indulged ourselves, we decided to forgo it. With its rattan chairs, chinoiserie table lamps, potted orchids and Jim Thompson fabric-covered cushions, the room re-creates the atmosphere of a well-appointed living room of an English country cottage, albeit on a larger scale. An elderly couple sit on planter chairs and sip tea, while a few youngsters play snooker in the corner. Some guests are distracted by the Jim Thompson boutique located nearby, while the melodic tinkling of ivories by Richard Clayderman in the background adds to the relaxing ambience.

It must be the cool highland air which whetted our appetite because, by eight, we were famished. Chef d'hôte Danny Lau's new menu for the Dining Room is mouth-watering, to say the least, and consists of a nice blend of English, Italian and local dishes. With an emphasis on fresh and flavourful ingredients, special mention has to be made of the *Udang Masak Lemak* – large and succulent fresh water prawns gently simmered with local bamboo shoots in a spiced lemongrass and fresh coconut gravy. Also, the colonial classic, Pot Roast, which contains 600g of Australian Black Angus beef brisket served

Enjoy going on the Cameron Highlands Resort's Signature Picnic Experience in the BOH Tea Plantations where you can wander idyllically around the tea bushes, visit the tea factory to see how tea leaves are processed and then have a sumptuous picnic in a private and secluded part of the tea plantation, overlooking the sweeping hills and valleys.



“There can't be many other experiences to rival sipping bubbly al fresco in the cool and temperate climates of Cameron Highlands.”

with garlic butter jersey potatoes, highland vegetables and hydroponic salad – which serves two – shouldn't be missed, with the tender meat falling off the bone and a melt-in-your-mouth texture. Other noteworthy dishes include the white cod fillet oven-baked with saffron infused mayonnaise and the maltose and honey-glazed sea bass.

After dinner, we adjourned to the adjacent Reading Room. With old photographs of scenes from the surrounding area framed on the walls and Persian carpets lining the wooden floor, the place was too cosy to ignore, so we decide to have our digestifs here instead of the Highland Bar. Gerard the bartender recommends the *Strawberry Daiquiri* as it's the speciality of the house and one of the most popular beverages from the extensive menu. When it arrives, bright red in colour within a voluptuous margarita glass, we are secretly relieved that we skipped dessert. Sweet with the tartness of the strawberries coming through, we toast each other in front of the crackling fireplace and enjoy the remaining few minutes of what must be the most perfect of days. ■

Cameron Highlands Resort is located By The Golf Course, 39000 Tanah Rata, Cameron Highlands, Pahang, Malaysia. For further information, please visit: www.cameronhighlandsresort.com



The Great Outdoors

Gaya Island Resort is all that you expect an island resort to be – sandy beaches, diverse activities, unique culinary experiences and the pleasure of doing nothing at all. Seeing a turtle swim out into the sea, however, turned out to be the highlight when **Christy Yoong** came to stay.

It turned out to be a perfect day after all. Earlier in the morning, rumbling dark clouds and squalls of rain threatened to put a damper on the day. Later, though, it became sunny, with clear blue skies, exactly the kind of weather you'd wish for while on Gaya Island Resort. Located off the coast of Sabah's capital, Kota Kinabalu, Gaya Island Resort is situated within the Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park. Spread out along the island's Malohom Bay, the resort sprawls out on the hillside, its 120 villas and two-bedroom suite blending into the rainforest. Across the bay, the silhouette of Mount Kinabalu caps the horizon.

The sun-kissed outdoors is where Gaya Island Resort reveals its fullest promise. The 40m pool, with its private relaxation chambers, floating cabanas fronting the beach and bar, offers both diversion and repose as you bask in

indolence. If this is too languorous, the resort has any number of specially designed PURE activities that allow you to immerse totally into the natural environment. Choose from *Discovery* (land and marine excursions like nature walks, snorkelling explorations and scuba diving adventures), *Vigour* (kayaking, paddle surfing and power walks), *Creativity* (craftworks, dance and storytelling) or *Balance* (spa, meditation and yoga).

Of course, you don't need the sun to enjoy the resort's myriad attractions. Spa Village Gaya Island, for example, is a haven integrated within the island's mangrove forests. Its treatments, utilising the finest and freshest local ingredients, reflect the healing traditions of Sabah's many indigenous people, including the Kadazandusun and Bajau sea nomads. The stunning yoga theatre

Gaya Island Resort is spread out amongst the rainforest, overlooking Malohom Bay. Across the sea, Mount Kinabalu dominates the horizon.



and library-with-a-view offer intrinsic discoveries amidst tranquil surroundings.

There is also culinary gratification to be had at Gaya Island Resort. The all-day Feast Village offers cuisine from the Asia-Pacific region, while Fisherman's Cove, on the resort's rooftop, is a fine-dine restaurant that serves fresh seafood against a breathtaking view of the sea and Mount Kinabalu. Local cuisine comes to the fore with unique experiences like the Sinagang Steamboat, a hotpot of fish broth with vegetables, meat and seafood beloved by the Kadazans, and the Bajau Laut Beach Barbecue, inspired by the seafaring tribe and enjoyed under the stars.

One of the more unique experiences on the resort, however, is its marine conservation activities. The Gaya Island Resort Marine Centre plays its part in the preservation of the Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park through educational programmes, coral reef restoration and turtle rescue. The latter operates a Turtle Hotline as well as undertakes rescue and rehabilitation of injured or sick sea turtles, the first of its kind in Malaysia. Guests to the resort are welcome to visit and volunteer at the marine centre, located on Tavajun Bay, a private beach that's a five-minute boat ride away. And today was a big day for the team at the marine centre – and everyone connected to the resort.

In April this year, a female green sea turtle was recovered by the Sabah Wildlife

Department and, emaciated and suffering from septicaemia, it was transferred to the Gaya Island Resort Marine Centre. Under the care of Scott Mayback, the resort's resident marine biologist, the turtle was treated and kept under constant surveillance. And now, nearly three months later, Ninja, as she had been named, was deemed fit to be released.

The clear, sunny day drew a large crowd that included resort guests, students from the nearby Kampung Gaya School and staff from wildlife bodies. After speeches from Mayback and Dr Nathan Sen, Assistant Director of the Sabah Wildlife Department, describing the circumstances of Ninja's discovery and treatment, both helped carry the turtle to the beach. After a false start – perhaps she was intimidated by the large crowd – Ninja slowly but surely paddled out into the open sea.

Watching her swim away was a poignant moment: the entire act of rescuing, treating and releasing was a deceptively simple one. Since she is estimated to be only between seven and 10 years old and green sea turtles generally live up to 80 years, Ninja could, potentially, have more than half a century ahead of her. It is a sobering thought that she could, perhaps, return to these shores in 50 years' time, a matriarch, even, of a species currently identified as endangered. Here, then, would be a legacy that Gaya Island Resort could choose to be most proud of. ■



Clockwise, from right: Scott Mayback, Gaya Island Resort's resident marine biologist, watches as Ninja returns to the sea; the resort's Marine Centre rescues and rehabilitates sea turtles, as well as encourages coral propagation; the Spa Village offers treatments that reflect the wellness traditions of Sabah's indigenous people; enjoy both local and international flavours at Gaya Island Resort.



“The Gaya Island Resort Marine Centre operates a Turtle Hotline as well as undertakes rescue and rehabilitation of injured or sick sea turtles.”



Relax and Recharge at Donna Spa

Jade Park,
Miss Scuba Malaysia 2013.

If you've ever stepped inside the pristine corridors of Starhill Gallery, you'd notice that the premium complex boasts an entire floor devoted to making anyone feel right at home. Called the "Pamper Level", it is no wonder that some of its tenants are visited by international as well as local celebrities. In fact, one of the spa treatment centres there, Donna Spa, is frequented by VIPs such as actress



Dato' Michelle Yeoh, international designer Jimmy Choo and F1 driver, Nico Rosberg.

Even though we live in Kuala Lumpur's modern and cosmopolitan areas, some of us still prefer the 'old ways', so Donna Spa's healing treatments – which have been around for more than 4000 years – fits in perfectly. Today, I am treated to this experience by Ann.

Ann, like all of Donna Spa's therapists, is from the island of Java in Indonesia, and has benefitted from the health and beauty knowledge passed down through countless generations. "There," Ann says, pressing a particularly painful spot on the back of my shoulder. "Wind."

"Villages in the country were far away from any hospital," explains John Chin,

Director of Donna Spa. "So due to this logistic inconvenience, the emphasis was placed on staying healthy. Now in more advanced times, these techniques are used to relieve stress, fatigue, insomnia and, of course, 'wind'."

'Wind' is when cold air enters the body and pools into small pockets. This in turn affects people who spend their days darting in and out of air conditioned environments; in other words, it affects anyone who spends any amount of time travelling or working in a hot country.

This 'wind' can also be a hard knot blocking the body's circulation. "All our organs depend on blood circulation," says John. "So if you keep your blood circulation normal, your health is in good hands." With her skillful fingers and

strong hands, Ann does me a huge favour by unblocking any barriers to my blood circulation, and this practice is essentially a part of the Excellent Donna Massage, which I get at the end of my visit.

Did I happen to mention that Donna Spa's services are so specialized that it takes a while to get everything ready? Yes, it's that meticulous and indulgent, so much so that it is best for visitors to make reservations. Nonetheless, walk-in customers can still enjoy a cup of complimentary warm ginger tea or a hot steam bath while waiting for their turn.

The steam bath is a small pod of a room, almost futuristic with tiny neon lights that change colour every now and then – definitely a plus point as it is both hypnotic and soothing. Of course, guests can choose to shower after this, but unlike a sauna, the steam bath is remarkably refreshing and energizing.

Reluctantly getting up from the steam bath, I am taken to one of their private rooms with a jacuzzi. There we start with a hot herbal compress that 'makes the body softer', which is a very popular (and welcomed) treatment amongst long-haul travellers.



Wanting to indulge myself further in more natural goodness, I chose avocado from their wide selection of scrub flavours, which was also the Donna Spa specialty. The scrub goes on cool and damp, a little rough to touch. Ann lets it dry for several minutes then does a proper rub. The scrub residue is then rinsed off in a lovely milk and rose petal bath, leaving my skin baby smooth.

Back to the Excellent Donna Massage – it is a combination of acupressure, long therapeutic strokes and deep thumb therapy.

The massage was not only wonderful; it was relaxing, invigorating and something I'd been looking forward to for a long time... Until Ann found some 'wind' accumulated in my back, shoulders, neck and head – I was a veritable human hurricane!

Not to worry, I'm still alive as Ann got rid of most of it but John says I'll have to come back a few more times before my circulation is running at full capacity. Nonetheless, I left Donna Spa feeling refreshed, energized, excellent and ready to take on the world!



S20-27, Pamper Level, Starhill Gallery, 181, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur.
Reservation Tel : 603-2141 8999
Website: www.donnaspa.net

1. Poster for the first of the 'Gendarme of St Tropez' film series. 2. The French actress Brigitte Bardot in evening dress in the 1950s. 3. While it may look like a sleepy fishing town, St Tropez in the summer is undeniably glitzy.



Celebrity & St Tropez

The French Riviera's most glitzy fishing village is a great place to be famous in.

Text Keith Mundy

A bombshell hit St Tropez in 1956 and changed everything. A blonde one, called Brigitte Bardot. As a rebellious teenager with a pile of tousled hair and a provocative body in the film *And God Created Woman*, the sultry young actress became an overnight sensation around the world, and soon St Tropez, the movie's sunlit location, became world famous too, a magnet for sun and fun-seekers.

A lovely old fishing village on the French Riviera, St Tropez was not entirely unused to glamour. It had been the 'in' place amongst French creatives for some years, as well as a favourite of the more discerning *bourgeoisie*. But all was very low key – little hotels to stay in, and a few cafes and restaurants.

The writer Guy de Maupassant had 'discovered' the village in 1887 while sailing the coast in his yacht. With its little harbour encircled by tall houses in the Genoese style, St Tropez looked immensely attractive from the sea, drawing Maupassant to sail into port. He wrote of sardine scales glistening "like pearls on the cobblestones" and a town that was a "charming, simple daughter of the sea".

Another yachtsman, the painter Paul Signac, took shelter in the harbour in 1892. Wandering about the narrow old streets, he was enchanted and decided to stay. The setting was idyllic: the southern curve of a sheltered gulf, a clear, bright light on the blue waters, the mountains of the Esterel rising on the far side, the



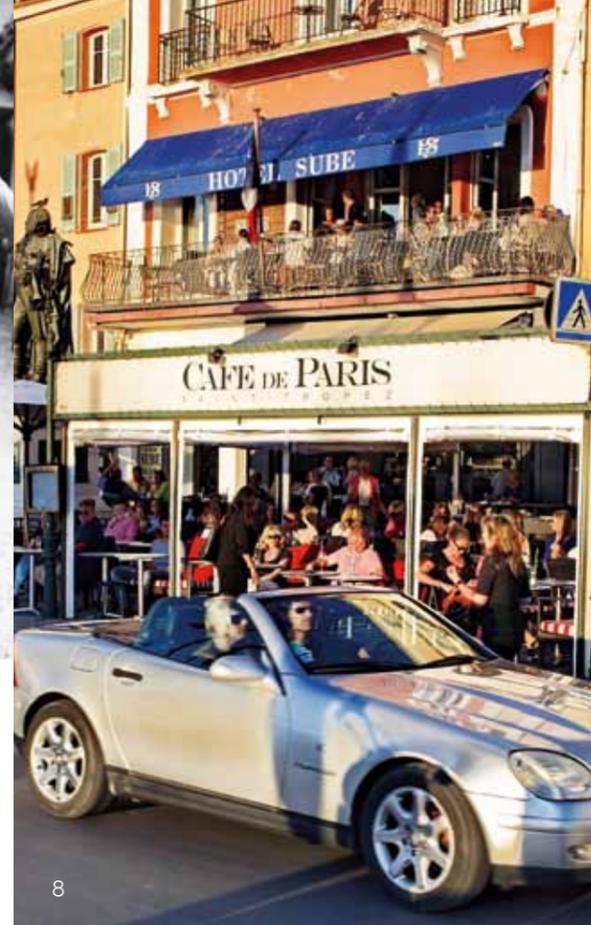
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pink and ochre walls of the houses catching the golden evening sun.

A pointillist painter in the manner of the more famous Seurat, building impressionist pictures out of little dots of colour, Signac invited other artists to join him, and many came to visit and paint for a while, most notably Bonnard and Matisse, who later carved huge reputations.

That's when word began to spread that there was a charming little village beside the Mediterranean, where you could rent a room for almost nothing and while away summer days in the sun. There were no rich foreigners spoiling the Provençal authenticity, like

elsewhere on the Riviera; all was down home and unpretentious. By the mid-1920s, the bestselling novelist Colette had taken a villa on the neighbouring Canebiers Bay, prompting summer visits from other leading lights like the playwright Sacha Guitry and filmmaker René Clair.

The Paris *beau monde* soon began turning up in their Hispano-Suizas and Bugattis, their chic swimsuits and beach pyjamas, but outside of high summer, St Tropez remained a Provençal idyll. The working harbour sheltered tall-masted sailing barges and hardy fishing ketches, with few pleasure yachts. Up to the early 1950s, St Tropez was still a quaint place inhabited by sunbeaten fishermen and women in black.

Into this Provençal paradise came the new bohemian crowd from Paris, the existentialists of St-Germain-des-Prés. The chanson singer Juliette Gréco, the multi-talented Boris Vian, the philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir – that famous *ménage à deux* which often became *trois* – all these and more caroused and debated at café tables, favouring the tiny La Ponche beach and its fishermen's harbour over the port, which they considered too bourgeois. Picasso sipped his *pastis* on the terrace, "his eyes deep black, seeming to capture everything as only a ferocious animal knows how", a habitué recalled.

The Bar de la Ponche became animated by a gang of young Parisian bohemians

"After the release of *And God Created Woman*, St Tropez became a summertime magnet for everyone."

gathered around 19-year-old Françoise Sagan, suddenly famous for her 1954 novel, *Bonjour Tristesse*, which told an amoral tale of someone very like her on a Riviera summer holiday. It was a *succès de scandale* in France and around the world – and Sagan, with her new wealth, set out on a life of fast cars, drink, drugs and gambling, coming to St Tropez each summer trailing a shocking reputation behind her Jaguar XK140.

The tremors that Françoise Sagan sent out, however, were as nothing to the waves that Brigitte Bardot made. Filmed entirely in St Tropez, *And God Created Woman* – a tale of a wild young girl who upsets all the locals with her rebelliousness and tantalises all the men with her natural sensuality – was a worldwide smash in 1956. The most sensuous scene was on a wild beach where Bardot has been washed up after her boat sank.

Her new brother-in-law, played by handsome hunk Christian Marquant, saved her. Her soaked dress clinging to her lithe body, she provoked him into taking her to the sand dunes as the waves crashed ashore.

Nothing like this had been seen in the movies before and, together with all the other scenes where Bardot's insouciant natural sexiness threatened to burn the screen, especially the climactic mambo dancing scene with Afro-Cuban musicians in a harbour bar, *And God Created Woman* packed cinemas around the world. In the United States, it was one of the highest-grossing films, and Bardot became an American obsession.

Where was this beautiful place that this sexy wide-screen melodrama had played out, people asked? From that moment on, St Tropez was a summertime magnet for everybody,

from celebrities to campers. Bardot actually made her home beside Canebiers Bay at a villa called *La Madrague*, which instantly became a tourist attraction. With this sun-bronzed, devil-may-care actress as its iconic spirit, St Tropez became a byword for sensuality and star quality, the must-be-seen-at resort of the Swinging Sixties. The *yé-yé* heartthrobs of French pop music as well as the stars of French cinema flooded in each summer.

St Tropez in the 1960s was the hippest place you could ever be. Renting a villa in the hills just above the town – where today you find the MUSE Saint Tropez hotel – was especially cool, as you can see in two films by French New Wave directors, Eric Rohmer's *La Collectionneuse* (1967) and Claude Chabrol's *Les Biches* (1968). Most evocative of all was *La Piscine* (1969), in which Alain Delon and Romy Schneider, glamorous superstars of



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4. Sunset at Senequier, a long-standing harbourside café.
5. Roger Vadim's 'And God Created Woman' made both Brigitte Bardot and St Tropez internationally famous.
6. Paintings for sale on the quay.
7. Brigitte Bardot eventually made her home beside Canebiers Bay in St Tropez.
8. Open-top convertibles and St Tropez go together.



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life feature //

- 9. MUSE Saint Tropez offers unsurpassed luxury away from the bustling village.
- 10. Rolling Stones singer Mick Jagger with his new bride Bianca Pérez-Mora Macias at the Chapel of St Anne.
- 11. Unwind at the MUSE Saint Tropez after a day out.
- 12. Claude Chabrol's 1968 film, 'Les Biches', was set in St Tropez.

French cinema, played out a summer drama of passion beside their secluded swimming pool.

St Tropez was a place where Parisian chic and swagger met the laid-back Mediterranean with more sparks than anywhere else on the Riviera. Till then a French phenomenon, it became an international resort for the jet set – as rich celebrity travellers were then called – typified by one event, the 1971 wedding of Mick Jagger to Nicaraguan beauty Bianca Pérez-Mora Macias. The Rolling Stones were the hottest act on the planet, two Beatles were guests, and the nuptials turned into a paparazzi riot.

It is simply known as 'St Trop' now, a diminutive which means 'St Too Much', a fitting nickname for a village into which 50,000 people might crowd into on any high summer day, and still do. The rich

moor their gleaming yachts in the old harbour, the celebrities occupy their swanky holiday villas, and the trippers come celebrity-spotting.

Even French ex-presidents turn up, with Jacques Chirac seen in harbourside cafes and Nicolas Sarkozy taking lunch at Club 55 on Pampelonne beach, the kind of place where you might find Beyoncé at the next table and George Clooney at the bar. And topless bathers all around.

Today, St Tropez is glitzier than ever, its yacht-jammed waters and lavish night clubs drawing A-list names such as Kate Moss, Bono, Rihanna, Jack Nicholson, Lady Gaga, Elton John and Leonardo DiCaprio. But there's still a place for you at a café of the old port, sipping the local rosé, watching the world go by – and hoping the world sees you. For that is the great sport of St Trop. ■



A glamorous yet private hideaway in stunning Saint Tropez, living the South of France lifestyle doesn't get better than at the MUSE Saint Tropez. Located in Ramatuelle and surrounded by forest of umbrella pines, this bijou property boasts just 15 suites, each named after famous 'muses'. Make it your base to explore all the sights, sounds and delights of this jewel of the Riviera. Visit www.muse-hotels.com

“The 1971 wedding of Mick Jagger to Bianca Pérez-Mora Macias in St Tropez was attended by various members of The Rolling Stones, two ex-Beatles and Eric Clapton.”



In the Heart of Bath

The ancient spa city of Bath has been attracting visitors for more than two millennia, drawn by its healing thermal waters and history. One of its best-kept secrets, the MUSE Bath Townhouse, offers unparalleled access to both and to really know what it's like living within so much history.

Text **Christy Yoong**

It's a late spring evening, the sky finally darkening, and I'm exploring the myriad pleasures of The Canary Gin & Wine Bar in Bath. Located on Queen Street, the bar – home to its own Bath Gin even as its shelves groan with more than 130 brands of gin from around the world – is one of the new discoveries I stumbled into while exploring the city of Bath's historic heart.

If Bath doesn't exactly sprawl in the way that, say, London (a mere 90-minute train ride away) does, its centre is positively tiny, effortlessly accessible on foot, but packed with a historical significance that belies its size. Not for nothing is Bath a UNESCO World Heritage Site: just around the corner from The Canary is the Guildhall, which dates back to the late 18th century. Across the street, literally, is the imposing Bath Abbey. While the present-day building was started in 1499, the site has been a place of worship since Anglo-Saxon times.

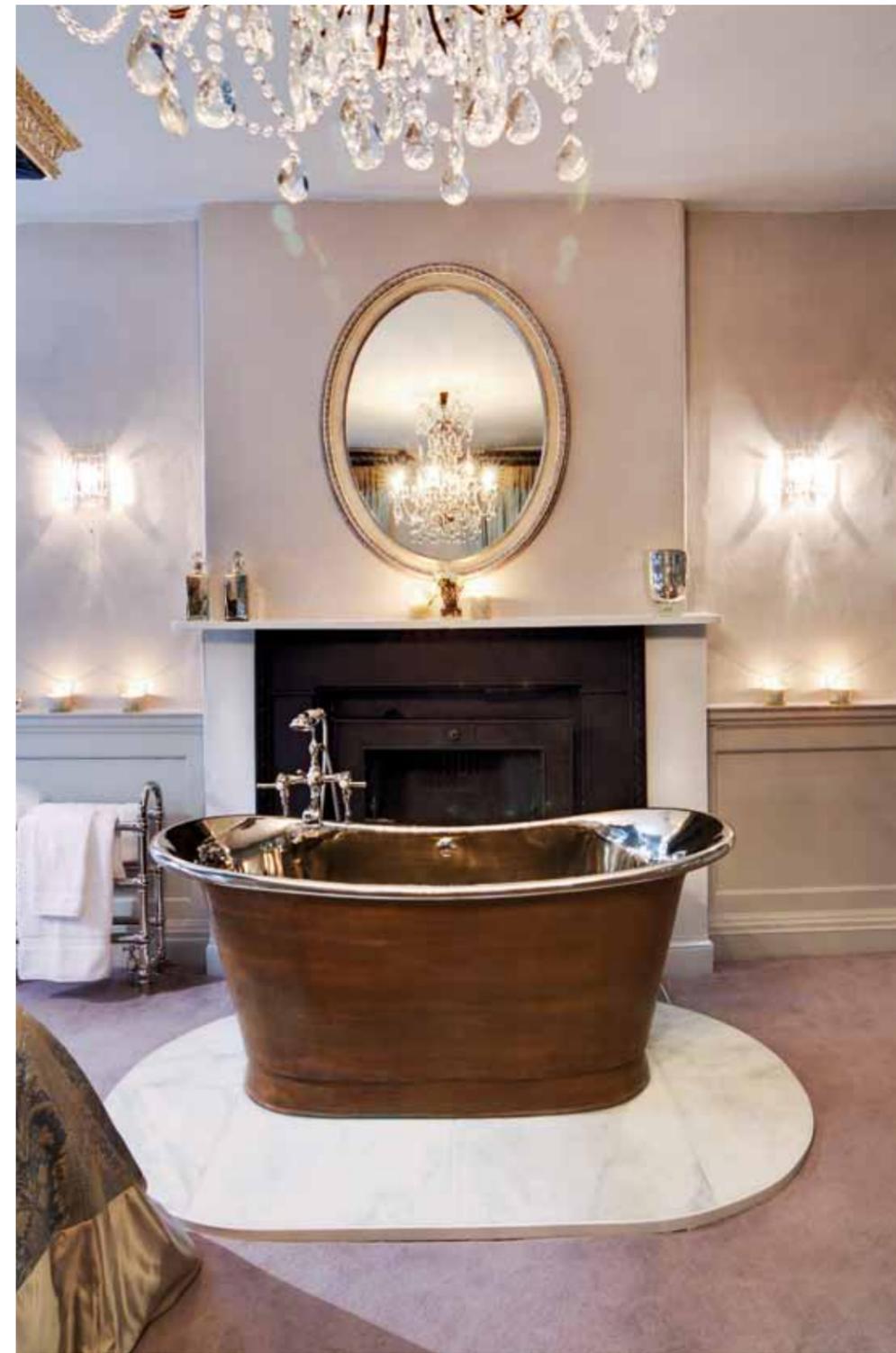
Directly in front of the abbey is an even older attraction – the Roman Baths, which first began construction around 60-70AD on a site that once held a Celtic shrine from the 8th century BC, dedicated to the goddess Sulis (hence Aquae Sulis, or the waters of Sulis, the Roman name for Bath). One of the more interesting exhibits in the Roman Baths is the Beau Street Hoard, a collection of more than 17,000 silver Roman coins, spanning the period from 32BC to 274AD, that were discovered during the construction of The Gainsborough Bath Spa.

Set to open later this year, The Gainsborough Bath Spa is the latest addition to the YTL Classic Hotels portfolio and its Georgian façade will enclose the UK's only natural thermal spa within a hotel. It is right next door to the publicly accessible Thermae Bath Spa (a YTL wellness operation), which is a quick stroll

Built on a Celtic shrine that dates back to the 8th century BC, the Roman Baths are one of the city of Bath's most popular tourist attractions.



“At the MUSE Bath Townhouse, time is at a standstill. On the other side of the door, history and the centuries swirl, waiting your discovery.”



from the Roman Baths. A few cobblestone steps away is another YTL gem and one of the city's best-kept secrets – the luxurious MUSE Bath Townhouse. This gorgeous property is part of Hetling House, formerly known as Abbey Church House, and is probably the city's last surviving Elizabethan building.

While parts of it date back to the late 16th century, the five-storey MUSE Bath Townhouse is anything but antique. The sumptuous interiors were designed by Peter Higgins of Bath-based Eton Design, who was also responsible for the refurbishment of the MUSE Bray Cottages in Berkshire, England. The discreet front door opens into a soothing garden room that also includes a large glass table with cushion chairs for meetings or informal meals. Further back, through a short passage, is the thoroughly fitted out kitchen, with a marble top breakfast bar for two. Standing out, incongruously, from all

the modern amenities is a pink Smeg refrigerator, filled with goodies that the house manager, Anne Marie Brennan, has personally selected, including pastries, confectioneries, cheeses and wines.

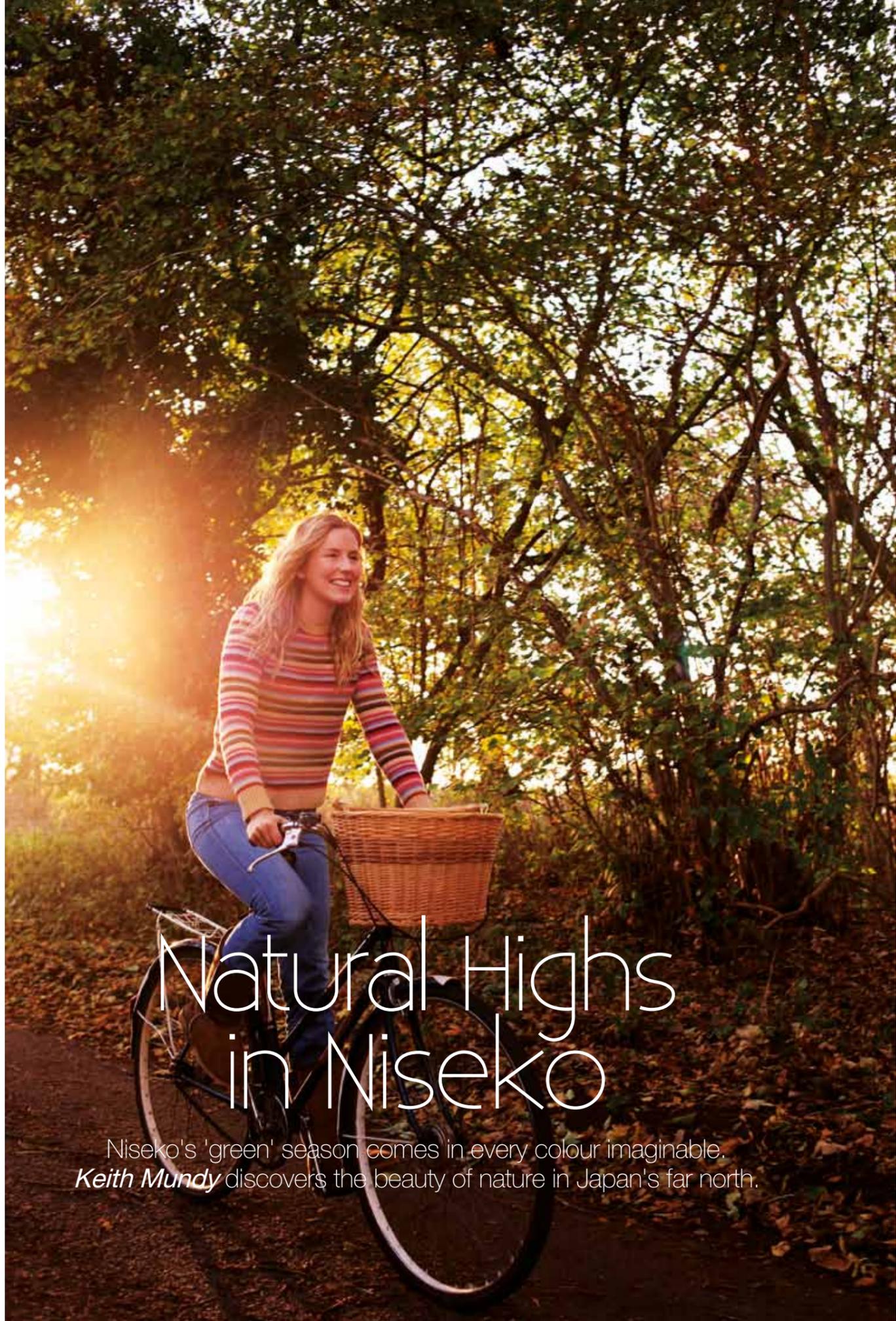
One floor up the thickly carpeted stairs is the Drawing Room, dominated by a pair of plush orange sofas – too large to fit through the doorway, they were actually put together in the room itself – and a velvet ottoman. A small library, music system and Bang & Olufsen flatscreen see to your leisurely pursuits, while a well-curated drinks tray add to the relaxing ambience.

The capacious Master Suite, on the third level, features a tempting copper freestanding bath, thoughtfully placed before the imposing fireplace. A king-sized canopied bed, with 18-inch mattress, silk bed linen and sumptuous pillows, ensures a snug night in among the room's pale teal, silver and grey accents. While the bath easily fits two, an adjoining bathroom, with walk-in shower and twin vanities, is just steps away.

While MUSE Bath Townhouse is the perfectly private escape for two, there's more than enough space for five. Apart from a single room on the fourth floor, the Queen Bedroom on the top is a colourfully decorated self-contained suite, with a large double bed, fireplace and enclosed shower amidst the pretty cream, pink and lilac accents.

It will take more than a night's stay to fully appreciate the full details – I took particular delight in the ribbed fabric pig doorstops – of the luxurious sanctuary that is the MUSE Bath Townhouse. Yet, it is its location, within the busiest part of the city, that appeals most. As night falls, a tranquil hush descends and, apart from the occasional footsteps or subdued murmurs outside, there is nothing to interrupt your quiet enjoyment of the house. As you enjoy a glass of wine while watching the television or curl up in bed with a book, it's truly impossible to believe that you are in the heart of Bath. Here, within the MUSE Bath Townhouse, time is at a standstill. On the other side of the door, history and the centuries swirl, waiting your discovery. ■

Clockwise from top: The kitchen in the MUSE Bath Townhouse, with a pink Smeg refrigerator for a touch of colour; The large orange sofas in the Drawing Room offer cosy comfort; The Master Suite's copper bath in front of the imposing fireplace.



Natural Highs in Niseko

Niseko's 'green' season comes in every colour imaginable.
Keith Mundy discovers the beauty of nature in Japan's far north.



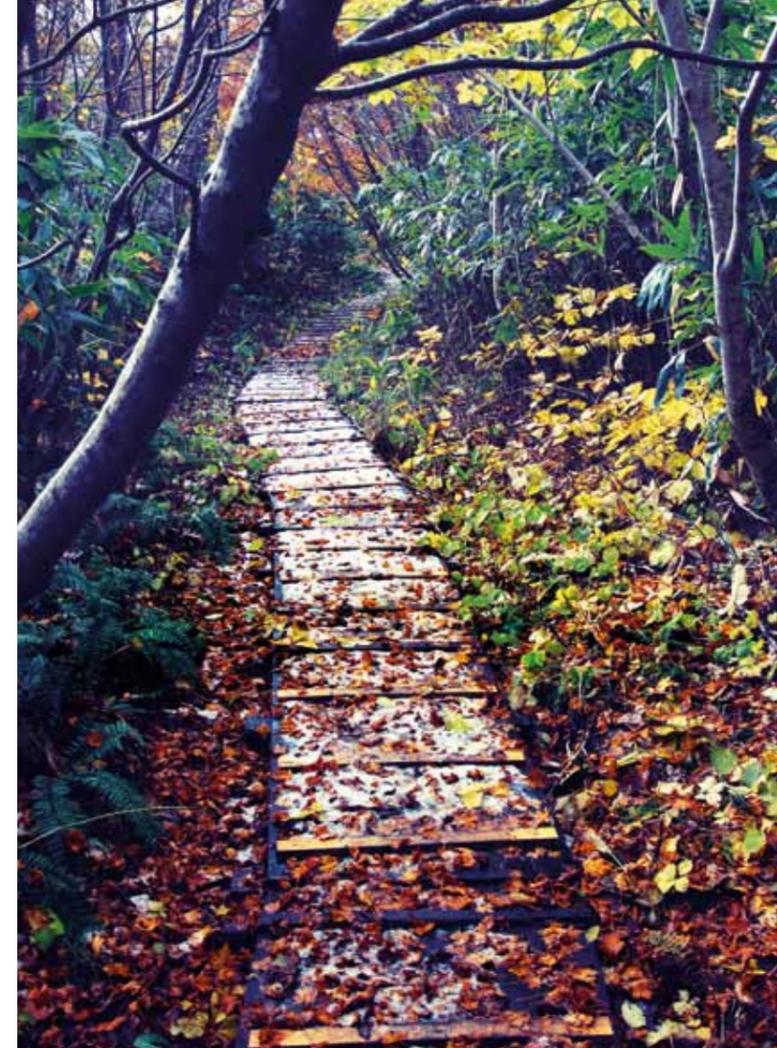
Ever yearned for a Canadian caper or a Scandinavian scamper, clean sharp air, forests of fir trees, scents of pine or the great outdoors of the northern climes? Well, you can do all that in Asia too, especially in Hokkaido, Japan's most northerly island, a complete wilderness 150 years ago and still, today, largely given over to nature.

Hokkaido's premier leisure location is the resort area of Niseko, just a two-hour drive from Sapporo's New Chitose Airport. Overlooked by the towering Mt Yotei, this is a land of forests, lakes and mountains, Niseko is an all-year round, outdoor pursuits destination with excellent tourism infrastructure. Plus, of course, the characteristic Japanese attention to detail and exquisitely polite hospitality. Well known for its winter sports, Niseko's premier hotel is Niseko Village, renowned not just for its luxury but for its express access to the slopes of Mt Annupuri, with its own cable-car system out back. The low-rise Green Leaf Hotel, with a more intimate environment, is also right next to the slopes.

Whilst the white season experience is what Niseko is famous for, the area is, in fact, an all-year-round destination for lovers of the outdoors, adventure seekers, sports enthusiasts and nature ramblers. At any time of the year, you will find a host of opportunities to enjoy the natural environment and many activities to pursue.

Spring, summer and autumn – the "green season" – have their own delights, and some of the best are available on the hotel premises across their extensive grounds. For a start, catering to lovers of the major sports of golf and tennis, there is an 18-hole golf course with greens flanked by pine trees at Niseko Village and no fewer than 16 tennis courts at Green Leaf Hotel. Playing these sports in view of the volcanic splendour of the area's two great mountains, Yotei and Annupuri, is a special experience.

"Niseko is an all-year round, outdoor pursuits destination with excellent tourism infrastructure."



Clockwise, from above left: Pumpkins for sale in a farmers' market, ready for Halloween; The Shinsen-numa Lake trail, strewn with golden autumn leaves; Meeting some canine hikers on Mt Annupuri.





The bear fountain gushing fresh mountain water; Mt Yotei and the Shiribetsu River in autumn; Niseko in the green season offers much natural beauty and Pure activities to enjoy.



Mountain Highs

For the really energetic, a hike up Mt Yotei is definitely – how else to say it? – the peak experience. Dominating the skyline, the conical volcano rises 1,893m and is notable for its beautiful silhouette. The crowning glory of the Shikotsu-Toya National Park, Yotei hosts more than 130 species of animals, with red foxes especially apparent, plus many precious alpine plants. The area's springs are famous for their water purity, rated by Japan's Ministry of the Environment amongst the nation's best.

Of the four hiking routes to the top, the Kutchan trail is the most popular, starting off gently, then getting steep and unrelenting, with many switchbacks. Enjoy rare flora along the way and, after a minimum of six hours, you will reach the crater rim. Yotei's highest point is about halfway around the rim, marked by a small sign. Circling the crater, you'll enjoy spectacular views all around, even as far as the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean. Closed from October 20 to June 1, this is a fine-weather hike: in adverse conditions, the trails can be very slippery in places and the top is exposed to strong winds and lashing rain.

If that's a bit too energetic, there's an excellent alternative: Mt Annupuri. Climbing this peak is easier, since its slopes are gentler and its summit lower at 1,308m. The well-used trail first runs through dense forests before popping out of the trees onto the main ridge. Here, the trail becomes much stonier, with loose scree. After some meandering, it goes straight towards the summit, where you're rewarded with a breathtaking view of Yotei's perfect cone across the valley.

In fact, you can make it even easier by taking the cable car up to just below 1,000m and hiking on up from there on a steep and rocky path enveloped in a dwarf bamboo forest. Quite different from normal bamboo, this species grows only about two meters high, but its dark green leaves are big, thick and numerous, and the plants cluster tightly together, creating a dense mass of bushes. From the top, as well as seeing Yotei, you get

tremendous views across the valley and, northward, out over the Sea of Japan.

From the south, where Niseko Village and Green Leaf are, Annupuri puts on a great autumn show: the mosaic of coloured leaves on its flanks glowing in the sun. There's a kaleidoscope of colours, dramatic in changeable weather as clouds cast shade on the wooded slopes, only to pass and let brilliant hues burst forth in the sun's bright rays.

Hidden Lakes

Shinsen-numa is rated the most beautiful among many ponds and lakes in the Niseko area. Hidden away amid Siberian dwarf pine, Japanese red pine, Jezo spruce and other tree varieties, the marshy pond lies in perfect tranquillity, reflecting the surroundings with shimmering beauty. Reached via a trail which begins steep and rocky, then runs along boardwalks, richly varied vegetation crowds in on you along the way, highlighted by the deep red leaves of mountain ash trees and the bright yellow of maples. Clumps of tall white birches rise higher than other trees, without much foliage, looking like ghosts. By mid-October, overnight snowfalls can add to the colour, dusting the trails with white.

Hangetsuko – Half Moon Lake – is quiet and pristine, a crescent of water cradled in the crater of a long-dead volcano, cloaked in forest. On an easy walk, you tread a leaf-strewn trail beneath tall

trees with leaves turning from green to gold, then red and brown. Reaching a ridge that is an old crater rim, you walk along under huge Mongolian oaks. Acorns crackle underfoot, and squirrels scurry away with them. A path leads gently down to the water as the lake emerges through the foliage. At the water's edge, you are dazzled by the view across the lake of a magnificent curtain of multi-coloured forest cloaking the hillsides.

Pure Delight

But even more remarkable is to engage in the exciting activities of 'Pure', the dedicated nature activity area of Niseko Village. Here, you find a whole gamut of thrills to experience, all with specially designed features and equipment, where you can stretch your legs and flex your muscles in more than 20 ways, pushing your limits and following your passions.

In the Pure Action area alone, there are as many as 10 activities, with names like Crazy Ladder and Pure Battle, where you climb, fly and fall from heights without a harness, with air cushions to protect you and nets to catch you. You can balance on the High or Low Wires, have a go at the Mini Swing and the Mini Jump, and get some amazing ups and downs with bungee jumping and trampolining.

For this year, Pure has been redesigned and revitalised, with a new area called Pure Adventure featuring three major attractions: the





Fuwa Fuwa Slider, a gigantic slide; Water Ball, where you walk on water inside a huge inflatable sphere; and the Fuwa Fuwa Maze, a labyrinth to get lost in.

During Niseko's green season, you can indulge in outdoor activities like golfing, zip-lining and kayaking.

Highlights for many visitors are the dramatic aerial activities of Tree Trekking and the Zip-Line Tour, forest adventures amidst a canopy of green. You make your way through the treetops along hanging bridges and ropes, and fly through the air on a zip line, with a special harness to keep you safe.

Back on the ground, you will find many more activities, such as two fun forms of golf, called Park Golf, played with a bigger ball and club than regular golf, and SNAG Golf. SNAG stands for "Start New At Golf" and it's a fun way to introduce kids to golf, using a plastic club, a ball similar to that for tennis, and a rubber tee-mat. Then there's Disc Golf, which is not really golf but a game where you throw a frisbee towards a series of targets arranged as a course. You can also enjoy kite flying, with a colourful variety of kites available to play with. For keen players and new players as well, there are courts for beach volleyball and badminton.

In addition to all this, you can saddle up too: the Pure area has dedicated trails for cycling and riding. Mountain biking is done on trails that include jumps, bumps, bridges, see-saws and other challenges. Horse riding is available on gentle, Hokkaido-born horses on the riding course around Niseko Village. Or else there is the Draft Horse Experience, riding a magnificent draft horse with a special instructor.

Small children have their own Kids' Area, a safe adventure park with play features in natural wood. If you have brought your dog along, then you can exercise your pet at the Dog Run, a large fenced park where it can run around off-leash or where you can take it through a number of training items.

If you're tired out from all the above, or just plain lazy, take a Golf Cart Tour. Easy and fun to drive – though you must still have a



driving licence to do it – golf carts for two or four people can be hired for tootling round the Pure area. Or if you want to get above it all, you could take to the air in a tethered hot air balloon: rise 30m up and appreciate a whole new perspective of the surroundings.

Lastly, if you want to keep things really simple, just take a walk around the grounds. There are paths you can follow throughout the Niseko Village area, strolling in the splendid natural surroundings. But the really great thing about Niseko is this: if you want to explore true wilderness, some terrific experiences are at hand in short drives from the hotel.

For water sports, the Shiribetsu River offers everything from lazy flat-rafting and gentle- to high-energy whitewater rafting, the last at its best in late spring and early summer when the snow melts and the river's upper levels are gushing with fast-flowing water. Hiking to hidden lakes is another great pastime, especially in the autumn, when the leaves turn to gold, orange and red, providing a dazzling display of nature at its best, or in June and July for the beautiful wild flowers.

Pumpkin Party

While the squirrels are collecting acorns, the farmers are bringing in the pumpkins. Hokkaido is known for its superb local produce, from the excellent seafood found in the nearby seas to the fine local beef, and especially for its seasonal fruits and vegetables. Come fall, pumpkins feature prominently and chefs in the hotels use them to make special dishes.

Visiting Niseko at this time, you'll see pumpkins everywhere. Grown in the area in many wondrous shapes, sizes and colours, they are energetically promoted all around town, decorating roadsides, house frontages and shopping centres – especially the big round orange ones – in one great pumpkin party. In the farmers' markets that are a colourful local feature, you see a huge variety of squashes, some of them carved with jolly Halloween faces as the American custom makes inroads in Japan.

Niseko is always in season, and the "green season" is actually every colour imaginable, courtesy of nature's bounty, which is abundantly found in Japan's invigorating far north. ■





Organise a wicked weekend with friends, family or clients with the Cameron Highlands Resort's Murder Mystery in the Misty Mountains package.

The Knives Are Out!

Inject a dose of wicked fun and games into your weekend with a *Murder Mystery Dinner* amidst the mist-swathed hills of Cameron Highlands.

Photography **Yong Keen Keong**

Invoke your long-dormant inner Agatha Christie or Chief Inspector Barnaby over a round of wicked fun and games at the Cameron Highlands Resort. The emerald jungle and misty hills of Malaysia's most popular hill station might be soothingly inviting by day but could easily prove to be a hotbed of intrigue, mischief and mayhem once night falls. After all, the highlands did prove to be the real-life setting for the still-unexplained disappearance of legendary Thai silk king, Jim Thompson, who vanished without a trace one Easter Sunday afternoon. Was it tigers that got the enterprising American or was it something more sinister? Only time will tell.

Spinning yet another web of intrigue around this local lore is the talented events team at YTL Hotels. Crafting this signature experience, titled *Murder Mystery in the Misty Mountains*, up to 60 people may participate at any one time, each one taking on new guises, and forming a completely new party that wouldn't seem out of place in a game of *Cluedo*. Preparations for this whodunit experience begins way in advance as character dossiers are prepared and handed out, enabling each one to arrive for the start of the dinner in character. You might, for example, be given the role of an international man of mystery or a roué. Later, you might find yourself seated next to your great-aunt Millicent, who's transformed herself into a cabaret singer. Part of the fun lies in the dressing up and the murder mystery dinner always begins with a cocktail session, designed, in part, to loosen up any remnant inhibitions

as well as to help you get to know the other characters who'll be called into play as the evening goes on.

The fun really begins once the dinner is underway. The knives (or, perhaps, a revolver) will soon be out and guests are encouraged to hunt for clues all around the Tudor-inspired property or even blackmail fellow guests surreptitiously at the table in order to keep mum about certain potentially damning pieces of evidence that have you branded the murderer. There's no fun without prizes at the end and the organisers have ensured that everyone leaves happy, with awards and accolades going to the Best Performer, Super Sleuth and so on. It is, of course, unthinkable that one embarks on the long drive down to the flatlands after such an exhilarating evening. So, the *Murder Mystery in the Misty Highlands* is best ended by finally retreating, after nightcaps in front of the fireplace, to the luxurious comfort of the resort's beautifully appointed rooms. You may choose to stay for a single night but the Cameron Highlands Resort is best enjoyed over a double- or triple-nighter. There's plenty to do, of course, including teeing off on the golf course that's just right across from the resort, to jungle-trekking, bird-watching, tea-drinking and strawberry-picking. If the excitement of the previous night proves a bit too much to bear, recover in style over a few hours' of sybaritic bliss at the award-winning Spa Village Cameron Highlands. Now, that's a treat we certainly wouldn't mind killing for. ■

Suites With A View

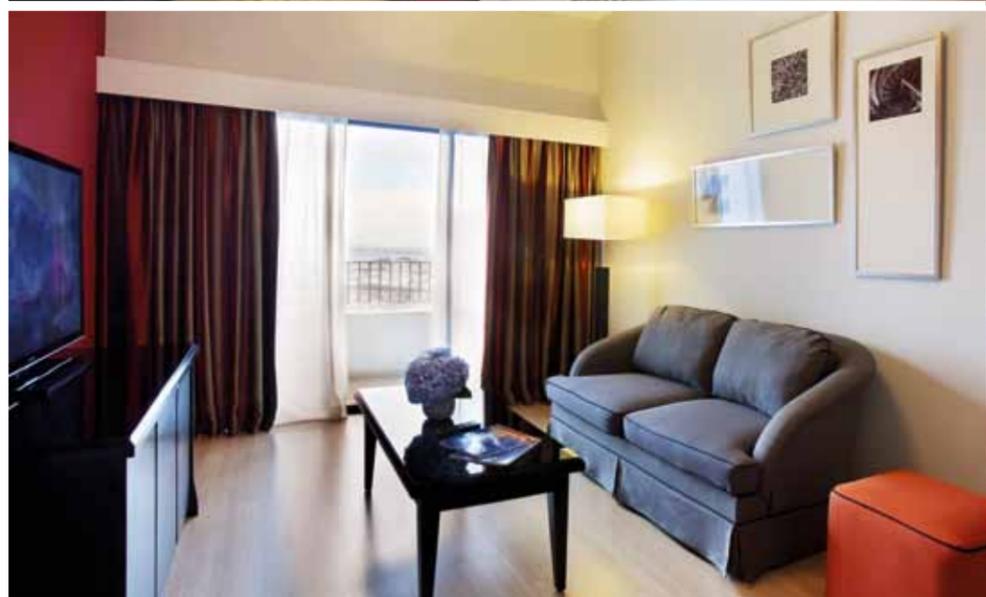
Spacious suites and great views enhance the business travellers' experience.

Text **Jan Yong** Photography **Law Soo Phye**

The newly refurbished Suite Wing of Vistana Penang Bukit Jambul is, literally, a breath of fresh air for the busy executive needing a place of respite after a hectic day. All of the exceedingly spacious suites feature private balconies that look out to interesting vistas, with beautiful views of the Penang Golf Club and Penang Second Bridge.

When you step into the stylishly appointed suites, you will appreciate the generous open plan of the living and dining areas. There is plenty of room for you to reflect, put on your thinking cap or simply chill out in front of the 50" LED television with local and cable channels. The bathroom, too, conspires to put you in a relaxing mood, with its minimalist design complemented by a range of signature bathroom essentials created exclusively for Vistana Hotels by Mangosteen Collection.

If you need more space at any time of the day, visit the newly unveiled 24-hour Executive Lounge on the second floor that adjoins the main hotel. Here, you can keep up-to-date with the 24-hour news channels



Vistana Penang Bukit Jambul offers the hectic executive traveller a respite from a busy day, with spacious rooms overlooking panoramic vistas, while still seeing to all his or her business needs.

"The introduction of our fully refreshed Suite Wing delivers the brand's promise of Vibrance, Verve and Value, designed with much insight into the needs of today's traveller, adding yet another option for our guests," says Wayne Lee, General Manager of Vistana Penang Bukit Jambul. Targeted at mid-range business travellers, the hotel features a range of facilities required by those on a working trip. For meetings, seminars and big dinners, the main hotel houses 10 meeting rooms and a ballroom, while for short, casual discussions, the hotel's Hub247 is private and comfortable enough.

This being Penang, you have the assurance that your F&B needs are always taken care of. There is Barista at the main hotel, which offers coffee and local favourites any time of the day, while a short walk away is the Original Penang Kayu Nasi Kandar restaurant. For your shopping needs, Kompleks Bukit Jambul shopping centre is within walking distance, while Queensbay Mall is a short drive away.

Vistana Penang Bukit Jambul's strategic location is another plus point, making it a breeze for business travellers commuting to and from the Penang International Airport – a mere 7km away – while other attractions, such as Bayan Lepas Free Industrial Zone, Subterranean Penang International Convention and Exhibition Centre (SPICE), Bukit Jambul Complex and Penang Golf Club, are even nearer.

Book now by calling 04-646 8000 or visit our website at www.vistanahotels.com.

or avail yourself of the business facilities such as printing and free WiFi, along with a complimentary cup of hot coffee or tea. And, if you need some action, take a short walk to the gymnasium located on the same floor. It's open around-the-clock to cater to your demanding hours. If that's too much work, try a few laps in the swimming pool instead.

The Suite Wing, comprising 185 two- and three-bedroom suites, are in addition to the existing 221 guest rooms and 17 suites located in the main hotel. Easily accessed via the second floor of the hotel, each suite features a master bedroom with a king-sized bed, while the remaining rooms have the option of a cosy queen-sized or two single beds.

"The fully refreshed Suite Wing delivers Vistana's promise of Vibrance, Verve and Value."

UNIFIED IN SPORT

The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur celebrated the spirit of sports, while playing host to quite a few sporting legends, at the recent 2014 Laureus World Sports Awards held in the Malaysian capital. **Ong Chin Huat** caught up with some of the stars during the Laureus All Star Unity Cup.

It was a treat for soccer fans at the Royal Selangor Club as they were able to see their idols play in the first-ever Laureus All Stars Unity Cup in the run-up to the 2014 Laureus World Sports Awards held in Kuala Lumpur recently. Being up close and personal with Paulo Ferreira, Steve McManaman, Hidetoshi Nakata and Quinton Fortune as well as rub shoulders with football legends like Ruud Gullit, Vitor Baia and Ronald de Boer, not to mention Sir Bobby Charlton, certainly made the day for the specially invited audience and VIP guests.

With former England boss Fabio Capello and the legendary Johan Cruyff – with assistance from Michael Laudrup – as coaches for the charity match, some lucky fans, including local actor Fahrin Ahmad, as well as the international sporting media turned up at the club to see their football heroes in action, and they didn't disappoint. With deft legwork and smart tactics often seen only in international matches, these celebrated football players garnered loud

cheers from the crowd and the game was all played with zest and for a good cause.

The exhibition soccer match featured two 30-minute halves, comprising two teams selected from the Laureus All Stars, pairing up with selected Malaysian juniors from Yayasan Rakyat 1Malaysia (YR1M), representing the Under-19 and Under 12 sides.

During the charity match, also attended by Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin and Laureus Sport for Good Foundation chairman Dr Edwin Moses, Laureus and YR1M jointly announced a partnership to benefit Malaysian youths through sports. Among the VIPs present were YR1M trustee Tan Sri Lodin Wok Kamaruddin and YR1M chief executive officer Ung Su Ling. Dr Moses said the foundation, which supports over 140 sports-based community programmes in 34 countries, would transfer its know-how to YR1M through proven training programmes and skills development courses.

Quinton Fortune of Team YR1M and Gaizka Mendieta of Team Laureus battle for the ball during the Laureus All Stars Unity Cup.



Laureus and YR1M have also agreed to hold a Laureus Sport for Good Summit in Kuala Lumpur later in the year to allow members of the Laureus global network to share knowledge, compare techniques and learn from one another to ensure the best possible development programmes could be delivered to young people around the world. Over 150 youths, sports practitioners and development leaders are expected at the summit.

Dr Edwin Moses presenting an autographed t-shirt to Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh of YTL Corporation.

The Laureus statuette is displayed during the Laureus World Sports Awards 2014 Nominations Announcement.



"Laureus is not just about the awards ceremony. It is also about the year-round work of the foundation, which uses sports to improve the lives of young people around the world," said Dr Moses. "This is the 15th year of Laureus, and we have helped millions of youngsters since. Yayasan Rakyat 1Malaysia is the Laureus CSR (corporate social responsibility) partner. Over the last few months, Laureus Ambassadors and I have visited events organised by YR1M and have seen the amazing work they do. We are truly delighted to be working with such an excellent partner and we hope our activities will make a difference to young people in Malaysia."

YR1M's Ung said: "Edwin and Sir Bobby are true giants of the sports world. It is a pleasure to be able to work with them and other great Laureus sportsmen and sportswomen to help young people in our country." Laureus Ambassadors are expected to inspire and encourage local youths at grassroots level by taking part in Laureus-YR1M projects in Malaysia over the next three years.

Dr Moses and Sir Bobby are members of the Laureus World Sports Academy, a unique grouping of 46 living sports legends, who volunteer their time to act as global ambassadors for the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, whose mission is to use sport as the means to combat some of the world's toughest social challenges facing young people today such as juvenile crime, gangsterism, HIV/AIDS,

discrimination, social exclusion, lack of education, landmine awareness, obesity and other health problems.

The foundation helps children from the slums of Mumbai to the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro and the minefields of Cambodia. It attempts to improve the quality of life in the poorest areas of Nairobi as well as the disadvantaged inner city areas of the developed world. Laureus-supported projects aim to show every day the dramatic successes that sports can achieve with young people coming off drugs, leaving gangs, entering education, finding jobs, gaining confidence, getting fit, making friends and stepping up to become positive role models in their communities.

YR1M is a charitable foundation set up to benefit Malaysians from all walks of life, particularly the less fortunate and the needy. The foundation organises activities that use education and sports to improve their quality of life. This year's Laureus World Sports Awards on March 26 was held the following night at Istana Budaya after the Laureus All Stars Unity Cup, drawing a crowd of international sporting and social stars. The winners, as voted by the Laureus World Sports Academy, were announced at a globally televised awards ceremony.

Actor Benedict Cumberbatch was specially flown in to host the event and delighted guests with his witty repartee. The entire stage was a spectacle in itself – special effects and light works impressed the audience as did holographic duplicates of Cumberbatch, all talking among themselves and with the audience. Germany's Sebastian Vettel, the youngest four-time Formula One champion in history was named Laureus Sportsman of the Year, while US swimmer Missy Franklin, at 18, became the youngest ever winner of the Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year Award. Spain's Rafael Nadal bagged the Laureus Comeback Award, while Marc Márquez received the Laureus

Breakthrough of the Year Award, after winning the World MotoGP Championship at just 20 years and 266 days.

Among members of the Laureus World Sports Academy present were Sir Bobby Charlton, Sebastian Coe, Nadia Comaneci, Michael Johnson, academy chairman Dr Moses, Ilie Nastase, Mark Spitz, Daley Thompson and Steve Waugh.

Interspersed between the awards presentation were performances by the Wrecking Orchestra Dance crew who entertained the audience with slick dance moves in the dark, with only fluorescent lights illuminating their bodies. Jamie Foxx made a surprise appearance and sang several hit songs and did a convincing Ray Charles impersonation to entertain the crowd.

Adding some show biz glamour was German actor Daniel Brühl, who played Niki Lauda in the film *Rush*, as well as Chinese supermodel/actress Du Juan who was quite a sight in a black satin gown with a plunging back. Fans of former footballer and actor Eric Cantona cheered and whistled as their idol appeared on stage to present an award.

After the awards ceremony, guests were ferried to the After Party held at Marini's on 57. The celebrity guests mingled with each other and feasted in a pop-up Nobu restaurant where sushi and sashimi were served. Seen partying were Nacho Figueras, Nakata, Gullit, Brühl, Fortune, and Raphael Holzdeppe. Cumberbatch, surrounded by bodyguards and a horde of female fans popped in for a quick drink and obliged a few guests with selfies.

Proceeds from the Laureus World Sports Awards fund the work of the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation. Since its inception, Laureus has raised over USD60 million (RM82 million) for projects that have helped to improve the lives of millions of young people.

Hidetoshi Nakata



As one of the most famous Asian footballers of his generation, Hidetoshi Nakata has played for Japan in three World Cups and two Olympic Games. Beginning his professional career at the age of 18, this midfielder has also played for Italy with Perugia, Roma, Parma, Bologna and Fiorentina. With a keen interest in fashion – he is often spotted in front-row seats during men's collections in Milan.

When asked about the Calvin Klein underwear ads he appeared in, Nakata said he did it at the encouragement of friends in the fashion industry. Catching up with him after his match at the Laureus All Stars Unity Cup held at the Royal Selangor Club in Mont Kiara, Nakata said he has been to Malaysia a number of times, adding that Kuala Lumpur had changed a lot over the years. On his accommodation at the Majestic Hotel, he was all praises for it, describing it as beautiful with service that was "amazing."

Nakata retired at age 29, after a 10-year career that included seven seasons in the Italian Serie A and a season in the English Premier League. He announced his retirement from professional football and the Japanese national team after the 2006 FIFA World Cup held in Germany, saying he no longer found it fun to play. However, he told *YTL Life*: "Football is still an amazing game even though it is now much faster, more technical and

difficult." Nakata also said coaching wasn't in his future game plan.

He spends his time nowadays travelling all over Japan, visiting different prefectures as well as playing tennis. When asked about the World Cup, he cited Brazil as a favourite to win the cup but hastened to add that there could be a surprise. "I just like to see good and exciting matches being played and it doesn't matter who wins." Having played for Asian and European clubs, he said there was little difference playing the sport in both continents. "Football is football, it's universal," he said thoughtfully. "That's why it has so much power... anyone can play."

"Football is still an amazing game even though it is now much faster, more technical and difficult."



Steve McManaman

"I think the Majestic Hotel is simply fantastic," said Steve McManaman, breathless and fresh off the field from scoring a goal with sweat dripping from his brow. "The staff is amazing and it couldn't have been better...I'm having a great time." The English former footballer who played as midfielder, winger and playmaker for Liverpool, Real Madrid and Manchester City, McManaman is the most decorated English footballer to have played abroad, with the UEFA website stating that "of all England's footballing exports in the modern era, none were as successful as McManaman."

Friendly and lively with a wicked sense of humour, McManaman puts a human face on the sometimes cold and ruthless world of professional football. He's the man you could easily share a pint with in your local pub and not feel the weight of his fame or status leaning on you. "I've been to KL four or five times already and I always seem to enjoy myself here," he said.

"I usually come on holiday or with my team and I do what normally people do when they go on holiday ... I love going out and sampling the local food and night life." He cited Bijan as one of the restaurants he was recommended to try out but hastened to add that he can't take spicy food.

He doesn't have a special diet, even when he was playing professionally. "I just try to eat right but I'm lucky as I'm naturally slim." He said he was planning

to spend a few days in KL and then proceed to Pangkor Laut in Perak to relax and "enjoy the beach".

When asked which team he supports today, he said: "Liverpool, of course!" He singled out Steven Gerrard for mention, describing him as "a good friend and an absolute superstar." He said he still visits Liverpool club and coaches the 18 to 21-year-olds there.

These days, he spends most of his time as a football analyst and leading TV pundit for BT Sport's Premiership. He also has a keen interest in coaching. "The biggest challenge is to make your team win," he told *YTL Life*. "In England, they change the manager so many times, it's very disappointing. You need to be patient and give the manager time to work out his strategy. But that's the hard part. The football management business is so big financially and there is so much at stake. When the owners lose two or three games, they start to panic ... there are too many managers getting sacked nowadays so that is very disappointing."

He plays many other sports nowadays although he modestly admits he's not good at them. "I like horse racing and golf and watching rugby." On the World Cup, he shared Nakata's opinion that Brazil could win. "If I gamble, it would be Brazil. They are the favourites and they have the best opportunity as they are on home ground so they will have lots of fans. Their fans are very passionate and that will definitely help them."



Ruud Gullit

The Laureus All Stars Unity Cup event also gave rising talents in the Malaysian football academy a lifetime opportunity to play football with the legends of the game. In between his job as the official commentator of the exhibition match, Ruud Gullit spoke to *YTL Life* on football and what he has been up to.

You were both a player and manager – which do you prefer?

A player, of course! But I'm too old to play now and my knees have given way but I still feel young.

What do you think of the high salaries football players earn today?

When I was a football player, they also said I earned a lot of money. That's just part of the business.

How did you use to prepare for an important match?

I didn't do anything special really. You just need to believe in yourself, have strength and confidence, and always think positive in what you are going to do

Did you have to have a special diet?

Our diet was fixed by the club. We had pasta, chicken, fish and veggies.

What do you think of football today?

Football today is much quicker, more commercially oriented with TV rights, etc. It's a big business and we need to grow and move with the times. It brings joy to lots of people. I think FIFA did a great job in the way they changed the game, so that's good.

How do you keep fit?

I go to the gym but I can't run anymore because of my knees. I do a little bit of boxing and play golf... things like that.

What kinds of challenges did you face as a coach of a football team?

There were many challenges. You and your team are only as good as your last victory. You need to keep motivating your team all the time and push them over their limit. You have to keep doing it all the time by talking to them and giving them confidence. Different players have different personalities and some are easier to work with than others.

What is the most memorable match you have ever played?

It would have to be winning the European Championship with Holland in 1988... nothing beats playing for your own country!

Where do you live now and how do you spend your time?

I live in Amsterdam and I do quite a lot of television work, presenting as well as commentary.

Any regrets?

The worst thing an athlete can have is an injury.

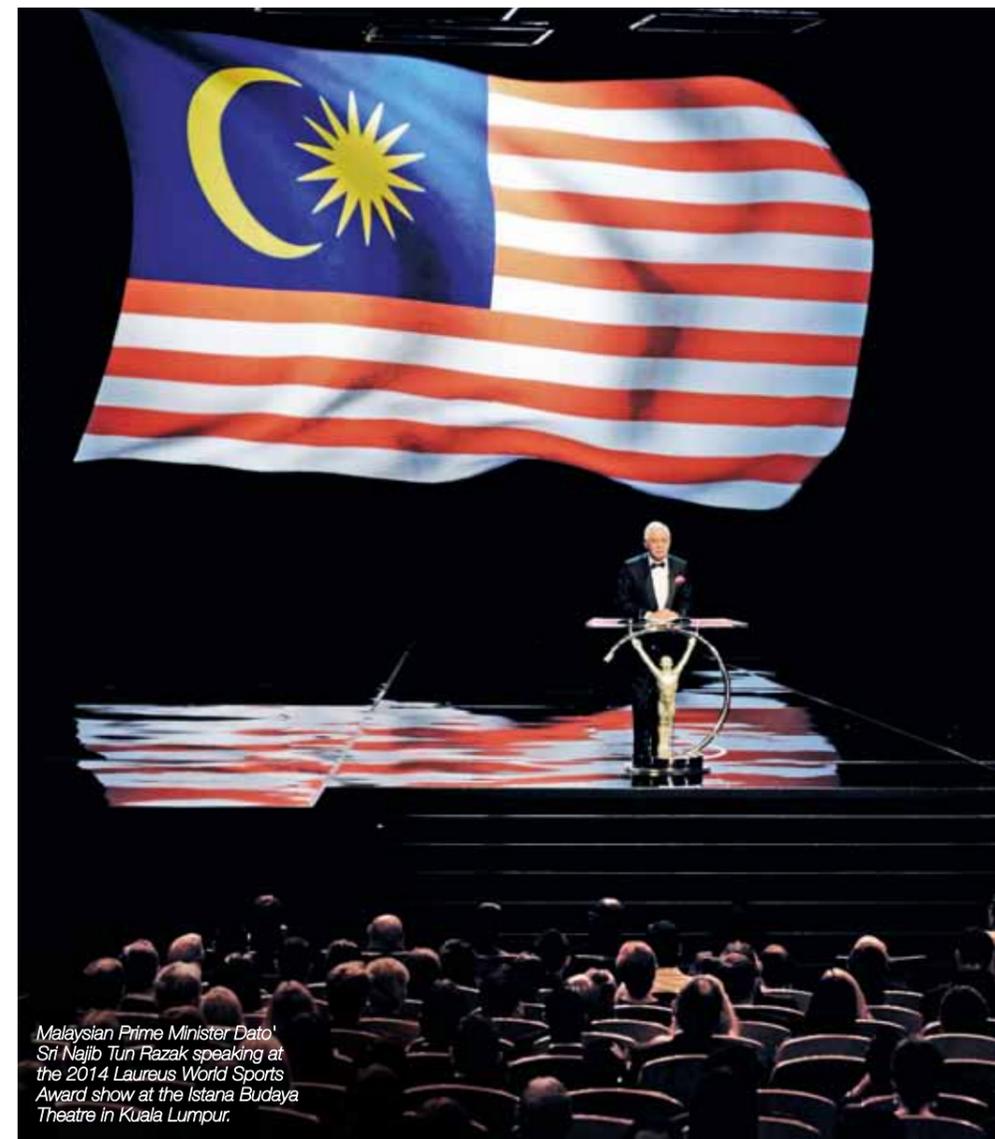
If you had not become a football player, what do you think you would have been?

Oh! That's a difficult question ... I like music so I think I would have become a musician even though I don't play any instruments.

Any team you support today?

I enjoy watching Bayern Munich play. 🇩🇪

"The Laureus All Stars Unity Cup event also gave rising talents in the Malaysian football academy a lifetime opportunity to play football with the legends of the game."



Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak speaking at the 2014 Laureus World Sports Award show at the Istana Budaya Theatre in Kuala Lumpur.



Felipe's Top 10

Life as a Formula One driver is seen by many as exhilarating. Living life in the fast lane brings about a certain set of privileges such as the keys to every city you happen to race in. When Formula One champion Felipe Massa raced into Kuala Lumpur recently, he knew exactly where to go and what to do. As precise and definitive as his manoeuvres on the racing track are, the fast and furious Brazilian thrilled the crowds at the Malaysian Grand Prix 2014 and shared with *YTL Life* his Top 10 list on what he likes about the city and beyond, both on and off the race track.

Text Ong Chin Huat Photography Ting Yang Shan

1. Richard Mille

Richard is a dear friend and one of the most incredible watchmakers of this generation. He has been my sponsor since 2004 and we have collaborated on several watches together. Among them are the **Richard Mille** three special-edition tourbillon watches, including the *RM 006*, *RM 009* and *RM 056* as well as the *RM-005FM* and the *RM-011*. I have a soft spot for his watches.

2. Sepang International Circuit

I like the **Sepang** race track very much. It's a nice place to race. I started twice in pole position there. The heat and humidity make it tough for the racers. The heat also affects



the tyres significantly – degradation can happen very quickly. The weather here is also very unpredictable as it can suddenly rain heavily. But all these factors mean the race is always exciting for the fans. I always look forward to a good race at Sepang.

3. Pangkor Laut Resort

This is the place I go to recharge and relax, especially after a race. I indulge in watersports such as water skiing, jet-skiing and swimming. The place is so private and secluded; it's where I can escape from the entire world and just be myself. This is the first trip for my son to Malaysia and I can't wait to show him **Pangkor Laut Resort**.

4. Ferrari

I live in Monaco and when I am there, I like staying home, surrounded by my family and friends. To get around the principality, I use several cars but my favourite is a **Ferrari 599 GTO**.

5. Starhill Gallery

Oh, shopping is nice at **Starhill Gallery**! I just bought a Richard Mille watch from a boutique here and I love it! Starhill is a world-class destination for luxury lovers and shoppers as it has the most sought-after brands and designer goods on sale. It also has great restaurants so everything is all under one



Felipe Massa enjoys relaxing at Pangkor Laut Resort, Malaysia.

roof. You can shop till you drop then go and eat till you literally fall asleep!

6. The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur & The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur

Normally, I stay either at The Ritz-Carlton or the Majestic Hotel. They are very different but I like both. The Ritz-Carlton is classic and grand whilst the Majestic has an old-world ambience and is rich in history. Both have their unique charm and advantages. The Ritz-Carlton is nearby shopping havens whilst the **Majestic Hotel** is opposite the beautiful railway station and in a quieter part of town. I couldn't choose between the two as I love both equally.

7. Durian

Although I cannot eat spicy food, I like Malaysian fruits such as **durian** and **mangosteen**. I follow a special diet and eat salads and lots of vegetables, fish, chicken and steaks but I need to be careful with what I eat. Before a race, I eat plain pasta without sauce for energy. But if I'm not racing, then I can have pasta with cream or tomato sauce. I also enjoy Bordeaux wine... but definitely not before a race.



Kuala Lumpur's Starhill Gallery is a favourite shopping spot.



Dining at Shook! is a must for Felipe Massa when in Kuala Lumpur.



8. Italian Style

Where fashion is concerned, I like **Prada** and **Dolce & Gabbana**. Prada for its innovative materials and fabrics; **Dolce & Gabbana** for its well-cut suits and jackets.

9. Shook!

I come here all the time when I'm in KL. I just like **Shook!**'s ambience and variety of food. The location is fantastic and, with constant updating of its menu, I never get bored of the place. I also like its open kitchen concept. Being able to see the chefs at work and the food being cooked right in front of me makes this place special and unique. My favourite is the grilled wagyu sirloin done medium rare and the signature dish of **snow white dancing prawns** tossed in hot mayonnaise and sprinkled with walnuts, to be washed down with a 2008 Château Figeac Saint-Emillion.

10. The Sporting Life

I like **football**. I play whenever I can. I also play tennis and indulge in watersports and **go-karting**. I organise a charity kart race every year and many top racers have taken part. My job requires me to keep fit so I run, cycle and go to the gym every day. I work out no less than three hours each day. I lift weights as well. Not to bulk up but to become strong. You need to have good concentration when you drive. I think about a lot of things while I am racing such as the control and balance of the car and the set-up. To succeed as an F1 driver, you need discipline and self-belief. You also need to be very humble and have your feet on the ground yet stay motivated by always thinking how to be better in every race. ▣



Baubles and Time

Brighten up your every day – with fabulous timepieces and gems.

Feathers And Stars

Inspired by the softness and shape of a bird's feather, the **Omega Constellation 'Pluma'** takes its name from the Latin word for 'feather'. Among the most striking design elements of this delicate 27mm model is the mother-of-pearl dial that comes in natural white or blue – a hue that is created by coating the underside of a white piece of mother-of-pearl with black paint. A soft, wavy pattern, cast from the iconic claws on the bezel, is engraved on the dial and recalls the gentle lines of a feather. The dial is further decorated with 11 diamond indices, while its heart, as with the rest of the Constellation line, is powered by the reliable Omega Co-Axial Calibre 8520.



Layers Of Beauty

A deeper meaning shines behind the beauty of **Carrera y Carrera's** Seda Imperial gem collection. Behind the exquisiteness of the stones and cutting-edge techniques of the craftsman is a 4,600-year-old legend of a Chinese princess forced to marry a savage Khan. In revenge, she hid in her shawl the best-guarded mystery of the Far East – the secret of Imperial Silk embroidery – and threw it into the ocean. Centuries later, the captain of a Spanish ship, sailing from Manila to Acapulco before returning home, recovers the shawl. It turned up in the possession of the captain's lover, who passes it on to a young embroiderer, thus giving birth to the famous *mantones de Manila*. The silk, hand-embroidered Manila shawl, a fusion of Chinese tradition and Spanish insignia, is the inspiration for the Seda Imperial collection. Drawing from the splendour and beauty of the shawl's embroidered floral motifs, the collection is created in similar fashion, with varying flowers encompassing different meanings. The true stars of the entire collection are the royal heron and orchid flower, both of which carry symbolic significance in the historic and popular composition of the shawl, and wrought into fine jewellery by the artisans at Carrera y Carrera.



Diamonds And Dial

Jaeger Le-Coultre takes high jewellery watches to new heights with the *Duoplan Joaillerie*, which combines diamonds and dial in one alluring piece. Dressed in brilliant cut diamonds, this bejewelled timepiece is powered by the venerable Calibre 101, the smallest movement ever made. This delicate watch is designed to look like a bracelet, where a 'secret' watch is hidden under a flower motif flap adorned with diamonds. Radiating ultimate aesthetic appeal and supreme elegance, this timepiece merges the dual art of exceptional watchmaking and fine jewellery.



Into The Deep

The superlative diving legend gets an upgrade as **Rolex** brings back a contemporary version of the *Oyster Perpetual Sea-Dweller* from 1967. Defined by its water resistance of up to 1,220m and the groundbreaking helium escape valve on the side of the case, the 2014 *Sea-Dweller 4000* incorporates these elements as an integral part of the legendary design along with additional enhancements, including a Cerachrom bezel made from ceramic that is impervious to scratches and ultraviolet rays, Chromalight display with long-lasting luminescence, Oysterlock safety clasp and the Rolex Glidelock extension system. Within its 40mm stainless steel superalloy case are the paramagnetic blue Parachrom hairspring and Ref 116600 mechanical movement with bidirectional self-winding Perpetual rotor.



Becoming fitter and more fashionable is a goal many people have. Meet the talents behind a new reality TV show, filmed on location at Tanjong Jara Resort, who set the standards for the 12 contestants seeking to be *Fit for Fashion*.

Text **Ong Chin Huat** Photography **Kenneth Foo** Location **Tanjong Jara Resort**



Louise Roe

Fashion journalist, well-known TV host and all-round fashionista.

Statuesque and elegant, Louise Roe sits on a makeshift chair on the well-manicured grounds of the Tanjong Jara Resort in Terengganu, coconut fronds swaying overhead and the sound of waves breaking in the distance. Her make-up is perfect despite the humidity and the ocean breeze gently blows strands of her luscious butterscotch locks across her face. An attendant hair stylist rushes up, brush and hairspray in hand, and deftly adjusts her mane so that her face is unobstructed for her take. When the director motions to the cameraman to start, Roe, right on cue, delivers her lines eloquently. The take is flawless and the director gives her a thumb up.

As a fashion journalist, TV host and all-round fashionista, Roe exudes the confident and professional image of someone who's a natural in front of the cameras – and the perfect host for the new reality TV show, *Fit for Fashion*. "Fit for Fashion is about 12 contestants who are put through their paces and, each week, they face physical and fashion related challenges." Roe says, adding that those two areas are interdependent on each other. "If you want to wear fab clothes and look amazing and confident, then you have to be in good shape... you need to have a healthy, functioning body, great skin and clear eyes."

Roe's own complexion and eyes are sparkling when she turns up at the beach fronted villa for our interview and photo shoot. Dressed in a short blue print kaftan, her crown is framed with a gold headpiece, which gives way to her tumbling wavy hair, projecting an ethereal and hippy Pre-Raphaelite vibe. After the make-up artist touches up her eye liner and adds more gloss on her lips, Roe is ready, smiling demurely and pouting innocently as she crosses her long tanned legs, shod with a pair of gold-braided strappy Jimmy Choo stilettos, and poses for the camera.

"The show is both aspirational and inspirational," Roe tells *YTL Life*. "Its

“It’s unparalleled. Seeing monkeys pulling coconuts off the trees is the coolest thing ever and the beach at your doorstep is something I have never experienced before. It was very tranquil.”

contestants come from all walks of life – from parents, people in their late 30s, younger people who should be in better shape than they are, or people with bad habits like smoking. They learn skills that everybody can benefit from. It’s not just about wanting to become athletes or models.” Roe surmises by saying: “Some contestants are overweight and some are underweight. It’s really about learning to become the best version of yourself.”

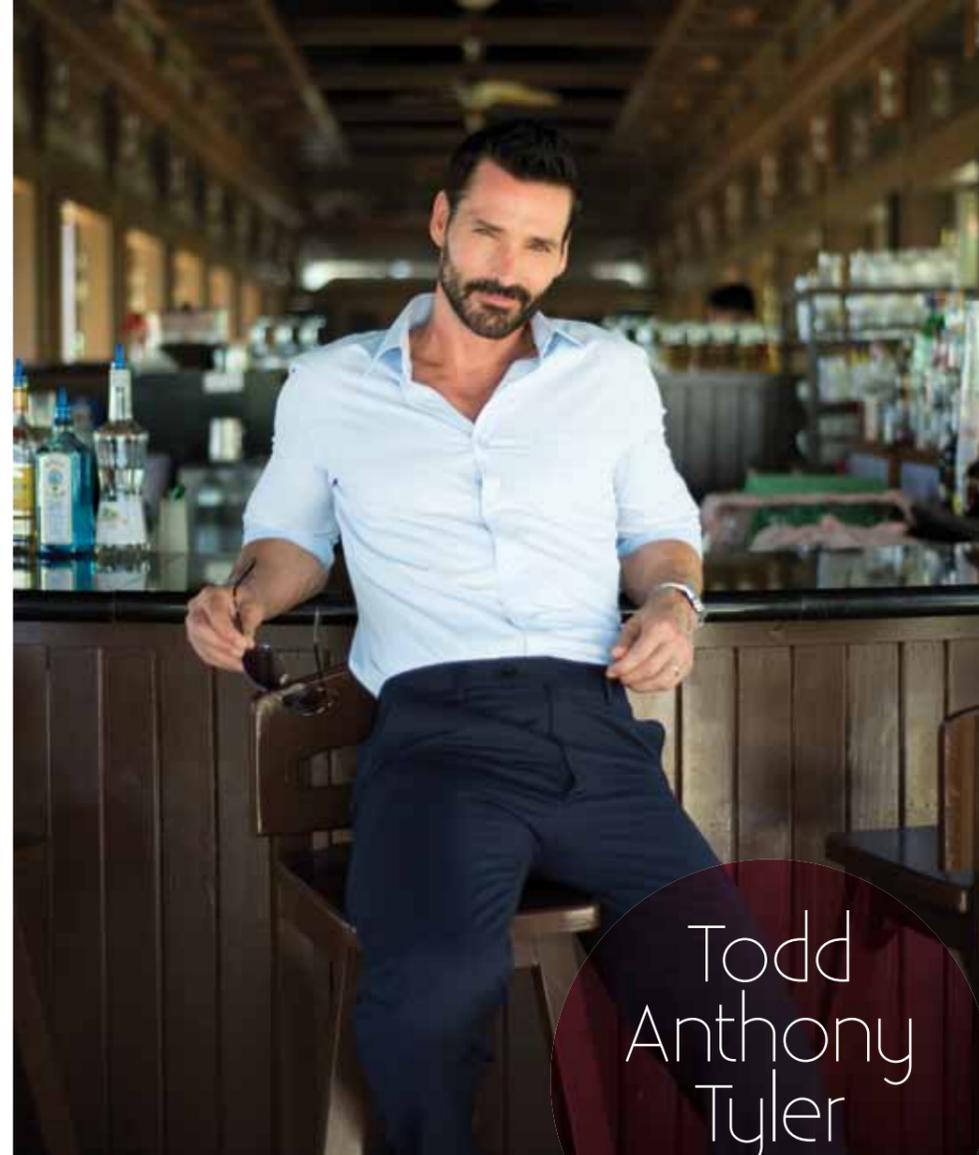
Roe recalls a very dramatic scene during the second episode at a waterfall. “I can’t give too much away but even I was blindsided by what had happened.” Drama aside, Roe says that what struck her was the camaraderie among the contestants: “They were very supportive even though they were competing against each other.” The challenges took a toll, physically and mentally, and “I spent a lot of my time having one-to-one with some contestants to keep their spirits up,” she says. And with all that expended energy while filming the show, Roe says what she liked best about staying at Tanjong Jara Resort during the 10-week stay was hearing the waves while falling asleep. “Seeing monkeys pulling coconuts off the trees is the coolest thing ever and the beach on your doorstep is something I have never experienced before. It’s very, very tranquil.”

As someone who has covered fashion for most of her career, being the host for BBC’s long standing TV series *The Clothes*

Show as well as the NBC hit, *Fashion Star*, and MTV International’s *Plain Jane*, Roe is probably more clude-in than others when it comes to advice on looking good. “You have to start from within. You can buy as many designer dresses and shoes as you want but, until you feel good about yourself on the inside, you won’t pull it off or walk into a room with a sparkle that turn heads. Self-confidence is the most important accessory.” This, she hastens to add, is easier said than done. “Exercise is definitely a great start as it makes you look better. Also, having honest and supportive friends around you, and wearing really fabulous high heels!” Roe laughs.

While some people have innate style, others can definitely learn some rules. “My main thing is, forget trends and designers, and focus on your own body shape. Women should look at themselves in the mirror and realise which parts they want to accentuate and which to hide, and then work one’s wardrobe around that.” The other trick is colour. “So many people hide behind black and grey. I feel happy when I wear colour as it lifts my mood.” And her favourite hue? “I love wearing red; there’s nothing like wearing a red dress.” While she declines to define good taste, she can easily describe bad styling: “Being a complete fashion victim, where you bought a head-to-toe look from the runway. There’s no style in that; style only happens when you personalise your own look and make something your own.”

As for herself, Roe likes the 1970s look. “That slightly boho era. People like Lauren Hutton and Ali MacGraw have this really simple and sexy way of dressing. It might be just a cut-off denim shorts and white shirt, but it’s so stylish without overdoing it.” Marchesa is one of her favourite designers to wear when she is hosting on the red carpet and, in all her years of covering fashion, she has learnt not to take it too seriously. “I’m very passionate about fashion and I believe in its power to make people feel differently about themselves, but it’s important to have perspective as well.”



Todd
Anthony
Tyler

Model and professional
fashion photographer.

Heads turn when Todd Anthony Tyler walks into Nelayan Restaurant in Tanjong Jara Resort. Commanding attention, however, is nothing new for this model turned celebrity fashion photographer. Dressed in a sky blue cotton shirt and navy blue trousers, his outfit fits him like a glove as he sidles up to the bar for his photo shoot. In his role for *Fit for Fashion*, Tyler is usually the one behind the camera, cajoling and egging on the 12 contestants to put their best face (and body) forward. Right now, though, the tables are turned and he’s the subject instead. Unlike the show, where some contestants needed to be constantly badgered to get the best out of them, Tyler doesn’t need instructions: like a true pro, he changes poses and facial

expressions with each click of the camera, using his eyes and subtle shifts in his body to create visual interest within the frame.

With his experience in the fashion business, it’s no surprise that Tyler represents the fashion aspect of *Fit for Fashion*. With 10 years’ experience as a model and another 12 years as a fashion photographer, Tyler shares his expertise with the contestants on the show. He’s also a judge at the elimination stage. He says the participants were selected on the basis that they wanted to make a physical change in their lives. “It’s not necessary weight loss they are after,” Tyler says in a low baritone. “Some want to gain more strength, while others want to

become fitter. The aim of the show is not to make them models; it’s to make them more confident, and to look and feel better about themselves.”

With his lean and muscular physique, Tyler has a workout and diet schedule as hard and firm as his abs –he runs every morning, no matter where he is, for 30 minutes. He then has a lean and high-protein breakfast from “clean sources”, such as egg whites, chicken breast and fish with raw veggies and fruits. He then schedules a workout in the afternoon at the gym for at least 45 minutes where he incorporates weights. “I eat most of my calories at breakfast and my larger meals come before noon,” Tyler says. “Then, throughout the day, I eat five to six small meals, two of them being protein shakes. I try not to eat after 7pm.”

Looking as if he had just stepped out from the pages of a glossy magazine, Tyler is in undoubtedly peak physical form but he’s the first to confess that he hasn’t always been this shape. “When I first got married, I slowed down a bit and got comfortable,” Tyler says with a smile. “My wife and I cooked big meals together, and I wasn’t going to the gym a lot.” All that marital bliss added up to 95kg, a big difference from his present weight of 80kg. “I came to a moment when I couldn’t recognise myself in the mirror; I didn’t identify with myself and I didn’t like what I saw.” This motivated him to get back into shape: “Recalling how I looked like at 95kg definitely gets me out of bed every morning and start running.”

His eyes light up when he talks about Tanjong Jara Resort. “This place has the most wonderful beach. I look forward to waking up each morning for my run. It was heaven to see the sunrise. It’s so quiet at around 7am, with only one or two fishermen around. The beach was really the highlight for me.” Tyler also enjoyed the pool and says the service he experienced was exemplary. “The service was very attentive and polite. It wasn’t obtrusive at all. As I am a very private person, the staff respected me and my space, and gave me privacy when I wanted it.”

Like a Greek goddess, Christine Bullock appears to float beside the lotus pond at the entrance of the award-winning Spa Village in Tanjong Jara Resort. She takes tiny steps and works her pace in front of the photographer, tilting her head and smiling sweetly. With the rays of the late afternoon sun glistening on her caramel-hued highlights, Bullock, dressed in a floaty white frock with an asymmetrical hemline, gold jewellery and strappy high heels, attracts the attention of a few passersby. She smiles at them but remains composed, her warmth and friendliness shining through, both for our photographer and her admirers.

As the fitness expert and trainer on *Fit for Fashion*, Bullock, along with the other trainer, Mitch Chilson, is entrusted with getting the contestants in their best possible shape. "We trained them morning and afternoon, and put them through physical contests and also judge them at the end of every episode," Bullock tells *YTL Life*. "The hardest part for me was judging the contestants and eliminating them," says the former ballerina turned fitness trainer who is currently based in Los Angeles. "I found it difficult because, in my normal work as a personal trainer, I would never eliminate one of my clients," she says. "My job on the show is to provide them with the tools that will change their lives for the better. Physical activity is really an example of what you can do in other areas of your life. You can gain your health back through balance and strength, speed, agility and nutritional tools we provide." Bullock says that the accomplishments the contestants make in the challenges create breakthroughs in other areas of their lives where they might have had blocks.

It's easy to see how Bullock was voted by lifestyle website *Racked LA* as the hottest trainer of 2013 as well as the go-to wellness expert on E! Channel and an array of other TV shows and fitness magazines. Her enthusiasm for fitness and life in general is infectious and she speaks with conviction and passion about the subject. "The biggest tip for keeping fit and staying



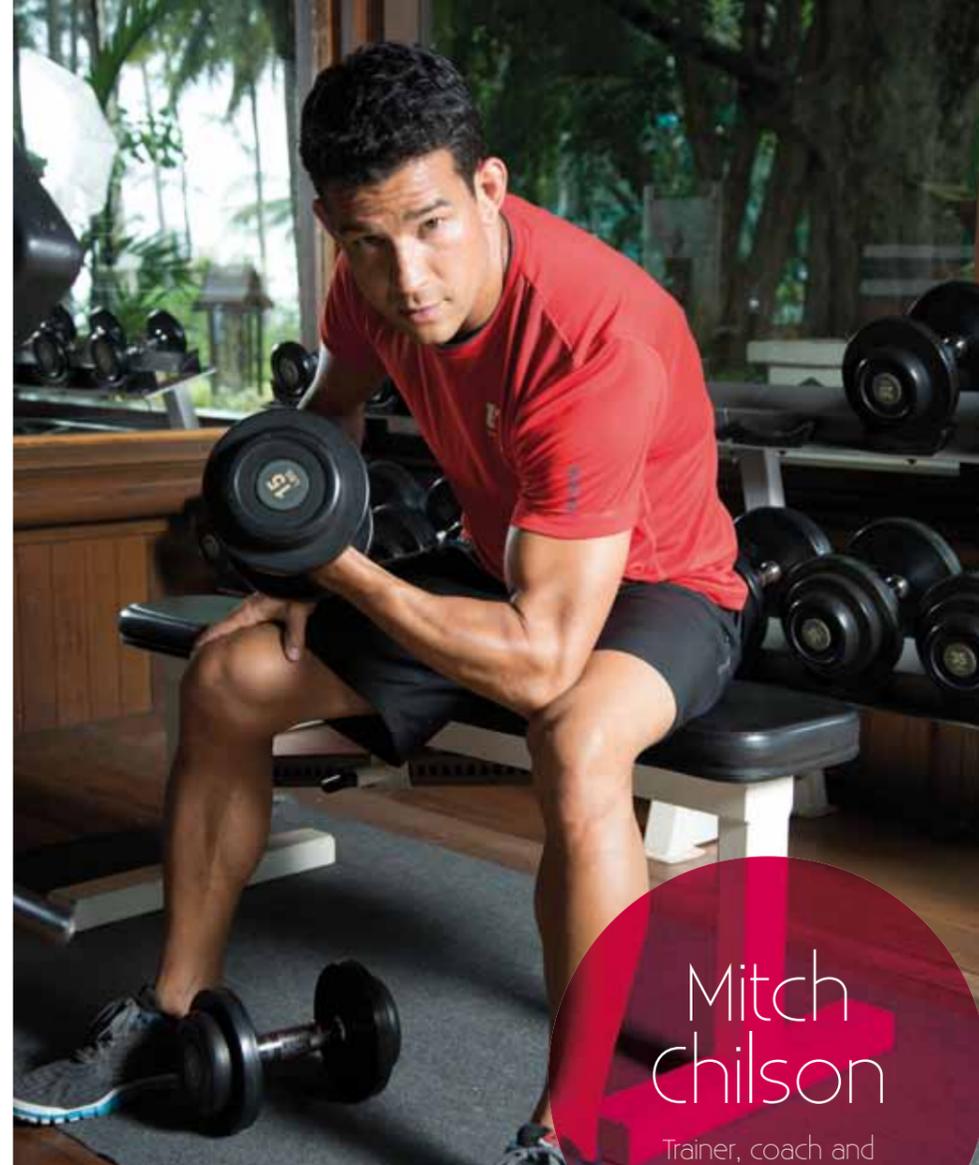
Christine Bullock
Fitness expert and trainer.

slim is preparation," she says. "You have to prepare to create fitness and nutrition as part of your daily lifestyle, so it becomes a daily habit." Another tip is to find a form of fitness that you enjoy: "Don't force yourself to run on a treadmill when you'd rather play tennis."

With a BA in psychology and education, Bullock's repertoire includes Pilates, yoga, Barre, TRX and High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT). "I get bored very easily, so I mix it around. I listen to my body every morning as to what I want to do. Some days, I will feel up to doing a high intensity workout; other times, I might be low in energy so I will do yoga to regain my focus, or Pilates to tone the hidden corners of my body and create these long, lean muscles." Her favourite days, however, are when she goes to dance classes. "I was a dancer growing up, so I love going to hip hop or ballet classes." Those who only have 10 to 15 minutes to spare for exercise should

listen to their bodies. "If you are feeling energetic, then do some high intensity workouts like squat jumps or quick bursts of running. This increases your metabolism for 24 to 48 hours afterwards. If you are low in energy, then do something less energetic like core work. Planks are a great way to work your entire body."

When it comes to food and nutrition, Bullock says she's a 'flexitarian', preparing her meals in advance for the entire week. "I eat healthy most of the time because I think about what I put into my body and how it will affect me in the future. Instead of looking at the negatives and worrying about my exterior like my six-pack or biceps, I think about the positives and how eating well will beautify my skin, whiten my eyes or clean my liver. And, when I have cravings for food that isn't so healthy, sometimes I will eat it but, mostly, I make healthy alternatives. The key is eating foods which satisfy your taste buds."



Mitch Chilson
Trainer, coach and professional athlete.

Apart from being a trainer and coach, Mitch Chilson has also been a professional athlete in his own right. A two-time ESPN Martial Combat MMA Champion, winning the 147lb Thepprasit Stadium Muay Thai Championship in Thailand, Chilson also has a solid base in Brazilian jiu-jitsu and is one of only seven Muay Thai instructors outside of Thailand certified by the Grandmaster of Muay Thai, Yodtong Senanan. In *Fit for Fashion*, Chilson is the fitness trainer to the contestants, where he puts them through a gruelling pace with workouts and challenges designed to, not only raise their fitness levels, but also help them realise their full potential. Of mixed parentage (his mother is Japanese,

while his father is American), Chilson have been living in Singapore for the last nine years, having moved there to work for a fitness gym. More recently, he has been working with the largest martial arts academy in the world, Evolve Mixed Martial Arts in Singapore. "People see exercise as a drudge because they don't enjoy it. They equate exercise with pain. People need to change their mental associations with exercise and see it as fun. Trying to find ways to make exercise enjoyable is best way to make it part of your lifestyle," Chilson says. ■

Fit for Fashion airs on 16 October 2014 on StarWorld at 940pm, Malaysian time.

STAY IN SHAPE
Here are Mitch Chilson's tips to get fighting fit.

- Drink more water – about two litres per day.
- Plan on exercising every day. If you miss a day, no problem. But if you plan to work out three times per week and miss one or two, you are in trouble.
- To burn more fat, try interval training. Instead of doing steady state cardio (which is aerobic exercise done at a constant tempo), use interval training. Intervals are going from high intensity to low intensity. Research has proven that the constant changing of intensities burns more fat calories. Once you stop steady state cardio, your body stops burning calories. With interval training, you burn calories at a higher rate and for longer after you finish.
- For faster fat loss, reduce the amount of carbs you eat at night. Carbs are used for energy and if your body is busy breaking down carbs, it's hard to burn fat. Reducing starchy carbs will also improve sleep.
- Balancing your meals improves health and energy. Have protein, carb and a little bit of fat at each meal. This prevents blood sugar spiking and crashing, which will help reduce and control your appetite
- Stay on your food plan by planning your meals ahead of time. This increases the likelihood of sticking to your diet plan. It also removes the temptation to eat something you shouldn't. If you already have a packed lunch, you will be less likely to hit the drive-through.



beautiful life //



It's A Wrap

No matter what the season is, a scarf is a sartorial security blanket that can add the perfect touch to any outfit. Scarves in the summer make perfect sense, especially one of silk or light linen fabric that comes in bright colours and statement prints from **Alexander McQueen**. The lightweight and cooling material won't make you sweat; instead, the brightness and eclectic patterns enhance the look of the outfit effortlessly, adding a finishing touch that binds the entire look.



High And Flighty

Give your outfits a lift as you stride elegantly into town with **Sergio Rossi's Flora**, a black suede wrap-up sandal with *fougère* 'climbing vines' made from shaded rhinestone pavé that surround the ankle. An expression of the brand's artisanal skills, this sandal is a conceptual synthesis of two inspiring themes: the organic world of nature and the kaleidoscope combination of vibrant colours. A woman certainly can never have too many shoes, especially one that dazzles as fabulously as this. ■

Dressing up

Fashion and accessories that help you make the perfect statement.

Aqua Allure

This season, **Kenzo** is all about the deep blue. With designs inspired by ocean waves and imbued with prints symbolic of the sea, the new collection presents an array of clothing and accessories dedicated to Kenzo's new partnership with the conservation charity, Blue Marine Foundation. Fusing classic tailoring with beach living, laser jackets feature large, open back vents while drip-embroidered cropped tops resemble the crest of waves. The melted fish print plays an iconic role in bringing awareness to the issues of marine pollution and overfishing.



Wrist Candy

The latest **Gübelin** cufflinks are the perfect accessory for the contemporary gentleman. Meticulously handcrafted in Lucerne and available in 18K white, rose or yellow gold, these elegant cufflinks comes in different variations of diamond, black spinel or enamel accents. Instead of making do with ordinary buttons, complement your personal style with a hint of exquisiteness through these geometrically shaped beauties.

MAJESTIC MODE

Embrace the UNESCO World Heritage site of Malacca in fashions that are timelessly chic yet beautifully au courant.

Photography Edmund Leong/20twelve Studio Photography Assistant Wee Seng-Yeoh Styling Calvin Cheong Hair Shawn Goh
Makeup V V Chen Models Angelina S/ Attitude Model & Laszlo Pop/Base Model Location The Majestic Malacca

Ladies First

On her: Dress, Kenzo.
On him: Shirt, suit and pants, Kenzo.

店酒華大
MAJESTIC HOTEL



Lazy Afternoon

On her: Wave print halter dress, Kenzo.
On him: Floral shirt, denim suit and pants, Kenzo.



Evening Glamour

On her: Frilled lace cardigan & skirt, RED Valentino.
On him: Shirt, denim suit and pants, McQ by Alexander McQueen.



On the Town

On her: Sheer blouse, palm-stripped jacquard coat and matching skirt, Kenzo.
On him: Shirt, McQ by Alexander McQueen; suit and pants, Kenzo.



Bar None

On her: Dress, M Missoni.
On him: Sweater, shirt and pants, Kenzo.



Colourful Prints

On her: Knitted cardigan and tube dress, M Missoni.
On him: Sweater and black slacks, McQ Alexander McQueen.

Out the Door

Scalloped-hem crop top and matching mini skirt, Kenzo.





In the Sun
Lace print pink peplum
top and red slim fit
pants, RED Valentino.

For the Love of You

Fragrances and skincare to pamper yourself with.



A Seductive Trail

Dress your skin with an enchantment of feminine mystery through **Ralph Lauren's** *Midnight Romance*. A fragrance of passionate desires, *Midnight Romance* carries sophistication and elegance. The sensual scent of sweet floral musk contains mixed notes of pink peony and black vanilla, being both confident and delicate at the same time.



Scent Voyage

Collecting all 15 colognes in the Cologne Absolué collection by **Atelier Cologne** is akin to gathering the pockets of nature that define different parts of the world – from the silky bouquet of Calabrian bergamot to the soothing scent of Egyptian jasmine. The latest addition to the Cologne Absolué range is *Cedrat Enivrant*, which reinvents the bitter lemon by accenting the refreshing floral citrus of Moroccan *cedrat* with Mexican lime and basil to give this fragrance an instant stimulating effect. The initial jolt is enough to wake you up, evoking the senses and memories of summer at the beach. The scent calms down to an elegant citrus that, despite its brightness, feels neither sharp nor overly zesty.



Eastern Promise

Korea's leading luxury holistic skin care brand, **Sulwhasoo**, has introduced yet another breakthrough in the *Renodigm EX Dual Care Cream*. This anti-aging day cream has the dual function of protecting the skin from the damaging effect of sunlight and heat while maintaining its youthfulness. With a strong UV protection of SPF30 PA++ and TPF40, this herbal medicinal formula is made from the best of Eastern herbs and ingredients, such as red ginseng and *mume* fruit, two of nature's miracle workers. Utilising traditional techniques of the East, this natural solution to combat aging is a must-have for those living in hot and humid climates.



The Hero Serum

The search for a multi-functional skin care product is finally over. **Kiehl's** *Powerful-Strength Line-Reducing Concentrate* is the ultimate solution for those seeking to improve skin texture and radiance, as well as reducing the appearance of lines and wrinkles. This super serum is formulated with a potent dose of Pure Vitamin C, a powerful antioxidant that boosts the natural production of collagen in the skin while shielding it from free radical damage.

Unique Malay Rituals

At Spa Village Tanjong Jara, restorative healing techniques have been handed down for generations, using indigenous herbs and plants found in the east coast state of Terengganu.

Text V Durga

The east coast of Peninsular Malaysia holds a certain mystical allure. From the slower pace of life characterised by betel leaf-chewing *pakoiks* with toothy grins and skullcaps, to the rustic charm of wooden houses overlooking the emerald sea, the culture here is steeped in age-old traditions. The Malay Archipelago is also rich in traditional practices and restorative healing treatments that have been influenced by the convergence of Malay, Arab, Indian and Chinese cultures over the centuries.

At Tanjong Jara Resort in Terengganu, the essence of the predominantly Malay state is captured and revived via its 17th-century architecture, cuisine and activities offered. It is also home to the award-winning Spa Village Tanjong Jara, which offers a myriad of treatments for the weary guest. I had the pleasure of sampling the *Tuam Pasir* (Heated Sea Sand Therapy) recently.

While waiting for my experience to begin, I was given a *sarong* as a memento to take home, purportedly so that I could connect with and recall the impending treatment when I return to the rat race.

I am ushered into a softly lit wooden *warong* with a thatched roof, and surrounded by ferns and greens to recreate the village feel. As I sit listening to the soothing tinkling of piped-in *gamelan* music, while

At Tanjong Jara Resort in Terengganu, the essence of the predominantly Malay state is captured in its 17th-century architecture, cuisine and activities, especially, in the traditional treatments offered at its award-winning Spa Village.





sipping cold herbal tea made of *pegaga* root, betel leaf, ginger and honey, I can't help but gaze at the *busubus* adorning the wall. Despite the availability of modern fishing trawlers and boats, fishermen here continue to use these contraptions occasionally to bring in the catch of the day.

As is the norm in all Spa Villages at YTL Hotels, every spa experience is preceded by a pre-treatment ritual in accordance with the practices in the area. In the East Coast states of Malaysia, *mandi bunga*, or flower bath, is a common practice among Malays to dispel negative energy, ward off bad luck and attract good fortune. Believed to have originated from the palaces, this special bath was undertaken by the future ruler before his coronation day. Presently, this ritual is especially important for Malay brides to give that added radiance as they prepare for their traditional marriage ceremony.

Mandi bunga is typically performed using three, five or seven types of flowers. At Spa Village Tanjung Jara, random, colourful flowers are used in the bath, in addition to *limau purut* (kaffir lime). There are many theories surrounding the use of flowers and one of which deems that every colour carries a specific energy path or vibration, hence, the more colourful the flowers, the better the cleansing effect.

Clad in a *sarong*, I am led into an walled open courtyard where my therapist explains the concept of *Sucimurni* practised by the resort. The journey of revival emphasises purity of spirit, health, and well being. She starts by pouring water on my feet, slowly moving up my body before reaching my head. In ancient times, the *mandi bunga* was performed using seven different sources of fresh water: rain,

“Random, colourful flowers are used in the bath, in addition to *limau purut* (kaffir lime).”

river, stream, spring, waterfall, lake and well. For every tumbler of lukewarm water my therapist pours, she utters a blessing (purity, sincerity, health, beauty, happiness, prosperity and longevity). Lastly, she hands me the tumbler and asks that I make a wish. I oblige and hope it comes true soon. Guests can also request to have the *mandi bunga* in their rooms or without a massage.

I dry off, don a *sarong* and make my way to the spacious treatment room. My therapist explains that the ingredients used for all the therapies are found in indigenous herbs and plants in the area. My massage oil is comprised of a combination of coconut, citronella, eucalyptus and clove, which is intended to improve blood circulation.

Hot sand, fenugreek and black seeds are heated in a frying pan and placed on a cotton cloth that is folded into a pouch. The aroma is enticing enough that I want to nibble on it! The oil is first applied to the body before the hot pouch is used as a pressure massage. Apparently, it provides strength and vitality, and is effective for joint pains, severe inflammation, mothers in confinement and when the weather turns chilly. However, it is not advisable for sunburnt skin or on open wounds.

For the next hour, I am in total bliss as the therapist deftly works on my body using her fingers and palm. Applying long strokes, she gently eases away the knots and attempts to remove the kinks from my muscles, which were a little fatigued from a full day's hike to the Chemerong Waterfall. Concentrating on one body part at a time, she alternates the massage with the hot pouch and I slowly drift in and out of slumber.

Too soon, my session comes to an end and I ask for permission to sleep for a few minutes as the hot pouch has totally beaten the normally gung-ho me into submission. I snooze for 15 minutes before finding my way back to the *warong*, where I am served the same herbal tea I had before the treatment started, except that it's hot and without honey. Meant to have a detoxifying and anti-oxidant effect, I find it calming.

Revitalised, I stroll back to my room with heightened senses, hearing the gentle breeze blowing and waves crashing against the rocks. A *pakcik* gives me a friendly wave as he rides by on his bicycle with a cartful of soiled towels. It's such old world charm and the main reason why guests keep coming back to Tanjung Jara. ▮

The Tuam Pasir spa experience is priced at RM355++ for 80 minutes and RM455++ for 100 minutes. For enquiries, contact Spa Village Tanjung Jara at +609 845 1100.





Steamy Pleasures

Famed for its *Tales, Trails & Traditions* tagline, the Cameron Highlands Resort also boasts another ace up its stylish sleeve – *Taste*. The new hot pot menu at its Gonbei Restaurant proves tempting enough to head to the hills for a gourmet experience to remember.

Text **Diana Khoo**



Emerald jungle swathed in spidery clouds of mist and a crisp coolness in the air, there's something to be said for the tranquil hills of Cameron Highlands. Perched along the spine of Malaysia's Titiwangsa Mountain Range, the Highlands has been the preferred hill station of the colonial elite ever since it was discovered in 1885 by English surveyor William Cameron.

Today, aside from tourism, the Highlands is also renowned for its agricultural industry, with local farmers cultivating an abundance of produce that include vegetables, strawberries and flowers.

Many parts of the Highlands itself are covered with undulating tea plantations, which makes for a truly beautiful sight. Certainly, the tradition of taking afternoon tea here is strong, with the Cameron Highlands Resort boasting one of the area's finest scones, to be accompanied with pots of local Cameronian tea and homemade strawberry jam, at its famous Jim Thompson Tea Room. But once night falls and the temperature drops, few things warm the heart and soul the way a hot pot dinner at Gonbei, its Asian-inspired restaurant, can.

A traditional Chinese meal, hot pot is now enjoyed all over China, Mongolia, Korea and Japan as well as most parts of South-East Asia. In Malaysia and Singapore, hot pot is usually referred to as "steamboat", while the Japanese call it *shabu-shabu*. Fuss-free, warming and convivial - as it promotes a highly-social way of communal eating - hot pot essentially comprises fresh ingredients cooked in a continuously-simmering pot of stock that takes pride of place at the centre of the dining table.

At the Cameron Highlands Resort, few pleasures beat congregating around a bubbling pot of delicious goodness at the Gonbei Restaurant.

It is said that the tradition of eating hot pot dates back centuries, originating from the time of the Mongols who favoured horse meat and mutton in their bubbling soupy stew. This method of cooking

and eating soon found favour among the Han Chinese who added a variety of ingredients, including fresh vegetables and seafood. Today, most Hokkien Chinese families celebrate the night before the Lunar New Year with a hot pot feast, which they call *jian lohr*.

One of the reasons why hot pot has proven so popular is that it requires no slaving away at a hot wok – all you need is to gather everyone around to cook whatever catches their fancy and enjoy. Preparation is done in advance, with platters and platters of assorted leafy greens, sweet cabbage leaves, meats (thinly-sliced to facilitate the cooking process), noodles and seafood. Fresh eggs are also a favourite accompaniment – perfect to crack into the soup for a flavourful poached treat – while small dishes of dipping sauces, like soy and chilli, are served alongside for extra doses of spice or flavour.

The stock may be meat or seafood-based and may be mild or fiery, depending on one's preference. Few can deny that hot pot is best enjoyed in a cooler climate, making Gonbei the perfect venue at which to experience all the steamy pleasures of an authentic hot pot experience. There are no rules, really. All you need to do is load the pot up with all your favourite things, close the lid and let it come to a boil before tucking in.

There are a few tips, though. Put in items like the meat and cabbage first as they take longer to cook while adding more depth and flavour to the stock. Leafy greens are best saved for a quick dip before immediately fishing them out, lest they overcook. The same goes for quick-cooking ingredients like fish and prawns. It is customary to enjoy the egg and starches at the end of the meal, ensuring the choicest ingredients are all eaten up first. It is also perfectly acceptable to ask the waiter to top up your stock several times over the course of the meal as the soup level may run low, due to evaporation and, of course, imbibement.

Part of the perks of enjoying hot pot in Cameron Highlands is the dizzying choice of farm-fresh produce available for the table. Gonbei serves only the freshest local ingredients to ensure each dip into the pot of simmering, fragrant broth is a truly delicious one.

Choose from six choices of stock before selecting your meat or seafood platter. A vegetarian option is also, thoughtfully, available. Then pick away at the buffet spread of accompaniments, with choices that range from highland vegetables to bean curd, mushrooms and noodles. A station for condiments and garnishes is also provided. Other than that, there's nothing else you need except, maybe, a cold beer or a glass of perfectly-chilled Sauvignon Blanc on hand to cool things down when the night gets really steamy. **■**



Clockwise, from top: A dizzying array of farm-fresh treats to dunk into your hot pot; thinly-sliced meats are a must; Cameron Highlands' chilly weather makes steamboat dinners an absolute delight.



Steamboat 101

Simple steps to hot pot heaven.



All you need is a big pot and a hot plate or flame to continuously keep the broth simmering.



Prepare the key ingredients. You'd need protein that may be provided by a variety of meats and seafood as well as vegetables, followed by starches in the form of noodles.

Long chopsticks are ideal for fishing out goodies from the pot, while a soup ladle and a strainer spoon are also basic tools in every steamboat dinner.

Meats must be thinly-sliced to ensure they cook quickly and evenly.



Processed seafood like fish balls and crab sticks are also hugely popular in steamboat dinners.

Mushrooms and tofu are also a great match for hot pot. For a rich touch, add hard-boiled quail's eggs to the line-up of ingredients.



Condiments are also appreciated but not absolutely necessary. You may also wish to drizzle sesame or shallot oil into the stock as it boils to give it an extra depth of flavour and aroma.

Gonbei's Menu

- RM75++ per person includes hot pot with a choice of two types of broth, a meat or a mixed protein platter, buffet varieties and dessert of the day.
- RM100++ per person, includes hot pot with a choice of two types of broth, a seafood protein platter, buffet varieties and dessert of the day.
- RM20++ for an additional portion of meat or mixed platter.
- RM25++ for an additional portion of seafood platter.
- RM30++ for every child aged between six and 12 years.

AUSPICIOUS 80!

If you've ever had the pleasure to experience the charms of Malaysia's Pangkor Laut Resort, chances are you would have dined at its Chinese restaurant known simply as Uncle Lim's Kitchen. Celebrating his auspicious 80th birthday-milestone in 2014, the talent (and name) behind Uncle Lim's Kitchen talks to *YTL Life*.

Text **Felicia Lee** Photography **Kenneth Foo & Law Soo Phye**

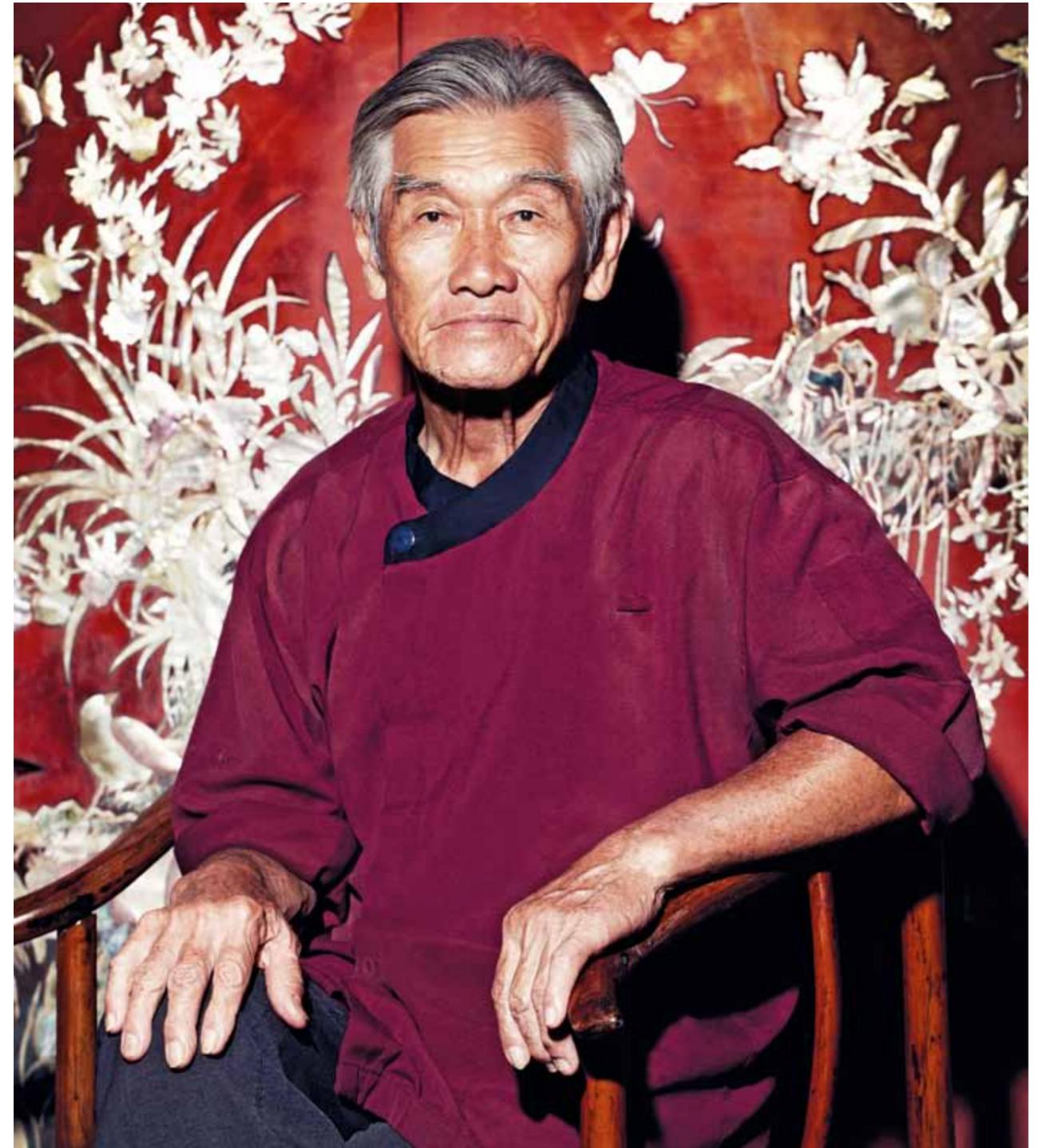
Three decades is a long time. But for Lim Fang Tat, it has been an unforgettable culinary journey. Having served nearly 29 years with YTL Hotels – owner of Pangkor Laut Resort and a string of other award-winning properties worldwide – Lim is something of a legend in the group. Diners sing his praises for the steady stream of inventive and delicious dishes that emerge nightly from the kitchen, while staff and colleagues alike know and admire the integrity and humility of this seldom-seen but widely-known chef, who is popularly known as Uncle Lim.

For those unfamiliar with his story, Uncle Lim was born in the northern island-state of Penang to parents who had emigrated from China's Hainan province. Having started cooking at the

tender age of eight, Uncle Lim learnt the basics from his father, a cook himself. Being a food buff, the younger Lim's flair for experimenting with different ingredients and textures to create unique flavours led him on a self-taught path to greatness. Working as a chef, Uncle Lim quickly carved out a reputation at some of Penang's renowned restaurants. One thing led to another. He was for a time operating a restaurant specialising in fusion food. His talent and commitment to serving only the finest dishes has earned him recognition from near and far.

Uncle Lim's life was to take a different turn when, at age 49, he was invited to work at Pangkor Laut Resort, a newly opened property located on a private island off the west coast of Malaysia.

Lim Fang Tat is the talent and name behind Pangkor Laut Resort's famous Chinese restaurant, Uncle Lim's.





Dine under an umbrella-inspired roof at Uncle Lim's.

Having been there since its opening, he remains an essential figure in the resort's operations and counts himself as its oldest employee as well as the one with the most years of service.

Uncle Lim makes the day-to-day cooking look easy. Harnessing his invaluable experience, the octogenarian chef skilfully whips together a mouth-watering menu of Chinese dishes that have drawn effusive praise from the resort's sophisticated clientele. Dining at Uncle Lim's Kitchen is quite an experience, starting with the approach. Strolling across the wooden walkway, past sea villas and clear, lapping waters, guests arrive to a marvellous ambience – the roof of the restaurant resembles an open umbrella. Guests may catch glimpses of fishing boats chugging past as the sun sets, a setting that is truly relaxing and romantic. Once seated, an attendant will inform guests of the day's specials and what's available on the menu. Uncle Lim often breaks new ground serving dishes catered for guests with different preferences, while also taking inspiration from an ever-changing array of fresh local produce.

The traditional concept of a menu was initially too restrictive for Uncle Lim, who realised that he could incorporate different styles and ingredients to create a wide array of food. It was in 2000 that a menu was drafted as a guideline for guests as to what's on

offer, but still upholding the idea of bespoke dishes upon request. At Uncle Lim's, menus are often adapted to please the palate of each individual guest. The Hainanese considers what he's doing as part of a long heritage, creating modern dishes with traditional techniques and ingredients that reflect the flavours and roots of the Hock Chew and Nyonya traditions he picked up from Penang. Among them are family recipes that are passed down from one generation to another. His first dish, taught to him by his father, was traditional Fuzhou sweet and sour fish maw soup, which has now become the signature and most popular dish at Uncle Lim's Kitchen.

The chef finds pleasure in simple things. He's not above tucking into a bowl of plain white rice for sustenance. He enjoys the boat ride from the resort every morning to Pangkor Island nearby to select fresh ingredients for the restaurant. Daily strolls amidst the resort's lush greenery are still a ritual the hale and hearty 80-year-old commits to as a way to unwind and stay healthy. Whenever he can, Uncle Lim visits Hainan Island, home of his forebears to catch up on developments. It also helps him stay grounded, giving him a sense of his place in the world. "No matter where you go or what you do in life, prove to yourself and others what you are worth but never forget your principles and beliefs." Words of the wise, indeed. ■

"No matter where you go or what you do in life, prove to yourself and others what you are worth but never forget your principles and beliefs."



UNCLE LIM'S SPECIAL BIRTHDAY FEAST

Start your banquet with a traditional Four Seasons appetiser platter before moving on to a nourishing Hock Chew-style fish maw soup. For mains, pick four dishes from a selection of seven, before ending with red rice wine mee sua and Shanghainese pancakes. The menu is as follows:

- Four Seasons Platter.
- Hock Chew Fish Maw Soup.

Select four from the following seven items:

- Stir-Fried Sea Cucumber with black mushrooms and broccoli.
- Deep Fried Soft Shell Crab served with Kampung Koh Chilli Sauce.
- Fantasy Lobster diced and stir-fried with Chinese black bean sauce.
- Aromatic Steamed Pangkor Grouper fresh from the fisheries of Pangkor Island and fragranced with lemongrass and chilli.
- Stir-Fried Scallops with Ginger Wine.
- Braised Abalone with Homemade Beancurd.
- Herbal Chicken, steamed free range chicken with traditional Chinese herbs.
- Hock Chew Red Rice Wine Mee Sua with handmade thin wheat noodles from Pangkor Island.
- Shanghai Pancake.

Available from 1 September to 31 December, 2014, Uncle Lim's special Birthday Feast is priced at RM360++ per couple and is available at Pangkor Laut Resort.



Get Creative!

Gratitude is ingrained in local Balinese culture; it is the art of giving thanks daily for all that they have. In that sense, there are ceremonies for practically everything. By making traditional flower offerings known as **canang** the way locals do, I am often reminded how thankful I am to be living in such a beautiful place – a place that nourishes body, mind and spirit just by being there.



QUEST FOR INNER BLISS

Everyone who has been to Bali agrees there's magic in the air. But the peaceful, unspoilt north-eastern coast of the island exudes a subtle vibrancy that is all its own. **Wati Sharron Hopley**, Resident Manager of Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, shares with us her favourite things to see, do and experience in one of Asia's most celebrated patches of paradise.



Om, Sweet Om

Nothing beats starting your day with a **sunrise meditation** session with Luh Manis, Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali's resident yoga teacher and recreation manager. There's only one word that best describes this – "magical". You sit on the beach at 6am just as the sun is coming up and it's always an awesome way to start the day. Also, meditation allows you to think up and fulfil the intention for the day as well as honour the day ahead. Perhaps, this is how the "rise and shine" mantra came about.



Veggie Might

The **menus** at the resort are all prepared with the input of a certified wellness and nutrition consultant so it's easy to eat healthy without having to sacrifice flavour. My top dish would be the chef's raw vegetable lasagne. It looks absolutely gorgeous, tastes likewise and is just so good for you!



Starry, Starry Nights

The resort's unique **Massage under the Stars** treatment is, really, pampering at its best. Where else in the world can you enjoy a massage under a black velvety sky twinkling with stars and with the sound of the ocean all around?



A Boost Of Juice

Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali is famous for its menu of wholesome, healthful **juices**. My favourite has to be the orange, aloe vera and lime juice, which is simply bursting with Vitamin C. The sweet Balinese oranges work great in helping to regulate blood pressure as well as heal skin problems, not to mention putting a glow on your face. Aloe vera, meanwhile, grows in abundance here at the resort and is widely known for its healing, medicinal properties as it helps the body absorb nutrients more effectively. For best effect, you should start your day with this, ideally before breakfast.



Black Is Beautiful

The beautiful **black sand beaches** in Bali's north are actually made of lava rocks from the eruptions of Mount Agung. It's also a natural foot reflexology path. Guests have told me they feel so much more grounded and balanced just by walking on these rocks. And I recommend long walks on these ebony-hued sands after a long flight or if you simply need to energise your life.



Healing Waters

An excursion to the nearby **Les Waterfall** is a journey that will take you through pristine jungle where you can catch sight of tropical fruit like avocados and mangosteens growing in their natural habitat as well as spot bright chilli patches. You will also pass bamboo groves and get the chance to meet and chat with the locals. The waterfall itself is spectacular; get under it for an amazing, totally natural shoulder massage!



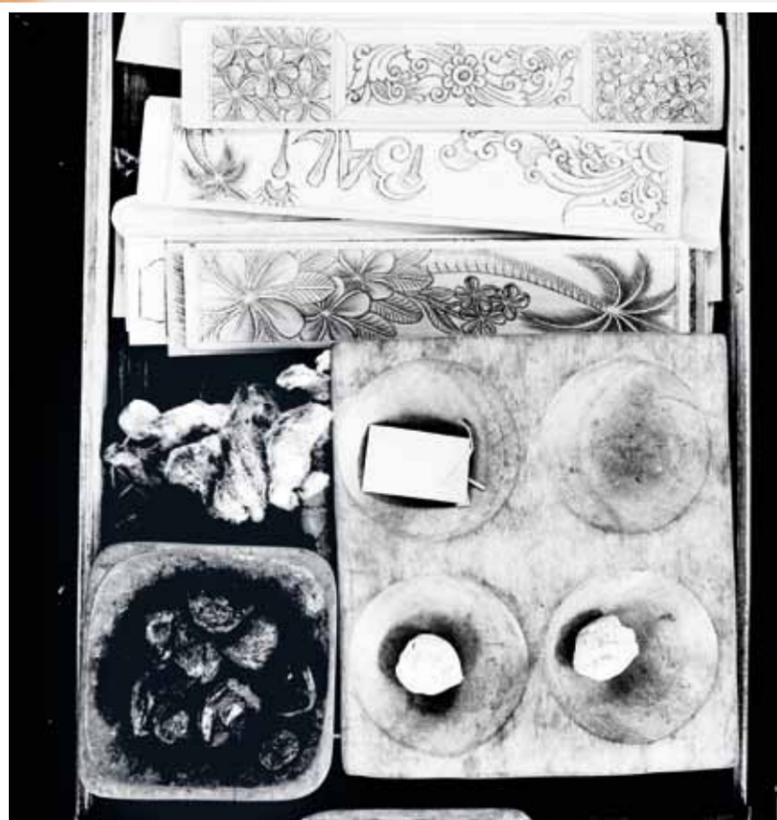
Transform Your Life

Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali is also known for its bi-annual **Oracle Retreats**. It has been hailed as “life-changing”. We see amazing transformations for those who seek to work on their spirituality. We have multi-faceted programmes that last several days and may include workshops on yoga, meditation and holistic aromatherapy, all of which are conducted by renowned facilitators and are designed to help guests achieve greater balance in body, mind and soul as well as a heightened sense of inner peace and awareness.



School Of Life

With the frenetic pace of life in modern society, many of us are becoming increasingly disconnected from our bodies and souls. We come to rely only on our minds, which is not the way nature intended it to be. Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali's unique **School of Life** programme reconnects guests to a balanced way of living, which includes learning life-long practices on health and well-being in a setting of untouched nature and the elements



Under The Sea

I think one of the best in-house activities you can indulge in at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali is **snorkelling**. Not many people know there's great snorkelling fun in the waters right off the resort. The clear waters make the whole area seem like a bath tub – albeit one where stingrays, moray eels, fish in every colour of the rainbow as well as gorgeous coral platforms can be found.



Wati Sharron Hopley is Resident Manager of YTL Hotels' Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali.



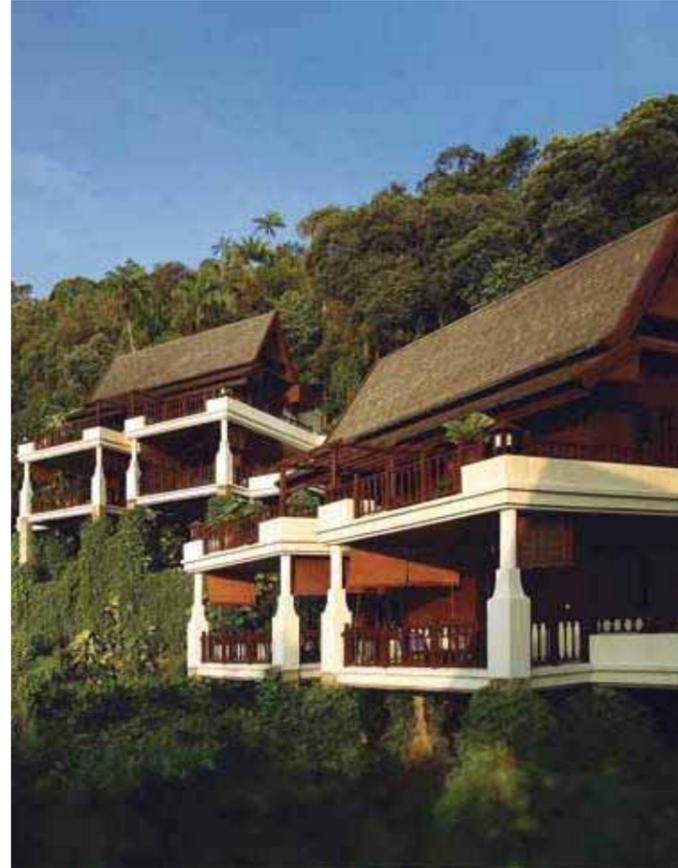
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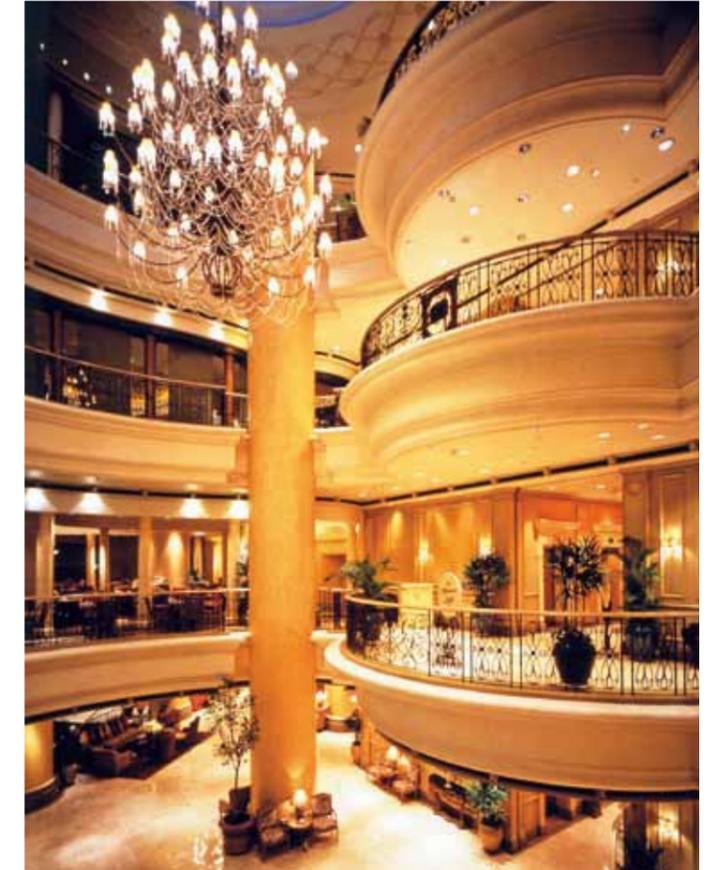
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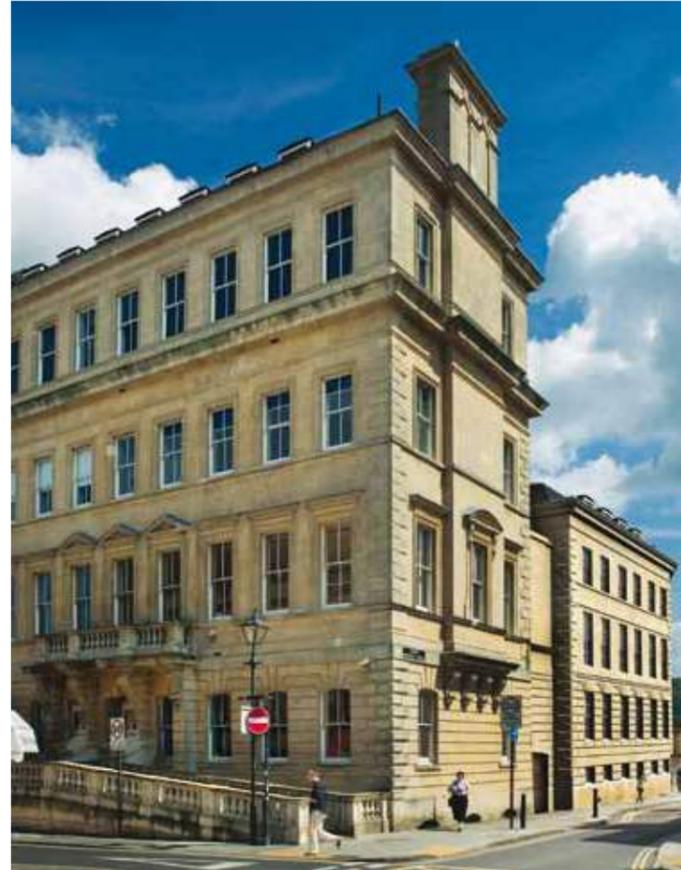
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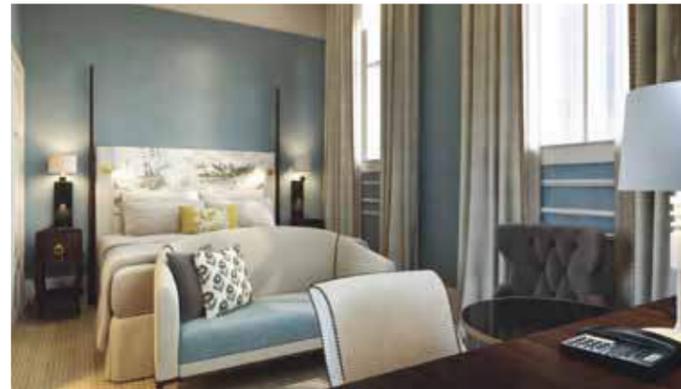
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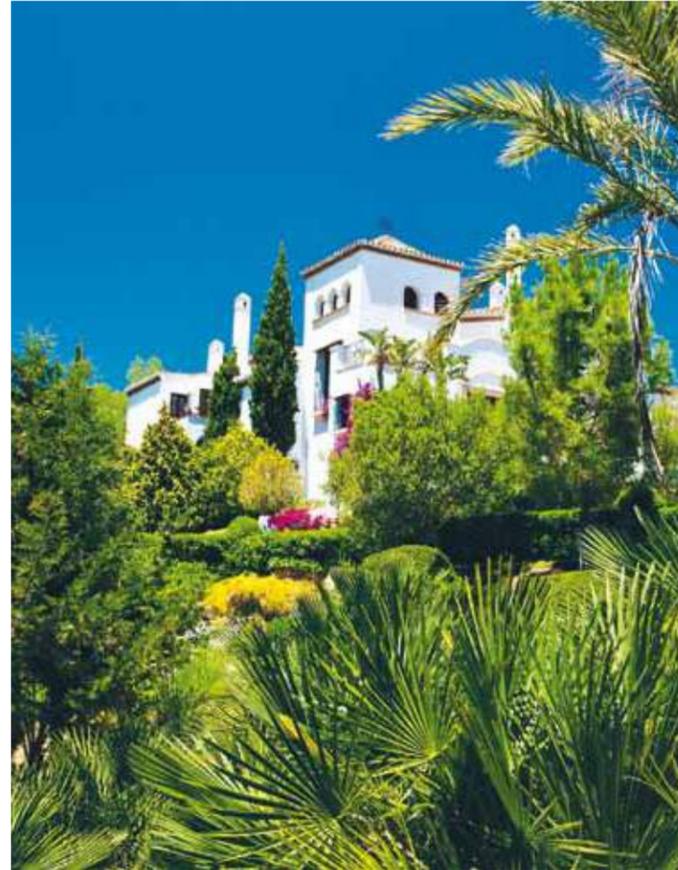
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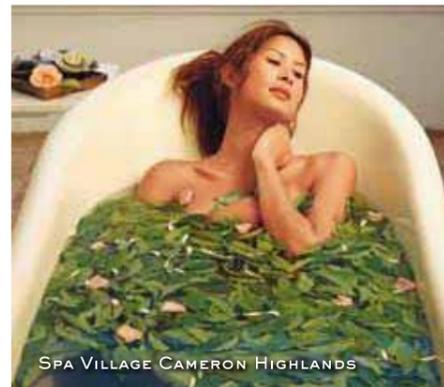
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SPA VILLAGE PANGKOR LAUT



SPA VILLAGE TANJONG JARA



SPA VILLAGE CAMERON HIGHLANDS



SPA VILLAGE MALACCA



SPA VILLAGE GAYA ISLAND



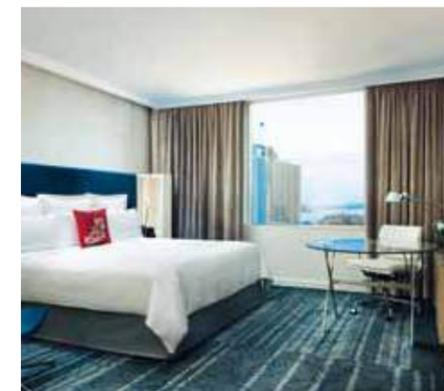
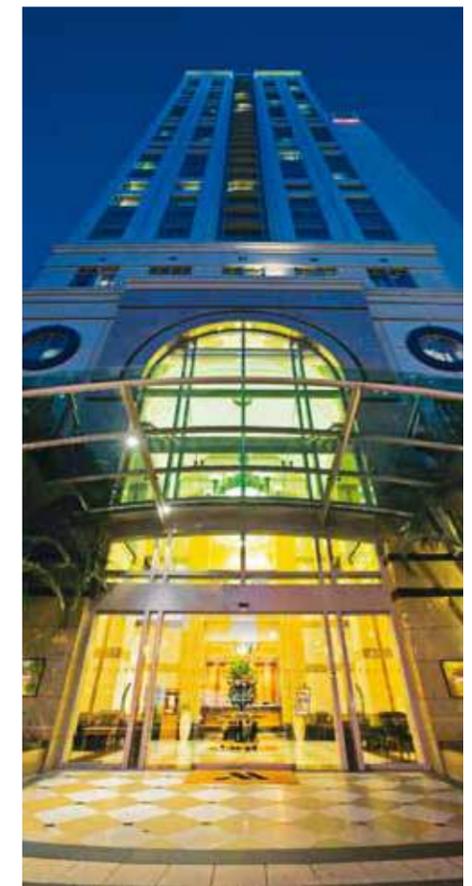
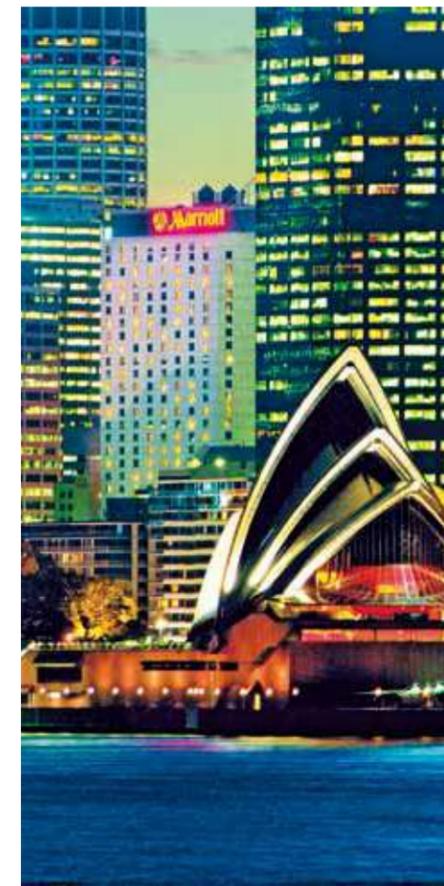
SPA VILLAGE KUALA LUMPUR



SPA VILLAGE HANGZHOU

THE SPA VILLAGES HONOUR THE HEALING CULTURE OF THE REGION IN WHICH EACH IS BUILT. EACH SPA VILLAGE IS THUS UNIQUE TO ITS LOCALE: THE FLAGSHIP SPA VILLAGE PANGKOR LAUT IS INSPIRED BY THE VARIOUS HEALING TRADITIONS OF MALAYSIA'S DIVERSE CULTURES, SPA VILLAGE CAMERON HIGHLANDS' THERAPIES ARE BASED ON THE RESTORATIVE PROPERTIES OF TEA, SPA VILLAGE GAYA ISLAND REFLECTS THE HEALING PRACTICES OF SABAH'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WHILE SPA VILLAGE MALACCA IS UNIQUELY PERANAKAN IN ITS OFFERINGS.
WWW.SPAVILLAGE.COM

EACH SPA VILLAGE HAS ITS OWN CHARACTER AND AUTHENTICITY, WORKING WITH LOCAL HEALERS AND TRADITIONS. SPA VILLAGE TANJONG JARA FOCUSES ON MALAY THERAPIES HANDED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS, SPA VILLAGE KUALA LUMPUR SEAMLESSLY BLENDS ANCIENT AND MODERN PRACTICES WHILE SPA VILLAGE HANGZHOU FEATURES NEW TREATMENTS WITH EACH CHANGING SEASON.
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SHOOK! SHANGHAI OCCUPIES THE PENTHOUSE FLOOR OF THE SWATCH ART PEACE HOTEL, A RENAISSANCE-STYLE 1906 HERITAGE LANDMARK ON THE BUND. THE CELEBRATED RESTAURANT FEATURES A SHOW KITCHEN WHERE SIGNATURE DISHES FOR FOUR DIFFERENT CUISINES ARE CREATED AROUND THE SENSES, FLIRTING WITH SEASONAL TRENDS. WWW.SHOOKRESTAURANTSHANGHAI.COM

CHOICE IS THE KEY WORD WHEN IT COMES TO DINING AT SHOOK KL AND LOT 10 HUTONG. THE FORMER OFFERS FOUR CUISINES FROM FOUR LIVE KITCHENS, INCLUDING ITALIAN, JAPANESE, CHINESE AND THE GRILL, WHILE THE LATTER IS THE DE FACTO DESTINATION WHEN IT COMES TO ENJOYING THE BEST OF MALAYSIAN STREET FOOD UNDER ONE WELL-FORMED ROOF. WWW.STARHILLGALLERY.COM WWW.LOT10HUTONG.COM

EACH AUSTRALIAN MARRIOTT HOTEL IS SITUATED WITHIN THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT OF ITS CITY AND IDEALLY POSITIONED TO SERVE BOTH BUSINESS AND LEISURE TRAVELLERS ALIKE. THE 563-ROOM SYDNEY HARBOUR MARRIOTT IS SET IN THE HEART OF CIRCULAR QUAY, OVERLOOKING ICONIC LANDMARKS THE HARBOUR BRIDGE AND OPERA HOUSE. THE 186-ROOM MELBOURNE MARRIOTT IS CLOSE TO THE CITY'S THEATRE PRECINCT, THE SHOPPING DISTRICTS AND CHINATOWN. THE BRISBANE MARRIOTT, WITH 263 ROOMS AND 4 SUITES, IS SITUATED BETWEEN BRISBANE'S CBD AND THE FORTITUDE VALLEY HUB, CLOSE TO SHOPPING, RIVERSIDE DINING, AND THE CITY'S CORPORATE AND CULTURAL LOCALES. WWW.MARRIOTT.COM

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