

YTL *Life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine

Puttin' On The Ritz

The Reopening
of an Icon

The Glamorous Life

Julien Macdonald
on Style

Sun, Sea & Strength

The Chapman's
Challenge Comes
to Pangkor Laut

Historical Cameron Highlands • Wellness in Bali • Gainsborough+Gourmet

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they explore and experience their favourite things about and around the UNESCO-listed city.

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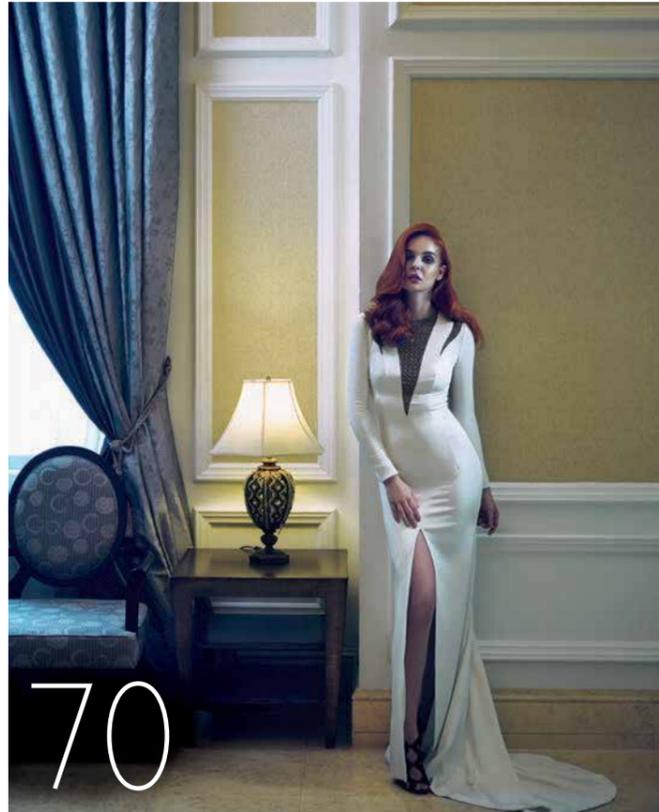
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Life Guide

100 Cameron Highlands has long held the distinction of being Malaysia's premier hill station and preferred retreat from the tropical temperatures. Here, amidst the emerald, cloud-swathed hills, lie gushing waterfalls, nature trails, tea plantations and numerous historical landmarks that stand proud in the crisp cool air. Terence Waller, Resort Manager of Cameron Highlands Resort, shares his favourite things about life high above the valley floor.

Portfolio Of Life

106 Explore the world of YTL Hotels.



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

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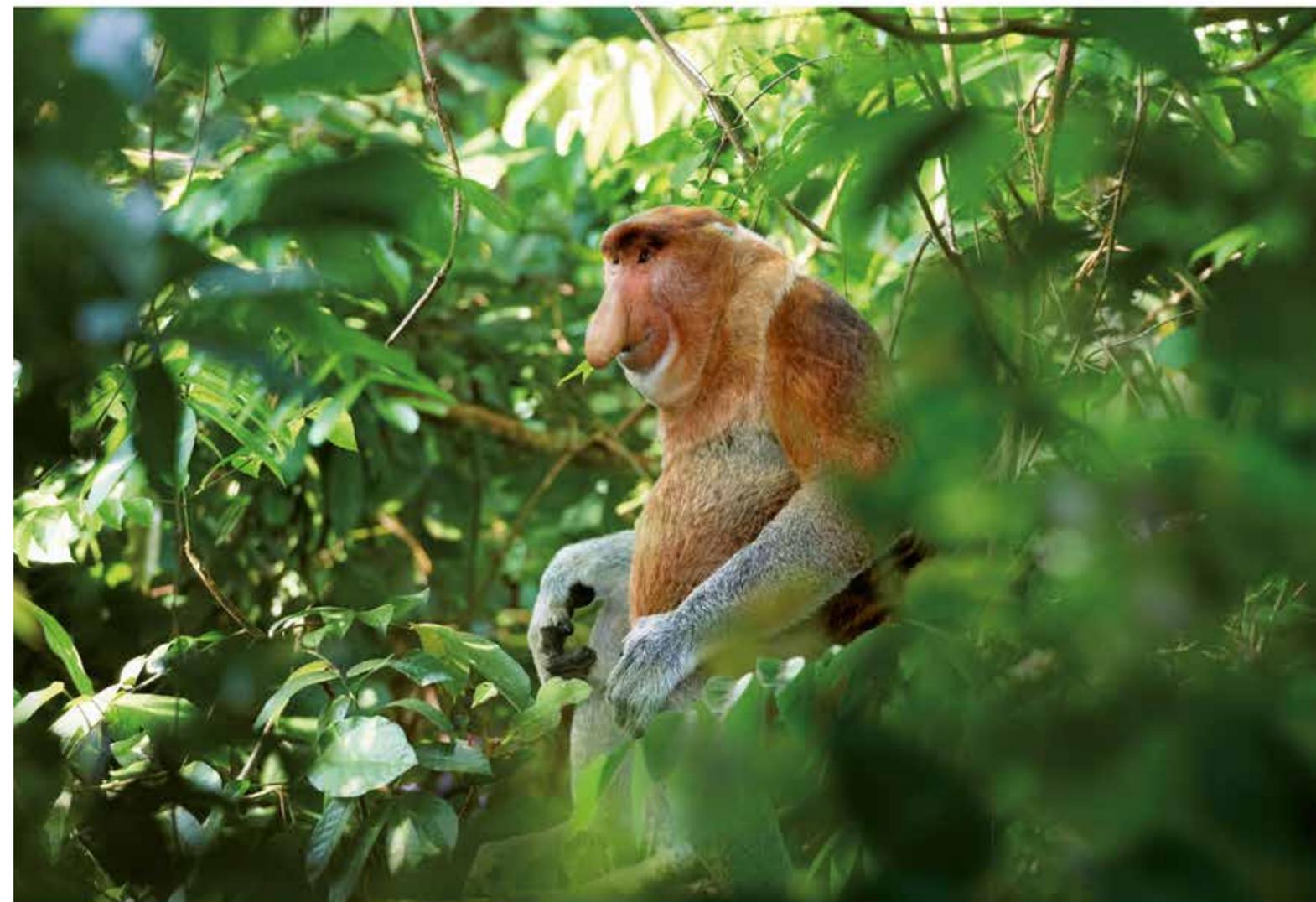
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Your eyes lock with a Proboscis monkey's for the first time.
It makes a strange noise.
And you don't know whether to stand in awe or run.
Your moment awaits.

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A Note from Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh



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

The legendary Irving Berlin might have composed and penned the great melody that is *Puttin' On the Ritz*, but that's certainly how all of us feel at YTL Hotels right now. The renovation, refreshment and complete luxurious refurbishment of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur is certainly a great way to start the year. One of Malaysia's most iconic properties, located right in the heart of its famed retail and recreational 'Golden Triangle', I invite you to come explore and enjoy the new face and offerings of this *grande dame*.

Venturing further afield, there are also other YTL Hotels within the Group that might just catch your fancy. Be it for work or play, although we'd much rather recommend the latter, there's a property to suit your every need. Learn more about the gentle giants of Kenyir Elephant Conservatory that is not at all far from Tanjong Jara Resort, or soak up the old world charm of modern-day Malacca at The Majestic Malacca. Order a signature cocktail and enjoy the ambience at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur, while being serenaded by the music of the Solianos – Malaysia's preeminent musical family – or step back in time and soak up the waters of ancient Bath, just like the Romans did, at The Gainsborough Bath Spa, our biggest and brightest UK property to date, and still the only place in the United Kingdom to enjoy thermal bath waters within the comfort and luxury of your hotel.



Fare Thee Well

It was a bittersweet night as the who's who of Malaysia's diplomatic and corporate societies congregated at the banquet hall of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, to bid farewell to the immensely popular HRH Norodom Arunrasmy, the long-serving Ambassador of Cambodia, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and daughter of the late King Norodom Sihanouk, who returns to the Kingdom after an extensive tour of duty abroad. Accompanied by her husband, HE Keo Puth Reasmey, the event was also graced by her daughter, who performed a delightful Cambodian dance, much to the delight of the guests. ■

1. S Radhakrishnan and HE Manuel Guzman, Ambassador of Venezuela and new Dean of the Diplomatic Corps.
2. Bussarin Parhar and Hunsu Eakturapakal.
3. Dato' Robert Teo and HE Luc Vandebon, Ambassador of the European Union.
4. HE Archbishop Joseph Salvador Marino, Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See, and HE Lourdes Puma Puma, Ambassador of Ecuador.
5. HE J Eduardo Malaya, Ambassador of the Philippines, and Dr Cinzia Giordanelli-Kohlrieser.
6. Dato' Yeoh Soo Min, Tan Sri Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria, HE Keo Puth Reasmey and HRH Princess Norodom Arunrasmy.
7. Dato' Dr Devan Pillay and Datin Dr Kalpna Maghji Patel.
8. Zhao Shumei and HE Huang Huikang, Ambassador of China.
9. Tan Sri Munir Majid.
10. HE Christophe Penot, Ambassador of France, Dr Pio Trippa, HE Maria Isabel Rendon, Ambassador of Argentina, and Yukimi Penot.





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Of High Times And High Notes

Asia's premier watch, jewellery and lifestyle showcase, A Journey Through Time IX, came to a magnificent conclusion at the JW Marriott Hotel Kuala Lumpur with the Tourism and Culture Gala Night: Watch and Jewellery of the Year Awards Presentation 2015. The evening gala was the culmination of an eight-day affair, featuring a series of curated events from over 125 international watch, jewellery and lifestyle brands that drew connoisseurs, fashionistas and Malaysian high society. Apart from the awards, the evening gala also featured critically acclaimed British mezzo soprano Carly Paoli and renowned Italian tenor Alessandro Safina, who stunned the star-studded crowd with their vocal prowess. **W**

1. Dr Bernard Cheong and Tan Sri Dr Francis Yeoh, Group Managing Director of YTL Corporation. 2. HE Victoria Treadell, British High Commissioner, Dato' Yeoh Soo Min and Tan Chien Chyi. 3. Gianni Stagi and Naila Mazzucco. 4. Alex Yoong and Emitsa Shirazi. 5. Simone Teh and Dr Paolo Conconi. 6. Su Jia Xian, Thierry Gasquez, and Dr Bernard Cheong. 7. Milo Muhle, Mandy Muhle, Charmaine Low, Christine Hutter and Rainer Hutter. 8. Carly Paoli and Alessandro Safina. 9. Laura Teo, Adeline Choong, Freda Liu and Jessie Low.



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life events //

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Teatime Tunes

It was a musical time at Starhill Gallery recently when Newens Tea House welcomed specially invited guests to an afternoon tea hosted by Wells Cathedral School. The usual tinkling music was replaced by the hauntingly beautiful melodies of the cello and piano, played by three of the school's specialist musicians – Cameron Goon, Ian Lum and Julian Chan. Former students and their families enjoyed a mini reunion, while future pupils and their parents familiarised themselves with one of the oldest extant schools in the world. The event, supported by the British Malaysian Chamber of Commerce (BMCC), was another partnership between Britain and Malaysia to bring forth a new generation of musical talents. **W**

1. Mark Coote, CEO of The Wells Cathedral School Foundation, Elizabeth Cairncross, Head of Wells Cathedral School, and Mark Stringer, Director of Music of Wells Cathedral School. 2. Gan Yee Why, Samantha Lum and Jane Lum. 3. Ng Mei Fong and Thean Thin Ming. 4. Tan Poh Joo and Tan Poh Kim. 5. Stephen Hodgson and Audrey Choo. 6. Cameron Goon playing the piano. 7. Ian Lum on the cello. 8. Andrew J Dalton, Nik Tasha Nik Kamaruddin and David Mumford.



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Christmas At Cameron's

Located a mere four hours away from the busy city of Kuala Lumpur sits the tranquil and cosy hideaway known as Cameron Highlands Resort. Set amidst a natural wonderland of lush greenery peppered with charming Tudor-style cottages, this peaceful retreat presents a perfect opportunity to experience a memorable Christmas weekend unlike any other. During the holiday season, the colonial-style resort transforms into a majestic wonderland complete

with a vibrant display of blooming poinsettias, delectable gingerbread houses, ornamental Christmas trees, roaring fireplaces and sparkly fairy lights strung on the magnificent pine trees that line the resort driveway that twinkle to life during the resort's annual Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony.

After being greeted by the most gracious of welcomes and exploring the picturesque grounds, which includes magnificent views of rolling

hills and the nearby 18-hole golf course, hungry guests can opt to whet their appetites at the numerous food and beverage venues available throughout the resort. Those looking to indulge in a spot of afternoon tea can head to the Jim Thompson Tea Room which offers a lovely array of homemade scones, delectable sandwiches and pretty pastries complemented by a variety of warming teas sourced from the very same plantations that carpet the valleys in Cameron Highlands. For more savoury delights, a taste of the heart-warming hotpot offerings found at Gonbei is simply the best way to stave off the evening chill. But of course, no festive experience could possibly be complete

without sampling the fabulous, four-course Christmas dinner served at the Dining Room.

Cameron Highlands Resort also boasts a variety of fun-filled activities designed to refresh the senses and relieve stress. Highlights include the Jim Thompson Mystery Trail, an educational guided tour which explores the mysteries of the nearby misty forests; and pampering sessions at the award-winning Spa Village which is renowned for its soothing, tea-inspired spa treatments. And even if one decides to spend most of the weekend basking in the comforts of the resort's relaxing rooms or suites, rest assured that this experience will be one worth reliving for many years to come. ❖

1. The grand entrance of Cameron Highlands Resort sparked to life with hundreds of twinkling fairy lights. 2. Guests had a wonderful time dining while surrounded by beautiful flower arrangements. 3. Vanessa Tevi, Miss Universe Malaysia 2015, and Guest-Of-Honour Carey Ng, Miss Universe Malaysia 2013. 4. Khoo Cai Mei and Jason Lim. 5. Valencia-Aged Balsamic Glazed Duck Breast with Gingerbread Crumbs and Foie Gras. 6. Beetroot-Cured Petuna Salmon Trout, Confit of Navel Orange and Granny Smith Mustard Sauce. 7. Natasya Falina, Lim Yung, Terence Waller, Georgina Chang, Sunita Chhabra, Jen Tan and Ben Quah. 8. Cecilia Yong and Jeremy Teo. 9. Antoine Commare and Michelle Sagan. 10. Guests had a blast singing along to classic Christmas songs performed by the Versus Choir group. 11. Heather Wilson. 12. Michelle Sagan, Julie Goh, Antti Ruohonen and Tom Sullivan.





A LEGACY OF MUSIC

Family and friends of the late music legend, Alfonso Soliano, got together at The Refinery in D6 Sentul East, Kuala Lumpur, recently for the launch of *Alfonso Soliano – His Legacy*, a pictorial exhibition celebrating the life and times of the patriarch of Malaysia's greatest living musical family. The launch was officiated by Dato' Mark Yeoh in the presence of HE J Eduardo Malaya, the Ambassador of the Philippines, and Dato' Johari Salleh. **■**

1. Tan Bee Hong, Tan Bee Wei, Tan Bee Teing and Renee Tan. 2. The musical Soliano family. 3. Isabella Soliano, Cynthia Soliano, Irene Soliano and Sasa Soliano. 4. Suzie Ibrahim and Hafiz Hisan. 5. Tristano Soliano, Rizal Soliano, Connie Soliano and Don Soliano. 6. Rachel Guerzo and Audrey Soliano. 7. Chang Fee Ming. 8. Dato' Johari Salleh, Isabella Soliano, Professor Hanafie Iman, Dato' Mark Yeoh and HE J Eduardo Malaya.



life events //



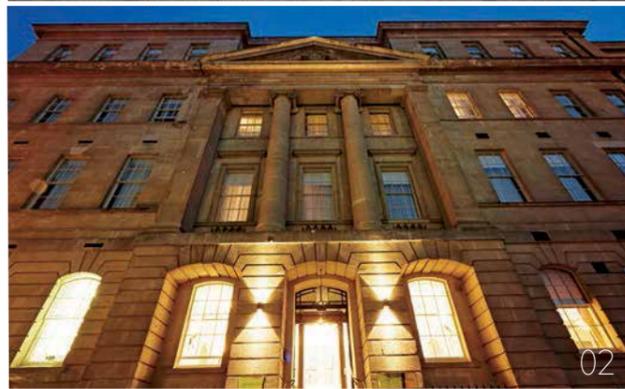
Masters Of Entrepreneurship

In an evening that celebrated the best of enterprise, Datuk Tan Say Jim, Group Managing Director and Group CEO of IRIS Corporation Bhd, was judged the best of the best to become the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year 2015 Malaysia. The glittering event, held at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur, attracted a veritable who's who of the Malaysian business scene and also honoured the achievements of Timothy Tiah, COO of Netccentric Group, in the Emerging Entrepreneur category, Liew Choon Lian, Group Chairman and CEO of MDT Innovations Sdn Bhd (Technology Entrepreneur) and Jerrene Pang, Executive Director of Coolblog Group of Companies (Woman Entrepreneur). Datuk Tan, who also won the Master Entrepreneur category award, will now spearhead the claims of Malaysia at the EY World Entrepreneur Of The Year event, which will be held in Monte Carlo in June. **■**

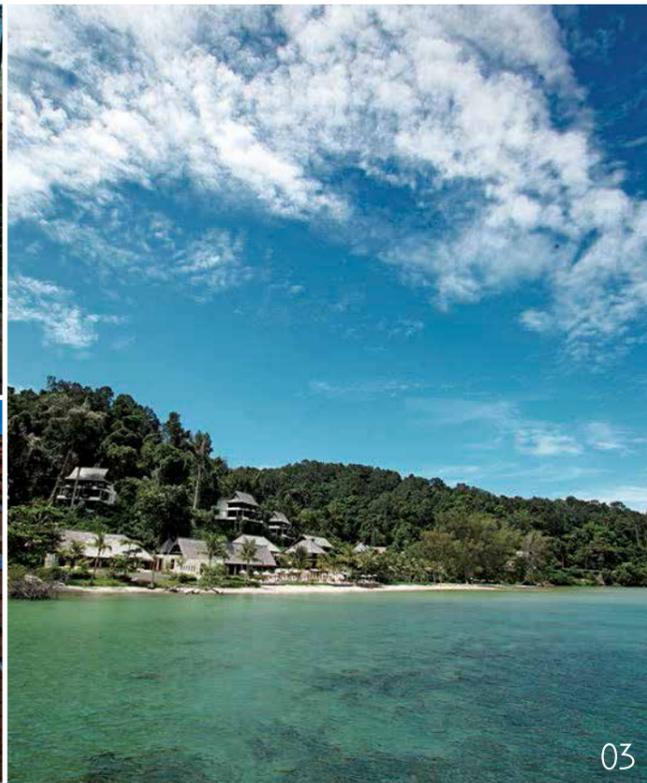
1. Dato' Sri Mustafa Mohamed, Minister of International Trade & Industry. 2. Harvinder Singh Sidhu, Paul Tan and Lee Jiun Ying. 3. Philip Satish Rao, Goh Peng Ooi, Datuk Ali Abdul Kadir, Tan Sri Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria, Datuk Tan Say Jim, Dato' Rauf Rashid, Jerrene Pang, Liew Choon Lian and Timothy Tiah. 4. Aileen Chan and Lim Siang Wee. 5. Tan Sri AK Nathan and Dato' Ir Muhamad Guntor Mansor Tobeng. 6. Lyn Siew and Ian Chong. 7. Yee Tsai Siew, Dexter Lau and Lim Poh Yit. 8. Law King Hui, Christine Chea, Law Yi Chian and Law En Zhen. 9. Benjamin Yong, Ming Ne Tan, Sherin Wong, Bobby Ting and Lyndon Felix.



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01

Alluring Visions

With a freshly inked deal between YTL Hotels and Marriott International, the splendour and sophistication of The Ritz-Carlton experience will soon be coming to the pristine white beaches of Koh Samui and all-season Niseko Village of Hokkaido, Japan. **The Ritz-Carlton, Koh Samui** will be an exquisite 187-roomed hotel in Plai Laem, surrounded by the emerald green waters of the Gulf of Thailand. Spectacular views of the great Mount Yotei, refined Japanese culture and exclusive ski access are set to delight guests at the new **Ritz-Carlton Reserve** in Niseko Village, which would be the first Ritz-Carlton Reserve, not only in Japan, but North Asia as well. Though these highly anticipated hotels are only set to open within the next two to five years, we say there's no such thing as planning your next vacation too early!

02

The 'it' Factor

The Gainsborough Bath Spa, the only hotel in the UK providing privileged access to Bath's natural thermal waters has just been given a spot in *Travel + Leisure's It List 2016: The Best New Hotels on the Planet*. Joining an impressive list of beautifully designed and unique hotels in some of the best cities in the world, The Gainsborough Bath Spa impressed the editorial team with its tranquil settings and stunning interiors by Champalimaud Design – hardly surprising, seeing how the limestone building's intriguing history and Georgian features are honoured in this 99-roomed hotel. However, it was the spectacular spa that set this hotel apart. Fed with the mineral-rich waters of the city's thermal springs, it allows guests to do like the Romans and float dreamily while enjoying the water's healing powers.

03

It Comes Naturally

Having always nurtured the environment around it, it's no surprise that **Gaya Island Resort**, off the coast of Kota Kinabalu, in Sabah, won Best in Protection of Natural Areas & Wildlife Conservation at the Ninth Wild Asia Responsible Tourism Awards, for its careful consideration of the local environment and biodiversity, while actively supporting and protecting their natural resources. Gaya Island Resort led the pack with its winning formula of seamlessly integrating luxury with the natural world. Guests get to engage with the island's rare flora and fauna in a series of environmental programmes designed to educate and conserve the resort's natural assets. Students from surrounding schools are also taught the importance of preserving the environment through the Gaya Island Resort Marine Centre.



04



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04

Moonlight Serenade

There's nothing more romantic than dining in the moonlight, under the stars. As crooned by Frank Sinatra, "The stars are aglow and tonight how their light sets me dreaming. My love, do you know that your eyes are like stars brightly beaming?" **Tanjong Jara Resort** offers couples the enchanting *Dining on the Rocks* experience set on the rocks by the resort's golden sand beach that, symbolically, represents the rock-solid bond between them. Couples can relish each other's company while enjoying a delectable five-course meal of fresh seafood sourced from the South China Sea. A truly private experience for one couple each evening, it promises to be a dreamy evening of love and romance.

05

Wedded Bliss

If you're planning your dream wedding, then **Pangkor Laut Resort** is the only place to have it. The private island resort was awarded Asia's Leading Wedding Venue at the recent World Travel Awards Asia & Australasia Gala Ceremony 2015. With a bewitching blend of sun, white sands, sapphire-blue sea and lush rainforest, you and your significant other will have an enchanting wedding filled with love and beauty. Couples can choose between four bespoke experiences – the signature *Wedding at the Sea*, *Pangkor Laut Beach Wedding*, *Lantern Courtyard Wedding* and *Wedding at the Estates* – to tie the knot in nuptials no one will ever forget. Here comes the perfect wedding!

06

In Good Company

Small Luxury Hotels of the World has welcomed another two YTL Hotels, **MUSE St Tropez** in France and the **Kasara Niseko Village Townhouse** in Japan, to its collection of exclusive and independent hotels. Basking in the glamour of the French Riviera, MUSE St Tropez enchants with its luxurious suites weaving through the award-winning ecological and self-sustainable garden designed by Sophie Agata Ambroise. Kasara Niseko Village Townhouse is an elegant fusion of authentic Japanese heritage and charm, and is the first SLH property at a Japanese ski resort. Selected for their stunning individuality and world-class amenities, SLH properties deliver unforgettable experiences. ■

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



life on the cover //

Puttin' on the Ritz

The curtain rises for an iconic beacon of luxury in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, following a stylish refurbishment to offer new levels of bespoke service.

Text **Chin Mui Yoon** Photography **Edmund Lee**

For over 18 years, The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur has been a luxurious home away from home for thousands of well-heeled guests from all over the world, including members of royal families, international celebrities, corporate leaders and heads of state. Set in the heart of Kuala Lumpur and steps away from the bustle, upscale boutiques and skyscrapers of the city's Golden Triangle, the hotel has long commanded an enviable address.

From lavish weddings and gala events to countless anniversaries, proposals and special dinners, this iconic beacon of style and luxury has carved a cherished place in the hearts and memories of its guests. Every guest who walks into The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur has come to expect an extraordinary level of personal service with genuine care and attention. The hotel consistently aims to set new benchmarks in its legendary service and exceptional facilities.

In tune with a global re-mastering of a much-loved, award-winning hotel brand, The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur has unveiled a complete refurbishment of all its 364 guestrooms and suites, restaurants, spa and public spaces.

Evolution Of A Classic

When The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur first opened at 168 Jalan Imbi, it was hailed as the country's first truly luxury boutique

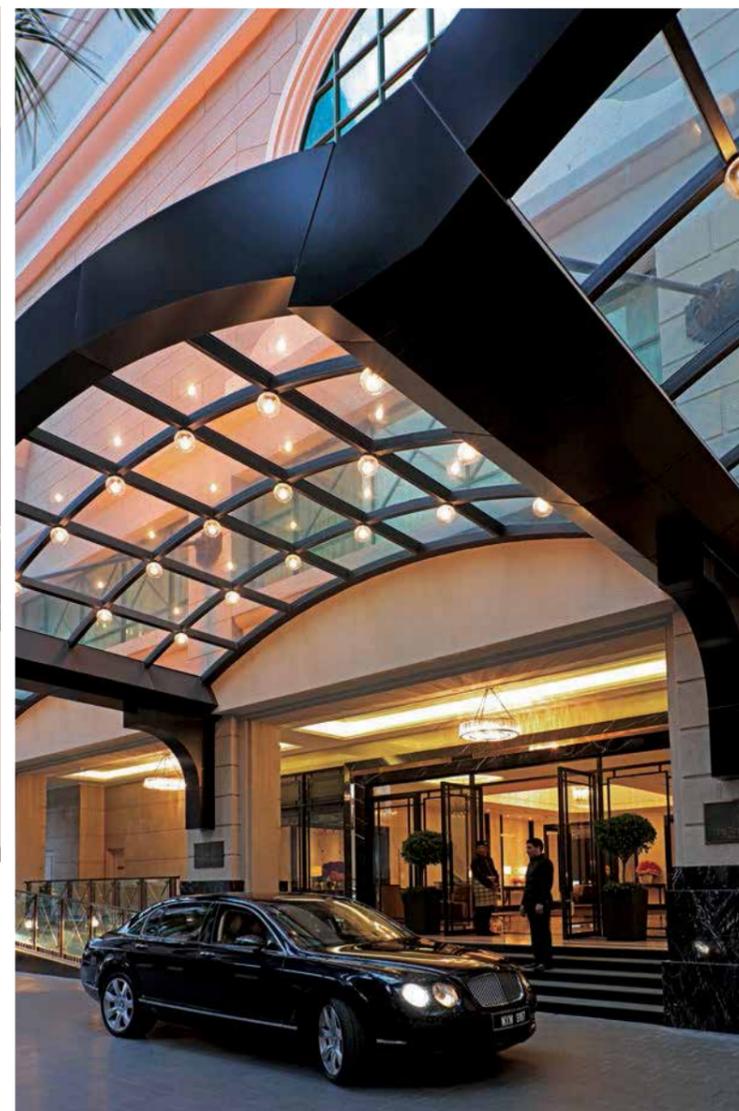
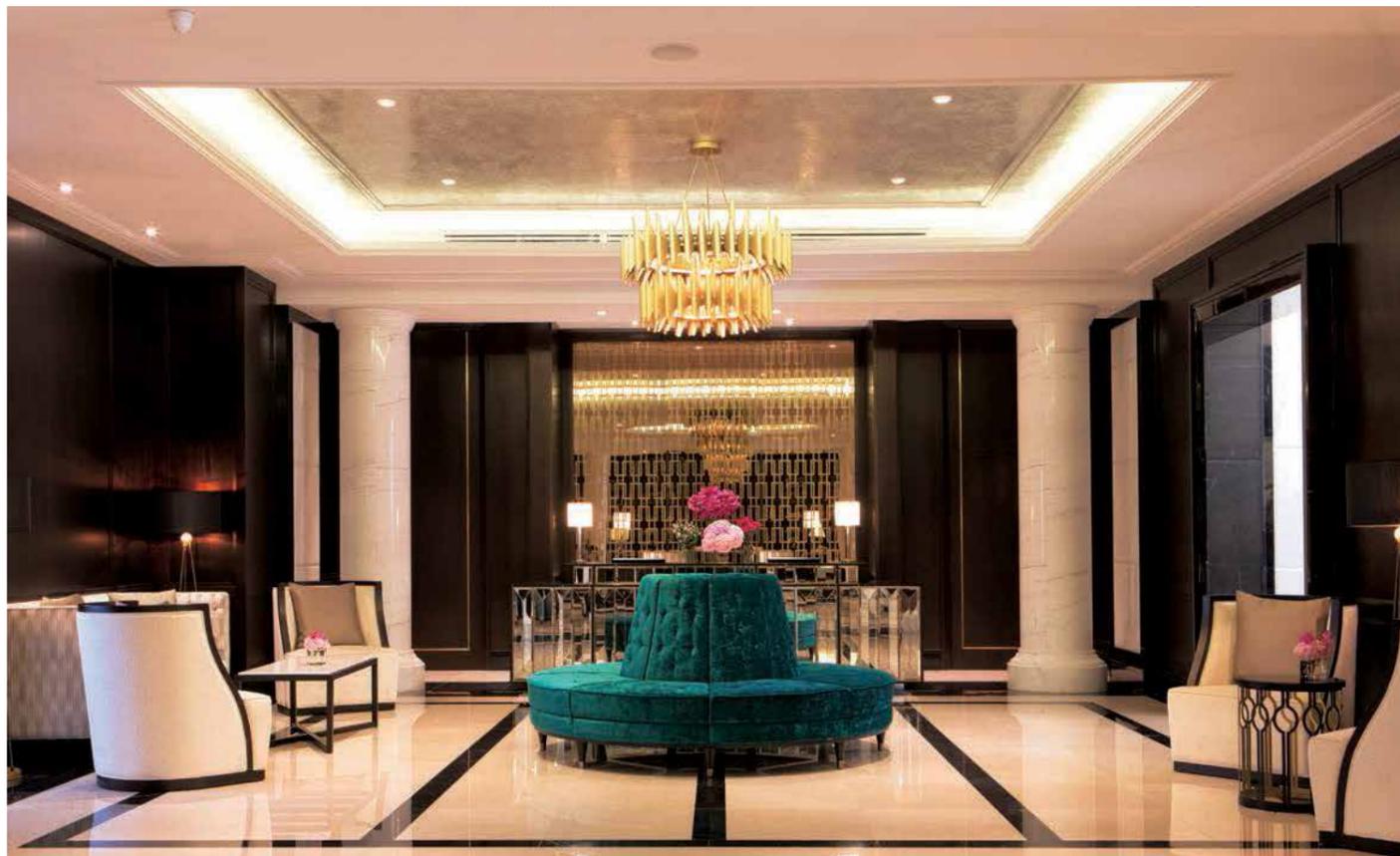
hotel, with bespoke butler service and a level of perfection that was previously unseen. Its discreet lobby was a classic of its own, while its restaurants were included in every culinary connoisseur's itinerary.

Even then, the hotel was setting new benchmarks in hospitality, very much in line with the hotel brand in offering unmatched standards. After all, one of the earliest Ritz-Carlton hotels in Boston had revolutionised hospitality in America in 1940 by creating luxury in a hotel setting that included a private bath in each guestroom; white tie and apron uniforms for the waitstaff, black tie for the maître d' and morning suits for all other staff – conducive to a formal, professional appearance; extensive fresh flowers throughout the public areas; à la carte dining, providing choices for diners and gourmet cuisine, utilising the genius and cooking methods of Auguste Escoffier.

The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur continues setting new standards today. The task of refurbishing such a beloved hotel was aptly given to Alexandra Champalimaud and her atelier of designers.



life on the cover //



“Every guest who walks into The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur has come to expect an extraordinary level of personal service with genuine care and attention. The hotel consistently aims to set new benchmarks in its legendary service and exceptional facilities.”

Clockwise from left: Opulent marble bathrooms with Asprey amenities; the guestrooms and suites are detailed in luxurious linens and soothing neutrals.



The New York-based studio is known for inculcating a high level of historic relevance and knowledge in its work on some of the most renowned hotels in the world, including The Dorchester in London and The Pierre in New York. The company also created design concepts for the historic Gainsborough Bath Spa and The Green Leaf Niseko Village in Hokkaido, both part of the YTL Hotels portfolio.

"Good design begins with an exceptional story; our studio is dedicated to expressing the individual character of each space through extraordinary design," Champalimaud explains to *YTL Life*. "We have partnered with YTL Hotels to create a distinctive property, transforming context and heritage into compelling stories and unparalleled experiences. As we develop the hotel's unique expression, we consider all the elements that define a space – history, setting, purpose and, above all, people. The new design for The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur is contemporary while celebrating the hotel's location and catering to the busy, vibrant and important clientele. The sense of place and luxury has been redefined to engage modern world authenticity, attention to detail and quality of materials. Richly detailed screens and beautiful marble throughout the hotel are new signature decorative elements.



Furnishings and fabrics are rich and luxuriously appointed, and speak to the quality of the property and the brand."

The bespoke luxury that goes with The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur begins at the airport where a guest is personally met for the transfer to the city, alighting at an impressive new porte cochère that offers a distinctive sense of arrival in this cosmopolitan city. A contemporary lobby and reception experience has been integrated into the existing building to provide a sense of grand, open spaces throughout. A notable change from the previous entrance is the stylish and elegant ambience created by the new high ceilings in the public spaces, invoking a sense of drama and place.

Gleaming marble floors and walls across an expansive lobby are layered with contrasting metal detailing that seamlessly combines to create a contemporary design with a nod to the classical. Groupings of fine furniture and clever lighting balance a classic look with rich and vibrant materials to further enhance the public spaces; creating a mood of understated elegance. New escalators lead guests to The Lobby Lounge, The Patisserie and The Library on the first floor. These new graceful rooms and signature spaces create the perfect setting to conduct casual



meetings between business associates or among friends. Their location now conveniently and seamlessly connects guests to the adjoining Starhill Gallery.

"As the brand looks forward, so does the design of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur," Champalimaud further explains. We build on the traditions of this iconic brand while delivering a beautiful hotel that is worldly, modern and respectful of the past, but confidently looking forward."

The luxurious and refreshed guestrooms and suites capture the serenity of a sophisticated hotel in the hub of a dynamic city, marking the beginning of what will become an extraordinary and memorable experience for every guest. A palette of soft, sophisticated neutrals works with new furnishings to provide cocoons of comfort. Expansive windows command views of the Kuala Lumpur skyline or the hotel's landscaped swimming pool. A wall-mounted flat screen television offers 24-hour cable and satellite channels with movies, while a full-sized desk caters to today's business traveller.

Comfortable beds boast brand new fine linens, and feather and down comforters while opulent marble bathrooms with exclusive Asprey bath amenities and other thoughtful touches complete the requirements for a divine retreat.

And, of course, The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur's signature butler service around the clock delivers every request with the touch of

A lively and interactive breakfast experience awaits guests at The Cobalt Room, with its elegant leather banquet seats bathed in natural sunlight complete with live cooking theatre; The Patisserie's diverse offerings include delectable sweet treats.



a single button on the telephone. From unpacking and packing, shoeshine and car transfers, to organising the perfect itinerary for shopping, dining and entertainment, these highly trained butlers add an integral edge to a perfect stay.

Celebrating Culinary Excellence

Through the years, The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur has carved its own niche in gastronomic experiences through its portfolio of fine restaurants that have hosted many momentous events. In contrast to the soft, relaxing ambiance of the guestrooms and suites, the restaurants are imbued with energy, where they are envisioned to become hubs of culinary dynamism in a city already famed for its cuisine.

Guests at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur start off their day with a vibrant breakfast experience at The Cobalt Room. This elegant, expansive space, awash with natural sunlight streaming in from large windows, offers a delightful gastronomic experience. The restaurant showcases local and international flavours, with diverse 'theatre' or food stations offering cooked-to-order preparations from organic ingredients catering to each guest's tastes.

Sunday afternoons in Kuala Lumpur will never be the same again with the sumptuous Sunday Brunch that is interactive and lively. The hotel's glorious spreads of signature roasts on handcrafted trolleys are featured with fresh seafood displays, homemade pastas cooked à la minute, artisanal cheeses, decadent desserts and free flow of premium champagne and wine to toast to a delightful time with family and friends amidst live music.

The iconic, award-winning Cantonese restaurant Li Yen continues serving its daily *dim sum* lunch accompanied by a wide selection of premium traditional Chinese teas. In the evenings, Chinese feasts may be enjoyed in this harmonious, elegant space, while a *yangqing* harpist entertains.

For lighter meals, The Patisserie serves up the offerings and mood of an intimate Viennese patisserie with a modern twist. Guests can enjoy lunches of Niçoise Salad with Lobster Chowder; a decadent Poached Duck Egg and Truffle Sabayon; Parpadelle in Slow Cooked Lamb Ragout or a selection of savoury quiches and pies. In The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur style, a burger served here is created with nothing less than premium waygu



The time honoured tradition of Afternoon Tea is served with flair and music at The Lobby Lounge.



Clockwise, from top: The swimming pool offers a welcome respite; the signature Ritz Fizz; cocoons of rest and relaxation at The Spa Village with luxurious award winning treatments.



life on the cover //

enhances the ambience while guests partake of the time-honoured ritual of Afternoon Tea.

A new feature is The Library, which is beautifully designed with wood panelling and floors for a relaxing yet stylish ambience. An extensive collection of books, with topics ranging from film and theatre to art and travel, is on hand for contemplative pleasure. A beverage programme also celebrates classically focused cocktails alongside a vintage cognac and whiskey library and fine wines from around the world. The Ritz Fizz, The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur's signature cocktail, dating back to 1934, is the perfect drink in hand to wind down the day. You may also choose from a selection of fine wines, cognac or Armagnac served alongside a tantalising dinner from the Menu Du Jour. A choice of premium cigars is available from The Smoke Room.

Stylish Occasions

A newly introduced Chef-On-Call is available for bespoke corporate or private affairs, making for truly memorable events. This is a fabulous private dining concept available for events that call for The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur's touch of distinction and meticulous consideration. This may be requested throughout the hotel, served by the guest's very own Chef, Butler and Hostess. The service enhances a portfolio of choices for classy business meetings and corporate functions, accompanied by impeccable hospitality and attention to detail synonymous with The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur. A varied food and beverage option is offered, including special themed breaks and meeting package lunches available at the Feast Village at Starhill Gallery.

Naturally, the hotel is also the city's most desirable address for a wedding venue for the ultimate in romantic dates. From bridal showers and martini nights for bachelor parties to lavish feasts and romantic interludes, every wedding at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur is a signature experience to start off a special journey.

The hotel's multiple award-winning Spa Village, which has sparked off many trends and traditions in the world of wellness, has also been rejuvenated. This urban oasis draws upon a rich heritage of ancient remedies, and features modern facilities complemented by steam rooms, outdoor baths and a beautifully landscaped swimming pool. Spa Village Kuala Lumpur continues to offer an integrated approach to a wellness journey with a menu of therapies and a newly designed Sensory Sound Bath Room, which is the only one of its kind in Asia. ■

Revamped, Refreshed, Relaunched The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur Puttin' on The Ritz! For more details on the newly refurbished The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, go to www.ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/malaysia/kuala-lumpur

beef layered with seared foie gras, offered alongside a choice of King Crab Wrap and The Ritz-Carlton Club Sandwich with lobster and grilled beef bacon. Guests can relax to soothing afternoon melodies while sampling a perfect assortment of delicious cakes, cookies, macarons, chocolate pralines and light gourmet fare, savoured with a choice of specialty coffees or freshly brewed teas. In addition, guests can take home a sweet memory from the selection of baked goods in the hotel's signature packaging that also makes ideal gifts.

Perhaps the most awaited feature remains The Ritz-Carlton's beloved Afternoon Teas. These may now be relished in the new Lobby Lounge, a truly elegant and refined space on the first floor, with marble floors and stylish furnishings crowned by a gold-leafed ceiling. Moments of serenity and reflection or cherished time spent with friends and families could be enjoyed here alongside business meetings. A choice of 40 luxury teas from Ronnefeldt accompanies the delicious offerings for tea. The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur Blend is exclusively crafted for the hotel, made from a delicately refreshing green Oolong Tie Guan Yin, a tea served to royalty since the Tang dynasty. This unique blend has a subtle flavour, and effectively captures the essence of Eastern and Western tea drinking traditions. The Lobby Lounge speaks of conversations and the pure enjoyment of the moment through carefully crafted coffees and teas with light fare. Live music





Weekend Magic In Malacca

For Malaysian celebrity couple-about-town, television host Xandria Ooi and composer-producer Yuri Wong, The Majestic Malacca holds a special place in their hearts: partly as it's in Yuri's hometown and, primarily, because it set the scene for their picture-perfect wedding five years ago. *YTL Life* follows them around one weekend as they explore and experience their favourite things about and around the UNESCO-listed city.

Photography **Robin Liew**

Be it dining at The Mansion restaurant or indulging in pre-dinner drinks at the old world bar, you'll experience the best the historical town has to offer at The Majestic Malacca.

Saturday

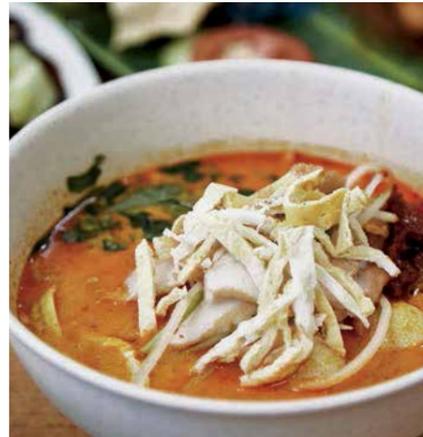
1000HRS – An easy two-hour drive from Kuala Lumpur, the historical gem that is the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Malacca is the perfect place for a weekend getaway! The city that gave rise to the splendour of the Malaccan Sultanate and once the most important port of call along the legendary 'spice route' of Asia, a visit to Malacca now is a little like stepping through the looking glass and going back in time. The only place to stay, of course, is at The Majestic Malacca – a mansion that was once the home of Leong Long Man, a Chinese tycoon who commissioned the grand home in the 1920s. Having been resurrected by YTL Hotels, it opened as a luxury hotel under the group's banner in December 2007. "I love everything about the hotel," says Xandria Ooi. "The architecture and beautiful mix of traditional and Western elements is something to see and experience, from the rooms to the claw-footed bathtubs and the old world dining room and hall."

1030HRS – Checking in at The Majestic Malacca is an easy, personal experience, underscored by the hotel's signature welcome, inspired by the Peranakan tuang teh ceremony, of a pot of blended lychee black tea, served in a traditional Straits Chinese basket. Tea-drinking is an

integral part of auspicious ceremonies in Chinese and Peranakan cultures, and the sweetness of the tea is a symbol of the happy memories to come.

1100HRS – "One of the first things we do whenever we arrive in Malacca is to head out to Donald & Lily's," says an animated Ooi. "The Nyonya laksa is to-die-for, with the most amazing broth. It's right on top of our go-to list as they usually sell out by noon, so it's best to get there early. It's seriously the best Nyonya laksa in Malacca! After dining here a few times, Yuri found out that the owners of Donald & Lily are actually related to him, which was such a surprisingly lovely coincidence!"

1200HRS – If you've filled your tummy nicely, now's a good time to beat the lunch-hour queues and crowds, and head instead to Jonker Street to shop for antiques, or Heeren Street for unique gifts. If you prefer a touch of culture, venture towards Temple Street, which is also referred to as Harmony Street, or



Clockwise, from top: Strolling along the Malacca River rewards you with tranquil vistas; shopping for antiques is a must when in Malacca; Xandria and Yuri visit the beautiful Cheng Hoon Teng temple; feasting on Peranakan favourites at Donald & Lily's; Nyonya laksa; the couple's favourite foodie pitstop; being served lychee tea - part of The Majestic Malacca's traditional welcome ritual.



Jalan Tukang Emas, where three of the oldest places of worship in Malacca may be found: the ornate Cheng Hoon Teng temple (also the oldest Chinese temple in Malaysia), the equally-decorative Sri Poyatha Moorthi temple and the Kampung Kling mosque, which is a curious blend of Sumatran architecture, whose minaret is more pagoda-esque, with sloped eaves as opposed to a domed roof. It's the perfect place to admire harmonious religious co-existence – a rarity in today's world – hence the name 'Harmony Street'.

1600HRS – Shopping and soaking up culture can be tiring (and thirsty) work. Follow Yuri and Xandria's lead by nipping into The Daily Fix Café for its signature Pandan Gula Melaka Pancake. "This little café is such a gem. It looks deceptively small but is actually really spacious as it extends right out onto the back," says Xandria. "It's so quaint and quirky, and the best thing is that you actually have to enter a souvenir shop to get to the café as The Daily Fix is nestled right at the back. I love that it's so hidden! Everything on the menu looks yummy. I have yet to try them all as I keep on ordering the same thing, which is the Pandan Gula Melaka Pancake. I think it's a dish everyone needs to taste. I have yet to see anything similar elsewhere in Malaysia and I think it's absolutely divine. They also serve durian pancakes which I have yet to try as I'm too obsessed with the pandan version."

1900HRS – Few pleasures beat that of simply sauntering down from your room to The Majestic Malacca's elegant dining room, The Mansion, for dinner; preferably,

after an aperitif or two at the beautiful bar by the reception. However, if you've had too much spice and are craving for some clean, cool flavours, another of Xandria and Yuri's favourite restaurants is Wa Zen. "The Japanese restaurant's ambience is incredibly authentic and the food's absolutely stellar in relation to the price. It's always packed out as the food's so good. Wa Zen closes Sundays, which is why I always try to make it to Malacca on a Saturday so I can have dinner here, and concentrate on my laksa and pancake fix the next day!"

Sunday

0800HRS – Start your day bright and early with a hearty breakfast at The Mansion at The Majestic Malacca. *Petit déjeuner* here is served cascade-style, which means you will be served tea, coffee and juices at your table, followed by a bakery basket, fruit, yoghurt and cereals, if you wish. The highlight is, of course, the hot breakfast, where you can go local or Western, taking your pick of a menu that ranges from eggs all styles and waffles served with berry compote and thick double cream, to Malaysian favourites, like *murtabak* (a fluffy local dough cake filled with meat and onions, and eaten with lentil curry), noodles, Chinese porridge or, the all-time favourite, *nasi lemak* – rice cooked with coconut milk and served with chicken curry, crispy anchovies and peanuts.

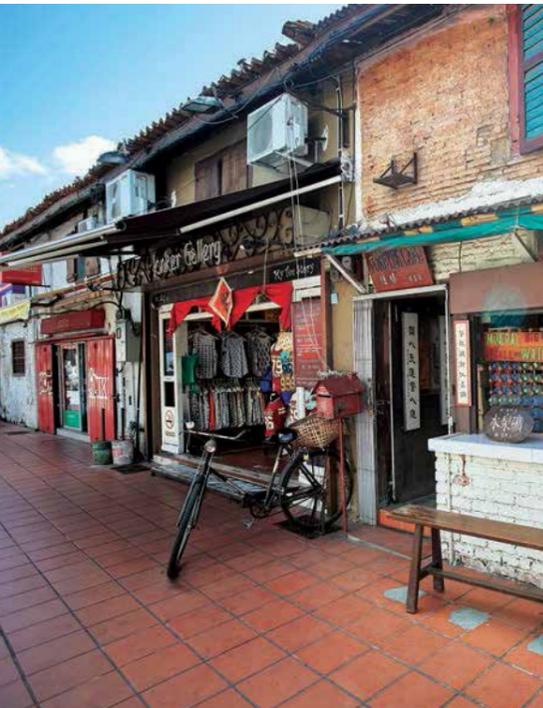
1000HRS – Head out again to Jonker Street and Heeren Street for more shopping or take time to visit some of Malacca's key sights, including the iconic, red-hued Christ Church – the oldest functioning Protestant church in the area. Across the river from The Majestic Malacca is also the traditional village of Kampung Morten, well-worth a look to get a glimpse of life the old-fashioned way in Malacca.

Clockwise, from top left: The Daily Fix is where Xandria and Yuri indulge in their favourite Pandan Gula Melaka pancakes; this local twist on an international favourite is a must-try; East or West, breakfast is always served up in style at The Majestic Malacca.



1200HRS – With its abundance of cute cafés and snacking options, stopping for a break is always a good idea while roaming Malacca's historical heart. "The durian puffs and durian soft serve ice cream at Taste Better in Jonker Street is one of my favourite durian-y indulgences ever. You can find other outlets elsewhere in Malaysia, though, if you can't make your way here," says Xandria.

1500HRS – If the afternoon heat gets to you, one of the best places to retreat to would be Spa Village Malacca, an award-winning haven of rest, relaxation and authentic wellness therapies inspired



Clockwise, from top: Shopping for traditional treats, like pineapple tarts, is an easy pleasure when in Malacca; Jonker Walk is the focal point for most visitors; step back in time when walking Malacca's interesting streets; Xandria tries on a beautiful Nyonya kebaya.



The Spa Village Malacca's wellness therapies are based on the healing heritage of the Peranakan, a unique blend of Chinese and Malay influences.

by traditional Peranakan remedies. Here, Xandria opted for a combination Lomi-Lomi and Shiatsu massage, while Yuri went traditional, with an invigorating Malay massage. All treatments here are preceded by a delightfully soothing hair care ritual that includes washing, combing and a scalp massage, which is inspired by the elaborate grooming ritual of a Nyonya bride-to-be. Certainly an experience not to be missed while you are here!

1900HRS - The Majestic Malacca, with its heritage ambience, warm, welcoming staff and fabulous attention to detail, is the obvious choice should you be feeling celebratory. The weekend turned out to be a special one for Xandria and Yuri as the timing of the trip enabled them to be in Malacca in time to celebrate Yuri's mother's birthday. "The dinner at The Mansion was beautiful and delicious, and a big thanks to the chef for creating a special Western menu for us," says Xandria. Feasting on The Majestic's Classic Caesar Salad, followed by a hearty mushroom soup, cod with spicy sauce, black pepper rib eye

steak and chocolate mousse, no birthday celebration would've been quite complete without the blowing out of candles and a birthday sing-song either. "Each of the staff was fantastic and made it so very special for my mother-in-law, who had an amazing time," she enthuses.

MONDAY

1000HRS – Alas, all weekends must come to an end and, as Xandria recaps before she departs for Kuala Lumpur: "It was the best weekend ever, one where Yuri and I truly felt relaxed and so comfortable. I've always loved The Majestic Malacca for its colonial architecture and Nyonya accents, but it's really the entire team here that makes each experience and visit so remarkable, from the gentlemanly and considerate General Manager, Ben Quah, to Rahayu, who showed us around and was spectacular. I cannot be more proud to recommend the hotel!"

For more details on The Majestic Malacca and Spa Village Malacca, go to www.majesticmalacca.com.



The Majestic Malacca also proved to be the perfect venue at which to celebrate Yuri's mother's birthday, which made the couple's trip all the more special.

Back to Basics

Sometimes, you just need a break from the grind of modern life. Here, at Gaya Island Resort and Tanjong Jara Resort, you can reconnect with a simpler and more relaxed world with their unique signature experiences. Each gives you an insight into the magic and spirit of the locale.

Text **Diana Khoo & Maya Michael** Photography **Law Soo Phye**

Experience a cultural journey with an East Malaysian twist at Gaya Island Resort, Sabah.



TRIBAL ODYSSEYS

For a glimpse into the traditional lifestyles of the indigenous people of Sabah, look no further than Gaya Island Resort.

If it's fun in the sun that you're hankering for, then Gaya Island Resort is the perfect retreat to satisfy those wanderlust cravings. Renowned for its white sand beaches, spectacular underwater havens and untouched tropical rainforest, this luxurious holiday destination has been making plenty of waves since its official launch back in 2013.

Located on a private island colonised by an ancient rainforest – accessible via a quick speedboat ride from Jesselton Point in Kota Kinabalu – this exclusive luxury resort has been designed to blend seamlessly with its captivating natural surroundings. Beyond all



that opulence and splendour, however, is a golden opportunity for visitors to embark on a cultural journey while experiencing, first-hand, the local way of life of Sabah's indigenous people.

THE GAMES WE PLAY

On Wednesday and Saturday evenings, the beachfront near the resort's popular Feast Village comes alive with the signature experience, **Singgah Singgarung** (available from 1800hrs). It is during this festive event when both guests and members of the resort's staff will bond over food, art and dancing. Live weaving demonstrations conducted on mats allow guests to channel their inner artist by transforming ordinary palm fronds into decorative animal figures.

Those with especially nimble feet can showcase their speed and agility by partaking in the traditional dance, **Magunatip**, which is typically performed during grand festive celebrations such as the harvest festival, **Kaamatan**. The aim of this exciting performance is to hop between two clapping bamboo poles while moving to the rhythm of the beat. And, in case you feel like having an impromptu picnic session on the beach, just stop at any of the nearby stalls to sample local snacks and beverages provided by the resort.

This insight into the Borneo way of life ends with a fantastic Kadazan Tribal Dinner, a beach barbecue where melodious Kadazan music sets the mood while you feast on skewered fresh fish grilled campfire-style and produce served with the famous local rice wine, *lihing*.

Clockwise, from far left: The resort blends harmoniously with its surroundings; the 'Magunatip' dance is a spirited performance that involves hopping in between bamboo poles; a guest visiting one of the colourful stalls set up during Singgah Singgarung; learn how to create little critters using nothing but palm fronds and a little imagination; make your own souvenir to commemorate your Singgah Singgarung experience.



The Kadazan Tribal Dinner beach barbecue features fresh fish



LEARN THROUGH PLAY
Here's a quick guide to other cultural activities that can be found at Gaya Island Resort.

Borneo Craftworks: Catered to handicraft enthusiasts, this relaxing activity involves looping colourful beads through string to create delicately intricate accessories. Available on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 1530hrs.



Yahai Pupuan: Available for guests of all ages, this wholesome outdoor workout aims to cultivate wellness, balance, relaxation and awareness by incorporating various breathing techniques with physical postures. Available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Sundays at 1530hrs.



Sabah Scent Adventures: Held within the serene halls of the Mangrove Theatre at the Spa Village Gaya Island, participants at this unique workshop will not only be enlightened on the various benefits of essential oils, but will also get a chance to create their own bespoke scent. Available on Wednesdays and Fridays at 1230hrs.

All activities and dining experiences listed here are subject to availability and weather conditions; and must be reserved through the resort's PURE Counter at least a day in advance (before 1700hrs). For further details, please visit www.gayaislandresort.com

VILLAGE PEOPLE

It's summertime all-year long on the Malaysian East Coast, so let the living be easy. Enjoy the sweet simplicity of kampong life at Tanjong Jara Resort, where you can escape from the frenetic fervour of big city life and, instead, indulge in a few blissful days of village life de luxe.

City living can get to you. If your daily schedule revolves around the higger-mugger of crowds, commutes and the ticking clock, it might be time to break away for a few days of the simple life. One of the best places to retreat to is the Tanjong Jara Resort, located along the golden coastline of Malaysia's north-eastern state of Terengganu. The Malay culture and way of life has always formed an integral part of the Tanjong Jara experience, but it truly comes to life every Saturday as the resort hosts its weekly **Kampong Sucimurni Lifestyle** activity.

At the beachfront garden, a flurry of activity takes place every Saturday evening as makeshift stalls are set up to offer resort guests a taste of village life. Kitchen staff will set up woks where *keropok lekor*, a type of fish sausage and the state's most popular snack, *keropok ikan* (fish crisps) and *cucur sayur* (vegetable fritters) are fried à la minute, and cups of sweet, strong local coffee are served. For those who wish to cool down in the tropical heat, there are also cups of iced roselle juice. Nearby, a *makcik* mans a stall offering piping-hot *akok*, a traditional Terengganu kuih famous along Malaysia's east coast, made with a sinful blend of flour, eggs and rich coconut cream. Guests are invited to sample the selection of sweet and savoury tea-time snacks, and enjoy an impromptu picnic on ready laid-out woven pandanus mats.

Kampong Life was launched in 2004 when the resort decided to introduce an experience that would be different, unique and yet live up to its 'Unmistakably Malay' philosophy. It is an activity that is enjoyed by both foreign and local guests as many Malaysians, especially those living in big cities, hardly ever get a chance to experience the simple pleasures of Kampong Life. Such is the activity's popularity, the resort runs an extra session on Wednesdays during peak season and festive holidays like Chinese New Year and Christmas. And, during the Muslim celebration of Hari Raya, Kampong Life is held according to the local 'open house' concept, where guests experience what it would be like to celebrate in a traditional Malay home, with must-have festive dishes like *lemang* and beef *rendang* while the night before will be marked with fireworks and sparklers.

Clockwise, from right: Guests will enjoy relaxing in the elegant surroundings evoking ancient Malay palaces at Tanjong Jara Resort; a guest tries their hand in the art of batik-painting; move to the local beat at Tanjong Jara Resort; eating is always an art form here.



Nimble feet are needed for traditional bamboo dances.

One of the undisputed stars of Kampong Life, however, is a pig-tailed macaque who visits the resort with his trainer to demonstrate the fine art of coconut-plucking. Effortlessly scampering up each tree, he is trained to select only the ripest, juiciest coconuts and, with a quick twist and throw, a bright green fruit will soon land with a thud on the grass. These freshly picked coconuts will then be served to the picnicking guests as the ultimate tropical thirst-quencher. There are also stalls where you can try the art of batik-painting as well as demonstrations on the games of *congkak* and *takraw*, both popular pastimes in the East Coast. The rhythmic beats of the *gamelan* can also be heard in the air and, for a magical hour, guests can lose themselves in the sweet simplicity of kampong-living, served up Tanjong Jara-style. ■

Kampong Life takes place every Saturday from 1700-1800hrs at Tanjong Jara Resort's gardens. For more details, visit www.tanjongjararesort.com



KAMPONG SUCIMURNI LIFE 101

A quick guide to what's what.

Congkak: A traditional girl's game that is played all over the Nusantara region, using a wooden *congkak* board with about 14 to 18 holes, depending on the board. Seashells, bright red saga seeds, tamarind seeds or even marbles may be used to play. A game of mental calculation, the objective of *congkak* is to capture the seeds or shells of your opponent, whereby the person with the highest number collected is deemed the winner. If you have a handful of Malaysian coins, look for the older 10 cent ones as a picture of a *congkak* board is depicted on its reverse side.

Gamelan: A traditional musical ensemble featuring a variety of instruments, usually at least one metallophone or xylophone, gongs and drums.

Takraw: Also referred to as *sepak takraw* or *sepak raga*, this is a sport that is immensely popular on the Malay Peninsula as well as the south of Thailand. Using a small rattan ball, the rules are simple: only the feet, knee, chest and head of the player are allowed to touch the ball. A type of 'kick volleyball', it is traditionally played by men.

Akok: A traditional *kuih* (local cake or pudding) that is popular on the East Coast of Malaysia, particularly in the states of Kelantan and Terengganu. Made using a mixture of hen's eggs, santan (coconut milk) and flour, there may be several shapes and variations of *akok* but it is always soft, spongy, egg-y and sweet. Pandanus leaves may also be used to flavour it, causing some *akok* to have a green-ish colour.

Lekor: Also known as *keropok lekor*, this is one of the East Coast's most famous nibbles. It is especially famous and popular in Terengganu. Made from fish, sago or tapioca flour and lightly seasoned with salt, these can best be referred to as Malaysian fish sausages, and may be eaten boiled or fried. Best enjoyed with a dribble of chilli sauce.

Lemang: Rich and filling, *lemang* is a traditional Malay rice dish made with glutinous rice and coconut milk. Stuffed in hollowed-out sticks of bamboo lined with banana leaves, in order to prevent the rice sticking to the bamboo, it is cooked over an open fire. Found all over Malaysia, this dish is a must-have during festivals and religious feast days, particularly Hari Raya, where it is eaten as an accompaniment to meat-based curries, particularly fragrant beef *rendang*.



Tenggol The Terrific

March marks the start of the diving season on the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia and there is no better place than this jewel of an island off Terengganu.

Text Loo Kit Choong

Tenggol is the most southerly island of the Terengganu Marine Park. It is bounded by equally well-known neighbours like Nyireh Island and the rocky outcrop, Tokong Timor (East Temple). Your stay at the award-winning Tanjong Jara Resort means that you will be on Tenggol's doorstep, with some of the best diving this side of Malaysia awaiting you. The resort's PADI-certified Dive Centre also offers a range of marine activities and PADI dive courses.

Tenggol is spectacularly adorned by rocky cliffs and blessed with some 20 excellent dive sites offering divers pristine hard and soft corals, rays, nudibranchs, humphead parrotfish and jacks. Declared a protected marine park in 1994, Tenggol was up until then a popular spear

fish hunting ground for snappers and groupers. Not as crowded or as touristy as other popular islands further up the coast, Tenggol definitely offers the best of the East Coast, with village charm, gorgeous beaches, unspoilt reefs and marine creatures that aren't shy of divers. When the diving is done, let Tanjong Jara Resort indulge you with its superb cuisine and luxurious accommodation. Bliss at its purest!

After a hearty breakfast at the resort, take a short van journey to the Dungun river mouth jetty, where you board a speedboat for a 45-minute ride to Tenggol. Be prepared to be accompanied by occasional playful dolphins on the way to the island! Here are some not-to-be-missed dive sites coveted by divers:



TOP TENGGOL DIVE SPOTS

The Edge

This site is a good 30m deep and an excellent introduction to diving around the Tenggol waters. Witness multi-pastel coloured corals and curious marine inhabitants, and watch humphead wrasse going about their feeding quite oblivious to divers. Pause and listen to them chowing down on hard corals with their sharp beaks.

Tokong Timor

This has to be a favourite dive site for many aficionados, even though it might

be awash with currents at times. Timor is a rock outcrop, topped with a small lighthouse and populated by seagulls. Be further mesmerised by more corals in their olive greens, mauves and blues, while giant boulders teem with marine life.

Amazing Grace

This site lives up to its name. Immerse yourself in a coral garden, schools of fish and a forest of colourful anemone. Grace is home to a variety of nudibranchs – miniature sea slugs that live on the corals. They come in the most vivid and gorgeous colours – greens with orange, dark blues with pinks, and rich purples. Nudis move slowly, like snails, so take your time to

appreciate these little wonders of the ocean. You might just catch a pair mating.

Moon Racker

If you fancy some drift diving, Moon Racker is just the place. You might also get lucky and spot black tip sharks here, alongside the fearsome looking Titan Triggerfishes. You just have to make sure to stay clear of them come mating or nesting season, as they are extremely protective.

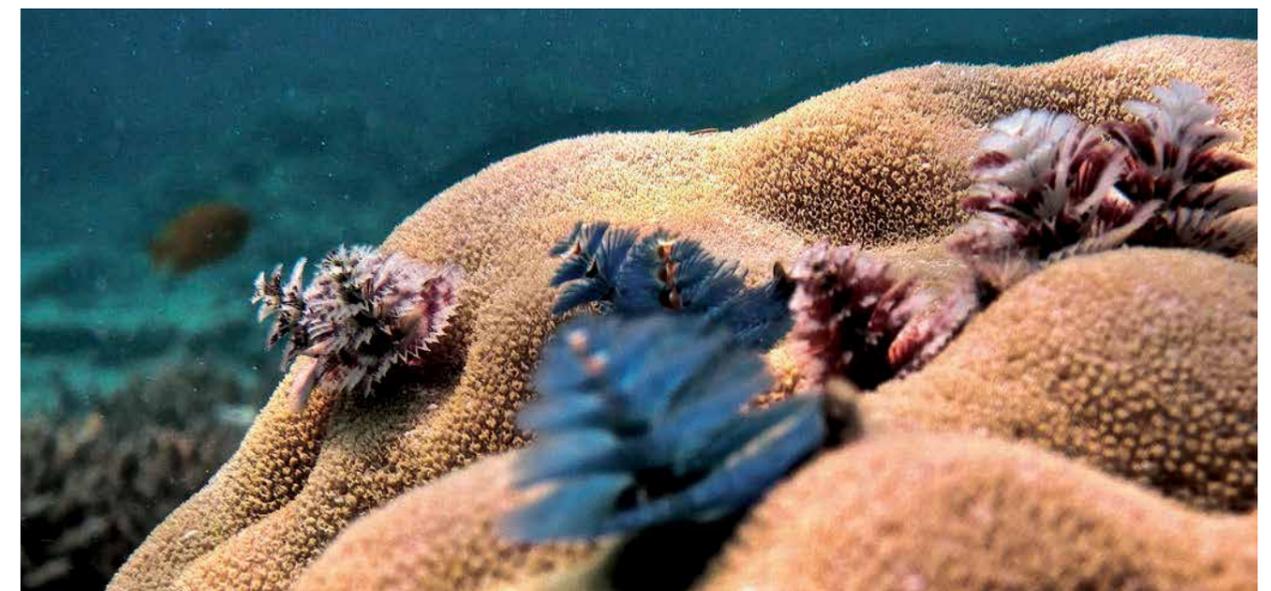
Rajawali Reef

Situated at the seaward side of Tenggol, Rajawali is best done at a relaxed pace, soaking in the sight of the vibrant reef community and looking out for the smaller marine creatures.

Tanjong Gemok

Calm waters beckon you at Gemok and you will see more nudis, rays, eels, and pipefish. Be fascinated by the graceful but predatory lionfish out for its next meal. Try spotting shrimp and gobies in the sand patches, as they share the same burrow. These two animals form a very interesting symbiotic relationship. The shrimp is blind and relies on the seeing goby to protect it. In return, the goby gets to stay in the burrow that the shrimp has dug. ■

For more information or to book, visit tanjongjararesort.com.





Under The Sea

We all need Vitamin-Sea! Here's a short and sweet guide to some basic snorkelling dos and don'ts.

Text **Simon Pridmore**

Author and columnist Dave Barry once wrote: "There's nothing wrong with enjoying looking at the surface of the ocean itself, except that when you finally see what goes on underwater, you realise that you've been missing the whole point of the ocean. Staying on the surface all the time is like going to the circus and staring at the outside of the tent." Snorkelling, in other words, gives you a VIP ticket into the circus! There are many places where you can discover this amazing underwater world, including YTL Hotels' Tanjong Jara Resort and Pangkor Laut Resort in Peninsular Malaysia, Gaya Island Resort in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, and the Spa Village Resort, Tembok in Bali.

What To Wear

Cover up when you snorkel in tropical regions as the sun striking your body via a thin layer of salt water can burn even tanned skin. Wear at least a t-shirt and shorts, but be aware that this will still leave your arms and calves exposed. If you use sunscreen,

make sure it does not contain chemicals that can harm the reef when it washes off your body. Check before buying – if a sunscreen is reef-friendly, it will say so on the bottle.

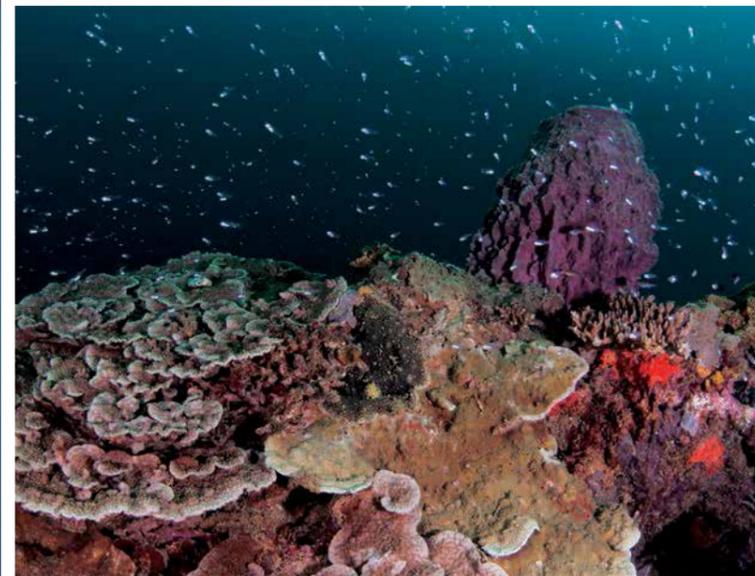
It is far better to wear a full-length Lycra dive skin. These are cheap to buy from water sports outlets. They should fit you well and not be loose. Wear a swimsuit underneath as the lycra leaves nothing to the imagination. On your feet, wear reef shoes or dive boots to protect you from sharp rocks and spiny fish. This means the fins you need will be open-heeled style.

Time And Place

First and foremost, choose the right time and place to snorkel. Pick a site where the reef or rocks are close to the surface and where there is no boat or Jet Ski traffic. Many beaches have snorkelling areas cordoned off but, if there isn't and you hear or see a boat coming towards you, swim out of the way and keep your eyes on it until it has passed. Choose a time of day when the water is calm and clear, and there is only minimal wave action. If the ocean is rough, cancel your snorkelling plans.

Preparation

Before you start, clean your mask so that it doesn't fog up while you are in the water. While the glass is still dry, spit in it or use a commercial defogging liquid. Baby shampoo works really well

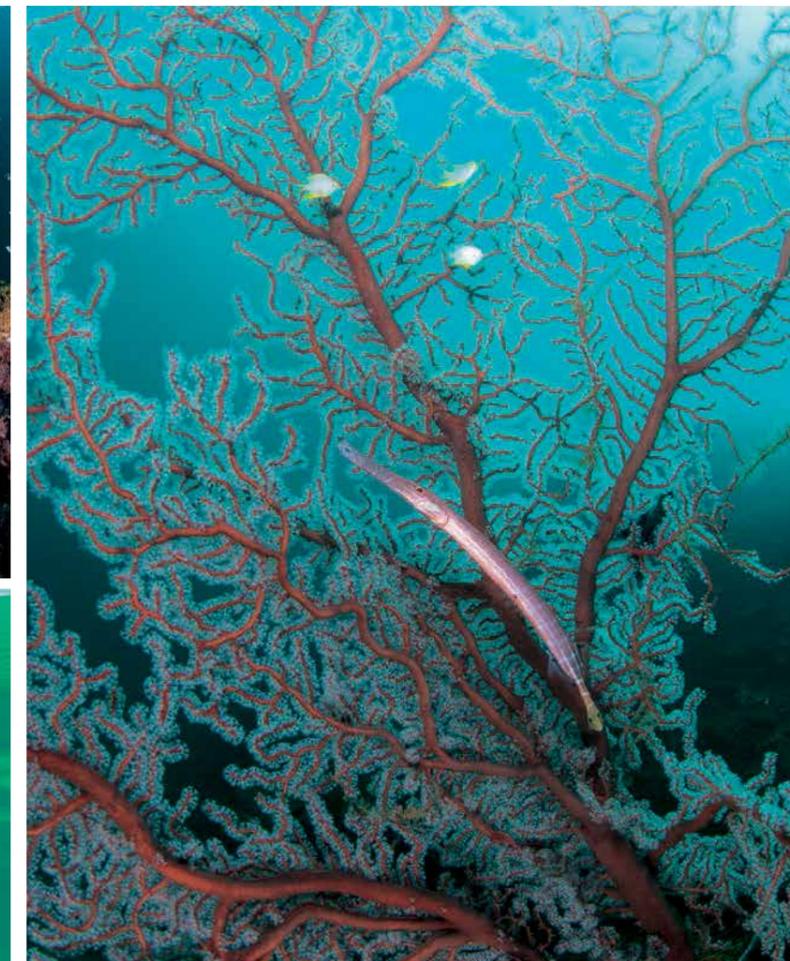


too. Make sure your fingers are clean and dry first – a mistake many people make is to apply sunscreen before they clean their mask, which just leaves an oily residue on the lens. This almost guarantees that the mask will fog up once you put it on. Wipe the liquid round the inside of the mask glass with your finger before rinsing it out in fresh or salt water. The product you applied to the glass now acts as a surfactant to stop fogging. Avoid touching it as you risk removing it.

Bring A Friend

Don't snorkel alone. While it is hardly a high-risk activity, it is always a good idea to snorkel with someone else or as part of a loose group. After all, the ocean is an alien environment that

life feature //



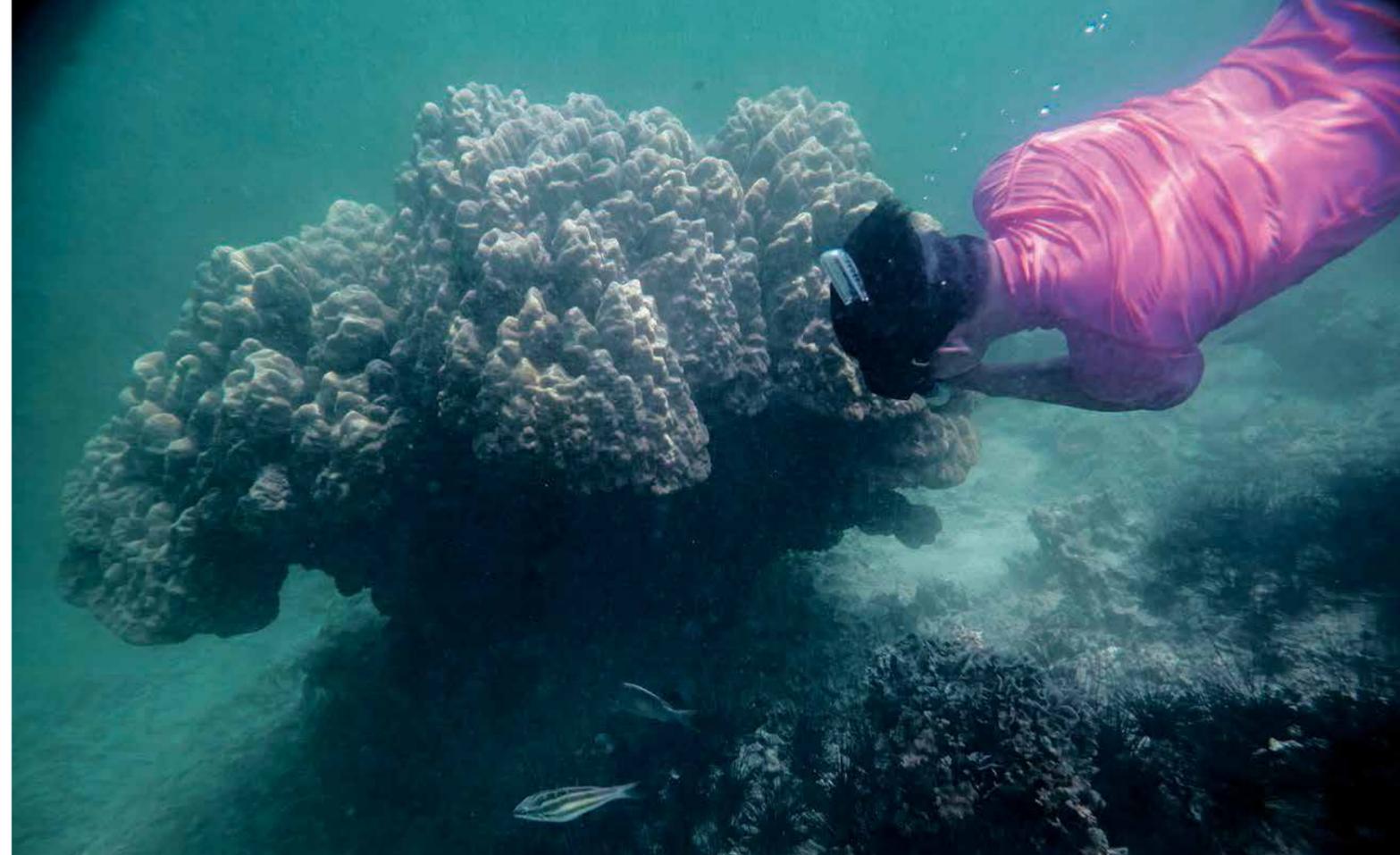
you are not completely familiar with. Although your snorkelling partners may be no more experienced than you are, multiple sets of senses might see trouble coming much earlier. It is also reassuring to have a companion around in case something goes wrong. Having someone to help you get back to shore, if you have cramps or are stung by a jellyfish, turns a potentially serious emergency into just a minor inconvenience.

How To Swim

When you snorkel, even on the surface, don't use your hands or arms. Instead, use your fins for propulsion and to change direction. Keep your arms by your side or folded across your chest. If you are just lying on the surface, watching the marine life below, keep your legs and fins still and stretched behind you. If you want to move, keep your legs as they were but flutter them a little on the surface like paddles.

How To Duck Dive

Duck diving gives you a closer look at the marine life on the reef and allows you to experience, albeit briefly, the freedom of being able to move through the water in three dimensions, up, down and laterally. It is the closest you can get to swimming like a fish.



Lie on the surface; take a breath and hold it, then duck your head underwater, bending at the waist to make yourself as vertical as possible. Throw your legs straight up into the air, so that their weight carries your upper body down under the water. Make one breaststroke pull with your arms, then kick with your fins down towards the seabed. If you feel pressure on your ears as you descend, hold your nostrils together through the flexible nosepiece in your mask and sniff against your blocked nose. This should make your ears go 'pop'. If they don't, they will hurt, at which point, stop descending and go back to the surface.

If your ears clear up, keep finning down. Don't pull with your arms; just kick with your fins. When you are near the bottom, straighten out to a horizontal profile and look around. When you feel the urge to breathe, head for the surface, looking up as you do so, to make sure you don't bump into a boat or another snorkeler. While you are underwater, keep your snorkel clenched between your teeth and hold your breath. When you surface, nod your head forward so you are looking downwards. The end of your snorkel will now be in the air. Exhale forcefully into the snorkel to clear it of water. Then take a fresh breath, inhaling cautiously just in case there is residual water in the snorkel and keep swimming. A couple of caveats – First, do not hyper ventilate before duck diving to try to give yourself more time underwater. This is dangerous. Second, the rule for duck diving with your snorkelling partner is 'one up, one down'. That is why one of you always remains on the surface while the other dives. ■



ENTRY AND EXIT

01 Enter the water wearing reef shoes or dive boots, with your mask and snorkel around your neck and the heel straps of your fins looped over one forearm. You carry your equipment like this so you can use your free arm to balance yourself as you walk into the sea. It also makes sure you won't lose anything if a wave catches you or if you trip on a rock and fall over. Once you are at about waist depth, bend your knees so that most of your body is immersed and supported by the water. Then, put your fins on, one at a time. Use your snorkelling partner for support and offer them the same.

02 Stand up and put your mask and snorkel in place. Your mask should feel comfortable, so don't pull the strap too tight. If you find that water comes in while you are wearing it, don't tighten it even further. Instead, loosen it a little so that the flexible silicone skirt can mould itself to the contours of your face. Leave your mask in place all the time when you are in the water. Not only does your mask help you see the marine life below, it stops water from going up your nose.

03 Look down as you swim rather than ahead. If you raise your head to look forward, your snorkel can tilt back below the surface and give you a mouthful of seawater instead of fresh air when you breathe through it. If your snorkel does fill up with water, blow it out forcefully. If you have no air in your lungs, first turn your face away from any wave action. Then, take the snorkel out of your mouth, take a deep breath in, put the snorkel back in and exhale strongly to clear it.

04 To leave the water, approach the beach, then turn and face out to sea before standing up. This way, you can watch for any waves heading towards you. Slip your mask and snorkel down around your neck. Watch the waves, wait for a calm patch of water, then bend your knees to remove your fins, as before, holding on to your snorkelling partner as you do so. Loop the straps over your forearm again and head for the beach.

Summer Days, Summer Taste

Niseko enthusiasts, rejoice! Summer's here and, in celebration of the first time The Green Leaf Niseko Village stays open during the green season, come enjoy a wide range of activities and menus that celebrate the best of unbeatable Hokkaido produce.

Summertime is when the living is easy... and bountiful. As one of Japan's most preferred and renowned gourmet destinations, there's no better time than the green season to enjoy the best Hokkaido has to offer. The Green Leaf Niseko Village, just a short distance away from the Hilton Niseko Village and a stone's throw from the Kasara Niseko Village Townhouses, makes the most of this vibrant season by staying open, for the first time ever, throughout summer, giving guests the opportunity to enjoy a different facet of the region.

Bundle up your Moncler jackets and chuck the skis and snowboards into storage, as



you slip on cool cottons and linens and let your pedicured toenails shine through in pretty sandals. Although the allure of summer equates to long treks through lusciously green meadows, horseback riding and games of golf on either the Niseko Village Golf Course or the Niseko Golf Course, another highlight of summer is tucking into all the wonderful bounty, from both land and sea. Niseko Village's retail and restaurant hub will be working around-the-clock to constantly come up with produce-driven menus and food promotions that will change according to what's fresh and available. Feast on succulently sweet strawberries as you stroll the grounds or, even better, check with the restaurants what special ice-cream flavours are on offer. The Japanese are immensely clever at infusing Western dishes with local flavour, as can be seen from the variety of flavours proffered by your local *aisukurimu-ya*. Who knows?

There could be *yuzu* (a type of Japanese citrus), melon, green tea and, if you're lucky, *ramune* (a local fizzy cider) flavours to try!

Summer also signals the best time to enjoy Hokkaido's sweet-as-sugar pearl-like white corn. Grab a cob or two, slathered, of course, with Hokkaido's incredibly addictive whipped butter, in-between enjoying all the PURE activities offered at Niseko Village, including bouncy castles for the kids, whizzing through the air on the flying fox and rope climbing in the treetops. Melon is also one of the highlights of the season and, once you experience all the delights of a slice of local Makkari ham draped beautifully across a slice of *yubari* melon, you might never consider Iberico again! Seafood feasts are also not to be missed this season, so be sure to head to The Crab Shack for seafood all-styles, including decadent sea urchin and the big

but beautiful king and snow crabs prepared however you like it. A few *machiya*-like shops away is also the Two Sticks tapas bar, who will prepare the summer's bounty with an Asian twist, as well as the popular Village Patisserie, where delicious cakes and pastries featuring sun-ripened summer fruit would assume the starring role in its array of tarts and other sweet treats.

And if you simply can't get enough of the summer cornucopia, check with your concierge when the farmer's markets will be set up within the village. We can't think of a better way to spend a sunny day, ice cream in hand, of course, than browsing the array of artisanal produce on display. Whatever your fancy, Niseko is certain to thrill your palate this green season. ▀

To find out more about what's on offer this summer at The Green Leaf Niseko Village, please visit www.thegreenleafhotel.com.

The Bond Of Music

The Solianos continue a time honoured musical legacy as a family with the sounds of yesterday at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur.

Text **Chin Mui Yoon** Photography **Law Soo Phye**

Come evenings, the sultry voice of Isabella Soliano rises over the gold-leaved dome of the Colonial Café in The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur. Accompanied by family members, Irene, Valentino, Rizal and Coni, the Solianos are making beautiful music once again in the footsteps of their famous father, Alfonso. Regarded as one of the fathers of modern Malay music, Alfonso (1925-1990) was also a pioneer of Malaysian jazz, helping shape what was then a fledgling Radio Malaya Orchestra (RTM).

One of his more abiding legacies would be the deep love for music he has passed down to his 10 children. This incredibly gifted family of musicians commands attention every time they take to the stage, particularly for their prowess in vocal harmony. The Solianos have even earned an entry into the *Malaysian Book of Records* as 'The Longest Performing Group as a Family'. In 2010, they released their first album, named *Pusaka*, a tribute to Alfonso that included his original compositions as well as classic Malay numbers. The band currently performs nightly at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur, entertaining guests with a repertoire of evergreen hits.

"Music runs through our blood," says pianist-singer Isabella, 58, when we meet recently for a chat before their performance. "Our home was always filled with music. My father's band members, who were cousins, would practise at all hours. As kids, my siblings and I would sneak in during their break time to play with the instruments. Our passion just grew from there. My father loved

The Solianos are keeping faith with the musical legacy they inherited from their father, Alfonso.



The family that plays together: (from left) Rizal on the drums; Valentino on the bass; Isabella on the piano; vocalist Irene; Conrado on the trumpet; and Don Alfonso on the bass.



music completely and was wholly dedicated to it. We'd listen to all his favourite jazz pieces and we knew them from young. My father was our fiercest critic and motivator. As teenagers, we each evolved and formed our own tastes in music. But, as a band, we played together as directed by our band leader. Creating music as a group brings out our heart because that's where it touches the soul of those who are listening. When you play from within, it is different."

Saidah Rastam, in her book *Rosalie And Other Love Songs*, explains that when the British wanted to set up a state band for Selangor in 1894, they couldn't find enough musicians trained in Western music in Malaya. As a solution, they hired 64 musicians from the Philippines and formed the Selangor State Band. After their contracts expired, almost all of them, including Alfonso's father, remained in Malaya and Singapore, where they found work in dance and cabaret bands, *bangsawan* ensembles and any other opportunities that were open to them.

In 1952, the then-27-year-old Alfonso formed a trio, Orkes Tiga Serangkai, with bassist Mahadzir Yassin and drummer Julio Julius Villenguez, and broadcasted music from Radio Malaya. Apart from performing, Alfonso was also highly regarded for his role in teaching many musicians and singers in those days. With his deep passion and knowledge of traditional Malay music and jazz,

Alfonso was a full-time conductor and arranger for Radio Malaya till 1965, when he moved to Bangkok for nearly a decade. "We used to perform at the American Officers' Club for servicemen on their R&R and the Chao Phraya Hotel, where my dad led a 10-piece band that backed many famous international singers passing through Bangkok," recalls Alfonso's second eldest child, Valentino, who continues to play the bass today.

"I was a teenager when I joined the band in Bangkok," recalls drummer Rizal, 62, the fourth sibling. "I was only eight when I knew this was what I'd be doing for the rest of my life. Together with my cousins, we formed our band and were presenting for the earliest shows of RTM from their base in Jalan Ampang in those days. We performed at pantomimes and opera shows, including with my father, in Bangkok. I never had nerves. I'd say a prayer and hoped it sufficed. We had to be very flexible and not get stuck in one genre."

Practice makes perfect and this has never been truer for the Solianos. "Everyone had a part; my father would know instantly if we hadn't practised because, if we'd done that, the song would be perfectly tuned," says Rizal. "I never counted the amount of time we practised, but I'd say it was around five hours each day. Music is fun. We always enjoyed the energy and the harmony that was just remarkable considering how very different we are."

Irene, 53, who is also a singer and the second youngest in the family, laughs as she recalls how strict her father had been. "But he was very funny too! He loved having all his family together under one roof. Music is the bond that holds us together through the generations. Fortunately, there were only wooden rulers in those days and not the stainless steel ones, which he'd been tapping to see we were following the beat correctly and, if not, we'd get a rap on our fingers. The practices ensured that we were never ever too tired to perform. We are always relaxed even at the most stressful times. We never joined competitions because our dad was very humble and he believed that music is what we give to an audience, not for competing. As long as we perform with our heart and soul, it brings happiness and fulfilment, he'd say."

This musical family is so renowned that there at least six separate bands flying the Soliano flag throughout the country and Singapore. The Solianos have played in various hotels through the decades as well as discotheques, lounges and halls. Both Isabella and Irene giggle as they recall a performance during one of striptease queen Rose Chan's infamous cabaret shows. "When the red panties went off and the snake came on, our eyes were popping out," says Irene. "We hadn't realised what sort of show it was!"

Another sibling Conrado, 56, says: "I grew up in a very noisy household, where there was always music and conversations

centred around music. I started with drums but my dad decided we had too many drummers. So, he bought me a trumpet. I struggled initially, especially with the breathing, which I only mastered much later. But it's an instrument with a power all its own. In those days, we had no access to materials, so we depended a lot on my father to teach us whatever he knew, or every time a musician was passing through, we'd beg them to help us. To see any musician perform then, you'd have to sneak in to catch a live performance, unlike today where you can see anything on YouTube!"

Coni adds thoughtfully that they had lived, worked, played and practised together. "We always travelled as a band. Nobody would dream of abandoning the band to join another when times were tough. You rough it out together."

"I am grateful for opportunities to continue being working musicians," adds Isabella. "We're often asked how we stay together as a band through the years. We know each other's strengths and weaknesses very well, and we don't pressure one another. My father had always put the family first. He'd already planned this legacy and masterplan for us. I believe we are gifted by God and the best we can give in return is to use this gift well for Him." ■

The Solianos perform nightly at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur. For more details, visit www.majestickl.com.

Have You Herd?

It's easy to get awed by the colossal frames of elephants. There's so much more to them, however, than meets the eye as **Kirat Kaur** learns after getting up close and personal with Terengganu's gentle giants.

Photography **Yong Keen Keong**



Nature is your best friend at Tanjong Jara Resort. You wake up hearing the song of the sea and spend the day trying to spot the shy critters around the resort – from the adorable squirrels and comical monkeys to the hornbills. Blessed is the land of Terengganu, or 'Ganu' as it is called by locals, with nature's bounty providing a myriad of activities for you to experience its breathtaking beauty. Amongst them is the highly popular Kenyir Elephant Conservation Village by the Telemong River, a haven for elephants to roam and live peacefully till the end of their days.

Elephants have long been exalted in ancient eastern cultures and an icon in Asia, playing pivotal roles in mythology, war and in building cities and empires. Though widely recognised and beloved by many, elephant numbers were greatly reduced in the last hundred years or so due to the decimating ivory trade and they continue to be under threat from poachers and human encroachment on their habitats. This is where elephant sanctuaries like the Kenyir Elephant Conservation Village play a pivotal role: helping stabilise and conserve the mammal while educating the public on their gentle nature.

The 90-minute drive to Kuala Berang, where the Kenyir Elephant Conservation Village is located, is a contemplative one. I was mesmerised by the smooth curves of the Pantai Timur mountain range running through the eastern Malaysian state, and lucky enough to catch sight of a few rainbows adding bursts of colours to the sloping green hills – an insightful experience into a theory that traces the origins of Terengganu's name as *terang ganu*, Malay for 'bright rainbow'.

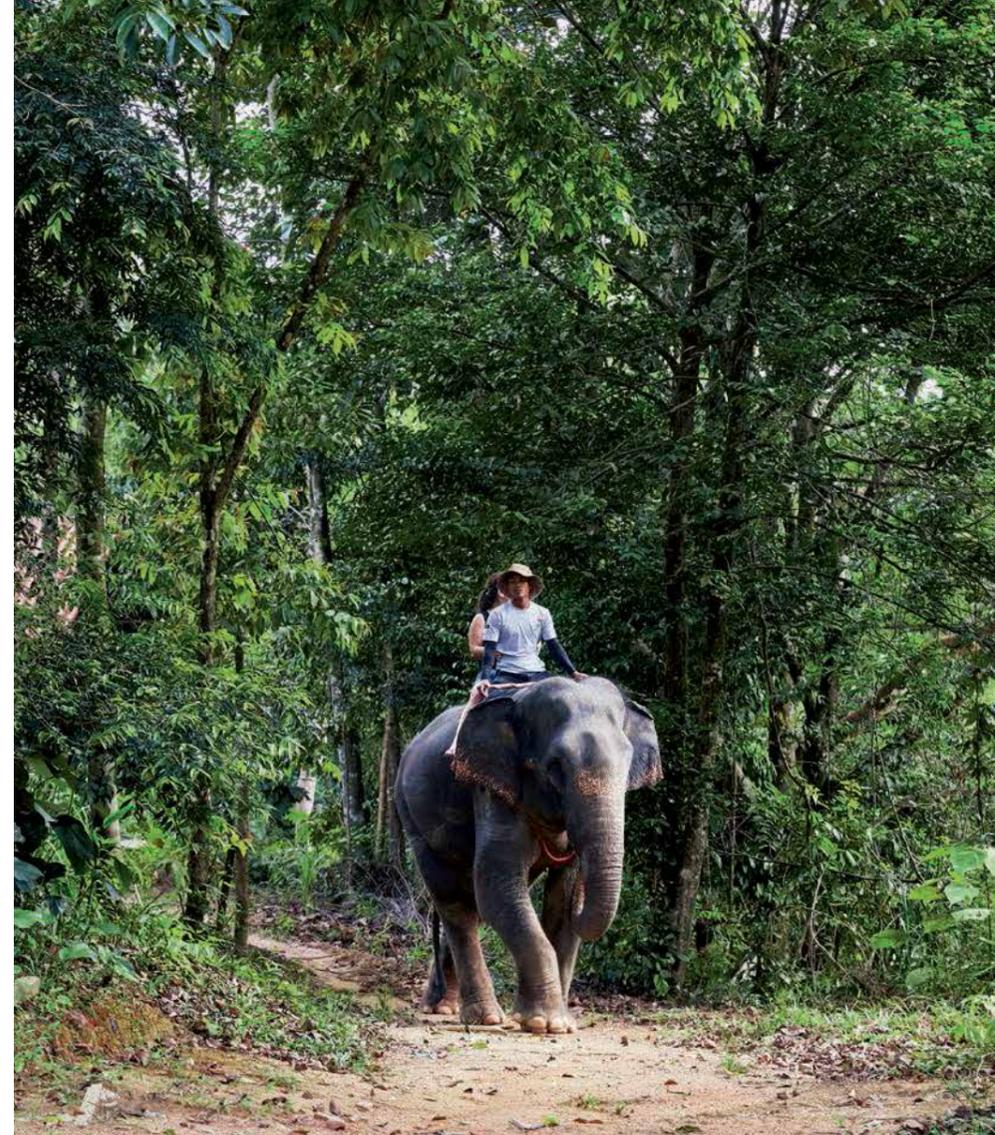
Despite the considerable number of attractions available at Tasik Kenyir, the Kenyir Elephant Conservation Village



(KECV) stands out for the intimacy you experience with these giants. The elephant conservation village is exactly what it claims to be – a place that conserves Malaysian elephants, their way of life and the diverse flora and fauna of Terengganu. Despite being in operation for only four years, 13 elephants call the village home, free from human-wildlife conflict as most of them were rescued from poachers' traps or captured after trespassing on farms.

Jumbo Delight

Getting to the elephants involves a mini adventure trail, with hanging suspension bridges providing some heart-thumping action and glorious views of the virtually untouched forests and Telemong River snaking below. The 600m canopy walks are interspaced with viewing towers and resting platforms up to five stories high, which allowed me to observe the elephants' antics in their natural habitat. Largely free from development (save from some ancillary facilities that include bathing



pools, feeding and training areas, and an on-site veterinary clinic), the elephants roam about on roughly 256ha of land, enjoying life as they would in the wild.

While many elephant sanctuaries claim to put the animal's best interest at heart, this is where one can actually experience genuine love for the animals. The elephants are playful and the younger ones, especially, are a treat to watch. The elephant village also invites visitors to familiarise themselves with these glorious creatures by educating them about elephant behaviour and their habitat with an Elephant Educational Presentation. The animals here do not perform circus-tricks, presenting, instead, their natural capabilities under the guidance of a mahout. Derived from the Hindi word 'mahaut', this is an elephant trainer or keeper, and each creature at this village is cared for by two mahouts.

During the presentation, the mahouts gently instructed the animals as the crowd (myself included) whooped and cheered in delight, captivated by the elephants working together to move logs, demonstrate their agility and splashing water all over the place with their long, waving trunks. Abby, one of the younger elephants, showed the dexterity of her trunk by placing a hat on an excited volunteer and even planted a whiskey kiss on their cheek. As the elephants displayed their typical conduct and habits, fascinating facts about these impressive creatures were narrated to the appreciative audience.

After the show, it was time to feed the elephants. Each of us was equipped with a basket of sugar cane that disappeared as soon as we got them. Elephants mean business with their food and I was surprised by their strength as they wrapped



their trunks around the food offered and eagerly put it into their mouths. Of course, the highlight of the whole trip was bathing with the elephants. As I climbed over the rocks into the river, I was thrilled by the sight of the elephants frolicking about and cooling off in the water. It was during this time I witnessed the love and respect between the mahouts and the gentle giants, who were mischievously spraying water everywhere while their carers affectionately rubbed them down.

No doubt, I was a little apprehensive when approaching the elephants. The colossal size of these animals is enough to overwhelm even the bravest. As I came face to face with an elephant, it slowly blinked at me and lied down on its side. It lazily waved its trunk around in encouragement and, I have to admit, the long-lashed creature looked absolutely adorable in its contentment. It was at this moment I forgot my fears and gave it a rather ineffective but spirited bath.

Getting so close to the elephants, along with the facts I learned during this trip,

made for a rather pensive journey back to Tanjong Jara Resort as I reflected on the creature's dire circumstances. While I had a fair share of fun and games at the village, it was comforting to know that places like Kenyir Elephant Conservation Village exist to rescue them and increase awareness. The future might just be full of trumpeting good times.

Creature Comforts

When it comes to fantastic food that comforts the body and soul, Tanjong Jara Resort delivers like no other. With the day spent warming your heart with the demeanour of the elephants, it's only fitting to carry on the comforting experience in the evening by warming your body – and, by this, I mean a sumptuous steamboat dinner at Teratai Terrace.

A steamboat dinner is an amazing bonding experience, with the food cooked together and shared amongst the diners. Of course, the experience is elevated by the aroma of fresh seafood stewing in the simmering metal pot at the centre of the table. What makes a steamboat dinner particularly

enjoyable is how the flavour of the soup evolves throughout the meal – from tasting simply delicious to absolutely divine thanks to the myriad of meats and vegetables flavouring the broth. The camaraderie and closeness felt at the elephant village earlier in the day made the dinner even more delightful as there is a sense of fellowship around the table, with playful jokes aplenty.

A steamboat dinner is only as good as its ingredients and the one at Tanjong Jara Resort was unquestionably heavenly, with prawns, squid, scallops, mussels and dory fish fresh off the fishermen's boat. The fragrant broth – a comforting chicken soup or boldly tangy *tom yum* – bubbled enticingly as the seafood and crisp green vegetables cooked to perfection. Sitting by the resort's free-form pool, sipping on cocktails and feasting like a king, I savoured the tranquil atmosphere as one should in life's good moments.

The evening ended on a cosy note as I soaked in a wonderfully warm milk bath drawn by the pleasant housekeeping staff. There's no arguing that Tanjong Jara Resort goes all out to make guests feel comfortable and relaxed, while relishing in the remarkable flora and fauna of the East Coast state. It was no easy task leaving the serene resort, but there was an unspoken promise to return for another rendezvous with nature and its glorious creatures. ■

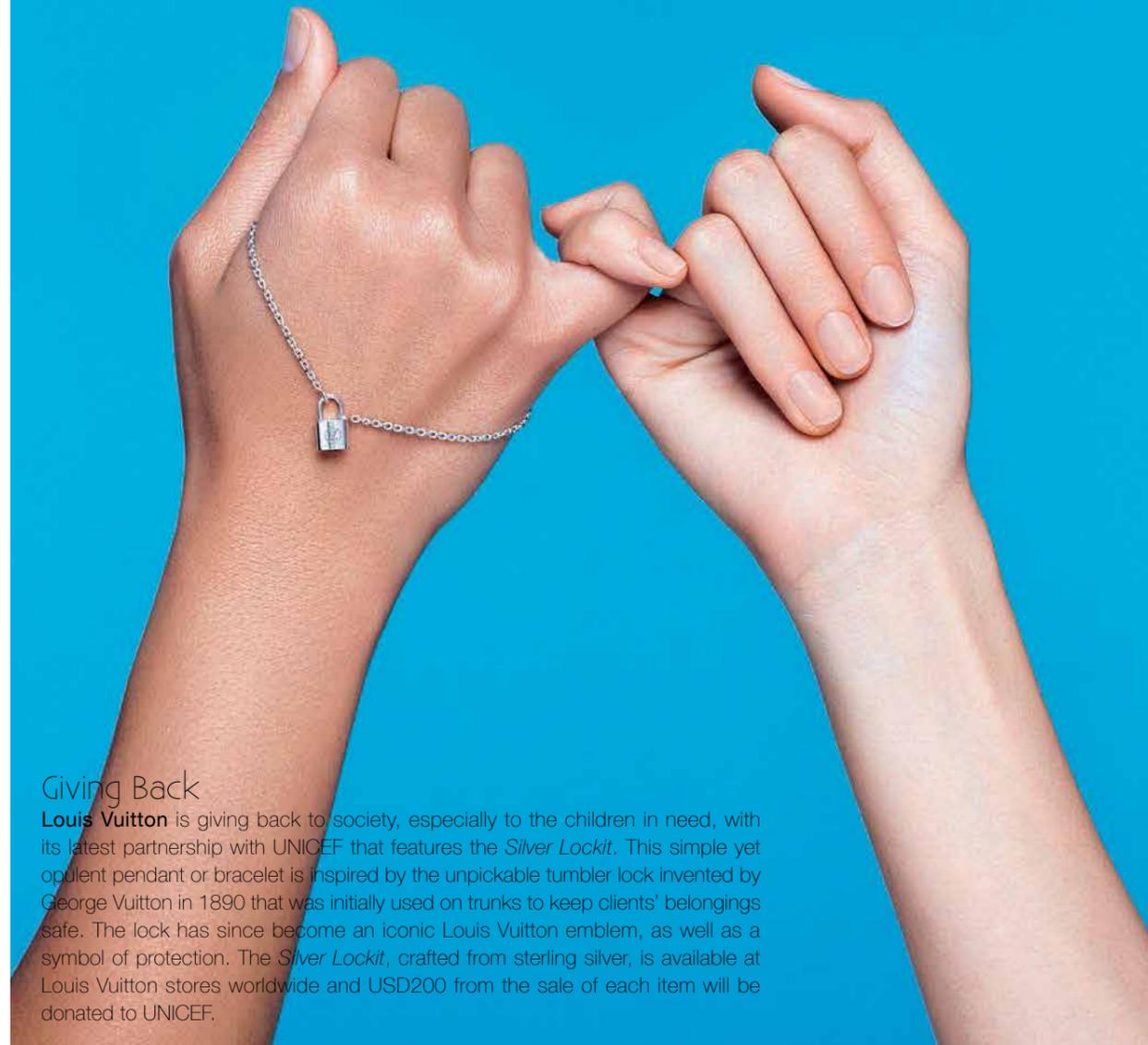
Activities available at Kenyir Elephant Conservation Village include feeding, educational presentations and bathing with the elephants. Trips to Kenyir Elephant Conservation Village are provided by Tanjong Jara Resort every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday in the afternoon and evenings. Picnic baskets furnished by the resort are also available upon request. For more details, visit www.tanjongjararesort.com

ELE-FUN FACTS

- Elephants have the longest pregnancy of all in the animal kingdom, with a gestation period of 22 months. That long pregnancy seems justified enough as a newborn calf weighs around 120kg.
- One might be quick to assume that trumpeting is an elephant's only means of communication, but these majestic creatures actually prefer the power of touch-greeting each other by stroking or wrapping trunks. Elephants also produce a range of rumbles to 'talk'. Adorably enough, these rumbles can sometimes sound like a cat's purr.
- The tusk is an elephant's incisor teeth used for defence, digging and to strip bark from trees. Just like people who are either left or right-handed, elephants also have a preference, favouring one tusk over the other. This highly useful appendage has, however, contributed to their downfall, due to the highly controversial ivory trade that has greatly reduced their numbers.
- The Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus indicus*) is actually a different species from the African one (*Loxodonta Africana*). The two can be differentiated by the shape of their heads – Asians have two bulges on their foreheads, unlike the flat front of the Africans. Asian elephants also have smaller, rounder ears and patches of depigmentation on their hides.
- The trunk is the most distinctive physical trait of an elephant, containing about 100,000 different muscles that allow it to lift heavy objects. Projections at the end of their trunk help them pick up tasty treats – a feat slightly easier for African elephants, which have two projections, unlike Asian elephants that have only one.
- For a creature so large, elephants are quite the ninjas. They walk almost silently, thanks to the soft padding covering their feet that dulls any sound. Asian elephants are more agile on their feet due to their slighter build.
- Elephants are known to communicate with seismic vibrations, where they can detect other elephants and predators through vibrations in the ground. Using their trunks and bones in their feet and shoulders, the low-frequency seismic vibrations are transferred to the elephant's ear, enabling it to 'hear' sounds from great distances.

Bibelots To Covet

Accentuate your dress sense with these luxurious ornaments.



Giving Back

Louis Vuitton is giving back to society, especially to the children in need, with its latest partnership with UNICEF that features the *Silver Lockit*. This simple yet opulent pendant or bracelet is inspired by the unpickable tumbler lock invented by George Vuitton in 1890 that was initially used on trunks to keep clients' belongings safe. The lock has since become an iconic Louis Vuitton emblem, as well as a symbol of protection. The *Silver Lockit*, crafted from sterling silver, is available at Louis Vuitton stores worldwide and USD200 from the sale of each item will be donated to UNICEF.



Timeless Beauty

Paying tribute to Monsieur Dior's couture, *Diorama Précieuse* by **Dior** is a classy yet sophisticated collection inspired by the *Diorama* evening dress presented at the Spring/Summer 1951 catwalk show. Embellished with unravelled 18K gold ribbons that create a ripple effect for asymmetrical wear, designer Victoire de Castellane adds coloured stones like amethysts and emeralds to furnish this jewel with a vibrant and feminine touch.



Coming Together

Marking the 85th anniversary of **Jaeger-LeCoultre's** *Reverso* timepiece, the manufacture joins forces with renowned shoe designer, **Christian Louboutin**, to introduce a refreshed line of its iconic *Reverso* timepieces. Taking inspiration from the magnificent galleries in Paris, carved wood lattice work of North Africa and even from his own shoe collections, Louboutin reveals that each *Reverso* has a unique aspect with a surprise element while still respecting the manufacture's identity. The *Reverso Classic Duetto* has also been updated: while the emblematic face on the front, with its classic Art Deco lines, is unchanged, the back is embellished with two rows of diamonds on either side of the dial – a tasteful touch by Louboutin. ▣



Azure Adornment

Inspired by the depths of the sea, the *Ulysse Anchor Tourbillon* by **Ulysse Nardin** is a limited edition timepiece that comes with a cascade of sapphire hues. Meticulously handcrafted in-house at Donzé Cadrans, the cavities or cells of this wristwatch are formed in a thick metal surface and then filled with powdered blue enamel and fired until it melts. Once cooled, it is sanded by hand to bring out the natural blue glow.

The Glamorous Life

Nobody does glamour like Julien Macdonald, with his distinctive style on red carpets. For the first time, these iconic designs were showcased together with the magnificent timepieces of *A Journey Through Time IX*.

Text **Chin Mui Yoon** Photography **Jack Wong**

Despite a hectic schedule that spans international proportions, Julien Macdonald is surprisingly affable and calm, pausing to exchange friendly hellos with the staff at Starhill Gallery. The iconic British designer has an endearing warmth that makes him so easy and pleasant to talk to. We meet on a stiflingly hot afternoon when the Welsh designer was in Kuala Lumpur to launch a rare retrospective collection of his ultra glamorous gowns that have been worn by Hollywood A-List stars on red carpet events.

The fashion showcase of 50 couture pieces was part of Asia's premier watch, jewellery and lifestyle showcase, *A Journey Through Time IX*, including six dresses that were exclusively designed for the show and his latest collection unveiled at London Fashion Week. Macdonald beams, as he explains his fondness for Malaysia and, especially, for such a momentous occasion. "This is my fourth visit here; I like Malaysia, the city, and the fabulous beaches and culture," he

explains. "I met Dato' Yeoh Soo Min (YTL Corporation Berhad Executive Director) and Dato' Jimmy Choo when I first came here as a judge for *Britain's Next Top Model* in 2010. Since then, I've always wanted to return, which I did, to open the Debenhams store. Dato' Soo Min had attended my show in London and wanted to bring the excitement to Malaysia.

"So, she asked me to be part of *A Journey Through Time* and wanted me to do an exhibition like a retrospective of my favourites. I have never seen them all together in one room before. They tell my life's story, so it's very emotional for me, as it's truly a journey through time for me personally as well. It's nice that people get to see my work and understand the craft behind the dresses that have been worn by Shakira, Taylor Swift, Beyoncé and Kim Kardashian. For a lot of people, they see these celebrities only on TV or social media; but it's great to see the clothes that they actually wear up close and go wow!"

Indeed, these showstoppers have elicited many responses from visitors. Each piece is an expression of pure design and breathtaking craftsmanship. Through the exhibition, Macdonald's spectacular works can be appreciated, not just from afar in all their shimmering appeal, but closely examined in their abundance of stunning detail wrought with sequins, crystals, feathers, lace and rhinestones. Even the most restrained designs include a sneak-a-peek here and there, or a touch of glamour injected somewhere, be it down a cleavage or a sexy slit slithering up a hip. Barely there wisps of lace, trails of sequins and nets are so masterfully designed that they breathe an allure on their own even without the famous bodies that have adorned them.

Macdonald himself is especially fond of a pink dress designed for Dame Shirley Bassey for her appearance at the 2007 Glastonbury Festival. "I've been dressing Dame Shirley for a long time and we are

JULIEN MACDONALD



good friends," he explains. "The weather was terrible that day, so I added a pair of Wellington boots just for her, studded with crystals bearing her initials. Everyone just went crazy when she walked through the mud!" A portrait of Bassey at that sodden Glastonbury Festival, looking resplendent in her Julian Macdonald pink dress and iconic diamanté Wellington boots, was subsequently displayed at London's National Portrait Gallery.

Eight dresses were designed exclusively for Kuala Lumpur, inspired from his trips to Malaysia, with a vivid yellow one representing our abundant sunshine and a hot, fire-red dress inspired by the Orient. Travel, Macdonald says, has been a source of inspiration for over a decade. "I take in a lot of culture and history everywhere I go. My last collection was inspired by Bali, through its textiles and temples, religion and traditions. I made it modern and glamorous by translating the past for the future. After all, nobody wants to look like a museum, but young and fresh!

"I'm delighted to have my brand worn by different women of all ages, sizes and shapes, not just models or celebrities. My clothes empower a woman; they help her feel strong, confident and happy. My dresses are for very special occasions that become memories. You may have a terrible day at work and, once home, you put on this fabulous dress and you will smile and feel happy. You don't have to look glamorous every but, just for Friday, perhaps you can!"

At 44, Macdonald maintains a smart, dapper figure, largely due to his discipline in eating healthily and exercising. He is also an avid dancer and has served as a resident fashion expert for the show *It Takes Two* in 2012 and as a competitor in *Strictly Come Dancing*. Born and raised in the South Wales town of Merthyr Tydfil, Macdonald has always been artistic through drawing and dancing. A foundation course at the Cardiff Art College led to a



"With fashion, you are only as good as your last collection. You always get judged by your latest work. You can never 'disappear' once you've established your business."



degree in Fashion Textiles in Brighton, and he went on to receive his MA at London's Royal College of Art.

Macdonald was destined for the stars as, immediately after his graduation in 1996, Karl Lagerfeld noticed his talents and appointed him knitwear design head for Chanel. In 2001, Macdonald was named British Fashion Designer of the Year and succeeded Alexander McQueen as Creative Director of renowned French fashion house, Givenchy. Three years later, Macdonald received the Order of the British Empire for his contribution to the fashion industry.

"As we get older, we have experienced life and learned from mistakes, and try our best not to repeat them. With fashion, you are only as good as your last collection.

You always get judged by your latest work. You can never 'disappear' once you've established your business. You have to constantly work and design creatively. It is an extremely demanding job. A lot of designers can't take the pressure. At Givenchy, I was designing six collections a year, with two ready-to-wear and two *haute couture*. On top of that, I was the face of the brand and oversaw everything, right down to window displays and even doorknobs! I was young at 28 then. All my friends had a life, parties and holidays. I felt my life slipping away and, along with it, my youth. That was when I decided to leave after my three-year term was over."

People often see only 20 per cent of the life of a fashion designer – the runways and spotlights, cocktails and celebrities. "Fashion can be incredibly glamorous

and rewarding," says Macdonald. "But thousands do not make it; very few do, actually. I think designers need to have an identity and a strong brand. Mine is glamorous dresses and great knitwear, and people recognise those trademarks. I also tend not to listen to critics. I give a lot of talks at colleges and I'd always tell young designers not to ever give up. Some days are better than others. One day, dreams will come true because it has happened for me."

Macdonald also acknowledges the importance of a supportive family. "A lot of parents want their children to succeed, by becoming lawyers, accountants or biologists; when you say you want to be a fashion designer, they'll tell you that's not a real career. My father was a farmer and my mum was a nurse; they were

very regular folks. I was very lucky that both supported me in what I wanted to do. My mum sent me to drama class; I was like Billy Elliot, always artistic!" says Macdonald with a laugh. He adds quietly: "People always ask me how I made it this far. I believe I was born with a gift in life. Everyone has one but not everyone finds it, or they discover it too late. I was just incredibly lucky I found mine when I was young and I managed to make it work for me."

Macdonald adds that he is continuously growing his brand and making it more accessible by developing ready-to-wear collections with an Italian manufacturer that will be available in boutiques. "People

say that they love my clothes but they are just too expensive!" he laughs. (The fabulous pink dress made for Dame Shirley Bassey cost GBP50,000.)

Following his showcase in Kuala Lumpur, Macdonald is headed for another treasured trip to one of YTL Hotels' stable of exquisite resorts – Gaya Island Resort in Sabah. "I've travelled to all of YTL's resorts and Pangkor Island Resort is my favourite. And not just for me, but people like Pavarotti and Elle Macpherson, who have travelled the world. I'm literally going back to paradise. I love the tranquillity and beauty of such unspoilt places in the world. And, again, I am so incredibly lucky and thankful I get to come back here." ■

Dauntless Diva

Playing safe is long gone. It's time to bring out your inner diva with these daring fashion choices.



Free And Fabulous

Inspired by the life painting of a meadow on black canvas, **Khoon Hooi's** Spring/Summer 2016 collection joyfully celebrates the idea of freedom and light that comes from looking at this painting. In this collection, textures and prints are carefully placed to project a harmonised look by using brocades, nylon, lace and raffia, just like a brush mix on a colour palette. Fabric movement is also given high importance in this collection, where the back of the dresses and tops are pleated to give volume, skirts are draped asymmetrically channelling out lightness, and nylon dresses crafted for a luscious and flowy finish.



Being Transparent

Jackets are not necessarily meant to be black and boring. The latest women's collection from **McQ by Alexander McQueen** is where modern meets old-fashioned luxury, revamping the whole idea of the jacket and reintroducing it with a contemporary twist. A classic cropped biker is redesigned in clear PVC, juxtaposing the classic interpretation of youth culture with a more feminine transparency. This avant-garde statement wear is for anyone wanting to take their fashion sense to the next level.



Step It Up

If you think cowboy boots are passé, think again. This season, **Sergio Rossi** introduces boots with prominent, sleek lines and soft suede in golden hues that make a fashion statement. Presented as part of the Sergio Rossi Cruise 2016 Collection, these boots feature detailed embroidery and leather embellishments inspired by eyelet laces to create a romantic and modern version of the typical 1970s boots. ■

Bike Bags

This season, **Kenzo** celebrates the power of fearless women by taking a closer look at their adventurous lifestyle as well as their light yet pragmatic sense of dressing. Inspired by that idea, Kenzo created the *Bike* belt bag in black leather, which is accompanied by protective clutches that bear a resemblance to military water bottles. Ranging from simple to studded, Kenzo promises a bag that is both stylish and practical for daily use.



JULIEN'S *jewels*

The recent ninth edition of A Journey Through Time, Asia's premier watch and jewellery showcase, had a stylish twist to it when acclaimed British designer, Julien Macdonald, treated guests to a presentation of eight new creations, designed exclusively for the event and inspired by the unique beauty of Malaysia, and photographed on location at the new-look The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur.

Photography **Ian Wong** Styling & Art Direction **Sheila Cheah**
Hair **Cody Chua** Makeup **Nelson Tham** Models **Kika V/Attitude Model**



IRDINA

The long expanse of alabaster sands on Pulau Tulai, an uninhabited coral island off the north-eastern coast of Tioman, is brought to fashionable life in *Irdina* – a divinely modern yet contemporary design featuring hand-embroidered mesh in a pure floor-length gown.

IMAN

Colour is key in this eye-catching gown, which features exquisitely detailed hand-embroidered French lace with refined embellishment. The rich hue of this gown was inspired by the opulent colours of Malaysia's coral reefs.



BATHSYA

Famed for its ancient rainforests, this stunning emerald column floor length dress pays tribute to Taman Negara, the country's national park. A rich belt, encrusted with hand-cut glass elements and Swarovski crystals, cinches the waist in stunning style.



ARIANNA

Citing its inspiration as the famous limestone hill of Batu Caves in Kuala Lumpur, which houses one of the most important Hindu shrines in Malaysia and is dedicated to Lord Murugan, the son of Shiva and Parvati, the *Arianna* gown features a white-hot glamorous skirt with a delicately embellished top, bringing the ornate temple detailing to mind.



DHIA

The islands of Malaysia's East Coast are justifiably stunning, with the largest island among them, Redang, being one of the most popular due to its crystal waters, rich marine life and white sand beaches. Here, Macdonald pays tributes to Redang's lapping waves in this flowing gown that featured a luxurious nude silk cape and hand-embroidered mesh detail across the chest.



AQUILAH

Inspired by Malaysia's Kanching recreational forest, located in between the towns of Rawang and Selayang, this vibrant gown is fashioned out of overdyed metallic lace adorned with plated metallic studs, while bullion birds are embroidered almost as if fluttering down from the wearer's heart. The beautiful draped skirt is a direct tribute to the flowing beauty of the seven-tiered Kanching Falls.



AZELEA

The cool mistiness of Cameron Highlands, Malaysia's premier hill station, and its surrounding rock cliffs and pebbles form the basis of this elegant stone-coloured floor length gown, integrated with a glistening hand-stitched belt and smooth fishtail train.

Personal Pampering

Indulge yourself with these must-try fragrance and skincare products.



Floral Fragrance

Introducing the new *Mimosa & Cardamom* cologne by **Jo Malone** – a fragrance inspired by the bohemian spirit of adventure from the Victorians. Wanting to create something bold and intriguing that will leave a lasting impression, renowned perfumer Marie Salamagne combined two intrepid ingredients – mimosa and cardamom – to create a strong yet sensual scent. The additional touches of tonka beans, complemented with the aroma of English pear, blooming freesia and red roses, gives this unusual blend a warm and soothing fragrance.



Lineless Skin

It's never too late to fight wrinkles. **La Prairie's** new *Anti-Aging Rapid Response Booster* promises to be the most advanced wrinkle interceptor to date. This lightweight liquid gel serum utilises an anti-wrinkle delivery system where peptide is directed to the exact area needed to reduce depth and length of wrinkles in just two weeks. A nature-derived neuro-calming agent, peptide aids in reducing the aging process and reinforces skin's barrier protection while restoring hydration. A gel that leaves the skin feeling plumped and smooth for a lineless future.



Fairer You

Pursuing **La Mer's** heritage of healing, the deluxe skincare brand is back with its recently innovated Blanc de la Mer collection. The *Brilliance White Lotion* and *Brilliance White Essence* are two of the latest additions to the range, after scientists at Max Huber Research Labs meticulously engineered an improvement to whitening technology. This soothing yet effective regiment utilises the benefits of marine ingredients to give skin a new and much-needed ageless transformation. Calm, hydrated and glowing skin is promised.

Eclipse Aroma

If the combined scent of freshness and sensuality excites you, then *Sunshine for Man* by **Amouage** might be your preferred perfume. Inspired by the eclipse, this fragrance uses lavender as the aromatic base as well as other intriguing ingredients like everlasting flower, orange brandy, juniper berries and tonka bean. This spicy fragrance is the counterpart to the bright and joyful *Sunshine for Woman* launched in 2014. **■**





A Tale of Two Theatres

When making the rounds in Bath, don't forget to check out the gems that are The Little Theatre Cinema and the Theatre Royal Bath.

Text **Christy Yoong**

There's plenty to do in Bath. When you're not enjoying the sensuous luxuries of The Gainsborough Bath Spa, this historic city offers a myriad of activities, from shopping and sightseeing, to pleasure cruises and nature trails. More leisurely pleasures, however, can be had at The Little Theatre Cinema and the Theatre Royal Bath, two of the city's most venerable artistic institutions, conveniently located just a short walk away from The Gainsborough Bath Spa.

The Little Theatre

The Little Theatre Cinema is on St Michael's Place, virtually on the doorstep of both The Gainsborough Bath Spa and the Thermae Bath Spa, right in the heart of the city. Bath's only remaining independent cinema, The Little Theatre

has been entertaining and educating the city for 80 years. Founded by community theatre pioneer, Consuelo de Reyes, and her stage-designer husband, Peter King, in 1935, The Little Theatre began as a news theatre, screening hourly programmes of documentaries and newsreels. It expanded its repertoire when it started showing feature films in 1939, beginning with Anna Neagle's *Peg of Old Drury* and Will Hay's *Oh, Mr Porter!*

Its building dates from 1726 and was originally a large town house. De Reyes ran an experimental theatre in an adjoining building, Citizen House, until it was accidentally destroyed by a fire. She then turned her attention next door to open The Little Theatre. In addition to the main auditorium, it also boasted a roof garden



theatre as well as a tea and coffee lounge.

In the years since, The Little Theatre has undergone various refurbishments and is now a three-screen cinema. Both the roof garden and lounge, alas, are gone but it has been upgraded to the latest in digital sound and projection technology, while seats have been renewed, offering the best in comfort. Within its creamy Bath stone façade, however, it has retained its original charm of a 1930s cinema, complete with a balcony in the main auditorium. It continues to screen some of the best films from all over the world, including classics of the silver screen, as well as running an excellent arthouse film programme.

picturehouses.com/cinema/The_Little



life feature //

Theatre Royal Bath

The stage has enjoyed a long presence in Bath – its first theatre was built all the way back in 1705. George Trim's cramped playhouse, on Borough Walls, was a response to the visits Queen Anne made to the city in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. More theatres were constructed in the following decades, including one on Orchard Street, set up by local chandler and brewer, John Palmer, in 1750, which opened with a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry IV*. His son, also named John, was granted a royal patent 16 years later, creating the first Theatre Royal outside London. It became a great success and, soon, a season in Bath was as important for actors as a London billing.

In the early 19th century, however, plans were made for a new theatre and in 1805, the Theatre Royal Bath moved to its present location in Sawclose (a five-minute walk away from The Gainsborough Bath Spa), into a building designed by George Dance, Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy, debuting with Shakespeare's *Richard III* on 12 October. The theatre on Orchard Street closed and, today, is an atmospheric masonic museum. George Dance's building was destroyed by a fire in 1862 and the theatre was rebuilt according to a design by CJ Phipps. Shakespeare, again, was the choice for the reopening, with the great



Ellen Terry as Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The Theatre Royal has undergone extensive refurbishment since but its core mission of producing the best and most interesting plays, performed by some of the biggest names in theatre has remained unchanged. In 1997, the theatre created the Ustinov Studio, originally as a space for youth theatre and touring productions but now including classical concerts, stand-up comedy as well as in-house productions. A children's theatre, the egg, was set-up in 2005. In addition to theatre, there is also The Vaults Restaurant that serves pre-show meals, as well as two bars and a café. To complete your experience at the Theatre Royal Bath, look out for its most



famous ghost, The Grey Lady, whose appearance is usually accompanied by the strong scent of jasmine, dressed in an 18th-century evening dress with feathers in her hair! ❖

theatreroyal.org.uk

HEART OF HISTORY
Housed within two 19th-century buildings, The Gainsborough Bath Spa offers the only natural thermal spa within a hotel in the UK. Located in the heart of this UNESCO World Heritage Site, the hotel is mere minutes away from Bath's top historic and entertainment attractions, making it the perfect base to explore the city and its beautiful surrounds. For more details, visit www.thegainsboroughbathspa.co.uk

East & West In Bath

Dining at Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough is among the myriad pleasures on offer at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bath.

It's not easy to get lost in Bath. The centre of this UNESCO World Heritage Site is easily accessible on foot and, within just a day, you'll navigate its many compact streets and back lanes like a native. That's not to say that the city is short on attractions, however. Nearly 2,000 years of history are crammed together into the city, with the first century AD cheek by jowl with the later 16th-century Bath Abbey. Architecturally, Bath is almost picture postcard perfect, with some of the most iconic buildings in the UK.

Pleasures of a less serious kind are just as abundant – lovers of the outdoors would find plenty to explore at Prior Park and Longleat Safari and Adventure Park, while the bold would thrill at the challenge of Cheddar Gorge. More sedentary gratification can be had at the city's shopping areas of Milsom Street and Artisan Quarter, and, of course, a spa treatment, Bath's original *raison d'être*, is a ineluctable recompense after all that exploring.

While a Sally Lunn bun is *de rigueur* when you're in Bath, there are endless other dining options in the city that range from a local pie in The Raven pub to a champagne afternoon tea at The Jane Austen Centre Regency Tea Room. The recent opening of The Gainsborough Bath Spa, part of YTL Hotels, has also added an elevated option to the city's dining scene. The hotel's Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough is a collaboration with Johann Lafer, one of Germany's most celebrated Michelin-starred chefs and TV personalities. Lafer's first restaurant venture outside Germany, the gourmet philosophy behind Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough, 'Dining Without Borders', is based on using fresh and locally sourced produce to create truly innovative dishes.

The owner of Stromburg Castle, a hotel and dining destination in Stromberg, Germany, talks to *YTL Life* about his hopes and inspiration for Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough.

What is the most important thing about food for you?

Foremost is the pure delight of using absolutely fresh and high-quality ingredients, combined with creativity and passion for excellent taste and look. Wherever possible, I prefer seasonal and local food blended with Asian touches.

What is the essence of a well-run kitchen?

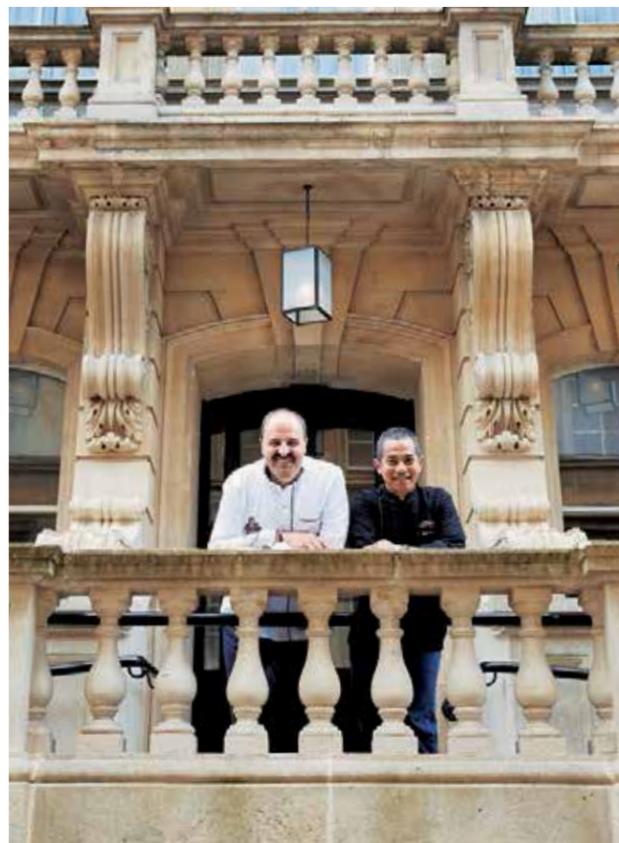
It is more than just a proper place to work; it's about motivated chefs and staff who are full of energy and creativity, have a great love for food, are disciplined, and only wish to make guests happy. A well-run kitchen is also about carefully selected, fresh and the best quality ingredients and spices.

What are the most important characteristics that a chef needs?

In my opinion, a good chef needs plenty of passion, discipline, knowledge of food and producers alike, patience, a good sense for taste and textures, creativity, curiosity to experience, a good feeling for freshness and tasty combinations, and, of course, a feel for new trends and personal love for the delights of food.

How do you inspire yourself and your staff to consistently create the best food possible?

It is our aim to make our guests happy with the food we create. We never stop trying out new things, to taste everything the world



has to offer in terms of food, and to create new tastes and textures out of what the seasons, farmers and markets have to offer. Our personal skills in creating the very best and most harmonic food experiences for our guests are our daily inspiration.

What does the food that you serve say about you – as an individual and as a chef?

The food I serve is a mirror of my character and personality. It says a lot about my passion for details, freshness, creativity, quality and excellence. My personal philosophy, 'A life for good taste', does not differ much from my being a chef. The knowledge of food, of farmers and producers who offer top quality, of cooking techniques and of the taste of my guests are add-ons to what I love personally: Creating happiness by wonderful dishes for the people I serve.

Much has been made of your friendship with Chef Wai Look Chow (pictured at left) of YTL Hotels. How has this influenced you as a chef?

Our friendship has influenced me a lot. He introduced me to the spices and creations of the Malay and Asian cuisines that I hadn't known before, just like I introduced him to many German and European delights. We both created a lot of new fusion dishes combining the best of Eastern and Western tastes, which has delighted our customers – not only at The Gainsborough Bath Spa. YTL Hotels and my Stromburg Castle in Germany have exchanged chefs for several years, and both sides have been inspired to new culinary highs. The results for both of us in terms of excellent cuisine are splendid, especially with Chef Wai.

How do you feel, so far, about your collaboration with YTL Hotels at Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough?

It is simply wonderful. With this restaurant, I can create happiness for hotel guests, locals and tourists alike. It is a great chance for me to merge my philosophy, 'A life for good taste', with that of YTL Hotels' 'Treasured Places, Treasured Moments'. It feels like the title of a deep friendship, and I feel absolutely honoured to have the chance to prove myself with YTL Hotels outside Germany.

What is the philosophy behind the menu at Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough?

We practise the philosophy behind *Two Friends – One Cuisine* (the highly acclaimed cookbook co-written with Chef Wai), where East meets West in culinary choices. Each dish combines the finest in product freshness and quality, with an Asian touch. Menus are the utmost of culinary delights combining all senses: the look of the restaurant and dishes, the soothing surroundings, the gentle flavour of spices and most delightful tastes, from appetisers to afters.

How different is the kitchen there compared to the one at Stromburg Castle?

At Stromburg Castle, we have two restaurants – the Michelin-starred Le Val d'Or and the more casual Bistro d'Or. The difference between Stromburg Castle and here is the difference in local products between Germany and the UK. The quality and freshness is the same in both places. Regional and seasonal products from farmers and producers differ, as well as the individual taste of

regular customers. Here in Bath, we focus a little bit more on light cuisine, respecting the splendid thermal spa nature of Bath.

How do you decide what to serve at Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough?

We want to please our customers in every way and focus on seasonal and regional products in close local harmony with the city of Bath. We combine local taste with exotic Asian touches and concentrate on the balance of taste, texture and look of our dishes in order to please all senses. We respect the opinion of our guests and are happy about their comments.

Why do you include Asian influences and ingredients in the menu?

Asian influences and ingredients are my personal favourites to create stunning and mouth-watering dishes. The combination of European and British products and Asian tastes are pure joy for body and soul. In co-operation with YTL Hotels, it also underlines the individual character of YTL Hotels' hospitality gems.

What are your hopes for Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough in the long-term?

I hope that Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough will be the place for dining out in the UK and to spread the dining concept of *Two Friends – One Cuisine* all over the world. 🍴

For more details on Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough, please visit www.thegainsboroughbathspa.co.uk.

Into Thin Air

Nearly half a century on, the disappearance of Thai Silk King Jim Thompson remains an enduring mystery in the verdant setting of Cameron Highlands.

Illustration Shing Yi-Chew



Moonlight Cottage, where Thompson spent his last few days before his disappearance.



a tiger, others say he simply got lost and was swallowed up by the jungle." Another theory is that Thompson had fallen into a ravine or long-forgotten animal trap. "The jungle has many patches of land which are very soft. And the leaf fall here is quick and heavy and could have concealed any of the holes... Thompson might have simply fallen into one," adds Mokh. There are, however, other theories as well, including those related to Thompson's wartime activities as a CIA agent. After all, Malaysia then still bore the scars of 'The Malayan Emergency' – the period between 1948 and 1960, and a dark patch in Malaysia's early history – where vicious communist activity struck fear and terror into citizens of the young nation.

In 1967, on a Sunday afternoon, 61-year-old James HW Thompson, an American businessman and founder of the modern Thai silk industry, mysteriously disappeared while supposedly on a post-lunch stroll in Malaysia's Cameron Highlands. Forty-nine years on, no one knows for sure what happened to Thompson that fateful Easter Sunday. Moonlight Cottage, where Thompson had been staying with his friends, Dr TG Ling and his American wife, Helen, as well as his companion, Connie Mangskau, remains the focal point of interest among conspiracy theorists as it is where Thompson was last seen alive.

Although Cameron Highlands today is a thriving hill station, in Thompson's time, its surrounding jungle was decidedly denser, with tigers and other wild animals known to be still lurking in it. "It's actually tremendously easy to lose yourself in the highlands," says Captain Mokh, one of YTL Hotel's resident naturalists who also happens to have been part of the original search parties that went out to hunt for Jim Thompson the moment he was reported missing. "There are many conspiracy theories on Thompson's disappearance," adds Mokh. "Some say he was attacked and killed by

Tragically, just five months after Thompson's disappearance, the body of Katherine Thompson Wood, Thompson's eldest sister who lived in Pennsylvania, was discovered bludgeoned to death, which only served to renew speculation in the mysterious disappearance of Thompson. Many followers of the case couldn't believe two such tragedies in a single family could be a mere coincidence. Whatever the theory, it would seem that Jim Thompson the man left as great a mark in death as he did in real life. ■

As legend has it, Thompson spent the morning attending service at the little Anglican church in Tanah Rata, before going to a nearby hill site for a picnic lunch. By mid-afternoon, the party had returned to Moonlight Cottage for an afternoon siesta. The Lings had retired to their room and Mangskau to hers. Whatever happened in the next few hours remains an enduring mystery. Thompson had left his jacket on the chair and his cup of tea on the table. A half-smoked cigar was still resting in an ashtray. Reports also note that Thompson's bed was not even lain on and, if he had decided to go for a post-lunch stroll, it would have not been unusual, given Thompson's love of the outdoors.

THE JIM THOMPSON MYSTERY TRAIL

At the Cameron Highlands Resort, don't miss joining its signature walk, The Jim Thompson Mystery Trail, led by the hotel's resident naturalist. Explore the surrounding hills, all the while regaled by theories and the mysterious circumstances surrounding the legendary Silk King's disappearance. The walk begins at Moonlight Cottage, where Thompson was last seen alive, and is a rambling trek, climbing all the way to 200m above sea level, before ending at the Luther Mission House, whose gardener at the time was the last person to have seen Thompson in the flesh. On the walk, expect to see flora and fauna that could include millipedes which are endemic to the highlands, bamboo orchids, wild strangler figs and ant's nest ferns. To book, contact the Cameron Highlands Resort at +605 491 1100.





The Great Escape

Follow in the footsteps of the legendary Colonel Freddy Spencer Chapman at The Chapman's Challenge, scheduled to take place at YTL's Pangkor Laut Resort from 13 to 15 May 2016.

Photography **Weng Sheng Thong** Photography **Edmund Lee & YTL Hotels**

Come 13 May, YTL's Pangkor Laut Resort will be hosting a one-of-its-kind endurance event in tribute of Colonel Freddy Spencer Chapman, a British Commando who fought for the Allies during the Second World War. Legend has it that during the Allies' retreat, following the fall of Malaya, Chapman was stranded behind enemy lines, armed with nothing but his wits and will to survive.

Never one to back down from a good fight, Chapman formed a merry band of resistance fighters that was a constant thorn in the side of the Japanese occupation forces for almost four years. As the war dragged on, however, Chapman's luck began to run dry and, on 13 May 1945, he decided to finally make a brave retreat and escape from the island of Pangkor Laut. After losing his pursuers





in the island's ancient jungles, Chapman made good his flight by swimming out of Emerald Bay under the cover of darkness to meet with the British submarine, the *HMS Statesman*.

Fast-forward to the present and Pangkor Laut Island is a very different affair from the Japanese occupied hellhole it was back during the Second World War. With its white sandy beaches glowing in the evening sun, pristine waters and lush virgin rainforest, Pangkor Laut Resort certainly has a well-deserved reputation for being one of the region's top tropical beach destinations.

The Chapman's Challenge comprises a 6.2km run through the jungles and a 1km swim across Emerald Bay to recall

the great escape of its namesake. While this distance is relatively short compared with conventional endurance events – a standard triathlon encompasses a 1.5km swim, a 40km bike ride and 10km run – The Chapman's Challenge is by no means an endeavour to be taken lightly. Instead of a battle of physical and mental endurance, it would instead be a contest of strength and speed; a sprint as opposed to marathon.

Even under ideal conditions, the trail running section of the event through the island's rainforests will put even seasoned athletes to the test. All but the most experienced and conditioned runners will find their pace significantly checked by the unforgiving terrain. To put the nature of this trail run into perspective, where





it normally takes an average runner two to three minutes to cover 500m on a flat road, it would, instead, take them almost 10 minutes to cover the same distance in the jungle.

However, the challenges presented during the trail run pale in comparison to the final leg of The Chapman's Challenge: the 1km open water swim. Open water swimming is a completely different animal to that of paddling about in a safe, clean pool. Poor underwater visibility, battling the tide and overcoming all your inner demons of imaginary primeval monsters lurking in the depths beneath are just some of the things participants will have to overcome here.

Upon completion of this final gruelling leg of The Chapman's Challenge, participants will be immediately rewarded with a platter of cold drinks and fresh coconuts prepared by the helpful staff at Chapman's Bar, which overlooks Emerald Bay. This is what sets The Chapman's Challenge apart from conventional endurance events, where athletes are left to fend for themselves after crossing the finishing line. From here, triumphant athletes may either choose to enjoy a sumptuous meal at the Chapman's Bar or indulge in a luxurious spa treatment at the Resort's award-winning Spa Village. ■

Register for The Chapman's Challenge at www.pangkorlautresort.com with a full board package starting from MYR999 nett per room per night, with a minimum stay of two nights. The package includes two race entries, return scheduled speedboat transfers, accommodation, daily meals and a post-race barbecue dinner at Emerald Bay. Every participant will also receive a goody bag courtesy of YTL Hotels, Reebok, Ipanema and TYR. The top three winners stand to win exciting stay prizes within YTL Hotels' global portfolio of luxury properties.



THE CHAPMAN'S CHALLENGE 101
If you're gunning for the top place at The Chapman's Challenge, it's essential that you be better prepared and equipped than your fellow competitors. Here are some handy nuggets of advice from the YTL Life team's resident athlete and marathoner.

TRAINING TIPS
1. Conquer your fear of open-water

swimming: Open-water swimming is a whole different animal from swimming laps in a nice, clear swimming pool. It's important that you are able to deal with not being able to see what's beneath you in a body of water.

2. Learn to love trail and hill running: Pangkor Laut is hilly and covered in jungles for the most part, and participants will go head-to-head with this gruelling terrain come the day of the event. There will be precious few sections of flat running, so you'd better get used to traversing steep ascents and descents at speed.

3. Squats, squats and more squats all day everyday: All runners should dedicate a significant portion of their training time to good old fashioned squats. Regardless of whether it's bodyweight or weighted, squats are essential for improving a runner's leg power, speed and ability to deal with elevated terrain (you'll thank us later).

PRE-RACE NUTRITION TIPS

1. Avoid spicy food: While we do love spice, it would be wise to stay away from anything bowel-upsetting an entire day prior to the event.

2. Have a solid breakfast: Toast with peanut butter, a half-boiled egg and muesli are good go-to choices for breakfast on the morning of any athletic event. It boasts just the right combination of complex-carbohydrates, protein and healthy fats. The last thing you want is to get a sugar-rush from an overly sweet bowl of cereal only to crash 30 minutes later.

RACE-DAY TIPS

1. Wear trail-running shoes: Regular road-running shoes won't be adequate for tackling the uneven and steep terrain at Pangkor Laut. Compared to regular running shoes, trail-running shoes offer greater ankle support, better grip and retain less water. I'd recommend a pair of trail-running shoes from Salomon, Brooks, Inov-8 or Reebok.

2. Don a triathlon bodysuit or compression wear: Not only will such attire improve your aerodynamics during the swimming portion of The Chapman's Challenge, it also decent protection against, depending on the season, potential jellyfish stings.

3. Bring knee and ankle supports if required: If you have a history of creaky limbs, then you might want to invest in solid knee or ankle support. You would hardly want to twist an ankle during the trail-running portion of the Challenge, which can be somewhat treacherous and slippery in the event of rain.

POST-EVENT RECOVERY TIPS

1. Refuelling your body: You've done it, but you're not out of the woods yet. To ensure that your body recovers swiftly and smoothly, it's important to properly hydrate and refuel yourself. Fresh coconut water, a protein shake and a good solid meal will help facilitate this.

2. Rewarding your body: The time has come to reward yourself and there are few better ways to do so than with a visit to the Pangkor Laut Resort's Spa Village. The Cleansing Ritual will purify your body of the dirt and grime of the event, and your aching muscles will surely appreciate the relaxing treatment offered by the massage therapies.

Good Vibrations

Why a session of sensory sound bathing at Spa Village Kuala Lumpur could be music to your ears... and balm for your body.

Photography **Edmund Lee** Art Direction **Penny Chew**

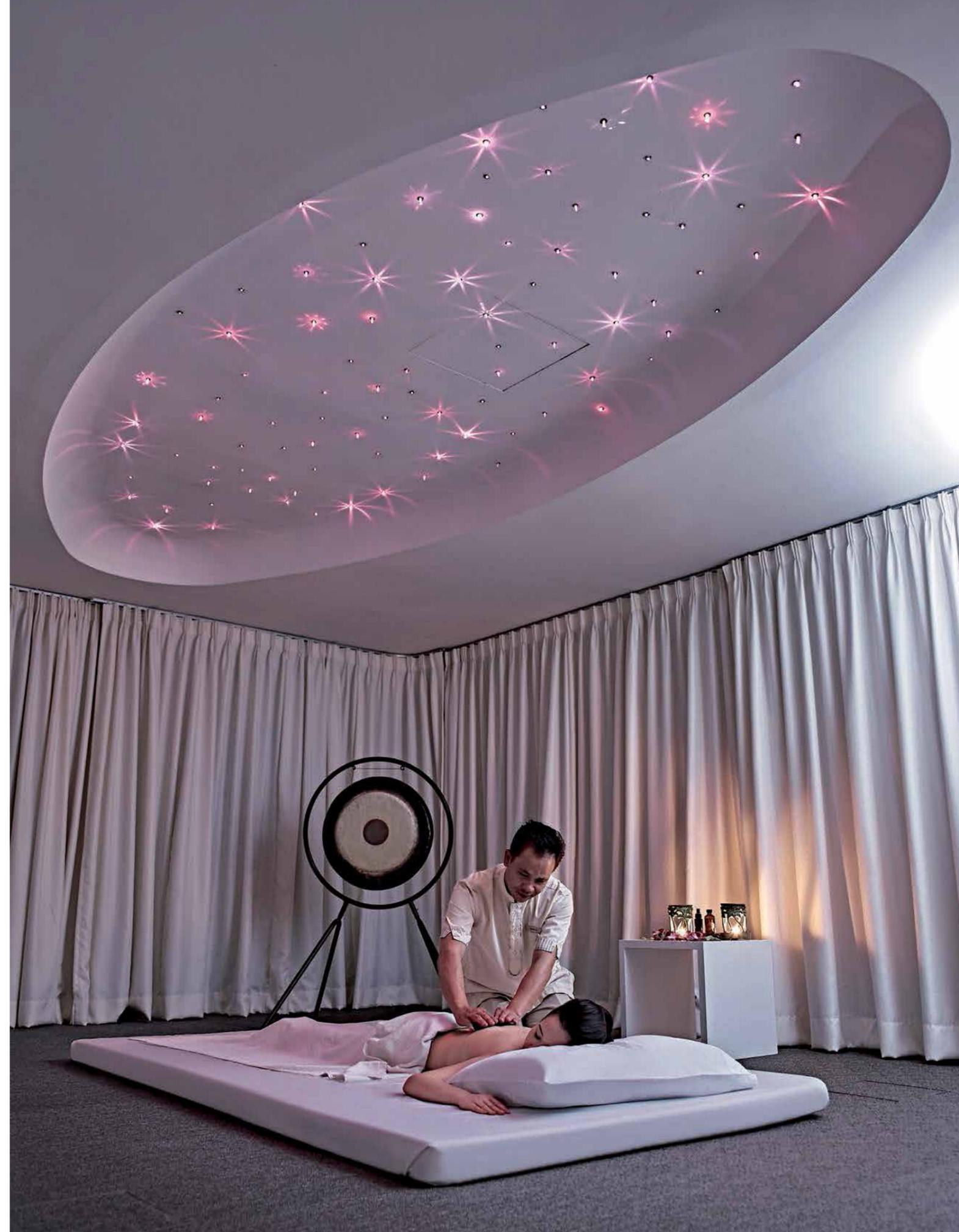
It has been said that everything in the universe vibrates with energy. From river stones to crystal, this mass chord of the universe is present in anything that is made up of atoms. Kinetic energy amplifies this and mystics have long believed that, once our beings are in rhythmic harmony with the subtle hum of life, we are on the path to wellness. Daily stressors, all part of modern-day living, can sometimes drown out our ability to perceive the universe's mass chord. The din of traffic as well as mindless chatter and noise pollution... all these, in some way, affect our wellbeing. Hence, the need to ensure our individual vibratory frequency is more imperative than ever.



Enter Spa Village Kuala Lumpur's *Sensory Sound Bath*. Held in the newly refurbished Sensory Room, this 90-minute treatment is a journey to deep relaxation and health. As you relax on the mat, under a ceiling studded with illuminated stars, let the therapist begin to massage you using essential oils and hot stones, in a rhythmic motion that eases tensions within your body while loosening all accumulated kinks and knots – the result of deskbound work as well as negative emotions. In the darkness, the sensation of being pressed with hot stones and massaged with therapeutic essential oils is enough to lull you into slumber.

Although few pleasures equal that of a really good massage, it is the finishing element of the *Sensory Sound Bath* that is said to hold the most benefits. Ending with a 10-minute closing session of sound bath meditation, your therapist will also utilise a symphonic gong, whose harmonic and universal sound structure is said to be akin to the healing vibrations of the universe. As the deeply reverberating hum washes over your body, this is the time to reflect, let go and yet focus on your individual awareness. As the sound carries, it is said that the body responds, on a cellular level, to this soothingly healing vibrational therapy. Instruments like singing bowls have long been used to mimic the earth's ideal frequency, likewise the benefits of a gong bath meditation are said to be many, including the reduction of stress on unprecedented levels, while the sound waves aid in dislodging emotional, physiological and spiritual blockages – much the same way crystals are used to open up *chakras* to allow for optimum energetic glow. If this seems a little hard to fathom, liken it to the act of clean eating and exercising. Just as it works wonders for the physical, sound bathing does the same – but primarily on the nervous system. After all, as anyone who pursues wellness knows that, at its most basic, the point is to restore balance. So, let the power of sound and resonance work together for your healing and wellbeing. ■

Spa Village Kuala Lumpur is located on Level 4 of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur. For more details, please go to www.spavillage.com/kualalumpur.





Be Well In Bali

The Island of the Gods is the perfect destination if you're searching for a haven in which to rejuvenate and recharge. *YTL Life* speaks to Savitri Talahatu, the Wellness Director of YTL Hotels' Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali to find out what's new to experience while there.



If the idea of improving your health and rejuvenating your life sounds good, try upping the ante a little by imagining doing so amidst a setting of sapphire blue seas, black volcanic sand, coconut groves and, in the distance, the majestically mystical form of Mount Agung. In Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, you will discover a picture-perfect haven of wellness, where guests come to enjoy all the pleasures and benefits of spa life in a tranquil, spiritual environment. Set in Bali's pristine north, the waters off the resort abound with dolphins, while the tropical climate ensures lush gardens blooming with all the ingredients needed in a tropical spa, including ylang-ylang, frangipani and coconut. Savitri Talahatu, custodian of this magical patch of paradise, tells *YTL Life* what's new to experience.

Tell us more about Kathrine Oldale-Cox's upcoming programme at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali.

Aside from being an experienced yoga teacher-practitioner, Kathrine is also a yoga therapist, nutritionist and raw food chef with a sunny personality that matches her vibrant offerings. There is just no limit to what she is able to offer our guests. She may decide to teach us how to make energy balls with cacao and goji berries, or look around for herbs to keep our skin looking healthy. Personally, I will take her Integrated Yoga Healing Therapy for deep healing and combine that with Nutritional Consultation to enhance the body's innate ability to perform at an optimum level of wellness. Kathrine is also able to perform chakra rebalancing using healing crystals, which is a full body treatment and one that is deeply restorative and therapeutic.

What are the main benefits of chakra rebalancing with crystals?

There are so many benefits of chakra rebalancing using healing crystals. However, to get the most out of a chakra rebalancing session, you would need to know, first, what chakras are and why they need to be balanced. Essentially energy vortices that exist within the subtle etheric body, they transmit life force energy, with each chakra governing a specific bodily function of the organs or glands closest to the area where it is located. Each chakra is known to represent a 'quality', which may be blocked when the person is unable to express themselves fully in any of the seven major chakras. Crystals, mostly quartz or other semi-precious stones, are used as they are minerals with high healing vibrations – conduits for clearing any blockages. For example, the third chakra, located in the solar plexus, is the centre of your own personal power. If balanced, you will have a strong sense of self. If it needs rebalancing, you may feel the need to blame or belittle others in order to feel right or better about yourself. Psychological symptoms may include lack of concentration and memory, fear, feeling uncentred, sugar addictions and insomnia. Physical symptoms may include digestive and

intestinal disorders, indigestion, food allergies, eating disorders, poor metabolism, diabetes, obesity, eczema, acne and other stress-related skin conditions. In a chakra rebalancing session, I would use a yellow semi-precious stone, like yellow citrine or amber, for the third chakra and turquoise for the throat chakra. I would place these crystals on the aforementioned chakras and use another modality, such as Reiki, to (re)move the energy in the affected area or areas. The person may start to feel stronger and clearer almost immediately.

And what about Integrated Yoga Healing Therapy?

In Kathrine's own words, Integrated Yoga Healing Therapy is a full body treatment carried out oriental style, with the recipient wearing light comfortable clothing, lying on a thin mat on the floor. It is a deeply restorative and therapeutic treatment combining methodology from various traditions, including Japanese shiatsu, Thai yoga massage, Neuromuscular Trigger Point Release and Trager. It promotes healing and relaxation across all levels of being.

We have also read about Sattvic diet. Can you tell us more?

The simplest way to explain a Sattvic (light and lively) diet is to liken it to what high octane fuel is to luxurious cars. The benefits are many but the main ones include the promotion of strength, calmness, mindfulness, perfect health and longevity. It also eliminates fatigue while promoting peace and tranquillity. The Sattvic diet is also easily digestible, while working to strengthen the stomach, intestine, liver and the pancreas. If you have high blood pressure or are prone to diabetes, you will find Sattvic food improves your health, the health of your skin and hair and, not to mention, your internal organs.

Will one be able to enjoy a Sattvic menu at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali?

The food here is always of quality, fresh and nutritious. Certainly, we will have a lot more Sattvic vegetarian and even vegan choices soon.

What else have you planned for the months to come?

There will be select choices of Ultimate Wellness Retreats to cater to our guests' vast interests. We have recently launched *Return to Yourself* – a yoga and wellness retreat geared towards the single traveller or those travelling in a small group of a maximum of four women, which starts on the first Monday of each month. In the pipeline is *Soul Renewal – An Inward Journey to the Self*, a wellness and yoga retreat for those wishing to recharge and reboot their lives. ❏

To find out more on the wellness experiences at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, please visit www.spavillageresort.com.



SAVITRI'S STYLE

An easy guide to a blissful day in Tembok.

0630hrs: Greet the sun in the best possible way, with a sunrise cruise in the resort's traditional *jukung* (Balinese catamaran).

0700hrs: Make time for a complimentary yoga session, which happens daily, except Friday and Saturday. Or opt for a bicycle tour to nearby Les Waterfall, followed by a picnic breakfast.

0800hrs: Savour the joys of a slow, steady breakfast or opt for one of the complimentary movement classes, like Yoga Swing, Nyuwun Yoga, Fitness Circuit or Pencak Silat, a traditional Balinese martial art.

0900hrs: A tour to Ponjok Batu temple is well-worth doing, followed by a visit to Surya Indigo, a women's weaving cooperative.

1100hrs: Make your way to the spa for a massage or traditional therapy.

1230hrs: Head back to the Wantilan Restaurant for a light, nutritious lunch.

1400hrs: Enjoy the resort's infinity pool or read a book in one of the breezy gazebos.

1500hrs: Don't miss snorkelling in the waters just off the resort, which teem with corals and marine life. If you have a dive license, you may also explore some interesting wrecks nearby. Cooking classes are also held on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

1600hrs: If it piques your interest, a special cultural talk is held on Fridays.

1700hrs: On Fridays, a special Balance Walk session is also available.

1730hrs: Get ready to stretch the body again, with complimentary Hatha Yoga sessions, except on Thursday and Friday.

1900hrs: Watch the stars slowly illuminate the night sky as you sit down to a scrumptious three-course dinner or have an unforgettable Massage under the Stars treatment.

2100hrs: Enjoy a spot of Starlight Gazing while floating on an inflatable bed in the pool – the perfect way to wind down the day and ensure a restful night's sleep.

The Historical Hills

Cameron Highlands has long held the distinction of being Malaysia's premier hill station and preferred retreat from the tropical temperatures that can sometimes soar. Here, amidst the emerald, cloud-swathed hills, lie gushing waterfalls, nature trails, tea plantations and numerous historical landmarks that stand proud in the crisp cool air. **Terence Waller**, Resort Manager of Cameron Highlands Resort, shares his favourite things about life high above the valley floor. There's magic in the mist, we say.

Photography **Yong Keen Keong**



Horse Play

If you like horses, do visit the **Equine Horse Spelling Station** – Cameron Highlands' one and only – which was opened in 1919 by Major Paddy Doyle, although a certain Captain Blockson, a former British army captain, was the original owner. Today, it remains the only spelling in the highlands area and is the place to send your polo ponies, racehorses or equestrian steeds for professional care or R&R.



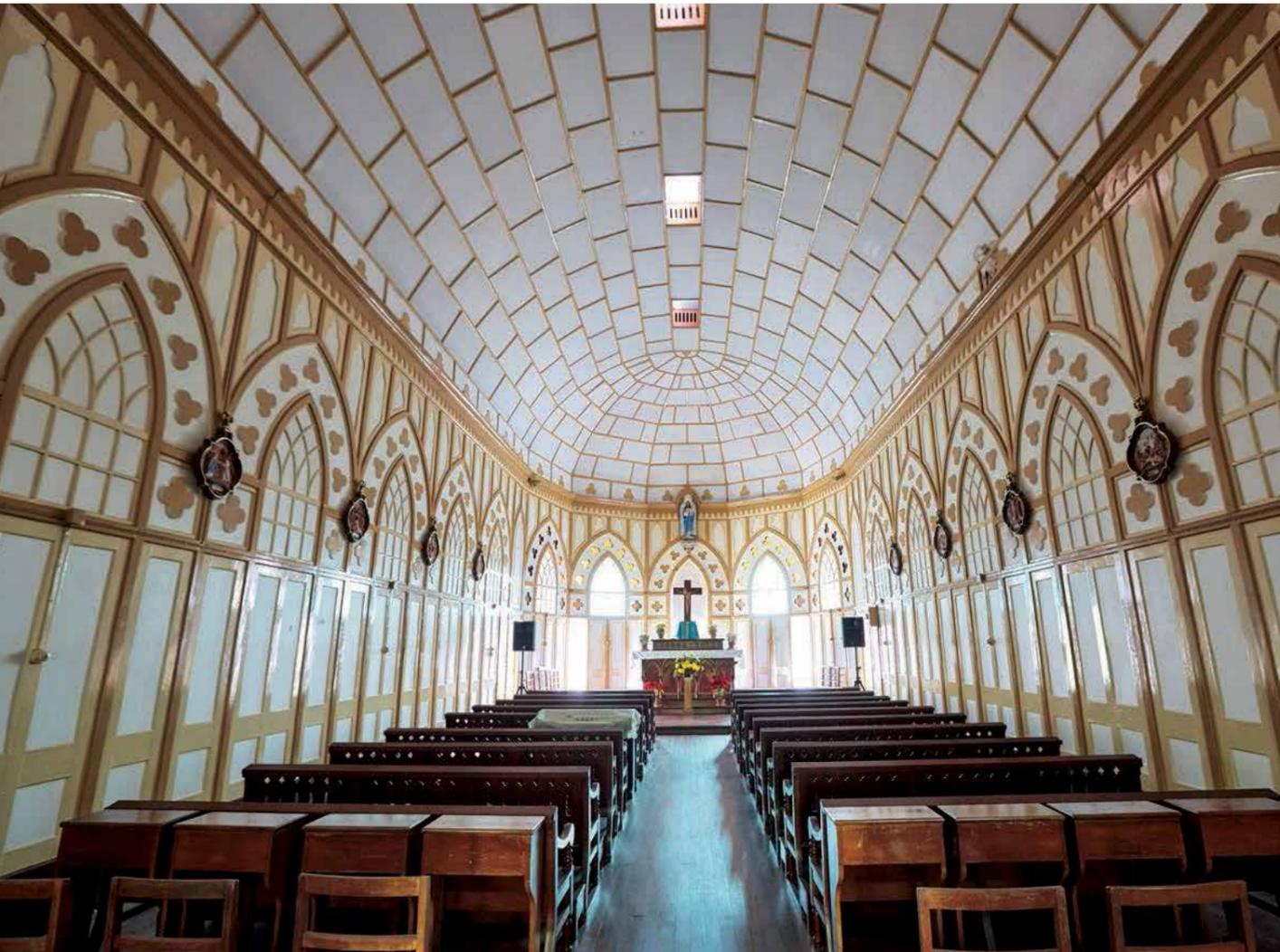
Trail Mix

A lot of people come to the highlands to trek the numerous **trails** that dot the area. There are 14 main ones; some are challenging, others not so. Be sure to allocate between two to three hours to complete each trail.



A Silk King Named Jim

One of the highlights of any stay at Cameron Highlands Resort would be our signature **Jim Thompson Mystery Trail**. Everyone knows the story of Jim Thompson, the famous Thai silk king, who mysteriously disappeared in the highlands on Easter Sunday in 1967. The trail we take you on was, in fact, used by the Japanese during the Second World War. The communists were also believed to have used it during the Emergency.

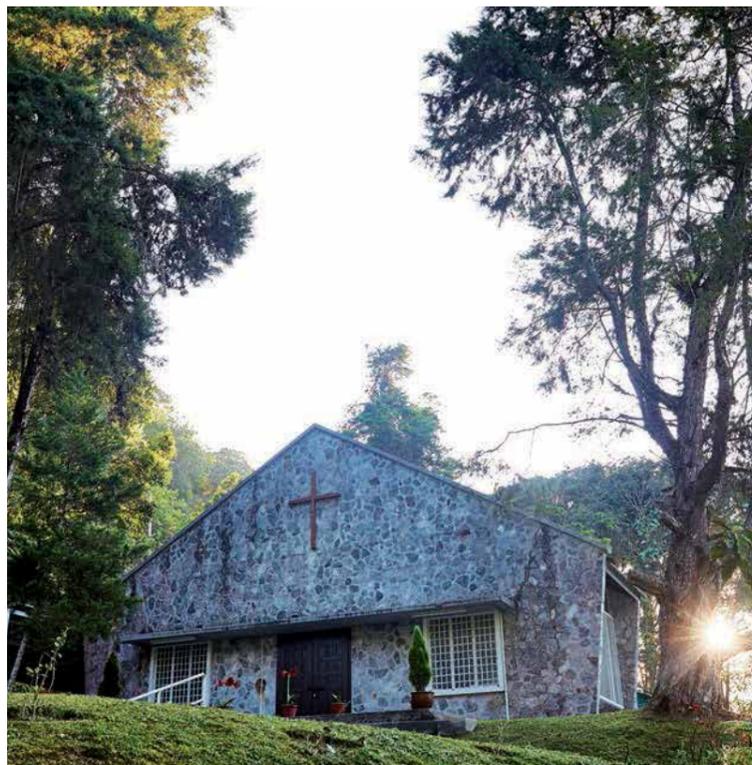


Too Cool For School

Originally built in 1935, the Convent **Church and Primary School** has seen much of the area's history. Beginning life as a boarding school called the Pensionnat Notre Dame, it was later used as a hospital by the Japanese when war broke out. The school was also commissioned by the British Army until the early 1970s. Today, it remains one of the iconic landmarks of Tanah Rata.

Sunday Best

The historical **All Souls Church** is said to have been one of the last places Jim Thompson visited on Easter Sunday in 1967 when he disappeared. Built in 1958, the history of the church can be traced back to the early 1950s, when the Vicar of Ipoh and other expatriate clergy held occasional services at either the Cameron Highlands Hotel (now the Cameron Highlands Resort) or Slim School.



A Heart For Art

The **Mah Meri Art Gallery** in Tanah Rata is a very new attraction. The Mah Meri people, indigenous to Carey Island in Selangor, have been expressing their beliefs and culture through wood carvings for over 300 years, using, primarily, a scarce mangrove wood known as Nyireh Batu (*Xylocarpus Moluccensis*). Showcasing a private collection of remarkable wood carvings that have been painstakingly crafted by the Mah Meri people, the museum-like gallery's collection of hundreds of masks, statues and sculptures is a lovely way to spend a few hours.

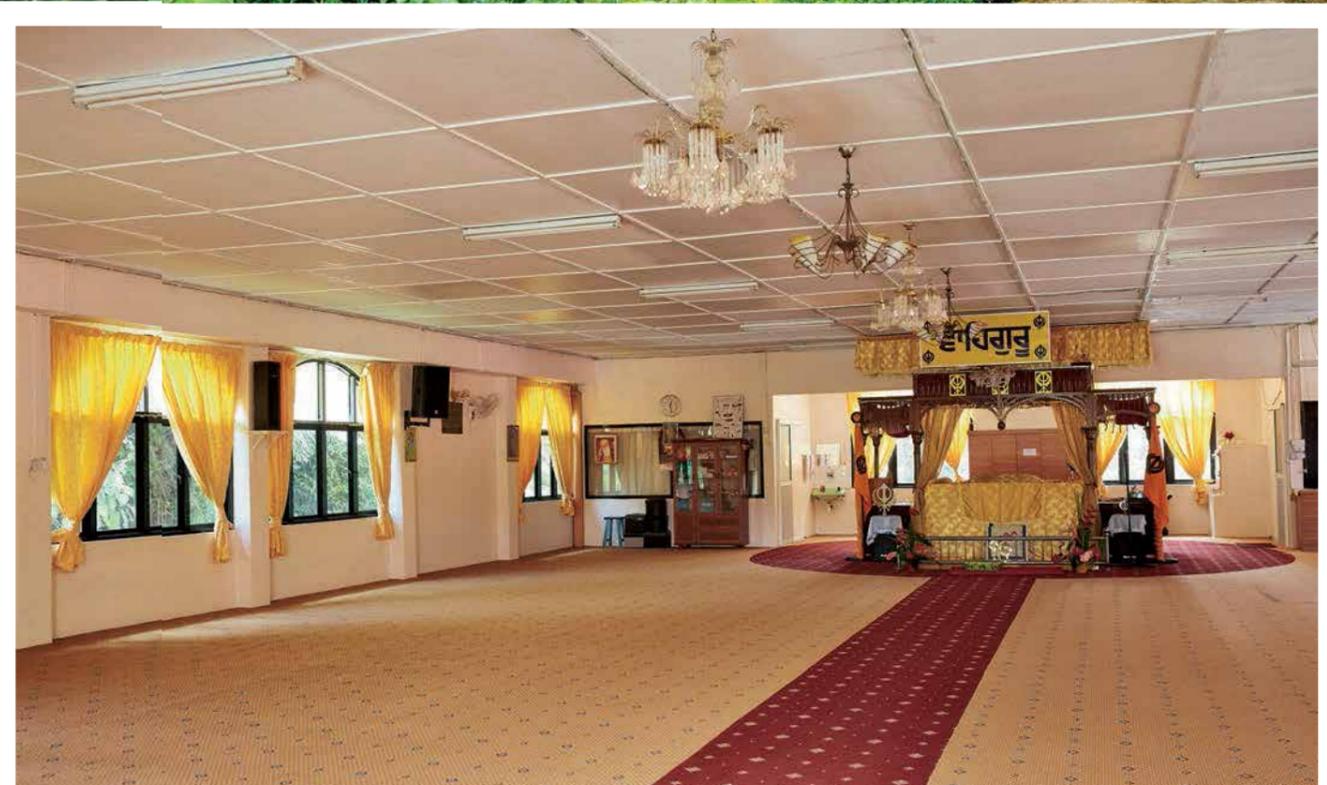
Time For Tea

No visit to Cameron Highlands is quite complete without a visit to **BOH Plantation**. Founded in 1929 by JA Russell during the British colonial era, the first BOH Plantation was set up in the Habu district, followed by the Fairlie Tea Garden and the latest being the Sungai Palas Tea Garden. The latter is your best bet as it offers guided factory tours, where you can see the entire process of tea production; literally, from plantation to tea cup!



The Temple Trail

There are two **Sikh temples**, built in the late 1920s and early 1930s, in Brinchang and Tanah Rata that are definitely well-worth visiting. Cameron Highlands used to have a population of around 500 Sikhs at one time. The temples were built by hand, using wood from the surrounding area. Over the years, they have undergone several transformations and weekly prayers are still held every Sunday at 5pm. The Sikh *sangat* (devotees) from other parts of the country and even Singapore occasionally hold prayers in these Gurdwara Sahib. ❖



Terence Waller is Resort Manager of Cameron Highlands Resort.



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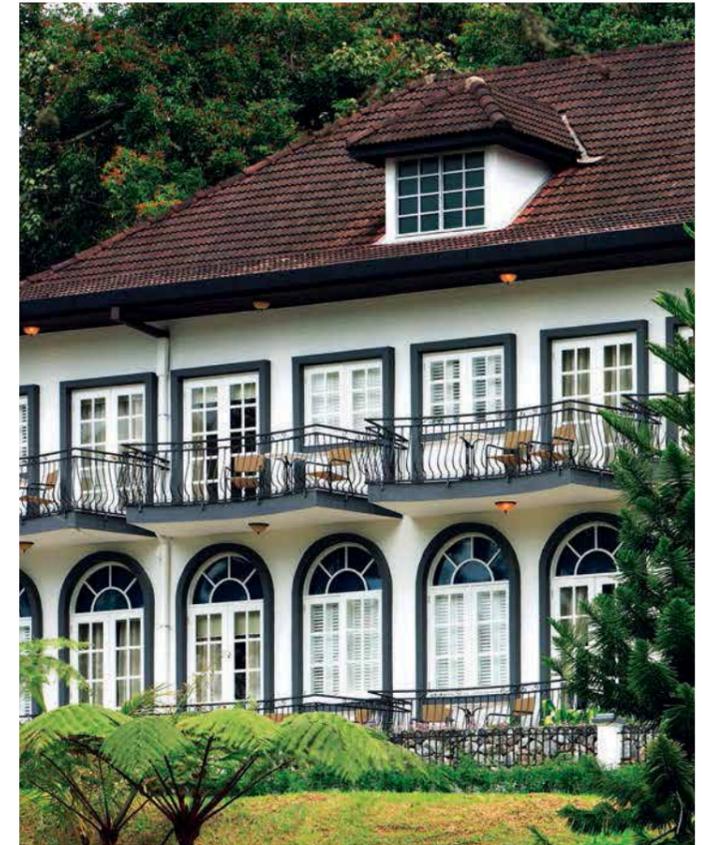


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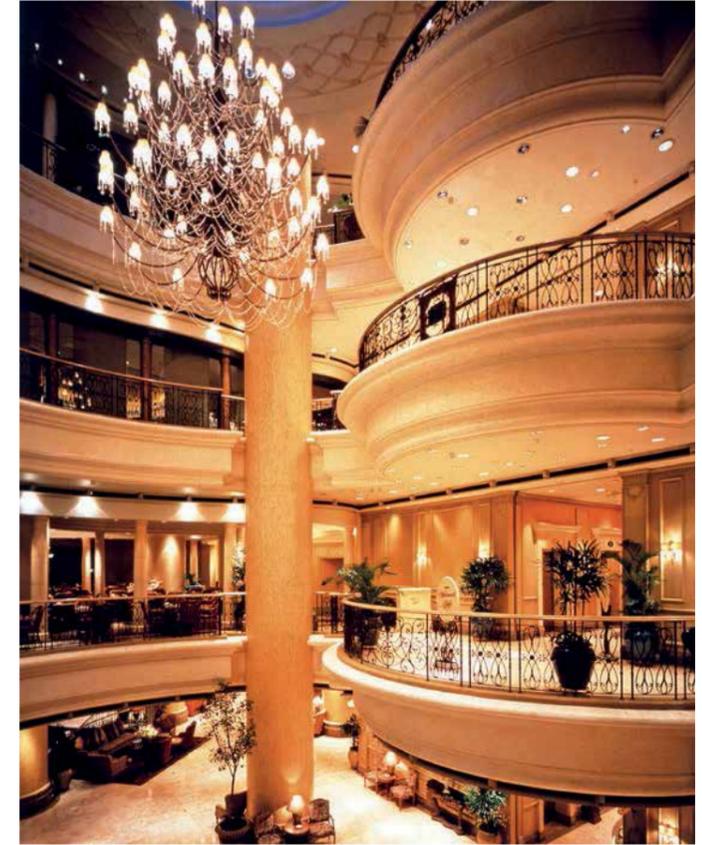
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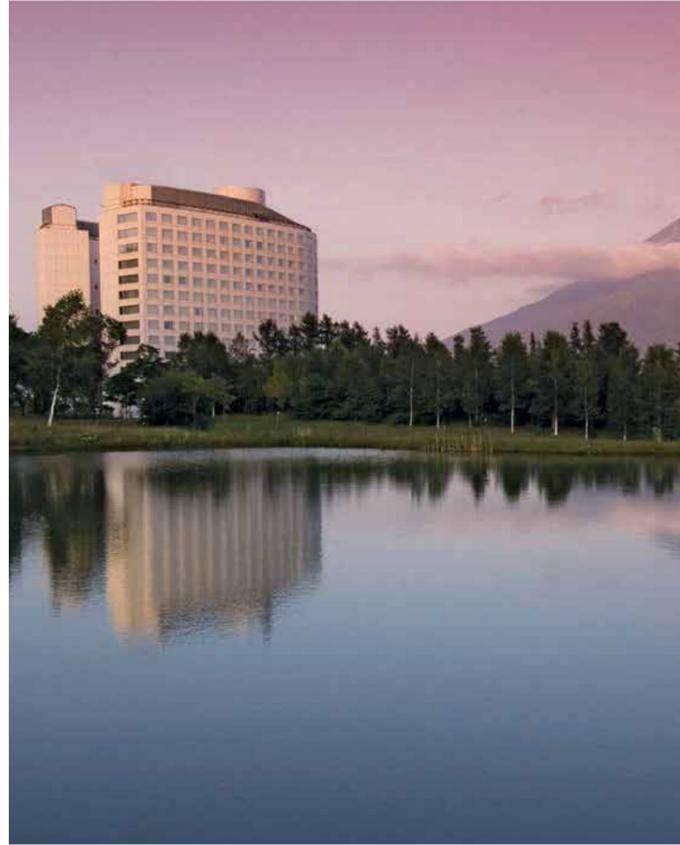
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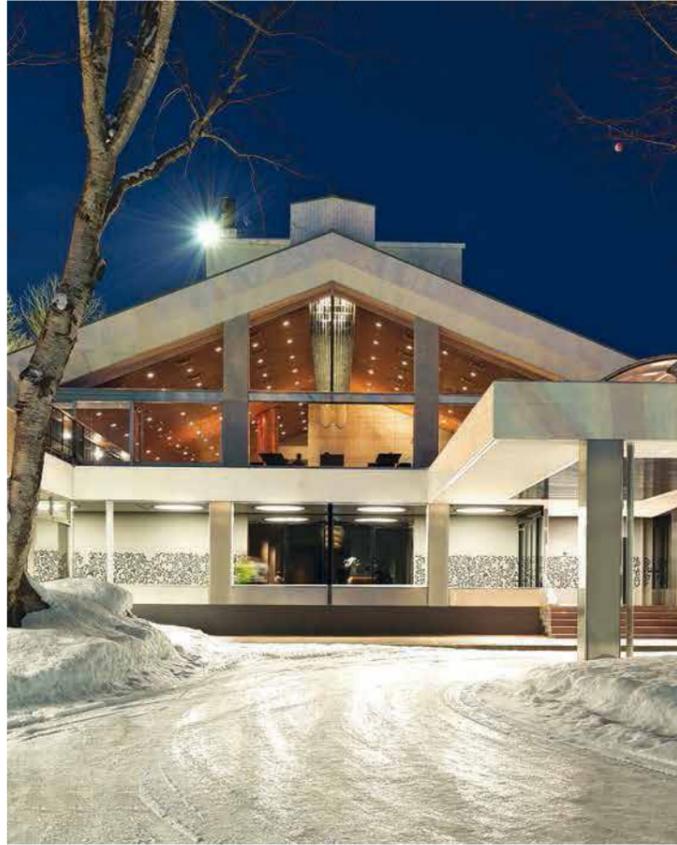
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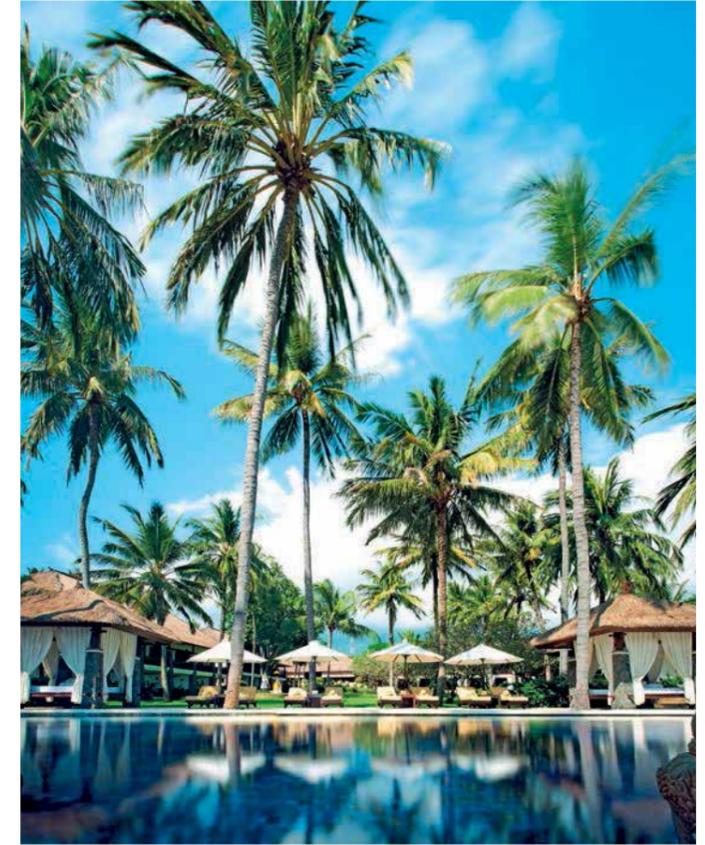


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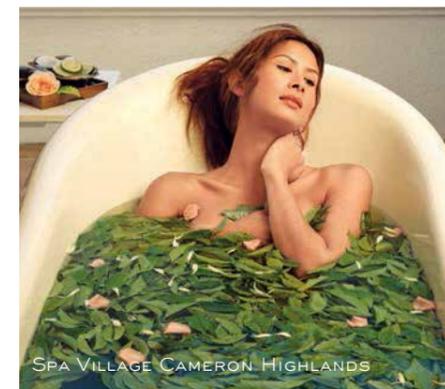


GUESTS WHO WISH TO ENJOY A MORE SPACIOUS STAY WHILE EXPLORING THE HISTORICAL SOUL OF BATH WOULD DO WELL TO CONSIDER THE ELIZABETHAN CHARMS OF THE MUSE TOWNHOUSES. SPREAD OUT OVER FIVE LEVELS, EACH WITH ITS OWN INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER, THE MUSE TOWNHOUSES COMBINE SPACIOUSNESS, MODERN COMFORT AND QUIET ELEGANCE ALL WITHIN THE HEART OF THIS FINE ANCIENT ROMAN SPA TOWN.
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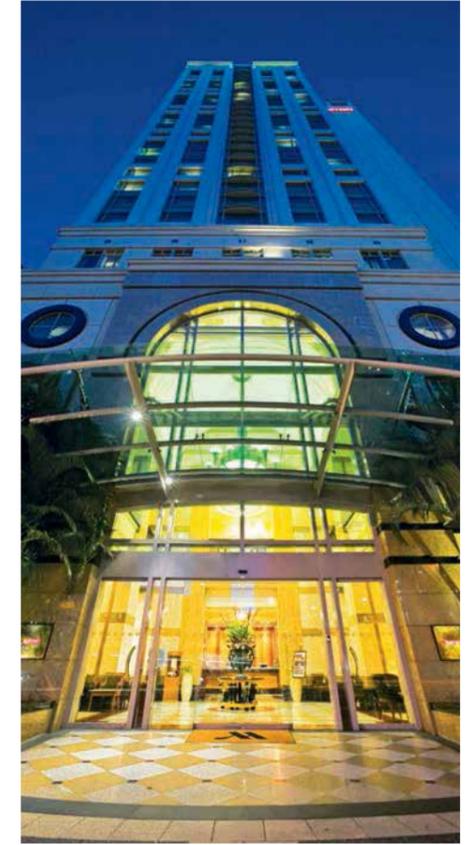
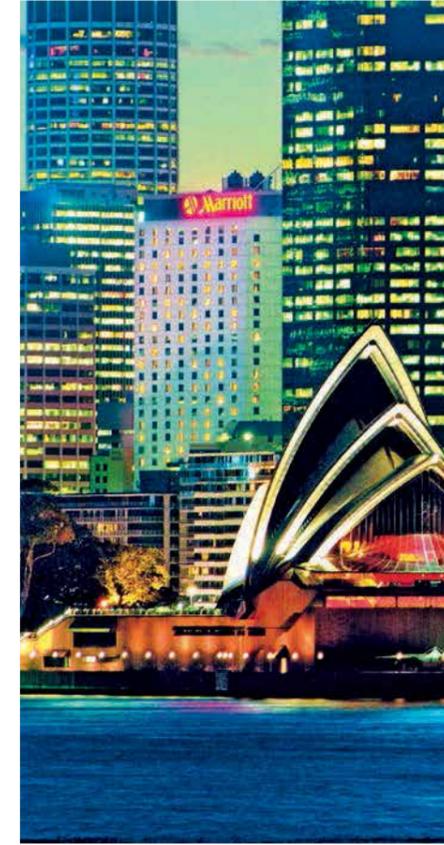


SPA VILLAGE GAYA ISLAND

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 FORESTS 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.
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TWO GORGEOUS AND LUXURIOUS VILLAS, WITH 9 AND 6 BEDROOMS RESPECTIVELY, OFFER COUNTRYSIDE LIVING, TRANQUILITY AND PEACE AS WELL AS THE SECURITY OF AN EXCLUSIVE RESIDENTIAL ESTATE, YET REMAIN IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO ALL TYPES OF AMENITIES AND ARE IDEAL FOR EXPLORING THE FAMOUS COSTA DEL SOL.
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THE SPA VILLAGES HONOUR THE HEALING CULTURE OF THE REGION IN WHICH EACH IS BUILT. EACH SPA VILLAGE HAS ITS OWN CHARACTER AND AUTHENTICITY, WORKING WITH LOCAL HEALERS AND TRADITIONS.
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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 FOR 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
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WWW.MARRIOTT.COM

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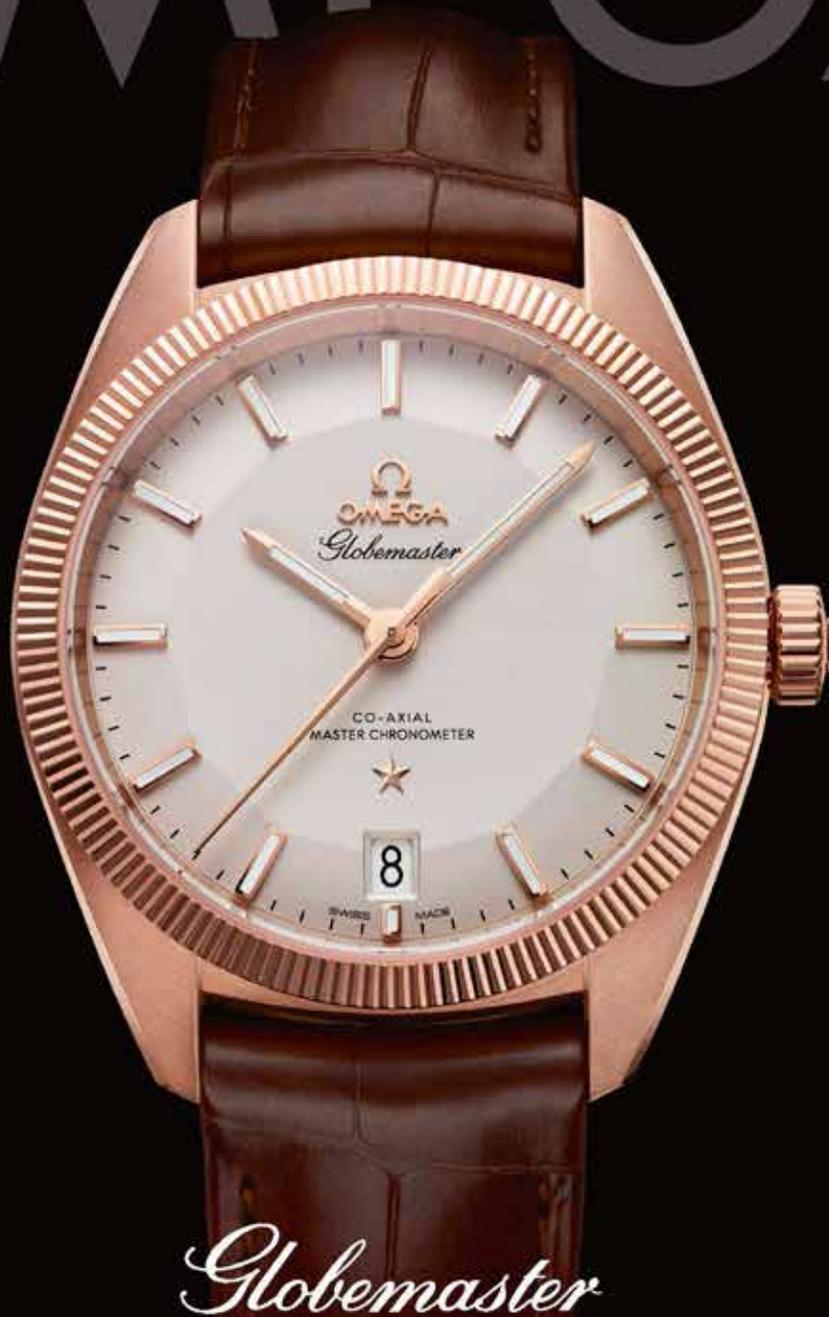


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