

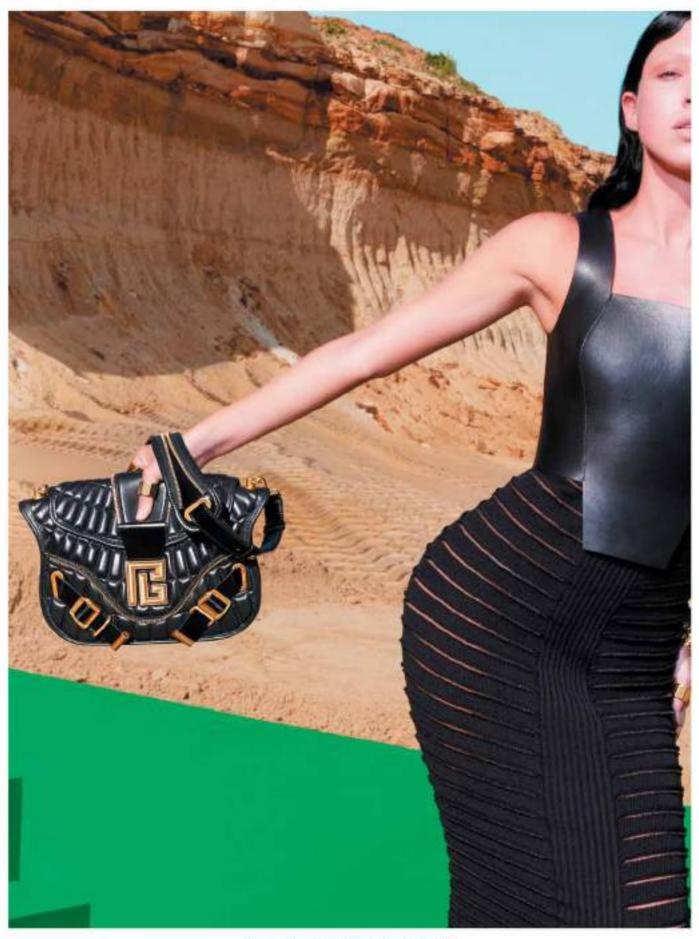
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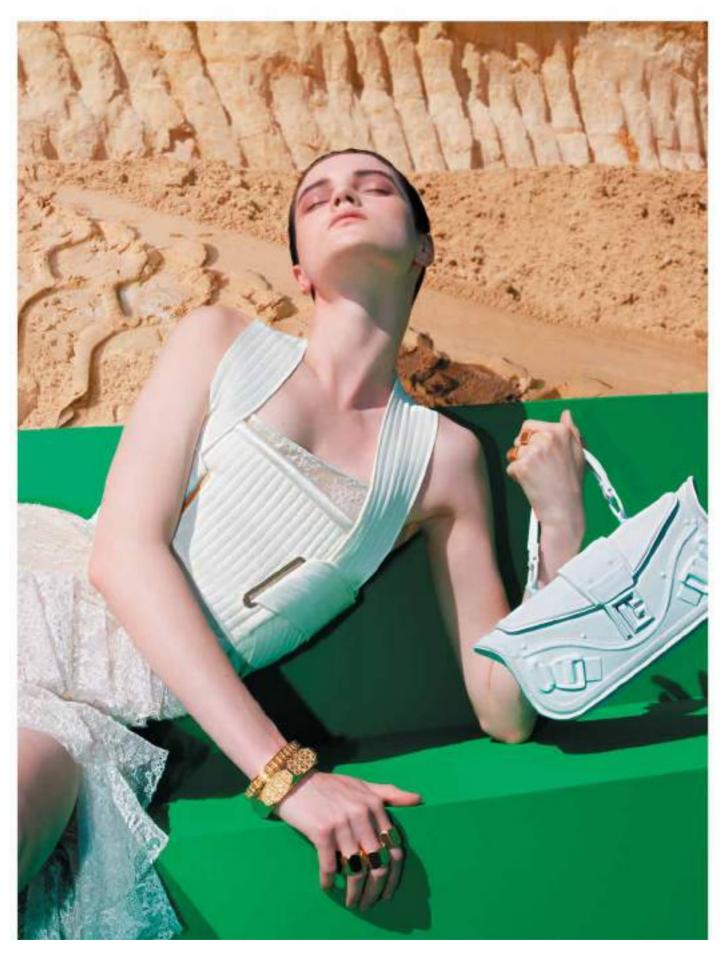
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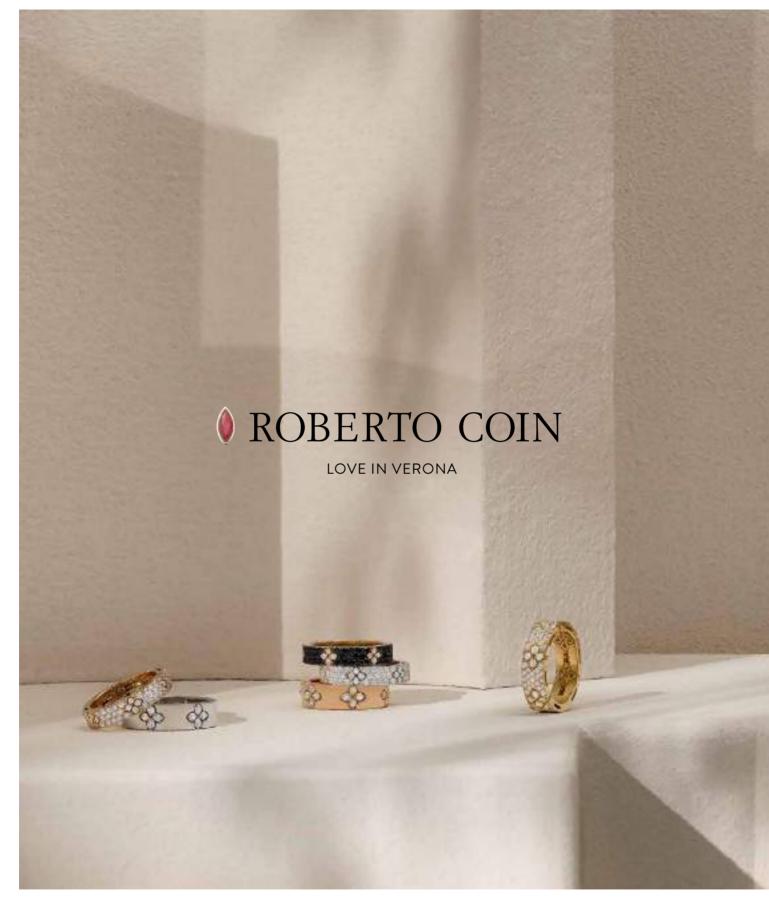


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THE YTL LUXURY MAGAZINE

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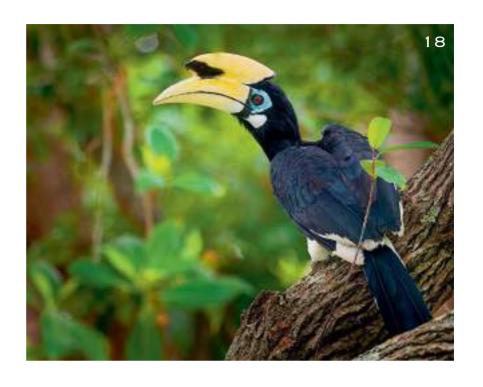
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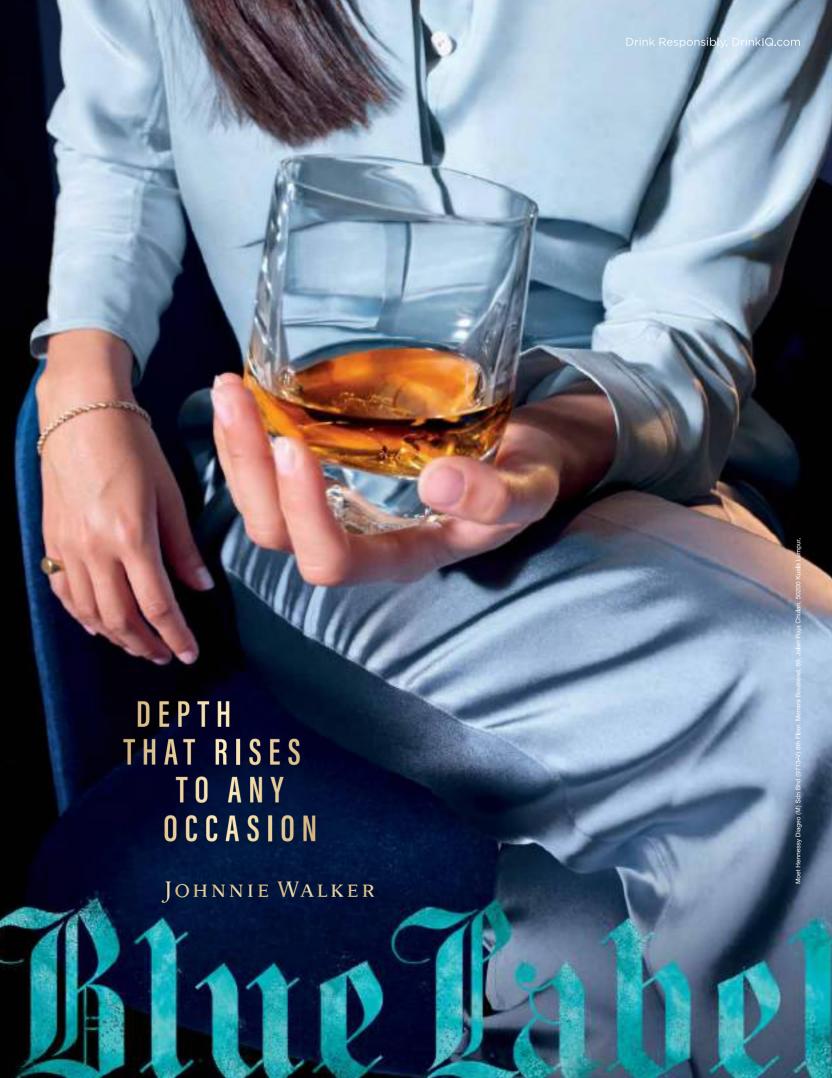
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THE YTL LUXURY MAGAZINE

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n our search for new adventures both near and far, we discover so much of ourselves. This brings to mind a Mark Twain observation: "Broad, wholesome and charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the Earth all of one's lifetime."

In this issue of YTL Life, we bring you the new stories of familiar places, with an insider's view of exciting discoveries at and around our properties. Our cover story reintroduces you to Gaya Island Resort's fascinating wonders; its age-old rainforests, native populations of flora and fauna, including the teeming marine life. Located off Borneo's northeast coastline, Gaya Island has the good fortune of being gazetted as a national park. And it is this lush return to nature that has attracted even Dame Judi Dench to visit, where her inner conservationist described her adventure as "the most extraordinary time of my life". We invite you, dear reader, to also do the same at Gaya Island Resort; to wake up to birdsong, enjoy a relaxing walk along the beach, kayak into the cool mangrove forests, bask in glorious sunsets and luxuriate with a delicious meal in this most surreal of landscapes.

Over in Australia, where winter is gradually giving way to spring, you can take in the decades-long body of work by Pablo Picasso at the National Gallery of Victoria, a 15-minute tram ride away from the Melbourne Marriott located at the fringe of the city's art precinct. The Picasso Century exhibition allows you to discover over 70 masterpieces by the Spanish artist and icon, inspired by his adventures and muses. In neighbouring New South Wales, the Sydney Harbour Marriot is the perfect launchpad for you to rediscover the city, now open after a fairly prolonged period of border controls. You'll find many familiar and some new pursuits; a picturesque fisherman's village in Watson's Bay and a backstage tour of the world-famous Sydney Opera House.

Those with a penchant for idyllic island vacations will take great pleasure in two of YTL Hotels' finest. At Pangkor Laut Resort, we bring you nine singularly awe-inspiring villas, each with its own unique characteristics which was intentionally

designed to ensure that the natural terrain and flora would be preserved as it has been for centuries before. Together, these villas form The Estates at Pangkor Laut Resort, the ideal retreat for those who seek an escape from urban realities. On the slightly larger island of Bali, Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali returns to life, offering physical rejuvenation and spiritual tranquillity away from the tourist throngs.

Read on and you'll find so much more to enjoy: Muay Thai at The Ritz-Carlton, Koh Samui; Kristang cuisine at The Majestic Malacca: homemade strawberry jam at Cameron Highlands Resort; an immersive whisky experience just a 20-minute stroll from The Glasshouse Hotel in Edinburgh; and the highly enjoyable green season at Niseko Village, where a day of horseback riding is rewarded with a bowlful of fresh uni don at one of the speciality restaurants. And through all these rich experiences in the company of family and friends, we hope that YTL Hotels has contributed, in some way, to your own journey of discovery.

tons'

BUSINESS UNUSUAL



HERE'S WHY THE MEETING SPACES AT HOTEL STRIPES KUALA LUMPUR SHOULD BE ON YOUR RADAR FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT.

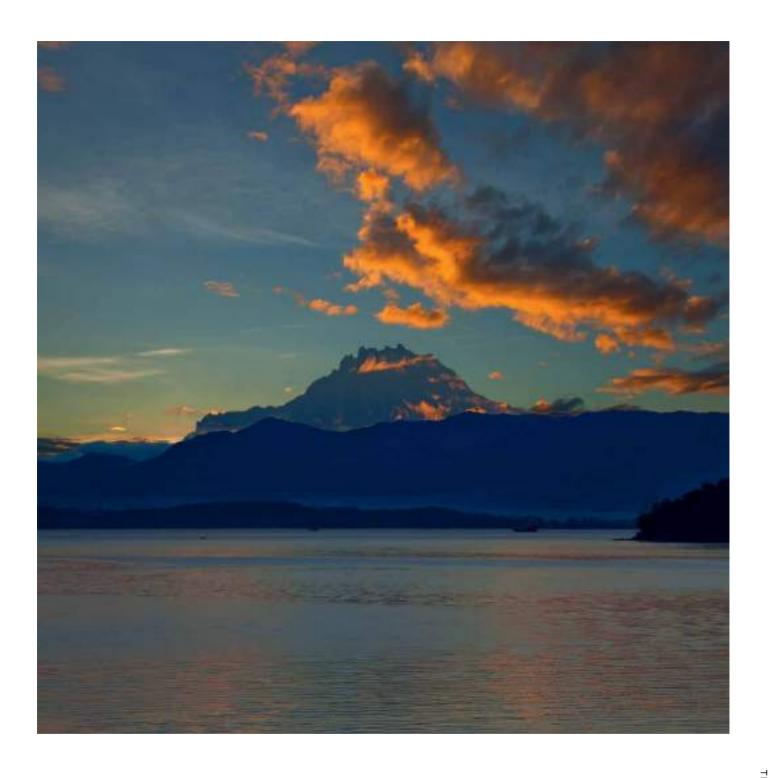
he smart set brainstorming on the next big thing can level up on their creative game and brace for impact at Hotel Stripes Kuala Lumpur, a member of the Autograph Collection. Studio S/T/R/I/P/E and a multifunctional space called The Snug offer a fresh perspective on how we conduct business. Their modular settings can accommodate a wide range of configurations, from U-shape to banquet-style seating, in an industrial-edged ambience. Think cool interiors, colourful beanbags, a collaboration-friendly atmosphere and an unmistakably dynamic can-do energy. There's plenty to ignite and inspire: poolside breakout areas, a walk around Hotel Stripes' vibrant, trendy neighbourhood, and handcrafted cocktails at Man Tao Bar. Take the corporate pressure off, get the right side of the brain ticking and find the fun in ideation again. Then, translate those sparks of genius into action at Snug, the perfect event-ready venue to host your latest bespoke venture. Thank us later when your unicorn starts sprouting wings.



This page: cosy with stripped-back walls giving it an industrial edge, The Snug on level 2 is an inspiring multifunctional space for one-of-a-kind events. Facing page: unwind after a full day of meetings at rooftop bar, Man Tao, which offers unrivalled views of downtown Kuala Lumpur.







AT GAYA ISLAND RESORT, NATURE'S RESPLENDENT BEAUTY BECOMES YOUR EVERYDAY SALVE, REFRESHING YOUR SPIRIT AT EVERY TURN.

Words by KENNETH TAN



here's something about Sabah that relaxes the world-weary traveller. Life here takes on an unhurried pace, perhaps a consequence of the solemn repose of Mount Kinabalu, the highest peak in Borneo rising 4,095m above the sea and visible from almost any vantage point in Kota Kinabalu. This sense of certainty is a rhythmic beat that calms the soul.

That ineffable feeling that all will be well becomes even more pronounced as you step onto the speedboat at Jesselton Point in Kota Kinabalu and, within 10 minutes, arrive at the idyllic paradise of Gaya Island Resort – a five-star property and member of the Small Luxury Hotels. Located in the heart of Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park, Gaya Island is largely gazetted as a national park, which protects and preserves its unique, native populations of flora and fauna.

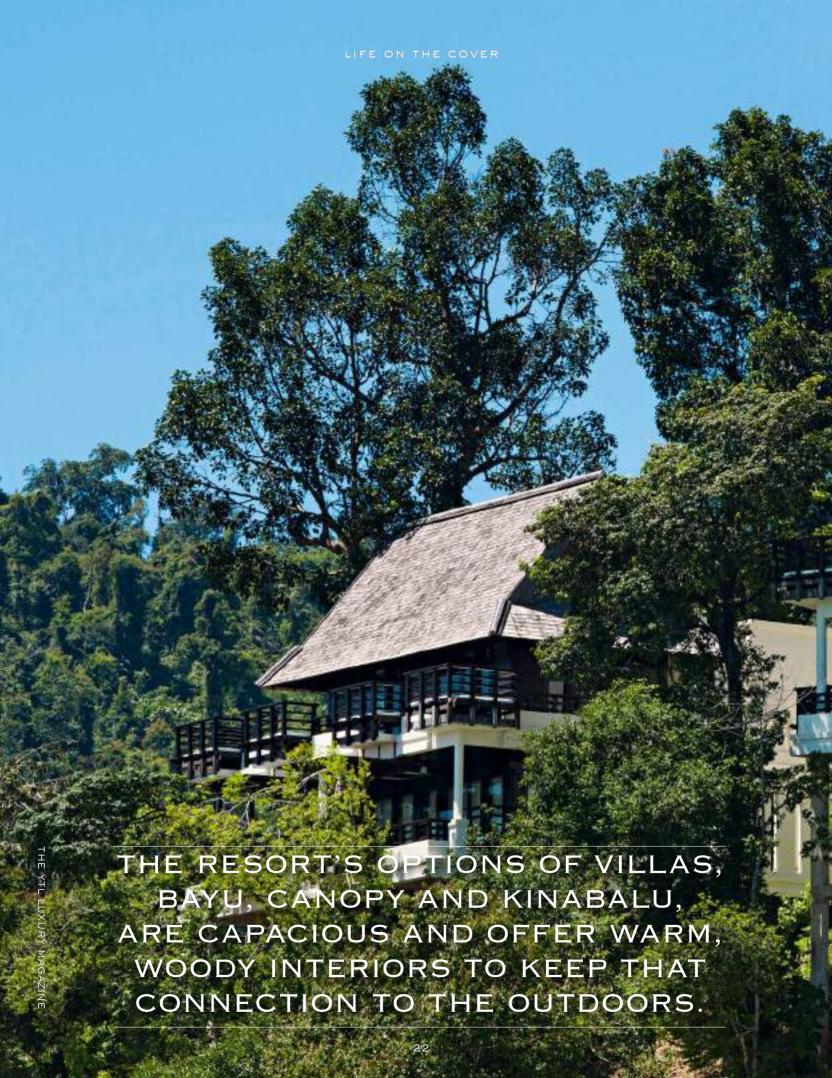
Upon leaving the pier, guests fall into a lull of the jungle's soothing rhythms, with the morning warbling of birdsong, afternoon riffs from mangrove cicadas and an evening serenade of wildlife from the rainforest canopy. All around the resort, a sense of theatre pervades; a monitor lizard doing languid laps in the stream, its speckled band flecked by sunlight, while a long-tailed macaque grooms her youngling as it impatiently waits to rejoin its monkey friends at play. Up overhead, a white-bellied sea eagle soars towards its treetop

eyrie, with its white breast indicating its relative youthfulness (adults develop brown patches).

At the nearby mangrove forests, where the resort's senior naturalist, Justin Juhun, leads morning kayak tours, one is likely to spot great egrets, horseshoe crabs and even an oriental pied hornbill. The experience is almost surreal, with the journey taking guests through a natural amphitheatre carved out by running streams and time. The air is cooler and richer as mangroves are 10 times more effective in recycling carbon and producing oxygen versus the rainforest.

Juhun, whose conservation work at Gaya Island Resort was recognised with a platinum award for CSR leadership at the 2018 Global CSR Summit and Awards, is a true-blue Sabahan, growing up in Tawau with a father who had plenty of animal lore. Graduating with a degree in hotel management, Juhun then set out on his naturalist path: undertaking orangutan conservation, wetlands management and training in the UK before returning to Sabah to serve at Gaya Island Resort. He describes his office as a "treasure island" due to its breakaway from Borneo, thus leading to its unique gene pools and evolutionary results. "No other island in Sabah has proboscis monkeys. It is one of the seven wonders of Gaya Island, which also includes the mangrove forests, red giant flying squirrels, bearded pigs, fireflies, elephant foot yam and the boobook owl."









Juhun also leads the morning nature walks which take guests deep into the mother forest of Gaya Island, where the shy and endangered proboscis monkeys are occasionally spotted. The trail wends its way through towering hardwood trees and a diversity of flora, from strangler figs and elongated rattan to vermillion-coloured fungi.

Back at the resort, hourly boat transfers to Tavajun Bay – a tranquil strip of beach further out – reveal the Gaya Island Resort Marine Centre helmed by the resort's marine biologist Scott Mayback, who specialises in coral restoration and turtle rescue. Over the past six years since the centre's establishment, Mayback and his team have overseen 20 individual turtle rescues and undertaken the planting of over 1,200 coral slabs on the seabed.

The coral planting which Mayback conducts starts with a guided snorkelling exploration for guests, who will then emerge from the waters with bits of coral that will become the foundation of new reefs. These fragments – which grow at a pace of two centimetres per year – are attached to a concrete slab to encourage greater multiplication of the reefs over time – one of the most important breeding habitats for fish, providing refuge for over 25 per cent of all marine life. The crystal clear waters of Gaya Island are conducive to the growth of corals, and Mayback is also experimenting with micro-fragmentation of corals to accelerate reproduction rates up to 47 times to re-establish reefs around the island.

At one end of the resort, the Spa Village, enrobed by the rainforest's greenery, is a great way to unwind – with massages and natural therapies designed to soothe and relax. And because time seems to become elongated at Gaya Island Resort, ladies may opt for the Unduk Ngadau treatment, named after the Kadazandusun beauty pageant held at the end of the harvest festival in Sabah annually. It

is an indulgent three-hour session comprising a body scrub, hair mask, indigenous massage and a facial.

As with every Spa Village within the YTH Hotels fraternity, each centre offers one-of-a-kind regimens inspired by the healing culture of its location using fresh local ingredients. The result, in the case of the Gaya Island Resort spa iteration, is an authentic treatment that marries age-old traditions – such as the rice scrubs and masks of the Kadazandusun and the age-old practices of the Bajau sea nomads – with modern approaches to rejuvenate body and soul.

The resort's options of villas, Bayu, Canopy and Kinabalu, are capacious and offer warm, woody interiors to keep that connection to the outdoors. The two-bedroom Suria Suite is perched on the hillside and spans over 188sqm, with full-length windows and balconies that open up to vistas of the South China Sea. And, of course, for the in-between moments, there's always the plethora of dining options at the resort ranging from its Feast Village which offers a perfectly grilled tuna steak with hints of pepper and salt to the Japanese-styled Omakase which has a chef's table and serves nabeyaki and shabu-shabu under the evening sky.

Couples will love the dreamy candlelit dinners with the exquisite seafood at Fisherman's Cove as they dine to the lullaby of lapping waves, while Tavajun Bay caters to bigger groups of families and friends with a barbecue lunch. At the main resort's pool bar and lounge, lazy afternoons are complemented by the bossa nova sounds of a different kind of warbler – perchance a chanteuse like Cecilia Dale – and a choice of international and local favourites, from pizzas and tuna tataki to curry laksa and banana fritters, paired with a deliciously cold glass of wine.

For more information, visit www.gayaislandresort.com





H E R I T A G E R E V I V A L

THE CLASSIC WING AT THE MAJESTIC KUALA LUMPUR IS SET TO ENTHRAL GUESTS AGAIN AFTER A COMPLETE REFRESH THAT TAKES NOTHING AWAY FROM ITS ORIGINAL CHARM.

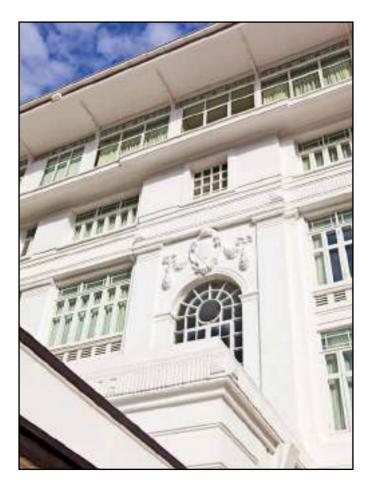
Words by MINDY TEH

he eponymously named original wing of The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur, a member of the Autograph Collection, is ready to welcome guests after a complete refurbishment. Those who return time and again to this part of the building will note that its many charms harking back to Malaysia's rich history have remained intact, while modern, even state-of-the-art, creature comforts have been discreetly added.

The Majestic Wing makes up part of the original hotel established in 1932 that is now gazetted as a national heritage site. The combined neoclassical and art deco styles that have come to define the colonial era extends beyond the hotel façade, informing the exclusive set of suites (and one room) with deep and rich wood furniture, cream-and-white linens and opulent drapes. Tufted carpets are laid over rich timber flooring while a chequered tiled bathroom showcases clawfoot bathtubs and separate showers.

Those lucky enough to land themselves in The Straits Room will discover a graceful, inviting space with its timeless elegance. The Colonial Suite is a step up with its separate living room and bedroom, while the Governor Suite provides a spacious, luxurious stay. The two largest suites, both named Majestic, provide respite within a gorgeous, refined setting





spread over 100 square metres each. The spacious bedroom within each suite features a beautiful walk-in wardrobe that recalls days when ladies and gentlemen had maids and butlers tending to them hand and foot. An open-plan living area in which to lounge on comfortable sofas, an elegant dining area and a guest powder room offer the ultimate in luxurious indulgence.

The glamour of 1930s refinement awaits at The Smoke House with a full range of services including a lounge and bar, a private dining room with a chef on call, cigar room, bespoke tailor and the world's oldest gentleman's barber and a Royal Warrant holder to the late HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, Truefitt & Hill.

The perfect place for a tipple and chat sees the single monikered Johnnie tending bar since the hotel's renaissance in the new millennium. Available here are a full range of cocktails from a bygone era. The Stengah, for example, consists of equal parts whisky and soda water (Stengah is an abbreviation of Setengah or half in Malay) and is served over ice. Once the drink de rigueur across the British Empire in the 1900s, the Stengah is begging for a welcome revival on a hot, humid day. The Gin Pahit has translated well into the modern age. It was brilliantly conceived by an unlikely source, the Royal Navy, for its sailors to make the Angostura bitter (pahit is bitter in Malay) that was used medicinally, more palatable to them. The Gin Pahit's place in literary history was sealed in the many stories written by colonial writers including William Somerset Maugham.

The Code 55 and 2 Bulat is a house classic that deserves literary mention, not least because its name is a hilarious colloquialism with an equally funny story behind it. To find out more, order this refreshing cocktail of beer, lemonade, gin and whisky, and have Johnnie come over for a chat. Other Malaysian classics include the renowned Junglebird which was created in the 1970s at Kuala Lumpur's Aviary Bar, the Straits Sling – a tarter version of the Singapore Sling – and the East India Cocktail which made an appearance in Harry Johnson's definitive New and Improved Bartender's Manual from 1882. The East India Cocktail perfectly mixes cognac, maraschino liquor, Cointreau, raspberry syrup and angostura bitters into a drink that still translates well in the 21st century.

Those looking to light up their prized Fuentes will be given velvet smoking jackets to wear to protect their tuxedos or gowns. This elegant attention to detail is a rare service that is much appreciated. For even more personalised service, the Smoke House Gentleman's Club membership comes with benefits that include a monogrammed jacket.

As always, the Majestic Wing's mainstay, the Colonial Cafe, serves classics including the famous Hainanese Chicken Chop and an updated prawn cocktail, while the legendary Soliano family take turns at the grand piano. The Library also presents welcome repose with a good book, while those wishing to hold a private soirée can do so at the beautiful Orchid Conservatory. One thing is for certain, it is easy to lose oneself in a relaxed and elegant past that is celebrated in its full glamour here in this wing.

For more information, visit www.majestickl.com



This page, from top: enjoy a Stengah, Gin Pahit or Sling just like the planters of old at The Bar; the Straits Room exudes the hotel's elegance and timeless style.

Facing page, from top: The Smoke House embodies the decadence of the 1930s; The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur includes the original 1932 building.





METROPOLITAN CHIC



THE GLAMOROUS STYLE OF TOM FORD COMES ALIVE WITH THE PRESENCE OF ITS FIRST FLAGSHIP BOUTIQUE LOCATED AT THE STARHILL. YTL LIFE SHOWCASES THE LUXURY FASHION LABEL IN THE ELEGANT SURROUNDINGS OF THE RITZ-CARLTON, KUALA LUMPUR, WHICH RECALLS ALL THE HIGH POINTS OF THE LEGENDARY HOTEL CHAIN.



THE YTL LUXURY MAGAZINE





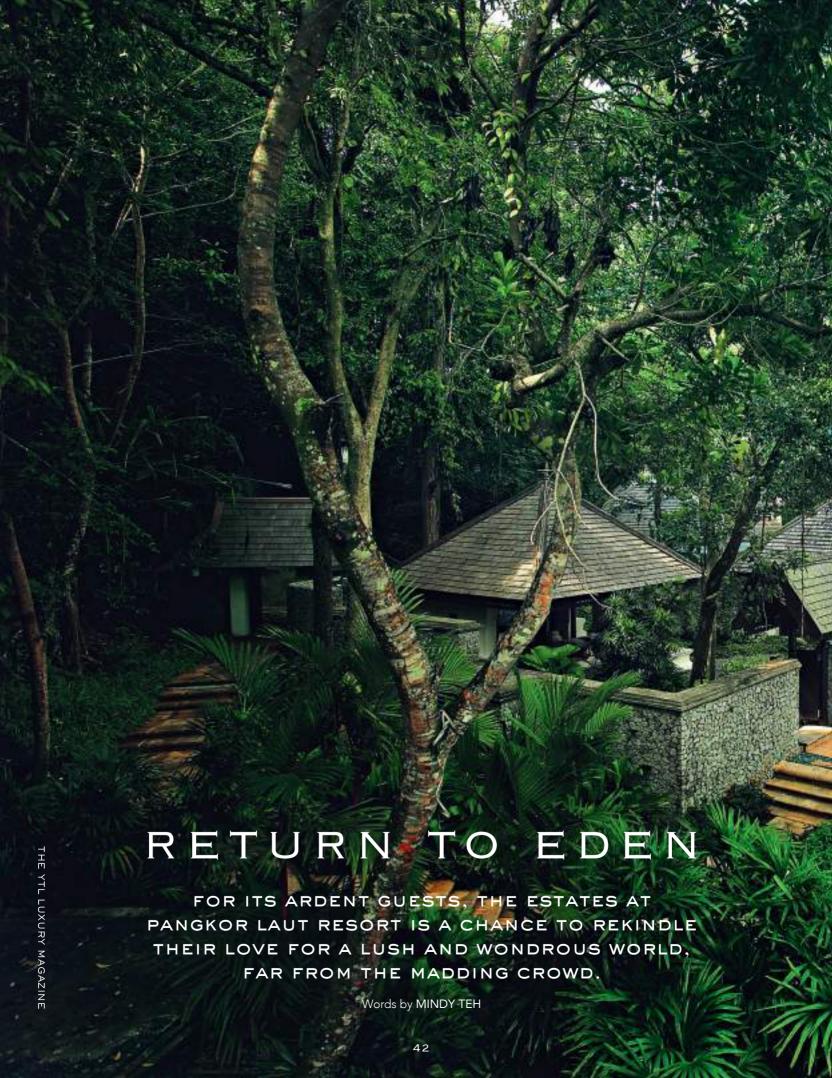




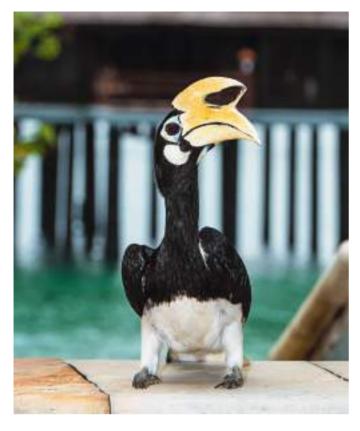




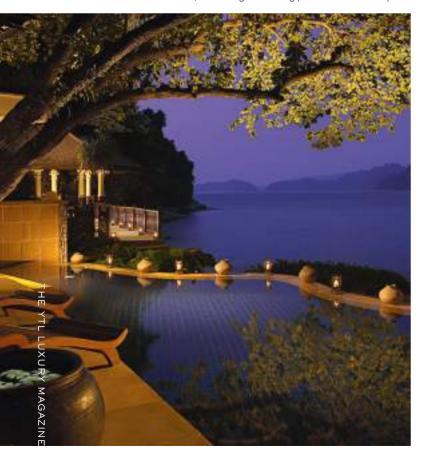








Clockwise from top: Pangkor Laut's hornbill community provides plenty of chance encounters; a 270-degree panorama of rainforest and sea from Estate Eight; a path from The Estates wends its way towards the beach where Pangkor Laut Resort's overwater chalets are located; Estate Four offers two bedrooms, with living and dining pavilions around its pool.



t The Estates at Pangkor Laut Resort, the mischievous high-pitched call of the oriental pied hornbill signals that all is well in paradise. These friendly birds, faithful companions and guardians during one's stay, drop by intermittently to say hello. Their presence lends the estates, and the island, an almost mythical air as ardent guests rekindle memories of the lush and wondrous world they've come to love and have now eagerly returned to.

There is little wonder that those familiar with the charms of The Estates are so beguiled. Nine exceptional private sanctuaries preside over a verdant million-year-old rainforest and shimmering emerald waters that teem with life, a veritable Eden on Earth. The great opera singer, Luciano Pavarotti, was moved by the island's stunning vistas to the point of tears. "This place is enchanting, it is paradise here," he famously said. "This morning when I wake up, I went out, I was really moved, almost crying to see how beautiful things has done God. Because this is really paradise."

Much has been made about the great care that has been taken to preserve the magic of the island. The tenet set by its guiding light, Tan Sri Francis Yeoh, was to "tread lightly upon the land". To that end, the creation of The Estates adhered to an intuitive and increasingly rare architectural sensibility that is designed to complement and blend rather than overwhelm its surroundings. An island-wide dictum, for example, ensures that all plants more than 15cm in diameter are given the sort of protection and immunity rivalling that of a distinguished diplomat's. The levelling of hills is forbidden and structures are formed according to the lay of the land. Roads, too, follow old trails or are cantilevered into the hills, allowing flora and fauna to continue to thrive underneath.

The reverence and respect accorded to the land follow in the footsteps of the indigenous tribes that once made the area their home and have long understood that the path to least resistance is the true way to happiness. Challenges are met not as obstacles but as opportunities for creativity and at The Estates, it is not unusual to see a staircase built around a boulder, a tree growing out of a custom-built hole in the roof or swimming pools formed around natural ponds.

Each estate is sequestered in its own oasis and possesses a defining feature and character that guests find irresistible. Favourites are quickly identified and visited often. At Estate One, for example, a sweeping vista of the beach on the secluded bay welcomes the weary technology wunderkind whose stay includes relaxing soaks in either one of two openair jacuzzis centred within beautiful walled gardens and whose bedroom showcases a magnificent fossil wall.

Estate Two's accessibility to the winding shoreline, charming carved wooden bridge leading to remarkable prehistoric foliage and natural freshwater pool make for perfect photo opportunities and memorable moments that a C-level executive and her friends on a girls-only trip would cherish. Estate Four, meanwhile, highlights two private pavilions for a newly wedded couple, one built seemingly over the waves, creating a stunning visual effect, while the other is a private oasis screened discreetly with bamboo.

The marvels continue at Estate Five. Built under a canopy of rainforest trees, it is the only estate with a spacious wooden deck purpose-built with a magnificent 270-degree panorama of rainforest and sea, perfect for barbecue evenings or an

The marvels continue at Estate Five. Built under a canopy of rainforest trees, it is the only estate with a spacious wooden deck purpose-built with a magnificent 270-degree panorama of rainforest and sea, perfect for barbecue evenings or an intimate engagement party with friends. Estate Six, meanwhile, attracts dynastic families with its long open lawn, a communal lap pool and uniquely, a hot spa. Each of its three bungalow bedrooms has a private balcony or veranda with views of the rainforest when one feels the need to retreat and recharge.

Estate Seven is a spectacular sight. Built on staggered levels closely following the topography of the land, it is the largest and hilliest of all nine estates, with its bungalow bedrooms enjoying the most secluded and expansive of spaces. Here, couples can relish alone time in their personal garden space, reconvening with the rest of the party during meals.

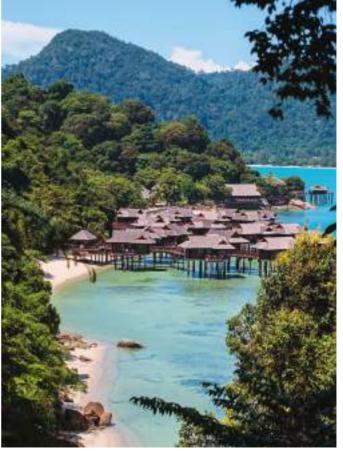
Eight is a lucky number and this estate benefits from being perched on the edge of a hill so that all three of its bedrooms offer beautiful views of the sea. Estate Eight is also formed under a natural rainforest canopy surrounded by tall, ancient trees with nothing less than dramatic sunsets to fill your evenings by an infinity pool shaped like a delicate lotus flower.

Inspired by the traditional Japanese onsen, Estate Nine's hot spa pavilion is designed to be a communal bath where guests can enjoy a convivial soak over a cold bottle of Akita's best sake. It is an experience made exceptional because of the surrounding rainforest and an impressive natural rock garden of ancient monoliths that present fascinating talking points for the estate.

The many splendours of The Estates at Pangkor Laut Resort are nothing if not for the exceptional level of service guests enjoy during each stay. With two butlers per estate in attendance and a personal chef, all requests are seen to perceptively, even preternaturally. Expect the finer points remembered beyond birthday dates: how you like your coffee and eggs, which pillows suit, what flowers you enjoy at the table, who prefers which bedroom, and more.

The attention to detail is remarkable and one of the reasons why guests return time and again to this paradise. The Estates at Pangkor Laut Resort remain unparalleled as a tropical retreat for the discerning. As one of its other famous devotees, Dame Joan Collins, puts it, the estates are "utter heaven", found nowhere else on Earth.





For more information, go to www.pangkorlautresort.com

KRISTANG TREASURES

THE MAJESTIC MALACCA IS ON A MISSION
TO RESTORE AND CELEBRATE A MOST
RARE AND PRECIOUS CUISINE, INVITING
ITS GUESTS TO BE A PART OF ITS
PRESERVATION THROUGH AN IMMERSIVE
CULINARY JOURNEY.

Words by MINDY TEH

Facing page: the Kristang Culinary Journey invites guests of The Majestic Malacca to discover a lesser-known side of the city.





This and facing pages: learn about each ingredient and the history of each Kristang (Portuguese-Eurasian) dish with one of the chefs from The Majestic Malacca.



f history is best traced through one's gastronomy, then nowhere is this more evident than in Malacca. Its remarkable heritage, made colourful and diverse by its rich history as the heart of the spice trade, can be discerned through a wonderful melting pot of flavours and influences drawn from the Malays, Chinese, Indian, Persians and Turks. Yet, one cuisine has become markedly elusive and rare.

The food of the Malaccan-Portuguese, or Kristang, reflects a 500-year-old history that has seen this small ethnic group evolve its own culture, even patois, that is different from modern-day Portuguese. The Kristang way of life and by extension, the food, is fast becoming a vestige of a bygone era as the Malaccan-Portuguese emigrate or intermarry, assimilating into other cultures. There are now only 1,200 inhabitants of the city's Portuguese settlement and the community is struggling to maintain its identity.

Determined to help restore and celebrate Kristang culture, The Majestic Malacca is arguably the only establishment of its kind in the city to weave its customs into its own storied tapestry. Its Comprador, Alvin Kessler, himself a native Malaccan son and part of the Kristang community, keeps a close eye on proceedings, ensuring that the integrity of the culture is upheld and maintained.

Of particular focus at the hotel is Kristang cuisine with its mélange of Portuguese, Dutch, Indian and Chinese tastes and textures, showcased in all its glory at The Mansion, the hotel's colonial-style restaurant located on the first floor. Drawn from the once closely guarded family recipes, the restaurant features crowd-pleasers such as Kari Debal but is also keen on introducing lesser-known dishes to its guests. Try Kristang Amostrador to start, a platter of appetisers including Inchimintu Karangezu (baked stuffed crab with vegetables, chicken and prawns), Cincalok Fretu (crispy fritters infused with fermented krill) and Karing-karing Fretu (crispy fried silver threadfish). Other notable dishes include Kari Seccu (slowcooked beef and potatoes in a dry Portuguese curry) and Soy Limang Terung (lightly fried aubergine in soy and lime gravy). Doubtless, The Mansion has garnered an appreciative audience both near and far with the former being a testament to its delicious authenticity.

Those looking to deepen their insight into the Malaccan-Portuguese experience can join an immersive culinary programme specially created by the hotel. The Kristang Culinary Journey begins with a visit to the local market led by Chef JR Rodolfo Balaqui, whose passion for the food was cultivated under the tutelage of Kristang exponents. So proficient is Chef JR that only he is entrusted with the baking of the hotel's famous sugee (semolina) cakes, the celebrated Kristang cakes that take hours to prepare. Fazeh de Casa, the Kristang (and quite possibly, original) version of Malaysia's favourite coconut caramel, kaya, is also made at the hotel under Chef JR's supervision

Freshness of produce is an uncompromisable aspect of this nuanced and vivid cuisine, an essential first step to good Kristang cooking. The Malaccan market is indeed a revelation, where even fellow Malaysians will be taken by its vivacity and sheer variety of produce. Just-caught stingray, squirming eels in buckets, live shellfish and more are displayed alongside foodstuff found only in the city, including the prized buah keluak and the Kristang condiment of fermented krill, cincalok.

Chef JR's exacting standards ensure that only the freshest *ikan tenggiri* (mackerel), chicken and vegetables make the cut and soon, these ingredients are prepped and ready for the cooking class that follows the market excursion.

The two recipes featured, Kari Debal and Sambal Fish Binagre, offer a glimpse of the cuisine's origins and cooking style as well as its colonial cross-currents. Immediately discernible is the use of vinegar – a throwback to its Portuguese roots – rather than the tamarind paste of the Peranakans and Malays. Candlenuts also feature greatly, perhaps a way of replacing the chestnuts that the Portuguese used in their cooking. A quick scan sees Goan influences (black peppercorns, mustard

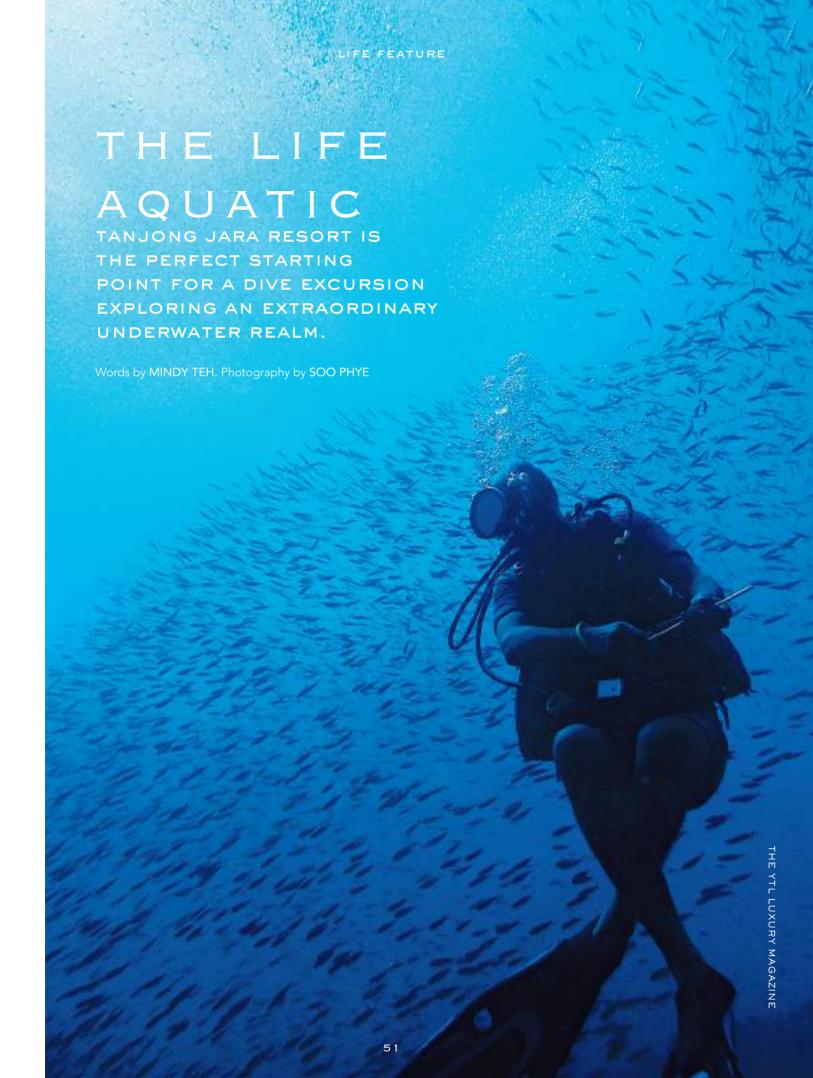
seeds, cloves and fresh nutmeg) as well as Malay (lemongrass and galangal) in these dishes. Neither dish employs the *santan* (coconut cream) or *belacan* so beloved of the local Malay and Peranakan communities – the richness of the Kari Debal is derived purely from the flavour of its meats melded with the fresh, deep tang of spices.

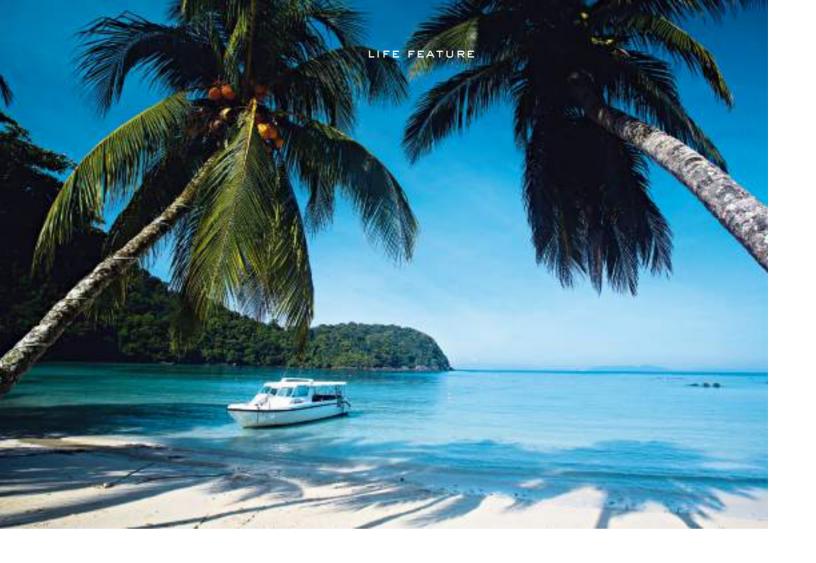
Cooking these dishes is enough to whet the appetite and the ultimate tasting of them brings a new-found appreciation for Kristang cuisine as one savours its wonderful array of tastes and textures. Hope springs eternal for its welcome resurgence.

The Kristang Culinary Journey is available upon request and comprises a market visit, lesson with a master chef and a food tasting. Return transfers, light refreshments, hats and aprons are provided. Children aged 12 and below join at no additional cost. For more information, go to www.majesticmalacca.com











s above, so below. In Dungun, Terengganu, the bucolic, coconut tree-lined seascapes of Tanjong Jara Resort are a glorious promise of what lies beneath the deep blue waters of the South China Sea. Scenic vistas and an architecture that references a 17th-century Malay palace provide an idyllic *mise en scène* at the resort, while the warm and communal culture of the Malays is felt from the minute of your arrival.

The resort's many inviting lounge areas, a relaxing spa treatment or a dip in the pool may tempt you to spend your entire stay without even venturing out. Yet, for those eager to get back out into open water after a two-year hiatus, the siren call of the sea soon beckons. The resort is the perfect place from which to begin an epic dive excursion and explore Terengganu's underwater majesty.

The scuba community heads out to Pulau Tenggol, an island located in the state's Marine Park, 26km off the coast of Kuala Dungun. Named for the fact that it looks like a person perched by a cliff, Tenggol is the last in a series of islands strung like jade pearls that include the equally stunning Perhentian and Redang. The island had managed to stay undetected for decades and was used only as sanctuary by local fishermen during stormy weather. Its location was so closely guarded that some still refer to it as The Lost World.

A 45-minute boat ride transports you to the island's shores anchored by a natural bay and characterised by 244m-tall

cliffs. It is the bay's warm, cocooned waters that provide a nurturing home in which sumptuous coral gardens bloom and grow, attracting an impressive marine biodiversity.

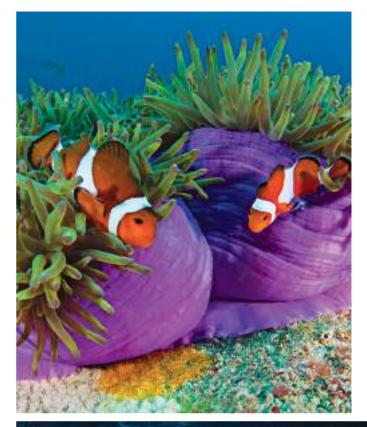
Tenggol is exceptional for its outstanding range of dive sites and divers enjoy 18 stunning locations around the island, with seven more on the satellite islands close by. Each location presents a remarkable and memorable experience. Snorkellers can enjoy the calm coral gardens of shallower waters, while seasoned divers can look forward to deeper dives, some sloping gently down to 20m below sea level. The most accomplished divers welcome the thrill of exploring a shipwreck in the deep or the challenge of drift dive, letting the currents sweep them through a free-form, Zen-like underwater discovery.

A different world, strange and new, awaits. Garden eels weave quickly away from sight, while turtles coast peacefully by, seemingly oblivious to the alien presence in front of it (that's you, diver!). Swim alongside a school of groupers or spy on a cluster of clownfish. Delight in the many electrifying shapes and neon shades of the nudibranchs. Sea anemones wave a colourful welcome, while the spectacular green shade of wrasses catches your eye. Butterflyfish striped like underwater tigers, parrotfish with holographic, chrome-like bodies, and large snappers make regular appearances.

The tunnels and crevices found at Tokong Laut, one of Tenggol's more popular sites, sees batfish and fusiliers while massive jackfish and kingfish make their presence known. At The Highway, advanced divers keep their eyes peeled for a glimpse of the elusive ghost ornate pipefish or, if they are lucky, the imposing figure of a spotted whale shark.

So entranced are you that you'd be hard pressed to surface and break for the lunch prepared by Tanjong Jara Resort's chef. But break you must. Your delightful meal over the table on Tenggol means a chance to go through your best photos and humblebrag before heading out to sea again, fuelled by the desire to behold even more stunning treasures.

Tanjung Jara Resort's carefully tailored courses cover a vast spectrum to include all manner of dive excursions, courses for children, awareness programmes on fish identification and coral reef conservation, even rescue and first aid courses. All include certification and manuals, and are taught by qualified PADI instructors. For more information, visit www.tanjongjararesort.com







This and facing pages: from exploring the reefs off Pulau Tenggol to discovering the beauty and wildlife of the Marang River on a half-day cruise, guests at Tanjong Jarang Resort can choose to actively engage or just peacefully absorb all the destination has to offer.



THE ART OF THE SUBLIME

CAMERON HIGHLANDS MAY BE HOME TO THE STRAWBERRY BUT ONLY CAMERON HIGHLANDS RESORT EXPLORES THE EXTENT OF ITS DELICIOUS AND MAGICAL PROPERTIES.

Words by BARRETT HO

hen William Shakespeare wrote in Henry V: "The strawberry grows... wholesome berries thrive and ripen best, neighboured by fruit of baser quality", he was not merely expounding the virtues of the fruit so much as referencing it as the king of berries. Its distinct and exceptional fragrance, sweet yet slightly tart taste, purported

exceptional fragrance, sweet yet slightly tart taste, purported magical and medicinal properties as well as its sensual, velvety texture ensure its rightful place in art and literature, delicious recipes and remedies. It is the only fruit where its seeds are exposed as if to boldly proclaim its lushness.

In Malaysia, its rareness was once only found at Cameron Highlands, where it was cultivated by its most skilled farmers who were able to tend to its fragility. These days, thanks to advances in science, the strawberry has become a ubiquitous sight in the Highlands with a better genus that allows it to flourish where it is late spring all year long.

The strawberry's qualities are celebrated at Cameron Highlands Resort, where it plays a starring role in a garden of earthly delights ranging from its integral place in a colonial high tea right up to its use as a remedial source in a range of spa treatments, even making a cameo appearance at dinner.

A BOUNTY OF FLAVOURS

The experience begins with the resort's famous jam, which is painstakingly prepared on the premises. "There's nothing to hide," says Chef de Hote Edward Chung, who heads the culinary team at Cameron Highlands Resort, when asked the secret to really good strawberry jam. At first glance, it is a spartan list of ingredients, which consists of lemons, sugar and strawberries.

Even its deceptively simple preparation belies the labour of love it goes through. In fact, its process is meticulous, even meditative, with a melding of these ingredients in a pot over the smallest of flames, slow-cooked and stirred gently with a wooden spoon every 10 minutes for 10 hours until the jam turns the colour of rich damson. All in, it takes up to three days to make a batch of strawberry jam. No gelling agents nor preservatives go into its making and the jam takes on

a slightly runny yet flavourful texture that's packed with rich bursts of fruit.

At the Jim Thompson Tea Room, the strawberry jam holds court when English Afternoon Tea is served. The tea room is named for Cameron Highlands' most famous denizen, Jim Thompson who, depending on who you talk to, is at turns a smuggler, a Cold War spy or a revered entrepreneur famous for reviving Thailand's silk industry. Here, a delectable tiered array of sweet and savoury offerings await.

Start with oven-fresh treats including tartlets and mini trifles, followed by traditional cucumber and egg sandwiches, while smoked salmon sandwiches add a modern twist to the proceedings. Tea, of course, comes courtesy of the heritage plantations that dot the Highlands. Leave the scones, baked to golden perfection, for last and slather them with rich jam and clotted cream, paired with fresh strawberries. Be sure to take your time for this afternoon ritual as Thompson himself would have done and lounge unhurried within the resort's elegant confines, styled like that of a colonial plantation.

Dinner time sees the strawberry appearing, uniquely, in a savoury dish, elevating the Ice Plant Salad that comes with grilled white prawns. The crisp, crystalline ice plant, grown on the Highlands, has started to appear on the menus of fine dining restaurants. Its hint of sea salt and crunchy texture are the perfect accompaniment to the sweet fleshy prawns, highlighted by the presence of fresh, luscious strawberries and drizzled with a piquant strawberry sesame dressing. The dish is a welcome prelude to a main of chargrilled Australian Angus sirloin steak served with Highlands mushrooms, basil mash, asparagus and wild garlic butter.

Strawberries make a sweet encore at the end of dinner and feature in two classic English desserts, Eton Mess and Trinity Cream. The former is an updated classic with strawberries and cream served in a cognac glass with bite-sized meringue swirls. The latter is perfumed with BOH lemon and mandarin tea and served with a strawberry salad and coconut tuile.

For more information, go to www.cameronhighlandsresort.com

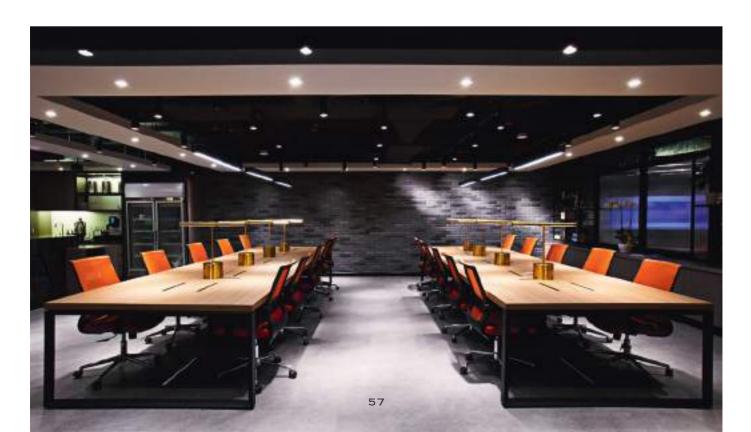






he concept of the co-working space has been taken up a notch with the introduction of JW Mezzanine, the first such space in Malaysia that is housed within a luxury hotel. It's an inspired concept that adds to the fluid nature of the way we do business today, but with the exceptional service that the JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur is known for. That means access to the hotel's impressive meeting rooms and event spaces as well as impeccable service even while you're taking your stakeholders through your new multi-platform venture or strategising on the next seven-figure breakthrough. Equally advantageous is JW Mezzanine's location at The Starhill, one of the city's most luxurious malls, providing endless, creative ways to conduct your business. Seal the deal at the gym, take the client to lunch at The Starhill's acclaimed restaurants or celebrate that new merger with a sundowner at The Alchemy or The Cellar bars. Being literally at the centre of it all also means you will have your finger on the pulse of the city while you align and connect with a network of like-minded business mavericks. Like you, your new work space is always-on.

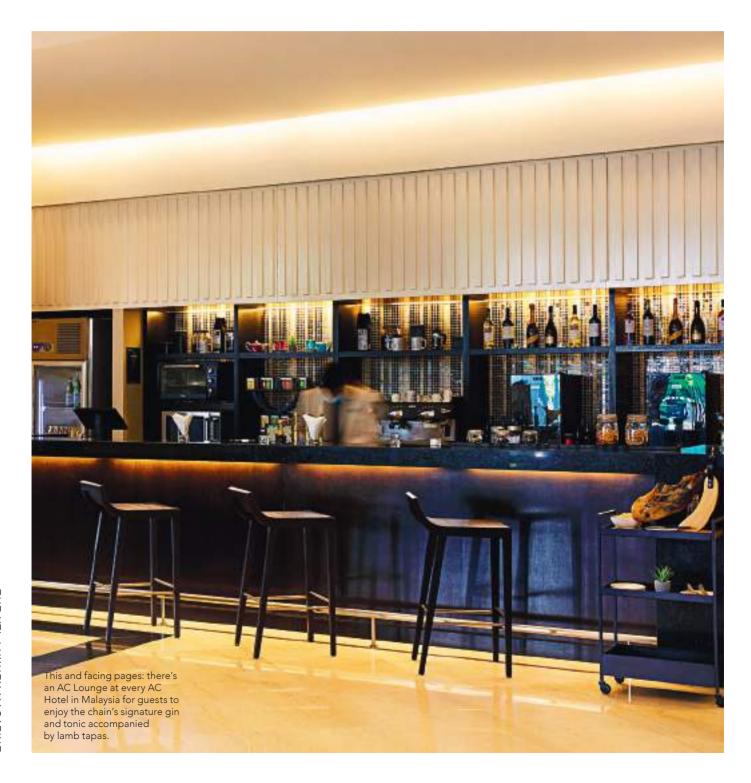
For more information, visit jwmezzanine.com



GIN O'CLOCK

A CLASSIC COCKTAIL GETS A GOURMET TWIST AT AC HOTEL.

Words by ALIZA KASSIM





in and tonic aficionados, rejoice! The classic cocktail is given its due with a generous one-for-one offer from 5.30pm to 7.30pm at AC Lounge in AC Hotels in Kuala Lumpur, Kuantan and Penang. The signature ACGT is a well-crafted gin and tonic employing a base of Tanqueray 10 with its fragrant botanicals of angelica, juniper, chamomile, coriander, grapefruit, licorice and citrus. Garnished with a sprig of rosemary and a thin slice of orange,

this is an excellent thirst quencher. The lounge also serves complimentary tapas in the form of AC Hotel's classic handshaved lamb prosciutto on buttered baguette, harking back to the chain's Spanish roots.

Both cocktail and tapas go so well together that subsequent orders are a requisite, as your hours spent here are made well and truly happy.

For more information, visit ac-hotels.com



GETTING A KICK OUT OF YOU

MUAY THAI AT THE RITZ-CARLTON, KOH SAMUI IS
THE PANACEA TO FABULOUS FEASTING.

Words by ANDREW LEC





The Ritz-Carlton, Koh Samui offers a range of outdoor and cultural discoveries.



he Ritz-Carlton, Koh Samui has no less than seven food and beverage outlets, each with its own style and conceptual identity. Chilling in the fabulous resort is required, which means contemplating the next time you're going to engage your taste buds and discover if another new hole in your belt is required for the inevitable waistline expansion.

Salvation, however, is at hand, but it involves a little bit of bargaining with yourself. The result, though, may provide the kind of guilt-free dining experiences for which vacations on tropical islands were invented.

We're talking about Muay Thai (or Thai boxing as it is also known) and while there is every possibility that it's not even something you thought about participating in when signing up for some Ritz-Carlton-inspired rest and relaxation, the activity comes highly recommended.

Firstly, it will provide just about the best workout imaginable – just think of all the calories you're going to be burning and how delicious it will be to replace them later.



Guests of The Ritz-Carlton, Koh Samui, can learn the art of Muay Thai under the guidance of a trained instructor at the resort's dedicated ring.

Secondly, it's enormous fun. While it might appear to be based on combat and the attendant aggression, it actually focuses on self-defence. More importantly though, the practice – known as 'the art of eight limbs' – seeing as you use two parts of all four that you possess – leaves not a sinew unstretched nor a muscle untoned after a satisfying session. And one will most definitely be provided for you by a gentleman member of The Ritz-Carlton, Koh Samui team.

Accomplished Muay Thai exponents themselves, you might imagine that it's a tad boring for them to inaugurate the newbies in the martial art. Not a bit of it. You get the impression, instantly, that they love the sport and want quests to love it as much as they do.

There are the rudiments to get through, of course, but the techniques are surprisingly easy to learn, and even the most hapless rube will derive pleasure from the satisfying thud of glove, shin or even elbow on pad. The heart will pound with each blow as you realign your body (as per instructions) in preparation for the next one, and before you know it you're

putting together combinations of movements that you didn't even think yourself capable of.

It's difficult to imagine a better place than The Ritz-Carlton, Koh Samui to start a Muay Thai 'career' – okay, not many guests will contemplate turning professional after a few lessons, but it's enjoyable enough (and sufficiently effective) to become part of a regular exercise regimen. The facilities are exceptional – as you would expect – with a proper, full-sized boxing ring and first-rate equipment. There's a special feeling as your coach tapes up your hands and helps you with your gloves, almost invoking a gladiatorial spirit that will get you through the rest of the day (and night) on a high.

Blowing off steam while exercising every part of your body is a wonderful way to spend an hour – even when on vacation – and it will probably make your next meal an even more savoury experience.

For more information, go to www.ritzcarlton.com



A TYPICAL NISEKO VILLAGE CULINARY SUMMER IS INFORMED BY THE CONCEPT OF SHUN, THE CELEBRATION OF SEASONAL PRODUCE AT ITS PEAK.

Words by ALIZA KASSIM



This page: savouring tender Wagyu.

Facing page: Lake Shikotsu was formed by a major eruption that led to the collapse of the mouth of the volcano.





iseko's reputation as a winter wonderland is equalled by its enchanting summers. In its warmer months, the surrounding countryside dramatically changes from pristine white to stunning green forests. At Niseko Village, which comprises Hilton Niseko Village, Green Leaf, Kasara townhouses and Higashiyama Niseko Village, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, Mount Yotei sits resplendently in the background, foregrounded by pastoral landscapes and bright yellow sunflower fields, a mirror of the colourful crop of Hokkaido's freshest produce.

"Summer turns Niseko into one large greenhouse," says Niseko Village's resort director Panch Ratnavale. Indeed, it is the perfect season to experience the age-old ethos of *Shun* – that food should be savoured in its proper season and at the peak of its perfection. The area is made bountiful by a 40,000-year-old explosion of a trinity of volcanoes resulting in Lake Shikotsu, the eighth largest lake in Japan, and rich, fertile soil. The lake's famed red salmon, known locally as *chippu*, is a popular feature at the dinner table and guests are able to witness its conservation in the form of the traditional salmon wheel to help the fish swim upstream to spawn. The lake's crystal waters are also perfect to observe other marine life from the comfort of rowing boats.

The culinary journey starts by the lake where food stalls offer plump grilled scallops, corn-on-the-cob dripping in butter, Yubari melon ice cream, glazed *mochi* and Hokkaido's renowned milk. Yet, nowhere is *Shun* more present than at Niseko Village, where the freshest ocean delicacies and finest fruit and vegetable harvests are highlighted through exciting culinary *savoir faire*.

Visitors at Sisam and Goshiki, for example, will be especially taken by the creamy umami-rich unagi (sea urchin), Japanese flying squid and juicy surf clams, their flavours coaxed and heightened by the chefs. Ikura from the eastern sea coast of Hokkaido and grilled herring are present at the themed buffets at Yotei (named for the mountain that it faces) and casual dining at Yang Shu Ten. At The Crab Shack, Kaizen Nabe, a pot of sheer seafood deliciousness in kombu dashi (kelp stock) is a firm local favourite.

Live squid sashimi perhaps presents the purest form of Shun with an unsurpassed flavour profile, while crab remains a coveted seafood. The sweet flesh of the native Hanasaki (or blooming flower) crabs are best sampled grilled or in teppou soup. There are also the clean, sea flavours of snow crab sashimi, horsehair crab miso and blue king crab tempura to be had.

On the table at some restaurants is the exceptionally marbled, melt-in-the-mouth Hokkaido Tokachi Wagyu. The perfect accompaniments to the meat, of course, are crunchy asparagus, new potatoes and sweet yellow pumpkin. Hokkaido's famous local Japanese soup curry is available at Two Sticks, which also serves a novel Tandoori chicken soup curry with local potatoes, eggplant, peppers, pumpkin, mizuna leaf and egg.

"SUMMER TURNS NISEKO INTO ONE LARGE GREENHOUSE."

Hokkaido's reputation for producing exceptional dairy produce means creamier milk and the richest of butters. Artisanal cheese maker, Niseko Cheese Kobo, does one better, producing award-winning cheeses including Momiji, the Mimolette cheese that won gold at the Japan Cheese Awards in 2014 and was served in Japan Airlines' first-class cabins throughout 2018.

The acclaimed tofu at Wakimizu No Sato, too, deserves a mention. Its signature soy blend, Yũzuru, is made from a seemingly elementary yet exacting blend of beans native to Hokkaido and crystal clear spring water that flows under Mount Yotei. It is the water, rich in minerals such as magnesium, that is the secret to the tofu's silky-smooth texture. Sugoi tofu, finished in soy milk for a creamier consistency, is highly sought after, while novel items such as tofu doughnuts and soy milk matcha pudding are certain to delight the palate.

The winding roads will lead guests to the many fecund orchards in Yoichi and Niki, within driving distance of Niseko, where they can pluck fruit directly off the vine or tree and enjoy their sweet, juicy ripeness on the spot. Cherries, blueberries, strawberries, peaches and plums are in abundance throughout the summer months and are a delightful treat for the whole family.

Visitors can bring home some farm-fresh goodness should they be lucky enough to be present for the Niko Niko Niseko Village Festival. Here, shoppers can select from a wide array of produce from local vendors at the village square. The festival includes live entertainment, crafts and games for children and more. Families can also enjoy Niseko's bounty outdoors with casual barbecues.

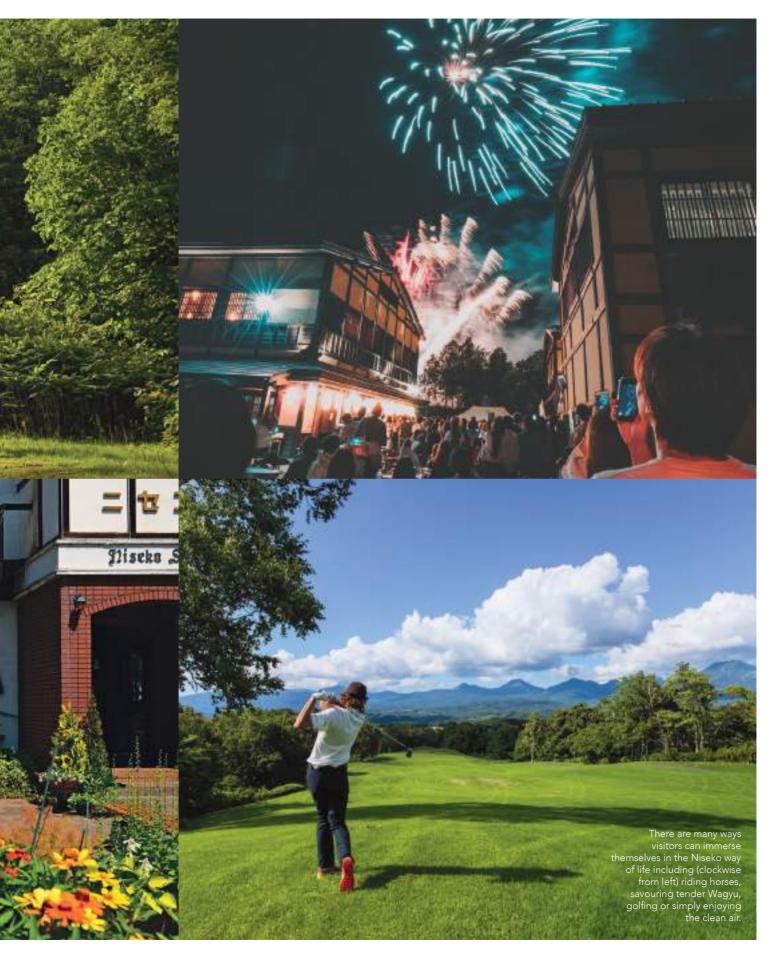
Thankfully, summers are mild and evenings cool in Niseko, ideal weather for nature walks or horseback rides exploring the bucolic countryside before or after a day of feasting. A hot-air balloon ride lets guests take in Niseko's scenic summer landscape just as the sun rises. For those with adventure on their minds, a treasure hunt is the requisite family activity as is mountain biking on the trails, white water rafting and zipline guided tours. Climbers and hikers, meanwhile, need a full day to conquer Mount Yotei with a five-hour workout to the top, an additional two to circle the volcanic crater and four hours back down. The longer days and flowers in bloom makes summer the ideal season for the climb.

Niseko Village and its golf courses provide golfers with panoramic views while they walk off a hearty breakfast. Niseko Village Golf Course is a consecutive winner of Japan's Best Golf Courses at the World Golf Awards for three years running, while Niseko Golf Course is an 18-hole, par 72 course designed by Arnold Palmer. Both courses hold plenty of tournaments and activities that guests can take part in.

In fact, Niseko's summer calendar is packed with other activities including trail runs, classic bike races and the Tanabata Fireworks Festival with a display of over 1,500 varieties. We say, best to work up an appetite.



For more information, visit www.niseko-village.com







FOREIGN QUEENS, SPIES AND PIRATES

THE SURPRISING HISTORY OF DUTCH DELFTWARE POTTERY.

Words by JUNE MONG-LOFTIN





The excellent location of The Hague Marriott Hotel (left) ensures guests can easily explore top attractions such as the Royal Delft Museum, which offers exhibits and workshops chronicling the history of Dutch delftware.

t The Hague, which earned its moniker of being the Royal City by the Sea by virtue of being the royal capital and the seat of administrative power, there is a sense of history being created. The large sidewalk cafes at its popular square are dominated by politicians and power brokers who gravitate towards the city's unique position as the seat of government as well as being the host of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. It is also home to The Hague Marriott Hotel, which has become a second-home to discerning travellers with its central location, modern fitness centre, 24 venue spaces and proximity to leisure, cultural and historical attractions.

A mere 20-minute taxi ride way is the Royal Delft Museum, the starting point for your amble through the city of Delft which traces its lineage to the house of Orange-Nassau, being the home of Jan Vermeer and of course for its now iconic blue pottery.

The exquisite blue-and-white ceramic delftware that has come to epitomise Dutch craftsmanship has had its share of louche episodes in its estimable 400-year old history. Two foreign queens of the Netherlands had, and continue to have, an influential role in raising the profile of delft ceramics. But before they came along, the trail of blue and white involves a town in Jiangxi, China, in the 14th century, Persepolis, the capital of Persia, caravans plying the Silk Road, a Dutch 16th-century undercover spy and finally high seas piracy sanctioned by the Dutch maritime empire in the 17th century.

Jan Huyghen van Linschoten was employed by the Portuguese and sent to India in 1596 where he saw exquisite Chinese porcelain being sold in Goa, a Portuguese colony. Van Linschoten became an inadvertent spy when he helped break the Portuguese monopoly of porcelain by publishing secret charts and navigation guides for the Dutch to reach the East Indies. In 1603 the Dutch seized the Portuguese ship



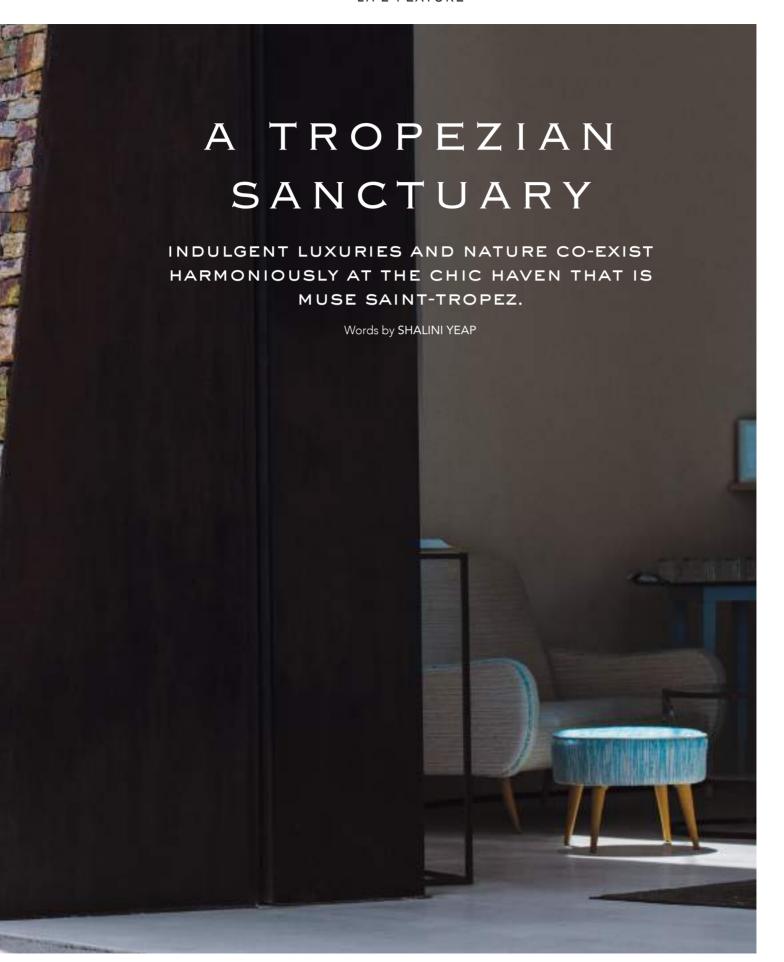
Santa Catarina off the coast of Johor in the Straits of Malacca, and auctioned off the haul of 100,000 pieces in Amsterdam.

But it wasn't until an English princess, Mary Stuart, married Dutch Prince William of Orange in 1677 that delftware evolved into a luxury object of desire by her lavish royal commissions. She and her French interior designer decorated Dutch palaces with elaborate flower pyramids and vases, which resulted in the largest and most technically advanced delftware ever produced. It became the high point of delftware production.

Even though Louis XIV of France ordered pieces of Dutch ceramics, delftware fell out of fashion in the 18th century. In the present day, however, the Argentine-born Queen Máxima, Dutch queen consort of Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands, has made delft relevant again. Since she became queen in 2013, she has helped create an elaborate delftware dinner service for use at Dutch state functions.

For more information, visit www.thehaguemarriott.com





THE YTL LUXURY MAGAZINE





USE Saint-Tropez paints a picture of great serenity. Tucked in a tranquil section of Ramatuelle and near Place Des Lices, an enchanting three-acre garden cradles the luxe hotel in nature's embrace. This greenery is the brainchild of Sophie Agata Ambroise, a landscape architect renowned for creating Bulgari Hotel's garden in Milan. A total of 160 varieties of plants thrive in MUSE's award-winning self-sustaining garden, filling the lush expanse between the green pine forest and the azure sea with Mediterranean colours.

The coastal town's rise to fame can be traced back to the 1950s and 1960s, when celebrities of the day fell in love with Pampelonne, one of the most popular beaches in Saint-Tropez today. It is charming that the boutique hotel's 15 suites made actresses from the golden age of Hollywood their muse, capturing their glamour and class in the mood and look of their spaces. After all, the name of the hotel, MUSE, is an ode to the daughters of Zeus; the original muses who each embodied a different form of artistic inspiration. Guests at this stylish escape will find their suites named after the muses who inspired the space, making the rooms a little unique from each other. Some suites feature the option of a private garden or a wooden terrace, in some you can take a plunge in a pool or indulge in personal spa services.

Soft earth tones with cool stone floors and marmorino wall finishes make up the suites' decor, in keeping with MUSE's architectural philosophy of simplicity and chic designs. Inside, the custom-made beds fit for movie stars are really masterpieces from one of France's oldest manufacturers, Henryot. This furniture maker's creations can be found in the royal court at Versailles.

Calm and tranquillity permeate this boutique hotel and highlight the pleasingly laid-back glamour of the French Riviera. Here, every detail is meticulously curated for the guests' enjoyment, no doubt, a nod to the muses who brought art and beauty to the hotel's architectural elegance. Amid idyllic settings, MUSE Saint-Tropez awaits, ready to enchant anyone who walks through its doors.

For more information please visit www.muse-hotels.com

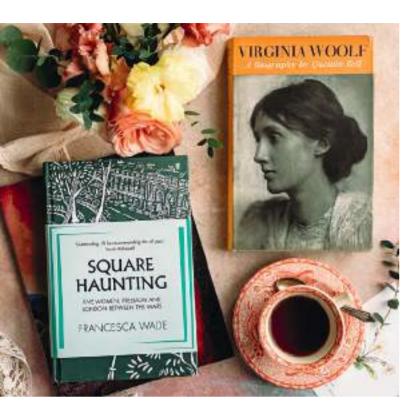
La Tente by Spa Village at MUSE Saint-Tropez offers a full range of indulgent treatments.



ROOMS OF THEIR OWN IN BLOOMSBURY

THE EXTRAORDINARY LIVES OF SIX WOMEN AND THEIR BOOKS BECKON IN MECKLENBURGH SQUARE.

Words by JUNE MONG-LOFTIN



he 50-room The Academy on Gower Street and the Georgian-era Mecklenburgh Square, are bookends for a lively, gender-advancing and genre-breaking period. In the early 20th century, the popularity of the local book clubs in the area, known as Bloomsbury, gave rise to a class of educated women who sought independence and, in the process, gave the world a new genre of literature.

The perfect starting point for guests at The Academy would be its library sitting room, from where one can explore the historically rich and pretty Mecklenburgh Square and its private garden a short 15-minute stroll away.

The square and garden are part of Foundling Estate, one of two residential squares planned in 1790 by Samuel Pepys Cockerell, and named after Queen Charlotte who, before her marriage to King George III, was Princess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. In the early 20th century, some of the elegant Georgian houses in Mecklenburgh Square became home to open-hearted and open-minded women determined to forge lives (and careers) of their own, often independent from a male partner.

Number 44, for example, was home to such women. In 1911, poet and novelist Hilda Doolittle (better known as HD) left her home in Philadelphia for Europe. Five years later, she found herself at 44 Mecklenburgh Square (rather than living with her first boyfriend Ezra Pound). Writing to her lesbian lover Bryher (who bore the pseudonym of Annie Winifred Ellerman) with whom she had an open relationship for years, she said: 'Can you see how London at least left me free?'

From 1920 to 1921, crime writer and translator, Dorothy L Sayers, also stayed at 44 Mecklenburgh Square when she arrived in London as part of the first cohort of women graduates from Oxford. Better known as the creator of the famous upper-class sleuth Lord Peter Wimsey, Sayers' writing influenced TS Eliot as well as DH Lawrence. The first sentence of *Gaudy Night*, considered to be her greatest novel, begins with the sentence: "Harriet Vane sat at her writing table and stared out into Mecklenburg Square." In fact, Sayers credits the Square as a metaphor for intellectual independence.

In 1926, the linguist, classicist and translator, Jane Ellen Harrison, came to live at 11 Mecklenburgh at the age of 76. It proved to be a refuge from her academic life in Cambridge, an institution with which she wrestled for 25 years to give her a job (they finally did when she was 48). Her Cambridge peer and friend, Gilbert Murray, on the other hand, was offered a professorship at the tender age of 23.

Eileen Power probably lived the longest in Mecklenburgh Square at number 20 when she moved here in 1931. Her home soon became a magnet for economists, aspiring politicians and reformers. She was not only a respected economic historian at the London School of Economics but also earned respect when, travelling in China and India, she dressed as a man to cross the Khyber Pass (British law did not allow women to cross it).

In 1939, Virginia Woolf and her husband, Leonard, moved in to 37 Mecklenburgh. Unfortunately, a German air raid in September 1940 destroyed the couple's home. Looking out over the destruction, Woolf said: "I want my books and chairs and carpets and beds. How I worked to buy them – one by one." To read more about these women and their lives on this Bloomsbury square, Francesca Wade's 2020 book *Square Haunting* is highly recommended reading, while a walk through the Bloomsbury neighbourhood will perhaps elicit a feeling of history.

For more information, visit www.theacademyhotel.co.uk







Threadneedles Hotel (left) and Broad Street in the 19th century.



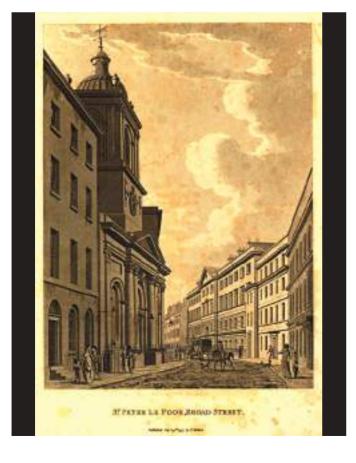
WALKING THROUGH THE MISTS OF TIME

IN SEARCH OF HENRY VIII'S
FIRST MINISTER
AND ANNE BOLEYN'S NEMESIS.

Words by JUNE MONG-LOFTIN







homas Cromwell was Henry VIII's chief minister who oversaw England's break with Rome, the fall from grace of Anne Boleyn and the dissolution of the monasteries. What then, does Cromwell have in common with Threadneedles Hotel in present-day London? Well, quite a lot surprisingly. And it has much to do with wares a state treasury a smart accountant and a ragistory.

Well, quite a lot surprisingly. And it has much to do with finance, a state treasury, a smart accountant and a rags-to-riches-to-spectacular-downfall story.

Let's start with Threadneedle Street where the five-star hotel, part of the Marriott Autograph Collection of iconic hotels, is located. It's in the historic Square Mile between Bishopsgate at its north-east end and the Bank junction in the south-west, and is one of nine streets that converge at Bank. There are a lot of financial firsts associated with Threadneedle – the street. For starters it is famed as the site of the Old Lady of Threadneedle – the nickname of the Bank of England which has been situated here since 1734. And up till 2004, so too was the London Stock Exchange.

In the 17th century, merchants and captains of ships and industry used to congregate in English coffeehouses to exchange maritime gossip. In 1744, the Baltic Exchange (a membership organisation for the maritime industry) was founded in the Virginia and Baltick Coffee House on Threadneedle Street. (In November 2016, the Singapore Exchange acquired the Baltic Exchange but it remains headquartered in London.)

Before 1598, Threadneedle Street was part of Broad Street (now Old Broad Street). Which brings us back to Cromwell. There is little trace left of his childhood growing up poor in Putney, but the enigmatic subject of Hilary Mantel's Man Booker Prize-winning novel Wolf Hall, we are told, escaped his boyhood by running off and settling first in France, then Italy and the Netherlands. He was a sailor's help, an errand boy, a soldier, a trader and finally an accountant for a Florentine bank. When he eventually returned to England he was a self-made man. His talent as a fixer and a shrewd but discreet agent attracted the attention of Cardinal Wolsey and Henry the VIII.

The first half of Wolf Hall describes Cromwell setting up his home in the north of the City of London in a tenement belonging to the religious order of the Augustine Friars. The main gate of Cromwell's residence, Austin Friars, was on the junction of Throgmorton Street and Board Street. In the 1520s, it was the largest and most palatial private house in the City, and Cromwell favoured the neighbourhood as it was popular with Italian and German merchants.

Historians believe that Cromwell, as Henry VIII's First Minister, orchestrated the fall of Boleyn who was queen for three years before she was executed in May 1536. It is said that Cromwell ordered a swordsman, instead of an axewielding executioner, as a final gesture to her status. But by late July 1540, the tide had turned against Cromwell. Henry VIII was about to marry his fifth wife, Catherine Howard, and Cromwell was to be beheaded as a traitor and heretic. It was said that as soon as Cromwell was arrested, his possessions were confiscated by Henry VIII to pay off the family of his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, when he annulled their marriage after six months.

Although Cromwell's house no longer stands on Broad Street, it witnessed one man's rise to greatness as well as his dramatic fall. Within the walls of Austin Friars, debates took place that changed the course of English history and the English Reformation was championed. Could the plot to bring down Boleyn have started there as well?

If not a man for all seasons, Cromwell of the City of London is surely the man for his season.

One hotel, and a double beheading? This is how a five-star stay at Threadneedles Hotel can throw up enigmatic and surprising stories to enrich your London sightseeing experience. Cromwell would have certainly appreciated the heritage of the hotel built 300 years after his death – it was formerly the head office of the London, City and Midland Bank and is the City's oldest surviving premises of a joint-stock bank.

RECOMMENDED RESTAURANTS NEARBY

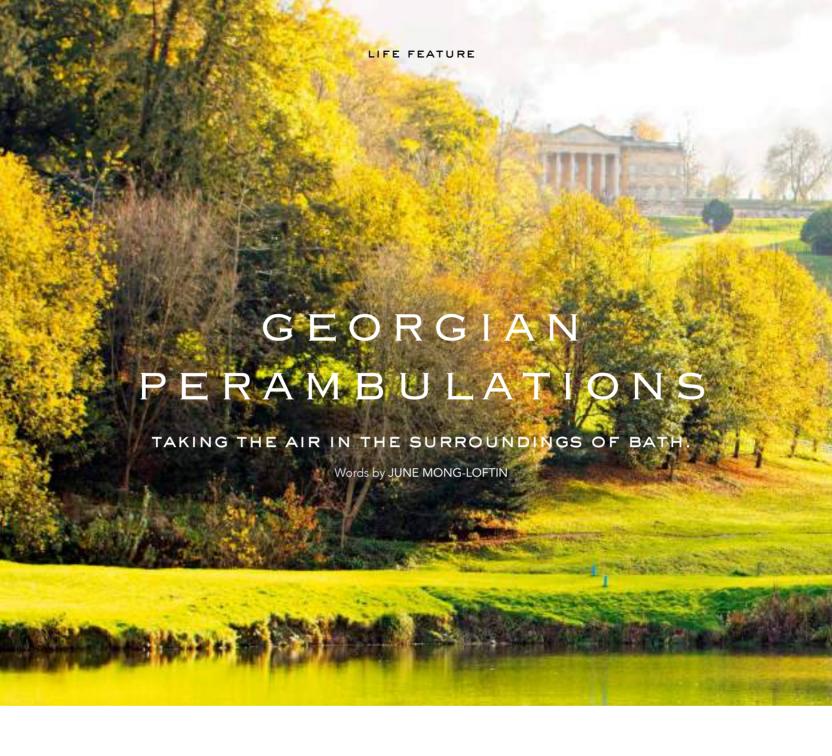
- A chic Cantonese *dim sum* teahouse in the City with French *petits gateaux* for dessert Yauatcha City, Broadgate Circle, London EC2M 2QS, Monday to Wednesday noon to 10pm; Thursday to Saturday 12.30pm to 10.30pm, closed Sunday *yauatcha.com/city*
- Seasonal contemporary Indian cuisine with a cocktail bar for aperitifs Mint Leaf Lounge, 12 Angel Court, Lothbury, Bank, London EC2R 7HB, Tuesday to Friday noon to 3pm, 5.30pm to 11pm; Saturday and Sunday 5.30pm to 11pm www.mintleaflondon.com/city

For more information please visit www.hotelthreadneedles.co.uk

Below: elements of Threadneedles Hotel's financial past can be found at Champagne Bar (left) and Dome Lounge.
Facing page: Thomas Cromwell ruthlessly dispatched those who stood against him and King Henry VIII, notably his royal master's second wife, Anne Boleyn (top) and a view of Broad Street in 1797 by the 18th-century artist, Thomas Malton Junior.





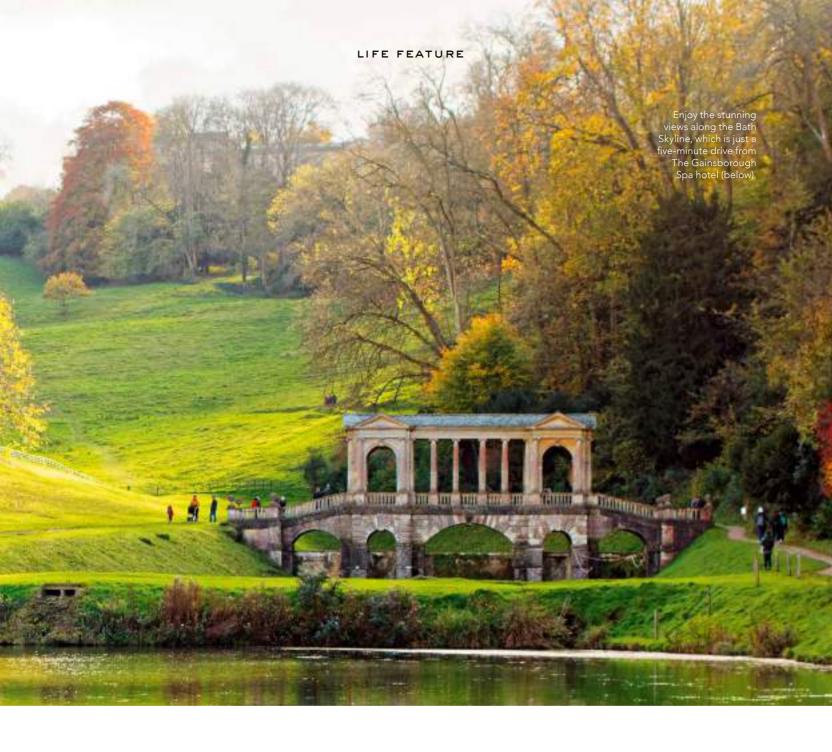


atherine Morland in Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey said: "I really believe I shall always be talking of Bath when I'm at home again – I do like it so very much... Oh! Who can ever be tired of Bath?"

And young Catherine was absolutely right as Bath in the 18th century was at its most fashionable. However, attending the endless social circuit of balls, 'taking the waters' and gossiping at teatime can be exhausting. When the ladies and gentlemen of high society needed a respite from the strict etiquette of polite drawing rooms they proceeded to take the air in Bath's tranquil surroundings. Guests of The Gainsborough Bath Spa hotel can do the same via the Skyline Walk. The concierge recommends two versions: the easy Walk to the View and the longer Bath Skyline Walk.

The Georgian period ran from 1714 to 1830, marking the reigns of the British Kings George I to IV. When this period began, there were only a few hundred houses in Bath and these were largely confined within its medieval city walls. But it was transformed very quickly within 100 years into the city Austen was writing about. If you have 90 minutes and want to follow in the footsteps of the Georgians, the Walk to the View stroll starts at Kingston Parade in Bath Abbey. You will amble through grand streets, public gardens, along the canal and past Holburne Museum on to the meadows of Bathwick Fields for a stunning view of the city and Somerset countryside, covering a total of approximately five kilometres.

The longer Bath Skyline Walk is a four-hour adventure that encompasses tree-lined paths. Starting from Bathwick Fields, you will cross the road to Cleveland Walk at Bathwick Hill.



Here, you'll see Sham Castle Down, enter Bathampton Wood and arrive at the elegant pillars of the Balcony and Rainbow Wood Fields. This is a tranquil spot by a placid pond to take a rest. Once you get to Smallcombe Wood, you would likely pick up the scent of flowers in the warmer months, which also indicates that you're near the end of your walk – bringing you back to Bathwick Hill. You can pick up a Skyline Walk leaflet from the Priory Park's visitor reception or ask your concierge at The Gainsborough Bath Spa hotel.

As Mrs Allen in *Northanger Abbey* said to Catherine: 'If adventures will not befall a young lady in her own village, she must seek them abroad." Or, perhaps, in these times, she can seek them on the Skyline Walk in the right romantic company.

For more information, visit www.thegainsboroughbathspa.co.uk



JOHNNIE'S STORY

THE DANDY OF BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY KEEPS STRIDING ON.

Words by JUNE MONG-LOFTIN AND WEI-YU WANG





ohn Walker, born in 1805 in Kilmarnock in southwestern Scotland, was among the many Scottish grocers and merchants in the 19th century who blended, bottled and sold their own whiskies in their shops. They were not distillers but many went on to found blended whisky brands. In early September 2021, the world's best-selling Scotch whisky brandbearing the name of Johnnie Walker – opened a massive visitor centre in the Scottish capital of Edinburgh: an eight-storey, 71,500 sq ft edifice that celebrates its 200 years of history and the liquid craft that is so beloved by consumers worldwide. The project took four and a half years to realise and is the highlight of Diageo's £185 million investment in Scotch whisky tourism – the largest single amount ever put forward for that industry, which attracted a record 2.16 million people in 2019.

Johnnie Walker Princes Street, the space in which Johnnie Walker now resides, is many decades old. It was once occupied by the now-defunct Binns department store, and more recently House of Fraser. The 'B' emblem on the side of the building and its cantilever clock (that was fully restored as part of Johnnie Walker's renovations) are well-known sights in historical Edinburgh. The torch has been passed, and the city now has a new landmark that pays homage to Scotland's most renowned export.

This new home to the bestselling Scotch whisky brand in the world lies a 15-minute drive away from The Glasshouse Hotel, Edinburgh, a beautifully restored chapel that preserved its 140-year-old gothic façade with its 20 suites named after specific Scotch whiskies. Naturally, guests of The Glasshouse Hotel will be able to have the concierge book their ticket and taxi for a visit to the latest whisky attraction in the city.

Once they've arrived, they begin the Journey into Flavour immersive experience, which takes them back to the origins. They see John, a farmer's son who became a grocer and began blending his own whisky to achieve a richer and more consistent flavour. In 1857, his son Alexander came up with the slanted label and the square bottles to ease shipping and

packing, thus broadening a whisky empire into the further reaches of the world. In 1902, a top illustrator, Tom Browne, created the Striding Man figure for the brand – a dandy in a bright red coat, riding breeches, top hat and walking stick – and Johnnie's been striding on ever since.

At Johnnie Walker Princes Street, visitors may expect a guided tour with Alba, a raconteur par excellence, and a whisky theatre that utilises an inventive audiovisual show (animator Christina is a superb touch at the visual aspects of storytelling). A touch-and-taste technique is employed to transport guests around the four corners of Scotland and showcase the different flavours and characteristics of whisky that the regions produce. It's a wonderful evocation of the roles played by Scotland's distinctive flora, climate, soil and water to make whisky. In one room, guests were taken around the four seasons and the whisky characteristics which are compatible with them.

The Johnnie Walker experience also very quickly dispels some whisky-drinking myths. As Alba might say: "There's no right or wrong way to drink whisky. It's okay to drink it with ice; it doesn't have to be drunk neat; and yes, you can drink blended whisky with a mixer." But what they do emphasise is that it's important to choose your glass, inhale the bouquet, savour the taste and take your time.

Before visitors start their experience, a Flavour Quiz helps discern their taste profile: fresh, smoky, fruity, etc. They then receive a corresponding coloured wrist band for a bespoke highball or old-fashioned cocktail. They are then offered choices of rosemary, candied ginger, sun-dried tomatoes, dried rose petals and more to have as garnishes, opening up new and unexpected flavours.

And what if whisky has never been your thing? Not a worry; this experience is still for you – the Johnnie Walker hosts make the most delicious and refreshing non-alcoholic cocktails which you would still enjoy, the performance included.

For more information go to www.theglasshousehotel.co.uk





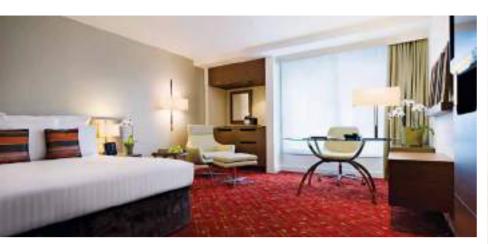


PICASSO 100

VISITORS TO MELBOURNE WINTER MASTERPIECES 2022

ARE IN FOR A RARE TREAT WITH AN EXTENSIVE EXHIBITION TRACING MORE THAN 70 YEARS OF THE SPANISH ARTIST'S PROLIFIC JOURNEY.

Words by MINDY TEH







uests of the Melbourne Marriott Hotel will be happy to note that it is a mere 14-minute tram ride or a pleasant 20-minute walk away from the city's Art Precinct, where the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) is located. The hotel's selection of rooms includes some with private garden courtyards and others with a hot tub and cinema or pet-friendly facilities. Dining options cater to a wide range of tastes, from farm-to-plate dining at the signature Country Bred at Lonsdale to contemporary cuisine featuring the finest locally sourced produce at Essence.

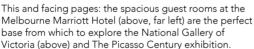
Art lovers will be thrilled at being this close to the NGV. Founded in 1861, it is the oldest gallery in Australia and houses a vast treasury of more than 76,000 works that span thousands of years. It also hosts a wide range of events, such as The Picasso Century, a world-premiere exhibition that highlights the works of Pablo Picasso. Organised as part of Melbourne Winter Masterpieces, a series of major exhibitions

held over 100 days in the city, The Picasso Century promises an extensive chronology tracing more than seven decades of the Spanish artist's journey and its evolution. Over 70 masterpieces by Picasso are on display including paintings, sculptures, drawings and ceramics. Exclusively developed for the NGV by Centre Pompidou and Musée national Picasso-Paris, the exhibition was curated by the noted scholar of 20th-century painting, Didier Ottinger, who is also Deputy Director of Centre Pompidou.

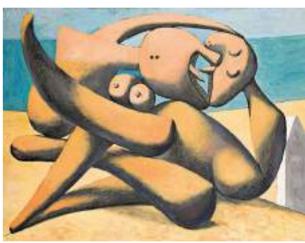
Visitors gain a deeper insight into Picasso's process in dialogue with his contemporaries, friends, muses, lovers and wives. The maestro kept company with an impressive list of intellectuals, artists, models and the literati, and these diverse encounters and relationships steered him through notable periods, from his Blue Period to cubism and surrealism. The likes of Guillaume Apollinaire, Georges Braque, Alberto Giacometti, Françoise Gilot, Valentine Hugo, Marie Laurencin, Dora Maar, André Masson and











Dorothea Tanning lent a greater perspective on Picasso's genius and inadvertently shaped his work.

The beginning of the exhibition examines Picasso's significant artistic developments including cubism, the movement formed together with Georges Braque that radically transformed 20th-century art. Picasso's place in interwar Paris among peers such as André Breton, Georges Bataille, Aimé Césaire, Alberto Giacometti and Gertrude Stein is also highlighted. The exhibition pays particular attention to Picasso's surrealist phase, presenting works from this period alongside those of Kay Sage, Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, Giorgio de Chirico and Masson.

The maestro's impact on the art world reverberated through his contemporaries and The Picasso Century also showcases over 60 works by his peers, artists rarely exhibited in Australia. These include works by Natalia Goncharova, Julio González, Wifredo Lam, Suzanne Valadon and Maria Helena Vieira da Silva.

The final section of this comprehensive display sees Picasso's impact on the international art world post-1945 with his artistic output in the 1950s and 1960s positioned alongside those by Francis Bacon and Willem de Kooning. The inclusion of a 2009 video entitled *I See A Woman Crying (Weeping Woman)* by Rineke Dijkstra coaxes viewers to reflect on Picasso's pioneering efforts in pushing art into the modern age, with their effects continuing to be felt and seen well into the 21st century.

NGV's younger patrons have not been forgotten. A free children's exhibition, Making Art: Imagine Everything Is Real, features immersive hands-on activities and multimedia experiences. Kids create their own works of modern art through collage, poetry and more while learning about some of the leading European artists showcased in The Picasso Century including, of course, the maestro himself.

For more information, please visit www.melbournemarriott.com

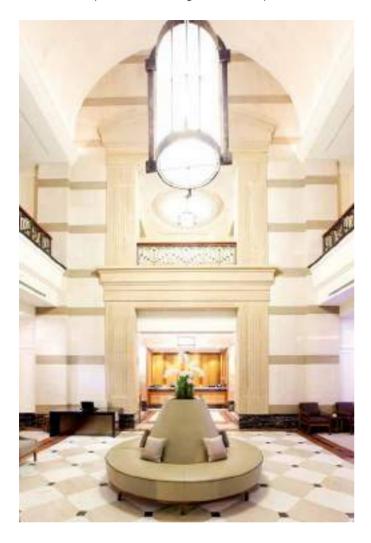
SONG OF THE SEA

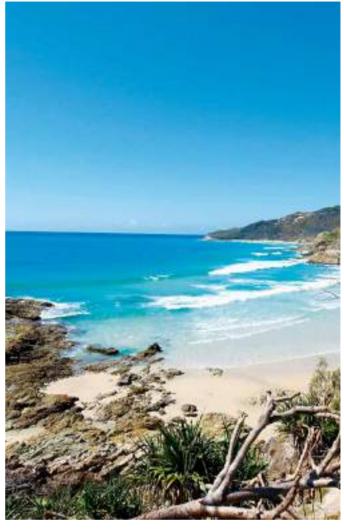
GAZE UPON HUMPBACK WHALES IN ALL THEIR
NATURAL GLORY OFF THE COAST OF QUEENSLAND AT
CAPE MORETON.

Words by TIEN CHEW



Brisbane Marriott Hotel's lobby features exquisite marble flooring and sandstone pillars.





Brisbane's beautiful Moreton Bay.

he feeling is almost indescribable the first time you see a pod of humpback whales surface from the depths of the shimmering blue. If you're lucky, you may spot a mother and her calf dive, spout or blow, or deliver a playful tail slap. From June until October, whale watching season descends upon Queensland as these large creatures migrate from the Antarctic to warmer Australian waters in search of plankton, krill and small schooling fish.

Redcliffe Jetty, about 45 minutes away from the Brisbane Marriott Hotel in the city centre, is your gateway to Cape Moreton, where around 18,000 humpback whales swim through annually. The best way to see these majestic mammals is on the cruiser named Eye Spy – a custom-designed low-noise catamaran purposefully built for whale watching. To ensure greater viewing success, a small Cessna 172 plane, also whimsically named Sky Spy, is used to pinpoint the whales' locations.

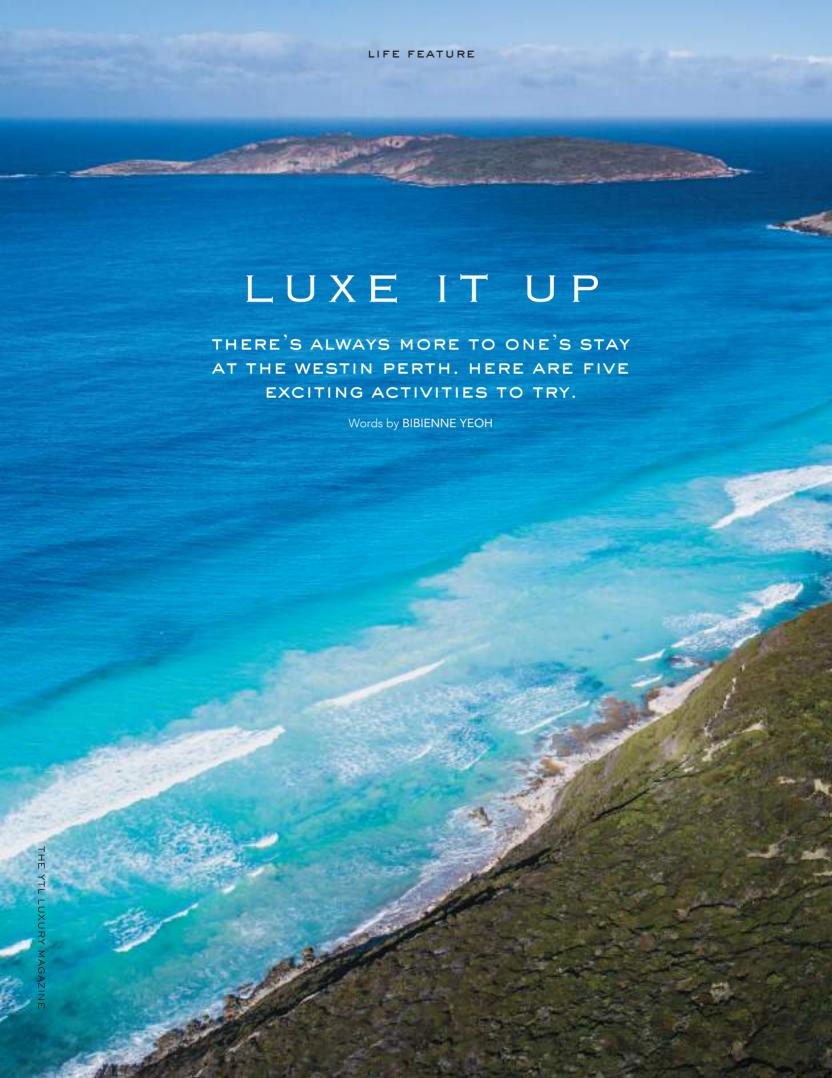
With keen eyesight, or a sturdy pair of binoculars and lots of perseverance, you can identify individual whales by their unique

markings, battle scars or the black-and-white colouration on the underside of their tails. It is said that observing individual humpbacks over a period of time rather than a larger number of whales may produce a greater watching experience. This form of observation lets you learn a whale's personality, movement patterns and interactions with its kin. Should you want to hear whale song, the ship comes equipped with state-of-the-art underwater microphones.

Humpbacks may be the main draw to Cape Moreton's waters, but a supporting cast of bottlenose dolphins, hammerhead sharks, dugongs, manta rays, turtles and other marine life keeps this aquatic theatre exciting. The presence of such diverse wildlife indicates that Moreton Bay Marine Park may rival the Great Barrier Reef itself.

THE YTL LUXURY MAGAZINE

For more information please visit brisbanemarriott.com.





he Westin Perth is setting a new standard for contemporary design as well as luxury accommodation options in Western Australia.

Designed in collaboration by Melbourne's BAR Studio, Hassell and BGC Development, the 28-storey building boasts high ceilings and full-height windows that make the most of the bright Australian sunrays shining through.

The spacious guest rooms – 368 in total – and lounge areas exude understated elegance thanks to the furniture pieces, curios and handpicked accessories that were specially selected for these spaces. Art plays a vital role in the interiors, with over 2,000 works by local artists in the grand hallways and guest rooms. The generous range of accommodation options range from deluxe rooms to the grand Presidential Suite, all with sweeping views of Perth's surroundings.

Its location, overlooking the popular Hibernian Place precinct, is only a stone's throw away from the city's bustling commercial hub and the Heritage Centre. While that's enough for most, there are plenty of things that you can do besides staying within the city limits. If you're looking to expand your travel itinerary beyond the poolside and spa, here are five activities that will get you exploring more of what Perth and Western Australia have to offer.

1. GO ON A SCENIC HELICOPTER RIDE

Esperance has a lot to offer when it comes to natural attractions and has one of the best beaches in Australia. What better way to appreciate the sweeping crystalline bays and pristine national parks of this paradise than an aerial tour with HeliSpirit. Taking off from the helipad at the Esperance foreshore, you will fly around the coastline and Middle Island's famous bubblegum pink saline lake, Lake Hillier. Hover over the lush Recherche Archipelago, shocking blue waters of Cape Le Grand and sprawling Cape Arid national parks. Cape Arid is home to 1,100 floral species and 160 species of birds – most of which are threatened or endangered. If you're lucky, you might even catch a view of migrating whales. Your pilot will land on Middle Island, where you can join a guided walk to the edge of Lake Hillier. This three-hour, 15-minute experience costs A\$1,295 per person.

2. CHARTER A YACHT TO ROTTNEST ISLAND

From blue lagoons to vibrant coral reefs and rich marine life, Rottnest Island is every water lover's dream with a brilliant selection of snorkelling and diving spots. The island is just 19km off the coast of Fremantle and is surrounded by the glistening Indian Ocean. Here, you can swim, surf, snorkel and fish to one's content. Charter the Super Yacht Paradise and drop anchor at any of the 63 secluded beaches and 20 sandy bays to soak in the sea and the sun. You can also ramp up the action with the luxury yacht's jet skis, kayaks or inflatable party island. When exploring Rottnest, looking out for quokkas, which is the only mammal that is native to the island. Spotting one of the happiest animals on Earth is always a welcome treat.













3. EXPLORE THE MARGARET RIVER REGION

Located in the southwest corner of Western Australia, the Margaret River region is known for its restaurants and art galleries, and more famously, its wines. Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Sauvignon are planted among an extensive menu of varietals, with many of the wineries here offering tours and tastings. A Touch of Glass Tours has a generous range of luxury tour packages. Indulge in a chauffeur-driven wine tasting experience at four wineries including a private tasting at Vasse Felix, the founding winery of the Margaret River region, followed by a decadent three-course luncheon complete with two glasses of wine. You will also have the flexibility to fully customise your itinerary, with 150 wineries to choose from. You can even opt for olive oil, cheese or chocolate tastings. A luxury full-day private charter starts from A\$550 for up to seven guests in a Hyundai Imax vehicle.

4. DINE AT ONE OF PERTH'S TOP RESTAURANTS

You'll be spoilt for choice when it comes to looking for your next meal around the city, starting with The Westin Perth's Garum (left), a Roman osteria where you can enjoy modern Italian classics. Venture out and you will discover Wildflower on the fourth-floor rooftop of the State Buildings with its stunning view of the city skyline and Swan River. Its menus change six times a year to reflect the indigenous Noongar seasons highlighting ingredients unique to Western Australia. Expect innovative dishes like Wagin duck breast cooked with quince, liquorice root and anise myrtle or Nannup chestnut prepared with local mushrooms, black garlic and acacia. There is also an extensive wine list. Petite Mort, a stylish European restaurant that has become synonymous with Perth degustation and nouvelle cuisine, is also highly recommended. Sample its intricate menu, which is heavily inspired by French cuisine, from the pork belly with pomelo and avocado to the roast duck served with fig and buttermilk.

5. REJUVENATE WITH ANCIENT INDIGENOUS HEALING AT BODHI SPA

At The Westin Perth's Bodhi spa, you can partake in a gorgeous selection of wellness treatments. As a holistic wellness destination, Bodhi welcomes you with an eightmetre water feature to relax your mind and calm your soul. Its treatment and steam rooms are where you'll melt away urban realities and your journey towards rejuvenation includes time to relax at the fifth-floor terrace with views of the city. Bodhi's treatments are inspired by ancient indigenous healing which, combined with the finest Australian botanical spa products and the nurturing, practised touch of its spa consultants, help to make this urban retreat extraordinary.

For more information please visit www.westinperth.com

12 THINGS TO DO IN AND AROUND SYDNEY HARBOUR MARRIOTT HOTEL AT CIRCULAR QUAY

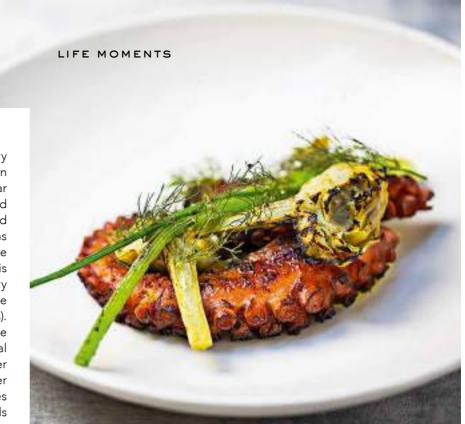


THE CAPITAL OF NEW SOUTH WALES HAS GORGEOUS BEACHES, PARKS, INCREDIBLE ARCHITECTURE, A RICH HERITAGE AND A DYNAMIC BLEND OF CULTURES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

AND IN THE HEART OF THIS BUSTLING CITY IS SYDNEY HARBOUR MARRIOTT HOTEL AT CIRCULAR QUAY, WITH ITS UNRIVALLED LOCATION AND LOVELY VIEWS. WITHIN MINUTES YOU WOULD ARRIVE AT DESTINATIONS FOR SIGHTSEEING, SHOPPING, ENTERTAINMENT OR BUSINESS NEEDS. HERE ARE 12 PLACES IN AND AROUND THE HOTEL THAT YOU CAN VISIT ON FOOT.

Words by CHIN MUI YOON





1. SILVESTER'S

Discover an award-winning global culinary journey at this restaurant, located within Sydney Harbour Marriott Hotel at Circular Quay. Chef Raphael Szurek, who worked at two of the most famous three-starred Michelin restaurants in Paris – Four Seasons Hotel George V under Philippe Legendre and Grand Vefour under Guy Martin - is known for his creative, contemporary Australian cuisine (not to mention one of the city's most impressive buffet breakfasts). His globally influenced menu features the freshest seasonal and sustainable local produce, such as Fraser Island Spanner Crab and WA Fremantle Octopus. Over 100 sommeliers curated premium wines from some of the most renowned vineyards in Australia and worldwide to complement the menu.



2. CIRCULAR QUAY

A 10-minute walk from the hotel takes you to Circular Quay. This is Sydney's main ferry terminus and is tucked into the heart of Sydney Cove, where the first fleet of ships from Britain arrived in 1788. Today, it is a central meeting point and gateway to the Sydney Opera House, Sydney Harbour Bridge and The Rocks. It's a hive of activity as a transport hub with ferries, trains and buses providing access to attractions in and around Sydney. In addition, restaurants and cafes around the Quay offer waterside dining and opportunities to observe life.

3. BARANGAROO

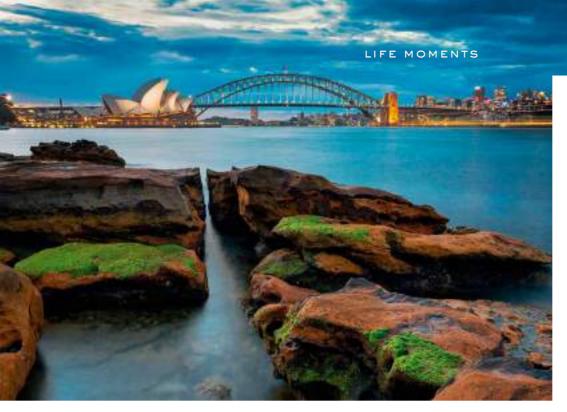
An ambitious urban renewal project transformed what was previously a container terminal into a hub of dining, shopping and entertainment in 2021. Barangaroo is named after a Cammeraygal woman who, along with her husband, mediated between her tribe and the British in the 18th and 19th centuries. The area is accessible on foot from the hotel via Wulugul Walk or via ferry, stopping at Barangaroo Wharf. Barangaroo House, with steam-bent charred timber on its stunning, curved exterior, offers many dining and shopping choices.





4. BARANGAROO RESERVE

A significant part of the Barangaroo urban renewal project is this unique, landscaped park with over 75,000 native trees and shrubs amid sandstone blocks extracted on site. These blocks were also used to create the Cutaway art and festival space. Renowned environmental educator Clarence Slockee leads tours with Barangaroo Aboriginal Cultural Tours that will shed light on the area's historical and cultural significance and stories of the Eora Nation that once lived where Sydney now stands.



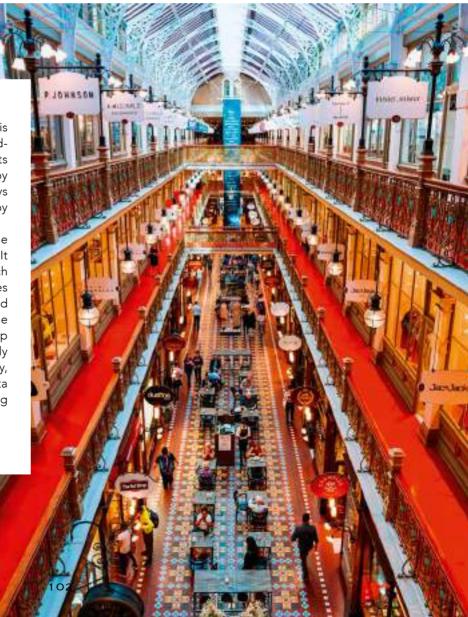
5. MRS MACQUARIE'S CHAIR

The breathtaking views of Sydney Harbour are a primary focus for many visitors. However, one of the most spectacular sites was discovered in 1810 by Governor Macquarie's wife, Elizabeth. She loved the view from that vantage point so much that she had a seat chiselled into the rock from which she could enjoy one of the most, if not the best, complete views of Sydney Opera House and the perfect arch of Sydney Harbour Bridge. Mrs Macquarie's Chair is an extension of Sydney's Botanic Gardens, making for ideal afternoon picnics followed by spectacular sunset views.

6. THE STRAND

English architect John Spencer designed this beautifully restored Victorian building in the mid-1880s. It is located between Pitt and George streets and is one of the city's earliest places to be lit by electricity. The 104m-long arcade soars three storeys high with a glass ceiling for natural light anchored by handcrafted cedar staircases at each end.

Restored after a devastating fire in 1976, The Strand today celebrates its 135th anniversary. It offers an assembly of Australian designers and a rich array of edible delicacies. Well-known Sydney names that have been trading for decades include Strand Hatters, Coomb's Shoe Repair & Service and The Nut Shop, while cult Australian skincare brand Aesop has a charming store here. For a refresher, sip freshly brewed coffee at Gumption by Coffee Alchemy, winner of the highly challenging Australian Barista Champion title and inaugural Australian Cupping Champion title.





8. WESTFIELD AND DAVID JONES

As a vibrant, cosmopolitan city, Sydney offers terrific shopping for everyone. Westfield Sydney is located in the central business district and is a 10-minute walk from Sydney Harbour Marriott Hotel at Circular Quay. Here you'll find top designer brands, including Chanel and Christian Louboutin, as well as leading Australian lifestyle brands. Across the road is David Jones, a quintessential Australian department store which opened on this spot 95 years ago. It offers designer labels, homeware and a wide variety of beautifully packaged food that make lovely gifts.



Catch a performance at this lovingly restored home of the Sydney Theatre Company at Pier 4/5 on Hickson Road in Walsh Bay, easily accessible on foot from the hotel. The Wharf houses the Company's offices and rehearsal studios for its productions led by its artistic director, Kip Williams.



10. MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Sydney's waterside home of contemporary art beckons on Circular Quay. The airy interior houses a theatrette that seats 120, an interactive education centre, a rooftop café and a sculpture terrace.



11. WATSONS BAY

The way to appreciate this capital is to take a ferry ride over its sapphire waters. Go a little further afield via a 20-minute ferry ride from the Circular Quay terminus to this laid-back, lovely escape from the city's hustle and bustle. As the ferry pulls away from the quay, you can truly experience the wonders of waterside living and marvel at how beautifully designed the city is. At Watsons Bay, the second stop after Rose Bay, spend a few hours completing the circuit walk that takes you from the picturesque fisherman's village around South Head with dramatic cliffside views of Sydney and the Pacific Ocean. Finally, arrive at the historic Hornby Lighthouse with its distinctive red and white stripes before turning back to catch the next ferry.

12. SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE TOURS

A must-see for every visitor, this iconic landmark was designed by Jørn Utzon and took 14 years to build, from 1959 to 1973. It's one of the most famous opera houses in the world and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2007. But beyond making a quick visit for photos, join one of its official tours to inspire a deeper understanding and appreciation for this building from an architectural or historic perspective. In addition, the Backstage Tour allows access to areas cordoned off to most tourists as they are reserved for the numerous celebrities and stars holding performances here.

For more information, visit www.marriott.com/sydmc







THE REAL BALI REDUX

WITH THE REOPENING OF SPA VILLAGE RESORT TEMBOK, BALI, WE BRING YOU THE SOULSTIRRING RETELLING OF A STAY HERE IN THE DAYS BEFORE THE PANDEMIC. IT IS A STORY OF THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE UP THE RESORT AND OF THE LIVES THEY LEAD, EACH OF WHOM REPRESENTS A VIGNETTE OF THE REAL BALI—A LAND WHERE HAPPINESS AND AUTHENTICITY RULE IN EQUAL MEASURE.

Words by KENNETH TAN Photography by MANGO LOKE



he village of Tembok is located in the idyllic northeastern corner of Bali. This area stood as the easterly gateway to the city of Singaraja, one of the key cities of the 12th-century Balingkang kingdom. Today, Singaraja continues to be the closest city for Tembok locals who occasionally make the one-hour journey for its shops and, for those looking to further their academic pursuits, the university.

Back in Tembok, you find yourself among a pastoral landscape of palm forests, coconut groves and a village community who greet visitors with a smile. Looming in the distance are Mount Bator and Mount Agong, two of Bali's most famous volcanic peaks, with the latter being the island's highest point of elevation at 3,031m above sea level.

This area of Tembok bears some unique features in topography that are dissimilar to Bali's southern regions. The mountain ridge which divides the island protects Tembok from much of the south's familiar rainfall, resulting in near cloudless skies on most days save for the wetter months of December and January.

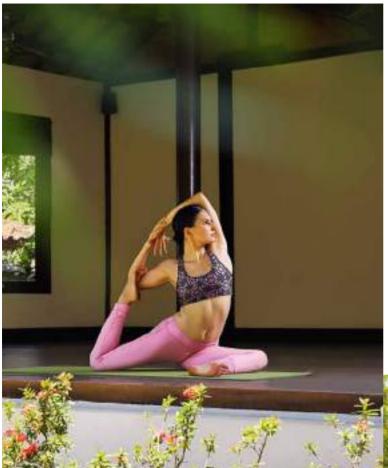
It is also here where one finds the charming Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali and its 27 deluxe rooms with two suites and two villas (which come with individual plunge pools). Here, in this adult-only resort – a minimum guest age of 16 is enforced – the day brings birdsong, a constant sea breeze

and the scents of garden life: ylang-ylang, jasmine and frangipani. To arrive here, you undertake a transformative two-and-a-half-hour drive from Bali's Ngurah Rai airport located in the island's south. The resort's comprehensive pick-up and drop-off package ensures that your journey begins at the airport's arrivals lounge, where you meet one of the resort's six drivers. Your journey will take you past densely packed districts and along a northeasterly coastal road. Highlights along the way include salt-making sites, temples and the century-old Ujung Water Palace where Balinese and European architecture meld into the spectacular residence of the former raja of Karangasem.

By the time you turn into the Tedjakula-Tianyar thoroughfare, which runs through the area of Tembok, that sense of discovery would have been greatly heightened with the sight of a quaint village seemingly lost in time. Here, an assortment of brick homes is interspersed with eateries, shrines, sundry shops and smallholdings. You would invariably notice that the people here possess an unhurried aura about them, a sense of ease of themselves and their lives.

At Pasar Tukad Eling, the market which serves the local community, live ducks and chickens are sold alongside freshly caught mahi-mahi and yellowtail tuna, as well as incredibly sweet Harum Manis mangoes, all representative of the produce from the surrounding land and sea. That same

LIFE FEATURE



This page: age-old Balinese traditions provide a calm and reclusive environment for relaxation, recovery and self-discovery.

Facing page: suites are generous with stunning views while the villas are private sanctuaries of peace.



freshness is translated into the healthy farm-to-table cuisine prepared at Wantilan, Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali's restaurant, where the day's menus are written up following the morning market run.

Executive Chef Mohamad Rizal brings his understanding of cosmopolitan cuisine from over a decade of service at Fairmont Dubai to the food served here. The Balinese delicacy of bebek betutu is prepared from over 20 herbs and spices, marinated over a spring duck, and then slow-baked in banana leaves. The result is a toothsome meal infused with heady flavours of galangal, cumin and cilantro. "It's important to strive for a balance of the salty, spicy, sweet and savoury tastes," Rizal explains. "Fresh ingredients are key of course, and we work closely with the local farmers and fishermen on a contracted basis to obtain the choicest selections."

There's an undeniable sense that Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali is connected to the core of this original way of life, where much of what happens at the resort mirrors the best practices of the villagers nearby. At the spa, the mineral-rich black sands from the adjoining beach – a result of ancient volcanic flows – are used in some of the treatments to dispel arthritic pains and low spirits, in the same way villagers would sit with their feet in the sand as a means of detoxification. Yuyun Cindarsih, the resort's Spa Manager, had helped design the spa menu by sourcing 100 per cent local organic





ingredients, from yoghurt, honey, lime and cucumber juice to local flora.

She has combined this chemical-free base with local traditions which have proved to be effective remedies across centuries. "For the locals, the traditional ways are always the first option before visiting the doctor," Yuyun states. Boreh, a warming body mask, is used to restore vitality to weary bodies in the same way the locals do. "A lot of what we practise today is taught to us by Tembok's late respected healer Ka Tis, who handed down the recipes of using local herbs, coconut oil and also his healing techniques."

In time, one realises that it is a sense of belonging and purpose which becomes the gateway to the happiness exuded on the faces of the resort's members of staff, many of whom originate from Tembok. Sika, a 42-year-old recreation officer, has lived his whole life in Tembok, growing up in a fishing family. As one of the original members of staff at the resort, he has relished the regular income which employment brings over the uncertainty of the day's catch. He is up before the crack of dawn, preparing the resort's boat – a traditional two-seater vessel fitted with outriggers called a *jukong*.

His familiarity with the sea means you will find yourself in the choicest spot to contemplate the coastline, backgrounded by majestic peaks. Through the water, you will spot fields of phosphorescent plankton (which attract whales in December and January). Most curiously, Sika and his ilk are able to pinpoint exactly where to locate the boat, to prepare for the



This and facing pages: the essence of the Balinese culture is woven through this resort, which is set against a dramatic landscape of sacred mountains and ultramarine waters.



dramatically charged encounter with schools of dolphins, numbering in the hundreds, which emerge from the warming waters with aplomb.

A deep and abiding love for the land can be seen in the faces of the groundskeepers at the resort, who gather frangipani blossoms to scent guest rooms. Throughout the day, various members of staff offer incense and floral offerings at the resort's shrines.

Not far from the resort, Les Waterfall serves as a purification point for locals on religious days of celebration. The cool waters, cascading from a height of five storeys, offer invigorating and natural hydrotherapy.

Once a year, when the moon waxes full, the Pujawali festival comes about, a thanksgiving ceremony for the ocean goddess, Baruna. At a temple dedicated to her, a 10-minute walk by beach from the resort, a fiesta of celebration is in full swing, with a *mangku* – a temple priest – offering songs and prayer in Sanskrit and Balinese.

Made Arjaya, 40, is the youthful village leader of Ngis (estimated population 2,400), a village in the vicinity of Tembok. He spent half of his life growing up here and the other half driving a cab in Bali's southern districts. "The spirits are old here in Tembok," he observes. "We celebrate tonight because the ocean has given us so much, everything, to our lives."

Made, who also possesses a cosmopolitan outlook by virtue of having developed many friendships through work,

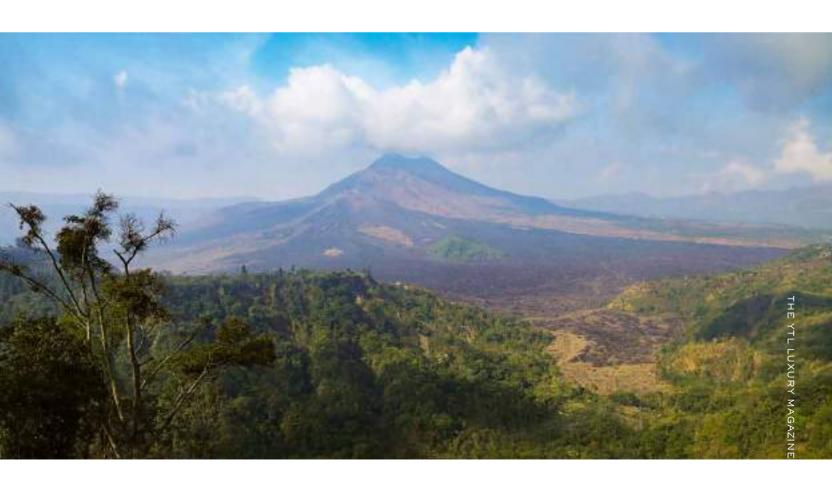
hopes that visitors to Tembok will see the "real Bali". For him, this notion of a real Bali rests in the deep-rooted culture, respect for customs and heartfelt relationships which the people share in Tembok.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the smiling eyes of Gede, 29, the resort's guests relations manager, who has been tasked to help organise the Pujawali tonight. Gede has shown up in his finery with wife Kadek Sri Widiasih, his five-year-old daughter Putu Angela and infant son Kadek Deo Honesta. He had had to take two days off work to help with preparations and temple decorations, with his father pitching in on security detail and mother on the gamelan – the traditional Balinese orchestra.

That sense of togetherness, for many, will be the enduring memory of anyone who visits Tembok. From the smiling ladies in the market to the pleasant-mannered villagers and members of staff, one has clearly stumbled into a guileless land. Fauzi Abriansyah, the resort's room division manager, a Javanese who has spent 10 years at the resort, has long noticed these charms at Tembok. "People are friendlier, the environment is calmer and you can feel that everyone is looking out for each other, understanding that they can only be happy when everyone around them feels the same way."

* This story first appeared in YTL Life's winter 2018 issue.

For more information, visit www.spavillageresort.com















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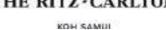






THE RITZ · CARLTON

KUALA LUMPUR











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THE SURIN

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SITUATED ON PANSEA BEACH, ONE OF PHUKET'S MOST PRIVATE STRETCHES OF SAND, THE SURIN OFFERS A PERFECT SLICE OF THAI BEACH LIFE. THE COTTAGES AND SUITES ARE BUILT INTO A CAREFULLY CONSERVED LANDSCAPE. FROM SUMPTUOUS CUISINE TO WATERSPORTS, THE SURIN COMBINES IDYLLIC TROPICAL CHARM WITH THE WARMTH OF THAI HOSPITALITY.

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THE GLASSHOUSE

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LONDON

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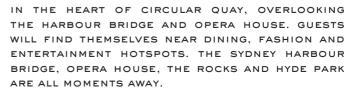






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Niseko Village Always in Season



HINODE HILLS















THE HEART OF NISEKO VILLAGE IS ITS MAIN PULSE, WHERE PAVED INTIMATE WALKWAYS ARE FLANKED BY CONTEMPORARY SHOPPING AND DINING OPTIONS. JUST MOMENTS FROM NISEKO VILLAGE'S AWARD-WINNING HOTELS, RESIDENCES AND LIFTS, ITS SLOPESIDE LOCATION ALLOWS FOR SEAMLESS SKI-IN, SKI-OUT ACCESS BETWEEN MOUNTAIN ADVENTURES AND INDOOR DIVERSIONS. BOTH MODERN AND TRADITIONAL INTERWEAVE, EVOKING A GENTEEL LIFESTYLE AT THE VILLAGE WITH ITS AUTHENTIC JAPANESE MACHIYA ARCHITECTURAL SETTING. APRÈS-SKI IS EXCITINGLY REDEFINED AT NISEKO VILLAGE.

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The Starhill Dining offers an epicurean journey that is curated to satisfy the most discerning taste buds. Tempt the palate with innovative international cuisine at Shook!, discover a poetic Chinese heritage at Luk Yu Tea House, enjoy a fresh feast of Japanese delicacies at Jogoya and savour fine

Arabic cuisine at Tarbush. You will also discover the Hairy Crab season at Shanghai, savour winter specials from Hokkaido through Yukibana at Shook! and encounter the refinement of the Ritzy afternoon tea.

Be it an evening sundowner or a tipple with friends - try a perfectly stirred Martini at The Alchemy – there's always something to discover at The Starhill Dining's bars and lounges. Oenophiles can linger over a rare vintage at The Cellar, which takes pride in stocking the city's most prestigious wine collection that includes highly sought-after Old World vintages and also New World icons. The stars of The Cellar are undoubtedly its unrivalled Opus One collection, a magnificent vertical flight of wines that span from 1980 to 2008, and the exclusive vertical collection of the largest and finest Château Mouton Rothschild of every consecutive vintage from 1945 to 2005.



"BRINGING
PEOPLE
TOGETHER
THROUGH MY
FOOD IS A
REFLECTION OF
WHO I AM."

– CHEF MO, SHOOK! MASTERCHEF AND GROUP EXECUTIVE CHEF OF YTL HOTELS –

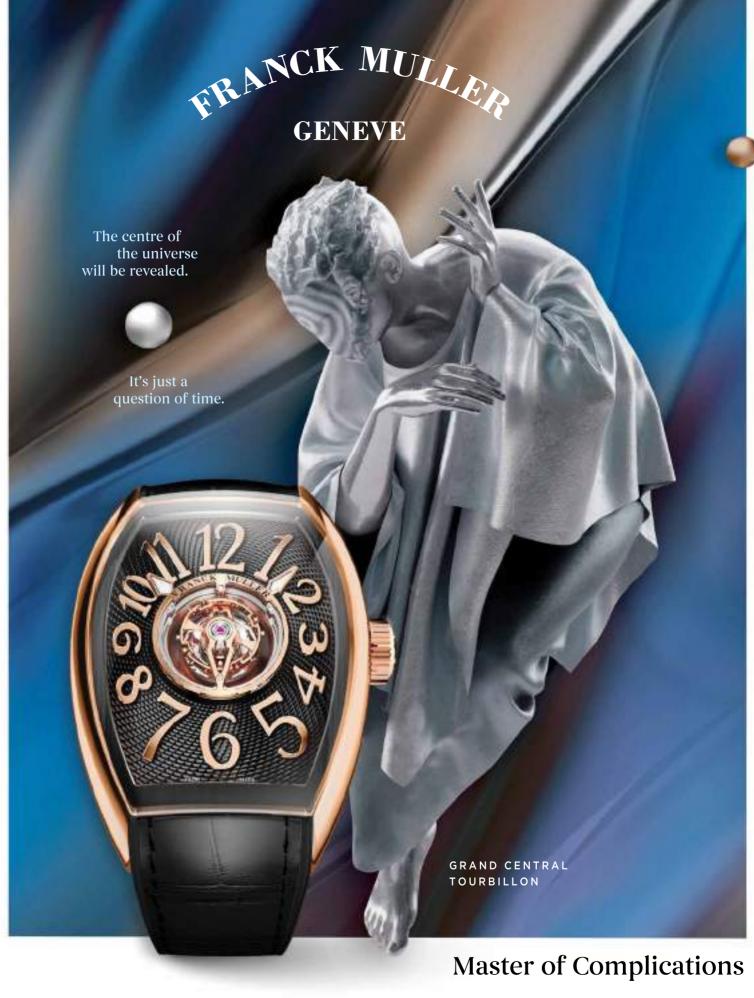




TONDA PF MICRO-ROTOR







FRANCK MULLER BOUTIQUE | KUALA LUMPUR PAVILION KL, 603 21415410 | AUTHORISED RETAILERS | KUALA LUMPUR | CORTINA WATCH STARHILL, 603 21441188 | SURIA KLCC, 603 21645175 | SINCERE FINE WATCHES SURIA KLCC, 603 2166 2181 | PENANG | CORTINA WATCH GURNEY PLAZA, 604 227 1026 | SABAH | CORTINA WATCH IMAGO, 608 8277 818

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