

YTL *life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine

On A
Balinese
Art Trail
In The Footsteps
Of Chang Fee Ming

Georgians
On Our Mind
All Things Jane
Austen In Bath

The Art Of Afternoon Tea • Smoke House Style File • Niseko's Autumnal Feast



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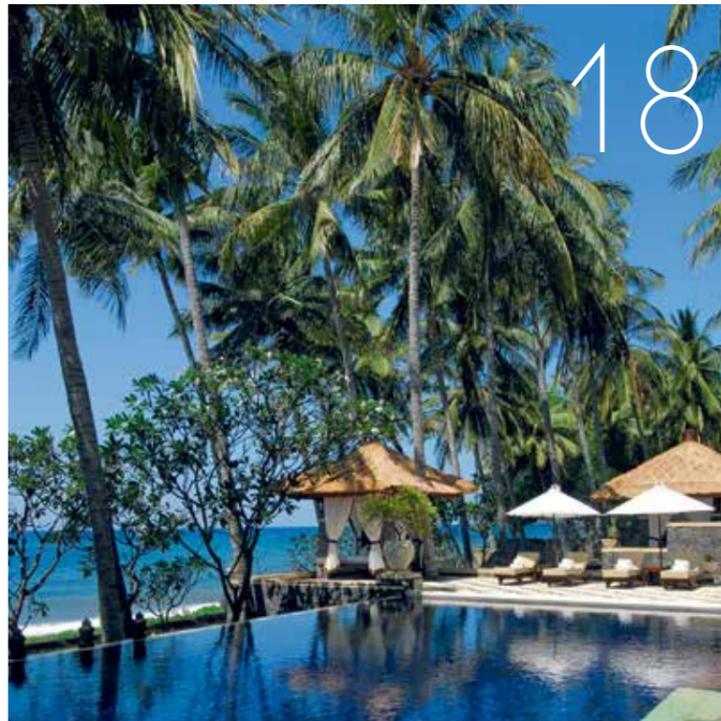
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181 Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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YTL *life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine

Published By

YTL Hotels & Properties Sdn Bhd
8th Floor, Yeoh Tiong Lay Plaza, 55,
Jalan Bukit Bintang,
55100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Produced By

Blu Inc Media Sdn Bhd
(Company No. 7408-K)
Lot 7, Jalan Bersatu 13/4, Section 13,
46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia
Tel: +603 7952 7000
Fax: +603 7960 0151
E-mail: kitchoong@bluinc.com.my

Colour Separation By

Far East Offset & Engraving Sdn Bhd.
19-25, Jalan Kuchai Lama, 58200,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Printed By

Percetakan Zanders Sdn Bhd
No.16, Jalan BK 1/11, Bandar Kinrara,
47180 Puchong, Selangor, Malaysia

Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief
Diana Khoo

Associate Editors
Christy Yoong

Art
Creative Director
Eireen Ooi

Art Director
Penny Chew

Editorial Assistant
Kirat Kaur Santokh Singh

Photographers
Yong Keen Keong, Edmund Lee,
Robin Liew, Jason Lee

Chief Executive Officer
Datin Azliza Ahmad Tajuddin

Sales
General Manager
Loo Kit Choong

Publishing Services
Production Manager
Satvinder Kaur

Assistant Production Manager
Kong Ah Kuan

Traffic Executive
Noor Aini Zainal Masri

Contributors
Maya Michael,
Rubaashini Shunmuganathan,
Kim Mun, Kim Inglis,
Simon Pridmore, David Yip,
Steven Goh, Vivian Chong,
Andrea Wong, Jacob Termansen,
Law Soo Phye.



AMIDST CENTURIES OF CULTURE AND COMMERCE

The allure of Malacca is still very much alive here in this magnificent mansion. The colourful wooden shutters. Ornate cornices. Intricate Peranakan tiles. Welcome to The Majestic Malacca.

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A Note from Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh



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

There is a famous saying of how the world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page. In this light, we are pleased to present a truly global outlook on the world of YTL Hotels. From running the trails inspired by the brave escape of Colonel Frederick Spencer Chapman during World War II on the island of Pangkor Laut to autumnal excitement in Niseko, Hokkaido, as well as all things Jane Austen this season in the jewel box town of Bath, England, discovery is at your very fingertips.

We have also chosen to profile Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali in an unusual manner this issue – through the eyes of an artist. And, not just any artist, but the great Chang Fee Ming, undoubtedly one of the finest watercolour artists in the region. Having just been feted by Christie's Hong Kong with a successful solo show last year, he takes time off his busy schedule to lead the *YTL Life* team on an exclusive artistic trail through Bali. Turn to page 18 to read all about it and we hope it inspires you to follow in his footsteps on your next journey to Tembok.

From a historical point of view, few places embody it as vividly as the UNESCO World Heritage site of Malacca and we invite you to walk along our historian's trail to discover the constant evolution of a place that has seen the changing of sultanates to modern-day innovation. Tanjung Jara Resort, our gem on the Malaysian East Coast, also recently played host to the famous yogi, Tara Stiles, while gentlemen with a taste for the finer things in life can be inspired by our special feature on The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur's Smoke House. We trust you find inspiration within.

Until then, God bless and enjoy the issue.



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Challenge Accepted!

To commemorate the anniversary of Colonel Freddy Spencer Chapman's escape from Pangkor Laut in 1945, the picturesque Pangkor Laut Resort welcomed fitness enthusiasts for The Chapman's Challenge recently. Hailing from all corners of the world, 130 participants, including members of the Spencer Chapman family, ran 2.4km through the two-million-year-old rainforest and pounded the pavements for 3.8km before diving into the gleaming Emerald Bay for a 1km open water swim and sprinting to victory at Chapman's Bar. The biathlon was created by YTL Hotels to mirror the British Army officer's arduous moments on the island during World War II before escaping onboard a submarine.

Despite the valiant efforts, there could only be one winner and Japanese-Malaysian national triathlete, Rikigoro Shinozuka, claimed the top spot. The victory was truly phenomenal with Malaysia's national triathlete Irene Chong See Win, former national triathlete Kimbeley Yap, Colorado Running Hall of Fame Adam W Chase, and Spencer Chapman's grandchildren, Stephen and Hazel Spencer Chapman, all running determined races. All finishers, however, received personalised medals made of wood while commemorative tokens from Reebok, TYR and Ipanema were given to every participant. After the excitement, celebrations began at sunset by Emerald Bay with games and a barbeque by the beach. 🍷

1. Adam W Chase. 2. Hazel Spencer Chapman. 3. Irene Chong finished second in The Chapman's Challenge. 4. Rikigoro Shinozuka, winner of The Chapman's Challenge 2016. 5. Mitchell Wong, Richard Lee, Christopher Spencer Chapman, Kimbeley Yap and Noel Chelliah. 6. Stephen Spencer Chapman, Christopher Spencer Chapman, Hazel Spencer Chapman and Susan Hutchinson. 7. Reebok Ambassador Loh Chee Khoo and Leong Moon Weng. 8. Ross Sanders, General Manager of Pangkor Laut Resort, and Rikigoro Shinozuka. 9. Ross Sanders and Irene Chong.





Orient Enchantment

Starhill Gallery Kuala Lumpur recently launched its first *The Enchanting Orient* event, which fuses ancient Chinese art and culture with contemporary style and glamour. Highlights of the three-day event included tea appreciation sessions, private screenings of epic Chinese movies set against a backdrop of authentic cinema houses and a special exhibition of over 20 scenic Chinese ink artworks by Professor Cheah Thien Soong. Guests who attended the gala dinner, in conjunction with Taiwanese couture label Shiatzy Chen's fifth anniversary in Malaysia, were also treated to an exhibition of some of the brand's iconic designs. ■

1. Taiwanese couture courtesy of Shiatzy Chen. 2. A host of luminaries turned up to support the first edition of *The Enchanting Orient*. 3. Dato' Lewre Lew. 4. Steffanie Chua and Jessie Goo. 5. Harry Wang. 6. All-smiles at *The Enchanting Orient*. 7. An authentic cinema setting for *The Enchanting Orient*



A Good Deed

Accompanied by the chorus of waves lapping against the shore, the Lang Tengah Turtle Watch at Tanjong Jara Resort was unveiled in the most appropriate fashion. The evening was one of marvel and adventure as the new conservation unit and turtle hatchery celebrated by releasing turtle hatchlings into the sea. Supported by the Ministry of Tourism and the Terengganu Department of Fisheries, the joint initiative between Tanjong Jara Resort and Lang Tengah Turtle Watch will provide a safe haven for the precious turtle eggs from poachers and predators, while giving guests the chance to witness the beginning of the gentle creature's life. ■



1. Leander Kruger and Natasha Zulaikha. 2. Capt (Rtd) Mokhtar Mohamad, Resort Naturalist at Tanjong Jara Resort. 3. Zanariah Zakaria, Carl Kono, Executive Vice-President of YTL Hotels, and Tuan Haji Zawali Ali. 4. Scott Mayback, Raphe van Zevenbergen, co-founder of Lang Tengah Turtle Watch, and Nur Liyani Fauzi. 5. Philippe Cavory, Area General Manager of YTL Hotels and Terence Waller, Resort Manager of Tanjong Jara Resort.

Jordanian Jubilee

Standing in the stately Mayang Sari Grand Ballroom of JW Marriott Hotel Kuala Lumpur, it was hard not to get swept away by the jubilant atmosphere. Not only was it a celebration of the Independence Day of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, but also the Centennial of the Great Arab Revolution. The evening, hosted by the Charge d'Affaires of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's Embassy to Malaysia, Dr Maen Masadeh, included a splendid display of Arabian music and cuisine, all thoroughly enjoyed by the revellers. 🍷

1. Suhair Masadeh and Dr Maen Masadeh. 2. Gan Chew and Yeong Lai Kuin. 3. Prof Dr Mohd Zamri Yusoff, Gerald John Pereira and Prof Ir Dr Kamal Nasharuddin Mustapha. 4. Christina Malaya and HE J Eduardo Malaya, Ambassador of the Philippines. 5. Frances Penafort and Professor Ron Edwards. 6. Ahmed Rashad, Ala' Eddin Husni, HE Salah Mohi Eldin Elwassimy, Ambassador of Egypt, and Dalia Elwassimy.



Who Run The World?

Honouring the glorious achievements and contributions of inspiring Malaysian women, the *Her World Women 2016* gala dinner was indeed a majestic occasion at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur. It was a night of empowerment as *Her World Malaysia* magazine, together with jeweller Damiani, bestowed the Her World Woman 2016 award and Her World Young Achiever Award 2016 to Anne Tham and Francesca Chia, respectively, two women who've achieved great success in starting their own enterprises. Complementing the powerful mood of the night was a soulful vocal performance by Jaclyn Victor and an exceptional display of musical mastery by violin virtuoso, Dennis Lau. 🍷

1. Datin Suraya Falak and Datin Lee Nai Yee. 2. Datin Mina Cheah-Foong and Datuk Simon Foong. 3. Dennis Lau and Joanne Teo. 4. Lalita Abdullah, Datin Azliza Ahmad Tajuddin, CEO of *Her World Malaysia*, and Nisha Ayub. 5. Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir and Seema Viswanathan. 6. Joanne Yew and Amber Chia. 7. Beatrice Looi, Jaclyn Victor and Samson Wong. 8. Sazzy Falak.



01



02



03

01

Farm To Table

At the **Cameron Highlands Resort**, 'farm to table' is not just a marketing phrase, but a way of life. With the *Organic Culinary Journey*, guests will venture into one of Cameron Highland's most premiere organic farms and be given a tour of the land by the farmer. As you walk through the vegetable plots, you'll learn the secrets to producing a bountiful harvest while giving nature the respect it deserves. After the walk, enjoy the fruits of honest labour with a cooking demonstration and three-course meal by the resort's chef in a rustic, open kitchen. Take part in this green journey every Monday and Saturday from MYR350 per person.

02

Therapeutic Treat

If you're daunted by the rules and etiquettes of traditional Japanese *onsen*, then a dip in **The Green Leaf Niseko Village's** new thermal pool is the perfect alternative. Bathe, swim and enjoy the Japanese thermal waters tapped from a mineral spring deep below **Niseko Village**. At a comfortable range of 30°C to 36°C, the Green Leaf Thermal Pool is a wonderfully therapeutic soak, not only in winter but also summer when you're surrounded by beautifully lush foliage. Guests of The Green Leaf Niseko Village, Kasara Niseko Village and Hilton Niseko Village are all welcome to spend the day enjoying the thermal pool, which is open year round.

03

How To Save A Life

In a quest to protect the turtles of Terengganu, **Tanjong Jara Resort** has partnered with Lang Tengah Turtle Watch to bring a new conservation unit and turtle hatchery. The Lang Tengah Turtle Watch at Tanjong Jara Resort offers guests a chance to learn more about the trials and tribulations faced by these gentle creatures as they battle to survive threats from poachers. Though it may be only a simple wooden structure, the hatchery is a place of life where guests can view the turtle nests up close and, if lucky, even witness the hatching. If you find yourself moved by the creature's plight, pledge in the nest adoption programme where you can save a nest from the dinner plate. Once a pledge has been made, guests will be regularly updated via email with photographs of the development and invited back to witness the hatching.



04



05



06

04

Peranakan Pampering

After spending the day exploring the winding streets and colonial buildings of historical Malacca, treat yourself to some Peranakan pampering at the **Spa Village Malacca**. The award-winning *Suam-Suam Panas Experience* is a warming, three-hour session of Malacca palm sugar and honey body scrub, nutmeg-rice rolling massage, pandan-coconut hair mask and bird's nest facial with fermented tapioca mask. Each of these treatments incorporates plants and ingredients revered by local culture throughout the centuries for their healing properties to give you a truly Malaccan affair.

05

Salus Per Aquam

There's nothing, really, like a good soak in natural warm waters to ease the body and soothe the mind. The next time you're in the UK, make it a point to visit like unwrapping a birthday present. At **Gaya Island Resort**, relive this satisfaction with the *North Borneo Straits Tiffin*. Inspired by Borneo's history as the convergence point in the old trade routes, the tiffin is a taste of how local and Western flavours come together in perfect harmony on the plate. ■

06

Timeless Taste

At **The Gainsborough Bath Spa**, the country's only natural thermal spa that is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. Ideally located in the heart of the gem-like city of Bath, we recommend the *Twilight Package*, a three-hour session of relaxing bliss that puts a perfect cap on a day of shopping and exploring. Be sure to catch the sunset from the open-air rooftop pool, before you saunter, across the road, to your room at **The Gainsborough Bath Spa**.

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

Go North, Young Man

Journey to Tembok, in Bali's unspoilt north, in the footsteps of the great watercolour artist, Chang Fee Ming. *YTL Life* tags along for an artistic adventure.

Text Diana Khoo Photography Jason Lee Art Direction Penny Chew

With a fisherman and his
jukung at Tembok beach,
right outside Spa Village
Resort Tembok, Bali.





The great essayist Anaïs Nin had once written how “Life, religion and art all converge in Bali”. And, indeed, it is irrefutable. Every scene on the island seems to be a dizzying melange of beauty, light and colour: women go about daily life resplendent in their lace *kebayas* while the men look no less dashing in sarongs accented with ceremonial *udeng* (headpiece); trays of offerings, a quintessential part of life in Bali, heaped high with bright and beautiful fruit and flowers, are an everyday sight while, everywhere, incense and sandalwood burn merrily to delight the senses of the gods. To all who’ve visited, it is easy to understand why Bali continues to captivate. To an artist, however, the island must prove doubly hypnotic and inspiring. Certainly that seems to be the case with the great Malaysian watercolour artist, Chang Fee Ming. Having first arrived on the island in the early 1980s, like many artists before him, to “find inspiration”, Chang soon fell under its spell, returning often and spending most parts of the year painting in Bali, capturing its rich tapestry of life, mystical rituals and even the detailed beauty of everyday slices of life in his watercolours and sketches. His published travel journal, *Journey to Tembok with Chang Fee Ming*, is filled with sketches, anecdotes and observations of the island’s vibrant, unspoilt north and is a delightful compilation of artistic memories of a special time travelling through a special place. Rekindle your sense of inspiration and wonder as Chang retraces his steps to Tembok, sharing the sights and sensations that captured his imagination so many years before. Sometimes, in life, you do need to wander to find wonder.

Taman Satria Gatotkaca

Those who arrive or leave Bali by air would definitely not miss this beautiful, imposing statue at **Taman Satria Gatotkaca** that depicts the brave knight, Gatotkaca, the son of Bima, one of the five Pandawa brothers. Built in 1993, it is believed to keep safe all incoming and outgoing flights from Ngurah Rai International Airport. “Bali is filled with exquisite sculptures and you will definitely drive past this beautiful structure after leaving the airport terminal. It is created



by Wayan Wintan, a sculptor from Ubud who is very famous for his abstract wood sculptures. I think it’s a wonderful Balinese welcome and it is inspired by the tales of the Mahabharata,” observes Chang.

Kusamba

The journey north will take you to one of the first ports of call, literally, at **Kusamba**, a famous fishing port where all the *jukungs* (traditional fishing boats) come to shore with their haul. You will notice how the black sand on the beach here is particularly glistening and adds a glamorous sheen to the haggling going on at the **Pasar Ikan** (fish

market). Here, you still can stumble upon scenes straight out of a Chang Fee Ming painting where wizened old ladies crouch on the ground, searching for little black volcanic pebbles that would be sold at IDR12,000 per bucket – an entire day’s work and wages. “The way they look for these pebbles is as if they were, in fact, looking for precious stones. These pebbles would then be used in decorative landscaping.”

Salt Farm, Klungkung

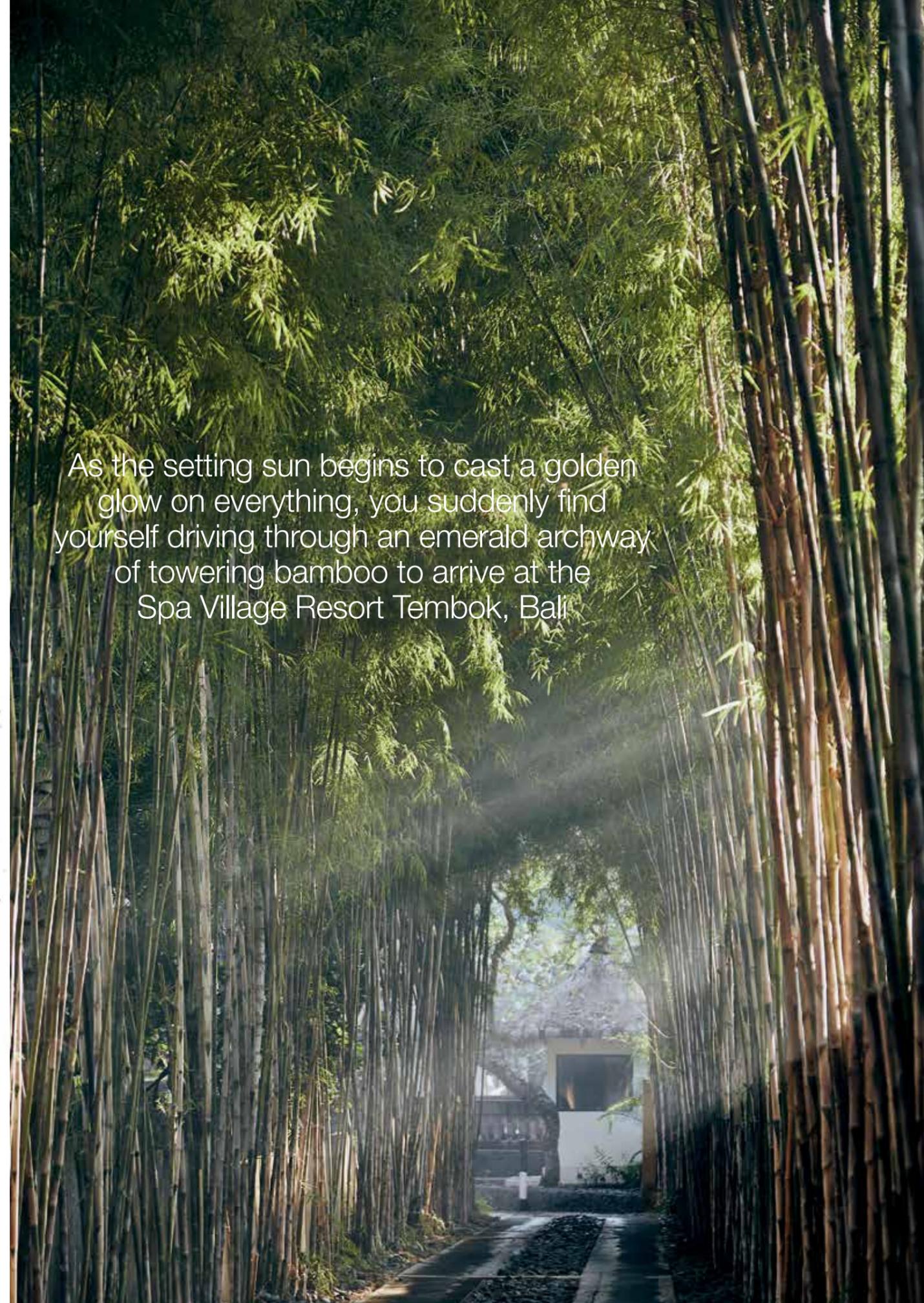
Although Amed, a famous diving spot about 30km further up the coast, is traditionally famous for its salt-making community, Klungkung is also a good place to stop for a short break en route to Tembok to discover how this labour-intensive process works. You can easily spot the **salt farms** from the road, where rows upon rows of carved out wooden trays are filled with sea water. You can see how the salt crystals slowly form as they bake under the heat of the sun. This painstaking process can take up to over a week to, finally, be rewarded with snowy white salt that tastes deliciously of the ocean. It is a good idea to buy packets of these Balinese *fleur de sel* as it’s still very much a cottage industry and not easily available for sale outside the area. Spa Village Tembok, Bali makes it a point to support the neighbouring communities by buying as much local produce as possible, so it is heartening to know that you can support the local Balinese while still being able to enjoy authentic tastes and flavours in every meal.



Clockwise, from extreme top left: Chang Fee Ming sketching; everyday life in Kusamba; mounds of glistening salt in Klungkung; a traditional salt farm; Taman Satria Gatotkaca just outside Ngurah Rai International Airport; ornate carvings are the attraction of every pura visit..



The beautiful water palace of Tirta Gangga



As the setting sun begins to cast a golden glow on everything, you suddenly find yourself driving through an emerald archway of towering bamboo to arrive at the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali





Karangasem

Karangasem was once a mighty kingdom before Bali was conquered by the Dutch. Today, it is classified as a Regency and one of the delights of the island's east coast, with temples to explore, crystal-clear waters to dive into and authentic experiences to soak up. On the *Journey to Tembok*, stopping in Karangasem for a meal is definitely a good idea. The **Lotus Seaview** restaurant is particularly pleasant, offering lovely views of the blue sea and, if it's dark when you arrive, you can still admire the collection of



antique ceramics on display all over the dining room. The menu is international although few things counter a long road journey than a freshly-cut coconut and plate heaped with *nasi kuning* (yellow rice) and grilled mahi-mahi or perhaps the local *babi guling* (roast suckling pig).

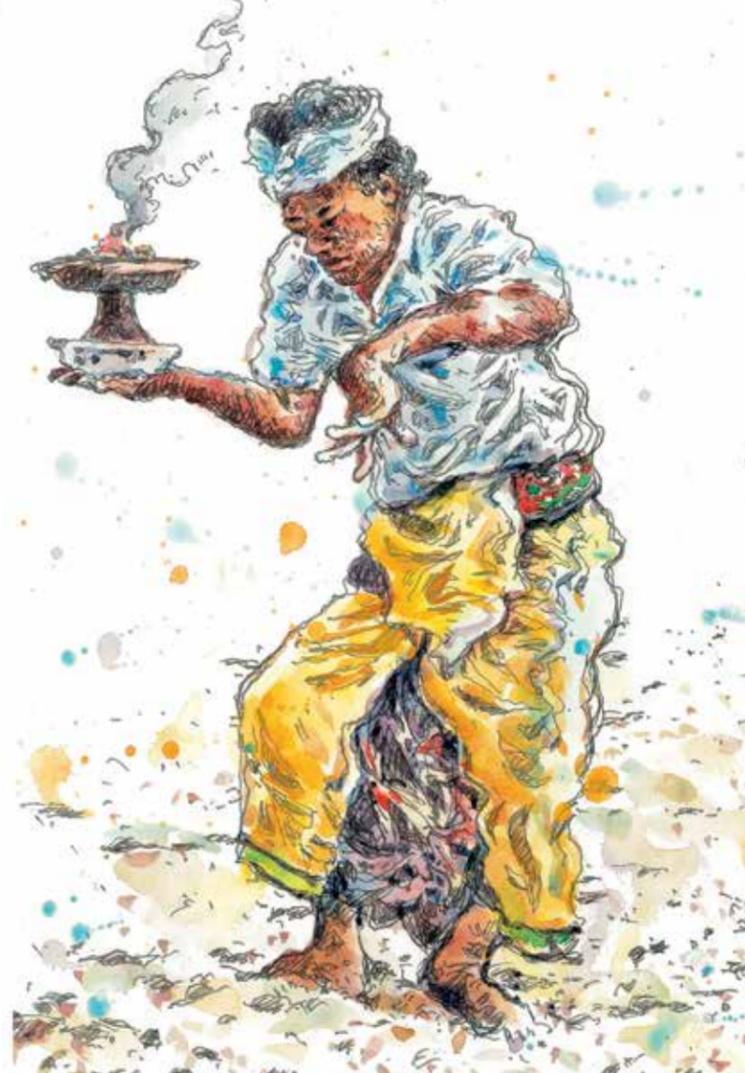
Pura Luhur Candidasa

Located in Karangasem's Desa Adat Bugbug, a stop here is a must, if only for the views of a picture-perfect lagoon, covered with blossoms, and *jukungs* just beyond. "Candidasa is located on the way to Tembok, with a picturesque lagoon covered with waterlilies. The lagoon is best viewed from the **Pura Luhur Candidasa**

temple that sits high up in the hills, perched on the mountainside. I'd painted a watercolour of the scenery but I knew that it could never capture the beauty I saw with my naked eye. Still, it was a very pleasurable moment for me."

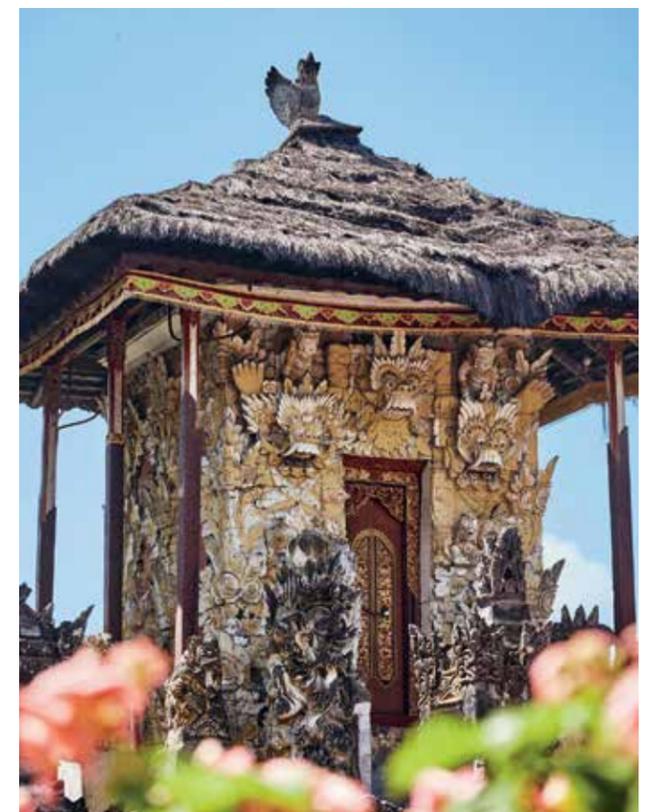
Tirta Gangga

One of the most famous water palaces in Bali, **Tirta Gangga** is definitely a delightful place to break the journey and stretch your legs in truly regal style. Conceptualised by the last king of



life on the cover //

Clockwise, from far left: Star struck at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali; Fee Ming's artwork of a keker (wild fowl) in his kurungan; a delighted Ketut Suradnya, caretaker of the Pura Dalem Segara Madhu, holding up Chang's drawing of him; religion is a pillar of Balinese life; scene from a purification ritual before Nyepi.





Chang Fee Ming in front of his artworks hanging at the Neka Art Museum in Ubud.

Karangasem, Anak Agung Anglurah Ketut Karangasem, Tirta Gangga is fluid tranquillity. Surrounded by lush gardens, fish-filled ponds, pleasure pools, pagodas and intricate statues and carvings everywhere, it is also more than possible to jump into the waters for a quick swim, should you so wish, before continuing on to Tembok. The gardens of Tirta Gangga are particularly wonderful to explore, with their rich architecture and subtle Chinese influences, but it is undoubtedly for its sacred water that people, especially the local Balinese, come. The waters of Tirta Gangga are believed to be holy and feature prominently at religious temple ceremonies or *odalan*. "I actually went swimming in one of the royal pools once," says Chang, "imagining myself as the King of Karangasem."

Gunung Agung

It is at this point in your *Journey to Tembok* you will most likely get your first view of the 3142m Gunung (Mount) Agung, Bali's highest and holiest mountain. Regarded as the island's 'mother mountain', **Gunung Agung** is indeed as majestic as her name (*agung* means 'mighty' or 'great' in Bahasa Indonesia) and also houses Bali's most revered temple – Pura Besakih – on her slopes. Today, as we drove further northwards, Agung rewarded us with the chance to view a procession up close, as it snaked its way through rice fields and villages, before walking with us slowly, side by side, on the narrow road.

Tembok

As the setting sun begins to cast a golden glow on everything, you suddenly find yourself driving through an emerald archway of towering bamboo to arrive, at last, at the **Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali**. And, few welcomes can outdo the one laid out for guests here, with, first, a cool tropical quencher of lime, mint and honey, followed by a warm foot soak with flower petals and culminating in a neck and shoulder massage. "Tembok means 'the wall'," explains Chang, "and it divided Buleleng and Karangasem and was considered the eastern gate of Singaraja when it was part of the ancient province of Baling-Kang. Today, Baling-Kang no longer exists in the eyes of the government but, as far as the people of Tembok are concerned, this great province still remains, as the temples of Baling-Kang continue to be an important part of their spiritual constellation of temples."

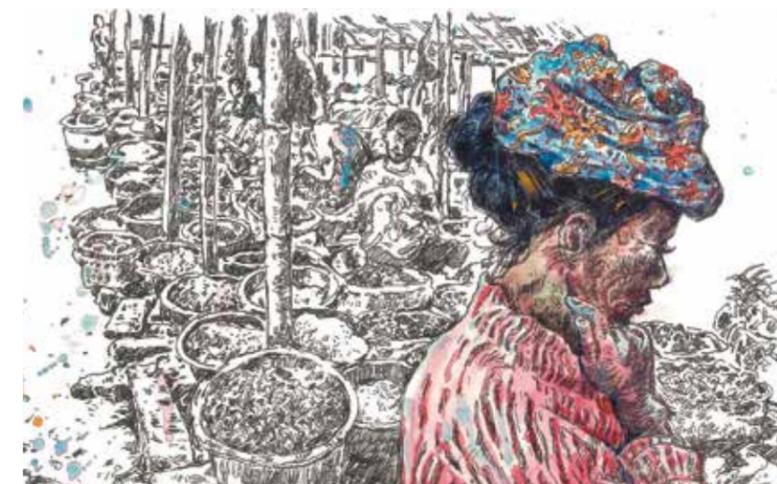
Speaking of constellations, one of the most blissful ways to simply just 'be' at Tembok is to spend your night **star-gazing**. Here, things are done a little more dreamily, where you just float weightlessly on an airbed in the middle of the swimming pool and take in the black velvety vastness of the star-lit universe far above you. You may choose to enhance the experience with a specially-selected soundtrack but natural pleasures are sometimes best, just listening in on the sound of the surf, the call of a night bird, perhaps, and



the soft, muted *rindik* music played on bamboo xylophones that waft over from the nearby Taman Gili pavilion.

Pasar Tianyar

To market, to market, says Chang and who are we to argue? "I always enjoy the market scene, which is abuzz with activity. I like going to the **pasar pagi** (morning market) in nearby Tianyar which is a great place to observe local life at its best – what the people eat, buy, wear and use." And, certainly, it is a wonderful place to enjoy Balinese routine at its authentic best. Everywhere, business and life are lived out in Technicolour splendour: gold is sold next to piles of fresh ginger; bamboo poles display horizontal fashion showcases of the latest splendid sarongs; a child's delight of *jajan pasar* (colourful breakfast cakes) like *lak-lak* (crumpet-like cakes made with rice flour and topped with shredded coconut and palm sugar), *cerorot* (a sweet-salty dough cake encased in a coconut leaf cone) and assorted *sumping* – steamed cakes made with

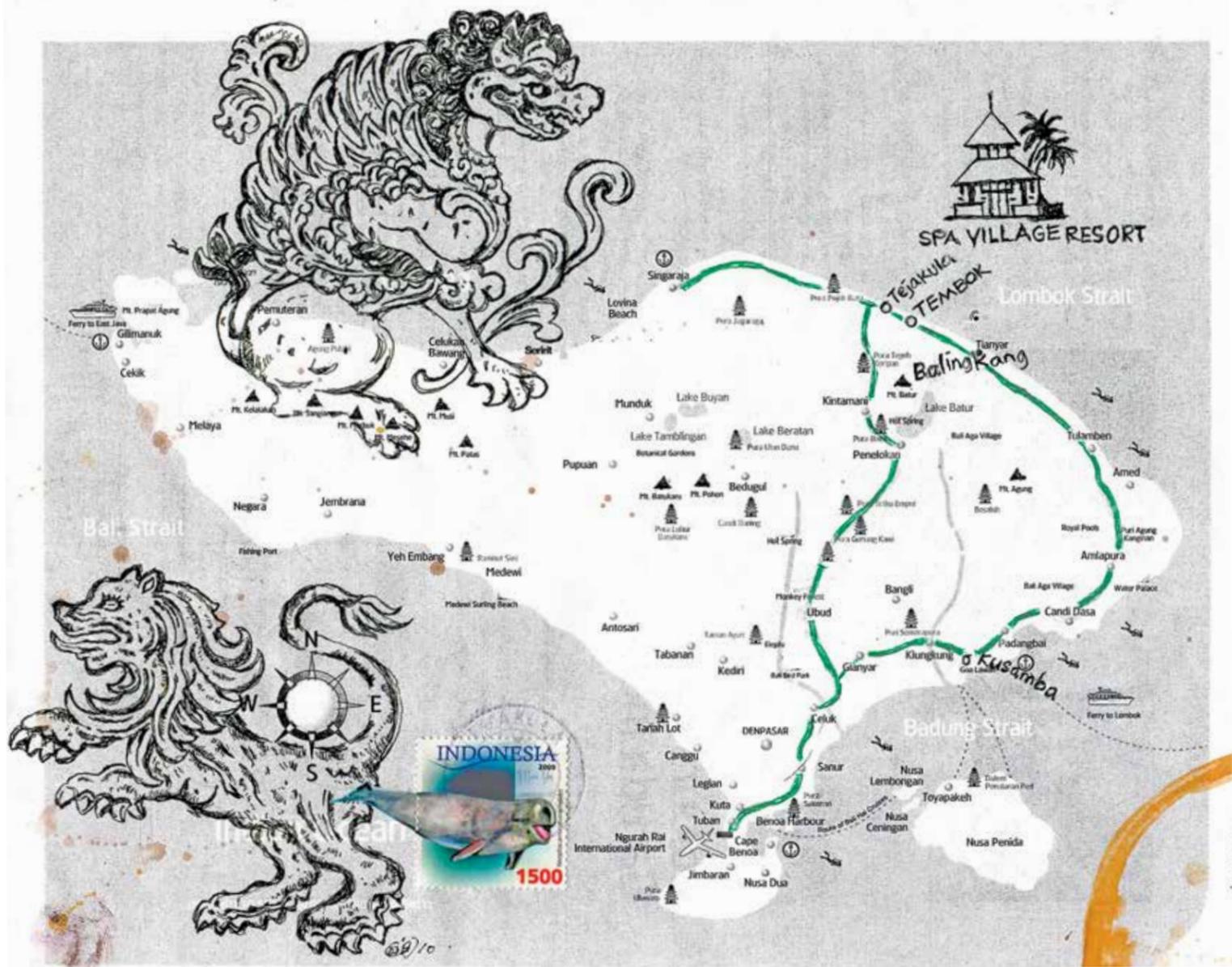


banana (*sumping biyu*) or pumpkin (*sumping wuluh*) – as well as the freshest selection of fish, still gleaming with seawater, and even mounds of fresh tobacco. In a corner, Balinese men crowd over a game of *bola adil* (a type of local roulette) while, a stone's throw away, fluffy brown *bebek* (ducks) and piglets noisily wait to be sold. "In a small section of the pasar, you will also always find a section provided for the trading of **ayam jaguh** (fighting cocks). In Bali, cock-fighting remains an important part of religious ceremonies at the temples."

Afterwards, it is a basic but satisfying pleasure to return 'home', if you will, to the resort, laden with fresh treasures. What makes staying at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali particularly wonderful is that it really does feel like a home away from home. That evening, the chef rewards with the fruit of our morning market jaunt by presenting us our 'purchases' all beautifully-prepared: grilled as well as baked baby trevally, which we enjoyed with steamed rice, vegetables and that wonderful chilli condiment that is a mainstay of every Balinese dining table – *sambal matah*.

Pura Dalem Segara Madhu

You will find it is easy to find the days just flying by in Tembok as Bali's north offers a cornucopia of treasures to discover. Far off the tourist track, a world away from the beat of Kuta and the pulse of Seminyak, it is a priceless treat to just be, sometimes, the only people exploring the fascinating temples that surround Tembok village and Singaraja. A short drive away in Desa Pakraman



Jagaraga is a particularly interesting *pura* (temple). Although the modernistic elements hidden in the temple's elaborate carvings take a while to reveal their secrets, the journey is well worth it alone to speak to Ketut Suradnya, the temple caretaker, who has the brightest grin and the most animated way when telling stories. The **Pura Dalem Segara Madhu** is also interesting in the sense that its architecture doesn't ascend to the heavens like most other Balinese temples; instead, it descends. Look out for interesting motifs carved onto the temple walls, depicting pistols and airplanes, as it chronicled the horrors of the Dutch attacks, as well as one carving that shows a ship, a big fish and a man being devoured by a crocodile – a symbol of the evil of men and the wickedness of war.

Tempat Ibadat Tridharma Ling Gwan Kiong
A strong touch of Chinese culture may be detected in Bali's north as an ancient legend tells the tale of a Balinese prince who fell in love with the daughter of a Chinese scholar, Kang Ching Wee. "It is said that Shiva Gandu, the priest of Shiva, refused to give his consent to their marriage as the girl was Buddhist. The

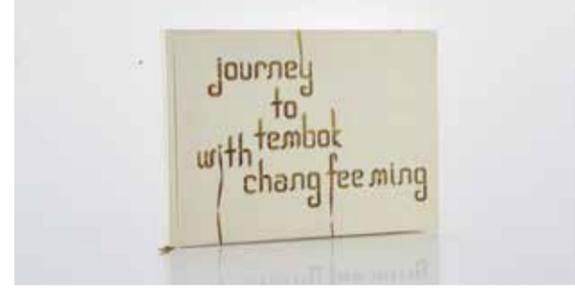
prince then abdicated and left with her to form his own kingdom. This is said to be the ancient province of Baling-Kang, as it is a portmanteau of both their names and heritage: 'Bali' and 'Kang', which remains a symbol of their love," says Chang. In Singaraja, a visit to the **Ling Gwan Kiong Temple** also reinforces the Chinese influence. Dedicated to the lady goddess and divine protector of seafarers, Ma Chor, it is interesting to see how Balinese and Chinese influences come together harmoniously, as devotees proffer offerings of both joss sticks as well as *canang sari* – the ubiquitous Balinese offering of flowers on a small palm leaf tray. It is also a must to take a short stroll to the nearby **Yudha Mandala Tama Monument**. "I find the monument so well-positioned," says Chang. "The statue faces the sea so defiantly and makes me think of how the Indonesians fought the Dutch invaders, who arrived from the sea, so courageously."

Neka Art Museum
If you'd travelled to Tembok by way of the coastal road, another way to return to Denpasar would be the equally charming route of cutting through the island's heart – through the highlands of



The Journey To Tembok is a uniquely-crafted stay by YTL Hotels that takes you on a journey through an ancient province and its legends, through the eyes and tales of an artist. The package includes complimentary meals, return airport transfers, a deluxe 50-minute spa treatment for every night of stay, a complimentary copy of the *Journey to Tembok* with Chang Fee Ming travel journal as well as a selection of crafted day trips as featured within the book. For more information or to book, please visit www.spavillageresort.com

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Born in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia, in 1959, Chang Fee Ming is one of Asia's most highly-regarded watercolour artists whose works remain highly sought-after by collectors as well as auction houses like Christie's and Sotheby's. A keen traveller and observer of life, he is celebrated for his extraordinary grasp of texture and light as well as vibrancy of colour and composition. Although based in his home state of Terengganu, Chang considers Bali to be his second home and has been a regular visitor since 1984, often working part of the year on the island. Many of his most acclaimed works, in fact, are inspired by Bali and include *The Undying Spirit* (1992) which captures the calm intensity of a *Wayang Wong* dancer before his performance as well as *Summoned by the Kulkul II* (2005), which he says, referring to the ceremonial wooden or bamboo bell, "is one of my favourite sounds in Bali"

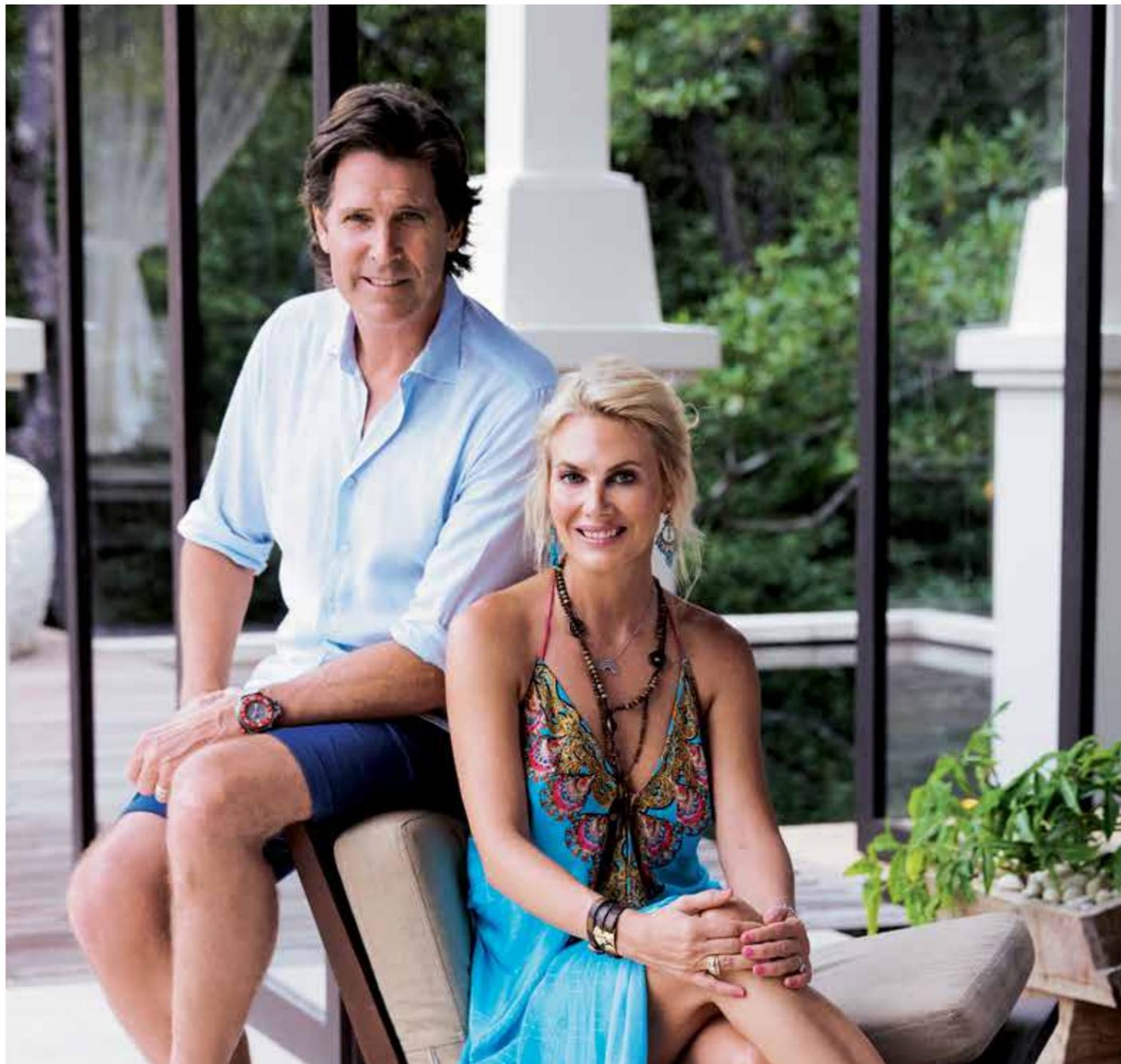


Kintamani – before arriving at the cultural heartland of Ubud. Here, a visit to the **Neka Art Museum** is undoubtedly the highlight for many visitors to Ubud. Founded by the legendary Suteja Neka, one of Bali's most famous names in the world of art, the museum was founded after he realised many masterpieces depicting the beauty of Bali on canvas could no longer be seen on the island of its inspiration and creation. In 1976, he then began to build the Neka Art Museum to display pieces from his personal collection to serve as a source of research, education, information and inspiration for future generations of artists, educators, collectors and aficionados. "There are halls dedicated to the paintings in the famous Kamasan style of Klungkung as well as celebrated names like the Dutch-born Arie Smit, Indonesian contemporary greats like Affandi, Widayat and Hendra Gunawan and, of course, Bali's most famous artist – I Gusti Nyoman Lempad," shares Chang, whose precious works also hang in the Neka, alongside other international artistic greats who have collectively been bewitched by Bali, like Ong Kim-Seng, Donald Friend and Johan Rudolf Bonnet. "The Neka Art Museum is, I think, the fitting finale to one's *Journey to Tembok*," says Chang. There is a popular saying how art is a journey of discovery. Likewise, as these few days so beautifully proved, a journey can also be a discovery of art. ■

Picture Perfect

YTL Life meets up with Aletha and Greg Carswell, the power-couple behind World Swimsuit Model Search, one of the world's most prestigious swimsuit competitions, and uncovers the highlights from their recent trip to the picturesque Gaya Island Resort.

Text Maya Michael Photography Kim Mun/Hopscotch Photography



It's been an especially busy couple of weeks here at Gaya Island Resort. Located a mere 15 minutes by boat from Sabah's capital of Kota Kinabalu, this exclusive island retreat served as the perfect backdrop for a glamorous swimsuit photoshoot for *World Swimsuit*, the spirited lifestyle brand from South Africa that celebrates all things beautiful and bodacious. Set amidst the tranquil surroundings of the property's luxurious Spa Village Gaya Island, YTL Life meets up with the ambitious duo spearheading this endeavour – Aletha and Greg Carswell.

TELL US A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT WORLD SWIMSUIT.

Aletha Carswell: In 1996, I founded Netsport Media that owns and manages the global brand known as *World Swimsuit*. A year after the launch, we brought in the first *Sports Illustrated Swimwear Issue* to South Africa, which is where we are based. My husband (Greg) joined the company not too long after that. About three years ago, we decided to break away from *Sports Illustrated* and launch *World Swimsuit*.

Greg Carswell: Besides being available on print, online, YouTube and social media, *World Swimsuit* also runs a television programme that is broadcasted globally in over 190 countries via Fashion TV. We have also started to expand into e-commerce with the launch of our World Swimsuit Shop and our first-ever beachwear range.

WHAT BRINGS YOU TO GAYA ISLAND RESORT?

Greg: Our team has spent the last two weeks conducting a glamorous photoshoot in different areas around the resort with the winner of this year's World Swimsuit Model Search, which is a global online competition where we seek out the next international swimsuit supermodel. This year's winner is a South African beauty named Tana Boshoff, and she'll

“My soul feels so at peace when I'm here; and the more time that passes, the more reluctant I am to leave.”

– Aletha Carswell –

be working alongside our top models and photographers. She's also one of the first to model our new beachwear range.

Aletha: One of the main highlights about this business is watching these girls pursue their dreams while observing their progress. We were actually one of the first to employ supermodels Candice Swanepoel and Bar Rafaeli. It's really exciting to be able to recognise potential and see them become successful. While there's no exact formula for success, I find that those who have the whole package – beauty, great personality, confidence in their own skin, intelligence and professionalism – are the ones who will go far in this industry.

IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME VISITING THE RESORT?

Greg: This is our third visit to Gaya Island Resort; we have stayed in numerous YTL properties over the past 16 years. When we first visited this place in 2013, we were so impressed by the entire experience that we decided it would make a great venue for our upcoming projects. There are actually quite a few similarities between this resort and the one at Pangkor Laut, which also happens to be one of our absolutely favourite places in the world.

Aletha: During this particular trip, we befriended some of the other guests who have stayed here numerous times. According to them, the main reason they keep coming back is due to the resort's staff and service, which is a major compliment for any establishment. The thing about the people here is that they are always eager to assist in getting things done for you.

ANY MEMORABLE MOMENTS FROM THIS TRIP?

Greg: We went on this amazing river cruise with Justin Juhun, the resident naturalist at Gaya Island Resort. The experience reminds me of the amazing Okavango Delta in Botswana.

Aletha: Justin has been our right-hand man throughout this trip, and he's absolutely amazing. Our nickname for him is 'Mowgli', just because he's just so knowledgeable and in-tune with all things nature. He even took us on a tour around the nearby mangrove swamps, jungle trekking and a few remote islands.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT THIS PLACE THAT APPEALS THE MOST TO YOU?

Greg: Not many people have been to rainforests; so, to actually be able to experience a place where the jungle meets the sea is rare. We also enjoy our encounters with the local wildlife; from the moment you wake up, you can already hear birds chirping in the distance, which is beautiful. But what also makes this resort extraordinary is its commitment towards preserving the natural environment.

Aletha: My soul feels so at peace when I'm here; and the more time that passes, the more reluctant I am to leave. I especially love the fact that you have to walk everywhere as it adds to the authenticity of this place. The moment you step outside your luxurious room, you are already surrounded by nature, which feels incredible. It's almost like having our own little slice of paradise. ■



Fall In Love

Just as spring is all about *hanami* or the art of cherry blossom viewing, autumn demands more than just a few sessions of *momijigari* – or *kanpukai*, as the appreciation of autumn leaves is referred to in Hokkaido. Explore the beauty of fall in Niseko, Japan, with YTL Hotels.

The great outdoors best encapsulates what life in Niseko is all about. Many people associate Niseko with powder-soft snow and all the attractions connected to ski slopes, alpine-style lodges and the pleasures of après-ski, hence its well-deserved reputation as the 'Aspen of Asia'. Few realise it is, in fact, a magnificent holiday destination all-year round. Autumn, in particular, is especially delightful. Harvest is in the offing, which equals a host of bountiful produce to enjoy, while, all around you, the hillslopes of Mount Niseko-Annupuri are changing in a symphony of colour – from vivid red to vibrant yellow, orange and brown – that is certain to delight.

Everyone is familiar with the iconic cherry blossom-viewing ritual called *hanami*. Few, however, are aware of *momijigari*. Taking its name from the Japanese words for maple (*momiji*) and hunting (*gari*), this act of 'finding joy in the autumn' may also be referred to as *kanpukai* in Hokkaido. This pleasurable activity is said to date all the

way back to the Heian period, as a relaxing pastime for noblemen and a way to enjoy their gardens. Here, sake would be sipped, live music played and delicate cakes and sweets served as accompaniment. It is not uncommon to find numerous autumnal references as well in traditional Japanese poetry. For the common folk, autumn was an equally happy time as the summer yields precious bounty for the upcoming winter. Even today, it is a common sight to see bright and beautiful pumpkins lining the streets or decorating windowsills in celebration of the harvest season.

For guests of the Hilton Niseko Village, the Kasara Niseko Village Townhouses or the Green Leaf Niseko Village, it is easy to enjoy the season. Although many Niseko regulars can't wait for the first snow to fall, there's actually so much to see, do and experience this season. Naturally, a love of the great outdoors is a must and guests can choose from a variety of adrenaline-inducing or relaxing activities. Hiking is, undoubtedly, one of the most popular

autumn pastimes and a gentle trek up the slopes of Mount Niseko-Annupuri will reward you with wonderful views of the vibrantly hued forests and there is also a delightful trail that leads to a beautiful lake called Kyonuma (also known as 'Mirror Lake'). Mountain-biking is also getting increasingly popular.

If you prefer pleasures of a more fluid nature, fishing in the pristine rivers can prove highly rewarding or, perhaps, a rafting adventure. Moreover, one of the greatest pleasures of visiting Japan is, of course, soaking in an outdoor onsen. For guests of The Green Leaf Niseko Village, a new outdoor thermal pool has just been built, giving them a chance to partake in *kanpukai* while soaking up all the mineral goodness of the hot springs. The best part is, since it's an outdoor pool, swimwear is mandatory – a godsend for those bashful types who have yet to brave traditional Japanese baths!

Those who enjoy a sporting foursome can tee off at the two beautiful golf courses

in the vicinity – the Niseko Village Golf Course, almost right next door to the Hilton hotel, or the Arnold Palmer-designed Niseko Golf Course, about 20 minutes' drive away. An equestrian centre nearby also gives you the option to enjoy the wonderful countryside on horseback.

And since autumnal holidays are decidedly active, what better way to reward yourself than with meals to remember while in Niseko? Hokkaido is a region that is famed for the freshness, quality and variety of its produce – from the most wonderful potatoes to unbelievable milk and dairy products. If you're visiting in early autumn, you still stand a good chance of catching the tail-end of the sweet corn and Yubari melon season. And, if you have yet to savour a freshly boiled or roasted Hokkaido corn on the cob with a generous slathering of local whipped butter, you are certainly missing out on one of life's simplest but tastiest pleasures. But the real star of Hokkaido's food show comes from the icy waters that surround it. And autumn means

that oysters and *uni* (sea urchin) are at their best. Enjoy it in a variety of forms – *au naturel*, cooked, atop a mound of soupy soba noodles or packed tightly into a piece of sushi. In Niseko Village, the best places to sample these delicacies would be at Yang Shu Ten, which serves sushi, tempura and teppanyaki, or The Crab Shack, where you grill the seafood of your choice at the table, *à la minute*.

Love Niseko in the fall? It should be more a case of fall in love with Niseko – in the fall or anytime at all. ■

www.niseko-village.com

YTL LIFE TIP
 Guests staying at the Hilton Niseko Village would do well to rise early in autumn to catch the spectacular 'Sea of Cloud' or *unkai* scenes that are so typical of the season. Be sure to book a Mount Yotei View Room, though!

The Tao Of Tea

Journey to Cameron Highlands in Malaysia to discover the story behind the tree that slaked the thirst of the world.

Text Simon Pridmore



Call it what you will: tea, *tey*, *teh*, *cha*, *chai* or *chay*, it's all the same thing. All these words, though apparently different, are derived from the various ways one Chinese character is pronounced in different parts of China. That Chinese character is the word for the leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant, which have been boiled for consumption as a stimulating drink or medicinal concoction for thousands of years. It is the second most common beverage on Earth, after water.

Most Westerners call it tea, or a word that sounds like tea, because they first heard about it via Hokkien-speaking traders in the southeast Chinese port of Xiamen and, in Hokkien, they call it "Te." The Portuguese, however, learned about this miraculous plant from their contacts in the southern port of Macau, where people speak Cantonese and call it "Cha." The people of Northern China also pronounce the character as "Cha" and this led to the Korean and Japanese equivalents. However, as the exotic leaves were traded along the overland routes to Central Asia and Eastern Europe, the word "Cha" picked up the Persian suffix *yi* and became "Chai" in languages as diverse as Russian, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic and Turkish.

Conveniently, or confusingly, the English language has all three forms of the word. The most commonly used is tea, of course, but British people will still refer to a "nice cuppa char" and chai has



Clockwise, from left: The author and friends enjoying a sunny picnic in the heart of the tea plantation; tea being processed at the BOH factory in Cameron Highlands; Tea and champagne do make perfect company for a tropical picnic.

gives black tea its dark colour and full flavour. The oxidation occurs when the crushed leaves are exposed to the air for a specified period of time, during which they blacken.

Oolong tea is made from leaves that are exposed to the air for less time, so have only been partially oxidised. Green tea is made from leaves that have been steamed or fried in order to prevent oxidation, which is why the leaves stay green. White tea, the most expensive and rare form, is made from immature, unopened leaves. Until comparatively recently, white tea was only available in China, the undisputed home of tea.

All The Tea In China

Camellia sinensis originally came from an area of East Asia that includes what is now north Burma and the Chinese provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan. It was first used medicinally, then recreationally, in Yunnan. Legends abound as to when tea was "invented" as a potion / drink but physical and documentary evidence shows that it was certainly cultivated, boiled and drunk during the time of the Han emperors over 2000 years ago.

During the Tang Dynasty, approximately 1300 years ago, the practice of tea drinking spread to Korea, Japan and Vietnam. Curiously perhaps, although people in India used tea as a medicine for a long time, other than in the far, far north, drinking tea for fun in India did not become popular until it was introduced by the small western European island nation of Great Britain, whose obsession with tea is written large in its recent history.

Taking Tea To The World

The British relationship with tea is very strong but only comparatively recent. They were not even the first Westerners to discover this unique elixir. It was Portuguese priests and merchants who first brought samples of tea to Europe in the 1500s. Then it was the Dutch who began trading it, bringing consignments of tea from China to Holland via Java. The first commercial shipment of tea arrived in Europe in 1606.

Tea immediately became fashionable among wealthy patrons across Europe, but the British, then as now, were suspicious of Continental trends and slow to pick up the trend. Indeed, there were coffee houses in London before there were teahouses.

Over the centuries, the popularity of tea in Britain has led to more than one significant event that had a major impact on world history.

come to mean in English a specialised form of black tea mixed with milk, honey and spices.

When Tea Is Not Tea

Camellia sinensis is a tree, not a bush. If left to their own devices, the plants in tea plantations would grow to a height of 15m or more. This, of course, would make the task of picking new leaves at the top of the tree extremely difficult. So cultivated tea trees are not allowed to grow over waist height.

Keeping the trees short with frequent trimming also encourages them to bear more new shoots and leaves and it is this new "flush" that is harvested by tea pickers or, less expensively and more haphazardly, by tea picking machines.

There are four types of tea: black, oolong, green and white. Other packets of dried herbs or fruit destined for concoctions using boiling water may be marked as tea, but they are not tea unless they contain *camellia sinensis* leaves. Whether a tea leaf ends up in a cup of green, black, oolong or white tea depends on what happens to it after it is plucked. The leaves that go into black tea undergo a withering, rolling, oxidation and drying process that



An Illegal Exchange

The mega city of Hong Kong owes its very existence to tea. In the mid 1800s, the British demand for tea was almost insatiable and China still held the monopoly. The Chinese refused to buy British goods in return and insisted on payment in silver. The British did not want to forgo their tea but nor did they want to deplete their bullion reserves. So they came up with a plan to trade tea for India-grown opium. It was illegal to import opium into China but they bribed Chinese officials to allow it to be smuggled in anyway.

In 1839, the Chinese Government decided to crack down on the smuggling, and seized shipments of opium from British merchants, who appealed to the British Navy for help. The First Opium War, as it came to be called, (rather than The First Tea War,) did not last very long. The British Navy was too well armed and the Chinese were forced to negotiate for peace. Part of the treaty was the handing over from China to Britain of the peninsula and island that formed a harbour the British had been using as a base during the war. This was Hong Kong.

Taxing Tea

Half a world away and a few decades earlier, tea had a major influence on the destiny of an entire country. Soon after the drink became so greatly desired, the Government in Britain placed a tax on tea leaves, (as governments tend to do with many things people feel they cannot do without!) Unsurprisingly, taxation led to smuggling and adulteration. At one point, tea was often "extended" by mixing it with leaves from other plants, even with sheep dung!

Across the Atlantic ocean, the colonists in America were also very fond of their tea and were upset at the heavy taxes imposed by colonial authorities on their favourite beverage. They had no representation in the British parliament and many refused to accept laws passed without their consent. The discontent reached its peak in the port of Boston, where the British Governor forced colonists to unload all tea shipments that arrived and pay taxes on them.

On 16th December, 1773, a number of colonists, disguised in native Indian dress, boarded three British ships, broke open all the tea chests they were carrying and dumped the contents into the harbour. This act became known as the Boston Tea Party and was the most famous of many acts of defiance that led to the American Revolution and the colony's eventual independence from Britain in 1776. And it was tea that started it all!

A Lovely Cuppa

Strangely perhaps, tea continued to be taxed in the United Kingdom until 1964, without any adverse effect on its popularity. Britons set a great deal of store by the healing and life-enhancing properties of this unique plant. Tea has given its name to one of the

major meals of the British day. Depending on your social class, tea is either a casual gathering with friends at around 4 in the afternoon, with a pot of Earl Grey or English Breakfast, accompanied by sandwiches, cakes and scones with jam and cream. Or tea is the name you give to the meal that you eat when you come home from a day at work, usually at some time between 5 and 6pm. This meal will not necessarily involve drinking any actual tea at all.

But the importance of tea in the United Kingdom goes much deeper. If you are British, when your team is expelled from a major football tournament, when your country is thrown into disarray by a plebiscite very few of you wanted, when your daughter announces she is to give birth to your first grandchild, when people in offices or factories all over the country take a well-earned break, the thing to do is have a cup of tea.

The very definition of anarchy in the UK is to refuse a cup of tea when it is offered. Even simply saying "yes" or "OK" in response to the question is considered quite rude. The expected reaction is one of almost delirious excitement, as if the prospect of a cup of tea, right here, right now, is the best thing that has ever happened to you. "Ooh, that would be lovely," you must trill. All this simply at the prospect of partaking of a few leaves immersed in boiling water, the flavour enhanced (or ruined, according to individual, national or cultural taste) by the addition of spices, herbs, milk or sugar.



Clockwise, from left: The Tudor-inspired Cameron Highlands Resort; it's all in the details here; continue your tea journey with a cup of sencha at Gonbei.



Tea Comes to Malaysia

This cultural obsession with tea was also responsible for the plant arriving in Malaysia. In addition to teaching them how to play cricket, the British Empire bestowed upon its citizens the gift of tea, if, of course, they had the right environmental conditions to grow it successfully.

In Malaysia, perfect tea-growing conditions existed in the Cameron Highlands, the most fertile, agricultural region in the country, more than 1500m above sea level and abundantly blessed with all the attributes you need to grow great tea: plenty of sunshine, plenty of rain and well-drained soil. In 1929, entrepreneur JA Russell was granted a concession of land there to create a tea plantation. He and his partner AB Milne named the place BOH, (according to legend, although the Russell family didn't confirm) after Bohea, a mountainous, tea-producing region in China's Fujian Province.

Tea at Cameron Highlands Resort

During a stay at the Cameron Highlands Resort, a visit to the BOH tea plantations is a feast for the senses, as well as a fascinating half-day out. You will see first hand how BOH black tea is processed from tree to cup and be able to indulge in a little tasting session with local gurus. A unique and wonderful excursion that the resort can also arrange for you is a BOH tour followed by a

picnic in a clearing within the tea plantation itself. A blanket is laid on the ground with cushions added for comfort and your private butler serves a succession of dishes while you chat idly and gaze out at the rows of tea rolling endlessly over the hills around you. Yes, it's decadent but you will remember it forever.

Indeed, you will find during your stay at Cameron Highlands Resort that tea punctuates almost every aspect of the experience. It begins with a welcome cuppa when you arrive but this is but a single note compared to the crescendo of a sumptuous afternoon tea in the Jim Thompson Tea Room. Your server will tease you with a selection of teas to try. The choice can be hard. "Cameronian Gold Blend?" "No, we can try that one tomorrow at breakfast. Let's go for the tangerine?" But, what about the vanilla?"

Tea features prominently in the Cameron Highlands Resort Spa Village menu too. How about a warm tea bath? Lie back with cold tea bags to take away those eye bags, while you relax completely and meditate to the sounds coming through your headphones. Then, how about a tea facial scrub and body wrap?

Did I say decadent? ■

For more details, visit cameronhighlandsresort.com

Novel Pleasures

Exploring the City of Bath with Jane Austen.

Text Kim Inglis

The British novelist, Jane Austen, is undeniably tied to Bath, with two of her books, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, set mainly in this middle-sized city in the English county of Somerset. Austen's parents were married in Bath; she lived in the city from 1801 to 1806; and her father is buried there. During her time (as today), Bath served as a health resort and a provincial outpost of fashionable life – and it offered all the amenities that a young girl looking for a husband wanted or needed!

It is, perhaps, for this reason that the acerbic Austen decried Bath's pleasures; she saw high society shenanigans as shallow, as undoubtedly they were. Nonetheless, as a single girl living with her parents, she knew the city intimately. Despite writing "Bath is still Bath" in a letter in 1813, she probably enjoyed life there more than she would have liked to admit.

Certainly, the city comes alive in her novels, perhaps more so than any of her other settings.

Today, Bath is enjoying a type of rejuvenation or, perhaps, a comeback, as its civic purpose has traditionally been one of amusement, diversion or enjoyment. For centuries, people have been travelling to Bath to 'take the waters' or a cure in the hot springs; to enjoy art and music, good food and entertainment in one form or another; or simply to experience the restorative delight of one of Europe's most beautiful townscapes. With major renovations, the city is being scrubbed up – and much of its Roman and Georgian refinement is reappearing.

Edward, Jane Austen's brother, visited Bath with Jane in 1799 in order to try to cure his suspected gout. Jane wrote to

her sister Cassandra: "He drinks at the Helling pump... and is to bathe tomorrow," and "Edward has been pretty well this last week, and as the waters have never disagreed with him in any respect, we are inclined to hope he will derive advantage from them in the end". Visitors today can do the same by drinking the water at the grand Pump Room, all the while listening to the Pump Room Trio, or bathe at *Thermae Bath Spa*, the only day spa in the UK where one can immerse oneself in natural thermal waters.

Run by YTL Hotels, this facility is fed by three underground springs and offers a series of steam rooms, an open-air rooftop pool with spectacular views over the city and surrounding hills, and several other warm pools, such as the *Minerva Bath*, named after the Roman goddess of health and wisdom. Mineral-rich warm



For fans, no visit to Bath is complete without a pilgrimage to The Jane Austen Centre.



Clockwise, from far left: Bath's Georgian spirit lives on strongly in the city; shopping for Jane Austen books and souvenirs is easily done in Bath; immerse yourself in Bath's famous thermal waters at the YTL-run Thermae Bath Spa.

water containing over 42 minerals and trace elements is guaranteed to soothe and rejuvenate, as will spa therapies that include massages, body wraps and facials.

Also run by YTL is the newly renovated and refurbished Gainsborough Bath Spa next door. The first hotel in the UK to tap directly into the city's famed mineral-rich hot waters, its airy Spa Village Bath, complete with Roman columns and mosaics, features three pools heated to between 35° to 40°C, as well as other facilities such as traditional and infrared saunas, steam room and ice alcove. Additionally, there is a suite and two guest rooms that have access to the thermal waters through taps in the bath tubs. Open to both hotel guests and special 'Spa Village members', it is a unique experience.

If an overnight stay is in order, the hotel comes highly recommended too. A visitor



in the early 19th century noted that "Bath lodgings are not only very numerous, but are distinguished for the elegance, convenience and comfort which they afford visitors" — and nowhere is this more apt than in relation to the Gainsborough. Ninety-nine rooms feature huge high beds, elegant period furniture and furnishings, and a classic Georgian colour scheme of deep blues and browns. With two Grade II listed facades in honey-hued Bath stone, the hotel may be slightly austere inside, but this allows views over the town through huge sash windows and the warmth of high-standard service to take centre stage. A stay here combines the elegance of an earlier era with all the convenience of 21st-century amenities and organisation.

In many ways, the rejuvenation of such buildings and facilities replicates the type of experience earlier 19th-century visitors to the city may have enjoyed. Austen's characters, friends and family patronised the Assembly Rooms for balls, tea-drinking, card-playing and semi-secret sessions of mild flirting. Today, they are open to the public along with a Fashion Museum that showcases the types of clothes that may have been worn in Austen's time. Jane Austen herself preferred the New or Upper Assembly Rooms, opened in 1771, and attended many balls there. Similarly, theatre is strong in Bath: dating



Clockwise, from far left: Sip Bath waters at the Pump Room; catch a play at the elegant Theatre Royal Bath; Spa Village Bath has become a destination in itself; a meal at Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough promises a feast of global flavours.



cooking styles. Think dishes such as a roast rack of Wiltshire lamb with Szechuan pepper crust, celeriac and blood orange at dinner or a Bavarian white sausage and pretzels for breakfast.

Naturally, tea is a big event in Bath as well. Jane Austen's heroines regularly imbibed an afternoon tea of clotted cream and scones at one of the city's regular establishments – and these are replicated at the Jane Austen Centre's Regency Tea Rooms. Try a 'Tea with Mr Darcy' or treat yourself to a slice of Mrs Bennet's lemon drizzle cake (from *Pride and Prejudice*). It is also the place to learn more about Austen and the way that Bath impacted on her and her characters. The neo-classical salon of the Pump Room is another appropriate tea venue: it was one of the filming locations for the television adaptation of *Persuasion* and retains a quaint period atmosphere. And, for guests at The Gainsborough Bath Spa, the stunning Canvas Room acts as the venue for a sumptuous spread of scones, sandwiches and Jing artisan teas.

from 1805, the elegant Theatre Royal Bath has three stages in the Main House, the Ustinov Studio and the Egg Theatre, and is extremely active today.

Twenty-first century tourists expect world-class restaurants in top destinations – and Bath doesn't disappoint in this

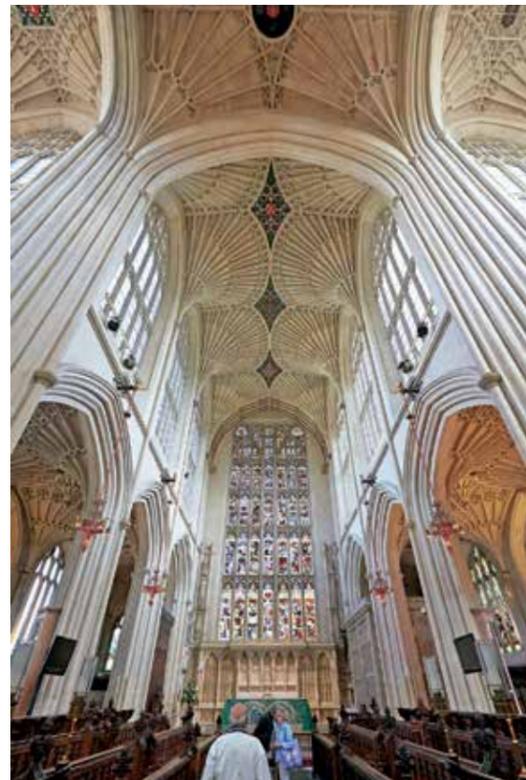
respect either. There are plenty of pubs, restaurants and wine bars to choose from, many reasonably priced for the quality that is offered. The Gainsborough Bath Spa's restaurant is run by German chef Johann Lafer, whose 'dining without borders' philosophy combines locally sourced ingredients with international flavours and



Clockwise, from far left: The Gainsborough Bath Spa is the perfect hideaway; the breathtaking view of the city from the top of Bath Abbey; the Assembly Rooms is one of the many places in Bath associated with Jane Austen; Bath Abbey is the city's sacred heart.

Catherine Morland, the heroine in *Northanger Abbey*, once exclaimed: "Oh! Who can ever be tired of Bath?" – and, certainly, the city beguiles the longer one stays. Morland was not averse to perambulating in Bath's parks or partaking of a spot of shopping, and such ladylike pursuits are also popular today. The city's most famed department store, Jolly's, is now run by House of Fraser and has been updated with a wide range of designer brands; indeed, Bath has more, and better, shops than a city 10 times its size.

Parks are no less prominent: Jane Austen regularly walked in the 18th-century pleasure gardens of the Sydney Hotel, writing to her sister that she often took a "public breakfast" there in the mornings. Present-day visitors can choose between Prior Park with its Palladian bridge, one of only four of this design in the world; the Bath Skyline, a six-mile circular route encompassing beautiful woodlands, meadows and 18th-century follies; or a stroll along the towpath by the River



Avon. And, of course, the surrounding countryside has some beautiful walking trails – not forgetting the sublime site of nearby Stonehenge.

Diehard Austen fans should look no further than a free, downloadable audio walking tour of Bath city centre called 'In the Footsteps of Jane Austen'. Developed by the Bath Tourism Authority, it takes in the main attractions and views associated with Austen and her characters, all the while featuring extracts from her letters and novels, and giving visitors an insight into Bath then and now. Much of the Georgian architecture is, of course, the same, as are many of the highlights – the Pump Room, Assembly Rooms, Royal Crescent, Queen Square (where Austen stayed for a while), Gravel Walk (the location of a touching

love scene in *Persuasion*) and the Jane Austen Centre, with its exhibitions relating to the novelist and her life and works. The audio tour brings alive many sites, past and present, and is liable to make keen readers reach for that *Kindle* for one of Austen's books again. As Catherine's mother says to her at one point in *Northanger Abbey*: "My dear Catherine... Your head runs too much upon Bath; but there is a time for everything – a time for balls and plays, and a time for work. You have had a long run of amusement, and now you must try to be useful."

Luckily, for visitors taking a vacation, it isn't a time to be useful or for work. It's a chance for amusement, balls and plays, or at least entertainment, and fine food and wine. And where better than Bath to indulge? ■

THE JANE AUSTEN FESTIVAL
The best time to be in Bath if you are a fan.



From 9 to 18 September 2016, the 16th annual Jane Austen Festival takes place in the city of Bath, complete with a spectacular Grand Regency Costumed Promenade, minibuses, talks, musical recitals and concerts. There will also be workshops on playing the harp and bonnet-making. It goes without saying that the best place to bed down for the night during this time (as well as with

any other time) would be The Gainsborough Bath Spa, located right in the heart of historical Bath. Boasting the only natural thermal spa set within a hotel in the UK, it's the perfect place to rest your weary body after a day of Regency dancing or promenading. The luxurious hotel is also just a minute's stroll from the ancient Roman Bath and the magnificent Bath Abbey, as well as a short walk from the best shopping at Milsom Street. www.thegainsboroughbathspa.co.uk

Trail Of A Bygone Era

Dubbed as the historical state of Malaysia, Malacca offers a myriad of activities, catering to individuals from different walks of life. Follow us as we unveil what to see and soak up on The Majestic Malacca's popular historical walk.

Text **Rubaashini Shunmuganathan** Photography **Robin Liew**

With a history that stretches back more than 600 years and its key role as an entrepot for the spice trade, Malacca, not surprisingly, boasts a diversity that is unique among Malaysia's 13 states. Ever since Parameswara, a fugitive Sumatran prince, transformed a small fishing village into one of the region's most important ports, Malacca attracted traders from both East and West, who brought with them cultures and traditions that would, eventually, take root. Set midway between China and India along the Straits of Malacca, the Malacca Sultanate that Paraweswara founded grew into an empire. Ironically, it was its very success that drew the attention of Western powers, who sought to dominate the spice trade through conquest. The Portuguese came first, defeating the sultanate in the early 16th century, followed by the Dutch and British, all of whom added to the mélange that is now Malacca.

Today, Malacca remains fascinating as ever, regularly drawing visitors attracted to its food and culture, historical landmarks, architecture and traditional trade. Such is its abundance, though, most only ever see or taste just a fraction of this cultural wealth. At The Majestic Malacca, however, a specially designed walk offers to tell the

history of Malacca through a number of specific landmarks within the city.

Living In History

Located on Jalan Bunga Raya, right in the heart of Malacca city, The Majestic Malacca is not without its own story. Originally built as the stately home of a Chinese tycoon, one fitted with imported Victorian tiles, stained glass windows and expensive furniture, it is a sumptuous representative of its surroundings – a graceful merger of cultures and influences both modern and traditional. The Majestic Malacca is the perfect base for any stay in the city, with an award-winning spa, lavish rooms and delectable cuisine. It is also the starting point for the historical walk around the city, guided by hotel historian Rahayu Kamal, a two-hour tour that offers a brief but comprehensive guide to Malacca.

Immediately after leaving the hotel, you will find the beautiful **Kampong Morten**, a riverine Malay village built by Frederick Joseph Morten, the British Land Commissioner for Malacca in the 1920s. Tucked along Malacca River, this quaint village is also home to **Villa Sentosa**, a pale mint house-turned-museum that





Clockwise, from left: The only remaining part of A Famosa; The Majestic Malacca is the starting point of the historical walk; learn about the Malay culture and history at Villa Sentosa; Church of St Francis Xavier with its beautiful Neo-Gothic architecture.

down the river are Dutch era shophouses, which are notable for being narrow and long. Houses at that time were taxed based on their widths, so it made sense to keep them narrow. Up ahead is another landmark, a rather infamous one. The Kampung Jawa Foot Bridge was first built by the Dutch from the red laterite bricks that the Portuguese used to fortify their fortresses around Malacca. During the Japanese Occupation, the heads of the victims of the dreaded military police were hung from the pillars.

After crossing the river, you will arrive at one of Malacca's treasures, the **Church of St Francis Xavier**. This Neo-Gothic church was constructed by a French priest, Father Favre, in 1856 and named after the famous missionary, St Francis Xavier, who visited Malacca four times. Although its twin spires have a slight tilt to the left, the more-than-a-century old building remains in excellent condition, an airy space with light streaming through the beautifully maintained stained glass. A few hundred metres from the church is the Red Square.

gives visitors a glimpse of Malay culture and history. Take a walk, then, down the walkways and bridges along the river. Modelled after the San Antonio River Walk in Texas, visitors get to see colourful decorations and patterns that provide an eye-pleasing experience for everyone. Along the way, on a bend in the river, you will come across the ruins of **Church of St Lawrence**. First constructed in the early 1600s by the Portuguese, St Lawrence languished after the Dutch took over Malacca. By the end of the 1700s, the Rosary Chapel was built on the same site, which also fell into ruins in mid 19th century.

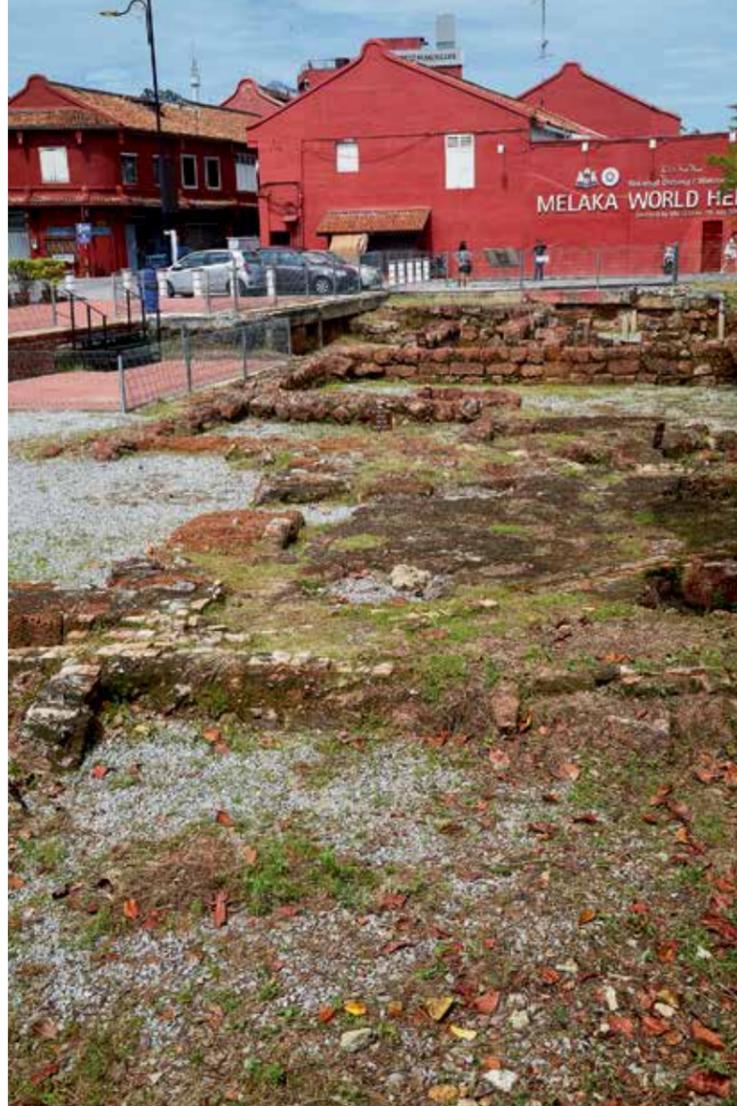
Around the red clock tower are a number of majestic crimson buildings that are some of the oldest colonial Dutch buildings left in South-East Asia. Two of them are essential stops on any tour of Malacca. **Christ Church** was formerly the Dutch Reformed Church of Malacca, which was converted to an Anglican church during the British Administration. Completed in 1753, it is the oldest functioning Protestant church in Malaysia. Its floor incorporates various tombstones that feature Portuguese and Armenian inscriptions, telling insights into colonial Malacca. The church still retains silver altar vessels that date back to the early Dutch period as well as a glazed tile painting of the *Last Supper*.

Leaving the ruins behind, you'll head for the **Malacca River Boardwalk**. Sheltered by mangrove vegetation, the promenade runs alongside the river, where you'll find a beautiful mural on the walls that gives a chronology of Malacca history and its role as a spice trade centre. At the end of the Boardwalk is the old Cathay Cinema, which has transformed into Panggung Bangsawan, a centre for traditional and cultural dance performances. Further

Flanking Christ Church is the **Stadthuys** (old Dutch for city hall), built by the Dutch between 1641 and 1660 on top of a Portuguese fort. The building served as Malacca's administrative centre for nearly 300 years before it became a museum. It is today the Museum of History and Ethnography, showcasing Malaccan customs and traditions as well as the city's rich history, from the Malay Sultanate



Clockwise, from left: Artistic murals along the Malacca River Boardwalk; ruins of the Portuguese fort discovered through the excavation process; the bright and vibrant Christ Church; old Portuguese tombstones placed in the church at St Paul's Hill; a marble statue of St Francis Xavier.



to the Portuguese, Dutch and British occupations. Around the corner from the Stadhuis is a staircase that goes to the top of **St Paul's Hill**. At the peak are commanding views of the city and the Straits of Malacca. Here are also the ruins of a Catholic church named **Our Lady of the Hill** (Nossa Senhora do Oiteiro) built by the Portuguese in 1521. After the Dutch took over Malacca, they renamed it St Paul's and held services there while waiting for the completion of Christ Church. The interior of the church was demolished after that and only the façade remains.

was part of A Famosa were uncovered. Originally built to monitor incoming ships, Santiago Bastion is now another historical landmark that testifies to Malacca's long and glorious history. ❖

The Majestic Malacca offers all guests a complimentary guided walk to the prominent historical landmarks in the city. Held daily (except Wednesdays), guests can join either the 10am or 5pm tours. www.majesticmalacca.com



As you descend St Paul's Hill, you will arrive at the **Porta de Santiago** gateway, the only remains of **A Famosa**, the great fortress built by the Portuguese after they conquered Malacca in 1511. The fort protected the city with 70 cannons, four bastions and walls that were 6m high and 2.4m thick. The Dutch renovated A Famosa in 1670 – which explains the 'Anno 1670' inscription on the Porta de Santiago – but the British decided to demolish the walls in 1806, leaving only the gateway, intact. From the foot of St Paul's Hill, the final stop of The Majestic Malacca's historic walk is just a short walk away. The ruins of **Santiago Bastion** are a fairly new discovery: while clearing a construction site in 2003, the remains of a watchtower that

TRAIL-LING FACTS

1. The St Lawrence Church was originally painted a pastel blue, remains of which can still be seen at the site.
2. The mural along Malacca River was produced by local artists and art students.
3. The boardwalk and boat ride at the Malacca Riverside were featured in the 1999 film *Entrapment*, which also included, inexplicably, Kuala Lumpur's Petronas Twin Towers in the background.
4. At Christ Church, mass services are conducted in four languages – English, Chinese, Tamil and Bahasa Malaysia.
5. The body of St Francis Xavier, who was also known as the 'Apostle of the East', was briefly laid to rest at the church on St Paul's Hill, before being transferred to the basilica in Goa, India. He was canonised in 1622.

Taking It Easy In Tanjong Jara Resort With Tara Stiles

New York-based dancer and model turned yoga guru Tara Stiles tells us how the practice has made her life easier and why she's been called the 'yoga rebel'.

Text Vivian Chong Photography Steven Goh



Tara Stiles in
Dandayamana
Dhanurasana pose.

“Since I was young, I have been doing classical dance including ballet, and yoga was a part of it. I’d always found that it helped me feel better and more relaxed.”

Striking a pose on
Tanjong Jara Resort's
pristine beach.

The setting couldn't have been more idyllic: on the manicured gardens of Tanjong Jara Resort, facing swaying coconut trees that look out towards the South China Sea. It was coming up to high tide and the waves were crashing relentlessly against the sandy beach. A balmy breeze whispered among the trees while the fading sun peeked through, a contrasting relief from the morning's rain.

The gardens were the centre of all attention that afternoon, the air even more festive than the weekly Kampong Sucimurni experience that takes place every Saturday, transforming the resort into a rustic village of food stalls, traditional games and dances. The green of the lawn was speckled with the striking red of Reebok yoga mats that had a huge smiley face and the words "Don't stress" emblazoned across. More colourful were the outfits worn by the nearly 90 yoga enthusiasts who had checked into a 3 day, 2 night yoga retreat hosted by Reebok and led by New York-based yogi Tara Stiles.

Tara was warming up on the makeshift stage, in between exchanging hugs and hellos with familiar faces who she has taught or had attended her previous retreats. The friendly vibe continued as Tara launched into the first of three yoga classes of the weekend, which included spa sessions, cooking demonstrations with the resort's Chef Ann, and a Sucimurni exercise session with Tanjong Jara's resident naturalist Captain Mokh.

Tara led us through a series of fluid movements, all the while reminding us to "take it easy, take your time, whenever you're ready..." and "soften all the way, sway from side to side – do whatever feels good for you..." With her calm, soothing voice and sing song tone peppered with hearty laughs, it felt more like being lulled into relaxation than being instructed to workout. With most classes, there is that unspoken pressure to catch up with the rest but Tara's approach is about enabling and empowering you to the best of your ability.

This gentle take on yoga is what Tara is known for and what she advocates through Strala Yoga, the studio she co-founded with husband Mike Taylor that has since grown into an international movement. From free classes at Central Park and that first studio in New York's SoHo in 2008 (where they charged just USD10 per class), Strala now has four studios outside of the USA – in Singapore, Barcelona, Tokyo and Mexico City – and is also taught in at least 15 countries. So how did she go from growing up in a solar-powered farmhouse in Illinois to teaching yoga with a global following?

“Since I was young, I have been doing classical dance including ballet, and yoga was a part of it. I'd always found that it helped me feel better and more relaxed,” Tara revealed. “When I moved to New York to pursue a dance career, I began training to be a yoga teacher while studying different types of healing modalities like tai chi and shiatsu. I was also modelling at the same time, to pay the bills, and used to teach yoga to the photographers on set. It was just a natural progression; yoga began taking up more and more of my time.” Her modelling agency had encouraged her to do a series of yoga video tutorials, which became a big hit, earning her a loyal fan base that continues to grow. YouTube viewers were drawn to the fact that Tara made yoga fun and practical with guides such as 'Yoga for Hangovers'.

There were already many schools of yoga at the time but Tara never subscribed to any of them. “It felt like a secret club, kind of exclusive and insular. I saw a pretentious world that needed to get off their high horses. The essence of yoga, after all, is about being connected to yourself. I think I was ahead of the time in encouraging the 'yoga is for everyone' mindset.” It earned her the nickname 'yoga rebel', a label she's not entirely uncomfortable with. “Being a rebel is about doing things your own way; I definitely fought against the rigidity and dogma.”

Naturally, there were naysayers who called Tara out on her unconventional ways. “I took yoga out of the spiritual realm and that

got the exclusive bunch riled up. It was a fair response, I suppose. But now yoga has become a lot more mainstream and others are saying what I've always encouraged – that everyone can do yoga.”

Strala Yoga also stays away from religious connotations and focuses on helping people feel good about themselves. Their studios have an open concept and all-white interiors, and instead of teachers or instructors, Tara prefers the term ‘Guides’ and that’s how she sees herself too – not someone who instructs others but a guide who shows the way. In hiring Guides, she doesn’t prioritise qualifications but more importantly, how that person treats his or her students and how much they care. “It has to be genuine,” Tara explained. “The first job in yoga is to help others feel good. To be a Strala Guide, you must first feel good about yourself.”

Then there’s the Strala ‘language’ that all Guides use, as Tara had demonstrated, that encourages students to relax into a pose and not force yourself into it – because when you do, the body tenses and that makes it more difficult to achieve what you want. This “do more with less” philosophy can be applied to improve other aspects of your life besides wellbeing.

“Yoga can complement any other sport or activities you do as it helps improve your range of movement, breathing, flexibility, and mobility. In New York, we train a lot of runners. For endurance athletes, you will learn to use just the necessary amount of effort required to power through.” Yoga can also be a remedial therapy to help the body heal itself by creating more space for your body to work for you.

It doesn’t stop there; adopting it within a corporate setting means not using force against resistance but finding a way around things. “Try planking for two minutes, for example, and observe where you start shaking. Feel it, experience it. Expand your peripheral vision and increase the room for improvement.”

In writing too, the bestselling author finds

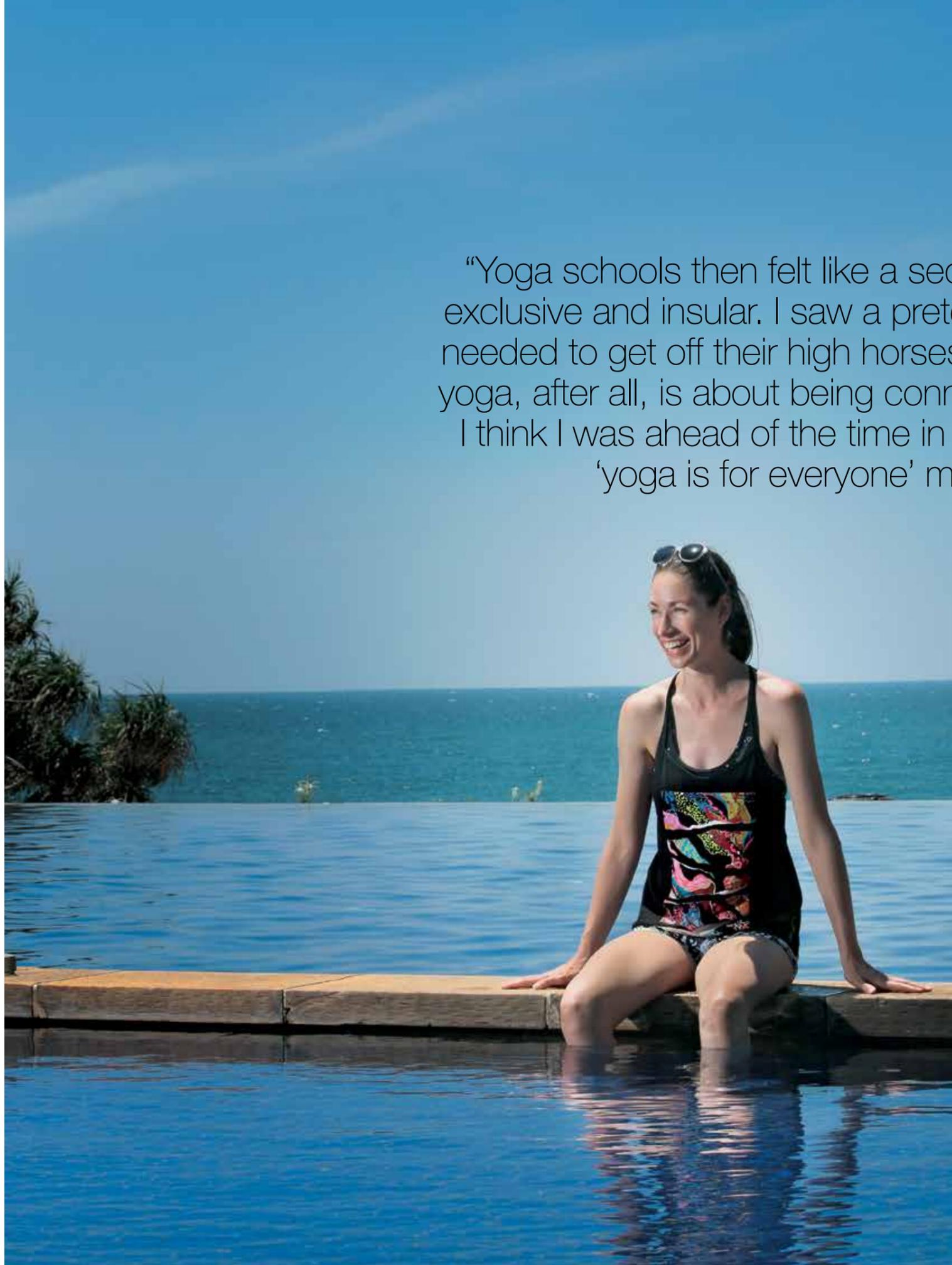
that it helps to break down the load into parts instead of cramming everything into an eight-hour stretch, for example. She details all these in her fifth book, *Strala Yoga*, which launched in August 2016 and will likely follow in the successful footsteps of her previous titles – on yoga, clean eating and healthy cooking – that have been translated into several languages. Clearly, Tara’s style of yoga has struck the right chord among many, and has led to some interesting collaborations. “In 2008, I was writing a book and my publisher asked who I would like to write the foreword. I said, ‘Well, it’d be great if Deepak Chopra would do it.’ Then I received an email asking if I would like to teach yoga at an event that Deepak was also attending. He came up to me, said he knew who I was, and suggested that we work on something together. And yes, he did end up writing the foreword for my book.” That ‘something’ turned out to be an iPhone app, *Authentic Yoga with Deepak Chopra and Tara Stiles*.

Tara met Jane Fonda a year after that, when the latter was seeking collaborators on some new workout videos and took a liking to Tara’s no-nonsense approach. The two became friends and the result is a DVD titled *Jane Fonda’s Workout: Daily Yoga with Tara Stiles*.

In 2013, Reebok roped Tara in to create their yoga line and they have worked together since to release several collections. Tara finds inspiration from a variety of sources for her designs. Last season, she introduced a pair of rainbow leggings inspired by leg warmers her grandmother had made for her years ago. For the current collection, she captured Harajuku’s vibrant, urban energy and street art in colourful, edgy pieces.

From studios and Strala Guides around the world to bestselling books, and yoga wear to her name, it would seem that Tara has done it all – but not if you ask her. “There’s still so much more to do. I want to continue helping people feel better, and reach out to different populations, such as children. Food is also an important aspect. You can do yoga all day but if you’re not eating well, you won’t feel good.” ■

“Yoga schools then felt like a secret club, kind of exclusive and insular. I saw a pretentious world that needed to get off their high horses. The essence of yoga, after all, is about being connected to yourself. I think I was ahead of the time in encouraging the ‘yoga is for everyone’ mindset.”



QUICK TAKES: SOME OF TARA'S FAVOURITE THINGS

On a roll – “On my first trip to Malaysia, I had dinner at Petaling Street and really enjoyed the *chee cheong fun* (steamed rice rolls) there! I’ve even tried recreating it back home in New York.”

Soup vs sup – “I enjoy Malaysian soups and curries. The idea of having soup for breakfast is comforting. That’s what inspired my *Make Your Own Rules Cookbook*.”

Hats off – “I love knitting, and am always making hats for friends. My favourite yarn brand is called Wool & The Gang.”

New York, New York – “I live in SoHo, which is great for walking around. On weekends, I enjoy going to the farmers’ market to pick up fresh produce to cook at home. New York is a very fast-paced city but come the weekend, the pace drops dramatically. Everyone’s out and about, you can easily catch up with three to four friends within a day.”

Asian affection – “This is my third visit to Asia. I’ve noticed that people here are more connected to nature. Things are also more authentic here compared to America, where everyone’s always so busy and things feel more manufactured.”

Bold And Beautiful

Make a grand appearance with these daring fashion choices.



Eastern Enchantment

Taiwanese fashion house **Shiatzy Chen**'s latest Autumn/Winter 2016 collection is a tribute to *The Journey to the West*, one of pre-modern China's most famous novels, employing captivating motifs and textures that pay tribute to the epic undertaking of the story's characters. The looks transcend the boundary of typical Oriental elements, moving towards a more classic Victorian style with elements like lace, girdles, frills and ribbons. The brand is again collaborating with top Taiwanese illustrator, Inca Pan, whose hand-drawings of characters from the novel, like Tang Sanzang and his disciples, Sun Wukong, Zhu Bajie, and Sha Wujing, add child-like wonder to the apparel.



Knitted Coat

If making a fashion statement is your definition of style, then the overcoats and blazers from **M Missoni** might just be the right pick for you. As part of the brand's Fall/Winter 2016/17 Collection, the fashion house exudes a distinctly British spirit, harnessing both classic serious elegance as well as fun, fresh and quirky modes. One outstanding element is a golden knit that can be seen on the overcoats and blazers, making it a sparkly and exciting addition to your wardrobe.



Colourful Cover

Shoes are one of those items that can either downgrade or elevate your style. Understanding the importance of footwear, **Sergio Rossi** reveals a collection that is both persuasive and glamorous, with its typical strong presence of colour and savoir faire. A highlight is the *Freda* sandal with a narrow toeline, covered heel and extremely feminine buckling ankle strap closure. Glittering sparkles and jet sequin embroidery on soft velvet make these heels the perfect choice for a fun night out. ■



Trendy Tote

This season, **McQ by Alexander McQueen** brings you a carryall that is both pragmatic and fashionable. Part of the brand's Autumn/Winter 2016 collection, the *Loveless Tote Bag* is made of lightweight sheepskin leather with a matt finish and embossed logo on the front. A front zippered compartment affords extra convenience in storing essentials like smartphones, while the interior is roomy enough to store everything you need for a day out.

Natural MOD

Surrounded by mangroves, coral reefs and a pristine coast, few getaways are as intertwined with their surroundings as Gaya Island Resort. Tana Boshoff, winner of the annual World Swimsuit Model Search 2016, makes gorgeous for *YTL Life's* camera.

Photography Kim Mun Styling Andrea Wong
Make-up Cat Yong Hair Bibian Leong
Photography Assistant Ng Kai Jun
Model Tana Boshoff

Sweater, M Missoni; Skirt and shoes, Khoo Hooi; Necklace, McQ by Alexander McQueen.

*Dress, RJR. John
Rocha at Debenhams;
shoes, Khoo Hooi;
necklace, McQ by
Alexander McQueen.*



*Top and pants,
Shiatzy Chen.*



*Dress and shoes,
Khoon Hooi.*



*Dress and shoes,
Khoon Hooi; coat,
Zang Toi.*

Self-Indulgence

Give yourself the love you need with these wonderful fragrances and skincare items.



Mystical Trail

Amouage Creative Director Christopher Chong's personal metamorphoses in life and his love for the expressive art of opera is the inspiration behind the luxury fragrance house's *Myths*, an oriental scent that explores surrealism. Presented in two contrasting variants – *Myths for Man* and *Myths for Woman* – the former represents the celestial Chinese dragon, projecting the natural beauty of chrysanthemum and orris that is further intoxicated with enigmatic tones of labdanum, ashes and leather. As for *Myths for Woman*, this mystical fragrance paints one with floral and green facets like narcissus laced with violet leaves and galbanum, as well as carnation, musk and patchouli that guarantees to leave an intriguing scent behind.



All Rounder

Dreams do come true, actually, especially if you use *Essential Face Cream* by **Diptyque**. It's a dream face cream that nourishes, energises and replenishes the general well-being of skin. This velvety potion transforms into a sorbet-like texture when coming into contact with skin, leaving behind a beautiful, fresh and replenished face. The secret? A combination of prickly pear flower oleate, orange blossom hydrosol, nasturtium extract and bluebonnet extract, which not only nourishes the skin but also exudes a divinely captivating scent.



Masculine Muse

Hugo Boss' brand new *Boss Bottled Intense* caters to the man of today, as a fragrance that expresses his modernity and strength. The new scent is laden with woods, spices and a powerful concentration of precious oils. Additionally, there's also a blend of green orange blossom laced with crisp apple in the top notes, mixed with a lavishly spiced storm of geranium, cinnamon and clove, along with sandalwood, vetiver, cedar wood and vanilla as part of the base notes.



Flake-Free

Just like your skin, your hair needs equal amounts of care and love, ensuring you'll have luscious locks to flaunt confidently. The new **SACHAJUAN Scalp Treatment** visibly reduces flakiness to keep dandruff at bay, while providing moisture and a cooling sensation to soothe the scalp. Healing doses of piroctone olamine and climbazole, as well as ingredients like rosemary oil, menthol, salicylic acid and ginger extract assures a healthy scalp, free of irritation. ■

Dashing Details

Adorn yourself with these stylish yet elegant accessories.

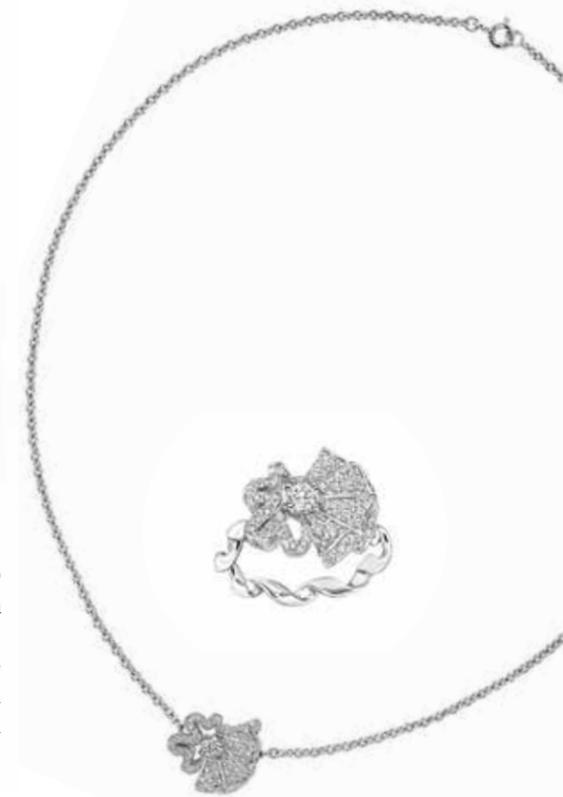
Transparent Time

All fashionistas know that black never goes out of style. With this in mind and giving the colour its own twist, **Hublot** changes the natural order by using transparency to foster a new connection between the visible and invisible with its *Big Bang Unico Sapphire All Black*. Ten years after the launch of the *All Black* concept, the brand has reinterpreted this iconic style, rendering the watch's exterior invisible to fully reveal the construction and proprietary Unico movement within. This limited edition of 500 pieces is crafted from blocks of sapphire that have been coated with metal and enhanced with black, allowing it to maintain its transparent properties in a subtle balancing act. Even the strap combines transparency with the signature all black style, a fitting touch for what is certainly a new icon of timekeeping.



Eternal Bow

Drawing inspiration from the treasures of the Romanov family that ruled Russia for 300 years, Italian jeweller **Damiani** collaborated with renowned Italian actress Nicoletta Romanoff, a direct descendant of the Russian royal family, to create a stunning collection. Comprising of necklace, rings, earrings and bracelets, the glittering *Fiore* assemblage has the bow as its main motif. Seen as a symbol of an eternal bond that enhances a woman's femininity, the jewellery is available in pink gold for daytime adornment, and a white gold set with diamonds that is perfect for elegant evening affairs.



Flowy Gemstone

Archi Dior, the high jewellery collection created by **Victoire de Castellane**, is a gem-set reinterpretation of some of the most iconic **Christian Dior** designs. From dress necklaces to suit bracelets, all the movement of fabrics and lightness of material of Monsieur Dior's emblematic looks are recreated in metal and precious stones. This year, eight new pieces, based on the *Cocotte* houndstooth dress from the Spring/Summer 1948 collection and the *Milieu du Siècle* line from the Autumn/Winter collection 1949/50, have been added to the collection. The silhouette of the *Cocotte* dress inspired an asymmetrical ring and necklace on white gold and diamonds, while the flow of the *Milieu du Siècle*'s curves reappears in a gold and diamond necklace as well as white gold and diamond earrings. ■



Avant-Garde Adornment

Paying tribute to Chopard's ongoing relationship with Porsche Motorsport's World Endurance Championship team and its *919 Hybrid* race car, the **Chopard Superfast Chrono Porsche 919 Black Edition** is a 45mm sporty flyback chronograph in titanium that has been treated with a bead-blasted DLC black finish. Powered by Chopard's COSC-certified 03.05-M automatic chronograph movement, the timepiece boasts a 12-hour chronograph with flyback and 60 hours' power reserve. Limited to 100 pieces, the *Superfast Chrono Porsche 919 Black Edition* picks up the aesthetic codes of the supercar, with the matt black rubber-moulded screw-lock crown bearing a steering wheel emblem, while the grooves on the case middle represent the cooling fins of race-car engines.



There's Something About Tea

The wise ones among us certainly got it right when they said tea is instant wisdom. All you have to do is just add water. If you wish to be elegantly enlightened, then the place for you to indulge in is at the beautiful and newly refurbished Lobby Lounge of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur.

Photography **Jacob Termansen & Andrew Ooi**

Tea is, as George Orwell famously quipped, one of the mainstays of civilisation in this country. He, of course, meant jolly ol' England but the potent powers of a warm cuppa, accompanied by a selection of delectables, knows no boundaries... nor borders. Even in tropical Malaysia, imbibing afternoon tea has become a pleasure; a social ritual; a few hours of delicious respite from the humdrum of daily life. At The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, however, afternoon tea has been elevated to a veritable art form.

One of the best ways to begin your journey into an experiential masterpiece would, of course, be with a pot of signature Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur Blend. Created exclusively for this luxury property, tea connoisseurs would easily be able to appreciate this exquisite variation of the classic Chinese Tie Kuan Yin. Already one of the most legendary and highly regarded Chinese teas in the world, Tie Kuan Yin has been served in the Forbidden City since the time of the Tang Dynasty and is also notoriously time-consuming and

“Tea is instant wisdom. All you have to do is just add hot water.”



complex to produce. Working with the acclaimed Frankfurt-based *teehaus* of Ronnefeldt, the hotel commissioned an exceptional blend to celebrate the rebirth of its iconic Lobby Lounge, and the result is a palate-pleasing and deliciously harmonious green oolong that captures the essence of East and West beautifully, with a lingering creamy flavour.

Such a flavoursome cuppa would be a tad lonely without a tray of treats to keep it company and the Lobby Lounge team doesn't disappoint. One of the great pleasures of partaking in afternoon tea would be the sight of your waiter heading towards your table with a silver tiered stand bearing all kinds of good things to eat. And The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur goes all out to ensure the food, as well as the brew, reflects its position in the upper echelons of the hospitality world. The chef normally serves up an *amuse bouche* to begin the experience and we were treated to slices of Melba toast served with a rich salmon and cream cheese dip. According to the hotel's legions of afternoon tea enthusiasts, the first item one should reach for is the signature beef pastrami sandwiches – a savoury nod to the hotel's American heritage. Served hot and toasted, with generous portions of beef, mozzarella and sauerkraut wedged in between, it is, for many, the star of the afternoon. For the rest of the savouries, there's usually a quiche of the day (we had onion) and a chicken pie. And no tea is quite complete without sandwiches and here, it always includes traditional favourites like tuna, chicken and egg mayonnaise.

Those with a sweet tooth would do well to concentrate on the topmost tier, where all the sugared fancies are served. There

is, of course, a slice of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur's iconic brownie (a much looked forward to edible 'nightcap' by guests as it forms part of the turndown service), as well as a changing array of delights: from raspberry cheesecake to strawberry flapjacks, lemon tart and macarons. Once you've cleared the tray, your waiter will arrive, once more, bearing the final gift of fresh-baked scones. There will be a traditional plain one as well as a flavour of the day, which may range from honey caramel to raisin, all served with clotted cream and preserves. Through all of this, a live quartet is on hand to entertain while, in between sips, you can admire the beautiful posies of plump hydrangeas or the elegant new look of the furnishings, marble walls or even people-watch in style. If you are feeling particularly celebratory, you can, of course, transform the traditional tea into a champagne one, while a full and extensive list of other brews (we counted at least 40), including Irish Whiskey Cream, Tarry Lapsang Souchong, Fancy Sencha and Superior Gyokuro, is also available for your tasting pleasure. For those who'd just come straight, post-treatment, from the Spa Village Kuala Lumpur upstairs, you can choose to prolong the sybaritic feeling with a herbal infusion as well. The Ayurveda Herbs and Ginger is particularly restorative, as is the Rooibos Lemon and the uniquely named Chill Out with Herbs – a tea made with Rooibos and lemon to banish stress and tension while helping to restore tranquility. And all this is yours to attain in just one afternoon – with a fancy tea to boot. Now, who's free for a cuppa? ☘

Afternoon Tea at The Lobby Lounge of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur is priced at MYR80 nett per person and is available daily, from 1500-1800hrs. To reserve, call +603 2142 8000.

This Is The Life

One of the great delights of staying at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur is the myriad pleasures on offer at The Smoke House. Enjoy a snifter of the best single-malt whisky or catch a nostalgic black-and-white movie, The Smoke House lets you enjoy the finer things in life, while looking your best, of course.

Styling & Art Direction **Penny Chew**
Photography **Edmund Lee**
Make-up **Taisu Hair Bibian Leong**
Model **Luke G / Andrews Models**

The Smoke House at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur is a throwback – in the best possible way – to an earlier, more indulgent time. Here, the pursuit of the finer things in life is taken seriously, offering the best in terms of food, drink and service, the very hallmarks that The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur takes pride in. Be it a fine single-malt whisky, bespoke dinner menu or the perfect shave, The Smoke House has you covered, whether you're there on your own or if you have company to entertain.

Light Up

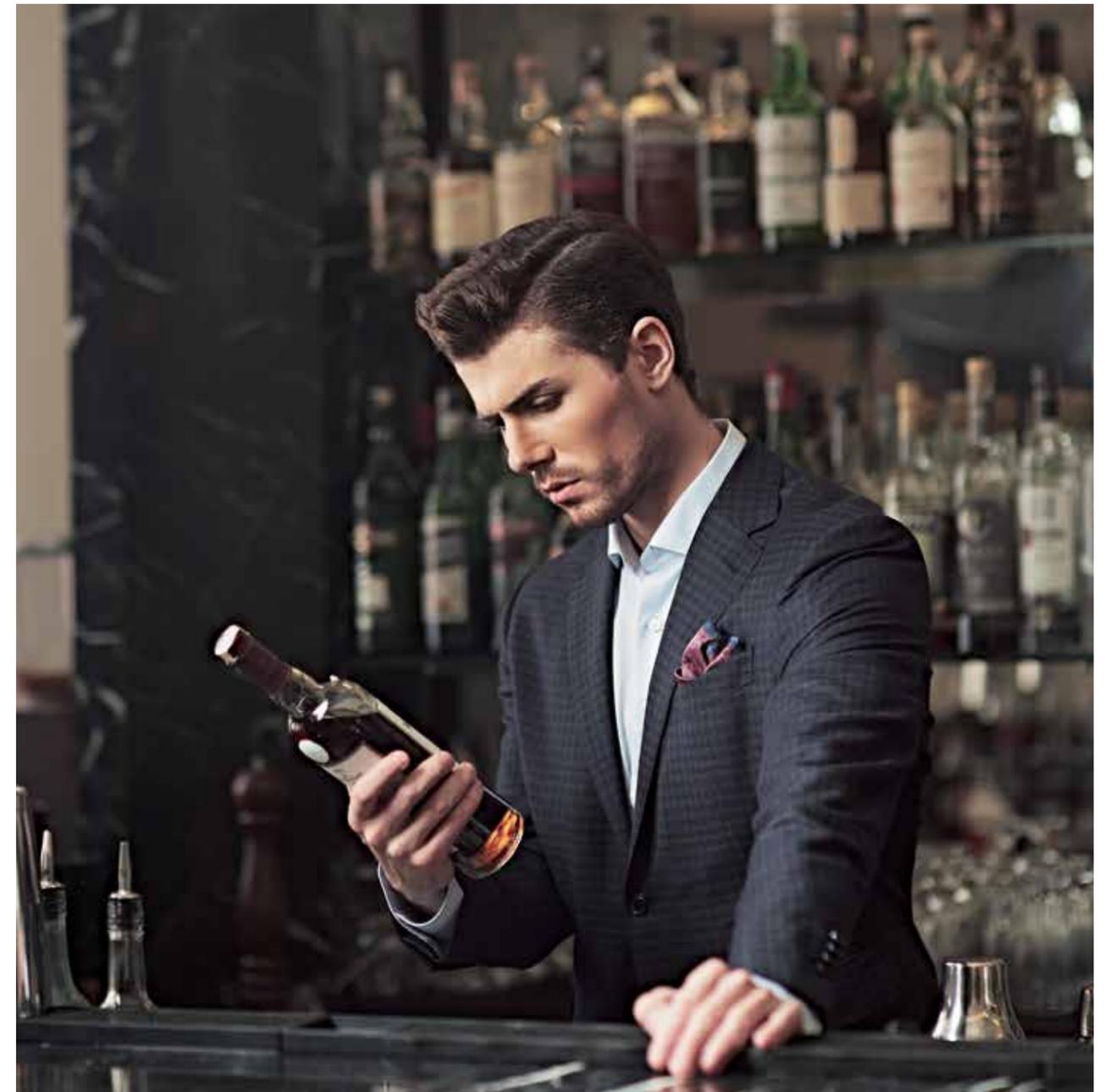
While The Smoke House strives to offer the best of food and drink, it hasn't forgotten to stock an excellent range of cigars for those who enjoy a post-prandial puff. With the majority from them from Cuba, you are sure to find a panatela or corona that's just right for you in the dedicated cigar room, where you may request to don a luxurious smoking jacket to complete the experience.



Red coat, shirt
and trousers by
Dior Homme.



Checked Jacket,
shirt and pants by
Ermenegildo Zegna.



Classy Mixes

Cocktails are another forte of The Smoke House. Look out for vintage colonial mixes like *Gin Pahit* (gin and bitters) and *Stengah* (whisky and soda), as well as local inspirations like *The Malayan Colada* and *Jungle Bird*. Special mention, however, must be made of the 'house' cocktails, created by The Smoke House's bartender extraordinaire, John Yap, including *The Tanqueray Blue* and *Code 55 and Two Bulat*, the latter inspired by a real and dramatic confrontation in the hotel. The personable Johnnie the Barman, as he's better known, is also a fount of knowledge where alcoholic beverages are concerned.

Great Scotch

Enjoy a fine dram of single malt whisky to see out the end of the day. The Smoke House has a fine range of Scottish single malt whisky, covering the Highlands, Lowlands, Speyside, Islay, Orkney and Campbeltown of Scotland. If it's wine that you prefer, do know that The Smoke House also offers an unrivalled vertical flight of *Opus One* from 1980 to 2011, a veritable dream come true for any oenophile.

Sweater and trouser
by Z Zegna.



Close Shave

Gentlemen take pleasure in being well-groomed and the Truefitt & Hill outpost at The Smoke House will have you looking your very best. Established in 1805 in London, the world's oldest barbershop offers a range of professional hair services as well as products that will groom you to perfection. The signature *Traditional Hot Towel Wet Shave* is an experience not to be missed!

Supper Club

The Smoke House also has an elegant private dining room that comes with your personal chef-on-call, who will work with you to create a menu customised to your requirements and tastes. Comfortably sitting up to a dozen, you can host an exclusive dinner here to impress or make any celebration truly special.



Black wool baratha
double breasted dinner
jacket, white cotton
evening shirt, white
cotton pocket square,
and black velvet bow tie
by Alfred Dunhill.

*Double breasted blazer,
brown cotton gingham
shirt, cashmere trousers,
black nappa classic
gloves and khaki knitted
silk tie by Alfred Dunhill.*

Showtime

Forget the world outside and immerse yourself in the nostalgia of black and white movies in The Smoke House's dedicated Screening Room. Sit back in comfortable settees as you relive classics by Alfred Hitchcock, Bob Hope, Fred Astaire and Humphrey Bogart in some of the silver screens most unforgettable moments. **W**





A Song For Time

Temperatures rose and hearts fluttered when Bastian Baker, the sandy-haired Swiss crooner, treated a select audience to an afternoon of music at the Omega boutique in Starhill Gallery Kuala Lumpur. Armed with baby blue eyes and a cheeky grin, the youthful new face of Omega shares with *YTL Life* his enthusiasm on the magic of the Omega experience as he jets around the globe.

Text Kirat Kaur Photography Omega



BEING A SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL MUSICIAN, HOW IMPORTANT IS A WRISTWATCH TO YOU?

I wake up, shower and put on my Omega. I think watches are a man's jewellery and you will never see me without mine. When I'm performing live, I have this move where I oh-so-casually lift my wrist and glance at my watch. Some people say it's a promotional stunt, but I'm actually checking to see how much time I have left for my set. I respect the amount of time given to me and I don't want to cut into another musician's performance. Besides, I actually like to look at a watch to check the time, rather than using the phone.

WHAT'S ON YOUR WRIST RIGHT NOW?

Oh, I picked out this Omega *Globemaster* with a beautiful blue dial because it says who I am perfectly. When you first look at it, you see a sombre, humble watch but, as you keep looking, you can't help but get fascinated by all the details – from the classic indices to the fluted bezel and that trademark pie-pan dial. At least, that's what happens to me. I often find myself staring at the watch for quite some time. Besides, someone told me it matches my eyes, so that's a bonus!

WHAT SIMILARITIES DO YOU SEE IN WATCHES AND MUSIC?

Both inspire great passion in people. Music drives people crazy and brings them together. Watches do that, too. In Baselworld, you see connoisseurs from all over the globe converging at this one place just to experience the excitement of seeing the newest watches. I see the same amount of excitement when a musician releases a new single. The excitement, the anticipation, the passion is the same.

HOW HAS YOUR OMEGA EXPERIENCE BEEN?

Being one of the most prestigious brands in the world – and as a Swiss – I am truly honoured to be part of the Omega family. Omega has been nothing but caring and supportive; they want me to be the happiest ambassador and I want to reciprocate that. Every time I'm in a new city or country, I always check to see if there's an Omega boutique and invite them to my shows. Through the places I discover and people I meet, Omega has definitely spurred my imagination and creativity, while I'd like to think that I inject some youth and coolness into the brand. It's like a happy marriage and we have a very loving relationship – three years so far and no one's sleeping on the couch!

FAVOURITE OMEGA MOMENT?

What I love about this relationship with Omega is how it has allowed me to discover wonderful experiences in amazing places. I remember this one event they had in a chalet on the top of a mountain in Switzerland that blew me away. I played a very exclusive show and they had someone drawing shapes in the sand as I played. It was truly beautiful how the music, art and mountains came together in harmony.

IF YOU HAD THE FREEDOM TO DESIGN YOUR OWN WATCH, WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE?

First, I would hire Omega to design a watch for me with musical elements and it'll be something very personal to me. I see a watch made with guitar pieces and engraved with my album titles, *Tomorrow May Not Be Better* and *Too Old to Die Young*. ■

Gourmet Delight In A Shell

Hirsute crustaceans from China make a gourmet's dream come true during the Mid-Autumn Festival.

Text David Yip Photography Law Soo Phye

Chan Chee Hoong (left) and Wong Wing Yeuk are the taste supremos at JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur's Shanghai restaurant.



Each year, the Autumn Mooncake Festival brings two delicious things in its wake: its namesake mooncake and the hairy crab. These hairy or mitten crabs – as they're otherwise known because of their hair-covered claws – come into spawning season around the time of the festival. They are filled to bursting with roe and are most sought-after and prized during this period. In JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur, Master Chef at Shanghai restaurant, Wong Wing Yeuk, lives and breathes hairy crab. So, who better to take us through the intricacies

of this epicurean delight than the 64-year-old Shanghai native? "In Shanghai, during the bumper harvest, every street and lane is lined with makeshift stalls selling the crabs," he says. "They're kept in wire baskets and we just put our hands in to make our selection."

There are some golden pointers when choosing your hairy crab, according to Chef Wong. Look for one with a green shell and white belly, yellow hair and golden claw, and alert eyes. "Most importantly", he stresses, "regardless of size, the crab must be heavy when you hold it. It means it is filled with plenty of roe." After the selection is made, the crab would be tied with straw-string and bundled like grapes for taking away. Chef Wong recommends straightforward steaming as the best way to cook the crabs, as it retains the full, unadulterated flavours and allows the decadent richness of the roe to come through.

There's no denying, however, that hairy crabs take patient labour to eat; children, especially, might find it tiresome. "There is a recipe in which the crab is de-shelled and the meat simmered in oil," explains Chef Wong. "It is called *xiefen* and this oily

Anjia in Chongming Island, Shanghai, hold large populations of the water snails that hairy crabs feed on, making it ideal habitat for the crabs. In recent years, the harvest from this region has gained rave reviews from food connoisseurs. "I procure my crabs from this region these days," says the chef.

Anyone familiar with hairy crab will realise that there are two types of roe: the orange, female roe; and the whitish 'roe' of the males. "As a native Shanghaiese, I prefer the hard orangey roe of the female crab," says Chef Wong. "It is rich and bursting with *umami* with every bite." He does concede that most locals prefer the male 'roe', which is often soft and creamy. "Compared to the orange roe, its taste is subtly rich and smooth."

From 5 October to 5 December 2016, Chef Wong will present a Hairy Crab Promotion at JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur's Shanghai restaurant. Together with his team, Chef Wong has been based in Kuala Lumpur since 1999. "After 17 years in Kuala Lumpur, I've cooked for dignitaries and visiting VIPs, and organised numerous food promotions, so I know how to pamper taste

"In Shanghai, during the bumper harvest, every street and lane is lined with makeshift stalls selling the crabs"

crab paste is great for tossing with noodles or rice, and as a filling for our famous *xiao long bao*."

buds," he says. "Diners at this Hairy Crab Promotion will get to taste the finest dishes highlighting this amazing delicacy!" ■

For a long time, the most prized hairy crabs have come from the Yang Chenghu area in Suzhou, China. But high demand and low yields have seen a rapid deterioration in the quality of the catch, and, as a result, Chef Wong has turned to another source. The pristine waters around the dam of Henan

Shanghai restaurant at the JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur is open Monday to Saturday for lunch from noon to 2.30pm; dinner starts 6.30pm to 10.30pm. On Sundays and public holidays, Shanghai opens from 10.30am to 2.30pm. Call +603 2715 9000 to book.

For the adventurous home cook, Wong Wing Yeuk, Master Chef at Shanghai restaurant in JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur, offers the following easy-to-follow recipes that lets you share the pleasures of hairy crab with your loved ones.



Steamed Hairy Crab

- Hairy crab 1
- Chinese basil leaves 2
- Zhenjiang black vinegar 0.5g

METHOD:

1. Clean hairy crab thoroughly.
2. Steam hairy crab with Chinese basil leaves for 20 to 25 minutes.
3. Serve it with Zhenjiang black vinegar.

Handmade Noodle with Crabmeat Soup

- Hairy crab 1, around 200g to 250g
- Handmade noodle 100g
- Chinese cabbage 50g, finely julienned
- Superior stock 100g

SEASONING:

- Huadiao wine 10g
- Salt 0.2g
- Rock sugar 10g
- Pepper a dash
- Ginger juice 0.5g

METHOD:

1. Clean crab by brushing away the mud and seaweed under running water.
2. Steam crab for 20 minutes. De-shell and set the meat aside.
3. Sauté crabmeat for a minute before adding seasoning. Pour superior stock and simmer for three minutes.
4. Add noodle.
5. Serve immediately when noodle is cooked.



Xiao Long bao with Crab Filling

- Flour 10g
- Water 20g
- Pork 20g, minced
- Hairy crabmeat 0.5g

SEASONING:

- Salt a pinch
- Sugar 0.5g
- Chicken powder 0.3g
- Ginger fresh ginger, minced

METHOD:

1. Mix flour with water and knead into dough. Divide dough into 35g balls.
2. Marinate pork with seasoning and add crabmeat. Mix thoroughly.
3. Roll dough into a circular sheet, spoon crabmeat filling in the centre and fold it into a *bao* shape.
4. Steam *xiao long bao* for 10 minutes and serve immediately.



Blanched Dou Miao with Hairy Crab Sauce

- Hairy crab 1
- Dou miao 200g, blanched
- Superior stock 100g
- Starch liquid to thicken

SEASONING:

- Huadiao wine 10g
- Rock sugar 10g
- Salt 2g
- Oil 1½ tbsp.
- Pepper a pinch
- Ginger juice 0.5g

METHOD:

1. Clean hairy crab thoroughly and steam for 20 minutes. De-shell and set meat aside.
2. Heat oil. Add crabmeat, seasoning and superior stock, and simmer for two minutes.
3. Thicken crabmeat with diluted starch liquid.
4. Pour over *dou miao* and serve immediately.



Herbal Healing

Working with local communities and utilising the best of indigenous knowledge have always been the heart of Spa Village's philosophy.

Text **Kim Inglis**

Nature lies at the heart of Malaysian wellness traditions, with all therapies – to a greater or lesser extent – reliant on the healing essences of indigenous plants. For thousands of years, local cultures have extracted the biological diversity from 130-million-year-old rainforests and used it to their advantage. They know that the key to a satisfying, healthy life is the concept of seeking and maintaining balance. The forests, with their multiple powerful leaves, roots, flowers and herbs, help with this process. Whether healing ingredients are taken as food or medicine, placed on the body, drunk as an elixir, or otherwise ingested is immaterial. What matters is that they have been harnessed within an ancient culture of wellness traditions – one that is as relevant today as it was hundreds of years ago.

Malaysian traditions look beyond mere physical health and focus on the totality – on body, mind and spirit. In the Malay world, inner and outer health and beauty go hand in hand; the ancients did not differentiate between a tranquil mind, a generous spirit, toned muscles or a clear complexion. The idea was that they were all the same.

The Power of Nature

Long before today's surge of 'cosmeceuticals', where beauty products are a mix of plants and chemicals, rainforest communities were making preparations such as herbal masks and scrubs, flower baths, scented steams and herbal oils for women. For men, treatments focused on male vitality and vigour. Within the family, massage was a daily occurrence. These practices and products were used as naturally as one drinks water from streams and eats a bowl of rice harvested from the fields.

Scientists today have noted these habits and are beginning to validate the efficacy of some of these traditional formulations. More research needs to be done, but there is now no doubt that many age-old therapies have direct benefits: they are anti-aging, calming, preventative and curative. Above all, they seek to address imbalances. If somebody is too 'heaty', they seek to cool; if somebody is too 'windy', they attempt to bring the body back to equilibrium. In the ancient Malay world, the basic purpose is to restore the chemical balance of 'heating', or *panas*, and 'cooling', or *sejuk*, elements within the body.

The Growth of the Spa Industry

This surge of interest in Malaysia's venerable wisdoms has resulted in a massive growth in the spa industry. Some 20 years ago, 'spa' was almost entirely a Western concept, based on specific hydrotherapies. Now, it is often associated with Asia – as the region's multicultural historical practices are harnessed in increasingly sophisticated ways. Be it a

Malay practice, a Malaysian Chinese habit, a Peranakan beauty ritual or something based on Ayurveda, it is now packaged and practiced in an increasingly international way. The world is sitting up and taking notice.

As spas have sprung up across Asia, many seek to replicate some of these traditional village practices in salubrious surrounds. People have also begun to plan their vacations round the spa experience, something that may have seemed almost unbelievable a decade or so ago. Eschewing Western medical approaches for something more natural, such holidays offer meaningful wellness experiences from the surrounding locale. Counteracting some of the stresses of modern-day life – obesity, stress, environmental toxins – with genuine local contact has enormous appeal.

One Step Further

Spa Village, the spa arm of YTL Hotels, has taken this approach to its natural acme. Working with local communities and combining indigenous knowledge with modern techniques and extremely high standards is at the heart of the Spa Village philosophy. Authenticity is hugely important, as is the quality of ingredients used. Added to this are high-quality spa environments and well-trained therapists.

Each Spa Village is designed to best meet the needs of the customer with nature taking centre stage. If the spa is on an island, there is plenty of water in the form of decorative features, pools, reflecting pools and, of course, the sea. If the spa is in a town, local heritage is reflected in the décor. If the setting is rural but inland, local plants, vernacular architecture and the like are utilised. The idea is to reflect the locale in which the spa finds itself – through fabrics, textures, choice of wood, furniture, fixtures, fittings and so on. Nonetheless, state-of-the-art massage beds, whirlpools, saunas and steam rooms accompany the more rustic elements.

Similarly, Spa Village is fervently enthusiastic about the quality of the products it uses. Ninety per cent of spa formulations are freshly prepared just prior to application – and the fruits, flowers, roots and/or herbs will have been bought fresh from the market, harvested from the forest, or carefully stored for full efficacy. For the most part, spa menus optimise the benefits of the immediate region's botanical heritage through a number of Signature Treatments. Every guest has their favourite; and many repeat visitors return to certain spas to experience something that they have come to love and trust.

Long-term Benefits

Many of the Signature Treatments are based on local family recipes or therapies long used by indigenous peoples who inhabit the region in which the spa is placed. A good example is at Cameron Highlands Resort, where a family of Semai, one of 18 ethnic subgroups of *orang asli* or 'original people' of Peninsular Malaysia, has worked with Spa Village personnel to educate them about their local apothecary. The result is a couple's ritual that takes full advantage of aromatic root and bark extracts, leaves, seeds and juices used by the Semai in their traditional therapies.

Called the *Tok Batin Mystical Tradition for Him* and the *Jungle Secrets of Anti-Aging for Her*, the rituals are designed to cleanse, moisturise, promote healthy circulation of the blood as well as remove negative energy. The ladies' sequence includes both a sitz bath as a monthly anti-aging maintenance and an anti-aging bath to soothe irritation, moisturise skin and reduce any swelling. A massage with local herbs is another highlight. The men's ritual is a little more vigorous, with a steam and scrub, and the addition of a deep-pressure massage. As well as providing a truly authentic experience for guests, this particular programme is helping to document Semai folk remedies while bringing their knowledge to a wider audience.



Clockwise, from top left: Gaya Island Resort's Spa Village is set amidst mangroves; old world luxury at Cameron Highlands Resort; Spa Village Malacca is bright and beautiful; Pangkor Laut Resort's Spa Village offers an experience of a lifetime; Straits Chinese utilise ingredients from the kitchen for both wellness and beauty.





The same can be said at Tanjong Jara Resort, where guests are introduced to the philosophy of *sucimumi*, a particularly Malay concept that is based around a way of life that embraces purity of spirit, wellness and revitalisation. It lies at the heart of Spa Village Tanjong Jara, a tranquil enclave set on the Terengganu coast on the eastern seaboard of the Malaysian Peninsula. Many guests talk about the healing energy of the resort and, certainly, there is a feeling of wholesome living permeating throughout. Turtles use the beach as nesting grounds; the resort is staffed almost entirely from nearby villages; many of the spa treatments are based on therapies formulated by local families of healers. Guests that embrace the environment with an open heart find themselves de-stressing and relaxing almost immediately.

One of the highlights for many is the *Asam Roselle Body Treatment*, a three-pronged ritual that is based around the roselle flower, a dark red type of hibiscus that grows abundantly in the area. Introduced to Malaysia from India, the plant now grows wild throughout the country: known locally as *asam paya*, *asam kumbang* or *asam susur* (*asam* translates as 'sour'), it is high in vitamins and minerals, and is used in local remedies to benefit the kidney system and lower blood-sugar levels. It also has anti-inflammatory properties, detoxifies and cleanses the body, and serves as an organic formulation for anti-aging as it forms natural collagen. The 100-minute experience begins with a relaxing massage using a blend of roselle, ginger, nutmeg, galangal and caroteno oil to gently ease away aches and pains; followed by a vivid pink, creamy scrub that is made from rice, coconut oil and roselle; and concludes with a cup of refreshing roselle tea.

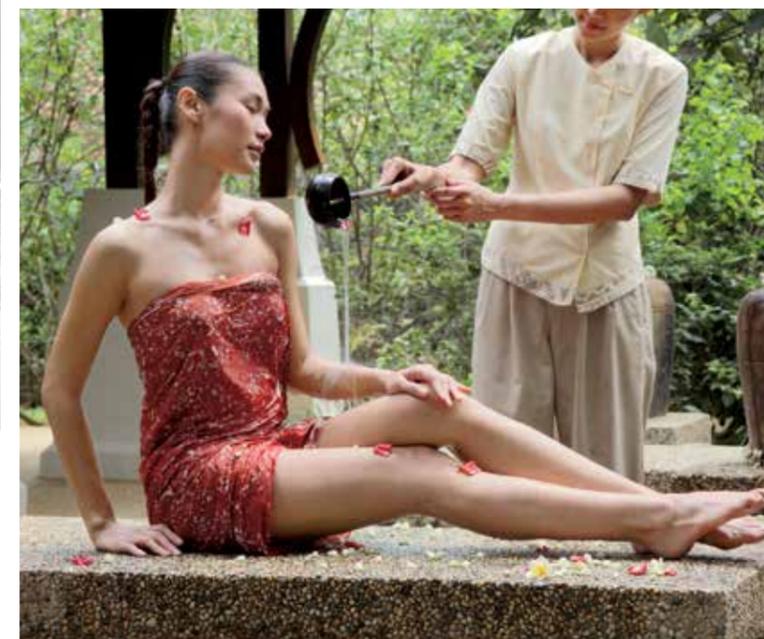
Island Healing

Once guests have had a taste of these local therapies, they are usually keen to investigate further, so trips to two island resorts may well be on their radar. The Spa Village at Pangkor Laut is high on any traveller's agenda as it is not only situated in a private beachfront enclave, but also set within a private island! Beautiful overwater dark wood villas on stilts front the spa, while a plethora of Ayurvedic, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Malay-inspired and other therapies take place in the luxurious land-based treatment pavilions.

Here, the couple's spa experience is based on traditional wedding preparations that used to be carried out for a Malay warrior and his princess. Called the *Secrets of Puteri Lindungan Bulan for Her* and *Panglima Bukit Gantang for Him*, the ritual includes a series of special body treatments that were devised centuries ago to prepare the wedding couple. Today, they have been slightly adapted, but nonetheless utilise fresh-from-the-forest ingredients that have, literally, been plucked, crushed or pounded minutes before use. The ladies' ritual combines beauty therapies in the form of a facial and hair treatment with a traditional massage, scrub and scented body steaming called *ukup wangi* using jasmine and rosewater. The men's is no less intoxicating and ends with a herbal tonic that is brewed in an earthen pot and designed to invigorate and strengthen mind, body and spirit.



Clockwise, from top left: freshly-harvested ingredients all ready for the spa chamber; ensuring the setting is just right at Pangkor Laut Resort; flower baths are rich in symbolism and not a mere bathing ritual; the pre-spa ritual at Pangkor Laut Resort includes Malay-style bathing.



At Gaya Island Resort, the newest of the Spa Villages is set within a lush mangrove forest that fringes a coral-rich marine park. Here, spa therapies reflect the profusion of healing traditions devised by Sabah's many indigenous peoples, such as the age-old practices of the last remaining group of sea nomads, the Bajau Laut. The Signature Treatment, however, is based on traditions that honour rice planting and harvesting as practiced by the agriculturalist Kadazandusun group. The *Tadau Kaamatan*, a celebration for couples, pays tribute to that most Asian of elements – rice.

The Kadazandusun is known for its rice masques and scrubs, so this ritual begins with a brisk scrub that uses rice and cinnamon for cleansing and exfoliating. The men's scrub also utilises coffee and *tongkat ali* (a root that has been used for centuries as an aphrodisiac) to stimulate and invigorate. An avocado and coconut hair masque is followed by an indigenous massage with rice pouches that were traditionally used to rejuvenate and restore mobility and flexibility in *padi* planters and farmers; the conclusion is a soothing honey and avocado seed facial. When ensconced in one of the island's sybaritic spa pavilions, listening to the lap of waves on the shore and the sounds of the ancient mangrove inhabitants, the guest not only feels primed, petted and pampered, but beautifully nurtured by nature as well.

Rich Mix

Another culture that doesn't really differentiate between food, drink and therapy is the Peranakan, prominent in Asia but less well known internationally. Referring to the descendants of early Chinese migrants who settled in the Malay and Indonesian archipelagos around the 17th century and married local women, they are also known as Straits Chinese. They developed a distinct and specific culture that is a unique blend of customs and traditions, with traces of Portuguese, Dutch, British, Malay, Indonesian and Chinese influences – and with this culture came many rich traditions. Particularly beloved in Asia is Peranakan cuisine. Cooking involves not only tasty eating, but sustenance for the soul as well. It includes a variety of teas and tonics, as well as dishes designed to produce genuine wellbeing – a healthy balance of *yin* and *yang* (dark and light, hot and cold). Therapies and practices that accompanied the cuisine were also developed; and the Spa Village in the town of Malacca taps into this ancient yore.

One of the brighter, more cheerful spas, decorated in the pastel tones so favoured by the Peranakans, Spa Village Malacca is known for its marvellous mix of the Malay and Chinese. There's a facial containing the saliva of swifts from birds' nests highly prized in Chinese cuisine; a scrub that pulls on the potent properties of local palm sugar, or *gula melaka*; and a warming tea served with a spicy *acar* pickle. And, of course, many foodstuffs found in the Peranakan kitchen (coconut milk, rice, galangal, ginger, candlenuts, *pandan* leaves, tamarind juice, lemongrass and the fragrant kaffir lime leaf) find their way into the various treatments on offer.

On arrival at the spa, guests are asked to fill in a questionnaire that ascertains whether they are in need of a warming or cooling treatment; depending on the conclusion reached, they are offered the warming *Suam-Suam Panas* or the cooling *Shiok-Shiok Sejuk*, both devised to remove 'wind' from the body and incorporating a scrub, special body therapy, hair masque and birds' nest facial. The ingredients are different and the techniques employed vary considerably – but the end result is the same. A satiated customer, one more balanced and at ease. ■



Paying tribute to the beauty rituals of the ancient Malaccan court, the *Tun Teja* experience is, at once, a blend of ancient traditions, local ingredients and that inimitable touch proffered by Spa Village's justifiably-renowned therapists. Begin with a decadent foot bath, scented with your choice of invigorating peppermint or camphor-like cajeput oils. Your dedicated therapist will begin by gently bathing your feet in warm, scented rose petal water before scrubbing them with slices of kaffir lime and Himalayan rock salt. Once you are slowly slipping into the spa frame of mind, you will then be invited to proceed to the massage bed where, for over an hour, your entire body will be pressed, kneaded, soothed and massaged in the traditional Malay style, called *urut*, with *minyak kebayang*, a special oil blend made with *gaharu* (aloeswood), coconut oil, *minyak kayu putih* (eucalyptus) and *melati*, a potent jungle flower, designed to relieve muscular tension, joint pain and mental and physical fatigue while proving to be deliciously relaxing. This particularly therapeutic massage technique is also believed to have been created by Tun Teja's personal beauty attendant, a woman famed for her anti-aging formulations.

ABOUT SPA VILLAGE KUALA LUMPUR
 An oasis of regeneration and beauty in the heart of Malaysia's bustling capital, Spa Village Kuala Lumpur is a unique healing retreat that combines the most sophisticated therapies with the region's traditional healing practices. Its recent, extensive renovation has resulted in a bright and beautiful new look and feel that pervades throughout the serene space. Therapies range across a spectrum of treatments, from traditional Malay to the Sensory Sound Bath Room, still the only one of its kind in Asia. For the gentlemen, feel free to reward yourself with the complementary Hang Tuah spa journey, the masculine version of the Tun Teja experience. (www.spavillage.com)

Royal Treatment

Experience heritage, beauty and sensuality all at once with Spa Village Kuala Lumpur's *Tun Teja* experience, named in honour of the much-loved queen of the last Malaccan Sultanate.

Photography **Jacob Termansen**

The ancient sultanate of Malacca might seem a world away from the gleaming metropolis that is modern-day Kuala Lumpur. But, in the heart of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, the Spa Village Kuala Lumpur offers a treatment that'll take you back to the time of heroic court *hulubalang* (commanders), the ancient spice trade and battles fought with the sacred but deadly *keris*, the traditional Malay dagger that was greatly feared in bygone days. Named after the last queen of the Malaccan Sultanate, the *Tun Teja* experience is an elaborate three-hour journey of beauty, wellness and rejuvenation, encompassing all manner of sybaritic delights: from a traditional massage to bring out the princess in you, scented body steaming to purify the system of toxins, a traditional face and body scrub as well as a royal herbal bath, enriched with milk and scented with rose petals and kaffir lime.



“The ancient therapeutic massage technique known as *urutan kebayan* is thought to have been invented by Tun Teja’s personal beauty attendant herself.”

Clockwise from left: The Tun Teja experience includes a Siram Panca Cahaya soak; herbal tea awaits you, post-spa; feel like an ancient Malaccan princess in the heart of modern-day Kuala Lumpur.

rice powder, no bigger than a beach pebble, may still be found in old fashioned apothecaries, where they are sold in glass bottles.

After your body has been petted and pampered to an extreme state of bliss, you will then be invited to rinse off the remnants of the Lunak Mayang and body scrub, before proceeding to the outdoor tub for a languorous Siram Panca Cahaya soak, where you may feel free to imagine yourself here as a 15th century Malay princess. As you let your body soak up the nourishing properties of the fragrant, milky bath, it’s hard to imagine you are actually in the heart of Kuala Lumpur’s bustling leisure and commercial district. The final part of the *Tun Teja* experience lies in the application of a herbal cream made with nutmeg oil to improve the skin’s suppleness and firmness, after which a short session of scented body steaming ensues, in order to expel excess water in the system as well as built-up toxins.

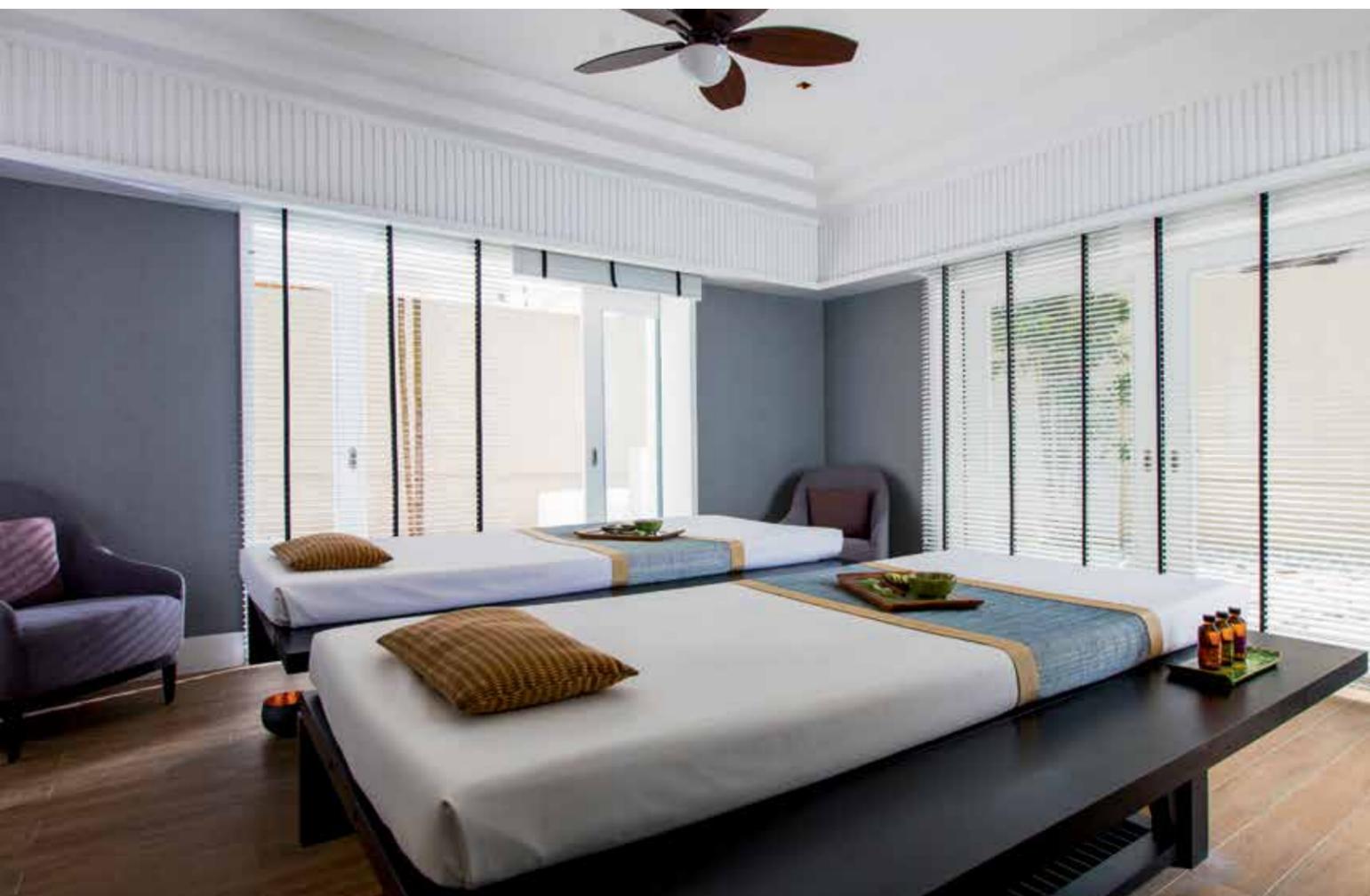
As you finally get to towel yourself off and be rewarded with a pot of herbal tea, it’s equally hard to believe three hours have already flown by. But, as the old saying goes, time flies when you’re having fun; and it’s an infinite bonus if glowing skin, radiant hair and a bright and beautiful complexion form part of the equation as well. Tun Teja herself would have approved. ■



Once you are in a blissful state of ease, it is time for the tresses to be treated. Called Lunak Mayang, a mixture of pandanus extract, extra virgin olive oil, grapeseed oil, castor oil and atlas cedarwood will be massaged into your hair and scalp, to promote stimulation, hair growth and provide a shiny, healthy glow to your locks while reducing dandruff and hair loss. As your hair luxuriates in the rich masque, a natural scrub, using ingredients which include blended rice, turmeric and galangal is applied all over the body. Your therapist will also treat you to a cooling face pack – a traditional beauty remedy called *bedak sejuk*, which literally means ‘cooling powder’. A mixture of powdered rice scented with rose, jasmine and pandan leaves, it is wonderful to firm and tone skin, while minimising pores and reducing irritation or inflammation. Similar to the Burmese practice of wearing *thanaka* as a cosmetic cum sunscreen, traditional versions of *bedak sejuk*, little nuggets of

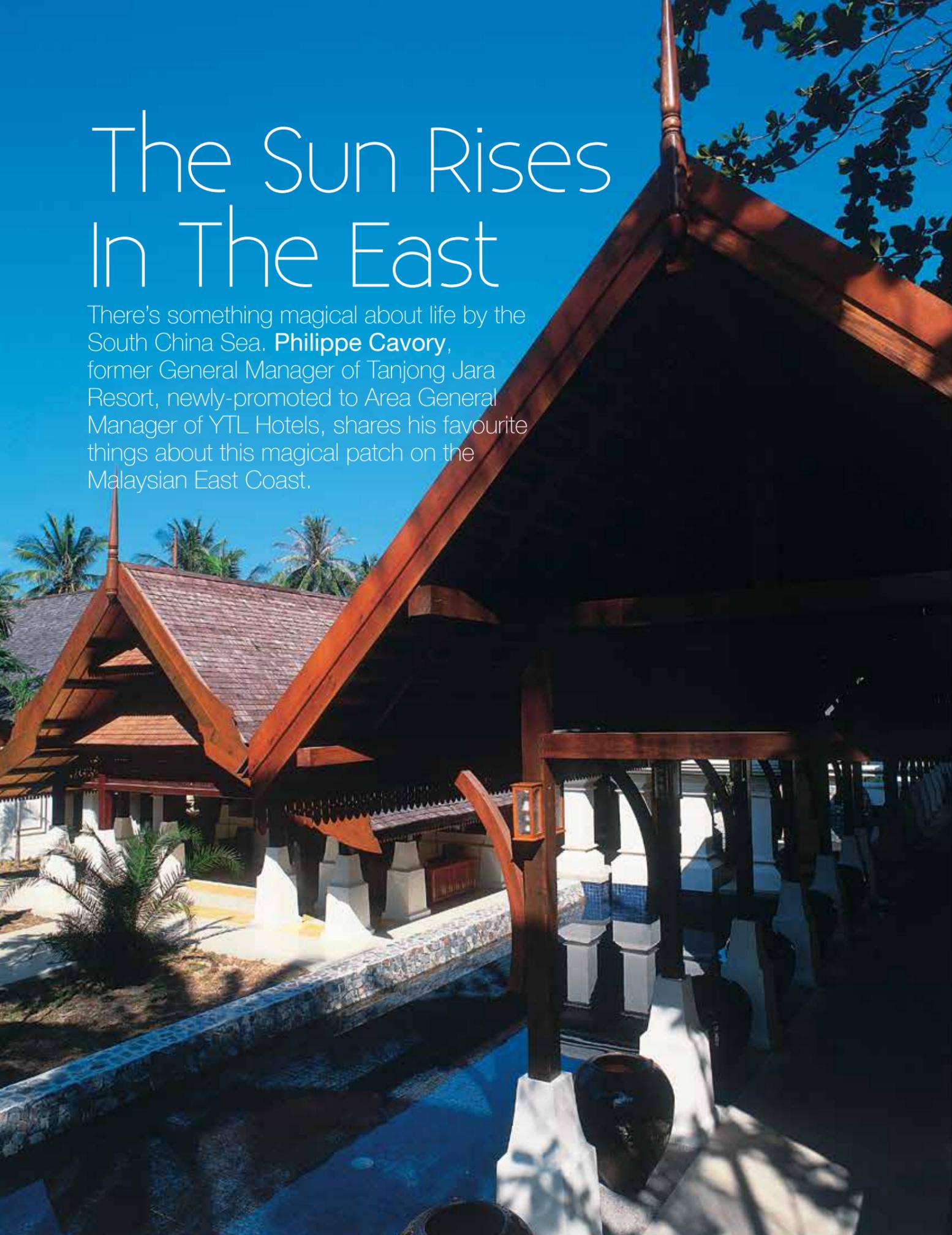
WHO WAS TUN TEJA?

Born in the 15th century, Tun Teja Ratna Benggala was the sole daughter of Bendahara Seri Amar Diraja Pahang, a high-ranking official of the court of the Sultan Abdul Ghaffar Shah of Pahang. Legend has it whispers of Tun Teja’s remarkable beauty had reached the ears of the powerful Sultan Mahmud Shah of the glittering Malaccan Empire. Despite being already betrothed to the Sultan of Pahang, it was none other than the legendary Malaccan warrior, Hang Tuah, who managed to persuade Tun Teja to run away to Sultan Mahmud Shah’s court and be his consort. In the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals), however, it states that it was another warrior, Hang Nadim, who’d spirited her away to Malacca. In 1511, when the Portuguese invaded Malacca, Sultan Mahmud Shah was forced to flee. Tun Teja, who was already very ill at the time, had to be evacuated in a litter. Her health began to deteriorate rapidly and she soon passed away, forcing the royal procession to bury her en route, in a place called Pengkalan Samak. Her mausoleum stands to this day, in the middle of a paddy field, in Merlimau, Jasin, Malacca. If you happen to be staying at The Majestic Malacca, do make a road trip and pay your respects to the last Queen of Malacca.



The Sun Rises In The East

There's something magical about life by the South China Sea. **Philippe Cavy**, former General Manager of Tanjong Jara Resort, newly-promoted to Area General Manager of YTL Hotels, shares his favourite things about this magical patch on the Malaysian East Coast.



life guide //



Nature Watch

I observed a ritual every morning after leaving my house – I'd walk straight to the **Nelayan Restaurant** at Tanjong Jara Resort and watch the sky dance with a myriad of colours. There'd also be wildlife running in the grass, eagles soaring in the sky and many other things Mother Nature would share with me. I also enjoy walking to the Teratai Restaurant to view the rocks in front of **Anjung 1601**. You can see the fishermen from afar as well as children trying to catch crabs. It sounds strange but I found so much happiness observing these simple slices of life. I'd worked so hard my whole life and being able to combine daily work and an appreciation of the simple things in life is such a pure pleasure for me.

Escapades

When I'm not working, I love going to Dungun to eat Malay food, shop at the local stores and go around looking for items for the resort. I enjoy talking to the shopkeepers and sometimes I drive to **Mesra Mall** to watch movies, discovering **street vendors** along the way. Another treat is borrowing my friend's **Harley-Davidson** and getting caught in torrential rain halfway. It wasn't a favourite memory with my wife, I can tell you!



Food For The Soul

One of the delights of life at Tanjong Jara Resort is the food. **Chef Ann** and her team do incredible dishes but my favourite has to be the **butter prawns**. I also love having *roti canai* in the mornings – it's definitely a favourite but not daily, if not my running time at the gym has to be doubled!

The Ties That Bind

The beauty of Tanjong Jara Resort helped me find myself, really. This site stretches for 900m along the beach and i walked the length of it at least four times each day. Every step on this golden sand gives me a sense of contentment, peace and harmony. I loved how my daily routine allowed me to stop and talk to the housekeeping ladies preparing the guest rooms, or to the gardeners as they cut the grass and swept away leaves, as well as the bell boys waiting to welcome arriving guests. The staff at Tanjong Jara Resort taught me **family values** and how to balance work and family life – for that, I cannot thank them enough.



Salubrious Sips

Don't miss Tanjong Jara Resort's **frozen mango daiquiri**, prepared by Mukumba, the bartender at Nelayan, or the **James Bond martini** by the ever-smiling Amira at Teratai Bar.

Sensory Pleasures

The entire **Spa Village** team and, of course, the spa at Tanjong Jara are pure pleasures. I have been lucky to experience the spa four times in the two and a half years I was based there and each visit was simply amazing. I have to recommend the Balinese oil treatment which makes me fall asleep each time yet wake up feeling rejuvenated. The surroundings of the spa are also very beautiful.



life guide //

Resort R&R

I lived in an Anjung room for a year and it was my little corner of paradise. My favourite way to de-stress was to sit on the balcony reading and watching the sky till the wee hours of the morning, observing the Milky Way. I also enjoyed the routine of a **daily swim** by the Nelayan Restaurant's **infinity pool**. All these helped me tremendously in finding peace and tranquillity.

Seascapes

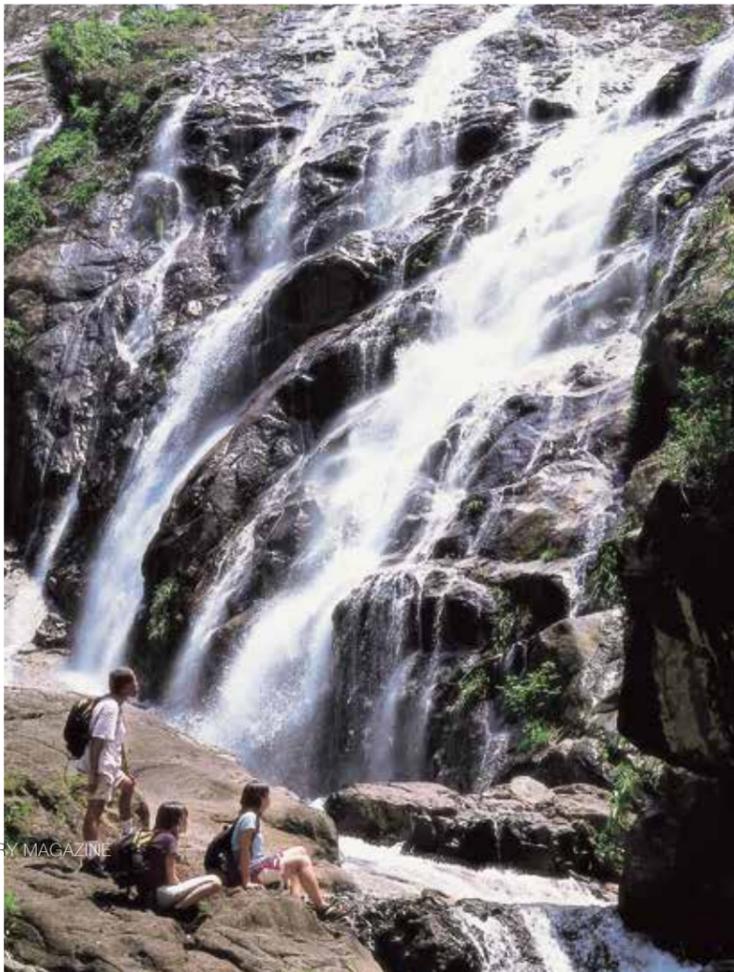
I used to enjoy diving but have stopped as a result of my sinuses. I do, however, recommend going to **Tenggol Island**. The flora and fauna will blow you away. I remember once spending 20 minutes swimming alongside a turtle. When she'd had enough of me, she simply disappeared into the darkness of the sea, leaving me with an experience to treasure. I can tell you, I'd lived nearly four years in the Maldives and never saw a single turtle!

Out & About

Aside from Tenggol Island, there's also a lot to see and do, nature-wise, around the resort. I must suggest the **Chemerung waterfall**, where you can climb all the way to the top. I'd done that once with Captain Mokh, the resort's naturalist, and his knowledge of the jungle, coupled with his sense of calm and kindness, gave me an unforgettable experience.

People Pleasures

This is intangible but I must say that it is the **warmth** of the team at Tanjong Jara Resort that truly resonates. It brings to mind something I'd been told by Dato' Mark Yeoh, Executive Director at YTL Hotels, who'd said: "If you care about your people, they will care about you in return." I'd heard this philosophy before but never experienced it in my working life. And it's something you cannot ask for. It has to be practised in order to be given. I finally found it after 30 years of searching! ■



Philippe Cavory is Area General Manager of YTL Hotels.

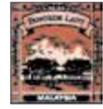


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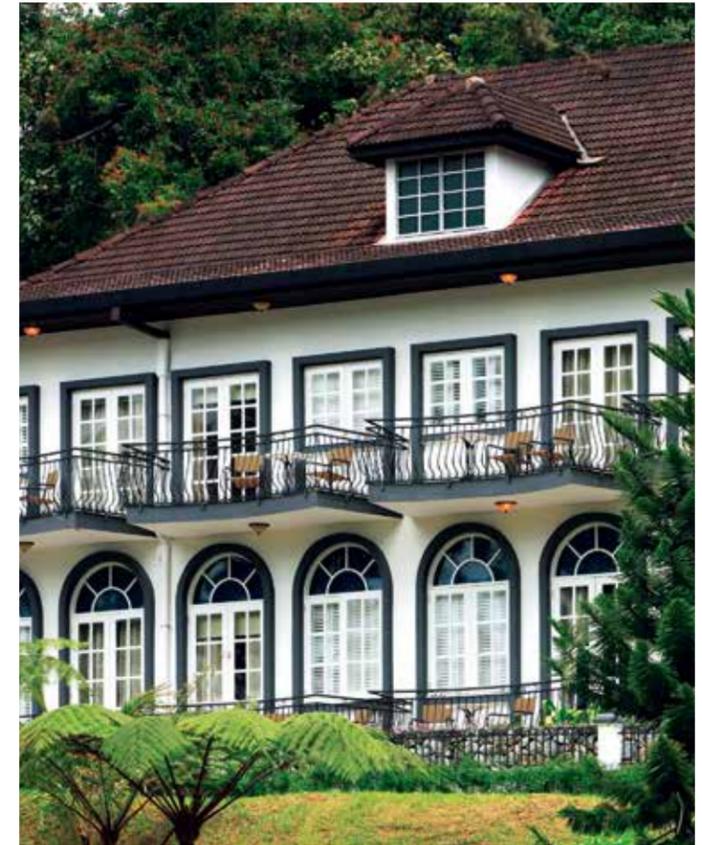


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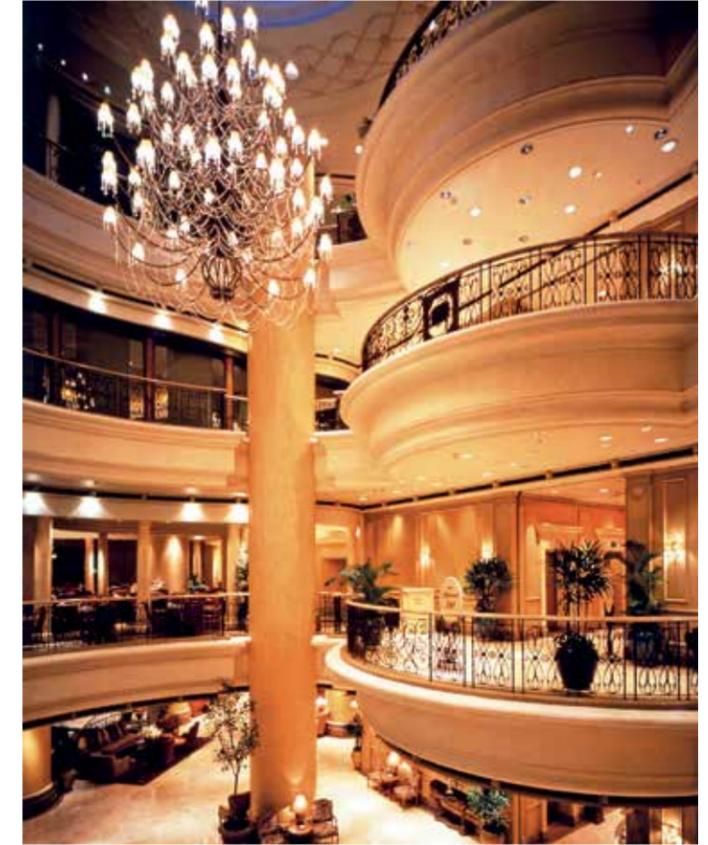


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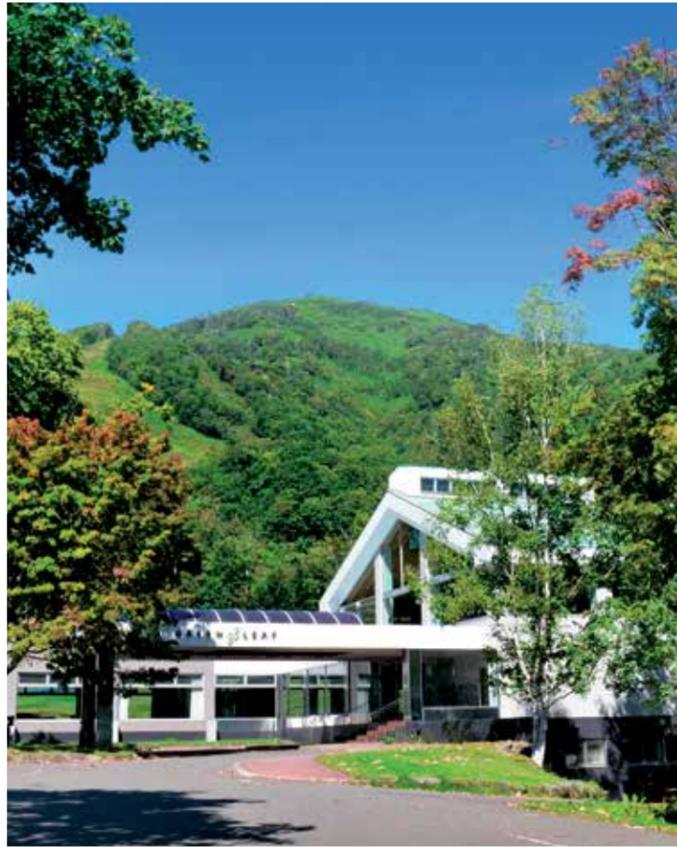
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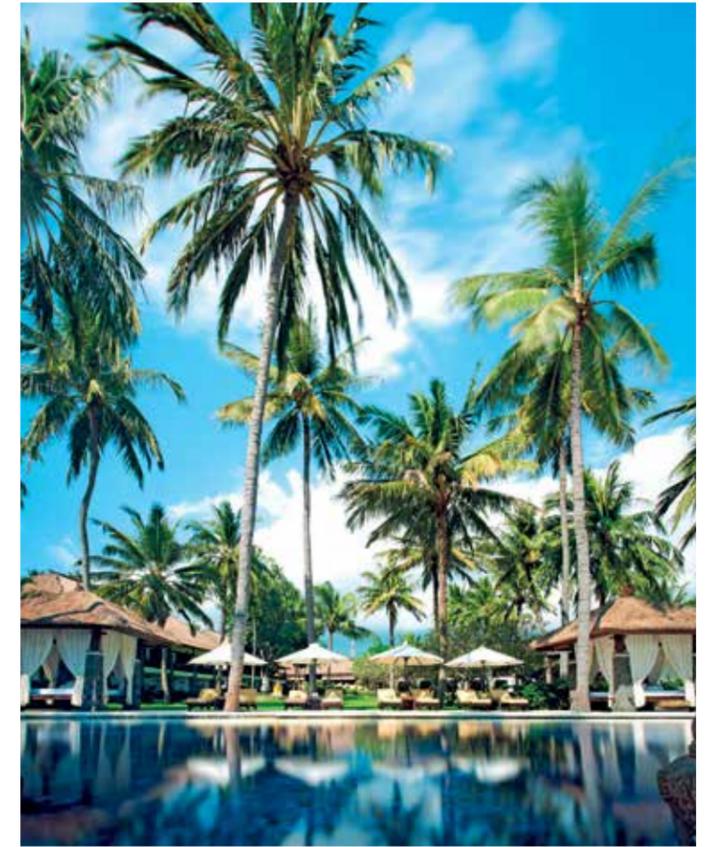


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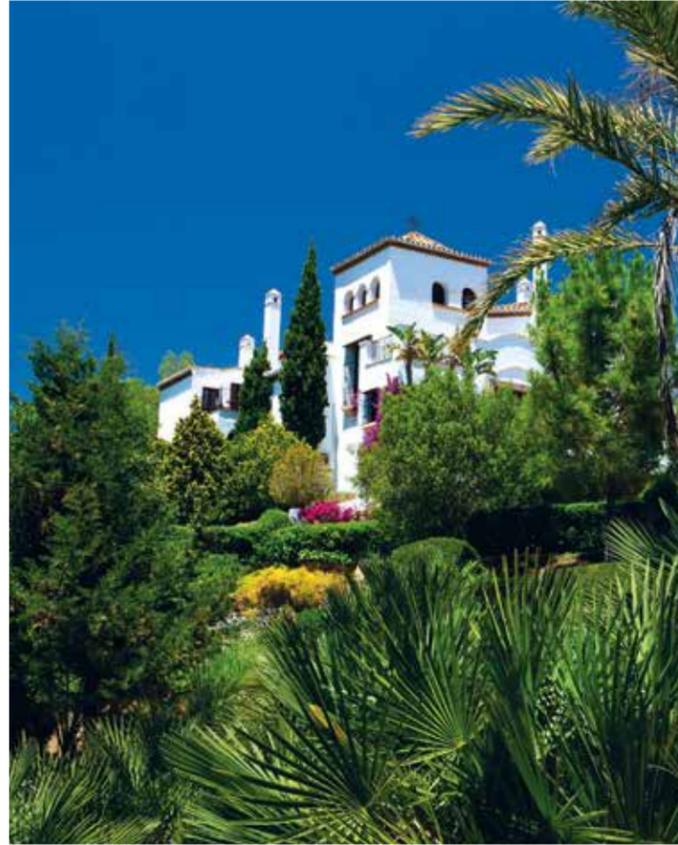
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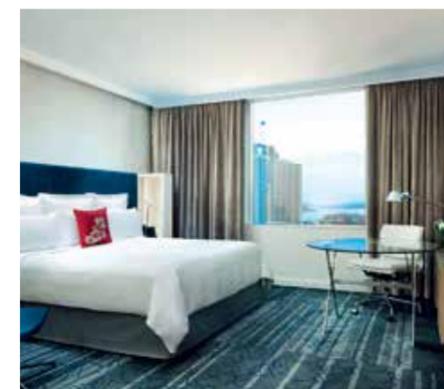
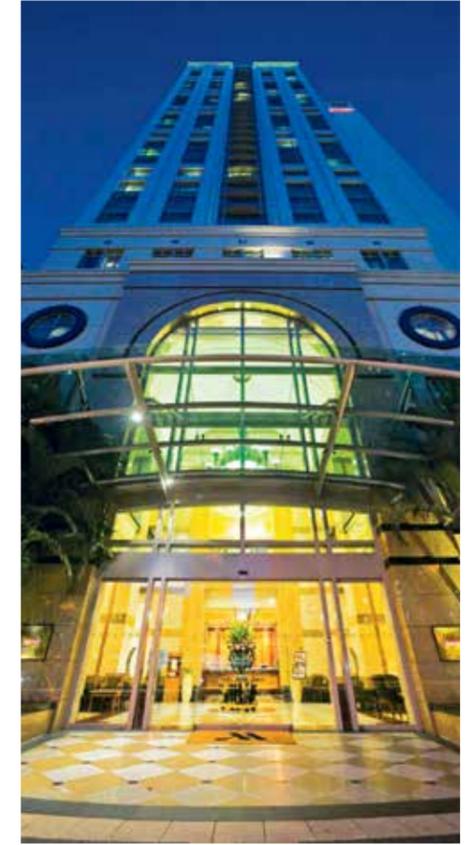
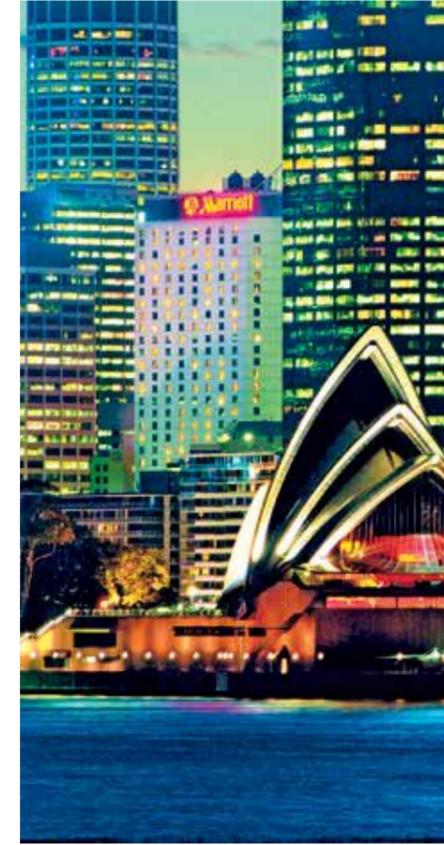


SPA VILLAGE GAYA ISLAND

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