

T H E Y T L L U X U R Y M A G A Z I N E

# YTL

L I F E

**CULINARY  
CELEBRATION**  
PANGKOR LAUT RESORT  
PRESENTS TWO NEW  
DINING EXPERIENCES

**LOST & FOUND**  
REDISCOVER YOUR INNER  
SELF THROUGH THE SPA  
VILLAGE RESORT TEMBOK  
BALI DISCOVERY PATH

**HOME IS WHERE  
THE ART IS**  
GIORGIO ARMANI ON  
ARMANI/CASA AND HIS LIFE  
IN FASHION



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World Heritage Site, we take an intimate tour of this most ancient and important of Malaysian cities as seen through the eyes of native Malaccan, Donovan Louis, the resident historical guide of luxury boutique hotel The Majestic Malacca.

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Following the opening of the Armani Casa store in KL's Starhill Gallery, YTL Life gets an opportunity to chat with Giorgio Armani - both the brains and brawn behind his world famous eponymous brand - about fashion, furniture and his passion for film.



**COVER CREDIT**  
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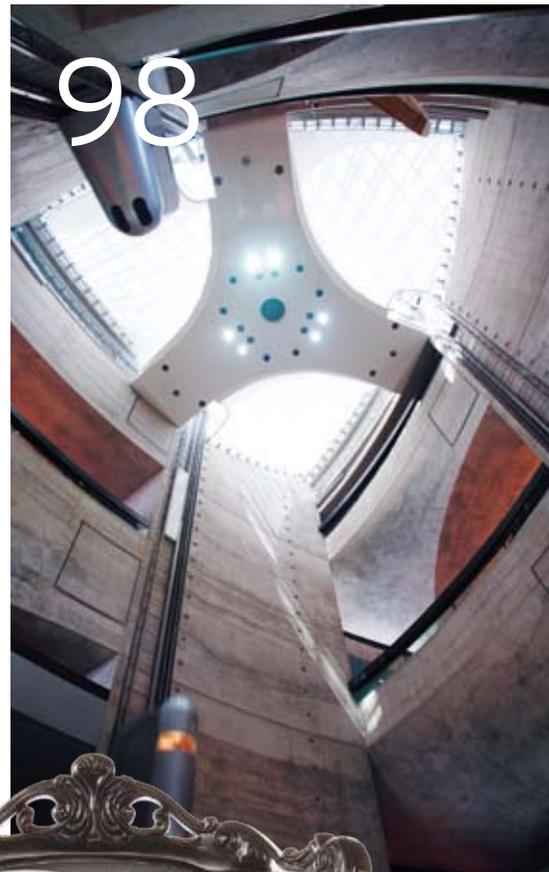
A new dawn for architecture in factory-made buildings; plus armchairs in neon pink by an ex-military guy, beautiful Swedish lamps and the most gorgeous foosball table in the world... ever!

### FOOD

Pangkor Laut Resort adds a new epicurean dimension to its island paradise with the launch of two brand new dining establishments; plus meet Chef Wong Wing Yeuk, the native Shanghainese who helms the five-star Shanghai restaurant at the JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur.

### BOOKS

YTL Hotels launches its first coffee table book, 'Spa Village: Honouring Healing Traditions', that celebrates the unique and diverse natures of the world-renowned Spa Villages.



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T H E Y T L L U X U R Y M A G A Z I N E

# YTL LIFE

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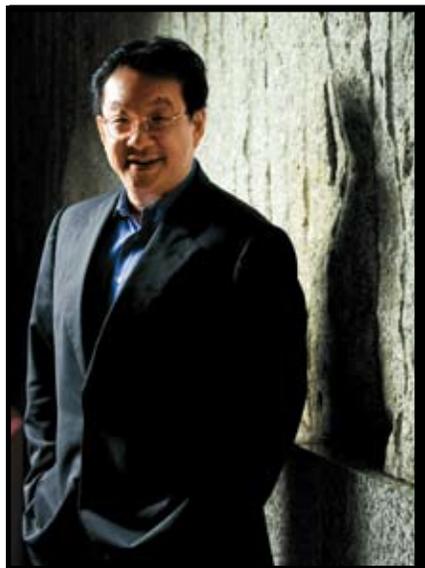
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As the year draws to a close, while many might take this period as a time to reflect, we prefer to view it as an opportunity to look forward, to discover new possibilities and explore different avenues. This yen for discovery has always been a part of YTL's innovative pioneering spirit, strengthened by an innate belief that everything can be more than what it initially appears to be.

It is the concept behind this lifestyle of luxury, which is not just about impeccable standards and outstanding service; but about continually pushing boundaries, to discover new perspectives in this beautiful world, moving beyond the hardware, to engage and to enrich your lives so you walk away with something different with every encounter.

In this issue of YTL Life, we explore special places of historical significance in the UNESCO heritage city that surrounds The Majestic Malacca, delving deep into its

rich history and culture. We observe how Pangkor Laut Resort ushers in a new era in fine dining with its delightful offerings of new culinary experiences. We embark on a journey with the discovery path of creativity in Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali and unveil a source of inspiration.

It is through these diverse encounters that we choose to enrich the human experience, creating something extraordinary. The desire to discover and provide fresh life-enhancing moments, translates into everything that we do, from property development to crafting experiences at our hotels and resorts.

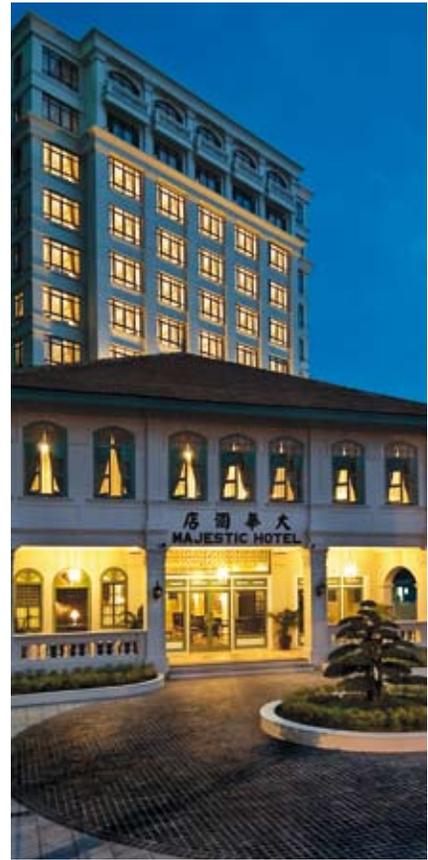
I hope you will enjoy this issue of YTL Life, for we recognise that with current lifestyles time is a precious commodity, which is why every experience we craft for you is unique bespoke luxury, a moment to be savoured.

Beautiful sunsets, like this glorious one bathing the sea villas at Pangkor Laut Resort, are just one element of the unique experiences you can have at YTL Luxury Resorts





**BEAUTY AND THE BEACH** It was a prize fit for a queen. A beauty queen to be precise. Georgia Horsley, 20, Miss England 2007, recently spent 10 glorious days enjoying the sun, sand and spa of the fabulous Tanjong Jara Resort on the East Coast of Terengganu, Malaysia. Nestled along a stretch of powdery white sandy beach, caressed by an azure sea and decorated with royal Malay architecture, it was the perfect setting for her cover shoot with UK's Spa World magazine and was part of her prize package when she scooped the coveted title. Accompanied by her mother, Georgia said, "My mother and I had a wonderful time and the resort was absolutely stunning. The spa treatment was magical."



**THE HERITAGE TRAIL** It's official! Malacca (with Penang) has finally been listed as an UNESCO World Heritage Site. In celebration of this historic occasion, The Majestic Malacca, a boutique hotel that has embraced wholeheartedly the idea of retaining and recapturing the spirit of old Malacca, has designed a special package for guests keen to discover the intriguing melting pot of history and heritage of this fascinating city. The hotel itself is a throwback of Malacca's past, a faithfully refurbished colonial house once used as a hotel and which rests on the Malacca River. Inside, the decor draws inspiration from Dutch, Portuguese, British and Peranakan influences. And the Spa Village housed in the hotel is the only spa in the world offering Peranakan-based therapies. The Majestic also offers guests guided city tours, enchantingly called 'The Route to Malacca's History', 'Treasures of Old Malaccan Streets' and 'The Empress' Hill at Bukit Cina'. [www.majesticmalacca.com](http://www.majesticmalacca.com); +603-2783 1000



**A NEW LOT IN LIFE** An icon of KL since 1990, Lot 10, a distinctive retail landmark along the city's famed Bukit Bintang will soon be getting a major "mall makeover". A rebranding and repositioning exercise, the proposed endeavour is set to infuse the shopping centre with renewed energy and dynamism. The exterior will be enhanced with Double Volume Frontage which ensures a wider, more impactful façade. This will display the changes going on inside where an eclectic range of trendsetting fashion and lifestyle brands from Japan, UK and the US will recharge this old KL faithful. Other exciting additions are the opening of a new Jackie Chan Cafe, a spanking new California Fitness gym and a hip destination hangout for KL's urbanites offering panoramic views of the KL skyline. The 70,000 sq feet space of the mall's roof top will be transformed by world famous Japanese architect and designer, Yuhkichi Kawai of Super Potatoes (who also designed the award-winning Feast Village), into a collection of concept restaurants, trendy bars and designer clubs.

# A SECOND TIME

ASIA'S PREMIER LUXURY WATCH AND JEWELLERY FAIR, A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME, RETURNS EVEN BIGGER AND BETTER THIS YEAR

Come December, all eyes will be cast on Starhill Gallery once again as Asia's largest luxury watch fair, A Journey Through Time II, takes centre stage once again. Following the resounding success of last year's event - which drew over 35,000 visitors - this year's instalment is set to be even more ambitious.

Once again, Starhill Gallery will be transformed into a walk-in exhibition of some of the most luxurious, innovative and exquisite timepieces from some of the biggest names of the horological world. The 11-day event will also feature special showcases. Top of this list will be the exhibit set up by The Swiss Museum of Horological Art, which will give visitors a comprehensive peek into four centuries of Swiss watchmaking history and innovation. This rare opportunity is made possible by a group dedicated individuals of the local watch fraternity and museum authorities in Switzerland together with Mr Jean-François Meyer and members of the Académie des Horlogers Créateurs Indépendants (AHCI) of Switzerland, a highly-respected academy independent watchmakers and innovators in technology.

Also on feature will be The Hour Glass Museum of Contemporary Horological Art (MOCHA) which has been touted as a horological cultural temple. It is the world's first and only watch and clock museum that will exclusively promote contemporary production watches and showcase watch artifacts developed over the past three decades.

The broader aim of A Journey Through Time II, organised in collaboration with the Malaysian Tourism Board, is to also promote Malaysia as a preferred destination for luxury acquisitions to high net global travellers. Malaysia enjoys tax free incentives for luxury timepieces and to further underline this objective, visitors to the fair can also participate in the The Forbes Asia Luxury Forum: The Art of Time, where leading authorities of the global watch industry will gather to discuss the finer points of haute horology.

Other highlights include the launch of the celebrity endorsed Curtis & Co and also the first and only Bedat & Co boutique. Mouwad, another brand associated with Hollywood A-listers will showcase its US\$4.5 million Fantasy Bra, the US\$1.7 million heart-shaped purse used by Nicole Kidman in the music video 'Something Stupid' and a replica of "The Star of Stanley Ho".

Boucheron chips in with magic created by fusing fauna and flora with watchmaking know-how in its latest Bestiary Tourbillon Collection. Meanwhile, Jaeger-LeCoultre will be also exhibit its multiple award winner Duomètre à Chronographe.

The stylish Richard Mille will present its ultimate symbol of prestige with the creation of the RM020 Tourbillon Pocket Watch that has a baseplate made of carbon nanofibre originally utilised in U.S Air force jets, a tourbillon escapement driven by a double winding barrel that supplies circa 10 days of power reserve. Maurice Lacroix will debut

its Mémoire 1, the first ever mechanical watch with a memory function. This new chronograph is limited to 20 pieces only.

The event will culminate with the coveted 'Starhill Gallery Watch of the Year Awards' with a host of celebrities set to perform during the gala night closing ceremony.

*A Journey Through Time II will take place at Starhill Gallery, KL, from December 4-14, 2008. For visitors to the fair, the JW Marriott and The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, are just a one-minute walk from the venue. [www.ajourneythroughtime.com.my](http://www.ajourneythroughtime.com.my)*



# FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

The Majestic Malacca hosted a unique culinary event when the Confrérie de la Chaine Des Rôtisseurs, Bailliage De Melaka, held an evening of fine dining featuring a selection of fine wines too. A little known but highly interesting organisation, the Chaine (as it is known in short) is an international group that celebrates the culinary arts through pleasure and experimentation. While officially resurrected in spirit only in 1950, it has roots that date back to the Middle Ages when the first Guilds were formed in Europe. The Bailliage de Malaisie (Malaysia) was established in 1977 and today consists of Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, Penang, Johor Bahru, Malacca and Kuching Bailliages with a total of 250 members. They meet at least twice a month to enjoy good food and good wines, with different Bailliages taking turns to host an event. For The Majestic Malacca dinner, the host of the evening was Datin Ingrid Schlumpf, the Bailli Regional of Malacca, with a menu devised in collaboration with the JW Marriot KL chef, Zaffar Abdul Samad. Dressed in black tie and evening dresses (a few ladies came dressed in kebayas to echo the venue's heritage), about 100 members of the Chaine attended the event and enjoyed an evening which featured the outstanding 'Majestic Itik Tim' soup and the equally delicious 'Braised Young Hare with Olives and Polenta Casalingha'. The entire event was held in raucous spirits, no doubt fuelled by the six fine wines on show.



## FOOD & WINE MENU

### PRE-DINNER

Canapes

### DINNER

A bouquet of fresh local Merlimau tiger prawns with spicy horseradish and tomato dressing.  
 The Majestic Itik Tim.  
 Portuguese-style Baked Fish.  
 Frozen Cameron Highlands Rock Melon Balls and Fresh Raspberries.  
 Braised Young Hare with Olives and Polenta Casalingha.  
 Welsh Rarebit.  
 Affogato.  
 Coffee/Tea with Homemade Biscuits.

### PRE-DINNER

NV Louis Picamelot - Cremant de Bourgoigne, Brut.

### DINNER

Vigna Dogarina - Pinot Grigio 2007, Piave, Veneto.  
 Noceto Michelotti - Strada Del Sole, Chardonnay 2006, Piemonte.  
 Ros De Plana 2001, Rosso Igt, Veneto.  
 Noceto Michelotti - Strada Del Sole, Chardonnay 2006, Piemonte.  
 Michel Fonne - Gewurztraminer Grand Cru Mambourg.

# SPA VILLAGE FÊTE

The award-winning, Malaysian homegrown brand Spa Village recently celebrated its entry into the world of publishing when it launched its first book 'Spa Village: Honouring Healing Traditions'. Held at the Mezzanine Floor of Kinokuniya in KLCC, the event saw this cosy nook of the bookstore transformed into an urban oasis complete with large potted frangipani trees and even a small corner where guests could sample a few basic Spa Village treatments. Spa Village is well-known in the spa world for extolling the indigenous healing cultures of the location it resides in and the new book celebrates this. Written by Kim Inglis, author of other coffee-table tomes like 'Cool Hotels' and 'Asian Bar and Restaurant Design', with photos by renowned spa photographer Luca Invernizzi Tettoni, the book explores the brand's philosophy and also dwells into the secrets behind the traditional restorative treatments at the Spa Village like Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine, orang asli and Balinese. The event was officiated by the Executive Chairman of YTL Corporation Berhad, Tan Sri Dato' Seri (Dr) Yeoh Tiong Lay.



# ARMANI AT HOME

In an event of quiet simplicity and effortless elegance, Armani Casa, the home furnishings extension of one of the world's leading fashion names Giorgio Armani, was officially launched at Starhill Gallery. Specially invited guests and members of the media were given the privilege to view for the first time the range of beautiful Armani Casa furniture and furnishings now available here in Malaysia. The Starhill Gallery boutique is Armani Casa's 80th around the world since its inception in 2000. The store will carry the 2008 Collection 'For Him/For Her', the Limited Edition Antoinette and Adelchi and the permanent "Bridge Kitchen", a signature collection of Armani Casa. And reflecting the brand's understated sophistication, the launch event culminated in the simple raising of glasses. Salut to that!



# FEAST FOR ALL

Cuisine, culture and children came together in grand celebration at the inaugural Midsummer Nights Feast 2008 at Starhill Gallery. The event - conceived to express a passion for the good life, good food and good entertainment - saw 10 days and nights of exciting culinary discoveries with luminaries like Australian Chef's Hat winner Stephen Mercer and celebrity chef Bobby Chinn showing off their talents in the kitchen. Featured on one of the evenings was a recreation of the renowned Eastern & Orient Express menu served during an interactive Murder Mystery play. Starhill's Feast Village was the heartbeat of the festivities with 12 restaurants participating in the 'Grand Harvest Night' finale's 'global buffet', where over 600 guests sampled Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Korean, Japanese, Thai, Malaysian and many, many more cuisines. Echoing this sentiment was the entertainment: belly dancing, Chinese chamber music, Thai dance and capoeira. The event also saw the launch of the Feast Village Junior, a fun-filled programme designed to start 'em young in learning how to appreciate good food.



A woman in a white and gold Balinese outfit stands in a courtyard with a stone well and palm trees. The scene is set in a tropical location with many palm trees and a clear blue sky. The woman is looking towards the right, and the stone well is in the foreground. The background shows a dense line of palm trees and a glimpse of the ocean on the right side.

# LOST AND FOUND

TAKE THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED AND WALK ON ONE OF THE DISCOVERY PATHS OF THE SPA VILLAGE RESORT TEMBOK BALI. **BOEY PING PING** ATTEMPTS TO REIGNITE HER CREATIVE PASSION.

**AS AN ISLAND STEEPED IN RELIGIOUS RITUALS AND ANCIENT SPIRITUALISM**, Bali exudes a sense of mystic calm that is craved by the weary soul in need of repair from the wear and tear of everyday life. At its northern tip lies an area known as Tembok Bali, far away from the usual Bali destinations of Nusa, Dua, Kuta and Ubud, and just as far away from the madding crowd of tourists that trawl those other places. Relatively undeveloped by the locals and relatively unexplored by foreigners, Tembok Bali offers an authentic glimpse of the real Bali.

Tembok Bali is also home to the Spa Village Resort Tembok Bali (SVRTB), the perfect location for the beach hideaway that offers its guests a chance to recover and discover. For, despite its name, SVRTB promises so much more than a lounge in floral bathtubs and being cocooned in banana leaves. The resort's signature treatment is its bespoke Discovery Path, a quartet of wellness programmes specifically tailored and dedicated to healing, rejuvenation and spirituality.

The four Paths are specifically Balance, Vigour, Creative and the Spa Village Academy; and each caters to specific needs. If you are craving peace and solitude, the Balance Path will reveal the Balinese way of living in harmony, while Vigour should suit the outdoors person in search of a shot of adrenaline. The Spa Village Academy offers insight into Balinese healing techniques used at the resort. But as a writer, the Creativity calls out to me as I feel a yearning to rejuvenate my creative juices.



## THE RESORT'S SIGNATURE TREATMENT IS ITS BESPOKE DISCOVERY PATH, A QUARTET OF PROGRAMMES DEDICATED TO HEALING

you could do with an iPod, an air mattress and a swimming pool. To experience the beauty of a night sky filled with stars, I slide backwards onto an air mattress floating above the resort's infinity pool. The pool attendant covers me with a towel to keep out the chill and hands me a music player spinning out meditative music designed to coax me into a state of relaxation. My gaze holds for five minutes before I close my eyes and let the floating air mattress and soothing soundtrack lull me to sleep, until I am awoken by a voice saying, "Welcome back".

**DAY 2: HEAD TO TOE** After a delightful breakfast of pineapple pancakes, I leave the resort for a half-day tour to Tegalalang and Kintamani. While Ubud is the cultural centre where creative talents gather to sell their wares, Tegalalang is the "factory" that supplies woodcarvings, Venetian mirrors and stone sculptures to Ubud. In Tegalalang, you can get artwork made to order but competitive pricing in Ubud could lead to more savings. Shopping aside, Ubud is also home to hundreds of monkeys residing in the Sacred Monkey Forest Sanctuary. But you'll probably see more tourists than monkeys there. Our last stop is a photo opportunity to capture the panoramic view of the still smoking volcano, Mount Batur.

Back at the resort, I enjoy my first spa treatment but not before experiencing the 'Segara Giri', a 30-minute pre-treatment ritual that involves steaming my legs with hot stones while my feet rest on black volcanic sand. I slurp on an 'ice bola' - ice shavings drowned in palm sugar - to cool down as my legs start to sweat out the toxins and hopefully, the water retention. My legs feel softer and smoother than after a wax job. I wipe them and stroll through a path where stone frogs spurt water to wash the remaining dirt off my legs. Led outdoors to a half moon chair, I lie back and enjoy cold water infused with ylang-ylang and nibble on frozen grapes that taste like sherbet.

The face and hair therapies that follow fuse tradition with luxury. Drawing upon the healing traditions of Bali, the 'Mesipat' facial uses local herbs such as sandalwood and tamarind leaves to create sweet-smelling scrubs, cucumber slices to soothe the complexion and mini pouches filled with ylang-

**DAY 1: JOURNEY TO THE STARS** The two-and-a-half-hour drive from Ngurah Rai Airport goes by quickly as I make use of the resort vehicle's DVD player and spend the journey alternating between short naps and enjoying emerald terraces of paddy fields. You'll know when you've arrived at SVRTB when you pull into this stunning grove of bamboo trees lining both sides of a narrow path. Staff are at hand to greet me and I suddenly find myself on a sofa with a cold towel in one hand, a refreshing glass of watermelon in the other. My feet are dipped into a basin of soothing hot water. Exchanging my shoes for a pair of comfortable sandals, I no longer feel like a stranger in Bali.

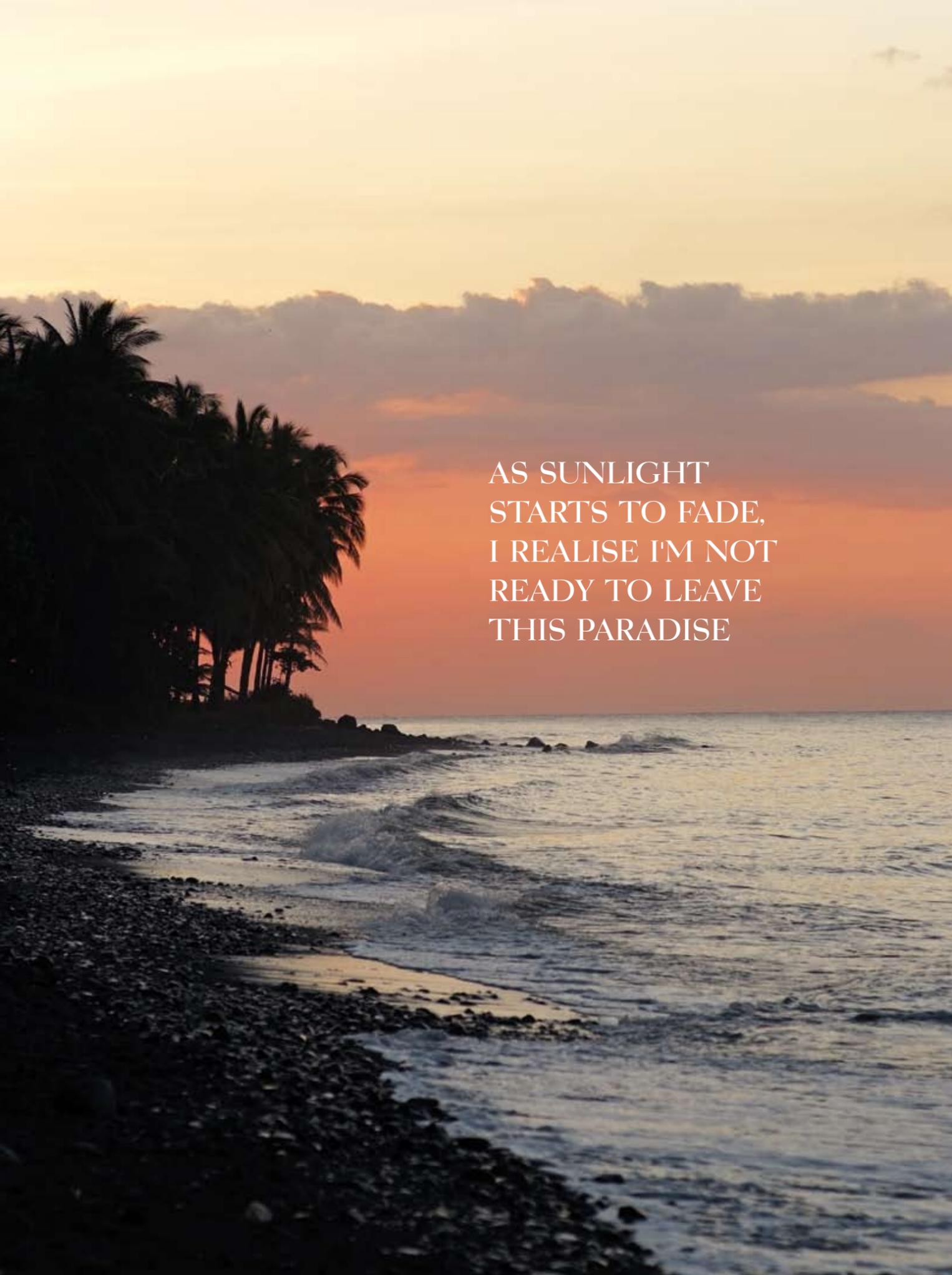
I enter my room and find a deceptively small teapot with a bottomless pit of hot ginger tea waiting. Outside, the view that greets me isn't that of a blindingly white beach but black, metallic sand glistening under the sun's rays. At Tembok Bali, the seashore is a carpet of black courtesy of the volcanoes surrounding the area. Within the resort, frangipani trees dressed in bright pink blooms stand out against the soft blue sky. All around, guests blissfully unaware of the time seem liberated by the lack of a need to impress.

My Creativity Discovery Path begins with a walk. Before I set out, an attendant shows me a book filled with sculptures and artistic displays of pebbles, grass, twigs and ice before walking me along the beach. The purpose of the walk becomes clear when I am encouraged to create my own stone sculpture from the multitude of lava rocks, smooth pebbles and coloured stones scattered along the shoreline. The finished product may not be good enough to launch an exhibition but it isn't too shoddy for a first attempt!

A grumbling tummy directs me to Wantilan Restaurant, the resort's solo dining space which showcases the ingenuity of Ipoh-born chef Danny Lau. Here, spa cuisine nourishes the body with a dose of nutritious meals that don't compromise on flavour. As fishermen and farmers make up the resort's neighbours, you literally get the catch and crop of the day. And because vanilla pods and chocolate beans are easily available, they are turned into meltingly good, homemade ice cream.

My first evening ends with a unique and magical experience. At this Spa Village in Tembok Bali, starlight gazing doesn't require a telescope but





AS SUNLIGHT  
STARTS TO FADE,  
I REALISE I'M NOT  
READY TO LEAVE  
THIS PARADISE

ylang flowers to rub over the face. My therapist busies herself massaging my scalp with a mixture of coconut oil and candlenut. Her hand movements are firm yet soothing and I can't help but succumb to sleep.

I awake to find myself with a new hairstyle - a banana leaf crown tied with a pretty muslin bow. Luckily, the treatment is conveniently scheduled to end when the sun is down and I slip discreetly into the darkness, after a quick sip of home-brewed jamu concocted from tamarind and palm sugar. In the privacy of my bathroom, I wash off the crushed

Nyoman who has promised to teach me how to make 'Tum Ikan', minced fish in banana leaf.

As sunlight starts to fade, I realise I'm not ready to leave yet. Before I pack my bags, the resort sends me off on a sunset cruise with a perfectly chilled bottle of Rosé wine. I find photographing the sunset a challenge as I try to steady my camera while making sure I don't fall off the 'Jukung', a traditional boat made entirely from a single tree. The wooden vessel rides the waves like a roller coaster on water. As the view of the resort becomes smaller, the view of Bali's highest peak and sleeping volcano,



hibiscus leaves and fresh aloe vera from my hair and find my crowning glory worthy of a shampoo commercial. After a dinner of scallops and sesame crusted mahi-mahi, I return to my room to discover a drawn bath peppered with enough pink and red petals to sew a floral couture top.

**DAY 3: FROM DAWN TILL DUSK** It is my last morning and I manage to catch an egg-yolk yellow sun brighten up the morning sky before I join a Japanese guest for yoga class under frangipani trees. For some, a three-week holiday here is not uncommon and I'm beginning to understand why three days is simply just not enough. Daily Balinese activities from yoga to jamu making, cooking class and drawing lessons help to keep boredom at bay while I increase my knowledge of local leisure pursuits.

After my body is pummelled, scrubbed and purified with a flower bath during a spa treatment called 'Penganten Melukat', I jump at the chance to learn 'Lontar' drawing, - carving fluid lines into palm leaves and filling the gaps with black dust from roasted candlenuts. And then I'm off to meet Chef

Mount Agung, covered in frothy clouds gets bigger. I stay until the golden egg in the sky is finally laid to rest in the sea before bidding goodbye to this heavenly paradise. ■

### ROAD TO RECOVERY

Each of the four Discovery Paths - Balance, Creativity, Vigour and Spa Village Academy - take you down a different route of treatments and activities with the sole objective of self exploration and restoring equilibrium to the body, mind and soul.

If you find it hard to choose one among the four, try two or even three. With the Balance Path, soothing body wraps, massage and yoga sessions give you a chance to indulge in more "me" time to detox your stress and regain a balance in life while the Vigour Path celebrates your vitality with active pursuits such as fitness circuit training, cycling trips to the waterfall, silat and deep-sea diving. For those who seek a deeper understanding of Balinese healing therapies, the Spa Village Academy Path introduces you to Balinese massage techniques, body scrubs and jamu (herbal remedies) making.



Hemingway Chaise Sofa

# THE LEGACY OF SILK

THE TRAGIC DISAPPEARANCE OF JIM THOMPSON DIDN'T JUST SPARK ONE OF THE MOST ENDURING MODERN SOUTH-EAST ASIAN MYSTERIES. TODAY, HIS NAME IS ALSO SYNONYMOUS WITH A LUXURY LIFESTYLE BRAND THAT IS PROVING AS TIMELESS AS THE LEGEND IT WAS CREATED FROM BY LENA NG PHOTOS COURTESY OF JIM THOMPSON



Crystal cushion



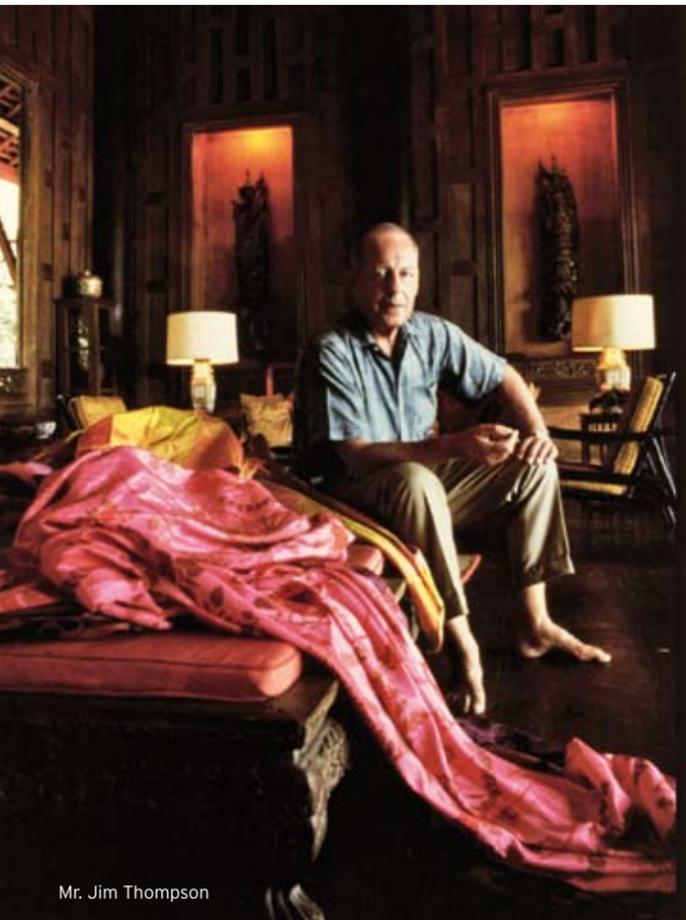
The Kaleidoscope collection

IT'S NOT UNUSUAL FOR THE WORK OF DESIGN ICONS TO RESONATE BEYOND THEIR DEATH. Think of Coco Chanel, whose work continues to be referenced in fashion today. Or even the furniture of Mies van der Rohe, whose modernist chairs are a recurring prop in any stylish photoshoot.

But the mysterious disappearance of Jim Thompson proved to be one of the biggest legends about this design innovator. Countless books and theories have come up since that fateful day on March 1967 in Cameron Highlands, in the Malaysian state of Pahang. Was it an accident, a robbery gone wrong or a murder, when he set off for an afternoon walk in

the jungle and was never seen again? Conspiracies even pointed to Thompson's past as a CIA spy, possibly dating from his time in the US military. In fact, Thompson came from a well-established background, with a wealthy Delaware textile businessman father. He studied at Princeton, before eventually joining the army and later being recruited to the precursor to the Office of Strategic Services. Whether due to his intelligence work, or his love of Asian culture, Thompson made Thailand his home after the Second World War.

One of his first projects was restoring the Oriental Hotel in Bangkok, but he soon found his passion



Mr. Jim Thompson



SURF-Andaman Collection

in the Thai silk industry. This fine art of weaving was well established over centuries, but more as a cottage industry that was slowly dying out. Thompson set up the Thai Silk Company in 1947 and began supporting women in local communities to revive the industry, using dramatic tones and subtle patterns to make the textiles fresh and modern.

The Jim Thompson collection of silk textiles is recognised as the ultimate in luxury today. Each collection is carefully researched in combination with technical innovation and historical references. Master weavers have threaded the secrets of the past into a rich array of silks and silk blends, using influences in Thompson's life and travels.

## JIM THOMPSON HAS CONTINUALLY REINVENTED ITS DESIGNS BY USING THE TALENTS OF THE BEST DESIGNERS FROM THAILAND AND THE WORLD

Thompson's success from the beginning was due to this bold selection of colour, but also to the uniquely hand-woven texture of each piece of silk. By making sure that weavers worked from home, many poorer local women were able to become part of a thriving business and recognised as artisans in their own right. Since 1976, his estate has been set up as a foundation under royal patronage and the range of textiles has expanded to become essential in any well-designed home.

Before his time in Thailand, Thompson spent several years in Europe and the Great Escapes Collection pays tribute to his time on the Continent. Inspired by the more gracious time of travel by yacht or train, these fabrics range from crisp cotton to plush natural silk. They invite you to take things slowly and luxuriate in the richness of texture, with linen that has the rich sheen of silk.

Just as Thompson was an avid collector of Cambodian



Bright colours are often a hallmark of a Jim Thompson collection

antiques, he also recognised that the craft of Khmer weaving was highly sophisticated. Natural silk was not only finely woven, but also dyed using complex Ikat techniques. His research into weaving skills passed down from the kings of Angkor proved to be the inspiration for the Angkor collection, where sixty silks are richly layered with colour and pattern.

Another inspiration comes from the landscape of Thailand's coast. The Andaman Collection is actually a range of outdoor fabrics that are both durable and stylish. The exotic hues of the Andaman Sea have been translated into an abundance of vibrant indigenous colours, as a testament to the company's sheer ingenuity in blending the exoticism of the East with the functionality of the West. Appreciated for its 'end and end' technique of alternating warp colours, each fabric comes alive with an iridescence that is so very reminiscent of the original Jim Thompson silks.

At the same time that Thompson was building up the Thai silk industry, he also found time to indulge in his passion for South-east Asian art and design. He built up his collection over a number of trips to





Jim Thompson silks are daring and contemporary

Burma, Cambodia and Laos, buying antiques from the great civilizations of those countries. To house all these artifacts, Thompson decided to make his permanent home in Bangkok a testament to the culture he loved. Six antique houses were dismantled from the ancient city of Ayutthaya, then moved to a tranquil site by a canal and put together as a uniquely beautiful home. The refined spaces were set in lush tropical gardens that became a refuge from the urban jungle of Bangkok.

This legacy of design and culture had to be nurtured after Thompson's tragic disappearance. After all, it's a well-established part of the design game for new designers to reinvent an old brand. The most successful example would be the fashion house of Chanel, which has been revitalized with Karl Lagerfeld's inventive genius. But the needs of a luxury brand's faithful old-school clients must be balanced with a fresher approach that will please both critics and a new generation of fans.

Jim Thompson has continually reinvented its signature designs by using the talents of the best

designers from Thailand and around the world who respect this legacy but move it forward in new and unexpected ways. From the architect of the iconic Amanpuri in Phuket, a new vision of Jim Thompson was created using classic lines. Ed Tuttle's collaboration with Jim Thompson started in 2002 when he created a luxurious textile collection for Jim Thompson that would have a unique architectural sensibility.

Tuttle's theme of understated simplicity and mixing of tradition and modernity is reflected in the Vendôme, Rue de la Paix and Chenille Canvas collections that are used in his projects worldwide. The collaboration now extends to an exquisite line of furniture; with collections Maia, Lite, Ciel, X and San. These exquisite pieces pay homage to traditional silhouettes sit well in a classical interior, but they also contrast stylishly with contemporary pieces in a modern environment. Each piece carries the hallmark of the designer who was so guided by geometric forms and sense of perspective.

Following the success of Jim Thompson's existing furniture collections in Thailand two more collections were launched internationally, with a stunning fusion of 'east meets west' inspiration in collaboration with one of the most notable contemporary furniture makers in Paris. With London-based designer Ou Baholyodhin, the ideal synergy of lifestyle and design extends into furniture and interior accessories that form the best of contemporary Thai design, including the Hemingway range, a fully modular system of chic, comfortable silk-upholstered pieces. Christian Duc has designed a range that grants moments of serenity in a seating experience of utmost comfort and support.

The perfect fusion between traditional and modern design is an enduring hallmark of Jim Thompson. These distinctive collections, including fabrics and elegant furniture pieces, adapt well to any designer environment. From a sleek contemporary interior to a stylish classical home, no modern home of luxury is complete without something from Jim Thompson. ■



Inside the Jim Thompson House in Bangkok

Cameron Highlands Resort pays homage to Jim Thompson and his legacy



# LIVING THE JIM THOMPSON LIFESTYLE

## CAMERON HIGHLANDS RESORT

At 1,500m above sea level, the cool temperate conditions of Camerons are perfect for growing tea and strawberries, and were also probably why the area was a popular spot with 19th century British colonials looking to escape the humid lowlands. Much of the highlands' character remains unchanged, exuding an old English charm and the architecture of the Cameron Highlands Resort continues this colonial feel. Of special note is the Jim Thompson Tea Room, with a sumptuous array of cakes and fresh scones, accompanied by a selection of fine teas. The resort also offers a guided 'Jim Thompson Trail', where adventurous visitors can retrace the steps behind the mysterious Thompson legend.

## MYTHAI RESTAURANT, STARHILL GALLERY

mythai aspires to recapture that combination of authentic Thai home cooking and warm conviviality in a home setting, reminding diners of the earthy origins of the fragrant herbs and spices that flavour the authentic Thai meal. Jim Thompson not only revitalised the Thai silk industry, he was also well known in Bangkok society for his gracious hospitality. His house by the klong was always full of good food in a delightful setting. mythai in Starhill Gallery serves only the freshest, home-style cooked foods from across Thailand in a

memorable, magical and exotic dining experience.

## JIM THOMPSON BOUTIQUES

The whisper of rich silks pulled from glossy hardwood shelves invites you into the world of Jim Thompson at his boutiques. But fabrics are not the only legacy of this design entrepreneur as exquisite collections of silk and linen are complemented by clothing lines and charming artifacts for the home. You can find this enduring tradition at Starhill Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Cameron Highlands Resort, Pahang, and Pangkor Laut Resort, Perak.

## JIM THOMPSON HOUSE, BANGKOK

For years this little canal-side house was virtually the only island of traditional Thai culture left intact in modern Bangkok. The original museum consisted of several interlinked old Thai homes, decorated with Thompson's eclectic choice of antiques and Burmese, Khmer and Thai art. In April 2000, the James H.W. Thompson Foundation expanded premises to cope with the rising number of visitors - more than 120,000 last year. New buildings created by traditional artisans now house an expanded boutique, outdoor café, bar and exhibition rooms. The new compound also highlights the lush gardens, with renowned landscape designer Bill Bensley adding his unique design to enhance a serenity appreciated by Thompson and many others since.



# THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

*In celebration of Malacca finally securing its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, we take an intimate tour of this most ancient and important of Malaysian cities as seen through the eyes of native Malaccan, Donovan Louis, the resident historical guide of luxury boutique hotel The Majestic Malacca*

BY MATT ARMITAGE PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHOEN LEE

Architectural features such as these round 'windows' at the front porch of old terrace houses hint at Malacca's varied colonial past

# D

ONOVAN LOUIS IS STOPPED DOZENS OF TIMES AS WE WALK AROUND THIS ANCIENT TOWN where Malay, Chinese, Indian, Dutch, Portuguese and British influences all combine to form one of Malaysia's most unique living examples of its history. There are friends,

schoolmates and a cousin "who plays hockey nationally" lining the bars and cafes of this tiny city, enjoying the lazy sunshine of a Sunday afternoon. A native Malaccan, Donovan is these days the resident naturalist of the 'It' hotel in Malacca right now, The Majestic Malacca. He is also our guide for today and a frequent sight on these streets, and those who live and work along them seem happy to welcome him into their stores and homes.

A stop-off in Malacca (also known as Melaka) has become an essential part of any trip to Malaysia. While capital city Kuala Lumpur rapidly modernises, sacrificing some of its historic treasures along the way, Malacca has embarked on a journey to actively preserve and restore its rich heritage, securing UNESCO World Heritage Site status in the process. And one of the buildings at the forefront of that movement is The Majestic Malacca, a classic boutique property with 54 guest rooms in the heart of the city's old quarter.

Looking out over the Malacca River that was once this trading port's lifeblood, the hotel sits opposite a picturesque settlement of Malaccan kampung (village) houses known as Kampung Morten. Built in the 1920s as the mansion home of a prominent businessman, the property was converted into a hotel in the 1950s before closing its doors in 2000. It was refurbished and re-opened as The Majestic Malacca in January 2008.

With such a rich history surrounding it, every effort has been made to preserve the colonial splendour of the original mansion and the adjacent accommodation block. This is reflected in the guest rooms, comfortably appointed with the handsome dark finish of teak and other hard woods, sparkling Portuguese tiling, elegant four-poster beds, regal four-footed bath tubs and innovative sliding doors that separate the bathroom from the sleeping and living area and allow you to customise the room into separate chambers or an open-plan whole.

So successful is this blending that despite featuring the latest in modern technologies - plasma TV

screens, DVD players, high-speed broadband and rain head showers - the overall ambience is of a period room. In fact, reclining on a chaise longue with the fan swishing above your head and views over the Malacca River and Kampung Morten is one of the best ways to acclimatise to this city of numerous cultural legacies.

And in spite of the tempting presence of Spa Village on the ground floor (YTL's award winning international chain of luxury spas), The Mansion restaurant serving the best in Baba Nyonya cuisine - a Malaccan speciality - not to mention the stylish pool and 24-hour gymnasium, you will at some point want to get outside and explore the beautiful and ancient city around which so much of Malaysia's prosperity has evolved. Which is where Donovan Louis comes in. The 36-year-old native Malaccan has worked around the world for a number of NGOs and charities including Greenpeace and World Wildlife Foundation (WWF), and is a specialist in trees and the timber industry.

As The Majestic Malacca's in-house historical guide he is currently engaged in a research project based around the town's history. "I look at the old records," he explains. "A lot of the old histories were prepared by a Father Manuel Pintado, a Portuguese priest who spent about 20 years examining the old Portuguese manuscripts and interpreting the information. And then there's a lot of the older Malaccans, like my dad, who collected a lot of these historical references so my job is weighing their recollections with the historical collections."

"There's this myth called the Treasures of the East. It's been said that the Portuguese amassed a considerable amount of gold and so far, only a little of it has ever been found. But if you go up to St John's Hill, there's a network of tunnels: I think it could have been hidden there by the Portuguese and unearthed by one of the other powers later. I believe that the British found it and quietly sent it back to Britain. But a lot of treasure hunters still believe there's a pot of gold here."

**INSIDER OUT** It's this insider knowledge that makes him such a valuable asset to guests at The Majestic Malacca for whom he conducts regular walks around different parts of the city. And like any insider, that information can occasionally be colourful: "The sign on the front gates reads 'happy drunk place' in Chinese," he explains with a laugh, adding jokingly, "A lot of local Malaccans are afraid to come inside in case the new management decide to chase them for



The Majestic Malacca's Library echoes of the city's multi-storied past



The Malacca River has undergone massive rehabilitation and still represents the lifeline that courses through the city



A view of the Malacca Ferris Wheel as seen at night from the rooms of The Majestic Malacca



The Portuguese influence on Malacca is still very much evident even till today



The Bar at The Majestic Malacca is more of an elegant place to wine rather than 'a happy drunk place'

their unpaid bar bills from way back when.”

Starting at the newly revitalised waterfront outside the hotel this timber specialist understandably starts with a tree. “This is the Malacca tree that the city gets its name from,” he explains, pointing to a small potted tree, before going on to explain how the ruins of the St Lawrence Church became building materials for many of the nearby houses. He also explains that although the land of the pretty Malay settlement Kampung Morten on the other side of the river is privately owned, the collective ethos of the community means that owners consult the village elders before selling or leasing their parcels.

But the most stunning thing is the river itself. The end result of the Malacca River Rehabilitation Project and the walkway that spans the 4km stretch from the sea mouth to The Majestic Malacca is nothing short of incredible. As we walk past the Eye on Malacca Ferris Wheel and up towards the old warehouses known locally as Godowns, Louis continues: “Ten years ago the river was dirty. Back when all the junks and schooners came in there was so much effluent discharge from the diesel engines and waste and it made the river really badly polluted.

“When the rehabilitation project was started they found that a lot of the homes in Jonker Street, Hang Jebat and other streets close to the riverbank were releasing their domestic waste directly into the

water. Now there’s a tidal barrage in place which has changed the whole character of the river. So now there are no boats coming in which has helped to put an end to the illegal logging junks that would come in from Indonesia and the household waste is treated and processed.”

“For me this stretch [gestures along the river towards the houses of Jonker street, the spire of St Francis Xavier Church and the roof of the Stadthuys, the old Dutch-era town hall] is one of the most picturesque in Malaysia, and you can see they’ve done a fabulous job restoring it. There’s a lot of fish (including mullet and archer) and the water’s now clean enough that you can eat them. I’m really happy the river’s no longer an eyesore. They’re even talking about this as a potential Venice of the East.”

It’s also the district where a teenage Louis would come and hang out at weekends. Sometimes at the Shaw Brothers’ Cathay cinema whose still-boarded up building was closed sometime around 1986, and others at the notorious tea dances, the afternoon socials that were popular for teens at the time. Adds a laughing Louis: “That you should highlight because they were one of my highlights.”

Of course, a town with more than 600 years of tumultuous history behind it has also had its share of dark times. At the base of the oldest bridge in the city, linking Kampung Jawa to Kampung Pantai, Louis explains that locally it’s known as the Ghost Bridge.

One of the many temples that dot Harmony Street, named so for its mixture of Muslim, Hindu and Chinese places of worship



porch and the old lady sitting next to him runs back indoors to fix her housecoat and lipstick before returning to pose for the shot. "It's one of the few places where you'll find a lot of real characters," Louis nods in assertion, just as an old man cycles down the centre of the street, shouting at everyone to get out of his path because his brakes don't work. It's that kind of town.

Walking past all the temples on Jalan Tokong, known locally as Harmony Street because of its mixture

"A lot of Malaccans won't use this bridge because it's the site of some of the wartime atrocities. And that's why it has been painted red: it's a way for the Chinese to appease the spirits."

Across the bridge on Kampung Pantai Street, once famed for its merchants, he halts. "When I was growing up there were scented smells that would always hit you on this street. First the smell of the rice. Chilli was another, so was the sweetness of cloves. Aniseed. The scents would change as you walked along the street. Further down, through

of Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist places of worship, Louis points out one of the old town's more low-key but equally important meeting places, Teo Soon Loong Chan Restaurant. "This is where all the high-end businessmen sit down to negotiate and do business," he confides. "I've been coming here since I was a kid. The guy who runs it, he tells you what you can order. He can really tell you some stories about this part of Melaka."

As we turn into Jalan Hang Jebat, known more familiarly as Jonker Street and the home of the

## IT'S THAT SENSE OF FRIENDLY INCLUSION THAT SETS MALACCA APART FROM MOST OTHER TOURIST DESTINATIONS

Kampung Kuli Street just past the Hang Kasturi mausoleum he comments: "This street is really quiet and quaint. The lady in this house makes the skins for the popiah (spring rolls) you see being sold all over the city. The silversmiths make bracelets, earrings and ornaments. Everything is unique because it's hand-made and you can even give them a design and they'll make it for you."

**PEOPLE** At this point our photographer stops to take a picture of a man holding a baby on his front

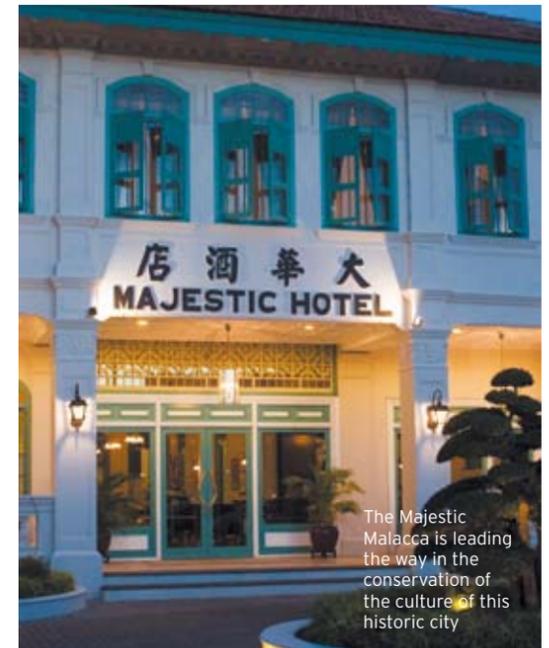
colourful weekend antiques and night markets, you get the sense from Donovan of returning home as he talks about the traditional Chinese town houses, many of which have now been turned into boutiques and restaurants, that line this and neighbouring Heeren Street (again, a local term, the official name is Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock).

At around 50 metres long, these inauspiciously narrow-fronted homes can contain as many as 20 rooms built around a series of internal gardens and

courtyards. "As you can see," Louis explains, "most of them face the old seafront to channel the sea breeze through the building and most have their own wells, which many of the owners still maintain in case of drought. Inside, it's not unusual for two or three generations to live together."

A group of the more impressive properties now houses the Cheng Ho Museum. Entranced by the narrow, ivy-strewn walkway that connects the museum, we return later that evening and spend a couple of hours enjoying a traditional Chinese tea ceremony and listening to the mixture of history and scurrilous local gossip delivered by the three generations of the family who rotate from table to table, sitting, talking and serving tea to the customers.

Ultimately, it's that sense of friendly inclusion that sets Malacca apart from most tourist destinations. This is a town with a vibrant artistic community and a commitment to maintaining old crafts and traditions. Its atmosphere is not so much bohemian in a leftfield European sense, like Paris or Barcelona, but more one of a small town that is open-minded and accepting, a community that The Majestic Malacca is very much a part of. As Donovan Louis happily acknowledges: "It's a nice place to be. People know you and you know them - sometimes it can have a downside, like people will still tell my mum if they've seen me at the pub," he jokes, "but I'm happy to be home." ■



The Majestic Malacca is leading the way in the conservation of the culture of this historic city



Many old buildings like this one built in 1911 still stand today

### WALK THE WALK



As the in-house historical guide of The Majestic Malacca, Donovan also takes the hotel's guests on more structured tours of Malacca that provide visitors with an insight into its culture and history. There are three different tours to choose from, each one highlighting a different aspect of this culturally rich city.

**THE EMPRESS' HILL AT BUKIT CINA** Retracing the story of Parameswara, who established Malacca port as a glorious empire for commerce between the east and the west Asian region in the 15th century, his subsequent union with Chinese Princess Hang Li Po which led to further inter-marriages and the birth of the Peranakan culture. Visit the unique Chinese temple Poh San Teng, the famous water well

where the Princess used to bathe, and end up with sweeping views of Malacca atop Bukit Cina.

**THE ROUTE TO MALACCA'S HISTORY** The walk that takes you to all the essential sights of old Malacca. From the A Famosa to the Stadhuys to St. Paul Hill's, the different historical influences of Malacca will come to life.

**TREASURES OF THE OLD MALACCAN STREETS** See old Malacca in all its finer details as you walk down streets where ancient buildings reveal the secrets and lives of the Malay Sultanate Empire, early Chinese migrants, and European powers through its architecture and what lies behind those many colourful wooden doors.



# HOME IS WHERE THE ART IS

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*Following the opening of the Armani/Casa store in KL's Starhill Gallery, YTL Life gets an opportunity to chat with Giorgio Armani - both the brains and brawn behind his world famous eponymous brand - about fashion, furniture and his passion for film*

BY SAM YEN PHOTOS COURTESY OF GIORGIO ARMANI

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# E

EVERY YEAR, this little-known magazine called Forbes publishes a discreet list of the world's wealthiest people. At the very top of the 2008 list is the perennial Warren Buffet... but further down, past Italy's Michele Ferrero ('You are spoiling us, Mr. Ambassador') and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, is Italy's fourth richest individual, the 203rd wealthiest person in the world and the man that Forbes magazine anointed 'the most successful Italian designer ever': Giorgio Armani.

Born in 1934 in the humble town of Piacenza - then more famous for pancetta and wine than global luminaries - the young Armani's childhood proximity to the nearby creative nexus of Milan soon awakened his genius. After developing a love for theatre and cinema as a child, a twisting route led the young man through medicine, photography, military service and window dressing before depositing him at the doorstep of Nino Cerruti. With no formal training, Armani proceeded to design a menswear line for the fashion house, the first step of a 44-year journey that now encompasses some US\$5 billion worth of

apparel, hotels, furniture, cosmetics, restaurants and even an airline.

If his softly-silhouetted powers suits in the 1980s confirmed his genius, the film 'American Gigolo' cemented his celebrity. And today, KL can also luxuriate in the stylish offerings from his home furniture line, Armani Casa, which recently opened its doors at Starhill Gallery. From dressing Jodie Foster at the Academy Awards to designing a luxurious sofa, all of Italy's greatest fashion son's creations adhere to a simple aesthetic that is at once timeless as it is forward. Addressing that very subject, is the great man himself, in his own words.

#### DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME FASHION OR DESIGN MADE AN IMPACT ON YOU?

I remember, as a child, that my mother made a huge impact on me by the way she dressed. In fact, till this day my mother is the one person who has really strongly influenced my ideas about style and design. She always dressed so elegantly and with great personal style, even though she did not have a lot of money to spend. She taught me a very valuable lesson: she would say that if you wish to create beauty, only do what is necessary and no more.

#### WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU NOTICE WHEN MEETING A PERSON? OR WHEN WALKING INTO A ROOM FOR THE FIRST TIME?

When I meet a person for the first time, the first thing I notice is the way they dress. What I like to see is someone who has timeless, simple and sophisticated taste. I do not like 'design for the sake of design'; exaggerated forms or pattern, or the eccentric shapes that today often dominate both the fashion and the domestic landscape. For instance, I believe that a woman wearing a trench coat, which is a pretty classic piece of clothing, can exude sensuality and understated seduction. When it comes to interiors, my appraisal is again, inevitably, filtered through my personal taste. I like environments characterised by subdued tones, which I find serene and relaxing, contributing to create a pristine and harmonious setting. Another element that is essential is good lighting; I prefer indirect lighting, as it produces a more tranquil mood. I do not like floodlit rooms; they make me feel like I am in an infirmary. They make the house lose all sense of intimacy and cosiness.

WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF AS A PERSON WHO IS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE BROAD PICTURE, OR ONE THAT FOCUSES ON THE SMALL DETAILS? A broad picture is the result of a variety of small details. It does not make any sense to focus on a detail without considering the whole and vice versa.

GIVEN ARMANI'S MAJOR SUCCESS AS A FASHION HOUSE, WHY MOVE INTO THE INTERIORS BUSINESS? IS THIS A NATURAL PROGRESSION, GIVEN THAT SEVERAL OTHER FASHION HOUSES SINCE ARMANI CASA HAVE ALSO MOVED TO PACKAGE THEIR BRAND AS AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING LIFESTYLE RATHER THAN MERELY A WARDROBE? The decision to move into interiors was, like my decisions generally in life, prompted by a personal desire, and not undertaken for any strategic business reason. I simply wanted to try my hand at furniture and furnishing design, as it was something I was interested in. Because I have a very strong personal aesthetic, based on principles of sophistication and elegance, I was curious to see if I could extend this approach to other fields. And so over time this has led me to explore not only the world of interiors, but also of hotels and resorts, cakes, cars, mobile phones, TVs and flowers. Yes, others have followed suit, but that is something you have to expect if you are a pioneer.

THE FIRST EVER ARMANI/CASA ITEM WAS THE

LOGO LAMP, DESIGNED IN 1982. EIGHTEEN YEARS LATER, THE FIRST ARMANI CASA STORE OPENED IN MILAN. BETWEEN 1982 AND 2000, TELL US A BIT ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE BRAND AND DESCRIBE YOUR THOUGHTS ON TAKING THE ARMANI BRAND BEYOND FASHION AND INTO THE REALM OF THE HOME. With Armani/Casa I wanted to extend my fashion philosophy and language into the home

The Dining Room



His study



Her bedroom





Various aspects of the Bridge Kitchen



environment, but unlike most of the other fashion designers who have gone down this road, I wanted to present a comprehensive collection from the outset. With Armani/Casa I tried to communicate what is essentially my own ideal of a home, my dream of a living space. This is an intimate and special place where one can gather one's thoughts and entertain others surrounded by beauty. But beauty here is not necessarily luxurious or ostentatious. Instead, I view it as a property that evokes a response that is both sensory and emotional.

**WHAT DOES THE ARMANI LIFESTYLE AS A WHOLE STAND FOR?** My vision for Armani is the same as it has always been - to make wonderful products which reflect my personal design aesthetic, and through doing this, offer people options which make them feel good about themselves. All that has changed since I started is that today, the option may consist of a collection of clothing, or furniture, or a fragrance, or a floral arrangement, or even a cake. Whatever it is, if it has the Armani signature of understated elegance, then I have done my job properly.

**FASHION IS ALL ABOUT EXUBERANCE, EXPERIMENTATION, MIX-AND-MATCH AND PANACHE. FURNISHING A ROOM IS CONSIDERABLY MORE DURABLE, DESIGNED FOR LONG-LASTING IMPACT WITH NARROWER ROOM FOR INNOVATION. DO YOU AGREE? HOW HAVE YOU MANAGED TO RECONCILE THE TWO IN ARMANI/CASA?** I like to imagine that a house is like a person, so his/her personality and character is permanent, but his/her look can change continually. At home, you cannot change your key pieces - like your sofas

or tables or beds - every season, so these constitute the foundation of your home's character. But you can change accessories and textiles more frequently so as to always have a new and fresh look.

**WAS IT A CHALLENGE TO ADAPT YOUR FASHION AESTHETIC TO THE ART OF DESIGNING A SPACE/ITEM? HOW SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT IS DESIGNING A HOME TO DESIGNING A GARMENT?** The process of creating products for the home and for fashion collections is very similar. Both skills require an ability to imagine things in three dimensions, and to translate sketches into reality. Attention to detail is key, whether you are making a dress or a chair. In both cases, it is the precision and finesse which will make all the difference. So while the actual skills used may not be the same, the approach is.

**WHAT DOES ARMANI/CASA ASPIRE TO BE, AND WHERE DOES IT DRAW ITS INSPIRATION FROM?** Armani/Casa simply aspires to be the interior's expression of the Armani aesthetic. My inspiration comes from many things - from travel, film, art, architecture, books, photography, but principally from observing people's behaviour and manner. Over the years I have developed a very strong aesthetic and it is this aesthetic that drives all my design work. That said, I am strongly drawn to the spirit of Oriental Art Deco at present, and so you will see elements of this movement reflected in my work - certain prints and fabrics, or finishes, like lacquer (so a dress may be made of a shiny silk, or a table feature a lacquer effect).

**WHICH ROOM IN YOUR HOMES DO YOU SPEND**

**THE MOST OF YOUR TIME IN? HAS THIS FILTERED DOWN IN ANY WAY INTO THE DESIGN OF ARMANI/CASA?** Without a doubt, my favourite room in the house is the living room. It is where I relax, entertain, watch TV and read. It is the centre of any home, and it is rightfully described as a room for living. There are, of course, many items in the Armani/Casa collection that have been designed for use in this space. I also spend time in my kitchen. In many ways, the kitchen provides the heartbeat of the home - a place not just for preparing food, but also for socialising.

**IS THIS WHY YOU DESIGNED THE BRAND'S SIGNATURE 'BRIDGE KITCHEN'?** The 'Bridge' is a modular system and I feel I have provided a solution to the potentially paradoxical nature of this space. On the one hand, "Bridge" provides a

technologically advanced area for cooking; on the other, the use of materials that complement the look of rest of the Armani/Casa range means that "Bridge" will sit comfortably within or adjacent to a living area devoted to socialising. From the off, I wanted it to have a natural feel so we decided on sukupira Brazilian wood for the bridges and bronze metal with a nest texture and technical fabrics for the shelves and drawers, all both glamorous and functional at the same time.

**A LITTLE BLACK DRESS IS THE ONE FASHION ITEM EVERY LADY MUST HAVE, WHILE A SHARP SUIT IS THE ONE THING EVERY MAN MUST OWN. WHAT, IN YOUR OPINION, IS THE ONE HOME ITEM THAT EVERY HOMEOWNER MUST HAVE?** A great sofa is undoubtedly the object a house cannot live without. Make sure it is comfortable, as well as beautiful.

**YOU WERE ORIGINALLY TRAINED IN MEDICINE, SWITCHED TO PHOTOGRAPHY AND SERVED IN THE MILITARY UNDER NATIONAL SERVICE BEFORE BECOMING ITALY'S MOST SUCCESSFUL FASHION DESIGNER. HOW HAS YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPOSURE TO THESE DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES AIDED YOU IN YOUR CAREER?** I'm not sure that anything I did before fashion has really shaped my career as a designer, with the possible exception of photography, which was a hobby that encouraged my visual side. When I was a child, people simply did not become fashion designers. They became accountants or doctors or lawyers, and I don't think we even knew what a fashion designer was. Of course that all changed for me when I started to work for Nino Cerruti and learned my trade. Once I found fashion, I forgot all about my days as a medical student. And as for military service, I was never destined to be a soldier. I believe too strongly in peace, and detest all forms of violence.

**IF YOU WEREN'T A DESIGNER, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO**

**BE?** I have always been a passionate film fan. Ever since I was a child and used to go to the big city of Milan to the cinema, it was a way of escaping into the glamorous world of the silver screen. I have sometimes wondered whether I could have been a film director - especially when I am staging fashion shows, when I assemble my own cast of models, dress them, instruct them, stage the production, and choreograph the lights and the soundtrack. But of course, directing a movie would be a whole different ball game, as the Americans would say.

**DEFINE WHAT 'LUXURY' MEANS TO YOU.** Luxury is all about quality and excellence of design, exclusivity and as far as I am concerned, sophistication and elegance. However, increasingly I find that time spent with my friends and family is a real luxury. I have always been something of a workaholic, and as I get older, I realise that it is really important to make the time to see your loved ones. ■



Astro fabric

Revolution lamp



His bathroom



The 'Antonette' collection

Aladino lamp

### PROFESSIONAL HELP

In line with Mr Armani's vision of a comprehensive, cohesive living space, Armani/Casa goes beyond being merely a purveyor of interiors; it also operates its own consulting service: Armani/Casa Interior Design. Launched five years ago, the service is mainly aimed at private individuals, but also works with interior designers and property developers on various developments. From its teams of ID experts based in Milan, Paris and New York, the Armani/Casa Interior Design team is equipped to manage projects from room decoration to complete home planning and design.

### SOME ARMANI/CASA INTERIOR DESIGN'S PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- Via Cavour in Rome, a prestigious redevelopment of a group of historic buildings
- The Fori Imperiali luxury residential complex in Rome
- Two penthouses in the Harbour Green (Kowloon) development in Hong Kong
- ID for the former Chase Manhattan bank building in Manhattan, New York, converted into apartment
- Projects in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Hawaii.
- And closer to home, Armani/Casa Interior Design is also slated to collaborate with YTL on the Sentosa Cove project in Singapore. Details are sketchy and under wraps, but will include the design and furnishing of 12 luxury villas.

# ISLAND CELEBRATION

A FEAST OF FOOD AND  
FASHION AT THE FABULOUS  
PANGKOR LAUT RESORT

PHOTOGRAPHY STEVE KOH / STUDIO ROM    STYLING WEECHIE

Silk crepe empire top  
and wool cardigan  
**Burberry Prorsum**;  
Cotton bum shorts  
**adidas**; Gladiator  
sandals **Stylist's own**





Silver bracelet  
and bangles  
**Bottega Veneta**;  
'Kyoto' steel with  
mother of pearl  
dial and diamond  
time piece **Gucci**



Organza and lace plastron  
blouse **Loewe**;  
High-waisted brief **Blush**;  
Gladiator sandals **Stylist's own**



Lake printed silk crepe pleated dress with tassel **Gucci**; Suede clutch **Mulberry**



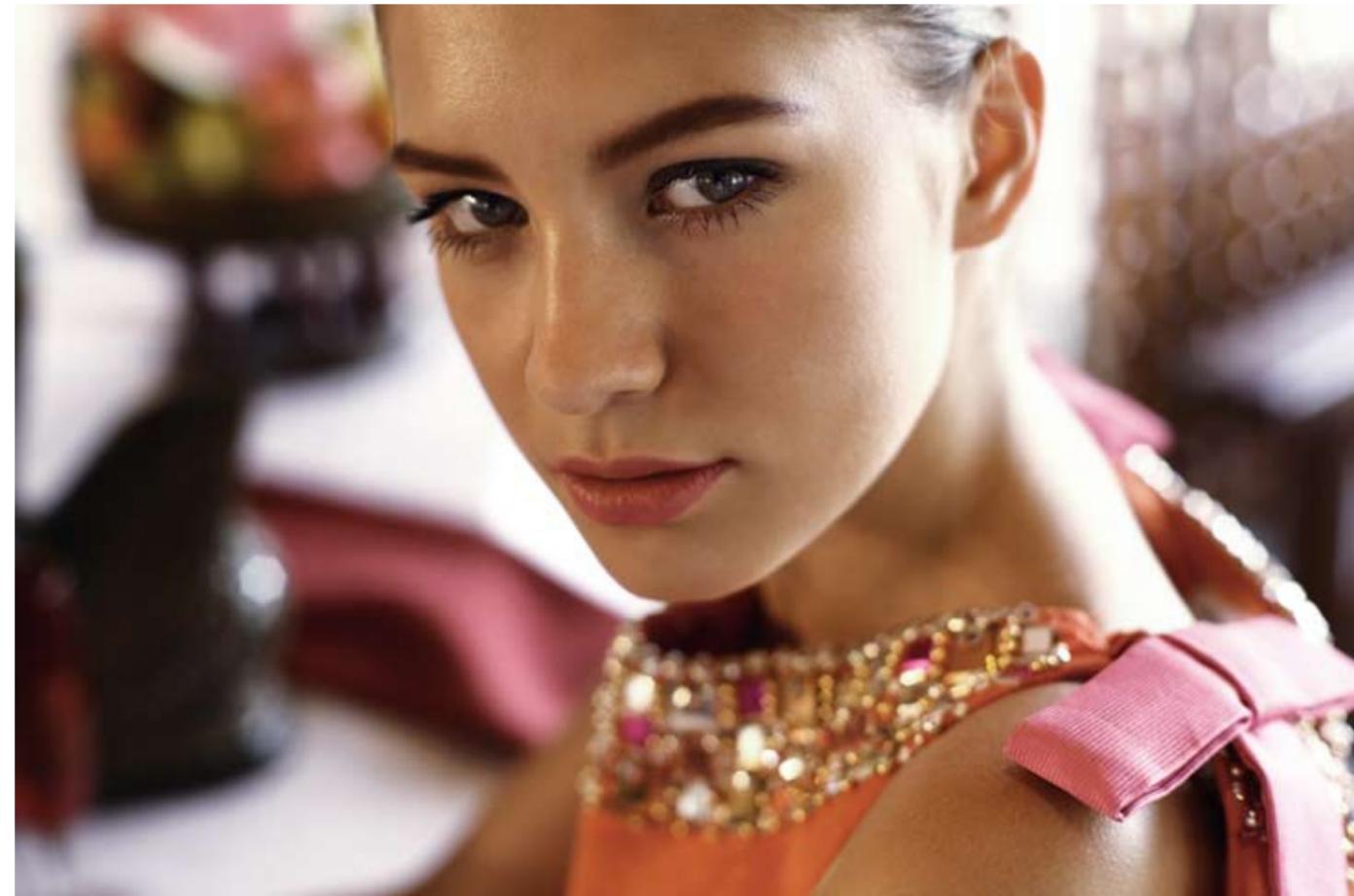
Leather Intrecciato slingback sandals **Bottega Veneta**



Hers: Organza and lace  
plastron blouse **Loewe**;  
High-waisted brief **Blush**  
His: Wool striped pullover  
**Club Monaco**; Cotton  
pants **Raoul**



Silk paisley scarf **Burberry Prorsum**; Bougie candle **Boucheron**; Chain belt with medallion **Gucci**



Crystal accented pleated dress **Dior**



Cotton drill sports jacket with  
hood **A/X Armani Exchange**;  
Cotton bermuda **Timberland**;  
Gladiator sandals **Stylist's own**



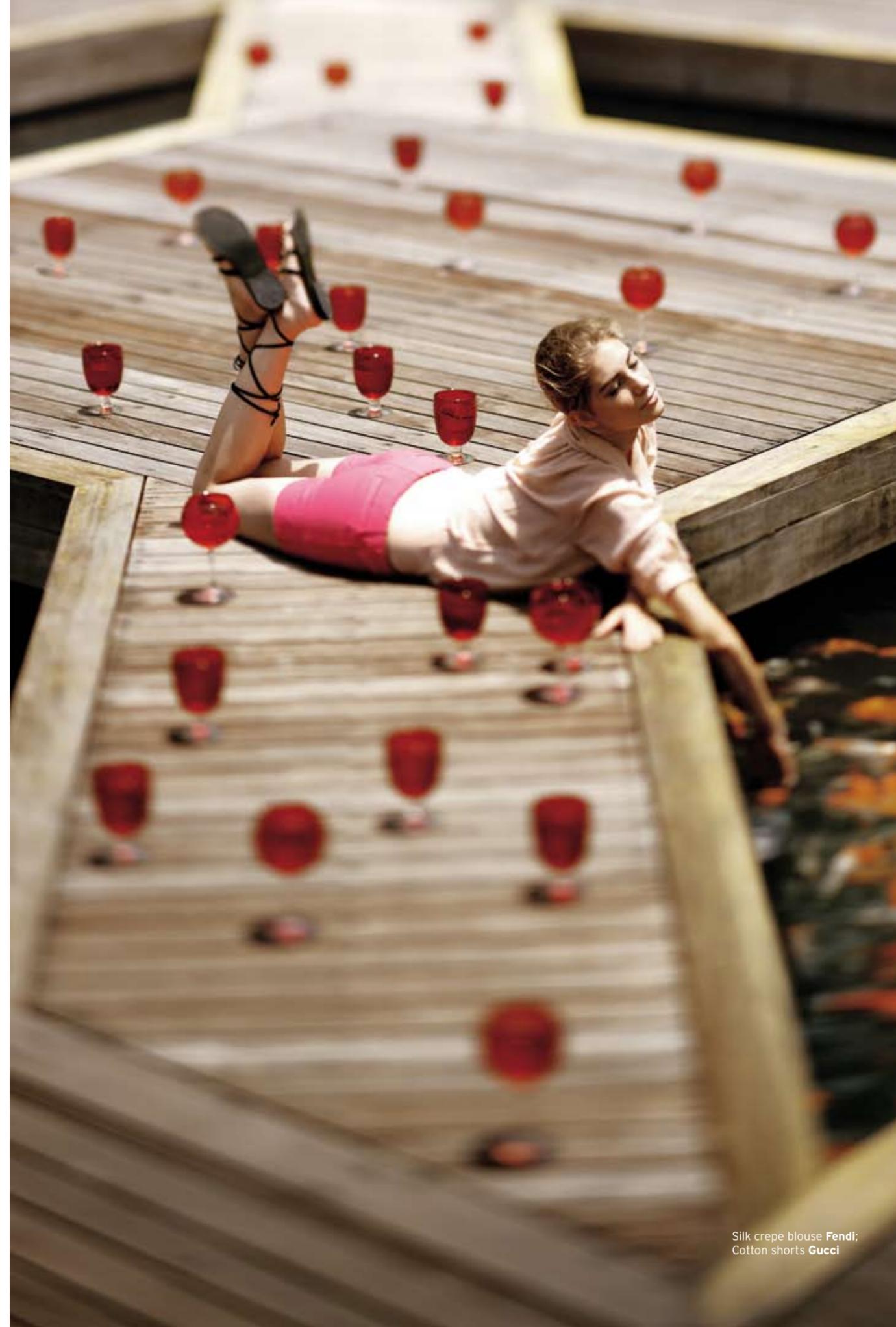
Hers: Silk shift **CK Calvin Klein**  
His: Wool pullover **DKNY**; Cotton pants **Raoul**



Hers: Beribboned dress **Burberry Prorsum**  
His: Slim blazer and madras shirt **Club Monaco**; Cotton pants **Raoul**



Smocked mercerized cotton sundress **DKNY**;  
Studded slim belt **Gucci**; Gladiator sandals **Stylist's own**



Silk crepe blouse **Fendi**;  
Cotton shorts **Gucci**



MAKEUP JESSIE CHONG  
HAIR JACK CHOONG  
MODELS AGNIESZKA GWARA &  
CLAUDE BARBALHO, FACES  
MODEL MANAGEMENT  
PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANTS LI &  
STANLEY  
PRODUCTION DIANA LIM

Leather pants Gucci

# LUXURY REDEFINED



UNDERSTATED, REFINED, CLASSIC: BOTTEGA VENETA IS A SHINING STANDOUT IN THE WORLD OF LUXURY FASHION WITH ITS LOGOLESS PRODUCTS THAT EMPHASISES ON ITS PHILOSOPHY "WHERE YOUR OWN INITIALS ARE ENOUGH". NOW, THAT'S WHAT TRUE STYLE SHOULD BE ABOUT

BY CHOO AI LING ALL PRODUCTS SHOWN HERE ARE FROM BOTTEGA VENETA A/W 08 COLLECTION

ARE LUXURY GOODS AN ARTIFICIAL CONSTRUCT FOISTED UPON US BY MARKETING AND THE MEDIA? Do those glossy ad campaign images starring Kate Moss, Agyness Deyn and Gemma Ward shot by Nick Knight, Annie Leibovitz and Mario Testino et al in the pages of Vogue, W and Vanity Fair or splashed across Times Square and Piccadilly Circus conspire to delude the public into paying an exorbitant amount of cash for goods which should sell for far less? Does having a logo emblazoned across a shirt or prominent hardware affixed on a bag ensure that an item sells by the bucket loads?

These questions may seem academic when confronted with an emphatically logo-free bag which still goes for a heart stopping price tag (prices begin from RM5000) and begs the question of how the company which manufactures them placed among the top three in consumer recognition and approval (ranking with Hermès and Vera Wang) in a 2007 consumer survey by the Luxury Institute. The company in question is Bottega Veneta, an Italian leather goods house steeped in the traditions of the master leather craftsman of the Veneto.

Founded in 1966 as a family business of luxury leather accessories by Michele Taddei and Renzo Zengiaro and headquartered in Vicenza, Bottega Veneta (which means Venetian atelier) earned its reputation creating goods based on core values of quality, craftsmanship, exclusivity and discreet luxury. This timeless style has been perpetuated by its signature "intrecciato", a unique leather weaving technique created by the Bottega Veneta craftsmen. Originally thought of as a way to make the brand's thin, supple leather more durable, this original technique allowed the creation of bags completely different from the bags of that time: deconstructed, soft and where the design and quality of materials were the most important elements.

From its inception, Bottega Veneta was among the elite handful of small leather-goods makers setting the standard for Italian craftsmanship, so much so that in the 1970s, its intricately woven rustic-looking designs were sufficiently identifiable to inspire the company's slogan, "When your own initials are enough." However interest waned in the 1990s but fashionistas started to sit up and take notice when owners Vittorio and Laura Moltedo brought in British designer Giles Deacon to inject some edge into its languishing fortunes in 2000. Under Deacon, the company launched

a successful Ready-To-Wear line which personified the designer's sexy aesthetic.

This flash of inspiration was enough to entice the Gucci Group to buy the brand for roughly \$200 million although Tom Ford, then the creative director of the Gucci Group, hired German designer, Thomas Maier to give it a new lease of life. Maier, who had designed for Hermès and Sonia Rykiel, was a perfect fit for Bottega's particular aesthetic. Indeed, in his pre-Bottega career, Maier's designs had always been characterised by a subtlety so finely tuned that they often flew beneath the radar.

Although the moment to revive a luxury brand seemed inopportune since the world economy was in the throes of the post 9/11 recession, Maier, with the blessing of Ford and Domenico De Sole, Gucci's former chief, chose to pursue a path of uncompromising high standards. For example, he turned his back on cherished marketing precepts like following the widespread practice of turning out a successful bag in three sizes and adjusting the prices accordingly. Also unlike other high-end competitors, Maier eschewed the lower costs of manufacturing in China, continuing to produce all their merchandise in Italy.

This effort to support the rich and storied heritage of the Veneto region where Bottega Veneta has its roots was reinforced when the house became concerned that the



ranks of artisans capable of handweaving the “intrecciato” pieces were beginning to dwindle. To ensure that this art was passed on to future generations, the house opened a free school, Scuola della Pelletteria Bottega Veneta, to train future employees. Open to anyone between the ages of 18 and 25, with preference going to students from nearby schools in the Veneto region, the three-year course of study includes instruction in leather goods techniques of increasing complexity, along with more traditional studies in English, computer skills, and fashion history. Technical classes are taught by the most skilled artisans at Bottega Veneta.

The house's abiding respect for heritage is apparent in their celebration of the 30th anniversary of one of its most recognisable and iconic bags, the Knot, which has become something of a favourite on the red carpet and carried by diverse stars from classic beauty Nicole Kidman to fashion forward Mary-Kate Olsen. When Maier took the reins as Creative Director, he recognised the special quality of the small rounded box clutch and created a new closure in the shape of a small leather knot and gave the bag its name. Since then, its many incarnations have ranged from the refined to the fanciful, including the Origami Knot, or intricately creased patent leather; the Jardin Knot, crafted from a profusion of leather blossoms; the Vintage Jewel Knot, embroidered with antique crystals; an Art-Deco-inspired version in sterling silver with faceted onyx; and others of woven sterling silver, padded satin and soft crocodile. The Knot: A Retrospective painstakingly collected



An example of Bottega Veneta's famous 'intrecciato' leather weaving technique

Knots from the 1980s and 90s for a travelling exhibition which began in Milan in April.

From handbags to shoes, intrecciato shows up in every category of the Bottega Veneta brand including the bomber jackets in its ready to wear collection. Along with their signature weaving, the elements of the brand identity are always evident in the understated and classical clothes which Maier designs. While other designers are busy producing trend-driven collections, he concentrates on deceptively simple, painstakingly constructed styles. The dressmaker touches – ruching, serpentine seaming, hand-beading and elaborate pleats – are recognisable to a small but informed clientele. In their Fall/Winter 2008/2009, Maier continues to streamline the act of dressing, distilling materials, colours, construction and functionality to their essence. Equal parts

creation and destruction, Maier's design process yields a collection of concise, unembellished pieces that serve, in their considered restraint, to underline the individuality of the woman who wears it. Similarly the men's collection, be it casual or formal wear is treated with equal attention to the exquisite detail that characterises Maier's work.

In 2006, Bottega Veneta launched a fine jewellery collection only after painstaking research yielded a small, prestigious jewellery manufacturer in Germany with a long history of workmanship. The latest collection is inspired by the



sfera, an ancient Venetian symbol of luck and protection, which joins the hand-woven 18 karat gold chains that form the foundation of the collection. Pure simple shapes and materials which are as understated as they are unusual are the focus in all the pieces and serve to complement the effortlessness of the brand's clothing and leather goods.

Expanding the Bottega Veneta universe to the home, a small but perfectly formed collection is produced seasonally which includes furniture like a sleek leather covered desk and a floor lamp seamlessly encased in intrecciato. The brand also has embarked on collaborations like scented candles with L'Artisan Parfumeur and tableware with KPM porcelain makers.

At the 2008 International Furniture Fair in Milan, Bottega Veneta unveiled META, a new armchair made in association with Poltrona Frau, international leader in high-end furnishings which continues the company's stellar track record of collaborations. For the first in a planned collection of seating, Maier chose to work with Poltrona Frau, as making the perfect chair requires a particular kind of expertise, an understanding of construction as it relates to comfort and the human body. Rounded and inviting, with organic lines and graceful curves, the proportions of the chair are unusual and visually engaging from all sides, while the seat cushion is soft and supple, certain to take on the shape of a regular occupant over time. Ever with the attention to detail, the wooden legs are upholstered in leather and the underside of the chair is also similarly covered.

To experience the Bottega Veneta home collection for a brief moment of luxury, one can stay at the 1700 square foot Bottega Veneta Suite inside the St. Regis Hotel, New York. Touted by The Los Angeles Times as New York's most plush suite, the hotel's Louis XVI-style furniture blends entirely with pieces from Bottega's new home line, such as leather-covered bookcases and leather-woven tables. Coordination was Bottega Veneta's footprint and the suite has been tastefully decked out for a muted, urban cool ambience.

From a once-ailing fashion house into one of Europe's top-selling luxury brands with annual sales of more than US\$500 million worldwide, the Bottega Veneta story is an inspiration, showing how quality and craftsmanship can overcome the bombast so prevalent in today's world. Instead it has redefined luxury for the new millennium as something more subtle, long-lasting and recession-proof. Maier's disciplined approach has a huge role in ensuring this by never resorting to the quick fix or producing gimmicky products. In the disposable business of fashion, Maier has overcome the odds by offering classic unique handcrafted things that can't immediately be reinterpreted at every level of the marketplace. Indeed he puts it best: "If you're never in fashion, you are never out." ■



The Poltrona Frau armchair

# PRECIOUS ENCOUNTERS

PEEKING INTO THE COFFERS OF FINE JEWELLERS FACET FIRE BY EUGENE NG



FACET FIRE, A RELATIVELY NEW PLAYER IN THE LUXURY JEWELLERY MARKET IN MALAYSIA, is a brand that has been developed with a single vision in mind: the creation of jewellery as art to be enjoyed by the well-heeled of society.

Facet Fire may be Singaporean in origin, but its inclinations and artistic temperament are nothing if not global. Specialising in sets, the collections it produces are mainly designed in Europe, require intricate craftsmanship and are produced over the course of between three to four months.

These exquisite designs are then adorned with white or champagne-coloured diamonds from north-west Australia and South Africa, sapphires from Sri Lanka or Madagascar and pearls in cream, grey, green and pink from Japan, Tahiti and Indonesia. In its award-winning boutique in Starhill Gallery, an exercise in stylish contemporary elegance, each piece of jewellery is displayed on a pedestal, befitting the artistry and poetry that lies behind each one.

Rosa Eldera necklace

Facet Fire adopts an artisanal approach to its jewellery, where each collection evokes an emotional response in the person viewing it. Each piece is a rare and singular affair. Each handcrafted lovingly and exquisitely. Each inspired by nature or beauty or life itself.

Particularly beautiful are the Velutto, Goccia and Stella Brillante collections but the boutique has recently unveiled a couple of new sets for the year. The Merletto collection is inspired by the graceful ripples of water and features a 383 Round diamonds (19CT) and 107 Princess cut 6CT diamonds necklace, and a 100 Round diamond (4CT) earrings. Corallina is also inspired by the ocean where 95 pink, green, orange and yellow sapphires, 658 Round diamonds (69.2CT) set in 18K white gold for the necklace, and 166 Round diamonds (19.8CT) set in 18K white gold for the earrings are reminiscent of corals. ■

*Facet Fire is located exclusively at F30 & F31, Explore Floor, Starhill Gallery, KL; +603-2144 1872; www.facetfire.com*



The award-winning Facet Fire boutique at Starhill Gallery.



Marquesa earrings

La Blu Royale

The Corallina collection

# STYLE FILE

## BEAUTIFUL NEW THINGS IN THE STORES

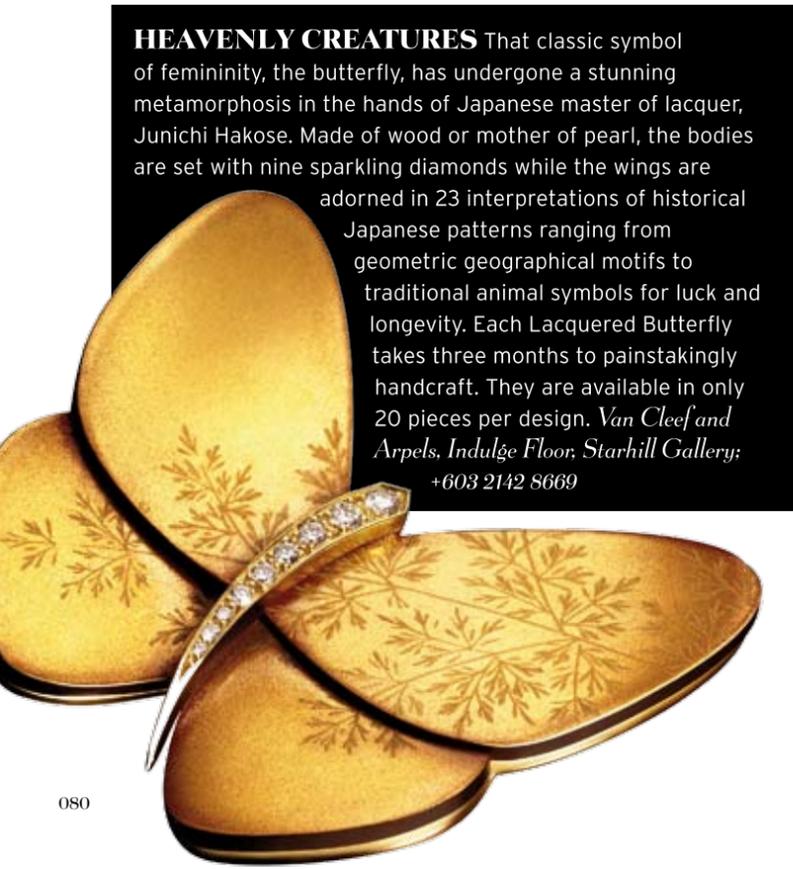
COMPILED BY CHOO AI-LING



**RETRO REDUX** DKNY updates the slick New York look they have perfected with flashes of eclectic glamour for their Fall 2008 women's collection with jewel colors, opulent weaves and vintage-inspired blocked patterns. Textures are added by layering luxurious separates although the dress - sculpted and puffed in jacquard, brocade or a charming print - still remains the key piece. To finish the look, choose from tactile accessories like loosely draped scarves, silk cord belts, croc lace-up platforms, shearling bags and animal-print hats to add that personal touch. *DKNY, Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603-2144 0042 / 0048*



**FEELING SKIN** As summer draws to a close in the northern hemisphere, Montblanc welcomes the addition of that favourite seasonal shade, grey, to its La Vie de Bohème leather collection. In a combination known as Caviar/ Sky Grey, the dark Caviar tone highlights the elegance of calf leather with its extravagant lizard embossing while the inside lining comprises of velvety, soft French lamb nappa in Sky Grey. Available in six small leather items like purses and business-card cases, the unique mixture of materials elevates what could easily have been ordinary leather goods to extravagant necessities. *Montblanc @ Cortina Watch Espace Boutique, Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2142 1171 / 1161*



**HEAVENLY CREATURES** That classic symbol of femininity, the butterfly, has undergone a stunning metamorphosis in the hands of Japanese master of lacquer, Junichi Hakose. Made of wood or mother of pearl, the bodies are set with nine sparkling diamonds while the wings are adorned in 23 interpretations of historical Japanese patterns ranging from geometric geographical motifs to traditional animal symbols for luck and longevity. Each Lacquered Butterfly takes three months to painstakingly handcraft. They are available in only 20 pieces per design. *Van Cleef and Arpels, Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603 2142 8669*



**BUY AND LUGE** Everyone's favourite British chap, Jude Law is once again the face of classic British fashion house dunhill with a spectacular Autumn/ Winter campaign shot on the foothills of St. Moritz. In this installment, Law plays the maverick gentleman taking on the adrenaline charged sport of tobogganing at Cresta Run, which has a reputation for being the world's scariest toboggan course. Built in 1885, the Cresta Run's combination of history and adventure fit in perfectly with the dunhill image of the quintessentially British with a side of bravado.

**EXCESS BAGGAGE** Devoid of the distinctive Burberry checks, the revitalised British fashion house of Burberry's first unisex luggage collection displays the hallmarks of becoming future classics. Like their iconic trench coat, the luggage pieces are both hard-wearing and practical - qualities synonymous with the manufacturing principles of progress, functionality and innovation laid down by founder, Thomas Burberry. All pieces carry the Burberry Established 1856 nickel plaque and are available in ostrich, soft grained leather or durable nylon. Previewed during the menswear Autumn/ Winter 2008/09 catwalk show, the colour palette reflects the muted earth tones of the collection.



**WATCH THIS SPACE** In the span of only 4 years, Swiss watchmaker DeWitt has charted its own course in the notoriously closed horological industry and garnered accolades and fans with its innovation and panache. In another historical landmark, DeWitt opened its first stand-alone boutique in Starhill Gallery with Jerome de Witt himself unveiling a magnificent collection of limited edition timepieces. To mark this auspicious occasion, DeWitt generously donated a watch for auction of which the proceeds will go to Ti-Ratana Penchala Community Center. Guests then watched the premier showcase of John Woo's latest blockbuster, Red Cliff, in the company of the director himself. *DeWitt, UG21, Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603-2141 0776*



# ODOUR WORLDLY

BRITNEY IN A BOTTLE? GLOW LIKE J.LO? GET STAR STRUCK WITH JUST A SPRITZ AND A SPRAY BY ANIS RAMLI

IT USED TO BE that fans with cameras and autograph books in tow would have to hunt down their favourite stars for that one moment where they get their brush with fame. These days, all it takes is a walk down the perfume aisle and you're likely to bump into Celine, SJP or even Shania Twain.

Not that they're hanging around oh-so-nonchalantly waiting for a fan to ambush them. No - here at the fragrance section, their images hang larger than life in promotional posters selling boxes that hold anything from a crystal flagon to a glass bottle with glued-on pseudo-diamonds for added glitz. And bottled within are scents that have the effect of turning one sexy, feminine, coquettish, and a range of other adjectives that only stardom can inspire.

These days, it seems that every other celebrity is readily lending their names to a scent. From J.Lo to Britney to Madge, superstardom brings about superpower to sell scents. And us mortals are lapping it up.

Celeb scents allow us for that one brief moment to vicariously live a life bathed in glitter, red carpet, paparazzi and power. A chance to share the star's intimate moments, love what they love and aspire to be what they are.

After all, who could resist a flight of fantasy into J.Lo's world with 'Deseo Forever', inspired by a shower of petals in her rain-kissed garden. For die-hard fans, this is as close as one

can get to her. Others are not as imaginative or as subtle. Paris Hilton's 'Heiress', for example. Cash does not equal class it would seem.

Still, there are celeb scents that pack more punch and inspiration than Oprah and Dr. Phil put together. 'Inspire' by Christina Aguilera is straightforward in her message that rallies self-assured women and celebrates confidence. When Celine Dion launched 'Sensational', she declared: "I want to provide inspiration for women everywhere to live their dreams and strive to achieve their greatest potential".

The idea of celebrity scents is by no means novel. Back in the late 80s, Elizabeth Taylor launched Passion, a distinctive scent of jasmine and rose in a violet hued bottle the colour of her eyes. Taylor's career had long stagnated but her fan base was still intact. 'Passion' did well at the checkout counter, but it was her 'White Diamonds' perfume, launched a few years later, that brought more than US\$1 billion in sales in the U.S. alone and made Taylor a household name once more.

Two decades later, the power of celebrity endorsement still proves vital. Throughout her custody battle, court appearances and a flagging music career, Britney Spears' popularity seemed unaffected when it came to her scents. Early this year, she launched 'Curious', 'Believe' and 'Fantasy' to name but a few and notched over US\$20 million in sales. Smell me the money? ■

PHOTO CORBIS



**IMPRESS YOURSELF** Fusing state-of-the-art technology and superior sensitivity to skin structure, Kanebo's Impress Emulsion II helps skin revive its smooth and refined texture. Dullness, roughness, and uneven skin tone caused by daily UV rays, external stress (air pollution) and dryness can take a backseat with this lotion that helps to replenish moisture for every corner of the deep part of the stratum corneum (the skin's outermost layer). IMPRESS is Kanebo's top-of-the-line basic skin care range. There is also a make-up line. @Kanebo International Salon, S21-25, Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2144 1218.



**HAPPY FEET** Leonardo da Vinci considered the human foot a masterpiece of engineering and a work of art. In fact, the feet contain stimulating reflex points that, when massaged in a proper manner, can help bring the body back to balance. Hence the ancient art of reflexology that is now employed at Asianel Reflexology Spa. For the month of October, the spa offers a 90-minute treatment that uses flower essences including geranium to reduce pain. The Essence of Flowers Shoulder & Foot treatment (RM135) begins with a foot wash and soak before your therapist massages your head, neck, shoulders and hands followed by a foot mask and ending with a foot reflexology. @Asianel Reflexology Spa, S17, Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery +603-2142 1397



**O' WHAT A SCENT**  
Love In Black is a mirror image of the 2006 Love In

White, but with its emphasis firmly on seduction rather than innocence. This sophisticated ladies' fragrance from Creed combines a heady aroma of white violets with warm and sensuous Virginian cedar, and Florentine iris. Nicknamed 'La Seducitrice' this fragrance was inspired by the sense of elegance, beauty and personality of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis. Creed, established in 1760, is well-known for its celebrity clientele and for their tradition of handmade perfumes. @Ken's Apothecary, Lot 10.

# PRINCESS FOR A DAY

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET MARRIED JUST TO ENJOY TRADITIONAL PRE-WEDDING MALAY BEAUTY RITUALS; AT SPA VILLAGE TANJONG JARA, YOU CAN LUXURIATE IN THE 3-HOUR DANDAN PUTERI TUJUH TREATMENT AND GET PAMPERED LIKE A BRIDE... MINUS THE GROOM BY ANIS RAMLI



THE LURE OF THE SPA VILLAGE AT TANJONG JARA RESORT IS THAT IT CELEBRATES ANCIENT MALAY BEAUTY RITUALS, including the elaborate and luxurious treatments that precede a bride's big day. The treatment is called 'Dandan Puteri Tujuh' (Seven Grooming Secrets), but I wasn't preparing for my big day to arrive before indulging in this glorious three-hour experience.

The Malays, like many other world cultures, view weddings

as a rite of passage and honour the bride-to-be with luxe pampering that, in many ways, help to calm pre-big day jitters, enhance her beauty inside and out, and prepare her body, mind and spirit for the day that is likely to be both challenging and nerve-wrecking.

So it seemed only apt that the first part of my body to be given some TLC was my head. In a nutshell, the treatment, 'Ikal Mayang' (Hair Crème Bath), was a hair cleansing

ritual, but as this was not your typical wash-and-blow salon session, I found my hair (and head) being given the royal treatment.

True to its Malay roots of ransacking the kitchen and garden for beauty aides, my hair was bathed in a delightful recipe of coconut oil, rice paddy stalks and pandanus leaves. The fragrant hair bath was massaged ever so delicately into my scalp, and combined with the rhythmic touch of my therapist's dancing fingers, I was lulled to a quick nap in no time.

The hair crème was left in my hair for a few minutes before it was rinsed off. And as the fresh cold water washed away the ingredients from my back, it wasn't hard to be enveloped by a sense of vigour and earthiness in this simple yet sensual act of cleansing.

With my tresses thoroughly conditioned by the coconut oil and the natural conditioners of the pandanus leaves, I proceeded to surrender the rest of my body to more pampering. Through the 'Urutan Gamelan' (Traditional Malay Massage), my stress knots (from work, not pre-wedding jitters, might I remind you) were coaxed to uncoil and unwind. The Malay massage is distinctive through its long, kneading strokes that focus on the muscles along with therapeutic oils made from local herbs and flowers. In this instant, my body was bathed in the fragrant oil combination of local jasmine and magnolia.

Soon, I was floating vicariously through space as my therapist's deft fingers kneaded my body. The way each stroke was applied to my body was hypnotic, loosening each muscle and enticing the entire body system to relax.

So engrossed was I in the experience that I barely noticed when the therapist began the 'Boros Puteri' (Facial and Body Scrub). A homemade scrub of turmeric and galangal was washed generously over my limp body, removing the dead cells off to reveal my new, softer and suppler skin. My face, meanwhile, was treated to a herbal facial made from recipes of yore that had a calming effect on the psyche while gently removing old skin for a fresher complexion.

The effects of the scrub were amazing, as I would later discover, when combined with the 'Bersiram' (Fragrant Milk Bath). The back-to-back treatment left a sheer veil of moisture on my skin and I could actually feel the texture turn as soft as a baby's! This, I was told, was the effect of the scented flower buds and petals that accompanied the dip, such as jasmine, rose and tropical magnolia, that provided natural emollients and moisturisers.

The cooling bath was also to clean my body off any scrub residue. It was also a good time to contemplate my state of mind. As I sat in the bathtub, with various petals floating around me and the varied fragrances making their way into



'Boros Puteri' Scrub



my senses, the calm waters only seemed to heighten my tranquil state of mind. The bath was sublime and blissful, to say the least.

All too soon, I was invited to step out of my water haven into the fading sunlight to end my therapy with the 'Ukup Wangi' (Scented Body Steaming). In the olden days, steaming the body was a ritual popular among the womenfolk of the Malay royal houses in preparation for their wedding night to stimulate the senses and soften the skin. The treatment left my skin lightly scented - thanks to the mixture of rosewater and local jasmine - allowing my body to be enveloped in a natural fragrance that lingered till the next day.

The beauty of all these rituals rekindled at Spa Village Tanjong Jara is the ability for guests to re-live the experience of past royal Malay houses. For here at the Resort, delving deep into the past for beauty and health secrets is more than just about keeping spa goes happy. It's about paying homage to the local wisdom of celebrating beauty from within and reviving the traditional art of healing for future generations to enjoy. ■



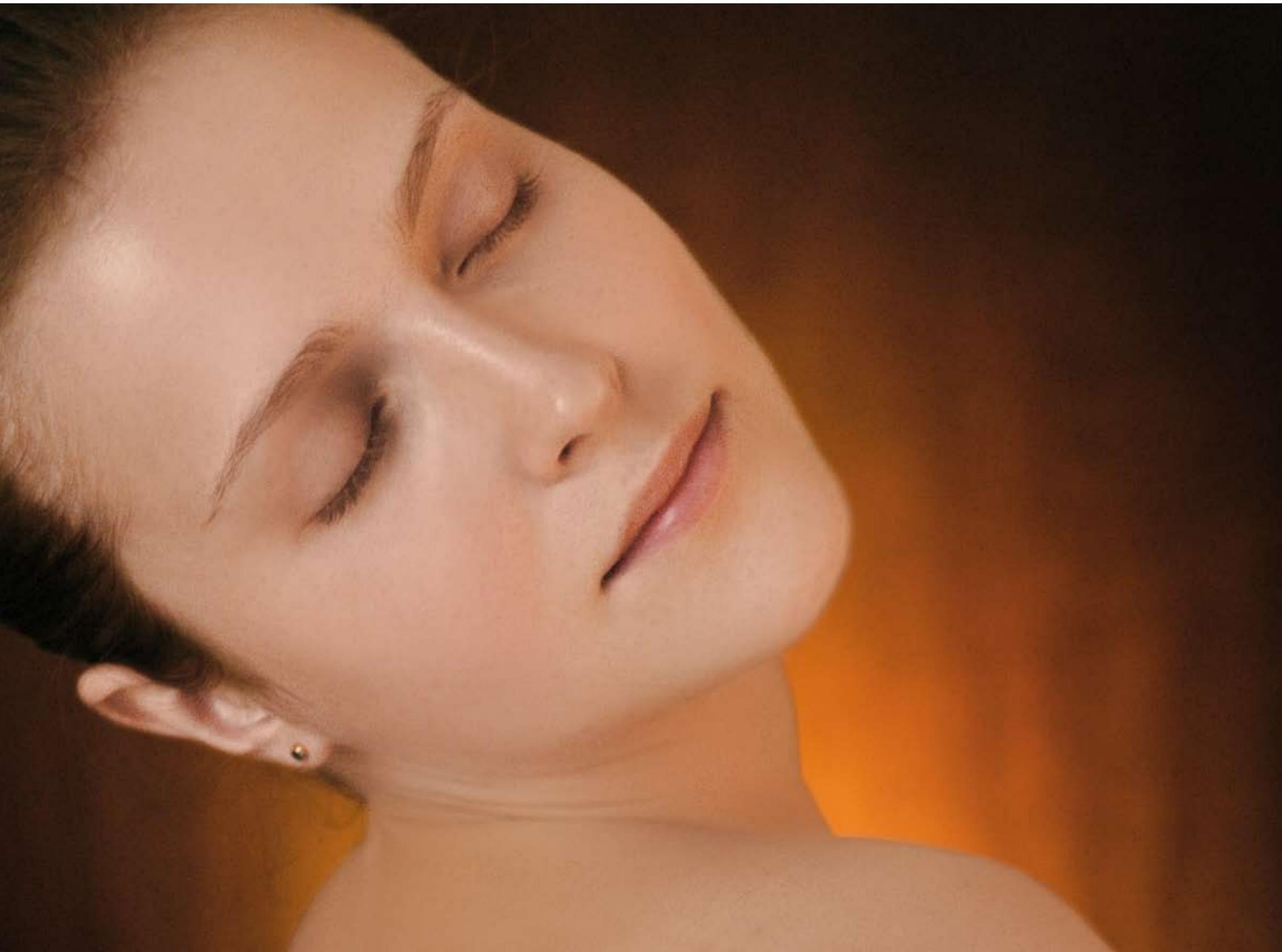
# ANOINTED ANATOMY

*Complete well-being should encompass all of the body and at Spa Village, you can find a range of treatments that take care of you from head to toe*

PHOTOGRAPHY CHRISTOPHER A. STYLING AZIZ ABDUL DRAIM  
MODEL SVETLANA, ANDREWS MODELS

## **THE EYES HAVE IT**

**Caviar Eye & Lip Care** - A truly effective eye and lip treatment that firms, tones and rehydrates with protein-rich caviar and powerful antioxidants. *Spa Village Kuala Lumpur. +603-2782 9090*



## FACE VALUE

**Rose Petal Facial** - Floral fantasy treatment of dried rose petal mask, cleanser and toner that cleanses and moisturises and also incorporates the European 15-points face massage to rejuvenate and refresh the skin. *Spa Village Cameron Highlands, +605-491 1100*

**Muka Berseri Seri** - Evocative of exotic Asian spices, enjoy a face massage using a herbal pouch filled with turmeric and wild ginger. *Spa Village Tanjong Jara, +609-845 1100*

**Bird's Nest Facial with Star Fruit Mask** - Considered the caviar of the East, bird's nest is great for dry complexions as it replenishes nutrients and improves micro circulation. It is easily absorbed by the skin leaving it smooth and supple. This treatment with star fruit was once only reserved for the palaces of Imperial China and is even ideal for sensitive skin. *Spa Village Malacca, +606-289 8000*

**Mian Bu Hu Liao (Chinese Herbal Facial)** - Begins with a traditional snuff of aromatic herbs to clear the nasal passage before a winter mulberry face wash, sandalwood and winter melon scrub to exfoliate, acupressure massage to tone facial tissues and ends with a mask of crushed pearls and ginseng. Once a favourite beauty treatment of concubines in Imperial China. *Spa Village Pangkor Laut, +605-699 1000*

**Sundari Neem Facial** - The Neem tree is known as the village pharmacy in India for its intensely reparative, calming and healing properties. It restores sensitive or irritated skin to its youthful glow. *Spa Village Kuala Lumpur, +603-2782 9090*

**Mesipat (Balinese Facial)** - With sandalwood and tamarind leaves and incorporating a Balinese massage using floral pouches. *Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, +603-2783 1000*



## HEAVENLY HANDS

**Jari Jemari** - A traditional Malay treatment where hands and feet are soaked in a herbal bath in order to help with circulation and to alleviate aches and inflammation of the joints. *Spa Village Tanjung Jara, +609-845 1100*

**Jin Pao Shou Jiao** - Keep limbs smooth and supple with this Chinese hand and foot soak that also improves circulation, reduces aches and pains and prevents arthritis. The usage of cinnamon sticks and angelica root also reduces dampness and 'wind' in the body. *Spa Village Pangkor Laut, +605-699 1000*



## HAIR OF SERENITY

**Limau Kasturi Yogurt Hair Mask** - Ideal for oily hair as the lime and yoghurt cleanses and unclogs pores. The treatment is complete with a scalp massage. *Spa Village Malacca, +606-289 8000*

**Ikal Ikal** - Traditional Malay treatment for hair loss, scalp irritation and migraines using hibiscus and betel leaves formed into a paste and applied to the hair. *Spa Village Tanjong Jara, +609-845 1100*

**Ikal Mayang** - Practiced by royal princesses of yore, this wonderful hair treatment consists of coconut oil, rice paddy stalks and pandanus. *Spa Village Pangkor Laut, +605-699 1000*

**Mekramas** - A traditional Balinese treatment which combines coconut oil, candlenut, hibiscus and aloe vera to remedy dry scalp, strengthen hair follicles and leave hair shiny, soft and silky. *Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, +603-2783 1000*



## BACK TO BASICS

**Sundari Back Balancing Treatment** - A detoxifying treatment to clarify skin. It starts with gentle exfoliation followed by an Abhyanga back massage to stimulate lymphatic flow and finally a mask to deep cleanse, detoxify and de-stress. A Gulkand Candle lit during treatment restores balance. *Spa Village Kuala Lumpur, +603-2782 9090*

**Cupping or Moxabustion** - Cupping is a traditional Chinese therapy using bamboo or glass cups to create negative pressure and to remove heat and wind from the body. Moxabustion uses a lighted herbal stick to heat up various acupoints on the body and dispels cold, promotes circulation and activate the points on the body. *Spa Village Kuala Lumpur, +603-2782 9090 and Spa Village Pangkor Laut, +605-699 1000*

**Tungku Batu (Heated Stone Therapy)** - Used by Malay and orang asli for centuries, it hastens elimination of toxins, alleviates joint pains, loosens tense muscles and breaks down excess fat. *Spa Village Cameron Highlands, +605-491 1100*

# TOGETHER IN ELECTRIC DREAMS

THE AGE OF ELECTRIC CARS IS NO LONGER A FANTASTICAL VISION BUT NOW A TECHNOLOGICAL REALITY BY MATT ARMITAGE



The British-made Lightning GT is the ultimate in luxury

IF SOMEONE TOLD YOU THAT IN A FEW YEARS MANY OF US COULD BE GLIDING AROUND IN SILENT SUPERCARS, you'd probably laugh in their face. For many, owning a Ferrari or Lamborghini is almost as much about the growl of the engine as it is about the speed or refinement: it's that sense of being at the wheel of some jet-propelled monster.

Yet, if companies like Better Place, a Californian tech start-up have their way, the days of petrol heads and the throaty roar of metal beasts may be confined to history. And, with the price of oil breaking every ceiling economists have tried to place on it, the eye-watering price tag of a Bugatti Veyron pales compared to the cost of actually keeping the thing in fuel on a daily basis.

So, what are the alternatives? Hydrogen, electric, hybrid? According to Better Place it's as much about changing perceptions and the way we look at the world. "The mission is to end oil not create a company," is the statement issued by Better Place founder and CEO Shai Agassi in the September issue of Wired magazine. And with its first commercial roll out in Israel set for 2011 (and a second in Denmark under

negotiation), and support from carmakers including Nissan and Renault, those close to Agassi are betting on electric.

Better Place's masterstroke was to separate ownership of the vehicle and the battery. By treating the battery and the current it stores as fuel in much the same way as the petrol that powers current combustion engines, and by shifting the costs of production for the fuel cells to his own company rather than automotive manufacturers, he has allowed the cars to reach consumers at lower or even subsidised cost on the basis of signing a subscription agreement with the company not unlike those used for mobile phones.

Better Place's revenue would come, on a subscription basis, from supplying the electricity that powers the cars. Instead of plugging them in to recharge at home as with current electric cars, owners would have to use smart charging stations owned by the company which would recognise the car being charged and add the relevant costs to their monthly bill. Or, as the batteries are all owned by the company, users could simply go to one of its exchange stations and simply swap out a depleted cell for a fully charged one.

It sounds fantastical but the pilot scheme in Israel will involve 500,000 charging spots and 100 battery exchange stations, so it's anything but a pipedream. But what can we expect motoring to be like in a post-petroleum world? Certainly, electric cars have been around for years, most notably the three-wheeled vans that deliver the post in much of Europe, and cities like London have made electric perambulators like the very unsexy REVA G-Wiz exempt from congestion and some other road charges. But most of us want to do more than potter slowly around the corner in a vehicle.

from Tesla Motors. With a base price tag of just over US\$100,000, a range of over 200 miles between charges and styling that is definitely more American Muscle than European finesse, the Roadster will accelerate from 0 to 100kmh in less than four seconds with a 248bhp powertrain.

Alternatives include the Caterham-like Wrightspeed X1 prototype and the more budget friendly three-wheeler the ZAP Alias with a more than credible 0 to 100kmh in less than six seconds and a more realistic price tag of around



Better Place is leading the way to an age of electric cars; CEO Shai Agassi is on the far right

And while Better Place's tie ups with the likes of Nissan will mean that a raft of saloons, sedans and pick ups will initially be available, what if you fancy something a little less, well, pedestrian? While they're in no way tied to Better Place (yet), the electric world has been producing its own supercars of late. Because this is one instance where environmental friendliness doesn't require a trade-off in terms of comfort and performance.

In fact, most people report that getting behind the wheel of an electric sports car is nothing less than exhilarating. Electric engines make all their power available from the second you touch the accelerator, with no clutch to slow them down, unlike combustion engines which build their torque gradually. So, you get a massive burst of power from rest that throws you back into your seat and the car appears to glide rapidly and, with no petrol to burn, silently.

So far, the most commercially successful of these performance models has been the Tesla Roadster

US\$30,000. There's also a Proton-helmed electric version of the Lotus Elise on the horizon. But if the ultimate in luxury is your thing, then the British-made Lightning GT is the way to go. With an awesome 700bhp of energy surging through it, the Kevlar and carbon fibre body has a classic Aston Martin style to it, and a price tag to match: around US\$300,000.

Right now electric performance cars are a rarity, but if the Better Place model takes off, you can be sure that over the next few years we'll see the technologies improve, batteries get lighter and more powerful, and road cars, even at their most basic, becoming ever faster. ■



The Tesla Roadster combines power with environmental friendliness

# LIVING WITH DIAMONDS



IN A FEW SHORT YEARS TAIWAN'S HTC CORPORATION has gone from selling rebadged smartphones for other manufacturers and carriers into one of the world's leading hi-tech phone retailers. Its latest model the HTC Touch Diamond continues the trend, combining innovative performance features and plenty of media convergence options. What that means in plain English is that the phone manages to be both a business and entertainment powerhouse in a stunningly designed shell.

Going for a sleek and minimal look, the front of the Diamond is smoked glass and only a power button at the top of the unit and a volume control on the side of the device interrupt its clean lines. Dominating the phone is the 2.8 inch touch sensitive screen which displays the company's own innovative TouchFLO 3D interface. This allows users to access most of the phones features - from calendars and address books to entertainment and programmes - without resorting to the less intuitive hierarchical navigation system of Windows Mobile.

Under the hood there's a 528MHZ processor with 192MB RAM and 4GB of internal memory running on Windows Mobile 6, more than enough for most basic Word and Excel multi-tasking, watching movies or listening to music. 3G Tri-band connectivity makes it an ideal road-warrior's companion and

high speed data comes courtesy of both HSDPA and WCDMA, as well built-in Wi-Fi to exploit hotspots and potentially use VOIP telephony for cheaper international calls, and of course, the now ubiquitous Bluetooth.

But it's with TouchFLO that the device comes alive: taking a note out of the iPhone's book, it allows you to scroll through menus with a flick of a finger and zoom in and out of documents and web pages with a touch. And the Home screen with its old-fashioned flip style clock is a joy to look at. Other natty touches include a magnet held stylus that deactivates the key lock when you withdraw it, and a very usable auto call-muting function: just turn the phone on its front and the in-built motion sensor will turn off the sound.

It's not without its flaws: like most media-heavy phones, battery life could be better, but as charging is via a common USB, it's simple and straightforward to charge anywhere from a hotel room to the office to the car. And like most Windows Mobile devices you have to remember to close applications from time to time to stop the machine from slowing down, but overall, the HTC really is as precise and polished as a finely cut diamond.

[www.htc.com](http://www.htc.com)



Our picks include powerful Task Management software Things and FileMagnet, a device that lets you share files between a Mac and the device wirelessly. [www.itunes.com](http://www.itunes.com)

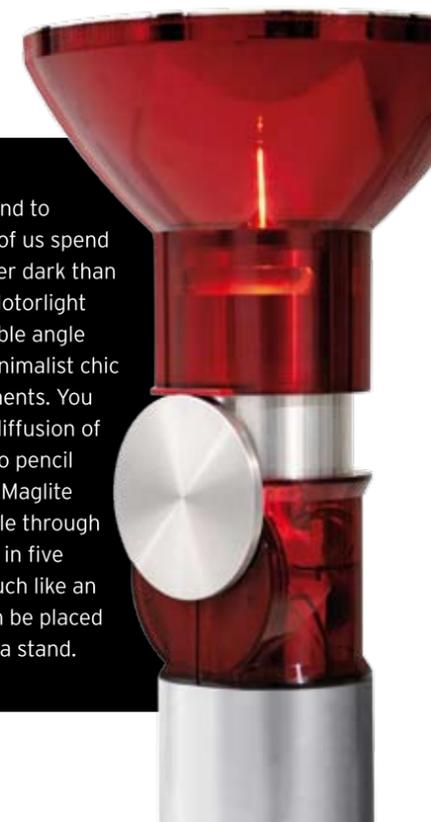
**ITUNES APPLICATION STORE** The iPod Touch is still unsurpassed as a music player but the first generation iPhone with which it shares much DNA was slightly disappointing. Many of those issues have been put to rest with the second generation iPhone, but the crowning glory has to be the iTunes Application Store. Here you can buy (some apps are free, some aren't) anything from a programme that turns your iPhone/iTouch into a Star Wars-style Light Saber (PhoneSaber) to a surprisingly useful spirit level (Meet Bubble).

**BOSE QUIET COMFORT 3** If you're no stranger to air travel then you probably grimace whenever the stewardesses hand out the crackly, hissy headphones that need to be cranked up to maximum volume to drown out the noise of the plane. If so, it's time to protect the hearing and blank out the background noise with a pair of Bose's latest Quiet Comfort 3s. Lightweight and compact, the phones feature Bose's Acoustic Noise Cancelling technology to eliminate ambient sound and give you detailed and faithful sound reproduction at much lower volumes. Our tip - turn them on and go to sleep in blissful silence. [www.bose.com](http://www.bose.com)



**ARCHOS 705 WIFI** Compact MP3 Players make perfect sense but when it comes to playing movies on-the-go it can't be compared to a good widescreen laptop. Which has made all-in-one media players a bit of a tricky sell. However, with the Archos 705 WiFi they've finally come into their own. Equipped with a 7-inch touch screen and up to 160GB of storage, the Archos plays most popular movie, audio and picture formats and can surf the Internet via its built-in WiFi and web browser. Best of all, that high resolution screen actually lets you enjoy the action rather than making you feel like you're squinting at midgets. [www.archos.com](http://www.archos.com)

**JAKE DYSON MOTORLIGHT** We tend to disregard lighting yet most of us spend more time in our homes after dark than we do in daylight. Dyson's Motorlight Claims to be the "first variable angle upright" and adds a little minimalist chic to our illumination requirements. You can alter the intensity and diffusion of the beam from wide angle to pencil thin, rather like a room size Maglite torch, or simply set it to cycle through its varying stages. Available in five colours and looking very much like an oversize Maglite itself, it can be placed on the floor or mounted on a stand. [www.jakedyson.com](http://www.jakedyson.com)



DAIMLER CHRYSLER

Herzlich Willkommen  
Welcome

# TRACING THE TALE OF THE THREE- POINTED STAR

WHEN KARL BENZ BUILT HIS FIRST CARS THEY WERE NOT DESIGNED AS SPEED MACHINES - 50 KM/H WAS QUITE ENOUGH, HE FELT. BUT HIS SONS HAD OTHER IDEAS, AND AT THE MERCEDES-BENZ MUSEUM IN STUTTGART YOU CAN SEE THEIR SILVER ARROWS, WHICH WON RACES ALL OVER THE WORLD, AMONGST THE OTHER CLASSIC INCARNATIONS OF THIS FAMOUS AUTOMOBILE MAKER

BY TIM SKELTON / TCS PHOTOGRAPHS BY BJÖRN GÖTTLICHER / TCS



THE MERCEDES-BENZ STAR IS AN INSTANTLY RECOGNISABLE SYMBOL OF QUALITY AND SOPHISTICATION. Cars bearing the famous logo have been driven by presidents and pop stars: Elvis had one, as did Picasso. And Mercedes prides itself not only on being one of the world's leading car manufacturers, but also the first.

The company was born thanks to two men: Gottlieb Daimler and Karl Benz. They never met, but were born only 100 km apart in southern Germany: Daimler in 1834, and Benz a decade later.

Daimler was a pioneer of internal-combustion engines. Together with his partner Wilhelm Maybach, he designed the prototype of all modern petrol engines. In 1885 they mounted one onto a two-wheeled frame, creating the world's first motorcycle, which Maybach rode for 3 km alongside the river Neckar, reaching a top speed of 12 km/h. A year later they attached the same engine to a four-wheeled horseless carriage to create a "Motorwagen". But it wasn't the first car.

The accepted inventor of the motorcar was Karl Benz, founder of Benz & Company. He designed a three-wheeled

"motor carriage" (he didn't trust the steering on four-wheelers), with a four-stroke engine. The world's first automobile powered by an internal-combustion engine was built in Mannheim in 1885 and patented on January 29 the following year. In 1894 Benz launched the four-wheeled Velo - an affordable, mass-produced car - and by 1900 his was the world's largest automobile manufacturer.

Benz retired in 1903, but his designs were already being eclipsed by the Daimler Motoren Gesellschaft (DMG) - even though Daimler himself had died in 1900.

From the beginning, racing was an important marketing tool for car manufacturers. At first they used production models - the Benz Velo took part in the very first car race in 1894: from Paris to Rouen - but specifically designed racers were soon introduced. In 1909 the Blitzen Benz set a land speed record of 228.1 km/h.

Following World War One, both companies suffered. Although 15 million cars were registered worldwide in 1923, most were Fords. Benz and DMG built little more than 1,000 each. Facing closure the two companies merged, becoming Daimler-Benz in 1926.

A new logo was created - merging a three-pointed star (representing Daimler's motto: "engines for land, air, and water") with Benz's laurels - and a legend was born. The vehicles were christened Mercedes-Benz in honour of the top DMG model: the Mercedes 35 hp (itself named after the daughter of Emil Jellinek, one of DMG's partners).

The merger transformed the company and production soared. But during the Second World War the factory became key to Nazi war effort. As a result it was largely destroyed in bombing raids. When the war ended the company rose from the ashes, becoming the global player it remains today: selling cars, buses and trucks all over the world.

Celebrating this rich history, the spectacular new Mercedes-Benz Museum opened in Stuttgart in May 2006, instantly becoming an icon of modern architecture. Designed by the acclaimed Dutch architects UN Studio, the gleaming glass and aluminium structure is as sleek and aerodynamic as the vehicles it represents: containing all curves and no right angles. The 48-metre high building features a double helix interior spiralling around a vast central atrium.

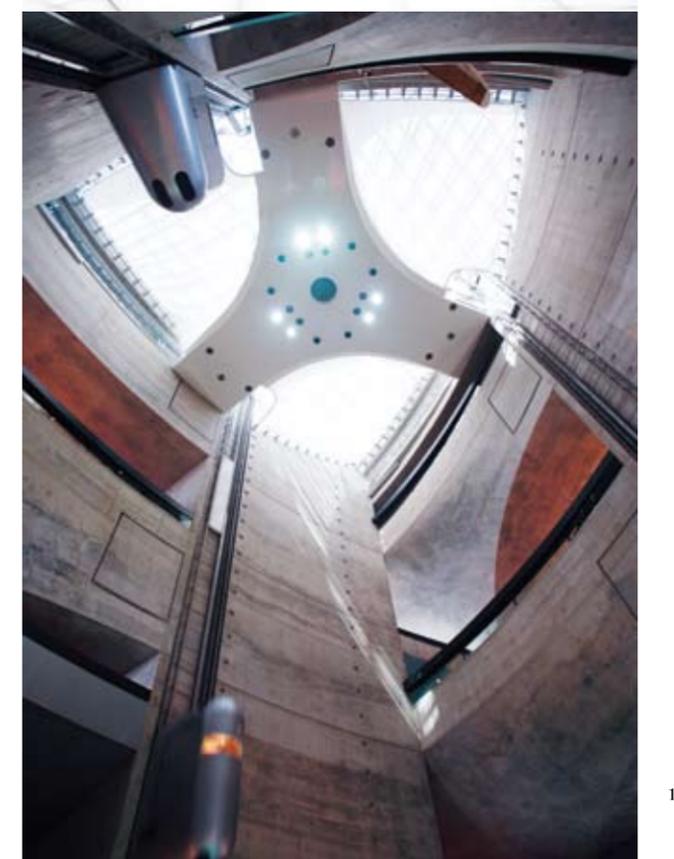
This striking layout shows off the legendary cars to best effect. On arrival, visitors are taken slowly by lift to the top of the atrium, whilst they watch a film preview of what awaits. Seven floors higher, the Mercedes-Benz story traces the company's proud history.

The magnificent museum houses 1500 exhibits, including 160 vehicles. From the upper level visitors can choose one of two tours running down through the museum. The two routes

meet at each level so visitors can switch between them. Along the first, seven "Legend" rooms relate Mercedes' story, providing historical context by telling it in parallel with that of Germany.

The company history is fascinating, but the real stars are the cars themselves, from the stunning 300 SL Coupe with its gull-wing doors, to Grace Kelly's 1958 model. They can all be seen lining the "Collection" route, which groups vehicles in five themed rooms. World-beaters from the racing world are on display, while another section features celebrity cars, from Princess Diana's 500 SL (she was the first British royal to buy a foreign car, and had to return it following a national outcry) to the "Popemobile" used by Pope John Paul II.

Mercedes is a brand name that everyone seems to love. And with its unbroken history of excellence, the world's biggest car museum is now the only one with the pedigree to present the more than 120 year old story of the automotive industry, all the way from day one. ■





# BUILDING WITH THE TIMES

## DR. DAVID FISHER REJECTS THE AGE-OLD METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION TO USHER IN A NEW DAWN FOR ARCHITECTURE: FACTORY-MADE BUILDINGS. WE KID YOU NOT

BY ABDUL AZIZ DRAIM ADDITIONAL TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF ALL RIGHTS RESERVED DR. DAVID FISHER AND RELATED TO DYNAMIC ARCHITECTURE; WWW.DYNAMICARCHITECTURE.NET

For centuries - nay, millennia - we have been building modern-day ziggurats the same way the Ancient Egyptians built their pyramids. We stack one brick on top of another and no construction site is complete without its noisy cement mixer, construction crane, bulldozer, and the team of workers sweating under the heat. Visionary Italian architect Dr. David Fisher wants to change that. In fact, he already has.

"It is unbelievable the leading sector of the world economy, is also the most primitive," the good doctor offers. "We still use trowels that were first used by the Egyptians and Romans! Buildings should not be different than any other products; from now on they will be manufactured in a production facility."

Walking his talk, Dr. Fisher is already in the midst of constructing the world's very first skyscraper from prefabricated parts. They make up residential units, each fully equipped with plumbing and electrical systems, and all required finishings from floors to ceiling, lighting and even furniture. These are then shipped off from factory to building site, regardless of geography, where they are then hooked to each other mechanically to form each storey. Each floor takes only 7 days to complete.

So what does all this - now dubbed the Fisher Method - add

up to? Fewer workers, reduction of construction time by 30% which results in less energy consumption, cleaner construction sited due to the elimination of waste, noise and pollution, and a lower risk of accidents to construction workers.

In June 2008, Fisher also launched the revolutionary Dynamic Tower, the world's very first 'building in motion': each floor rotates independently at varying speeds, allowing the whole building to morph into different formations as time passes. So residents will be able to watch the sun rise and set from the same room.

The first Dynamic Tower will be built in Dubai, followed by Moscow with plans for a third in New York. The Dynamic Tower is also the first building designed to be self-powered. Wind turbines are fitted between each rotating floor, bestowing the building with the ability to not only generate electricity for itself but also for other buildings nearby.

"From now on, buildings will have four dimensions: the fourth being Time," Dr. Fisher adds. "Buildings in motion will shape the sky line of our cities." The Dynamic Tower is already generating interest from Canada, Germany, Italy, Korea and Switzerland. Is KL ready for this new movement? ■

**LET THERE BE LIGHT** Some designers really know how to have fun with their products. Take designer darlings Lisa Widén and Anna Irinarchos of WIS Design for example. Always keen to add fun and poetry to their work, the duo's Proper lamp is inspired by black-and-white photographs of old relatives. The lamp's wide shade hides ruffles of brass netting, an homage of sorts to the petticoats that women in those old photos normally wore. Also new from the winsome twosome is the Orgel lamp. Made up of five cylindrical lamp holders attached to each other via a textile cable, this beauty finds inspiration in traditional Swedish Advent candlesticks. [www.wisdesign.se](http://www.wisdesign.se)



**ARMY CHAIRS** Perhaps it's too lazy to assume that a soldier's idea of decorating would involve yards of camouflage, but never in our minds would we predict neon pink or gilded wood to be their preference, now would we? After serving in the military for the bulk of his adult life, Dubai-based Australian designer Noel Duigan (pronounced Dy-gun) finally pursued his passion for design by forming his own design company earlier this year. Using intricately hand-carved frames combined with bold fabrics, Duigan's collection of chairs runs the gamut from pop art to punk and summer to retro. A bespoke service is also available for one-of-a-kind creations. We love them! [www.noelduigan.com](http://www.noelduigan.com)



**THE BEAUTIFUL GAME** Every guy would love to have his very own foosball table but here's one that even the ladies will approve of. For last April's Milan Design Week, Eindhoven-based GRO design and TIM model makers teamed up to design '11', undoubtedly the world's sleekest, most sublime foosball table to date. Inspired by the fantastical forms of cutting edge sports stadiums around the world, GRO and TIM broke away from the traditional concept of what makes a foosball table by creating atmosphere through form, colour, material and subtle use of light to bring a heightened sense of drama and excitement to the game. You're drooling over it already, aren't you? [www.eleventhegame.com](http://www.eleventhegame.com)

# CULINARY CELEBRATIONS

PANGKOR LAUT RESORT ADDS A NEW EPICUREAN DIMENSION TO ITS ISLAND PARADISE WITH THE LAUNCH OF TWO BRAND NEW DINING ESTABLISHMENTS

BY HELEN OON ALL PHOTOS YTL HOTELS

Feast Village:  
Open air  
Asian chic



CONTINUALLY SEEKING TO improve the experience for its guests from all perspective, the mono-island paradise island of Pangkor Laut has risen to this culinary challenge with the opening of two new food and beverage outlets to add to its existing five restaurants.

on the seafront afford a panoramic view of the beach on which stands a giant rock with a natural formation of a smiling face to welcome the guests. The dining booths on the landside are sheltered and enjoy a vista of the landscaped gardens and wild flora. The restaurant is designed to maximise on the sea breeze

The Feast Village Pangkor Laut and The Straits Restaurant are the latest to join the Pangkor Laut Resort gourmet parade. Feast Village is an interactive, adventurous and chic restaurant while the Straits is more upscale and celebrates the art of haute cuisine. Executive Chef Suhairi Idris, popularly known as 'Chef Sani', has taken on the task of transforming the new outlets into a 'celebration of culinary art'. With his passion for creating authentic dishes with an edge and an eye for artistic visual display, it is a marriage made in heaven. He is well placed to helm the epicurean central with 45 staff under him.

Feast Village Pangkor Laut has been hailed as 'a culinary tour of the world on one private island', a mini version of its eponymous sister outlet at Starhill Gallery in Kuala Lumpur. Facing the island's main seafront and complemented by an intimate courtyard with pavilions for private dining or romantic interludes, the pièce de resistance is its show kitchens which offers a diverse range of culinary experiences from within the Asia-Pacific region. It also has a bakery, café, and a wine cellar with a more than decent selection of wines. It has an informal atmosphere with its open air concept akin to an upmarket urban café.

The Straits Restaurant on the other hand exudes a more formal and intimate ambience. Located adjacent to the Feast Village, it is a symphony of granite and timber punctuated by a huge display unit at the entrance that gives it a contemporary edge. Without walls to hinder the views, the private dining booths

that teases the oversize sea-shell chandeliers, making them dance and tinkle in the wind. The gastronomic theme is Pan Asian focusing on Thai, Indonesian, Vietnamese and Nyonya cuisines with a modern twist delivered with aesthetic presentation.

My dining experience at the Straits Restaurant is a leisurely affair at a private seafront booth with the tinkling of the sea-shells resonating in the background. My starter is a selection of Asian canapés which come in delicate portions

and are beautifully presented on a white plate to bring out the colours of the food. Spring rolls, pickles and prawn rolls in tiny portions tease the appetite. This is followed by the main course of Seafood Yellow Curry, stylishly presented on an almond-shaped white bowl. Though rather unimaginatively named, this is a delicious curry soup richly flavoured with coconut milk, herbs and spices served with yellow noodle and garnished with giant tiger prawns with their shells and heads intact to retain maximum flavour to the dish. For dessert, to

complement the rich flavour of the curry soup, I opt for a coconut pudding that has a hint of fragrance and green tint of pandan (screw pine leaves). Dinner at the Feast Village is another epicurean delight as I feast on peppered Wagyu beef cooked to perfection.

If Pangkor Laut can be summed up in a series of 'S's - its Holy Trinity of sun, sea and spa - you can now add 'scrumptiousness' to that equation. ■



A view of the new Straits Restaurant

## QUICK BITES WITH CHEF SANI



### What inspired you to be a chef?

My grandmother was a hawker's stall cook and I used to help her at the stall. She influenced me in my passion for cooking. When I was working in hotels in Singapore, I observed foreign chefs at work and that also greatly inspired me.

### What's your signature style of cooking?

I specialise in Asian food though I am trained to cook Western food as well. I like to tailor my food to the taste of my customers and flavour my dishes according to their wishes.

I am not really into fusion cooking. I prefer to stick to the true origin of the recipes but would add a contemporary twist and modern garnishing without modifying the taste.

### How long have you been a chef?

I have been a professional chef since 1984 and I started off as a kitchen help in big hotels. I attended hotel and catering school in Singapore (where I'm from) and I worked my way up in hotels such as the Sheraton Group and Hyatt Hotel. Prior to coming to Pangkor Laut a year ago, I worked at the Empire Hotel in Brunei and I have also worked at the Dorchester in London.

### After city hotels, how do you find working on an island like Pangkor Laut?

It is a different atmosphere on an island and the guests are more relaxed. I have 45 staff under me and we all have to work closely to co-ordinate the day-to-day running of all the outlets on the resort including the Estates. We try to create tasty innovative dishes from the region and

our menu features Chinese, Malay, Indian, Nonya, Vietnamese, Thai, Japanese, Arabic and Western cuisines to cater for our guests from all over the world. Food is a very important part of their holiday on the resort and we aim to give our guests a memorable gastronomic experience.

*For budding chefs, a lesson with Chef Sani on his 'Chef Experience' programme is a must. The experience starts with breakfast with Chef Sani followed by a tour of the kitchen at Feast Village and a visit to a fish farm on a nearby island. Before lunch, guests are pampered with a Malay massage before lesson begins, which are held at lunch time only, and the recipes vary according to the day of the week: Monday - Malay/Nonya, Wednesday - Chinese, and Friday - Ayurvedic (Indian). Cost: RM300 ++; call +603-2783 1000 or email travelcentre@ytlhotels.com.my; www.pangkorlautresort.com*

# SHANGHAI TUNE

THE CULINARY SYMPHONY THAT IS PERFORMED AT THE RENOWNED SHANGHAI RESTAURANT AT JW MARRIOTT HOTEL IS SPEARHEADED BY NONE OTHER THAN SHANGHAI NATIVE CHEF WONG WING YEUK

BY EUGENE NG PORTRAIT BY JOHNNY MCGEORGE



THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF CHINESE CUISINE CAN OFTEN BE MIND-BOGLING TO THE LAYMAN. Most famous are the cuisines of the Cantonese, Hainanese, Szechuanese and to a lesser degree, the food of the Hakkas, Teochews and Hokkiens. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Shanghainese cuisine, on the other hand, is a little more obscure and it differs from many of the other main Chinese cuisines in one major respect: it isn't definitive unto itself but rather is comprised of dishes that are contrived and refined from cuisines from the surrounding areas of the city.

But there is still a lot to be experienced and enjoyed of this cuisine and in KL, the best place to sample just exactly what the Shanghainese put on their plates is none other than the five-star restaurant named... what else but Shanghai. Located in a nook on the first floor of Kuala Lumpur's five-star hotel JW Marriott Hotel, what makes this restaurant the real deal in Shanghainese cuisine is that it is helmed by a master chef who hails from this cosmopolitan Chinese city. And in Chef Wong Wing Yeuk, 56, Shanghai has a man who is dedicated to

serving up only the best and most authentic dishes from his native city.

Chef Wong began life in the kitchen at the relatively late age of 29. Prior to that, he had ambitions to become a violinist. A move to Hong Kong put paid to those dreams due to governmental regulations on foreign musical groups and so he decided to start a career working in restaurant kitchens. "I had some experience in cooking though not professionally, but my brother had a restaurant in China so I had learned a few things from helping my uncle in the kitchen there," he reveals.

As fate would have it, while working in Hong Kong, his 'sifu' Chef Sou at the restaurant he was working in had a chance encounter with the Managing Director of YTL Corp Tan Sri (Dr.) Francis Yeoh who was looking for a chef to start a new restaurant. Chef Sou recommended Wong for the job and the rest, as they say, is history. Or a fantastic new restaurant in the heart of KL's Golden Triangle in this case. Almost a

decade on, and Chef Wong is still dedicatedly introducing the subtleties and nuances of Shanghainese cuisine to Malaysia.

**WHAT ARE THE HALLMARKS OF SHANGHAINESE CUISINE? WHAT MAKES IT DISTINCTIVE FROM OTHER CHINESE CUISINES?** Shanghai is not famous for its cuisine but what makes it special is that it incorporates all the best of other cuisines and creates its own dishes. For example, some people may think that sweet and sour soup is Shanghainese but it's actually Szechuan. Authentic Shanghainese food is very strong in its taste and a lot of the dishes have a very dark colour. Classic Shanghainese dishes are 'Braised Pig's Trotters in Brown Sauce' and 'Shanghai Braised Pork'.

**WHAT ARE THE SPECIALTIES AT THE RESTAURANT THAT WOULD BE THE CHEF'S RECOMMENDATION?** You would definitely have to try at least two or three selections from our cold dish section. For other dishes, 'Steamed Bamboo Fish with Sliced Ham and Mushroom with Chinese Wine', a recent dish I created. Of course, our signature 'Siew Loong Pau' (Shanghai dumpling) and the ever-popular 'Baked Chicken Pie with Walnut'.

**TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT THE 'SIEW LOONG PAU' THAT WE DON'T KNOW.** In Shanghai, Siew Loong Pau is a very common snack because it is cheap and mass produced, but the texture of skin is not refined. So when I moved to KL to start this new five-star restaurant, I knew I had to rectify that problem. So I actually spent a lot of time experimenting and perfecting the skin of the Siew Loong Pau that we serve here at the restaurant. The taste is still there but the presentation has been improved. The funny thing is that when people who have eaten at the restaurant eat it in Shanghai, they will tell me that it's not the same. Then when Shanghainese eat at the restaurant, they will say the same thing!

**WHAT'S THE SECRET TO IT THEN?** For me, it's simple: the skin should be thin (and made from non-fermented yeast) and the filling should be moist, just like how Shanghai serves it.

**HOW DO YOU CREATE NEW DISHES FOR THE RESTAURANT?** Shanghainese cuisine emphasises freshness so I will always create a menu based on the freshest and most seasonal ingredients that I have, for example, hairy crab (Shanghai's most famous dish) and a type of bamboo shoot that is only available in the beginning of summer. With that in mind, I will come up with a dish that I think will suit my customers and this is based on research and observations on trends.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MALAYSIAN FOOD?** I've tried almost all types of Malaysian food but the one that leaves me with the deepest impression is 'Bak Kut Teh' (Herbal Pork Broth). It's simple, nutritious and I love soupy dishes. I feel that there is a high standard of Chinese food here in Malaysia, almost comparable to Hong Kong. I think that Malaysian hawker dishes like 'Har Mee' (Prawn Noodle) and 'Char Kueh Teow' (Fried Noodles) are really unique and delicious.

**HAVE YOU INTEGRATED LOCAL INGREDIENTS TO YOUR FOOD OR ARE YOU A CULINARY PURIST?** Yes I have. The restaurant uses both local and imported ingredients. For the above-mentioned steamed bamboo fish dish, we actually use a local fish (Soon Hock fish) but the style of cooking is very Shanghainese, only we have adapted it slightly to suit local tastes (less oil and milder flavours). We also import special ingredients from Shanghai, stuff like hairy crabs, beancurd leaves which we stir-fry with snow peas and preserved vegetables, 'pien jien' (a type of bamboo shoot available from Shanghai and most tender during the end of winter) and yellow fish ('wong ya fu').

**WHAT IS THE ONE FOOD IN YOUR HOME CITY THAT YOU MISS MOST?** A Shanghai soup with tofu, ham and bamboo shoots. It's a favourite dish among Shanghainese; everyone there loves it. It's available here on the menu but somehow it just doesn't taste the same even though the ingredients are imported from Shanghai. It must be the water in Shanghai.

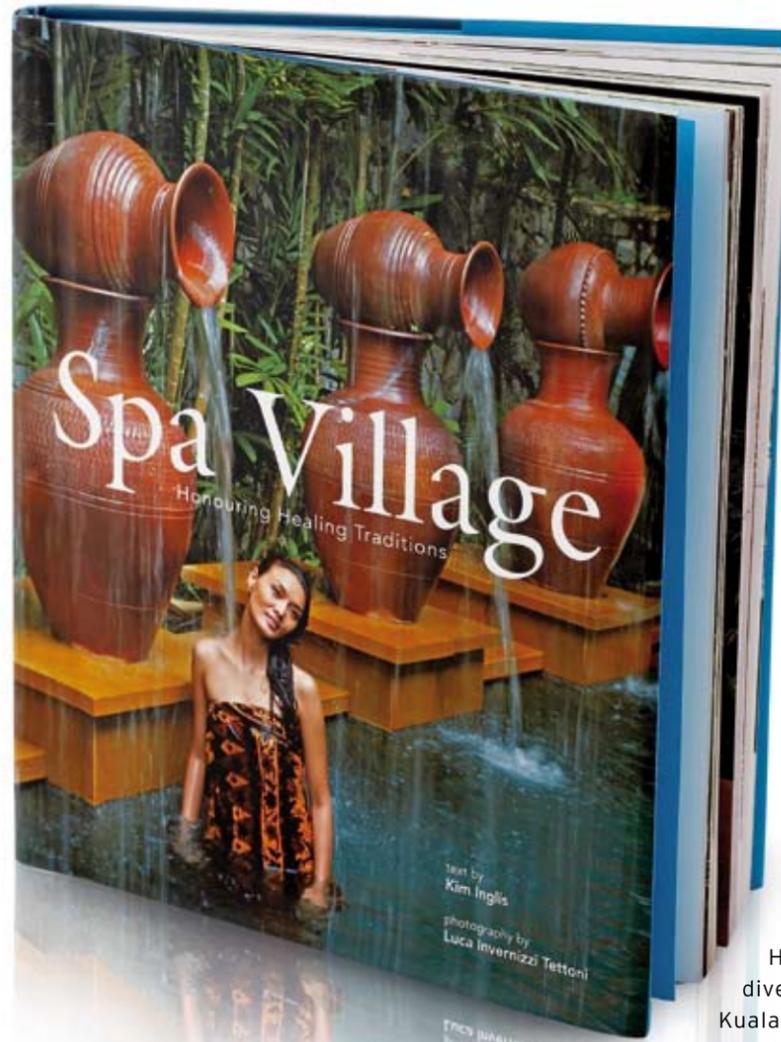
**WHAT ARE THE NEW TRENDS IN CHINESE CUISINE AND WHAT PATH IS SHANGHAI GOING TO BE TAKING IN THE FUTURE?** Chinese food is beginning to use ingredients never used before because the world is getting smaller. Something like truffle oil, which is expensive and relatively inaccessible. Today, Shanghai restaurant serves a delicious 'Fried Noodle with Lobster and Truffle Oil'. ■

*Shanghai on the 1st Floor of JW Marriott Hotel Kuala Lumpur, opens from noon-2.30pm and 6.30pm-10.30pm (Mon-Sat), from 10.30am (Sun and public holidays); +603-2719 8288*



# HEALING GOOD

YTL HOTELS LAUNCHES ITS FIRST COFFEE TABLE BOOK THAT CELEBRATES THE UNIQUE AND DIVERSE NATURES OF THE WORLD-RENOWNED SPA VILLAGES BY ANIS RAMLI



WHEN THE VERY FIRST SPA VILLAGE OPENED ON THE PRIVATE ISLAND OF PANGKOR LAUT IN 2002, it alerted the budding local spa industry that spas could be so much more than just pampering holes. Here was a spa with such a distinct personality and which gave added dimension to the environment and emotional texture of its treatment.

Working in collaboration with Sylvia Sepielli, a renowned spa consultant, Spa Village Pangkor Laut integrated its natural surroundings to its design. It also paid homage to local healing traditions and in the process created an intimate and unique refuge for the spa aficionado. It researched the oral lineage of Malay home treatments and therapies, long practiced for generations but vanished from popular psyche, and revived it for modern consumption. From ancient Indian Ayurvedic

practices to Traditional Chinese Medicine, Spa Village quickly and firmly established itself as a premium spa brand.

Six years on, there are now five Spa Villages dotted all over Peninsula Malaysia, one in Bali, and with another to come soon in Dubai. Each Spa Village has followed the initial blueprint of honouring the healing traditions of the region it is located in and the brand has now become a world class name renowned for this philosophy.

So it is fitting (and timely) that Spa Village has finally launched its first coffee table book, to further cement its status as one of the leading spa specialists in this country, if not the region. After all, no other Malaysian spa brand has stood out so strikingly in a spa scene previously stagnating with menus as uniform as a hard drive assembly line.

'Spa Village: Honouring Healing Traditions' takes the reader through the various healing systems that provide the distinct feature of each Spa Village. Readers will discover the renaissance of Malay healing celebrated at its Tanjong Jara Resort and the role of Pahang's indigenous healers at the Cameron Highlands Resort. Then there's the rich cultural diversity of the Nusantara region at Spa Village Kuala Lumpur with modes of treatment rooted in orientalism while Spa Village Malacca nurtures with Peranakan (Straits Chinese) healing modalities. Finally, readers explore the latest addition to the Spa Village brand, Spa Village Resort at Tembok Bali. This destination spa employs therapies to ultimately enhance personal wellness by merging Bali's pure island spirit with generations old remedies.

Illustrated lavishly throughout are captivating, full colour photographs of each spa destination including signature treatments that use nature's pharmacopoeia to heal in harmony with the earth. In fact, this is another factor that distinguishes Spa Village: it strives to use as many of nature's gifts where possible.

Ingredients for therapies are sourced from the region's

rich botanical heritage. While it gives a certain kind of exoticism to the treatments (think lemongrass/pandanus steam bundles, galangal/camphor herbal wrap, bird's nest facial, roselle scrub, henna/tea leaf baths, hibiscus leaves/candlenut hair conditioner), these ingredients play their respective roles in unleashing their potent properties that - while the generations of yore have long been privy to - are still being discovered and researched today by modern medicine practitioners.

There are portraits of healers associated with each Spa Village for an extra personal touch which encourages the reader to explore the science of these folk therapies. The book also provides a visual showcase of the relationship each Spa Village has cultivated with its surroundings, and the care with which conservation of biodiversity and culture via traditional healing has been maintained.

The book is a great guide for both the spa novice and the sophisticated spa goer as they discover the region's many culinary and medicinal plants that have long been the staple of home remedies. And for those who have experienced any or all of the Spa Villages, the book is an excellent reminder of how magical a Spa Village can be. ■



**Above** The Chinese Peranakan Treatment at Spa Village Kuala Lumpur includes a number of facial treatments: resting the eyes beneath warmed mulberry leaves; egg undulation; and the use of the traditional jade roller to cool and relax facial muscles. Mulberry leaves are used in TCM to dispel wind and heat, and are used medicinally to clear the liver and brighten the eyes. Beautiful cooled jade rollers, gently rolled over the skin, help to lift and tone facial muscles, while undulation of hard-boiled eggs over the complexion is believed to prevent breakouts.

124 Spa Village Malacca



**Left, clockwise from top left** Eggs for the egg-rolling therapy, whereby hard-boiled eggs are rolled over the body to extract stress, heat and cramping. The treatment is followed with a Thai-style massage. Ingredients in the delicious Malacca palm-sugar and honey body scrub include mineral-rich, grainy sugar and honey, rich in vitamins. Another is from guava yogurt: a of imparting a wonderful ingredient and rice is based on treatment "wind" to Opposite a picture i

**COOLING AND HEATING TRE**  
This yin-yang approach is also followed foodstuffs found in a typical nyonya kitchen in the various treatments on offer. Ki include coconut milk, rice, galangal, g leaves, samarind juice, lemongrass and f of which are used in one form or ano combined with some delightful treat remedies used in Peranakan household. For example, many Chinese childre rolling hard-boiled eggs on bruises; at unique body treatment using eggs for wide spa premises. Believed to settle h heat and help with cramping and swe here employed in a muslin bag and m



**Above and opposite top** Much more than a bubble in the jungle, the Spa Village Kuala Lumpur is a lush oasis. The scrub is deeply penetrating and is offered, with slight adaptations, for both men and women.

Voted the world's best resort, multiple award-winning Pangkor Laut Resort promises the privileged visitor an experience of exclusivity and elegance. Its home is the private island of Pangkor Laut, blessed with pristine beaches bathed in the waters of the Straits of Malacca. The accommodation is luxuriously appointed and the resort boasts unparalleled hospitality and attention to detail. On the gastronomic front, guests can enjoy a wide range of cuisine, whether dining at the new Feast Village at Fisherman's Cove or by the sea. Add the tropical sun, luxurious surroundings and the services of the Resort's world-renowned Spa Village – which combines the healing arts of India, China and Malaysia – and it is no wonder that this is the choice holiday destination for international celebrities and the most discerning of holidaymakers. Tel: +603-2783 1000; [www.pangkorlautresort.com](http://www.pangkorlautresort.com)



In a small secluded cove near Pangkor Laut Resort rest the eight wonders that make up The Estates. Each of these individually crafted enclaves is reminiscent of the traditional South-East Asian way of living of days gone by, when an 'estate' was made up of a number of special purpose buildings scattered amidst gardens of astounding beauty. Comprising either two, three or four bedrooms, each Estate offers a private infinity-edge pool, as well as discreet living, dining, bathing and sleeping pavilions in various adaptations of Malay architectural traditions. There is also a private vehicle and driver assigned to each Estate should guests decide to leave the seclusion of their villa to dine in one of the Resort's restaurants or to go for a treatment at the Spa Village. The Estates is truly the perfect luxury hideaway. Tel: +603-2783 1000; [www.pangkorlautresort.com/estates/](http://www.pangkorlautresort.com/estates/)

**Intimate Experiences**

Enjoy leisurely sunset excursions that provide the perfect setting for a romantic evening. Cruise around the island on board the Resort's large traditional 'tongkang'-style teakwood boat which will anchor at Emerald Bay where you will witness one of the world's most beautiful sunsets. From there the Captain will sail off to a quiet cove where you'll be served a delicious four-course dinner at a table set only for you.

**Emerald Bay**

A centrepiece of the Resort is the magnificent Emerald Bay, considered by many independent international travel consultants as one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. Here the beach is kept as pristine and natural as possible. This intimate bay remains as it has been for eons, providing the perfect place for swimming, sunbathing or simply spending time together.

**Rainforest Revelations**

There are three jungle treks through the rainforest that are accompanied by our experienced resident naturalist. The walks are free of charge and offer a fascinating insight into the spectacular virgin rainforest that is estimated to be over 2 million years old. Some of the interesting wildlife you may spot on the island includes crab-eating macaque monkeys, tropical monitor lizards and yellow pied hornbills.

**Privileged Tranquillity**

Reflecting a South-East Asian aesthetic, each villa at the Estates offers complete privacy to its privileged guests and is crafted to provide refined elegance and luxurious comfort. Polished tropical hardwood floors are accented by textured fabrics that add warmth to the elegant bedrooms with their podium beds; bathrooms and vanity areas are wonderfully spacious, and crafted with fine attention to detail.

**Integrated into the Environment**

Each and every individual Estate is a unique experience - tailored to blend comfortably and stylishly into its natural environment. In fact, the entire Resort was built with integration in mind, so that it not only blends in with the environment, but actually becomes part of it. A variety of wildlife roam the area so don't be surprised to find yourself dining with a peacock or waking up to the call of monkeys.

**Sterling Service**

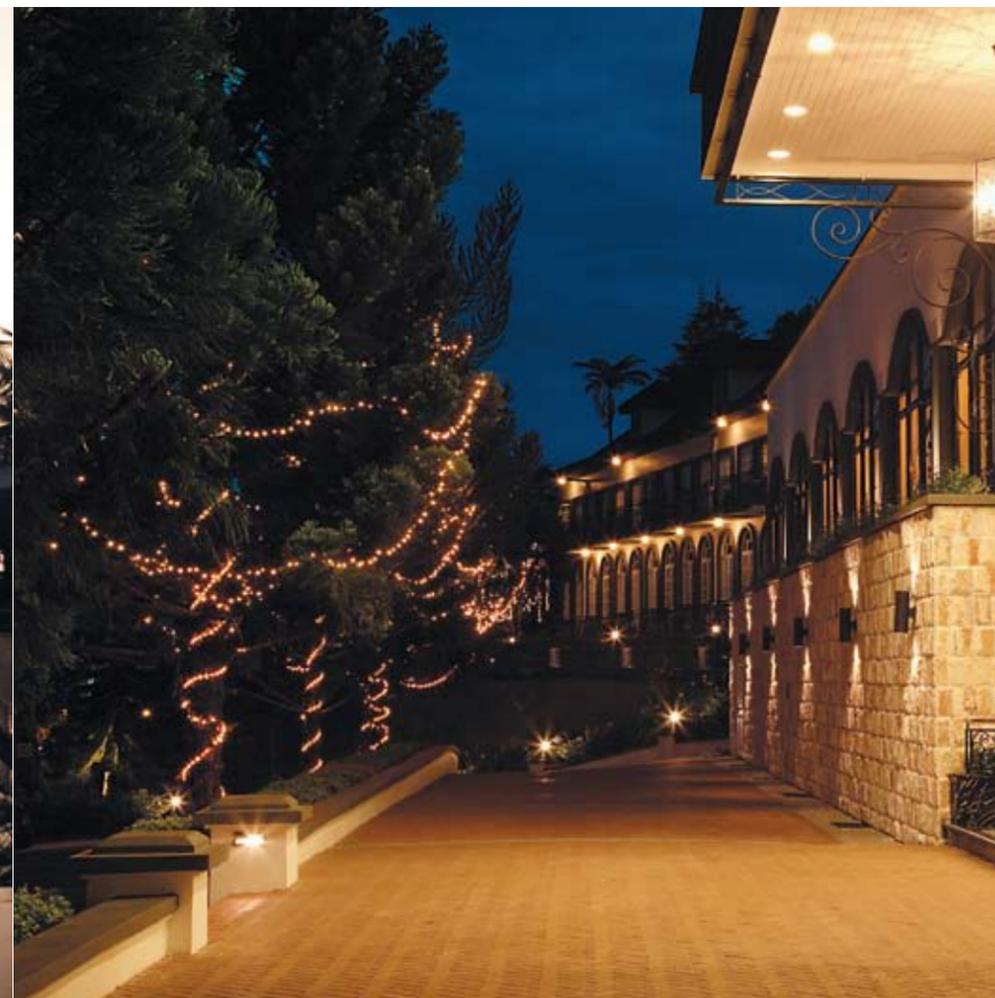
Every Estate is assigned an Estate Manager, at least two dedicated attendants and a Chef, all of whom will aid in unobtrusively addressing and coordinating every aspect of each guest's tenancy. During meal times, guests can give specific instructions, or be as adventurous as they want, as all our chefs' culinary skills span a wide range of both local Asian specialties and Western cuisine.



An evocation of the elegance and grandeur of 17th century Malay palaces, Tanjong Jara Resort is the only luxury resort that sits along Malaysia's beautiful East Coast beaches. Built on a 17-hectare site that blends in with its natural surroundings, the 99-room Resort is an embodiment of the gentle Malay arts of service and hospitality. With a philosophy based on the concept of 'Sucimurni' (which emphasises purity of spirit, health and well-being), Tanjong Jara is the perfect place to escape and rejuvenate. The Resort offers four different luxurious accommodation options, each commanding stunning views of the South China Sea and appointed in a fashion fit for a Malay king. Tanjong Jara is surrounded by sleepy fishing villages, shaded by coconut palms, alongside a meandering river teeming with wildlife – providing guests with an authentic taste of the region's spirit and culture. *Tel: +603-2783 1000; www.tanjongjararesort.com*



Set amidst tea plantations and rolling hills, this tranquil boutique hideaway promises visitors all the splendour, romance and nostalgia of Cameron Highlands' grand colonial heritage. Cameron Highlands is Malaysia's largest hill resort and is the only place in this tropical country where you can find tea plantations and strawberries, while enjoying a temperate climate. Largely unchanged since its colonial heyday, this 'little corner of England in Asia' is still dotted with Tudor-style cottages and is a place where scones and afternoon tea will not seem out of place. The Resort itself is representative of all this: with tall French doors, timber-beamed ceilings, plantation shutters and even a fireplace adding old-world charm to the surroundings. It also houses a Spa Village as well as an 18-hole golf course and 56 luxuriously appointed rooms and suites which weave in the wondrous colours and textures of Jim Thompson's famed Asian silks. *Tel: +603-2783 1000; www.cameronhighlandsresort.com*



**The World's Most Innovative Spa**  
Spa Village Tanjong Jara was recently awarded 'The World's Most Innovative Spa' by UK's Tatler Spa Awards, a testament to the unique nature of the Malay healing culture found only on the east coast of Malaysia. Ancient Malay healing traditions are honoured through the signature Asam Roselle, 'Panglima – Warrior Massage' and 'Syurga Tujuh – Seven Steps to Heaven' treatments.

**Diving off a secluded Island**  
Just off the Resort, approximately 45 minutes by speedboat is Tenggol Island which is part of the fabulous Terengganu Marine Park. Famed for its untouched coral gardens and rare species of marine life, it has over 20 dive spots for both the beginner and experienced diver. The Resort also offers its guests the chance to gain their PADI Open Water Diver licence while on holiday.

**A Unique Cooking School**  
Culture is an integral part of the Tanjong Jara Resort experience, and one unique way in which this manifests itself is through its cooking school. Guests can enjoy cooking lessons which will introduce them to the culinary arts of the Malay, Chinese and Indian residents of the Malaysian archipelago. Malaysian cuisine is an adventure of flavours and the master chefs at the Resort bring the experience alive for guests.

**Spa Village**  
Today, Cameron Highlands is still home to many tea plantations, being Malaysia's largest tea-producing region. The treatments at the Spa Village Cameron Highlands feature healing therapies based on produce from the surrounding jungles and ancient tea rituals. This authentic blending of culture and product, along with the tranquil ambience of the lush highlands, makes it a unique and therapeutic healing retreat.

**High on Golf**  
The Resort sits alongside the only 18-hole golf course in the area. The well-manicured course comprises luxuriant green fairways with well-developed trees, fine sand bunkers, tricky greens and forgiving rough. At 5,000 feet above sea level, it has been carved with precision out of the foliage and forests of the area. Tree-covered mountains also provide a spectacular backdrop to this stunning course.

**Taking Tea**  
The Resort takes its tea-time very seriously and the Jim Thompson Tea Room is a cosy retreat and the perfect spot for this time-honoured English tradition. Savour finger sandwiches, light-as-air pastries and home baked scones as well as fresh Cameron strawberries. For a local twist, try the scones with exotic local fruit like banana or mango. Complementing this spread is a wide selection of quality Cameron teas.





The key to every YTL Luxury Spa Resort is the marriage of luxurious accommodation and sterling service with beauty, tranquility and a sense of sanctuary. The Spa Village Resort Tembok Bali is all that and more. Inspired by the Spa Village Pangkor Laut, this latest jewel in YTL Hotel's crown embraces the same healing ethos of celebrating local culture, honouring the ancient healing traditions of the region and infusing each visit with the essence of the surrounding location. Set in a landscape of great natural beauty, this 31-room luxury spa resort offers guests the best of Balinese massage, wellness and spirituality therapies which seek to restore not just the body and mind, but also to replenish the spirit through a range of carefully-designed programmes. The seclusion of the resort also offers guests the opportunity to get away from the stresses of the world and rejuvenate within a place tailor-made for that very purpose. *Tel: +603-2783 1000; www.tembokbali.com*



#### Following the Path

Each guest is invited to select a Discovery Path based on an analysis of their needs – choosing from Balance, Creativity or Vigour – with each offering a combined range of tailored treatments and activities designed to restore equilibrium to bodies and spirits. Those who wish to improve their personal skills in the art of Balinese massage can join the Spa Village Academy and undergo private training with a group of skilled therapists.

#### Meditate upon the Stars

Unique to Tembok Bali is the Starlight Gazing experience, where you can enjoy the hypnotic pleasure of stargazing while floating on the Resort's infinity pool. You do this listening to Ultra Meditation music, designed to induce the brain into a synchronized theta state of consciousness, found to aid in expanding and enhancing memory and learning capabilities.

#### Cuisine Designed to Rejuvenate

Seafood is drawn daily from the local ocean, fruit purchased from local farmers, and only the freshest of ingredients are used in every dish. With captivating views of the Bali Sea, set just above the slate-hued beach, the open air Wantilan restaurant offers ever-changing flavourful regional and international cuisine. And organic products, as available, are the first choice ingredients.

#### The Peranakan Spa

The award-winning Spa Village opens its sixth wellness centre in The Majestic Malacca. Adhering to the brand's philosophy of honouring the healing traditions of the local region, the Spa Village Malacca is the world's only spa to base its therapies on the healing heritage of the Baba-Nyonya culture and offers treatments which uses a local specialty gula melaka, also known as palm sugar.

#### Dining Sensations

Malaysia is a country that is world renowned for the diversity and depth of its culinary options. And nowhere in the country is this more evident than the multicultural mix that is Malacca – the unique merging of cultures in this historic city has resulted in a novel marriage of cuisines, both Chinese and Malay, known as Nyonya food – which is truly a feast for both the senses and the palette.

#### A Haven of History

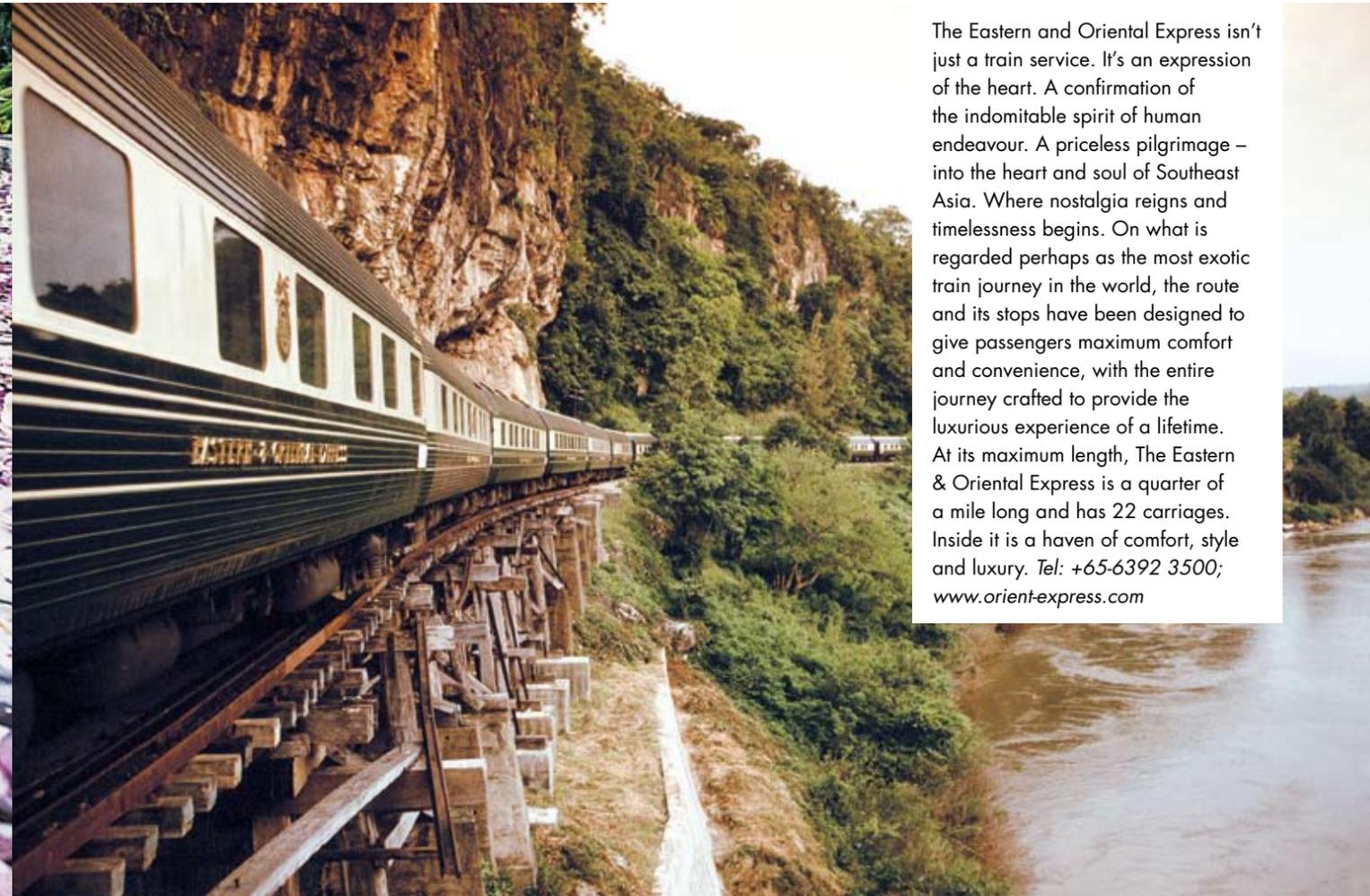
In this small town that was once occupied by the world's major colonial powers of the Portuguese, Dutch and English, The Majestic Hotel rests peacefully on the banks of the Malacca River. Reflections of this historic trading port resonate within the intimacy and luxury of this beautiful hotel, designed to provide experiences that are anchored in the past, but woven together with every modern convenience.



The Majestic Malacca is the first luxury hotel and spa in the historic city of Malacca. Faithfully restored and lovingly refurbished by YTL Hotels, the 54-room Majestic Malacca resonates with historical significance even while it has been thoroughly updated to cater to the needs of today's upmarket traveller. Architecture, décor and dining all reflect the legacy of this ancient city's history, and take guests on a luxurious journey into the past. The Majestic Malacca also houses the newest Spa Village which offers luxury-spa seekers such delights as the warm-energy treatment of Malaccan palm sugar and honey scrub and a hot nutmeg and rice rolling body massage. An icon of Malacca's past has now become something to be desired in the present. *Tel: +603-2142 8000; www.majesticmalacca.com*



YTL's multiple award-winning Spa Village brand has developed an international reputation within the luxury spa market and grown from strength to strength over the years. Besides the original Spa Village Pangkor Laut, there are now five other Spa Villages – Spa Village Kuala Lumpur, Spa Village Tanjong Jara, Spa Village Cameron Highlands and Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali and Spa Village Malacca. What's unique about each Spa Village is that they draw inspiration from the healing cultures of its particular region and blends traditional therapeutic remedies with a modern methodology. Whether in Pangkor Laut, Kuala Lumpur or Bali, the Spa Village is a sophisticated and rejuvenating experience, not just because of the quality of its services but simply because the Spa Village is more than just a place: it's a philosophy. Tel: +603-2783 1000; [www.spavillage.com](http://www.spavillage.com)



The Eastern and Oriental Express isn't just a train service. It's an expression of the heart. A confirmation of the indomitable spirit of human endeavour. A priceless pilgrimage – into the heart and soul of Southeast Asia. Where nostalgia reigns and timelessness begins. On what is regarded perhaps as the most exotic train journey in the world, the route and its stops have been designed to give passengers maximum comfort and convenience, with the entire journey crafted to provide the luxurious experience of a lifetime. At its maximum length, The Eastern & Oriental Express is a quarter of a mile long and has 22 carriages. Inside it is a haven of comfort, style and luxury. Tel: +65-6392 3500; [www.orient-express.com](http://www.orient-express.com)

**Spa Village Pangkor Laut**  
Paying homage to the three major cultures of Malaysia, ancient Chinese, Malay and Indian treatments drawing from the country's abundance of natural resources have generated international acclaim and accolades.

**Spa Village Cameron Highlands**  
A unique haven for relaxation where tea is the foundation of the experience. Located in the cool upper reaches of the Malaysian Highlands amidst dense jungles and rolling tea hills.

**Spa Village Tanjong Jara**  
The new Spa Village Tanjong Jara is a sanctuary of well-being anchored in the ancient Malay way of life. It features unique restorative treatments handed down by authentic Malay healers.

**Spa Village Kuala Lumpur**  
With treatments anchored in the cultural diversity and rich healing heritage of the region, KL's most stylish urban retreat combines ancient practices with a host of the most blissful spa therapies.

**Spa Village Malacca**  
The newest addition to the Spa Village family, it is also the only spa in the world to base its treatments on the Peranakan culture, which is native to Malacca and is a cross between Malay and Chinese traditions.

**The Perfect Vantage Point**  
The air-conditioned carriages are perfect vantage points from which to tour the region. The Restaurant Cars, Saloon Car and Bar Car are located in the centre of the train while the Observation Car with its open deck area is located at the very end. It is an ideal spot for watching South-East Asia go by as you trundle along the train's magnificent route, passing through several Malaysian states and South Thailand.

**Stately Accommodation**  
The interior walls of the compartments are panelled with cherry wood and elm burr, with decorative marquetry friezes and intricate design inlays. The delicate embroidery work on the pelmets was done in Malaysia, and the bespoke carpets hand-tufted in Thailand. While guests dine at night, the steward transforms the compartment from a living room to a magical bedroom.

**The Finest Cuisine**  
Chefs on board the E&O Express are internationally renowned for their ability to create a tantalising variety of Eastern and European dishes, using the finest fresh seasonal ingredients. The service is also top of the line and equals the world's finest restaurants. Each morning, a breakfast of freshly baked croissants, coffee or tea, juice and fruit is delivered to your compartment to be enjoyed in luxurious privacy.



The JW Marriott Hotel Kuala Lumpur was designed with the business traveller in mind. Located in the city's business district, this five-star deluxe hotel is the ultimate venue for meetings and functions. Facilities include 47 flexible meeting room options (including a grand ballroom) within the property, the adjoining Starhill Conference Centre and the newly built Carlton Conference Centre at The Residences at The Ritz-Carlton, KL, all of which are connected via link-bridge. There is also a Business Centre providing a full range of business services. Rooms feature ample workspace, a plush high-back executive chair, broadband connection and other standard communication services (two-line speaker phone, fax modem, voicemail). Tel: +603-2715 9000; [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)



Based on the philosophy that great service should never merely be reactive and compliant but anticipatory and spontaneous, The Ritz-Carlton Kuala Lumpur is Malaysia's only 5-star luxury boutique hotel offering a full personal butler service. Its location in the heart of the city's prestigious Golden Triangle district makes for easy access to the trendy Bukit Bintang area: Starhill Gallery, one of the city's premier shopping centres, is linked to the hotel via an enclosed sky bridge. With 365 elegantly appointed guestrooms (including 110 suites and 1 penthouse), 24 meeting rooms, three exceptional restaurants and an award-winning 'tropical' Spa Village, The Ritz-Carlton is regarded as one of the city's finest business hotels where combining business and pleasure is as effortless as the masterly service it provides. Tel: +603-2142 8000; [www.ritzcarlton.com](http://www.ritzcarlton.com)



#### Starhill Gallery

Today's truly outstanding cities blend architecture and design, art and fashion, music and culture with a state of mind. And Starhill Gallery, integrated with the hotel, is an effortlessly elegant and cosmopolitan environment that reflects the essence and spirit of Kuala Lumpur and its people. Delivering "A Gallery of Rich Experiences", seven luxurious floors offer quality and exclusivity crafted for those who seek experiences out of the ordinary. Here, the world's premier retailers present a palette of unique personalised shopping experiences, making it easy to combine business and pleasure at the JW Marriott.

#### Feast Village

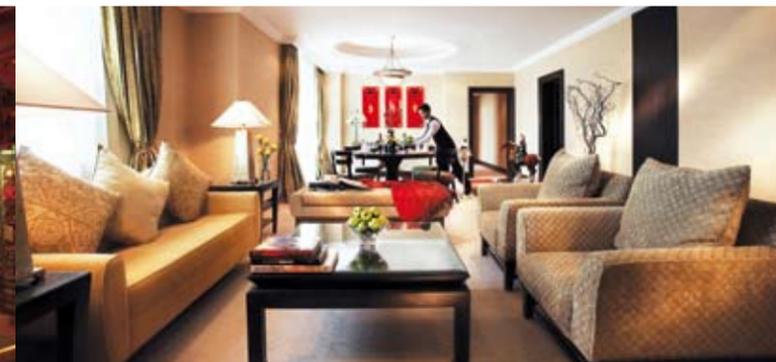
On the lowest level of Starhill Gallery, guests can enjoy a unique dining experience at the Feast Village, where 13 restaurants are brought together to create a multi-ethnic culinary experience like no other in the world. Design draws from nature here; walls are asymmetrical and serve not to separate, but rather provide peaceful enclaves where people feel at rest. Rice paper from Japan combines with slate and ikat from Indonesia, granite from China, silk from Thailand, and timber from Myanmar to create an essence of Asia. The Feast Village is truly one-of-a-kind.

#### The Ritz-Carlton Residences

An entire all-suite wing makes up the second tower of the Ritz-Carlton complex. Sumptuous two and three bedroom suites designed and decorated to the finest international standards offer guests a unique standard of accommodation. Each suite includes a dining room and lounge area as well as a gourmet-style kitchen where guests can self-cater or use the private catering services provided by Starhill Gallery's Feast Village. Guests may choose to have the Complex's Executive Chef prepare a private dining experience – and every suite comes with its own private butler. It's a home away from home.

#### The Carlton Conference Centre

A 30,000 square foot, 25 meeting room, three-level facility connected to the hotel at levels 1 and 2. This classically designed, yet state-of-the-art facility allows The Ritz-Carlton, KL, to host events from 10 to 400 guests. The Conference Center also connects via enclosed sky bridge to the upscale Starhill Gallery, a KL city landmark featuring some of the world's most exclusive brands and dining experiences. Guests can also choose to hold functions in the Meeting Suite, the Member's Lounge or at the adjacent Pool Deck, which is perfect for unwinding after an intense day's meeting.



# OH MY GIDDY AUNT

OUR FAVOURITE LADY GETS JUNGLE FEVER

BY LADY CRISTAL CHAMPERS

Aunt Sylvia will be celebrating her 70th birthday in the new year and she wants to celebrate it with the requisite grandeur. Sylvia has never been the brightest bulb in the chandelier. The family blames it on a fall from her pram as a baby. Of course the in-breeding does not help, what with her parents being first cousins (to keep the wealth in the family, you see).

Having spent some of her childhood in the wilds of Sarawak in Borneo when her father was serving under the British colony, she thought it would be fun to have an eco-chic party with a tribal theme. Old photographs of her father in Sarawak showed him frolicking with dusky maidens and... young men; he was very adventurous for his time. A Sarawak native theme would be most appropriate for the party.

So we hire the famous party guru Mrs. Pinkerton-Smith, a socialite who is simply marvellous at organising parties for the rich and famous, to accompany us to Sarawak on a research expedition to seek out inspiration for the bash. Tears still spring to the eyes when I think of the fantabulous 40th birthday party she organised for me at the Versailles Palace where I dressed up as Marie Antoinette accompanied by a flock of 10 dished men in sheep's clothing. What a deliciously decadent soiree that was. No wonder she lost her head.

But back to Sarawak. With the price of fuel rocketing and to reduce (designer) carbon footprints, we had to ditch the private plane and travel on a commercial flight instead (first class of course) with our chef and personal assistants in steerage. God forbid they should be in first too. It was painful enough having to queue up at the airport to check-in. Oh how the other half lives! The caviar and lobster with champers eased the journey a bit. The drinks trolley helped a lot too.

We arrive in Kuching, the capital of Sarawak. Apparently, the name means 'cat', which is nice, because I am quite partial to the feline species, being a proud owner of the exquisite Bengal cats - a cross between a cat and leopard. A mere snip at £10,000 per kitten, they so match my leopard skin coat. They are divine fashion accessories these pussies.

An expedition by boat to a tribal longhouse deep into the interior of the rainforest was the stuff of Indiana Jones. But we were instead led a native guide called Lemon, a sturdy young man with a pudding bowl

haircut. Apparently he was supposed to be named 'Raymond' but the Chinese clerk at the Birth Registration office obviously suffers from that Oriental inability to get his tongue around that 'R' and so, you could say, that it all went sour for Lemon.

We had to charter two boats for the riverine journey - one for our entourage and the other for a large supply of gin and tonic and Mr. Walker - for medicinal purposes of course - the quinine in the tonic prevents malaria we were told and the whisky kills all germs. I suffered two hellish nights at the longhouse - no electricity, no furniture and my Jimmy Choos kept getting wedged between the bamboo floors.

This experience was only made bearable by our spiritual encounter with the 'patron saints of spirit', Gordon and Johnny, and their new friend I'll simply call "local rice wine" (I was way too drunk to remember what its native name is). Ah well, I'll remember when I start to sober up some day. Or maybe I'll just ask one of those 20 hunky Sarawakian tribal warriors in loin cloths that we will be flying in for the party. Oh my giddy aunt, what a hoot that is going to be! ■



ILLUSTRATION EDWARD MAK