

YTL *life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine

Destination
Dreams

Exotic Venues
for Vows

Much Ado
About 'I Do'

6 Dream Weddings
with YTL Hotels

Spirited Away
Haute Honeymoons
to Consider

It's All White
Bridal Gowns
to Remember

Wondrous

Weddings

All The Days of Our Lives

Bridal Rituals • Bouquets & Banquets • Let Them Eat Cake

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Explore the world of YTL Hotels.



Mount Kinabalu appears mystically behind the parting clouds.
And once again, you remind yourself that you're not dreaming.
Your moment awaits.

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YTL *life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine

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A Note from Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh



*Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh
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In this fast-changing world, one of the most beautiful traditions to endure is the act of joining in holy matrimony before God. In this light, we are pleased to present to you a special collectors' edition, showcasing YTL Hotels' extensive portfolio of both destination resorts and city hotels should you be needing inspiration for you or a family member's big day. We showcase six real couples, each of whom made lifelong vows to each other in diverse locations; from the powdery white sands of Emerald Bay in Pangkor Laut to the beautiful, unspoilt north of Bali, in Tembok as well as Malacca's storied past at our boutique property, The Majestic Malacca, a tycoon's former mansion dating back to the 1920s.

To most Asians, no wedding is also quite complete without the requisite feast and, to assist with planning, flip to page 41 for ideas. We've also included nuggets of information on how to make the celebratory day just that much more special: from thinking ahead with a proposal to remember as well as jetting off together for an unforgettable honeymoon at our Muse and Kasara properties in England, Spain, France and Japan.

Not forgetting Starhill Gallery, our luxury retail arena in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, the team have also put together some of the most beautiful accoutrements to add sparkle to the grand occasion; from dreamy wedding gowns to jewellery that'll add lustre to any trousseau as well as divine floral creations.

God bless and enjoy the issue.

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Flowers For Forever

WEDDING IMAGES LAST A LIFETIME AND BEYOND, ETCHED ONTO MEMORIES AND HEARTS. ENSURE YOUR BRIDAL BOUQUET IS ONE TO REMEMBER WITH THESE POSEY IDEAS FROM SPRING COTTAGE AND ARMANI/FIORI.

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All Things
Bright & Beautiful

A bouquet of red roses, wild red berries, calla lilies and cymbidiums wrapped in maroon ribbon. By Spring Cottage.



Pure & Clean

Cream roses are paired with ranunculus, ornithogalum and fresh green berries wrapped in blush pink ribbon. By Spring Cottage.



All In Unison

Dark maroon calla lilies and green pandanus for a touch of floral drama. By Armani/Flori.



White Delight

White phalaenopsis and ornithogalum work beautifully with eucalyptus and silver leaves. By Armani/Fiori.

A Joy To Be-Hold

Lilac, dark and light pink roses are peppered with a dash of ornithogalum for a bridal bouquet to remember. By Armani/Fiori.



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Michael + Alison Elfwing

Cameron Highlands, Malaysia / Cameron Highlands
Resort

Adjusting to her return to Malaysia from London and new position as a radio announcer in Kuala Lumpur, Alison was attending the Style Rocks party organised in conjunction with the Malaysia International Gourmet Festival 2008 when a beautiful man blushing down the runway caught her attention.

Chef, not model, Michael Elfwing had been nominated to take to the catwalk in recognition of the parallels between food and fashion. Introduced backstage, the two shyly exchanged business cards, but it wasn't until a couple of months later, when meeting at another event, that Michael asked Alison if she would show him some of Kuala Lumpur's supper spots. Two weeks later, she moved in and, after three toy poodles and years, he got down on bended knee.

They knew they wanted an intimate wedding with family and close friends, and initially considered a castle in Michael's hometown in Sweden. Coordination, however, became difficult and the couple decided to look closer to home. Pangkor Laut Resort, one of their favourite holiday spots, was a natural option but Alison, an astute bride-to-be, surmised that she didn't want to be too hot in her wedding gown. A Catholic church was also a pre-requisite and,

hearing that a new church had been built in Cameron Highlands, the couple set out to explore the possibility. The church was perfect and they immediately fell in love with it. Minutes after, they drove up to Cameron Highlands Resort and fell in love all over again. "The grand colonial feel, with its intimate, high-ceilinged ballroom, sweeping staircase, four-poster beds, elegant touches and attention to detail... it was so romantic, we knew instantly that we would have our reception there," says Alison.

Michael being a professional chef and both being foodies, the couple were keen to inject their passion and characters into their wedding party. The Swedish *kräftskiva* – a party traditionally celebrating the crayfish season – became the central theme of the celebrations, with Michael's own dishes served alongside. The wedding day dawned crisp and cool. Grazing on sandwiches and Bloody Marys, the bridal party began preparations in the luxurious Jim Thompson Suite, while the groom and his entourage got ready in a Junior Suite. The couple particularly loved how the sophisticated décor of the rooms supported their frame of mind that day – Alison feeling like a princess on her big day, and Michael the gentleman about to sweep his bride off her feet.





Inspired by the resort's Fireplace Lighting Tradition, Alison asked to have her veiling done by the fireplace, where her father made a tender toast before her mum joined in to gently lower her veil in place. Next, they were off to the church for the evening solemnisation.

Back at the resort, the ballroom tables had been laid out Viking-style, with crisp white tablecloths topped with hundreds of candles, roses and hydrangeas. The resort team ensured that guests' game packs were taped under each chair, and that each setting was complete with place card, personalised bibs, menus, mini bottles of aquavit and all the other finer details. In the kitchens, the culinary



The cool climate of Cameron Highlands in Malaysia provided the perfect setting for a most stylish Swedish-Malaysian union.

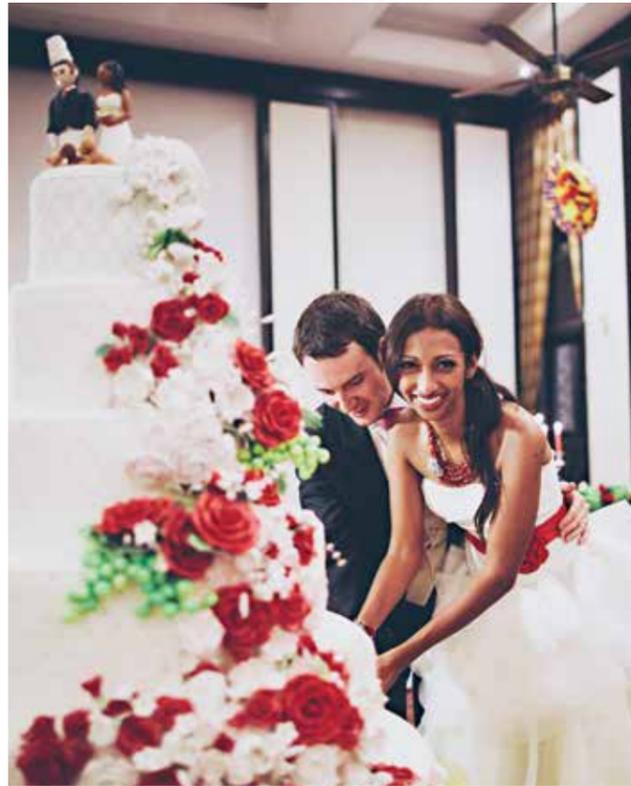


team painstakingly created each dish as if Michael himself were overseeing things.

All was ready for the couple to make their entry. Making their debut as Mr and Mrs Elfving, the newlyweds danced their way into the ballroom to Bruno Mars' *I Think I Wanna Marry You*. After the initial cheering and congratulations, guests sat down, and the feast began.

To start, mountains of fresh crayfish, and platters of Coffin Bay oysters, Swedish cheese tarts, chicken liver parfait and *gravlax* were served as guests donned their bibs and things got messy with the Swedish Crayfish Game, all aided by aquavit. Next, traditional Swedish meatballs were presented as the main course, followed by Michael's uncle, Clifford's, recipe for *Meringue Swish* as a sweet ending. And then, more games, singing, dancing and general merriment ensued, interspersed with emotional speeches. All too soon, the wee hours of the morning dawned, and the party drew to a close.

Looking back, Alison shares: "All the months of stress and worrying while wedding-planning were lifted off my shoulders because the team at Cameron Highlands Resort were so sensational. Despite



all the unique touches, special requests and personalisation, they executed our wedding without a hitch. At least, if there were any hiccups, I never found out and no one else noticed either. Professionalism at its best."

Three months later, the Elfings were invited back to Cameron Highlands Resort for the weekend as part of the resort's annual Christmas Tree Lighting Tradition. Their son, Cameron, was conceived that trip. The couple have now migrated to Australia but plan to introduce their son to their favourite YTL Hotels when they return next. 🍷



The Elements

The Flowers: Deep red and cream roses and white and light green hydrangeas. **Welcome Cocktails:** The hotel's signature 'His and Her's' cocktails. **Door gift:** Customised 'Marriage is Messy' bibs to protect guests' clothes when eating crayfish with their hands. **The Entertainment:** Styled wedding video of how the couple met, complete with friends' interviews on what they thought about the couple; a Swedish crayfish game; a surprise by Alison's sister Cheryl; and Logan, the best man, singing 'At The Beginning with you', followed by a DJ spinning party music.



Hidy Yu + Willian Lau

Kota Kinabalu, Sabah / Gaya Island
Resort

It would appear that Neptune himself blessed the union of Hong Kong actress Hidy Yu and Willian Lau. Having met purely by chance at a swimming pool, Willian, who works as a lifeguard, thought it perfect to celebrate his nuptials to the sea-loving Hidy at Gaya Island Resort in Sabah, Borneo. "I simply love the sea, the beach and sunshine," shares Hidy, who is also an avid diver. "Gaya Island Resort was where my dream wedding came true. I remember waking up to sunshine every day and seeing the sea first thing in the morning. The resort's staff had also filled the room with my favourite sunflowers and I thought that everything was just perfect – blue sky, beach, sunshine, sunflowers and my husband. Everything I need for a great life."

A beach wedding seemed perfectly apt, considering Willian had proposed while on a diving trip in 2011. "He took me on a dive and, suddenly, stopped, got down on one knee underwater and wrote out 'Marry Me?' on a board. He also showed me a diamond ring. I was so surprised and touched that I wanted to cry underwater but couldn't," gushes Hidy. "He showed me the dive hand signal for 'ok?', to which I replied, 'ok'. I thought it was such a meaningful proposal as diving is something both of us love very much, and he took the time and trouble to give me such a special memory, with all the fish around as witnesses."

Once the euphoria of the proposal had died down, it was time to seriously plan a wedding to remember. Turning to the team at Gaya Island Resort, Hidy and Willian weren't disappointed. "One of my favourite memories of our wedding was when I walked out towards Willian. I saw him waiting for me on the beach, surrounded by sunflowers. We both listened as the pastor we'd engaged spoke about 'love' in his sermon– it was all very touching. Then I remember looking into his eyes and putting the ring on his finger. I knew then that this man would stay with me forever in the course of my life. I really have to thank Gaya Island Resort for giving us both such an unforgettable wedding with all our favourite elements in it." For Willian, however, it had to be the moment when the couple returned to their honeymoon suite. "I was so surprised to come back to a room all decorated with roses and with a bottle of wine waiting for us," he says. "Even the bathroom had a bubble bath waiting, with 'I Love You' spelt out in rose petals!"

A few more idyllic island days followed, with the newlyweds spending every possible moment enjoying Gaya Island's nature and wildlife. "I love greenery and the ocean," notes Willian. "And Gaya Island Resort is wonderful for that. I loved the forest and the monkeys, and I even met a hornbill for the first time. I love living life this way." ■



The team at Gaya Island Resort had prepared many surprising little touches to wish the couple well in their wedded journey, including preparing a thoughtful wedding gift and romantic touches to decorate their suite.



The Elements

The Flowers: Bright and cheerful sunflowers, a favourite of the bride's. **The Concept:** A very private, simple wedding - to marry amidst nature and surrounded by God's most beautiful creations: the sea, marine life and abundant nature. **The Menu:** The bridal party enjoyed a special 'chef's choice' menu, which was especially created for them by the F&B team at Gaya Island Resort. **The Blessing:** Wanting to honour God and be married in His sight, the couple had also arranged for a local pastor to assist with the wedding vows and to bless their union.



Shaun & Melissa

*+ Shaun Foo
Melissa Teo*

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia / The Majestic Hotel
Kuala Lumpur

It's a bittersweet moment for every father as he gives his daughter's hand away in marriage. But, for father-of-the-bride, Dato' Robert Teo, one of Malaysia's best-known faces in the world of accounting and finance, he looked happy as can be. Welcoming close to a thousand guests to the Majestic Ballroom of The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur, guests came, dressed in their best, as early as 6.30pm to celebrate the coming together of two families. Laughter and excited chatter could be heard as old friends reconnected, family members celebrated and the younger guests swarmed around the fun afforded by a souvenir photo-booth and its requisite props. Waiters handed out glass after glass of wine as well as trays of East-meets-West-inspired canapés, including compressed watermelon cubes with feta cheese and balsamic reduction as well as Straits Chinese *kuih pie tee*, before everyone was invited to find their places among the 99 beautifully-decorated tables. As the heartfelt speeches were made, toasts pronounced and joy literally overflowed from the hearts of all in attendance for the happy couple, who could fail to see that this was, indeed, a match made in heaven?



From the newly-weds' heartfelt speech to a performance by family friend Johari Abas, every detail was seen to in style by the parents of the bride, Dato' Robert and Datin Anita Teo.



The Elements

The Flowers: Pink hydrangeas, red and pink roses and blush-hued orchids encircled a simple elegant white candle centerpiece. **The Canapes:** Nyonya vegetarian *kuih pie tee* and compressed watermelon cubes with feta cheese and balsamic vinegar reduction. **The Beverages:** Whisky, brandy, red and white wines, beer and fruit punch. **Door gift:** Butterfly bookmarks. **The Entertainment:** Photo-booth and a live jazz band.

Ross Sanders + Diwa Tharan

Bali, Indonesia / Spa Village Resort
Tembok, Bali

The magical elements of sun, sea and sand seemed to have played pivotal roles in this love story. Having been introduced by a mutual friend while on the private island resort of Pangkor Laut, Ross and Diwa's romance seemed destined to be played out amidst sea breeze, shimmering waters and sun-kissed days. The groom had, in fact, proposed while on a seaside getaway to the Malaysian East Coast. "We were on the beach when Ross suddenly got down on one knee and proposed," shares the still-radiant Diwa. "We'd just been swimming in the sea – the afternoon sun was glowing and it was a day of pure relaxation and contentment." It seemed to make perfect sense then to recreate the magic of being by the sea as the couple planned their dream wedding – this time on the mystical island of Bali.

Deciding upon Tembok, in the north-eastern tip of Bali, for the celebrations, the couple mused: "We knew we wanted to keep our wedding celebrations small and intimate. And, because of our mutual love for the beach, we knew we wanted a destination wedding. Having travelled to Bali and Tembok together before, Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali was a natural choice as we both loved the setting. It possesses such beautiful, calming energy, and our previous experience was filled with so much good vibes and loving, warm hospitality from the staff. The size of the resort was also perfect for our guest list and needs, so we felt there was no better place to have our wedding. Our mutual friend, who had introduced us all those years ago, also

happened to be working in Tembok at that time, so it really couldn't get more perfect than that."

The guest list proved to be truly international, flying in from the UK, Australia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore, all of whom cheered when the bride emerged to walk down the aisle, accompanied by The Beatles' hit song, *All You Need Is Love*. "I remember seeing the beautiful heart-shaped Balinese *penjol* the hotel staff had created and the girls from the spa all lined up on both sides of the aisle, with flowers in their hair and the sweetest smiles," Diwa recalls. "The afternoon light was perfect and everyone looked sun-kissed. I saw Ross beaming at the end and I nearly burst into tears right there and then. That feeling of overwhelming happiness was really indescribable. Now, whenever I have a low-energy day, I just have to close my eyes and recall that moment to start feeling happy and grateful again."

After a night of dancing, merry-making and a supper of *satay* and DIY pulled pork sandwiches, the couple woke up early the next morning to visit a nearby temple for a special cleansing and blessing ceremony by a Balinese priestess. "She performed the ritual for us by the sea and it was as invigorating as it was special," the couple shares. "We also loved having the resort all to ourselves for two days and there really was a special energy in the air. It was almost surreal seeing all the people you love in one place, having a great time. You can't replicate happiness like that and we feel so blessed to have been able to share it all with our loved ones." ■





Clockwise, from left: Traditional Balinese offerings called *canang sari*; upon pronouncement as 'man' and 'wife'; a seaside blessing; aisle-way splendour.



The Elements

The Flowers: Blue and white hydrangeas. **The Beverages:** Prosecco, Pinot Noir and cocktails. **The Entertainment:** Friends played DJ, lots of dancing and a spectacular fireworks display. **Doorgifts:** Handmade leather coasters by Malaysian design brand, thirtyfour, inscribed with the couple's four favourite quotes. **The Menu:** Curried Cream of Local Pumpkin, Traditional *Rojak* with Tamarind Dip, Balinese *Urab* Salad, Roasted Eggplant Salad with Grilled Chicken and Marinated Black Tiger Prawns. **On The BBQ:** *Babi Guling*, Beef, Chicken, Pork and Shrimp *Satay*, 150-Day Grain-Fed Australian Sirloin Steak, *Ayam Goreng* – Balinese-style Marinated Grilled Chicken, *Tum Ikan* – Fish Cooked in Banana Leaf Parcels and Chargrilled Giant Black Tiger Prawns.



Xandria Ooi + Yuri Wong

Malacca, Malaysia / The Majestic
Malacca

Starting a new life together as man and wife is all about looking ahead and the days to come. But, for celebrity couple Yuri Wong, a renowned composer and producer, and television personality Xandria Ooi, they chose to celebrate all the elements of past, present and future. Deciding upon The Majestic Malacca, a former tycoon's mansion-turned-elegant heritage hotel in the heart of Malaysia's most historical city, for their exchanging of vows – it proved to be the perfect choice indeed. "Malacca is, in fact, Yuri's hometown," shares the bride. "We wanted an intimate and meaningful ceremony where we could exchange the vows we have written for each other, with just family and the bridal party."

"Right from the start, I envisioned the ceremony to be held at The Majestic Malacca," she continues. "I didn't even look at other hotels as I was familiar with The Majestic – I have stayed there before and I knew its restaurant would provide the perfect

setting, with sunlight streaming in through the high windows." We wanted our family and best friends to bear witness to an event that was so very special to us, outside of the usual tea ceremony or lunch and dinner celebration. I've always believed that one never goes wrong if the gesture comes from the heart."

And, as if sensing the purity of their intent, the couple had a special blessing that day, with the renowned Buddhist monk Ajahn Brahm presiding over the marriage. "Ajahn Brahm lives in Australia and, by sheer coincidence, he was travelling to Malaysia to give a talk in Malacca the same day our vows ceremony was scheduled to be held," shares Xandria. "The timing couldn't have been more perfect. We'd never met before but, with the help of the kind people at Seck Kia Eenh Temple in Malacca, we exchanged e-mails and Brahm gamely agreed to bless our marriage. Upon arrival at KLIA, he made his way immediately to The Majestic Malacca. His teachings have

always been so precious to Yuri and me. So, to have him bless our marriage in person was surreal and incredibly meaningful. It is now one of my favourite memories of the day – it was just magical; perfect even."

She adds: "I've always believed it's the little details that make something spectacular and the hotel has always been breathtaking in a charming, quiet way. The Majestic Malacca is itself like a treasure trove of tales – a place that has borne witness to many moments in history and we were very glad to add our own story to its collection." ❖

The Majestic Malacca's combination of history, charm and old world elegance made it the perfect choice for Xandria and Yuri's exchanging of vows.



Buddhist priest Ajahn Brahm was present to personally bless the couple's union.



The Elements

The Weekend: "We performed the traditional tea ceremony at Yuri's house, as he is a Malaccan boy. Our event at The Majestic Malacca was a heartfelt ceremony where we exchanged vows in the presence of our loved ones."

The Flowers: Orchids, pale peach-tinged roses and green button pom chrysanthemums. **The Bridesmaids:** All wore azure gowns by Soo Lin Lei of Divine Couture. **The Highlight:** A personal blessing by Ajahn Brahm, Abbot of the Bodhinyana Monastery in Serpentine, Western Australia.

Yong Hui + Wai Ling

Lumut, Malaysia / Pangkor Laut Resort

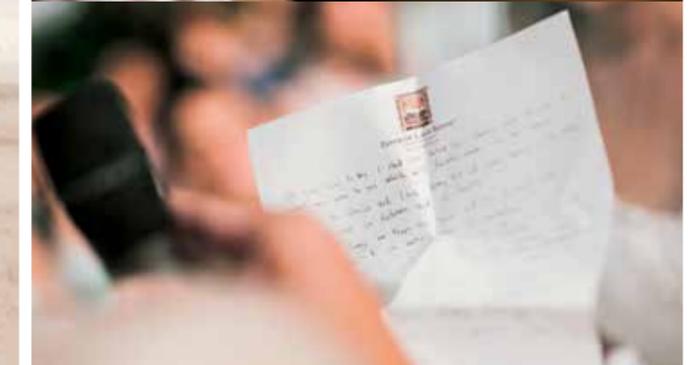
Having met at 20, through mutual friends, it's safe to say Yong and Wai Ling are young sweethearts, in the sweetest sense. And, indeed, it was a celebration of love, family and friendship as everyone near and dear to the couple made their way to the private island of Pangkor Laut to celebrate their wedding. Held at Emerald Bay, one of the island's most beautiful beaches, the couple made their promises of eternal love to each other under a pavilion decorated with flowers and a swathe of turquoise, one of the key wedding colours for the couple.

A special table, bearing framed snapshots of the couple's extensive travels, was also set up at the ceremony. Globetrotting lovebirds, Yong had, in fact, proposed while on holiday together in Tokyo – at the renowned Pierre Gagnaire restaurant. "He was

nervous and we'd drunk a lot of wine beforehand," shares Wai Ling. "When he actually got down one knee and popped the question, I was stunned and immediately said 'yes', without even looking at the ring. I guess I was too excited!"

"We chose Pangkor Laut Resort as we wanted a small and intimate celebration with close friends," Wai Ling says. "We did look around for a suitable venue and we knew we wanted a destination wedding. We eventually decided upon Pangkor Laut as my in-laws enjoyed their vacations here while staying at The Estates, and told us good things about the food and service on the island. It's also not difficult to get to – just a short drive from Kuala Lumpur. And we made the right choice as it was the perfect wedding for my husband and me." ■





Yong and Wai Ling's wedding brought together their nearest and dearest for a beach celebration to remember.

The Elements

The Flowers: White orchids and white roses. **The 'Aaaww' Factor:** Flower girls dressed in dreamy tulle and wearing circlets of white orchids. **The Posse:** The bride and groom each had eight chee mui (bridesmaids) and heng tai (groomsmen). **Party Touches:** Funny glasses and flashing headbands. **The Entertainment:** Live music, courtesy of a singer and guitarist, lots of dancing and drinking games. **The Hangover Cure:** Spa sessions and rides on a banana boat.

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YTLWEDDINGS//

To Have & To Hold

It was as romantic as you'd hoped it would be – candlelit dinner at a fancy restaurant, the ring hidden in the chocolate soufflé, getting down on one knee when he popped the question. And while you may have been waiting for his proposal for some time, it is the wedding that you have been dreaming about your whole life. Hence, everything about it has to be perfect – the dress, the cake, the vows, the wedding bands (Tiffany, of course!). But where do you go to do it right? YTL Hotels may have just the solution for you.



“Imagine a romantic setting of candlelit lanterns, a garden pavilion and a koi pond...”

Saying 'I do' under a bower of fresh flowers is magical indeed.



Pangkor Laut Resort

The Proposal: A real gem along the Straits of Malacca, Pangkor Laut Resort sweeps you off your feet with divine qualities that have made it one of the most romantic spots in South-East Asia, if not Asia. This small private island, just off the coast of Perak, boasts a magical, tranquil setting, with Malay-style villas amidst palm and frangipani trees, as well as an ancient rainforest that is home to exotic birds, not to mention secluded coves with sandy beaches and a scene of the sunset that rivals the sunrise in its breathtaking beauty. Put them together and you have a recipe for an enchanting tropical spot that is as easy to fall in love with, as it is the perfect venue to affirm your love and commitment to that special someone.

Say “I Do”: Imagine a beach wedding with the gorgeous sunset as the backdrop. The Pangkor Laut Resort Beach Wedding lets you live that dream with the promise of a beautiful ceremony on Emerald Bay, located on the other side of the island and away from the main resort. Think seashell-lined aisle strewn with rose petals, rustic driftwood arch decorated with fragrant white flowers and a guitarist seemingly strumming to the rhythm of the sea waves. Then say your vows as the setting sun’s rays cast a magical glow over the proceedings.

The other option is the Lantern Courtyard Wedding – imagine a romantic setting of candlelit lanterns in a garden pavilion



next to a *koi* pond, the resident band serenading as you walk down the aisle towards the beautiful floral arch where your handsome groom awaits.

The above settings are wonderful but, if you’re looking to do something a little more adventurous, hop onto the sleek 65ft *YTL Lady 1* motor yacht that offers you the chance to exchange your vows in the open sea. Along with the setting sun, the gentle evening breeze and a celebratory toast with Laurent-Perrier champagne, and you have a set-up that is fairytale material.

Cherished Moment: For something a little more private, especially if you plan to keep the guest list small, check into the Estates, an exclusive property literally hidden from the rest of the resort in a private bay and up along a lush hillside. Each Estate boasts a minimum of two villas complete with infinity pool, sun deck, round-the-clock butler service and in-house chef. Akin to a resort within a resort, the Estates offer the ultimate option for the most private and intimate of soirées.

While You Are Here:

The over-water Spa Villas are quite possibly the most romantic rooms to check into. Ask for Villa 819 - the most private one.

While You Are Here:

Ask the hotel to arrange a special blessing for you by Balinese priests at Pura Ponjok Batu, a temple nearby.



Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali

The Proposal: You can't help but be awed by the majestic beauty of the active volcanic peak of Mount Agung, which sweeps dramatically down to the grassy lowlands, eventually meeting with the black volcano sandy coast on the Bali Sea. Somewhere in-between is the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, a haven of blissfulness that begins right at the entrance that consists of a long path lined with leafy bamboo trees. The serenity matches the award-winning spa treatments inspired by ancient healing cultures of the region, which use only local ingredients for an authentic experience. In fact, it takes its mission of rejuvenation and relaxation so seriously that such modern-day distractions like televisions are conspicuously missing. The calming, healing energy, coupled with the mythical Balinese spirituality, creates an intimate atmosphere that helps you embark on your new journey together on the right note.

Say "I Do": The Intimate Balinese Wedding promises a beautiful and intimate garden affair amongst fragrant

Bali is magical enough but a destination wedding will only add to the romance and memories.

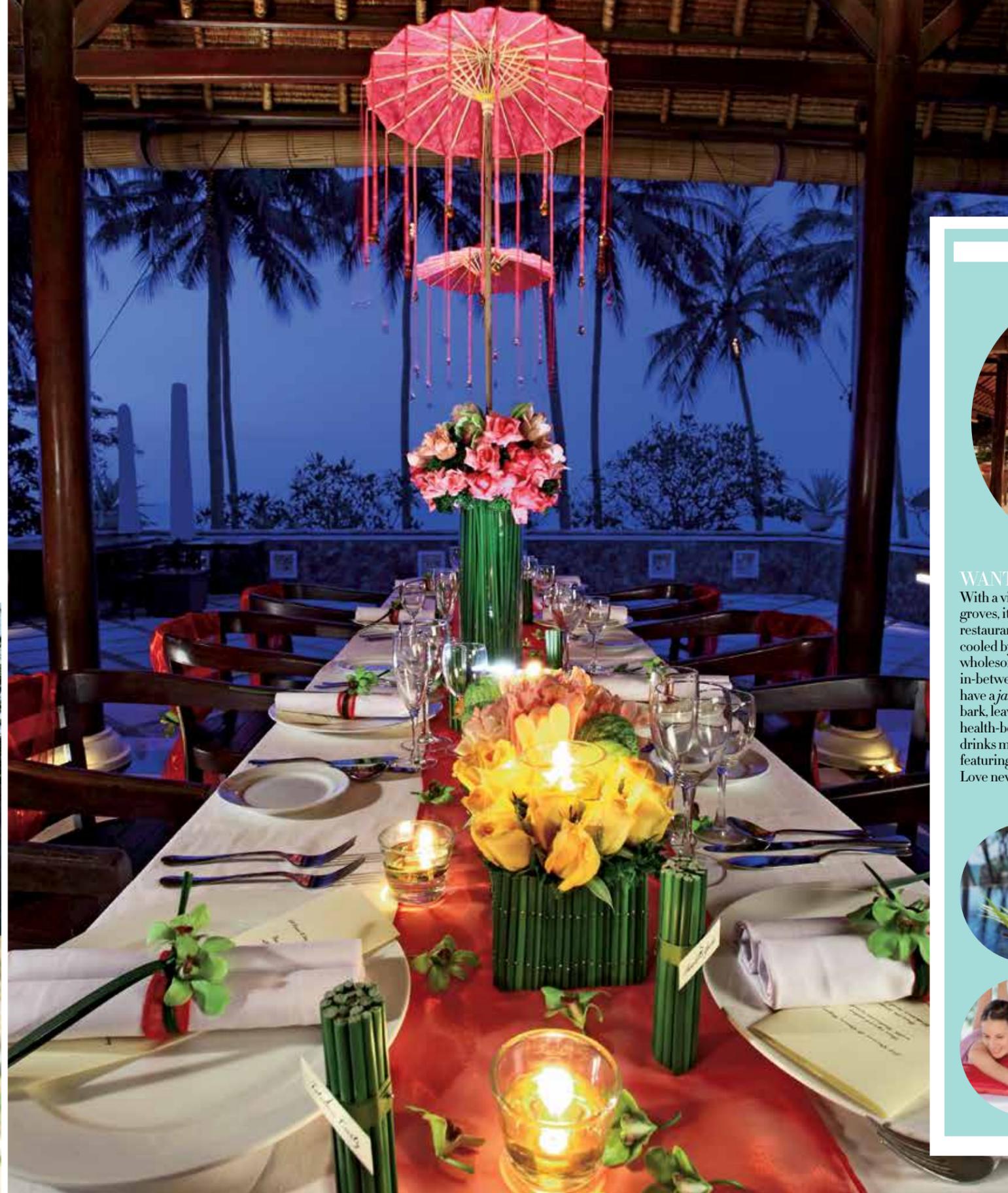


blossoms, with a Balinese dance performance. The reverie then continues with a celebratory champagne toast and five-course Balinese menu that is crafted to your liking.

Cherished Moment: It is a tradition in Bali that the mothers of the bride and groom prepare their offsprings for the wedding with a cleansing ritual called *Penganten Melukat*. And while the Balinese couple

is not allowed to see each other during this time, the resort's version of *Penganten Melukat* is a couple's treatment that begins with a traditional Balinese massage of *Mewangsul*, followed by an herbal body scrub (*Meodak*). The scrub is rinsed off with fresh milk (*Empehan*), which moisturises and softens the skin. The session then concludes with a rejuvenating soak in a floral bath (*Mersiram Sekar*).

“The best thing to hold onto in life is each other.”



INSIDER KNOWLEDGE: BALI



WANTILAN RESTAURANT

With a view of the deep blue Bali Sea and lush coconut groves, it's hard not to feel happy at the resort's main restaurant - Wantilan. Open-sided and constantly cooled by sea breeze, it's the perfect place to head to for wholesome meals or something cold and refreshing in-between sunbathing. And, since you're in Bali, try to have a *jamu*, a local herbal tonic made from plants, roots, bark, leaves, honey and fruit, daily as it's said to be a super health-booster. Wantilan Restaurant also has a special drinks menu, conceptualised by an Australian herbalist, featuring a variety of health-giving juices and smoothies. Love never tasted so good.



SPA

A spa a day is a sure-fire recipe to keep the flames of love burning bright. Surrounded by gorgeous tropical gardens, including fragrant ylang-ylang bushes, make it a point to drop in daily for a dose of rejuvenation. The *Segara Giri* pre-spa ritual is enough to get you in the right frame of mind and make sure to cool off with an *es bola* - a shaved ice and palm sugar confection - before you slip away at the touch of your masseuse's hands.





Malay wedding ceremonies consist of several steps including the Bertunang (engagement), Nikah (solemnisation), Bersanding (ceremony) and Kenduri (feast).

Of Malay Traditions

Tanjong Jara Resort's 'Unmistakably Malay' atmosphere is perfect for a traditional bersanding ceremony, where couple are married amidst joyful kampong beats and colourful bunga manggar.

Tanjong Jara Resort

The Proposal: You can't help but get the sense that time has stood still at Tanjong Jara Resort. For all its luxurious trappings, the resort in the East Coast state of Terengganu is full of the nostalgic charm, when life was so much simpler, aptly evoking the laidback vibe of the fishing village surrounding it.

The Malay influences are evident throughout the property, from the architecture and design that reflect the grandeur of 17th century palaces, to the food that incorporates local cooking styles and ingredients. An element of the rich Malay heritage is even introduced in the Spa Village's pre-treatment ritual, the *mandi bunga*, or flower bath, an ancient tradition practised by kings to rid themselves of negative energy. Consider doing this before the wedding for good luck.

Of course, it helps that the resort boasts a natural beauty that rivals any five-star

establishment, complete with a long stretch of golden beach that meets the pounding waves of the South China Sea and the pleasant *kampong* life around its fringes.

Say "I Do": The resort offers three signature weddings and they all borrow an element or two from Malay traditions for once-in-a-lifetime experience of the local culture. The Teratai Terrace Signature Wedding, for instance, celebrates the union by the free-form pool at Teratai Terrace, with a performance of *gamelan* music played on traditional Malay percussion instruments. The Nelayan Wedding ups the ante with the opportunity to partake in a colourful Malay tradition. The bride, dressed in a beautifully embroidered *baju kurung*, joins a *bunga manggar* procession accompanied by the rousing drumbeats of the *kompang* drum, demurely making her way to meet her groom, who looks handsome and regal in a *baju Melayu*

"Performances like pencak silat (Malay martial arts) and berbalas pantun (poetry exchange) are traditional Malay wedding hallmarks."

with a colourful samping. Meantime, the Bunga Wedding also incorporates the *bunga manggar* procession except that, instead of being on the beach, it is held in a coconut tree-dotted open field that has been set up with hurricane lamps and wooden huts where *kampong* culinary delights await.

Cherished Moment: The resort's location in the heart of a Malay village lends some measure of authenticity to the replication of the pomp and gaiety of a traditional Malay wedding. Suffice to say that the wedding pictures will be a hoot.





Gaya Island Resort

The Proposal: A pristine island that is part of the equally unspoilt Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park, Gaya Island possesses all the best qualities of Sabah's wondrous nature. The Gaya Island Resort is located along the coast of the Malohom Bay and boasts its own mangrove forest as well as an ancient rainforest overlooking Kota Kinabalu, the capital city of Sabah. On a clear day, the peak of Mount Kinabalu, South-East Asia's tallest, is visible in the distance. Throw in the crystal clear emerald green



A typical Sabahan wedding calls for Sumazau dancing, copious amounts of liling (rice wine) and a grand feast.



Begin your life together as 'man' and 'wife' in the shadow of majestic Mount Kinabalu.

waters of the South China Sea, and you have a great spot for a romantic wedding blessed with the incomparable beauty of Mother Nature.

Say "I Do": Embrace the exoticness of Sabah with the Kadazan Blessing Ceremony that incorporates traditional elements from the Bornean tribe of rice farmers. This fascinating ceremony involves putting on an elaborate gold-and-black Kadazan wedding garment and a tribal priest officiating the union on the beach. Or keep it straightforward with the Signature Wedding on the Beach on the private Tavajun Bay, with a romantic scene complete with rainforest arch, tropical flower-lined aisle and the idyllic backdrop of the marine park and soothing sounds of the waves lapping onto shore. With such an indescribably vast and beautiful nature around you, it does sound like a brilliant idea to hop onto the luxurious *Lumba Lumba* yacht for a Golden Sunset Ceremony that takes you out to sea for couple of hours, enough time to exchange your vows, witnessed by a glorious sunset in the background.

Cherished Moment: With diving being such a popular sport, it has become quite trendy for couples to seal the deal underwater. Blessed with abundant colourful tropical fish and corals, the marine park boasts some of the most spectacular snorkelling and dive sites. The Marine Marriage wedding lets you put on a wetsuit and dive into the depths of the South China Sea for such a unique sub-aquatic experience. Who knows, maybe a turtle will turn up as a surprise guest!

“Traditional Kadazandusun weddings involve the custom of giving napung (dowry).”



Did you know Cameron Highlands' first rose garden was planted by James Roberson in 1934?

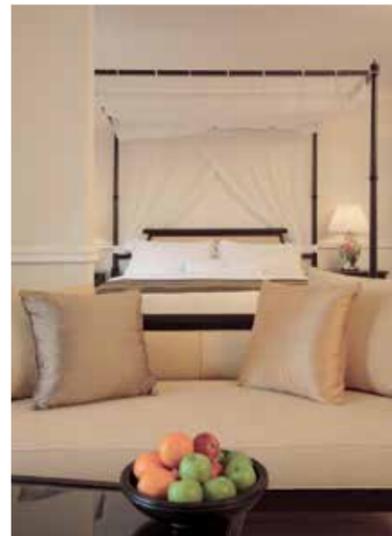
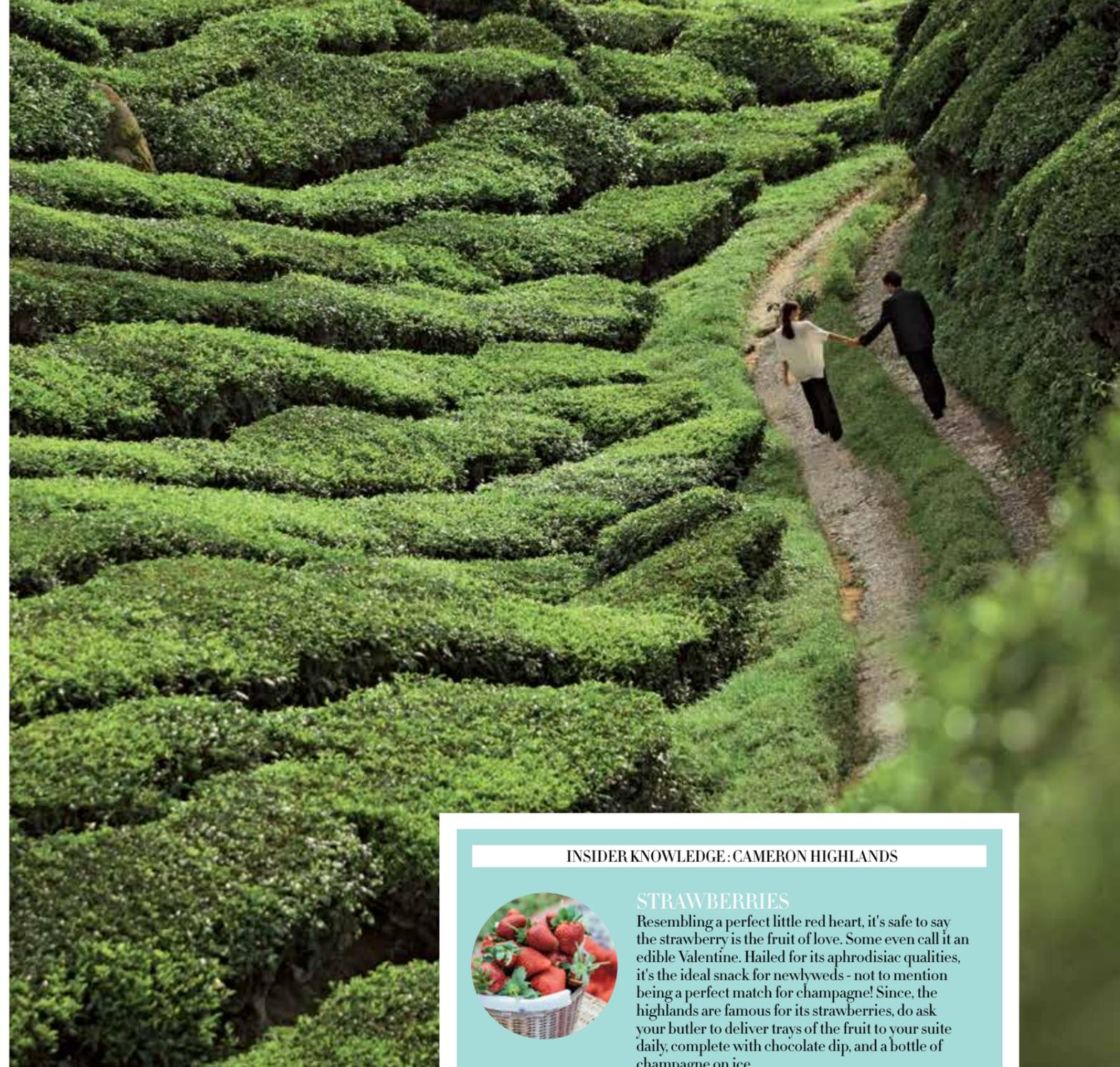
Cameron Highlands Resort

The Proposal: The view of the magnificent Titiwangsa mountain range, the backbone of Peninsula Malaysia, should inspire you to get on the phone with your wedding planner right away. But there is more than beautiful scenery at Cameron Highlands Resort. Housed in a stately colonial building that boasts such pre-war touches as timber-beamed ceilings, white French doors, grand windows and even a working fireplace, Cameron Highlands Resort possesses the allure of a typical English lodge that is still quite a common sight around the former British hill station. What's more, the resort's colonial charm is perfectly matched with cool weather throughout the year – kind of like escaping to a quaint English countryside without leaving the country.

Say "I Do": As befitting its vibe, the Cameron Highlands Resort's Signature Colonial Wedding begins with a ceremony on the terrace decorated with colourful blooms cultivated on the highlands itself, and set against the breathtaking backdrop of pine trees and misty peaks. Celebrate the union with a champagne toast, followed by a traditional fireplace lighting ritual to signify a glowing start to your journey as husband-and-wife.

While colonial may be the natural theme to go for here, the resort also offers the option of the Oriental Spring Wedding that includes a pathway lined with local flowers, gazebo whimsically decorated with paper cranes and lanterns, traditional tea ceremony and Chinese banquet.

Cherished Moment: With its slice of colonial charm 1,500m above sea level, Cameron Highlands Resort is not just an ideal venue for a wedding, but also the perfect platform from which to explore the lush hilly surrounding to capture



INSIDER KNOWLEDGE: CAMERON HIGHLANDS



STRAWBERRIES

Resembling a perfect little red heart, it's safe to say the strawberry is the fruit of love. Some even call it an edible Valentine. Hailed for its aphrodisiac qualities, it's the ideal snack for newlyweds - not to mention being a perfect match for champagne! Since, the highlands are famous for its strawberries, do ask your butler to deliver trays of the fruit to your suite daily, complete with chocolate dip, and a bottle of champagne on ice.



FLOWERS

Steeped in symbolism, no flower spells out L-O-V-E quite the way a red rose can. But that doesn't mean you're obliged to woo her only with one hue. Certainly, a red rose says 'I love you' but also know that pink roses denote admiration, grace and perfect happiness while dark red speaks of her deep beauty. Yellow signifies delight, gladness and the promise of a new beginning. So, when you're busy shopping for flowers in Cameron Highlands, feel free to go crazy with the colours!

more romantic moments for the wedding album. Magazines from fashion to bridal have long taken advantage of this landscape for some amazing photos, so why not do the same? A favourite spot is the tea plantation, with its acres of resplendent greenery that never fails to create a stunning contrast with the dazzling white wedding dress.

The Surin Phuket

The Proposal: Hailed as the Pearl of the Andaman, Phuket is Thailand's most popular island destination, blessed with miles of white sandy beaches and crystal-clear turquoise waters. And there is no better place to enjoy them than at The Surin Phuket, which lies along Pansea Beach, voted one of the dreamiest stretches of powdery heaven on the island. Pansea's exclusivity – it is shared with only one other luxury resort – certainly ups its charms.

The Surin Phuket, which recently underwent an upgrade courtesy of Parisian designer Edward Tuttle, is a

tropical sanctuary shrouded in lush foliage from which charming white cottages peek out, and a shady coconut grove beachfront where the luxurious suites reside. With the Andaman Sea on one side and the verdant hill on the other, this is a divine setting for a truly magical wedding.

Say "I Do": The best spot to utter those two words is, without a doubt, on the beach itself. Its seclusion not only offers a measure of privacy but also helps it preserve its amazing natural beauty from excessive human intrusion. This breathtaking sight can be the scene of either a modern

Western wedding, complete with a beautiful canopy and floral decorations, or a traditional Thai ceremony that involves a drum procession, traditional dance and wedding blessings from no less than five monks.

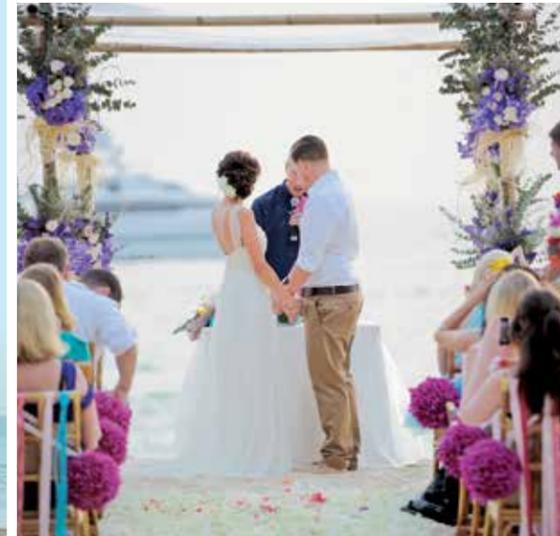
Cherished Moment: In ancient times, the Thais make a wish by releasing lanterns into the sky. Modern-day lovebirds have adopted this practice in the hope that the gods will grant them their hearts' desires. At The Surin Phuket, newlyweds get to participate in this illuminating ritual, thus sealing the bond on a decidedly quaint note.

While You Are Here:

After releasing your Khoom Loi (sky lantern), retreat to The Surin's beautiful bar for something cold and exciting, like the Tomyam Iced Tea or the resort's signature Sunsetini - a blend of vodka, lemon and cranberry juice.



“Flanked by the Andaman Sea and verdant hills, Phuket offers a magical setting for weddings...”



Known as daw k bua sii khaaw in Thai, white lotus blossoms add an elegantly Asian touch to any wedding.

The Majestic Malacca

The Proposal: The Majestic Malacca, located in the heart of a UNESCO World Heritage City, presents an alluring possibility: a traditional Peranakan (Straits Chinese) wedding held within the walls of an authentic 1920s Chinese mansion that has been faithfully restored, right down to the original porcelain tile flooring. There is something to be said about participating in a centuries-old tradition in its birthplace. That The Majestic Malacca overlooks the historical river that once teemed with traders from the east and west is a bonus, the latter an element that has been translated beautifully in the rooms designed in classic colonial style,

complete with poster beds and large clawfoot bathtubs.

Say "I Do": A Peranakan wedding is a colourful and merry affair that traditionally lasts for 12 days. The *Malaccan Heritage Wedding* is inspired by the vibrancy of the Peranakan wedding – albeit in a condensed form – that gives the couple a chance to don traditional Peranakan wedding attire sewn by local seamstresses, and partake in a tea ceremony in accordance with the Confucian tenet of respecting the elders. The couple then takes a ride on a trishaw around the city before returning to the hotel for a Peranakan feast, accompanied



by a delightful performance of *Dondang Sayang*, where two singers – one male and the other, female – exchange Malay *pantun* (poetry) in a lighthearted and humorous manner.

Cherished Moment: Malacca is one of only three places in the world – the others being Penang and Singapore - that has a vibrant Peranakan culture and community, making this a rare opportunity where one gets to embrace an ancient culture in all its glory. Plus, it certainly doesn't get any more memorable than a traditional wedding that is as culturally extraordinary as it is colourful.



Infuse your matrimonial rites with a dose of Peranakan panache at The Majestic Malacca.



“The traditional love ballads of the Baba-Nyonya are known as Dondang Sayang and are a fixture at Straits Chinese weddings.”

INSIDER KNOWLEDGE: MALACCA



NYONYA CAKES

When staying at The Majestic Malacca, do ask your butler to ensure you get to try the famous Peranakan *kuh* called *Ang Koo* or 'red tortoise cake'. With a soft and sticky texture, it's filled with ground peanuts or mung bean and is an integral element in any auspicious occasion. To the Chinese, its red colour is symbolically associated with good fortune and prosperity, and its shape alludes to longevity, as tortoises have famously long lives. These sticky, delicious cakes are also a must during key festivals and celebrations, particular the Lunar New Year and the first 'full moon' of a baby. If you're keen to sample a wider variety of *kuh-muih*, ask your concierge to arrange a car to Baba Charlie's - one of Malacca's most famous vendors of traditional Nyonya cakes.



The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur

The Proposal: When it comes to luxury at a desirable address, The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur has few rivals. Its location in the bustling heart of Kuala Lumpur, where it is not uncommon to spot a VIP or a big-name celebrity, is without question its biggest draw. Additionally, its unique brand of personalised service is legendary, a fact that has led to a ranking as one of the world's top five hotels with full butler

service. This potent combo is bolstered by the opulent but tasteful interior, the acclaimed cuisines (Li Yen's Chinese offerings and Carlton Gourmet's continental bistro classics are much talked about in the upper social circle), not to mention the VIP attention one inevitably receives as soon as one arrives on its doorstep.

There is no question that the name Ritz-Carlton inevitably lends a sheen of prestige to the wedding invitation, a distinction further aided by the distinguished property's splendid banquet hall and gorgeous bridal suite with a killer view of the city skyline. Needless to say, the who's who of Malaysian high society tends to gravitate here to celebrate special occasions, including weddings.

A prestigious name. Personalised five-star service. Great location. Highly lauded in-house cuisines. If your big day demands high glamour and lavish style, there is no better place to impress your guests than The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur.

Say "I Do": Nothing but the best in class and elegance is expected at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur. Choose to celebrate your union with the pre-existing wedding packages, appropriately named Pearl, Crystal and Diamond, all of which come complete with a choice of multi-course menus, champagne fountain and the luxurious bridal suite with 24-hour butler service. Or, customise the wedding just the way you have always dreamed about. Lavish banquet hall decorations, for instance, come in a choice of dramatic red, pretty pink, classic white or a royal combination of these colours. The hotel's talented pastry chef also extends an invitation to create your fantasy multi-tier wedding confection, gloriously decorated with flowers and pretty sugary ornaments to match the theme. Need a place to conduct the traditional tea ceremony? That can be arranged at any one of its well-appointed rooms that comes complete

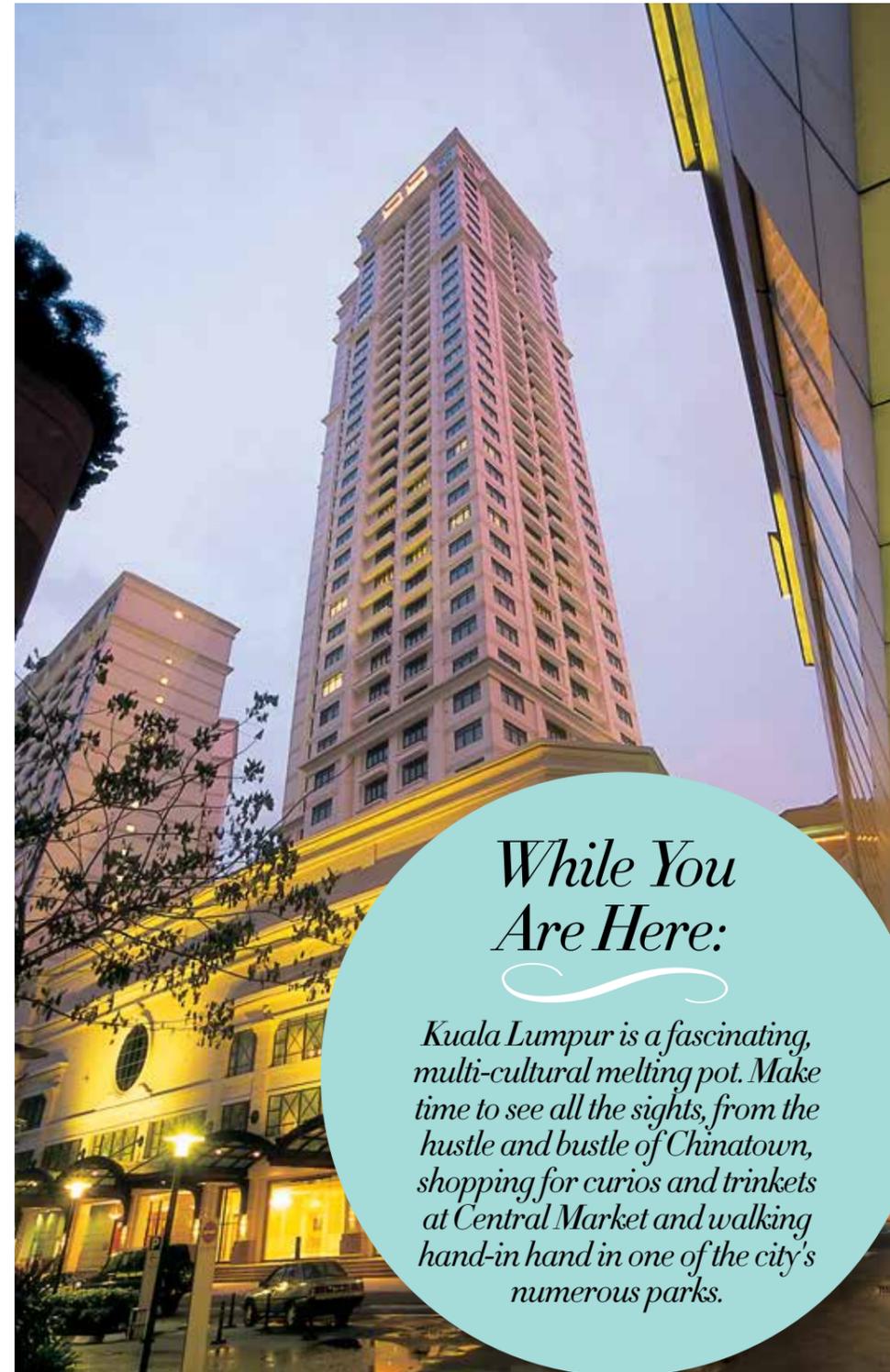
with Chinese teacups, decorated with auspicious symbols, to offer to the elders.

The wedding dinner itself is guaranteed to be a feast to remember, thanks to the award-winning culinary fares, with a choice of Chinese, Indian or Western menus. And what is a wedding celebration (or any celebration, for that matter) without the popping of the champagne bottle – better yet, if it is a magnum of Moët & Chandon!

After the celebration has wind down, start your first day as husband-and-wife on a romantic note by signing up for a couple's treatment at the splendid Spa Village, located on the fourth floor. A veritable haven of bliss and rejuvenation, the Spa Village boasts an exquisite array of Asian and Western relaxation rituals to stoke that loving feeling. A fine suggestion is the *Trade Winds* treatment that begins with a decadent body scrub (*Terra Timur* mixture of red clay, ground soy, rice and papaya for the groom and the Papaya Gentle Scrub for the bride), followed by an indulgent Swedish massage and a cleansing European facial using renowned Kerstin Florian products. Truly, it's just the couple time that you need after a whirlwind celebration.

Cherished Moment: Not many things can rival the pleasure of a good meal and, certainly, no wedding should be bereft of such pleasure. The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur's Li Yen is one of the city's top go-to places for Cantonese fare that entices at lunch with steaming baskets of delicious dim sum and, at dinner, a hearty meal of specialty dishes. Li Yen doesn't miss a beat either when it comes to whipping up a wedding feast, with a delightful nine-course banquet that features anything from Double Boiled Fish Maw Soup and Braised Abalone Clams with Chinese Mushroom to the signature Beancurd with Conpoy, Honshimeji Mushroom and Spinach. Mark my word, your guests will be singing praises for days

Classic charm and flawless service are trademarks of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur.



While You Are Here:

Kuala Lumpur is a fascinating, multi-cultural melting pot. Make time to see all the sights, from the hustle and bustle of Chinatown, shopping for curios and trinkets at Central Market and walking hand-in-hand in one of the city's numerous parks.



Traditional Chinese weddings are not complete without loud and raucous yells of 'yum seng' - the equivalent of 'bottoms up'.

effort to realise your fantasy wedding. For one, JW Marriott has one of the grandest pillarless ballrooms in the city that is perfectly suited for throwing a lavish bash that can host up to nearly 900 people. For smaller parties, there are no less than 21 rooms to choose from.

The morning after, get an early start on the honeymoon with a trip to the Spa Village located next door at the Ritz-Carlton Kuala Lumpur. Then proceed to a well-deserved quiet meal for two at any one of the fine dining venues in the vicinity. Go ahead, you know you deserve a treat.

Cherished Moment: The direct access to Starhill Gallery, which in turn is directly linked to the Ritz-Carlton Kuala Lumpur, is one of the best things about JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur. Apart from the shopping and dining, every imaginable convenience and service is here under one roof, including a cooking school, the Starhill Culinary Studio, for some fun group activity for your overseas guests staying at the hotel. London's famed upscale barbershop Truefitt & Hill can also be found here for the groom to have a nice shave and/or trim before the reception.



“And, as the story goes, they lived happily ever after..”

While You Are Here:

The JW Marriott is located along Kuala Lumpur's most prestigious shopping street - Bukit Bintang. Shop for treasures to signify your new life together or even something for your new home.

JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur

The Proposal: JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur sits right smack in the middle of the famous Bukit Bintang shopping district. With direct access to Starhill Gallery, Kuala Lumpur's premier luxury shopping destination, housing some of the most exclusive names from around the world, JW Marriott is a vibrant, lively address that nevertheless shuts out the frenetic goings-on of the outside world with the intimacy of a sophisticated five-star abode.

Aside from its central location filled with all manner of retail temptations, JW Marriott entices with a host of charming gathering spots, including Shanghai, the only hotel Chinese restaurant in the city to serve authentic Shanghainese fare; Al Halabi, a sumptuously furnished Middle Eastern-inspired private lounge; and the

cosy Newens Tea House that serves an excellent afternoon tea over which you can go over last-minute details with your bridesmaids. For an even wider variety, head to the Feast Village for its mélange of international cuisines ranging from Cantonese and Teochew to Vietnamese and Korean that attract an equally international crowd.

In short, if you want to be in the thick of the action, what JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur has to offer is second to none.

Say "I Do": If such a prestigious address is not enough to sway you, JW Marriott's top-notch service and facilities should do the job. Right from the get-go, a dedicated team takes the burden of planning every little detail off your hand – all you have to do is make your requests and leave them to the professionals. The entire ceremony will be tailor-made to the last detail in an



From Kuala Lumpur to Kuantan and Penang, Vistana Hotels will go the extra mile to ensure your wedding is one to remember.



Vistana Hotels

The Proposal: The Vistana stakes its claim as a contemporary city hotel that banks on service, style and, most importantly, location. Vistana Kuala Lumpur Titiwangsa, for instance, is minutes away from the central business district and is easily accessible via Jalan Tun Razak and Jalan Chow Kit, two of the city's busiest thoroughfares. The Titiwangsa monorail station, which runs on a track that links directly to the KL Sentral transportation hub via such key addresses as Bukit Bintang, is but a skip and hop away.

Similarly, Vistana Kuantan City Centre's central location in the heart of the Pahang capital – the East Coast Mall and recreational beach of Teluk Cempedak are a stone's throw away – is arguably its most attractive asset, its soaring white façade one of the city's most recognisable landmarks. Meantime, Vistana Penang Bukit Jambul also boasts a desirable address, thanks to its proximity to the Penang International Airport and direct access to the historical city of George Town.

Setting the brand apart as well are the modern amenities and stylishly designed rooms with warm neutral colours and sleek furnishing, all of which make Vistana, not only an attractive city venue for a wedding banquet, but also a quality alternative that is surprisingly gentle on the wallet.

Say "I Do": A professional wedding planning team will help you design a wedding that is uniquely yours, ably taking care of everything from the small matter of wedding invitations and seating cards to the wedding cake. The swimming pool with a vista of the nearby skyline is the ideal outdoor venue to hold the reception – the hotel can even arrange for a dramatic ice carving display to jazz up the space. Accommodations



“Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be...”

can also be made for the traditional Chinese tea ceremony or the Malay *akad nikah* marriage solemnisation in one of the rooms.

Later, guests proceed to dinner in the banquet room (in the case of Vistana Kuala Lumpur Titiwangsa) or ballroom (for Vistana Kuantan City Centre and Vistana Penang Bukit Jambul) that has been transformed into an elegant dining space, decorated with exquisite floral arrangements and the backdrop of your choice. Make your grand entrance along a red carpet aisle, strewn with rose petals, to the strains of your favourite love song. And, if you decide to bring your own drinks, you will be very pleased to know that corkage is waived for all alcohol.

Cherished Moment: No matter what your theme is, the philosophy at Vistana is to fulfil your every need and desire, so that your wedding will indeed be a special one. And, as icing on the multi-tier wedding cake, the newlyweds get to embark on a romantic honeymoon at either Tanjong Jara Resort, Gaya Island Resort or Cameron Highlands Resort, on the house.



INSIDER KNOWLEDGE : WEDDING RINGS



One of the most important symbols of love and a union between two people, the use of wedding rings have been recorded since the time of the ancient Egyptians. Its immediate symbolism is obvious, as the circle signifies eternity, with no beginning or end. Over time, wedding rings also became a status symbol - to demonstrate the wealth of the giver. From gold and silver, wedding rings of bygone days could also be made using leather, bone and ivory. It is said that Christians began using the wedding ring as a symbol of marriage or betrothal sometime around 860AD - a tradition that endures to this day.



While You Are Here:

You might have already proposed to her in grand style but, since you are at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur, add an extra frisson of romance to your union by having a candlelit dinner in the hotel's famous Orchid Conservatory prior to your wedding banquet. It's an experience to cherish.

The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur

The Proposal: It is not often that one can brag about getting married in a national heritage treasure and this is what makes The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur so seductive. Built in 1932, the neo-classical and Art Deco hotel was renowned for being the fanciest in its heyday, a place for the elites to meet and moneyed travellers to rest, and where glamorous *The Great Gatsby*-style parties were thrown.

Gazetted as a heritage building under the Antiquities Act in the 1970s, the hotel was refurbished to its former glory and renamed The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur in 2012, with the addition of a contemporary wing. Its strongest allure, however, remains its nostalgic charm – the white Art Deco façade, the interior of marble flooring and Roman columns, the curved driveway that slopes gently towards a *porte cochère* (think about the show-stopping entrance this would make!).

Subscribing to the highest standards of hospitality, The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur is also a member of The Leading Hotels of the World luxury collection, the only property in Kuala Lumpur to be admitted into this exclusive club. Therefore, if your fairytale wedding calls for a dose of old-world glamour, The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur is truly the only place in town to make it come spectacularly alive.

Say "I Do": Allow us to paint you a possible scenario: Hold the tea ceremony in the elegant, sun-filled space of the Orchid Conservatory, surrounded by hundreds of colourful orchids. Guests nibble on classic English tea bites, lending a novel twist to this traditional ritual. In the evening, the expansive pillarless Majestic Ballroom sets the stage for a lavish banquet, complete with a red carpet for the wedding march. Alternatively, the Roof Garden offers a unique setting for an intimate *al fresco* wedding reception in the company of the stars and the dramatic city skyline. After the final toast is dispensed with, retire to the luxurious

colonial-inspired suite in the Majestic Wing, where a bottle of champagne awaits the newly-weds for a private celebration. The next day, unwind with a complimentary 60-minute massage at the Majestic Spa. Then, conclude your stay with a hearty Tiffin Lunch (available only on Sundays) comprising Hainanese Chicken Curry, Mutton Varuval, Egg Masala, Fish Masala and Sago Gula Melaka at the Colonial Cafe, a fitting end to the back-to-colonial-times wedding experience.

Cherished Moment: The decadent colonial vibe is hard to resist. Venues such as the Drawing Room and The Smoke House, which houses a lounge bar, a cigar room, a card room, a private dining room and a movie room screening black-and-white Hollywood classics, offer old school-style gathering possibilities that are bound to impress that close circle of friends and family members. If a wedding is supposed to be one of life's most special celebrations, then The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur's rich heritage and luxury may just be what you need to make it even more so. ❏

*“Don't marry the person you think you can live with. Marry the one you can't live without.”
- JC Dobson-*

One of Kuala Lumpur's grande dame hotels, the historical Majestic lives up to its name indeed and is a grand yet gracious venue for a wedding to remember.



*Every new husband
and wife should
start their married
life together in style.
Here, consider the
bridal designs of top
Malaysian designer
Khoon Hooi, paired
with jewellery that
promises to dazzle.*

the. Beginning of our Lives

Styling Calvin Cheong Art Direction Sheila Cheah Photography Ian Wong @ Home Studio Assistant Faris Jamaluddin
Hair W Chan Makeup Kenny Yee Models Barbora K @ Icon Model & Nikolay B @ Attitude Models

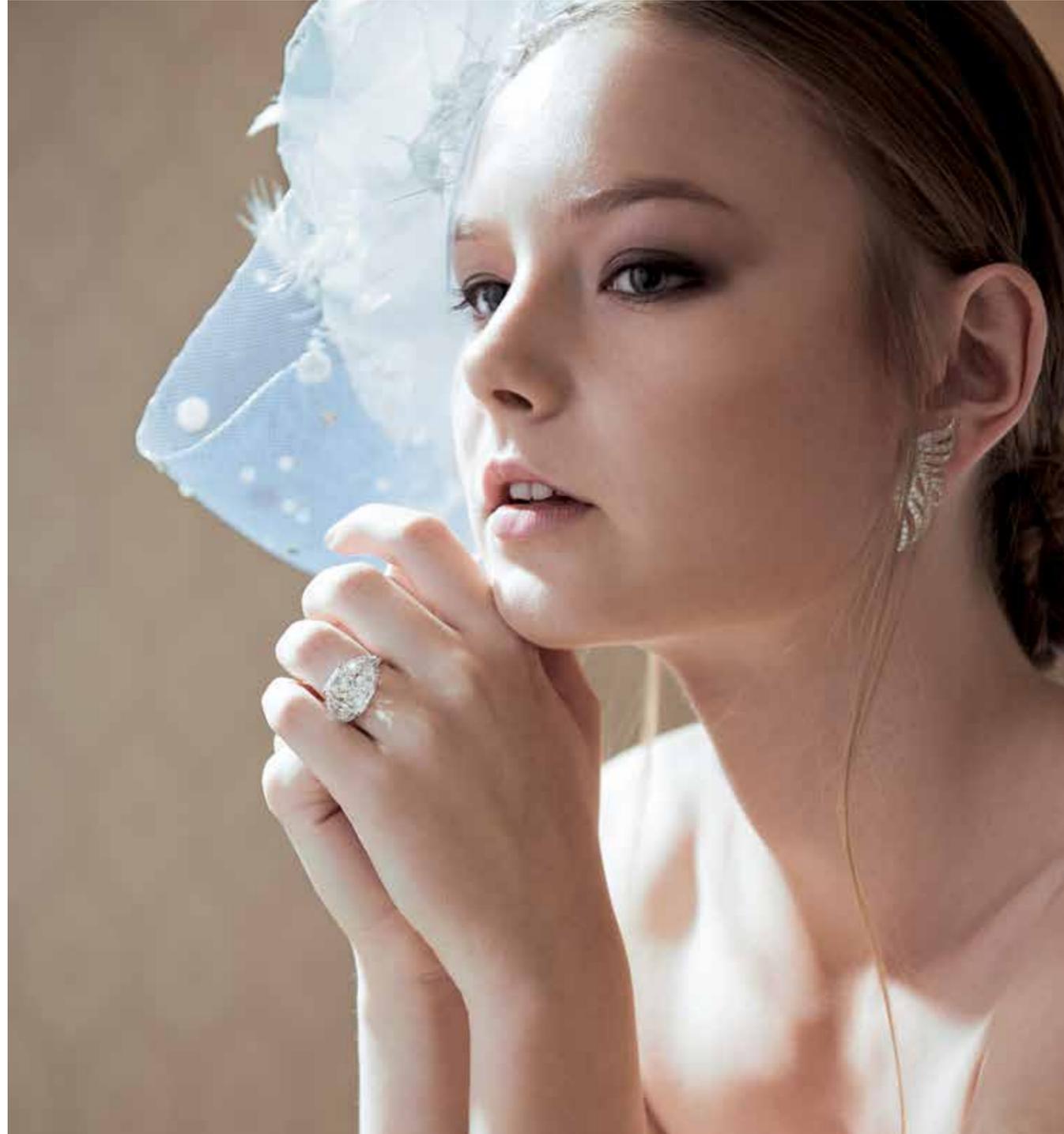
Old World Glamour

On Him: Shirt, suit and pants,
McQ Alexander McQueen.
Bowtie, Kenzo. Timepiece,
Audemars Piguet.

On Her: Necklace set in white
gold with 52.20 carats of
diamonds, earrings with 22.07
carats of rose cut diamonds
and ring in white gold with 3.97
carats of rose cut diamonds.
Samer Halimeh.

Shine Bright Like A Diamond

Head piece, **Bremen Wong Millinery**. *Garzas* earrings set in white gold with diamonds, **Carrera y Carrera**. Classic ring in white gold and 8.13 carats of radiant cut diamonds, **Samer Halimeh**.



Love Duet

On Him: Shirt, suit and pants, **McQ Alexander McQueen**. Bowtie, **Kenzo**. *Fusion Dwyane Wade* timepiece, **Hublot**.
On Her: *Entanglement* pendant and earrings in white gold with diamonds, *Heritage* ring with a 4.53 carats cushion-cut Burmese blue sapphire and brilliant cut diamonds, **Garrard**.

An Entrancing Entrance

New York necklace in white gold with a 6.60-carat aquamarine and 0.73 carats of diamonds, earrings in white gold with 3.24 carats of aquamarines and 0.37 carats of diamonds and ring with 0.30 carats of diamonds, **Gübelin**.



Monochrome Masculinity

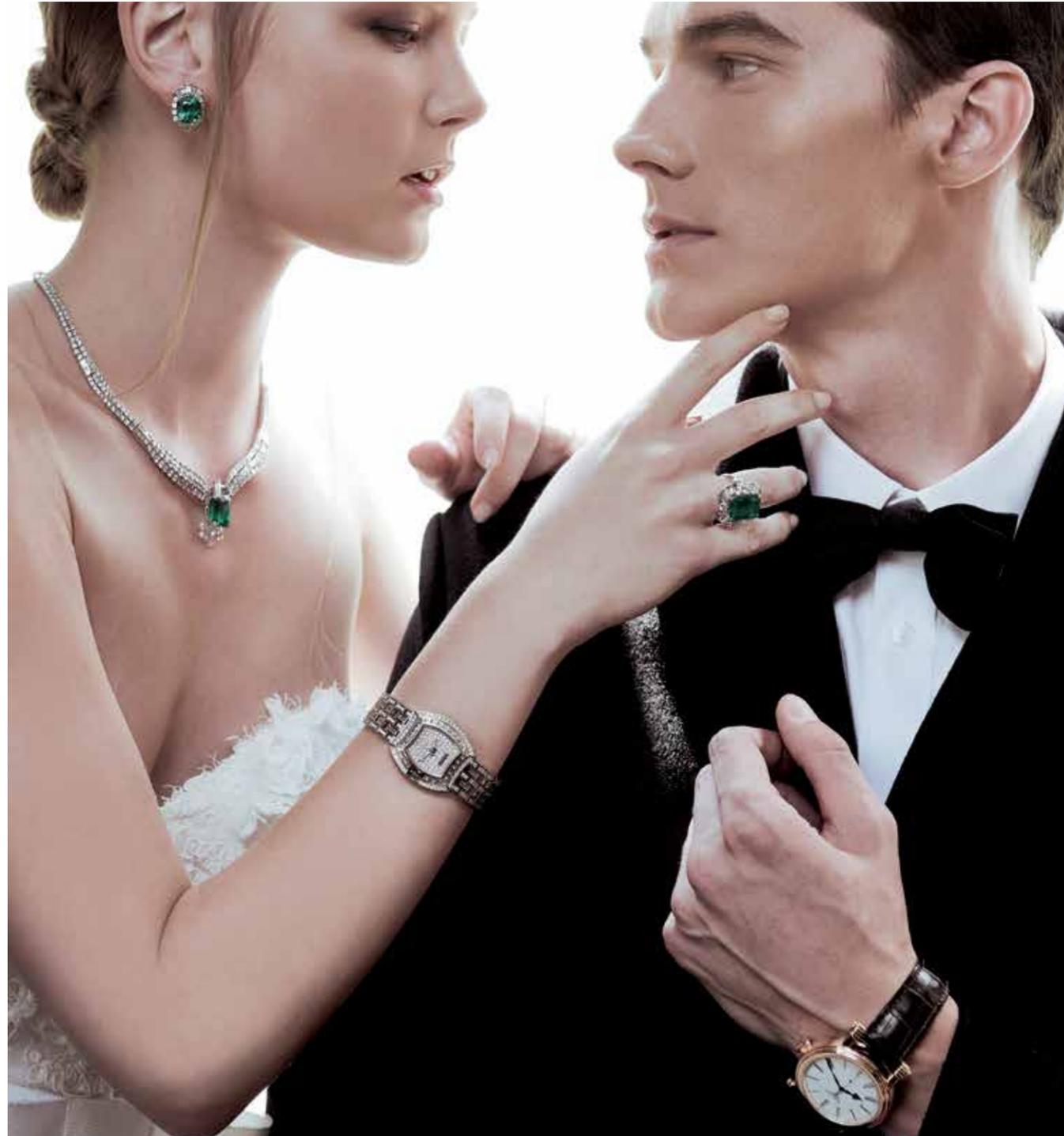
Shirt, suit and pants and bowtie, **Kenzo**. *Pontos S Supercharged* timepiece, **Maurice Lacroix**.



Love Is All Around

On Him: Shirt, suit and pants, **McQ Alexander McQueen**.
Bowtie, **Kenzo**. *Resilience* timepiece in 18K red gold,
Speake-Marin.

On Her: *Ref 324* timepiece, **Bedat & Co.** Emerald set of
necklace in 18K white gold with 22.74 carats of diamonds
and a 10.64 carats of emeralds; earrings in 18K white gold
with 5.43 carats of diamonds and 5.81 & 5.12 carats of
emeralds; and ring in 18K white gold with 6.52 carats of
diamonds and a 16.24 carats of emeralds, **Mouawad**.



Forever Starts Now

On Him: Shirt, suit and
pants and bowtie, **Kenzo**.
Timepiece, **Omega**.
On Her: Head piece, **Bremen**
Wong Millinery. Royal Blue
Tanzanite & Diamond Set,
Mouawad.



**A Time To
Fall In Love**

Shirt, suit and pants and bowtie,
Kenzo. *V16 GMT Double Tourbillon*
Classic timepiece, **Cecil Purnell**.

Tie the Knot

Shirt, suit and pants and
bowtie, **Kenzo**. *Chapter Three*
Reveal, **Maîtres du Temps**.





Rockstar Romance

On Him: Shirt, leather jacket, pants and bowtie, **Kenzo**. *Chapter Two* TCR timepiece, **Maitres du Temps**.
On Her: Head piece, **Bremen Wong Millinery**. *Ladies V11 La Croix Lucky Lady* timepiece, **Cecil Purnell**. Wing collar, ring and earrings in rose gold with diamonds, **Garrard**. All bridal gowns featured, **Khoon Hooi**.



Say You'll Be Mine

Every dream romance begins with 'Once upon a time...' Here, *YTL Life* shows you the best places to write the first lines of your love story with secret proposal spots that will have her saying 'yes' in no time.

Right: The team at Gaya Island Resort would be only too happy to arrange a sunset picnic, complete with champagne at a quiet, private bay. Proposal-perfect? We think so.

Far right: Firefly-pretty lights make the gazebo at Cameron Highlands Resort fairytale enchanting. Pop the question surrounded by misty mountains and cool night air.

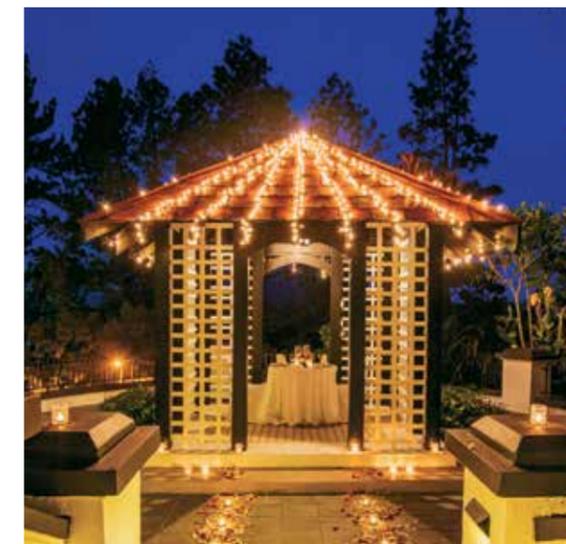


Primal Nature

Surrounded by the azure waters of the South China Sea and ensconced within lush tropical forest, **Gaya Island Resort**, off the coast of Kota Kinabalu, offers several choice locations at which to ask the all-important question. Serene bays like Malohom and Tavajun offer quiet, pristine beaches – perfect for setting up a *pique-nique à deux*, where the lady may say 'yes' in private, accompanied by the sounds of nothing else but the sea and a celebratory pop of champagne. If the pairing of motion and emotion seems like a more potent combination, a private charter of the resort's luxurious Lumba Lumba yacht may also be arranged. Throw in a fiery sunset and sea breeze, there's no way she'll say no. Take our word for it.

Highland Fling

Long hailed as the premier hill station of colonial Malaya, Cameron Highlands, blessed with a unique botanical heritage, is the place to head to if your beloved appreciates verdant beauty. With its cooling climes and misty hills, short treks to nearby waterfalls or the famous Mossy Forest are all good ideas but, should you wish to not stray too far away from the colonial grandeur of the **Cameron Highlands Resort**, may we suggest this pretty little gazebo, just a stroll away from the Jim Thompson Tea Room? Once night falls, this little nook, with all its fairy lights, is as pretty as a picture. Strew the pathway with flowers before leading her here, where champagne is a-chilling and the ring is a-waiting. Love in a cold climate? We think so.

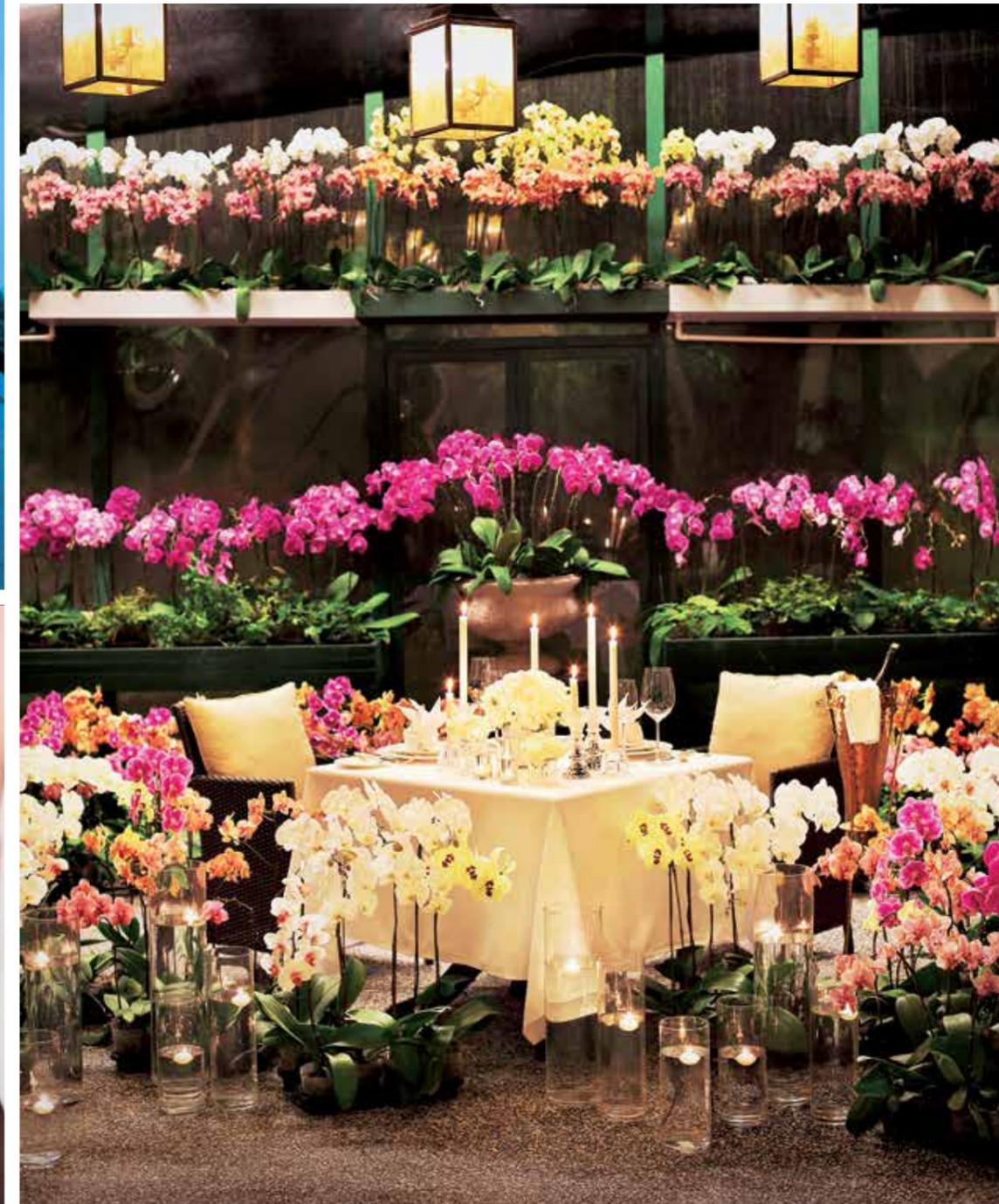


Eastern Promise

Resembling a sultan's *istana* from bygone days, **Tanjong Jara Resort**, set on the eastern seaboard of the Malay Peninsula, offers a setting fit for a king. Exuding a traditionally Malay charm, the resort is filled with many quiet spots – each perfect to orchestrate a proposal of marriage – but simplicity might work best here, with the beach's golden sands, tangy sea air and swaying palms providing a picture-postcard setting. Our advice? Bag one of the beautiful beachfront pavilions, shrouded by billowing linen. Once dusk falls, the added romance of a *gamelan* melody, carried by the wind, only adds to the magic of the moment.

Saying It With Flowers

Getting down on one knee is significantly less daunting when you are surrounded by a thousand orchids in full bloom. **The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur's** Orchid Conservatory has indeed been at the forefront of the property's most singular events. Let it work its floral magic for you, likewise. The affable staff are ever-ready to help you orchestrate the occasion flawlessly. This may include arranging for a solo violinist or, perhaps, even filling the entire space with votive candles. It is often said that a flower cannot blossom without sunshine. Likewise, a man cannot live without love. Here, at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur's Orchid Conservatory, seize the moment with both.



Clockwise, from right: The team at YTL Hotels will ensure bottles of bubbly are on standby for the 'yes' moment; The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur's elegant melding together of historical and contemporary elegance makes for a proposal setting that is irresistible; say it with flowers for a positive answer – only at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur's Orchid Conservatory



8

Clockwise, from above: Imagine asking her the all-important question while floating on a midnight blue pool and gazing at the heavens? All that is possible, and more, at the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali; float away

to a lifetime of bliss by proposing aboard a traditional jukung; let the magic of the Malaysian East Coast cast its spell on both of you as you retreat to one of the many seafront pavilions for privacy.



“Star-crossed lovers may appreciate the magical beauty of Tembok, Bali – a haven of black sand beaches, swaying palms and frangipani-scented breeze.”

Star-Crossed Lovers

Bali is always magical. But that element is magnified many times over in its unspoilt, isolated north – a haven where blue skies and sea meet on the horizon and where its ebony-hued beaches soak up all the heat of the sun to warm your body and soul in greater measure. Set amidst coconut groves and fragrant, flowering frangipani trees, the **Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali**, with its illuminating environment, is a place where spirit, soul and body can find rest and

restoration. One of its signature spa activities is the after-dark starlight gazing, which is done while floating in the sapphire-tiled pool. Tweak it a little by arranging for a floating platform, complete with music, with only the rustle of palm fronds and the vastness of the night sky opening up above you. Connect with each other as the magic of night sky and the liberating feeling of weightlessness combine to transport you. As the mind opens, so does the heart. It's hard to say no when you're spirited away like this. ■

The Touch of Love

The English novelist Angela Carter may have written 'Moonlight, white satin, roses. A bride.' But those with an Asian soul might prefer 'Sunlight, a sarong and frangipani blossoms.' Regardless of whether you're a blushing Mrs-to-be or basking in post-wedding, honeyed light, don't miss these romantic spa journeys that are best experienced together.



The Princess And The Moon

Where: Pangkor Laut Resort, a private island off the West Coast of Peninsular Malaysia.

What: *Royal Secrets of Puteri Lindungan Bulan* (for her) and *Bukit Gantang Warrior Treatment* (for him).

How long: Three hours, excluding a 45-minute signature Bath House experience.

Highlights: The prelude to any treatment at Spa Village Pangkor Laut, the signature Bath House experience certainly sets you in a spa state of mind. Encompassing a seven-pronged celebration of the region's unique bathing rituals, including a floral foot bath, a soak in a rotenburu and a Shanghainese-inspired back scrub, all these physical treats are designed to prepare mind, body and soul for the three-hour spa journey that will soon follow. After a consultation with the resident Malay specialist, this special couple's treatment begins with *urutan panglima* and *urutan gamelan*, traditional Malay massages for him and her, respectively, a hair cream bath or herbal hair root treatment, a scrub, a steam bath or herbal spice bath, and, to finish, a herbal tonic drink.

Resort tip: Make sure to book a dreamy, above-water Spa Villa that promises privacy amidst an island-luxe setting. It's also the most convenient location from which to access the spa; perfect if you're making daily treatments your honeymoon indulgence.

Baba Bliss & Nyonya Nuances

Where: In Malaysia's historical heart of Malacca, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, at The Majestic Malacca.

What: Signature Peranakan (Straits Chinese) rejuvenative experiences.

How long: A three-hour spa journey, as well as a signature pre-spa ritual of a Peranakan hair wash, hair combing and scalp massage – a traditional Nyonya treat for brides-to-be.

Highlights: Embodying all the charm and grace of the famously decorative Peranakans and their *yin* and *yang* outlook on living life, the Spa Village Malacca's iconic couple's treatment is dependent upon one's body type. After filling in a detailed questionnaire, your therapist will diagnose you to be either a 'warm' or 'cool' person, in line with the tenets of Traditional Chinese Medicine. A cool person would need a warming treatment and vice versa. The treatments are intriguingly named: *Suam-Suam Panas* and *Shiok-Shiok Sejuk* for yin and yang personalities, respectively. The former includes a Malacca palm sugar and honey body scrub, pandan coconut hair masque, a bird's nest facial with fermented tapioca mask and a session of nutmeg rice-rolling massage. The latter offers a session of egg-rolling body therapy, which is believed to draw out stress from the body, as well as a yoghurt and guava leaves body scrub, lime and yoghurt hair masque and a bird's nest facial with star fruit.



Top: Spa Village Malacca's Shiok-Shiok Sejuk treatment features a session of egg-rolling body therapy to draw out stress. Below: Spa Village Pangkor Laut's signature Bath House experience will set you in a spa state of mind.

Hotel tip: Nothing soothes the soul quite like a hot cup of tea. The Majestic Malacca has its very own blend of lychee tea (which is served to guests as part of the welcome service). Make sure to buy back a few boxes to bring home, so that the memory of your stay here lingers on and is brought to mind with each sip.

Hills Of Healing

Where: Set amidst misty mountains and emerald jungle, the Cameron Highlands Resort's Spa Village is a bijou highland haven.

What: *The Semai*.

How long: Three hours, excluding tea bath ritual.

Highlights: Named after one of the ethnic subgroups of the Orang Asli, Malaysia's indigenous people, *The Semai* is a rejuvenative ritual that's based on ancient Semai health remedies. Divided into the *Tok Batin Mystical Tradition* (for him) and *The Jungle Secrets of Anti-Aging* (for her), both spa journeys draw from the healing bounty of the jungle and include the use of numerous botanicals, including henna, tea, betel leaves, rambutan bark, ginger, cinnamon and kaffir lime. For the ladies, a Muhak herbal sitz bath, designed to firm muscles, is also included in the package. *The Semai* is designed to cleanse, moisturise, promote healthy blood circulation as well as remove negative energy, and, as always, is preceded by the Spa Village's signature pre-spa ritual, which features an anti-oxidant rich and Zen-inducing tea bath using tea leaves from the area's famed tea plantations. Slip into the claw-foot tub and soak all your cares away before journeying into bliss with your significant other. A herbal tonic drink, best enjoyed in one of the outdoor pavilions, brings *The Semai* experience to a suitably soothing close.

Resort tip: Steamboats, packed with highland-fresh veggies, are a healthy yet indulgent way to spend a lengthy dinner at the Cameron Highlands Resort. Be sure to make a reservation for a steamy hot pot meal during your stay here.

King & Queen For A Day

Where: In the heart of old KL, The Majestic Spa is a bastion of Art Nouveau chic and colonial-inspired charm.

What: The English Afternoon Tea experience.

How long: Two hours.

Highlights: Evoking celebrated Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh's famous Willow Tearooms, The Majestic Spa complements the grande dame hotel beautifully. Facing the Moorish towers of the old railway station, come early to enjoy the *Gift from the Garden*, the spa's pre-treatment ritual, where you will be pampered with two English garden classics: lavender and rosemary. A soothing lavender foot soak and a

Clockwise, from right: Enjoy a soothing cup of tea after your treatments in Spa Village Malacca; The Semai at Spa Village Cameron Highlands Resort is based on ancient health remedies; Spa Village Tanjong Jara's treatments are inspired by traditional Malay practices.



stimulating scalp massage with rosemary oil is the perfect prep for the therapeutic journey ahead. The English Afternoon Tea experience pays homage to the quintessential tradition begun by Anna, the Duchess of Bedford. Slough off dead cells in delicious style with a blackberries and cream scrub before a massage and a fragrant English rose facial.

Hotel tip: Schedule your spa experience for around noon to one o'clock as you'd finish perfectly in time for tea. The hotel serves up a marvellous afternoon tea, accompanied by live piano music from Ooi Eow Jin, the creative force behind some of Malaysia's most popular songs over the past four decades. And, if you're honeymooning or simply want that extra-special touch, arrange to have it amidst the floral confines of The Majestic's famous Orchid Conservatory.

The Sun Rises In The East

Where: Set along a picture-postcard view of golden sand beaches, lusty waves and swaying palms is Spa Village Tanjong Jara, a Malay-inspired sanctuary of the senses in the north-eastern state of Terengganu.

What: For him and her, the *Panji Alam* and *Dandan Puteri*

Tujuh, respectively. This couple's treatment is also referred to as *Raja Sehari*, which, in Malay, translates as 'King and Queen for the day'.

How long: Three hours.

Highlights: Begin with *mandi bunga*, a Malay floral bath that originated from the royal courts as part of the investiture of a new king, it is still practised by traditional healers as a means of ridding the body of negative energy. Today, it takes pride of place as Spa Village Tanjong Jara's pre-treatment ritual. Here, your therapist wraps you in a colourful sarong and proceeds to bathe you, head to toe, in floral water, reciting a blessing for each of the seven times she pours it over you. This charming practise is also all-important during coming-of-age rituals as well as for soon-to-wed couples, and held seven days before the wedding day. After donning a fresh sarong, let your therapist treat you to a session of *urut* (massage) and a series of other sybaritic treats, including a conditioning hair treatment, scrub, a milk or herbal spice bath, traditional body steaming and, lastly, a shot of herbal tonic. As a parting gift, a beautiful batik sarong will be presented as a memento of the day's royal experience.



Clockwise, from below:
The Majestic Spa evokes the famous Willow Tearooms designed by celebrated Scottish architect, Charles Rennie Mackintosh; the Spa Village in The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur is an oasis of calm in the middle of the city; enjoy treatments inspired by the Kadazan-Dusun people in Spa Village Gaya Island.



evocatively-named *Papakang* – the Odyssey of Seven Brothers – for him and the *Unduk Ngadau* (for her). Each treatment includes a body scrub, an avocado and coconut hair masque, *urutan pribumi* (an indigenous massage) using rice pouches, and a honey and avocado seed facial to end.

Resort tip: Honeymooners, do know that Gaya Island Resort also organises movie nights under the stars. Find a cosy spot in which to plop yourself down on beanbags, snuggle up and wait for something romantic to play. If you prefer to play by day, snag one of the private relaxation chambers by the poolside – each one named after a Sabahan tribe – perfect for snuggling in-between sun-worshipping.

Spa & The City

Where: A veritable oasis of calm in downtown KL, this city outpost of the Spa Village is tucked away within the classic luxury of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur.

What: City slickers can slough off their concrete jungle skin and, instead, slip on a cloak of serenity; which is easy enough once you step into this unique retreat, surrounded by the leafy surrounds of a rooftop pool.

How long: Three hours.

Highlights: Offering a myriad of Eastern and Western healing therapies, couples would do well to opt for the special *Hang Tuah* treatment for him, named after Malacca's most famous admiral, and *Tun Teja*, the legendary 'last queen' of the Malaccan sultanate, for her. Inspired by traditional Malay healing therapies, it is an all-encompassing spa experience that includes massage, scalp and hair conditioning, facial and body scrub, herbal bath, herbal oil application, traditional body steaming and a tonic to drink. The massage session is particularly restorative. Named *Urutan Pasak Bumi*, the gentleman's massage is designed for a warrior and is said to incorporate *silat* (the Malay martial art) hand postures. For the women, the *Urutan Kebayan* is also a special treat. It is said to have been invented by Tun Teja's personal royal beautician and uses a sweetly scented oil called *minyak kebayan*, made from a potent jungle blossom called *melati* as its main ingredient. Exceedingly indulgent, it is a spa journey that brings the evocative court rituals of ancient Malaya to mind – and all these in the heart of one of South-East Asia's most dynamic and exciting metropolises.

Hotel tip: After such a therapeutic journey, the best thing to do would be to immediately retreat to one's room. But it would be such a shame to be in the heart of the city's 'golden triangle' without indulging in a spot of shopping. After all, the luxury destination that is Starhill Gallery is just steps away. So, be sure to schedule your spa experiences during the second half of the day so you can effortlessly make the transition from retail to spa therapy. ■

Resort tip: Dusk is a particularly magical time in this part of the country. Make sure to find time to stroll, hand in hand, preferably, along the beach and take in the tangy South China Sea breeze before calling it a day. If you can persuade your better half to rise early, few things beat starting the day with a sun salutation – performed right on the beach, of course.

Borneo Bliss

Where: Spa Village Gaya Island Resort, off the coast of Kota Kinabalu in wild and exotic Borneo.

What: *Tadau Kaamatan*.

How long: Three hours.

Highlights: Named after the all-important harvest festival of the Kadazan-Dusun people, the *Tadau Kaamatan* is steeped in significance. Celebrating the rituals and symbolism associated with the planting of rice and its subsequent bountiful harvest, one of the highlights of *Tadau Kaamatan* is also the festival queen pageant, known as *Unduk Ngadau*. At Spa Village Gaya Island, this unique couple's treatment is divided into his and hers: the



Slice of Life

Tony Hoyle, Group Pastry Chef of YTL Hotels, whips up four beautiful creations that'll take your cake-cutting ceremony from standard to superlative.

Photography Law Soo Phye



Shades Of Sunset

Elegant and visually-stunning, a simple tiered cake is made eye-catching with delicate detailing coupled with vibrant roses in varying sunset hues.

Pretty In Pink

Yes, white's the reigning colour of the night where the bride is concerned; but that's no reason not to have a wedding cake that's the epitome of feminine sweetness. Here, a stunning rose detail, cascading down the cake, is the focal point of interest.



Key Lime Colours

Fresh and appealing, this floral design utilises zesty shades of lime to create a wedding cake that is simple and highly-suitable for an al fresco or beach wedding.



Two-Toned Treat

There's something to be said for a dramatic black and white cake. Here, Chef Tony Hoyle ups the ante with an embellished four-tiered cake that's sure to be the centre of attention during the all-important cake-cutting ceremony.



Fly Me To The Moon

As much as every bride lives for an unforgettable wedding day, there's much to be said for starting off the marriage on a good note. By this, we mean a honeymoon to remember. In this light, here are some destinations and (bed)rooms with a view to consider.



Glamorous, sun-soaked Saint-Tropez is the perfect destination for soon-to-be or June-to-be honeymooners.

SPAIN

Where: Imagine being at the very point where the Mediterranean meets the mighty Atlantic or, perhaps, traipsing through pristine whitewashed villages bright with bougainvillea, and soaking up a vibe that brings all the colour and gaiety of rhythmic flamenco and *toreros* to mind. Certainly, for a destination that combines all the magic, music and marvels of Spain in one location, it's hard to beat this land the Arabs used to call Al-Andalus, today Andalusia. One of its most charming towns is the seaside resort of Marbella, a gem of the Mediterranean and a magnet for the international jet-set. This mountainous region embraces the celebrated coastline of the Costa del Sol, which offers everything for the globetrotter, from breathtaking national parks, sublime cuisine, quaint towns and villages to explore and sapphire waters to bathe in or boat on. Although it also bears the added advantage of being studded with world-class golf courses, which led to some wags coining the area the 'Costa del Golf', we would, however, advise the groom to exercise all caution if planning to sneak in nine holes during the honeymoon. Save it for the next trip.

Stay: If the idea of sprawling gardens, expansive living areas and flawlessly unobtrusive service tickles your fancy, then the MUSE Casa Marbella is your honeymoon *casa* of choice. We particularly like Casa Marbella Two, which was formerly owned by the film

star, Madeleine Carroll, at one time Hollywood's highest-paid actress, who played alongside big screen greats like Gary Cooper and Henry Fonda, and, later on Glenn Tipton, Grammy-winning guitarist and riff-meister of Brummie heavy metal headliner, Judas Priest. Its master suite is particularly welcoming, with a romantic four-poster bed that looks out onto the deep blue. Depending on the season, choose to have breakfast or *cava* on the beautiful private terraces that offer 180° views of both valley and sea.

What else: Marbella is a delight to wander around in and explore for hours on end. Stroll along the promenades or visit renowned museums like the Ralli and Grabado Espanol. Sip the delicious cocktails at Pangea and dine at world-class establishments like Infuchsia, Skina and Santiago. If light bites are more your style, don't miss the tapas at El Estrecho. The old town of Casco Antiguo is also a must and do find a shady spot to people-watch along Puerto Banús harbour. And, given Marbella's 320 days of almost-guaranteed sunshine, it's really quite the perfect year-round destination to consider.

FRANCE

Where: Sun-kissed and glamorous, if Saint-Tropez were a woman, she'd be Brigitte Bardot at the height of her fame and desirability. Yet, for each of us who remembers Roger Vadim's iconic movie, a mere day in Saint-Tropez would have us remember that God created it too. Its



DID YOU KNOW?

In ancient days, married couples were made to drink mead – a wine made using water and honey. According to Pliny the Elder, it consisted of three parts water to one part old honey. It was believed that, if drunk daily, the couple would be blessed with sons. This ritual of drinking wine made with honey, thus, led to the creation of the term 'honeymoon', which links the phases of the moon to marriage, tracing it as it waxes and wanes – just like in any relationship. The moon phases are also a subtle nod to a woman's fertility, referencing the ultimate aim of unions in bygone days, which was to be blessed with children.



If your missus has the Mediterranean on her mind, the MUSE Casa Marbella and MUSE Saint Tropez are ideal honeymoon options.



reputation as a celebrity playground and haven for hedonists is well-deserved, but honeymooners who like a bit of sparkle and shine would bask equally luxuriantly in its sexy surroundings. Not that it's all hedge funders and the Euro-riche, though. Its main plaza, the Place des Lices, still buzzes with local life and activity. Come early to watch the petanque games in full-swing. Grab a *café au lait* and a slice of the local Tarte Tropeziennne at a café shaded by plane trees. Ramble along the walls of the fortified citadel or the narrow cobbled streets that are a literary cliché but never more charmingly so. Saint-Tropez is also surrounded by vineyards that produce delicious rosé wines – and, somehow, being so pretty

in pink, we can't think of a more-perfect honeymoon drink. Touché, we say!

Stay: Inspired by the modern world's legendary muses, the MUSE Saint Tropez is the perfect place to stay – just far enough away from the buzz of the town, and secluded enough for lovers to have their privacy. Perched atop a little hillock studded with *pins parasol*, the region's iconic umbrella pine trees, the MUSE Saint Tropez is a sleek boutique hotel whose reception hall charmingly resembles a *moulin* (windmill). The swimming pool is a focal point but it is the rooms that really take one's breath away. Offering just 15 suites, choose your 'muse' as each is named after legendary figures, like Edith Piaf and Catherine Deneuve.

What else: The hotel offers complimentary shuttle service to the town and its surrounds, including La Croix de Fer and Pampelonne Beach, making it easy to get your fill of activity yet allowing you to retreat, whenever you wish, to your little near-private haven. Although beach clubs are the main places at which to see and be seen during Tropezian summers, we think honeymoons are best enjoyed quietly. Here, we recommend strolling hand-in-hand in the town, sampling sweet treats (Barbarac does the area's best ice creams in a mind-boggling array of flavours, including can't-be-found-elsewhere ones like speculoos and canelé) and shopping for unique treats for each other. If the bride loves shoes

as much as the fictional Carrie Bradshaw does, rack up the brownie points by taking her to Rondini – famous for its gladiator sandals since 1927.

JAPAN

Where: Niseko isn't known as the 'Aspen of Asia' for nothing. If your bride likes the idea of being a snow bunny, whisk her away to Japan's pretty-as-a-picture northernmost region of Hokkaido. Although primarily known as a skier's heaven, Niseko is also fast building a reputation as a year-round destination. So, if snow and ice don't rock her boat, bring her here in the snow-free months for trekking, horseback riding and golf. The region is also dotted with innumerable *onsen* (natural hot springs), wonderful to soak in post-piste or after too much

White's more than alright at snowy Niseko but the 'Aspen of Asia' is fast gaining a reputation as a destination for all seasons.



With a concierge at your disposal, you only need to relax and enjoy your honeymoon at the Kasara Niseko Village Townhouse.



fairway action. Hokkaido is also where most of Japan's justifiably-famous produce comes from, not counting the seafood harvested off its icy seas, making Niseko a gourmet getaway par excellence whichever month you choose to visit.

Stay: If you've ever visited and fallen in love with the old world charm of Kyoto, you'd adore the *machiya*-style townhouses that are the flagship of YTL Hotels' new Kasara brand. The first phase of the Kasara Niseko Village Townhouse offers just eight units, spanning 240 sq m each. The highlight of a Kasara stay is the service and attention to detail, ensuring your Japanese honeymoon is *genki*. A concierge is at your disposal, while the fully equipped kitchen is ideal if you're considering stocking up at the nearby View Plaza farmer's market. But, it's your honeymoon. Leave the slicing, dicing and washing up for later on and, instead, spend each day trying out someplace new. You will find plenty of dining options, at Niseko Village's retail and dining hub. The nearby Hilton Niseko Village's Ren Restaurant, is also renowned for its sushi and teppanyaki. And, don't even think about walking over as each Kasara townhouse comes complete with a driver-on-call to ferry you around the village in style.

What else: A little spot of exploring is always a good idea and the seaside town of Otaru is ideal for a day out. Once

known as the 'Wall Street' of northern Japan and home to the numerous 'herring tycoons' who made vast fortunes from fishing, Otaru is today best-known for its romantic *unga* (canal), made famous as a location in many movies and television series. Spend the day sampling local street food like Otaru's famous fried chicken and *bakudanyaki* (a massive savoury fritter filled with meat, cheese and vegetables), and buy precious presents, particularly lovely music boxes from the Otaru Music Box Museum. Perfect for a daughter in the future, perhaps?

ENGLAND

Where: An extremely do-able drive from London, the beautiful village of Bray in Berkshire is perfect for a long weekend tacked onto an existing honeymoon plan. As idyllic a honeymoon location as can be, the quiet village, surrounded by beautiful woodland, is best-known for being a gourmet mecca, with two of the UK's only four three Michelin-starred restaurants located here. Its most famous name is, of course, Heston Blumenthal, who owns The Fat Duck, the Hinds Head and the Crown pub, all within a stone's throw of each other, although Alain Roux's The Waterside Inn is an equal culinary star, making Bray the perfect spot if husband and wife like Michelin stars in their eyes. Adding to its gustatory appeal is yet another restaurant in this small



The tiny but charming village of Bray in England's Berkshire is definitely for couples who love to eat together.





village – Caldesi di Campagna – giving you one more reason not to eat and run. Of course, digestion in-between meals can be easily aided by countryside tours. The picturesque and historic towns of Henley, Eton and Windsor are but short drives away, while, if you can still stomach the thought of tea, beautiful Cliveden, the scene of the infamous Profumo scandal of the 1960s, offers one of England's most stunning settings in which to sip on Lapsang Souchong with requisite cucumber sandwich in hand.

Stay: With 500 years of history, Dormer Cottage in the heart of Bray, has been spruced up, restored and lovingly modernised to placate even the most hardened city slicker forced here for the weekend. An open log fireplace takes pride of place in the wood-beamed living area, while further drama comes in the form of a striking burnt orange silk clad

wall. Pop open a bottle of champagne while music plays from a Bang & Olufsen system or, if it's summer, sit outdoors in the charming little garden complete with cascading water feature. Once bedtime beckons, retreat upstairs to a well-appointed bedroom done up in cream and ivory silks.

What else: Opened in the summer of 2015, The Gainsborough Bath Spa is the UK's latest luxury destination. With its dreamy hot springs, Roman history, Georgian architecture and breathtaking natural surroundings, it's no surprise that the ancient city of Bath is also one of the favourite cities for proposals, weddings and even pre-wedding parties for stags and hens alike. Set in the heart of historic Bath, The Gainsborough, with its first-rate dining, world-class spa and splendidly-appointed rooms is *the* only place to stay. ■

The Gainsborough Bath Spa is the only place to stay when visiting the ancient and beautiful city of Bath in England.

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Love & Marriage

Multicultural Malaysia means that weddings here are colourful affairs, steeped in a host of traditions and customs. *YTL Life* shares an overview of the Peranakan *Dua Belas Hari* ceremony, one that is unique to the Baba-Nyonya communities of the former Straits Settlements of colonial Malaya and may partly be experienced in The Majestic Malacca's pre-spa ritual.



“Love and marriage, love and marriage
Go together like a horse and carriage.
This, I tell you brother,
You can't have one without the other.”

Frank Sinatra's velvety voice might have crooned the ditty but, in Malaysia, forget the horse and carriage. Marriage brings into the equation hundreds of years of traditions, heritage and customs. Here's a quick look at the Peranakan wedding ceremony, one that is unique to Malaysia as well as neighbouring Singapore.

THE 12-DAY WEDDING CEREMONY

Peranakan or Straits Chinese weddings are renowned for their pomp and opulence. To those who don't know, Peranakan is a term used to describe the descendants of 15th and 16th-century Chinese immigrants, mostly traders, to ancient Malaya. This is on top of the descendants of the legendary entourage that accompanied the Princess Hang Li Po of Ming Dynasty China in the 1400s for her marriage to Sultan Mansur Shah of Malacca, who eventually inter-married with the locals after settling in the Malay Peninsula. Although influenced by Malay customs (the Peranakan word for

'marriage' is, in fact, the same as the Malays – *kahwin*), festivities and ceremonies are essentially Chinese in origin. Derived from the wedding traditions practised up to the late 19th century in southern China's Fujian Province, both the bride and groom will be involved in a series of events, often lasting up to 12 days long and, hence, referred to as *Dua Belas Hari*, that paid respect to the families as well as undergo rituals to bless the couple, wishing them a successful, happy and productive marriage ahead.

Peranakan weddings are known for their pomp and opulence, and the bride and groom traditionally participate in a series of events that last up to 12 days

The hair ritual is particularly significant for the bride. Brides of the past were subjected to a hair cleanse, scalp massage and gentle combing in the open courtyard of their homes, an architectural fixture in traditional Peranakan houses. This was believed to eradicate impurities and negative energy from the girl, while bestowing good luck on the couple's union. Floral water is used abundantly, as this is believed to *buang soey* (to rid back luck).

The exchange of gifts is also customary and this would include a gift of hand-embroidered slippers from the bride to her groom, in addition to traditional Nyonya finery like *kerongsang* (brooches) *cucuk sanggul* (hairpins), *kamcheng* (beautiful covered jars), belt made of intricately carved gold or silver for their *baju kebaya* and *kasut manik* (beaded slippers). In traditional Peranakan households, a prospective bride was often assessed by, amongst others, her prowess with needle and thread. The groom's family, on the other hand, would need to put together a generous trousseau for a sophisticated Nyonya. This includes lavish gifts of clothing and jewellery, as well



“The giving and receiving of food and the hosting of elaborate wedding banquets are also hugely important.”

AT A GLANCE

Unique to Malaysia and Singapore, an invitation to a traditional Peranakan wedding is not to be missed. Here are some of the colourful rituals and ceremonies that are fast disappearing as the culture hurtles into modernity.

Lap Chai

The custom of exchanging gifts between the bride and groom is of paramount importance and will often see the bride presenting gifts to her husband-to-be that showcase her skill as a well-brought up and accomplished Nyonya. Likewise, being a culture that is famed for its sophistication, the groom is expected to present a lavish trousseau to his bride, laden with fine gifts of sumptuous textiles or clothing and, of course, jewellery for the luxury-loving Nyonya.

Cheo Thau

This is the 'coming of age' ceremony and marks the occasion when the bride and groom are presented wearing their ceremonial wedding robes. Expect a feast for the senses as music, colour and gaiety are hallmarks of this auspicious occasion.

Chim Pang

Just as Western-style weddings have the groom unveiling the bride at the altar, the Baba-Nyonya do it a little more discreetly, in the relative privacy of their bridal chamber. After he casts eyes on his bride, the couple will be served tea and *kueh ee* – round rice dumplings in sweet syrup. Only after all these ceremonies are performed would the *Dua Belas Hari* commence.



as symbolic tokens of marriage, including a comb made from banana wood, a stick of lemongrass and some yam, along with three lit incense sticks in an earthenware pot to be placed beneath the marriage bed. This was supposed to bring wealth, longevity and fertility to the couple. Another custom called the *Ahn Chng* ceremony included the page boy rolling three times over the marriage bed as a blessing for a firstborn male child. More traditional families were also known to release a rooster and hen underneath the bridal bed in the belief that, if the rooster emerged first, the couple could expect a son as their firstborn and, likewise, a daughter, if the hen took the lead. Although steeped in cultural tradition, these ceremonies had a practical aspect too. Lemongrass and incense sticks help to keep mosquitoes at bay, while yam is often used as a folk remedy for impotence. All these intricate details would normally be seen to by a *Pak Chindek* and *Sang Kek Um*, the master and mistress of the wedding ceremony, respectively.

The giving and receiving of food and the hosting of elaborate wedding banquets are also hugely important. Auspicious dates and times were set for specific meals. To the Chinese and, indeed, the Straits Chinese, food was of paramount importance. In fact, the Peranakan kitchen was often referred to as *perut rumah* (stomach of the house), the core of the family's daily life and the seat of feminine power. In fact, one of the highlights of a Peranakan wedding would be the night-before feast, often referred to as a *Tok Panjang*. Literally translated as a 'long table', it would hold a staggering number of uniquely Baba-Nyonya dishes to fete all the friends and relatives the family could afford to host. ■



The groom's family will put together a splendid trousseau that includes lavish clothes and jewellery.



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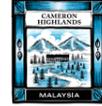
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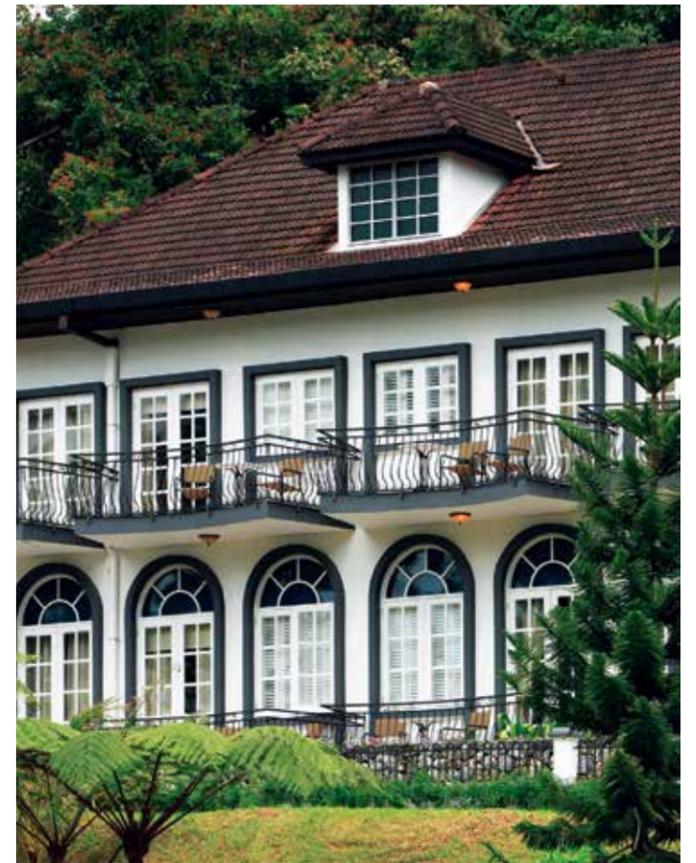
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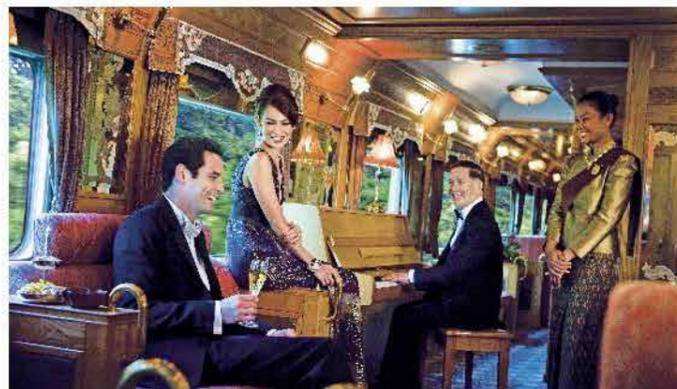
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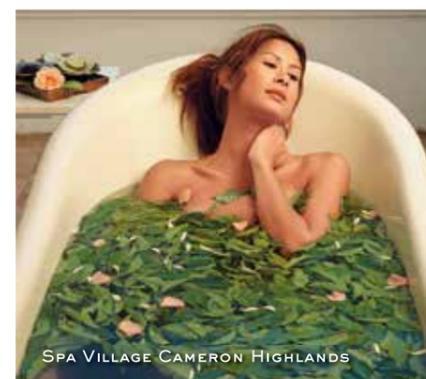


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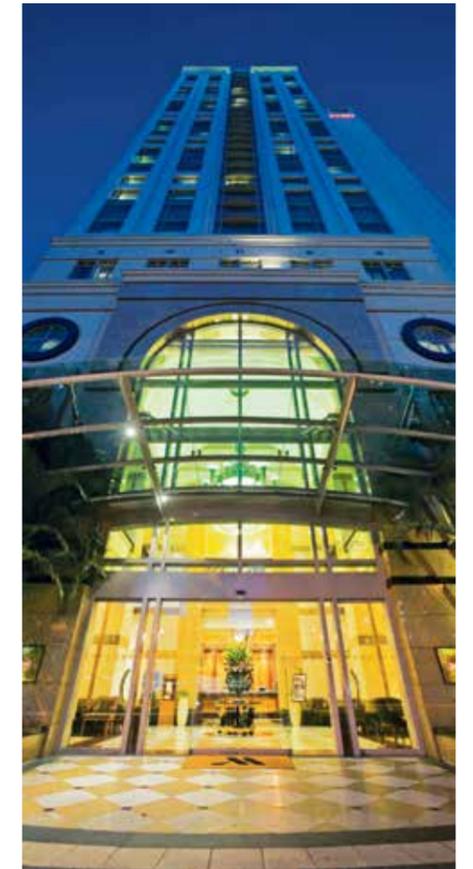
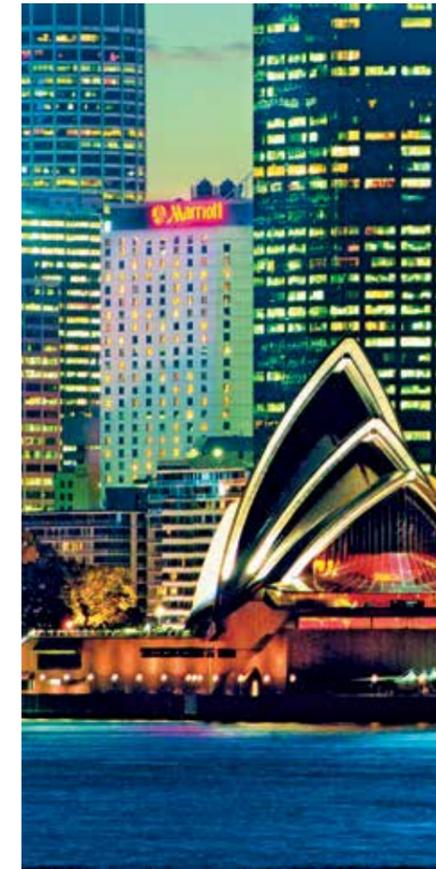


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