

YTL *life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine

The Essence
Of Life
Pangkor Laut Resort's
Water Wellness

Summer's
Here
25 Top Ideas
in Bath

Village People
Step Back in Time at
Kampung Morten

Under The Saint-Tropez Sun • A Highland Feast • Happy 90th Birthday, Ma'am!

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

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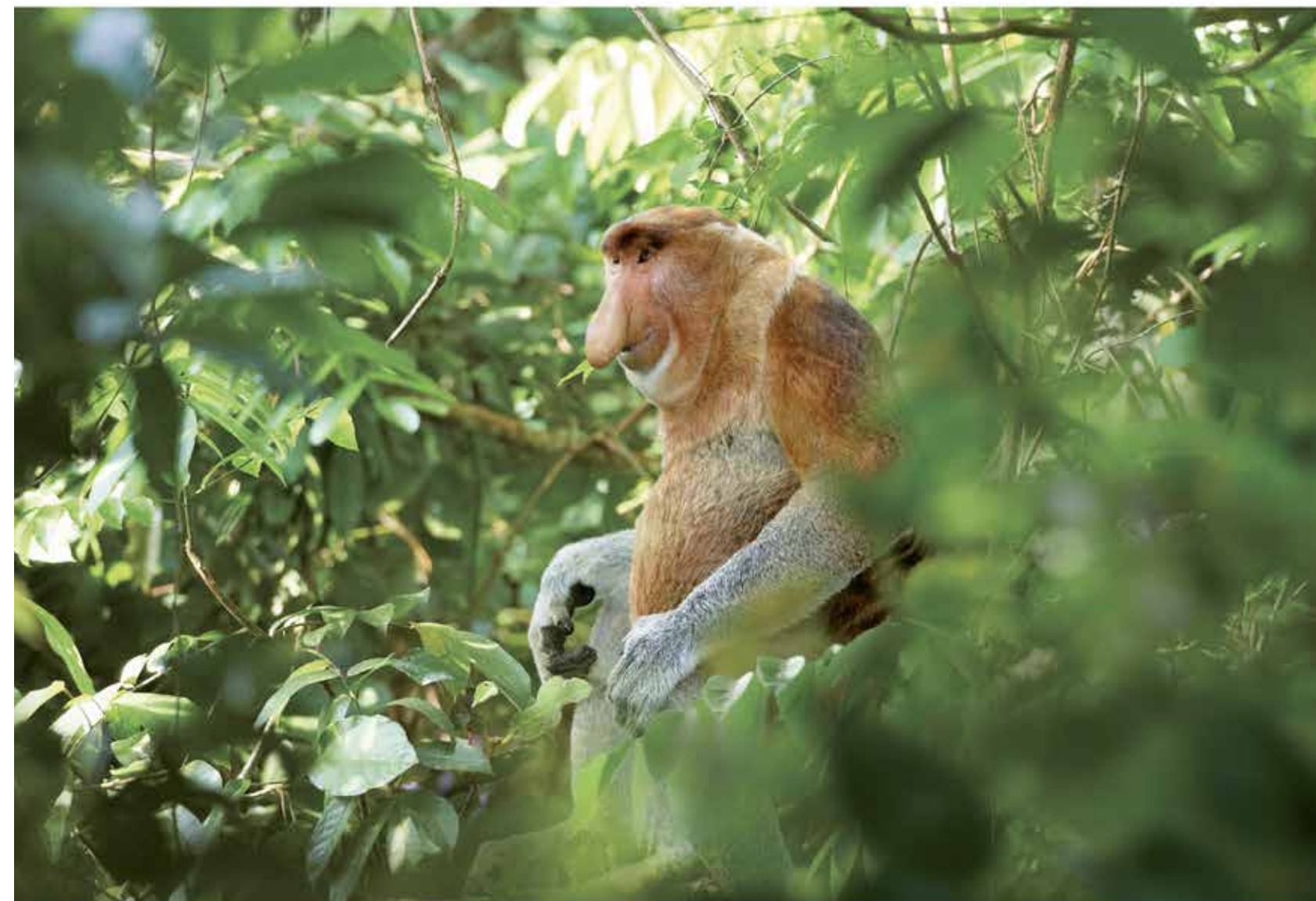
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Your eyes lock with a Proboscis monkey's for the first time.
It makes a strange noise.
And you don't know whether to stand in awe or run.
Your moment awaits.

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YTL HOTELS
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A Note from Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh



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

YTL Hotels' first venture into the hospitality industry, Pangkor Laut Resort maintains its position as the flagship property of the group as well as its unwavering status as one of the world's most sought-after luxury resort experiences. More than a mere destination, it is an experience in every sense of the word. It has won numerous accolades, from being ranked among the best resorts in the world for spa, romance and luxury to the feather in its cap, being voted Number One in The World by *Condé Nast Traveller*. It has also played host to many celebrity guests, including Luciano Pavarotti, Joan Collins, Heads of State like HSH Prince Albert of Monaco, as well as numerous sports illuminati, from racing great Sir Jackie Stewart to footballer Eric Cantona and golfer Nick Faldo. We hope our cover story tempts you to acquaint yourself with the island or, perhaps, to welcome you back once more.

As the days grow longer in the northern hemisphere, it's a sign that summer's nigh. Take advantage of the warmth and sunshine to enjoy the first time The Green Leaf Niseko Village opens for the green season and discover a totally different world from the ski slopes and powder snow for which the region is so famous. The warmer months also make it a wonderful time to explore Europe. The MUSE Saint Tropez is one of our family's favourite retreats in the South of France (if you visit, you will understand why), while our latest property, The Gainsborough Bath Spa, set in England's picturesque Somerset County, is a delight to discover, whatever the season. Come find out for yourself why this beautiful place is in the *Condé Nast Traveler* 2016 Hot List: The Best New Hotels in the World and won the 'Bathing Beauty' title at the Tatler Spa Awards 2016.

Enjoy the issue and God bless.

Francis

EVERY LANDSCAPE, TIMELESS
EVERY CULTURE, AUTHENTIC
EVERY EXPERIENCE, UNIQUE



SPA VILLAGE TANJONG JARA
Malaysia



SPA VILLAGE CAMERON HIGHLANDS
Malaysia



SPA VILLAGE PANGKOR LAUT
Malaysia



SPA VILLAGE GAYA ISLAND
Borneo



Extraordinary encounters, unique healing practices, bespoke services. Anchored in the principle of honouring the healing culture of the region with modern approaches to health and well-being, Spa Village is more than just a place...it is a philosophy. For a private consultation, please contact the YTL Hotels Travel Centre at +60 3 2783 1000 or email travelcentre@ytlhotels.com to handcraft your experience.

YTL Hotels is involved in both the ownership and management of the Spa Village brand in the United Kingdom, China, Indonesia and Malaysia.

LUXURY SPAS BY YTL HOTELS

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Irina Yermolova. 5. Tan Sri Lim Huah Leong and Dato' Kong Sooi Lin. 6. CC Cheng and TK Cheng. 7. Koo Cheng and Tan Sri Pheng Yin Huah. 8. Datin Lim Lee Lee, Keong Wei Yeoh, Dato' Yeoh Seok Kian, Tan Sri Yeoh Tiong Lay, Executive Chairman of YTL Corporation and Tan Sri Dato' Chua Ma Yu. 9. Tati Low and Patrick Low. 10. Roni Abdul Wahab, Law Chin Wat, Jullie Kan and Michael Hoh. 11. Yeoh Keong Hann, Puan Sri Sherina Aris and Yeoh Keong Yuan. 12. Geraldine Dreiser and Jacob Yeoh. 13. Susan Yuen, Chew Hoi Meng and Jeff Tham Kok Kuen. 14. James Chi-ping Chang and Margaret Chang. 15. HE Constantin Nistor, Ambassador of Romania and Violeta Nistor. 16. Jeremiah Tan and Laurent Myer. 17. Tan Sri Dato' Teo Chiang Liang and Puan Sri Datin Lilian Teo. 18. Tan Sri Dr Mohd Nadzmi Mohd Salleh and Datuk Mohd Badlisham Ghazali. 19. Tan Sri Dato' Lee Shin Cheng. 20. Dato' Yeoh Seok Hong and Zahir Kelvin Ong Abdullah. 21. HE Holger Michael, Ambassador of Germany, Rebekah Yeoh Pei Wenn, Datuk Jimmy Choo, OBE and Dato' Yeoh Soo Min, Executive Director of YTL Corporation. 22. Dania Daher and HE Ali Daher, Ambassador of Lebanon. 23. Rhonda Burchmore belting out classical tunes. 24. Dato' Mark Yeoh. 25. HE Huang Huikang, Ambassador of China. 26. Max Trengrove dazzling the crowd with his fast feet.



Puttin' On The Ritz

The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur finally reopened its doors to reveal a revived new space with a glitzy gala that was the talk of the town. Distinguished figures, including foreign dignitaries and prominent local and international personalities, had a good time at the relaunch party officiated by HRH Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah of Selangor. It was a jubilant affair celebrating a new milestone in the hotel's evolution to redefine luxury accommodation together with sterling service. The Ritz-Carlton's iconic style, elegance and timeless glamour was brought to life in a fabulous performance by Australia's leading lady of musical theatre, Rhonda Burchmore, partnered by Max Trengrove, who dazzled with their tap dancing while belting out classic numbers by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. It was indeed a lovely gala where wonderful memories were made, just as it should be at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur! **W**

1. Traditional drum beats of Malaysia welcomed guests to The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur. 2. Prof Loredana Padurean, HRH Princess Norodom Arunrasmy of Cambodia, HE Adrienne Diop, Ambassador of Senegal and HE Lourdes Puma Puma, Ambassador of Ecuador. 3. Tan Sri Yeoh Tiong Lay, Executive Chairman of YTL Corporation, HRH Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah of Selangor, Tan Sri Francis Yeoh, Managing Director of YTL Corporation and Craig Smith, Asia Pacific President and Managing Director at Marriott International. 4. HE Valery Yermolov, Ambassador of Russia and





Fashion Conscious

It was all about high fashion and high spirits at Starhill Fashion Week's Spring/Summer 2016 opening with a swanky launch party in the heart of Bukit Bintang. The spectacular fashion party saw Malaysia's most stylish faces having a fabulous time, enjoying complimentary manicures as they sipped on GH Mumm Champagne and Absolut Hibiscus cocktails and sampled Armani Dolce chocolates and canapés exclusively prepared by Shook! restaurant. The highlight of the evening was an incredible fashion showcase by Dutch haute couture brand, Monique Collignon who had the chic crowd blown away with stunning pieces from her latest collection. ■

1. Haryati Hanim and Nurul Izani Zulkifli. 2. Ingeborg Lampe and Monique Maissan. 3. Prof Loredana Padurean and Tengku Loreta Tengku Dato' Setia Ramli. 4. Paula Conway and Monique Collignon. 5. Aigerim Rakhmet and Dilnaz Akramova. 6. Hossein Karimi and Datuk Wira Rahadian Mahmud Mohammad Khaili. 7. Tunku Harunnarasheed Putra and Che Puan Amelia Thripura Henderson. 8. Christina Loh, Mi-Ki Choong and Shakira Matrici.



Gastronomic Fare

Fine food, fine wine and fine company- that was the atmosphere at Cameron Highlands Resort's Dining Room when it hosted the Chaine des Rottisseurs Bailliage de Kuala Lumpur and Bailliage de Perak for dinner. The evening started on a warm note with the society taking part in the traditional fire lighting ceremony while being served delicious rum and strawberry daiquiris exclusively concocted for the occasion. Conversation flowed easily as the members dined on exquisite dishes specially prepared by Chef Chang Kim Soon paired with excellent wines selected by *Professional Du Vin* Olivier Di Tullio. The delightful dinner was an extra joyous occasion as it was held in conjunction with World Chaine Day and Cameron Highlands Resort now joins Pangkor Laut Resort as a culinary destination endorsed by the international gastronomic society. ■

1. Olivier Di Tullio. 2. Dr Elizabeth Lee, Wendy Lewis and Ming Ho. 3. Elizabeth Buri, Christine Leveille, Mubina Ravinder Abdullah and Ajmal Khan. 4. Saskia Steinleitner and Chef Rodolphe Orno. 5. David Sui and Jennifer Sui. 6. Lydia Cheah and Hye Rin Um. 7. Chloe Cheah and Kristen Cheah. 8. Ken Lewis and Cheong Chung Kin. 9. Jennifer Sui, Ming Ho, Terence Waller, Cameron Highlands Resort Manager, Dr Elizabeth Lee, Wendy Lewis and Irene Chen.





All In Good Time

HYT, the masters of producing hydromechanical timepieces, recently celebrated the opening of the Swiss brand's very first standalone boutique in Kuala Lumpur. Among the VIPs in attendance included Tan Sri Dato' Francis Yeoh, Managing Director of YTL Corporation, Joseph Yeoh, Vice President at YTL Hotels and Properties, and Vincent Perriard, the charismatic CEO of HYT. Located on the Adorn floor at the prestigious Starhill Gallery, the journey that led to this momentous occasion can be traced back to 2014, when the brand first decided to set up a humble pop-up store during the prestigious watch and jewellery event, *A Journey Through Time*. The decision certainly paid off as curious passersby simply couldn't get enough of HYT's horological wonders which included the *H1 Dracula DLC*, that was ultimately awarded the *Favourite Men's Watch Award* during the Starhill Gallery Watch of the Year Awards 2014. 🕒

1. Dr S Soosay, Daku Chopra and Pream Anand. 2. Tan Sri Dato' Francis Yeoh and Vincent Perriard, CEO of HYT. 3. Tricia Katherine, Mahesh Narayan and Danielle Mohan. 4. Dato' Francis Sew and Xavier Casals, Art Director of HYT. 5. Hossein Karimi, Emtsa Shirazi, Joseph Yeoh, Lee Seing Wah and Caleb Chow. 6. Ida Lokman and Vincent Perriard, CEO of HYT.



life events //



All Hail The Queen

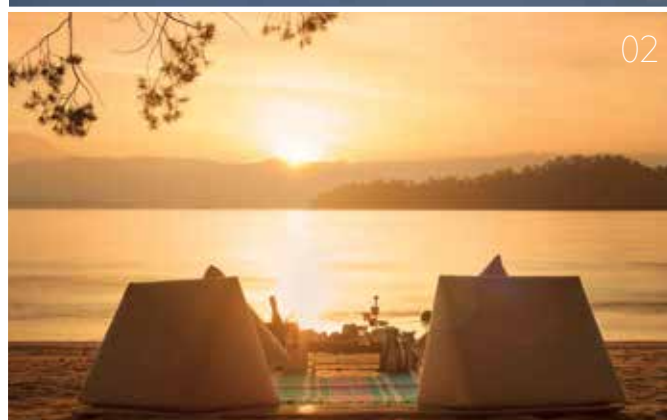
It was a night of celebration when many foreign dignitaries, senior government officials, business leaders, socialites and celebrities came together to raise a toast to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in conjunction with her 90th birthday celebration. Hosted by the British High Commission, the evening saw Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed, Minister of International Trade and Industry Malaysia, gracing and launching the event along with HE Vicki Treadell CMG MVO, British High Commissioner to Malaysia. Held at the magnificent Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur, guests were seen mingling and socialising over scrumptious British cuisine, ending the night on a high note. 🇬🇧



1. Vee Smith, Elise Mithell, Rimma Yakimov and Susanna Watson. 2. Martha Tee, CH Tee and Kathryn Mathie. 3. Angela Subritzky, HE Dr John Subritzky, High Commissioner of New Zealand, Hilary Michael and HE Holger Michael, Ambassador of Germany. 4. Robert Lim, Hamidah Naziadin and Dato' Lawrence Low Kah Guan. 5. Ning Baizura and Dato' Zahim Albakri. 6. Shontelle Allwood, Rebecca Arulsamy and Lorien Holland. 7. Roslan Wilkinson, James Beltran and Dato' Nicholas M Pinder. 8. Patrick McVeigh, Andrew J Dalton and Ng Kim Huat. 9. HE Hans Ola Urstad, Ambassador of Norway, Federica Sammartino, HE Mario Sammartino, Ambassador of Italy and HE Judith St. George, High Commissioner of Canada. 10. Iliza Ho and Datuk Jimmy Choo. 11. Suresh Soosay, Paula Conway, Jennifer Friis and Joseph Yeoh. 12. Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed, Minister of International Trade and Industry Malaysia, HE Vicki Treadell, High Commissioner of Britain and HRH Dato' Seri Diraja Tan Sri Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz binti Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah of Kedah. 13. Dato' Yeoh Soo Min, Datuk Jimmy Choo and Tan Sri Dr Francis Yeoh, Group Managing Director of YTL Corporation. 14. Datuk Nik Kamaruddin, HE Vicki Treadell, High Commissioner of Britain, Datin Nik Ruziah and Nik Faiz Nik Amin.



01



02



03

01

High Rise

Skiing at **Niseko Village** is reaching new heights with the all-new Village Express and Upper Village Gondola lifts, along with a new ski run set to open in December 2016. The lifts boast unprecedented construction – Village Express will be the first gondola-and-chair mixed lift while the Upper Village Gondola will be the first pulsed gondola ski lift to be constructed at a Japanese ski resort. These new lifts will give guests from **Kasara Niseko Village Townhouse** and **The Green Leaf Niseko Village** properties easier access to the beginners ski area on The Green Leaf Niseko Village mountainside for a full day of fun at the slopes. A new 1.2km ski run for beginners will also complement the state-of-the-art lifts, running from the top station through to the Village Express lift base.

02

Sunny Side Up

Watching the sun rise is one of life's most revered moments as you marvel at the daily miracle while the world stirs awake. At **Gaya Island Resort**, you can now take in the views of the sun painting the sky and the sea gold with the *Sunrise Breakfast* experience. Tuck into a private continental breakfast from 5.30am onwards on the shores of Malohom Bay and be amazed by the golden rays emerging over the horizon and lighting up monumental Mount Kinabalu. Start a sunny day with a soothing cup of coffee and the glorious view unfolding to the sound of waves breaking on the shore. The *Sunrise Breakfast* experience serves one couple daily for MYR500.

03

Winning Streak

The Gainsborough Bath Spa has been charming travellers from all over the world since its opening in September 2015. Really, who can find fault with this historic hotel that offers guests exclusive access to Bath's famed natural thermal waters in its luxurious spa? Certainly not *Condé Nast Traveler* and *Tatler Spa Guide*, awarding the magnificent hotel with a spot in the *Condé Nast Traveler* 2016 Hot List: The Best New Hotels in the World and the 'Bathing Beauty' title at the *Tatler Spa Awards 2016*. The Gainsborough Bath Spa particularly charmed *Condé Nast Traveler* by striking the perfect balance between old-school extravagance and modernity, praising it as a "place to live, and soak, like a Roman, in one of England's prettiest towns."



04



05



06

04

Ticket To Ride

Eastern & Oriental Express, Asia's most luxurious train, is set to welcome the culinary exploits of leading Australian chef and restaurateur, Luke Mangan, this October. Aboard the elegant green and gold carriages, guests will, literally, be taken on a culinary journey with Mangan's signature clean and contemporary dishes through the scenic landscapes of Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. The journey begins in Singapore, with guests joining Mangan on a morning tour of an exotic food market, before boarding the train to Bangkok, where he will host a book signing of his latest publication, *Salt Grill: Fine Dining for the Whole Family*. Along the way, he will delight tastebuds with specially created menus from the train's galley kitchens. The 3D/2N culinary adventure starts at USD2,820 for two in a Pullman cabin, including all *table d'hote* meals.

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

05

Seaside Sanctuary

If you think your stay at **Tanjong Jara Resort** could not get more magnificent, then you have another think coming. The exclusive new Anjung Seafront Rooms, perched on the shore, put you right in front of the deep blue waters of the South China Sea, giving you private sunrise views as you lounge on the deck. With such close proximity to the sea, you'll be lulled to sleep by the gentle lapping of the waters on the shore and waking up to the harmonious melody of the waves. The semi-detached single-storey rooms also showcase the resort's trademark Malay architecture with elegantly modern interiors. While the sun warms the outside, the inside is flushed with a warm colour palette and full height mirrors.

06

Country Life

With its history, lush green gardens and quintessentially English charm, it's no wonder that the picturesque country village of Bray-on-Thames was voted Best Village in the 2015 Britain in Bloom competition by the Royal Horticultural Society UK. At the heart of this pretty riverside parish is the elegant **MUSE Bray House**, with a fresh new contemporary look. The exquisitely furnished English house comes with a 24/7 concierge service to cater to your every whim – from private chefs and spa treatments, to riverside picnics and even restaurant reservations. So, if you're coming to dine at the famous three Michelin-starred Waterside Inn and Fat Duck restaurants in Bray, you now have a brilliant reason to stay. ■

Water, Water, Everywhere...

Water lies at the heart of every Asian spa experience; in fact it probably is the heart of Asian culture. It certainly rests at the heart of Pangkor Laut Resort, an idyllic private island where a glistening, emerald sea surrounds 120 hectares of untouched rainforest. There isn't anything or anyone in this tropical Arcadia unaffected by the healing power of water.

Text **Kim Inglis** Photography **Edmund Lee**



A Sybaritic Spa to Remember

The resort's prestigious and entirely private Spa Village, situated on secluded Coral Bay, pays homage to the Asian reverence for water in more ways than one. Hot and cold dipping pools, tranquil reflecting ponds, decorative water features and a 50-metre lap pool are surrounded by Malay-inspired treatment rooms and suites, cozy nap gazebos, open beachside pavilions, a café, beauty salon, boutique and library. The backdrop is primary jungle, as well as a garden of therapeutic plants, while views out to sea are pristine. Water literally embraces the spa in a cool caress.

This is entirely apt as the *raison d'être* of Spa Village is its connection to the natural world which surrounds it. It exists to harness the curative capacity of herbs and the purifying properties of water. As such, many of the spa's treatments are water based. In keeping with the Asian veneration for water, there are a number of hydrotherapeutic options that take their inspiration from ancient rituals, but have been modernised for today's sophisticated traveller.

In the past, purification through water was both a cultural and/or religious act, as well as a practical means to cleanliness. Such rituals continue unabated today. Take India, for example: every day thousands of people dip their bodies into the holy



life on the cover //

Clockwise from left: The tranquil lap pool at Spa Village is overlooked by the open pavilion Jamu Bar; interconnecting timber walkways link spa accommodations and the island; the Ayurvedic specialist is available for consultations at the Ayurvedic Hut; the library; cozy nap gazebos are dotted around the spa surrounds.



River Ganges as a means of ritual purification, while many others enjoy an Ayurvedic steam bath to balance their *doshas*. In Japan, the tradition of bathing in hot, mineral-rich springs or *onsen* is a cleansing as well as social activity; while in South-East Asia, bathing in perfumed waters or a *mandi* with milk are well-established beauty rituals. In addition, hot steam chambers using cleansing herbs such as camphor, lemongrass, ginger and lime are often accompanied by scrubs, wraps and massages.

As rainwater revitalises the tropical forest, water restores and reinvigorates the human body. This is why guests at Pangkor Laut's Spa Village are all offered a specially devised bathing sequence prior to whichever treatment they have booked. This six-pronged celebration of Asia's various bathing traditions is called the Bath House Ritual (see page 22). It helps guests unwind, slow down and de-stress and also prepares their mind and body for the treats to follow.

Despite the fact that the spa seems unhurried, entirely natural and uncluttered, and devoid of millennial technologies, it is actually a well-oiled machine. Offering a plethora of Malay, Chinese, Indian and Thai practices, its overall aim of wellness encapsulates mental, physical and spiritual health. Guests can dip into the à la carte menu of masques, wraps, massages and facials, or customise

full-day experiences for total immersion. Those seeking to fully experience the health rituals of the region are encouraged to consult the Malay, Chinese Traditional Medicine or Ayurvedic specialist to work out a programme for upcoming days.

As with other Spa Village properties, the binding theme here is nature and the natural world. This ties in perfectly with the other activities on offer at Pangkor Laut Resort. Due to the owner's commitment to sustaining the island's pristine environment, 80 per cent of the landmass is still covered by one of the oldest rainforests in the world — so a walk with the resident naturalist is many a guest's highlight.

THE BATH HOUSE RITUAL

Leonardo da Vinci once noted that “Water is the driving force in nature” and this is certainly a tenet close to the hearts of the therapists who devised the unique Bath House Ritual at Spa Village Pangkor Laut. Designed to prepare guests both physically and mentally for their treatment to follow, it is a voyage that honours some of Asia’s most refreshing bathing traditions.



China is the first destination — and not the China we know today, but that of feudal times. In the old days when concubines in the imperial court unwrapped their bound feet, they had to pound them with wooden mallets to ensure that the blood was still circulating. Thankfully, the Chinese Foot Pounding here is less life-and-death, more on the revitalising spectrum. First, guests’ feet are softened in a petal-scented footbath, then they are kneaded and given a brisk tapping with a small wooden hammer. This kickstarts sluggish circulation and opens up the meridian channels, in much the same way that a reflexology session would.



From here, China gives way to Malaysia, as guests are escorted from their sweet open-air pavilion into an airy ‘compound’

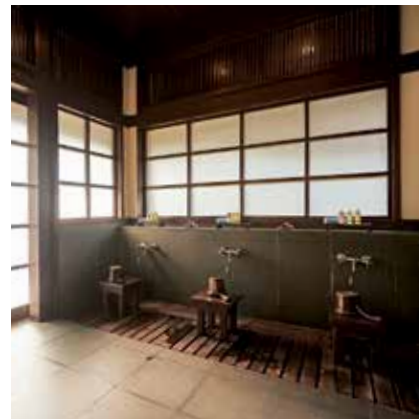
containing the Malay Bath. Water cascades from faucets concealed in carved stone walls, then circulates beneath in an oversized pool. Sitting under these ‘waterfalls’, allowing the water pressure to relieve muscle tension and strain, mimics the open-air bathing that women undertook every day in the traditional kampong. It also brings a sense of play into the ritual, as anyone who has ever watched a group of Asian children cavorting in a river or lake can testify.



Inhalation therapy is the next step, with guests invited to breathe deeply from one of four different steam boxes filled with various combinations of herbs wrapped in pandan leaf. Pandan is traditionally used in South East Asia as a deodoriser and cardio-tonic: taking the scents deep into the lungs to calm, uplift, detoxify or de-stress is another therapeutic part of the journey.



Next stop is Japan, for a cup of ginger tea or a session in the stylish surrounds of the Japanese Bath House. Surrounded by *shoji* screens and slate tiles, the ambience is more Emperor-eclectic than jungle Malay. An exfoliating session with a *goshi-goshi* cloth and duneberry soap using water from large Japanese buckets sets the skin up for a dip in the warm natural rock



pool *rotenburu*. *Rotenburu* translates as ‘bath amid the dew under open sky’ and is traditionally taken in the open air in the Japanese mountains in pools full of mineral-rich volcanic spring water. Here, steam rises gently from the clear waters and dissipates in the tropical air above.



Fittingly, guests end up where they started — back in China. This time they receive a Shanghai Scrub, a superb exfoliating scrub and wash on a cool marble bed. This was traditionally offered exclusively to males in the past, but is given to one and all as the finale to this beautiful water journey. Skin is guaranteed to feel soft and tingly after, with a deep surface shine.

Not only are the various stages of the ritual enlivening and restorative, the generously proportioned surrounds and the solitude of the experience are therapeutic in themselves. Water flows generously throughout and brings with it numerous benefits: cleansing, steaming, bathing, relaxing; tension-relieving and exfoliating; uplifting and energising; but above all, purifying. The Bath House Ritual is often the highlight of a guest’s stay.

The Power of Nature

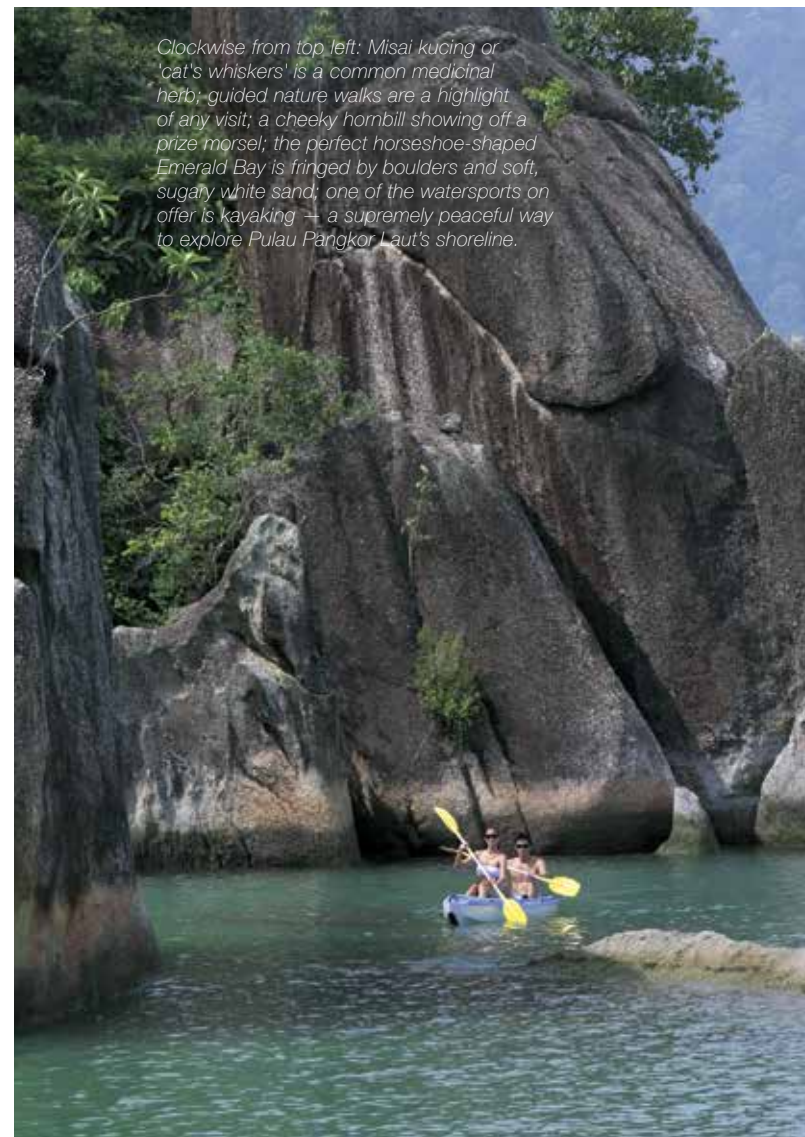
Whilst some guests are keen to spot the extremely rare pangolin or scaly ant-eater, macaque monkeys or monitor lizards, others are happy to learn about the smaller inhabitants — the fruit bats or the little beetles, lizards and spiders that scurry about the island oblivious to their human counterparts. When guests venture deep into the jungle, they begin to appreciate the majesty of the two-million-year-old trees, the variety of plant life and the huge diversity of birdlife. The latter can be every bit as interesting as the larger mammals. A hawk in majestic flight, the clumsy clatter of a pair of hornbills, flashes of colour from an Asian fairy-bluebird or oriole — all contribute to the rich natural heritage of the forest.

There are two nature walks on the island — the Northern and Southern Perimeter Trek. The Southern, a little over 500 metres in length, takes about two hours and meanders from Coral Bay in the south through the hilly interior robed in ancient forest to Emerald Bay in the north. A number of wild orchid species, clusters of tall *nibong* palms, huge straight-trunked hardwood trees reaching for the sky — all mixed with a profusion of lianas and rattan vines for a breathtaking variety of natural flora.

Watersports in the form of snorkeling, wakeboarding, water-skiing, kayaking and sailing are popular pastimes — as is simply



Clockwise from top left: Misai kucing or ‘cat’s whiskers’ is a common medicinal herb; guided nature walks are a highlight of any visit; a cheeky hornbill showing off a prize morsel; the perfect horseshoe-shaped Emerald Bay is fringed by boulders and soft, sugary white sand; one of the watersports on offer is kayaking — a supremely peaceful way to explore Pulau Pangkor Laut’s shoreline.



‘hanging out’, sunbathing or swimming at secluded Emerald Bay. This perfect horseshoe-shaped cove was the venue for British submarine rescue and reconnaissance operations during World War II. Today, it’s difficult to imagine such cloak-and-dagger subterfuge when one swings in a hammock at the water’s edge, with only the sounds of a shrieking kingfisher and the gentle lapping of waves on the shore for company.



Clockwise, from left: Private dining on the beach — what could be more romantic?; Feast Village; many of the hillside accommodations have picture-perfect views over the sea.



The living area of the Pavarotti Suite comes with a separate dining room for in-villa personalised dining.



Architecture, Design and Cuisine

Even though the resort dates back over 30 years, today's incarnation is a far cry from the humble hostelry that opened in 1985. Constant improvements, new buildings and different phases of construction have resulted in world-class facilities — all designed in the spirit of an idealised Malay village. There are 126 air-conditioned villas set in very different locations — over the sea on stilts, right on the white sandy beach, set amongst the lush tropical gardens, or perched dramatically in the hills. And because only 20 per cent of the landmass has been built on, the focus is always firmly on the forest.

The 22 over-water spa villas are a particular favourite: resembling the style of a traditional fishing village, the cluster of accommodations are linked by wooden walkways. Built almost entirely of timber, each has a private veranda overlooking cobalt sea and sky, a restful interior and a spacious bathroom stocked with all-natural toiletries. The eco-friendly approach is furthered by the choice of handspun cottons, wooden detailing and local craftsmanship. And because they are a stone's throw off shore from the spa, they make an ideal base for serious spa aficionados.

For those who want to push the boat out, the Paravotti Suite is recommended. Named after the world-famous tenor who fell in love with Pangkor Laut and sang at one of the resort's grand openings, it is an elegant two-bedroom villa set high in the hills. Surrounded by rainforest with spectacular views out to sea, there is an expansive balcony and an enormous open-roofed bathroom. It's a good example of how Malay style has been updated and improved upon: there's more than a nod to the past in the vernacular, but the overall impression is sophisticated and elegant.

Public spaces are no less opulent — with a number of restaurants and bars all designed to harness sea breezes and fit harmoniously into the natural island setting. Feast Village, the main dining room, is a buzzy interactive space that combines a number of different culinary pavilions each serving a particular cuisine. Conceptualised as a restaurant cum kitchen/grocer's market, it doubles up as a 'culinary academy' between mealtimes. The seaside Uncle Lim's Kitchen, specialising in Nyonya and Hockchew Chinese-style home cooking, seems to sprout out from a huge boulder adjacent the Spa Village; while Fisherman's Cove is a more formal affair.

As if this were not enough, there are four further food-and-beverage outlets: the Royal Bay Beach Club overlooking the infinity-edge pool; Chapman's Bar on the beach at Emerald Bay; The Straits, set against the rocks overlooking Royal Bay where guests dine in private booths of natural timber adorned with granite and silk; and the Jamu Bar at the spa. Each is very different in style and offering, but all are united in their celebration of fresh local produce. Service is key, along with a sense of place and a strong authenticity.

Finally, if romantic dining *à deux* is the order of the day (or night), members of staff are more than happy to situate a beautiful, petal-strewn table beneath the stars on the beach and serve a pre-arranged menu to guests' order. This is just one example of the many bespoke experiences on offer. A hallmark of the resort, they help to make guests feel that little bit more special — and linger long in the memory after they've gone home. ■

For more information, visit pangkorlautresort.com

Feast du Jour

The blissful feeling of enjoying your meal while flipping through your favourite read might just be the best dining experience for many. Head for The Library at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur for a relaxing journey of self-discovery for both your mind and palate.

Text **Rubaashini Shunmuganathan**
Photography **Jacob Termansen & Patrick Chan**



For many of us, it's the little things like having a family meal together or finishing a riveting book that makes life meaningful. Given the fast-moving world we live in today, not many of us actually get the chance to do either. With this in mind, The Library at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur took up the challenge to give everyone the chance to relax and enjoy their dinner while perusing their preferred books. Located on the first floor of the newly refurbished hotel, The Library has a cosy ambience – a warm colour scheme and intimate setting for a much-needed escape from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Upon entry, one would be pleasantly surprised to see sizable shelves, packed with fun reads, at the corners of the room. Dato' Mark Yeoh, who oversees YTL Hotels, is the brainchild behind this concept of reading while having dinner. A book enthusiast himself, Dato' Mark personally handpicked the different genres of books, ranging from travel and fashion to philosophy and law, giving guests a selection of more than 3,000 titles to browse through. If you're early and feel the need to socialise before your meal, the cocktail area, right opposite The Library, is the place to head for. Take a seat on of the comfortable sofas and enjoy the soothing music by the live band while catching up with your guests. Don't forget to order the signature cocktail, *Ritz Fizz*. The azure-coloured concoction is served in a champagne glass and definitely helps whet your appetite.

Another great pleasure to be had at The Library is the *menu du jour*, which means there will always be something new to experience for repeat guests. The food is also paired with thoughtfully selected wine to accompany each course, while the chef also offers bespoke menus if what's on offer isn't to your tastes. On a recent visit, our evening started with an amuse-bouche of crunchy yet perfectly cooked asparagus topped with salmon



and salsa. It was the ideal beginning as it was light and helped to kick-start our taste buds for the next course. On the recommendation of our host, we selected the crispy jumbo crab cake, and it proved to be the right choice as it was perfectly crispy on the outside and juicy and flavourful on the inside.

There is no particular signature dish, per se, at The Library but there is a signature carvery every day, which is prepared at your tableside when ordered. That particular evening, we were served succulent chicken drumstick, with sides of mashed potato and roasted root vegetables, and topped with an appetising gravy, an irresistibly delicious combination that we couldn't get enough of. For dessert, we had a fruit tart of

mango, kiwi, strawberry, raspberry and blueberry as well as a decadent chocolate éclair filled with chocolate and caramel cream, ensuring we ended our meal with a sweet touch.

If you want to linger after dinner to finish your book, head for The Smoke Room right next to the dining area. A cosy space with leather seats and soft cushions, kick back and enjoy your post-prandial musings with digestifs of premium whisky and cognac or even a cigar. It will be the perfect cap to a most memorable evening. ■

The Library opens daily from 6pm to 1am at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur. For more information and reservations, please call +60 3 2142 8000 or visit www.ritzcarlton.com.

Clockwise, from far left: Iconic cocktails to help stimulate your appetite; the rich chocolate éclair is a must-try on the menu; The Library's signature carvery of the day; end your meal with this sugary treat.



TOP READS

Ten highlights from the collection at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur's The Library.

- 01** In Time, Out of Place by You Jin – The author shares her travel journey, from trekking through Amazon to staying at a farm in Tanzania, in a fun yet insightful way.
- 02** 1001 Comics You Must Read Before You Die by Paul Gravett – A must if you're a fan of comics or graphic novels. There will be definitely be a few titles you'll add to your own reading list.
- 03** States of Minds: Experiences at the Edge of Consciousness – Explores the meaning of consciousness and the nature of interrupted conscious experiences, such as somnambulism, synaesthesia and disorders of memory, as seen through the eyes of writers, artists, scientists and philosophers.
- 04** What Are They Saying About You? by Frank Peters – Fifty short lessons that will help you build and maintain your reputation.
- 05** Passion for Seafood by Gordon Ramsay – Learn a thing or two from the highly acclaimed chef on how to handle and cook fish and shellfish.
- 06** The Little Coffee Know-It-All: A Miscellany for Growing, Roasting, and Brewing, Uncompromising and Unapologetic by Shawn Steiman – All you need to know about the art of coffee-making.
- 07** How to Visit an Art Museum by Johan Idema – The sense and nonsense of art museum etiquette.
- 08** The Process Matters: Engaging and Equipping People for Success by Joel Brockner – Learn the right way to meet business targets and goals – it's not just what we accomplish that matters but also how we achieve it.
- 09** At Home in Sri Lanka by James Fennel and Tom Sykes – Experience the architecture scene in Sri Lanka through the lens of Fennel and the words of Sykes.
- 10** George Daniels: A Master Watchmaker & His Art by Michael Clerizo – The author, who worked closely with Daniels, has created the perfect tribute to this master creator.



Niseko, Ikimashou!

The days are getting longer, the sun is getting stronger. Where to go when the great outdoors beckons? Niseko in Hokkaido, Japan, of course.





Few places offer air as champagne-clear as Hokkaido, Japan. Now that it's high summer, outdoor enthusiasts of all shapes, heights and sizes have long traded in their goose-down puffas for shorts, sandals and cotton tees. With pine-scented forests, lavender fields and crystal brooks to wade in, summer in Niseko is meant to be lived outdoors. From leisurely games of golf to adrenaline-inducing trekking and horseback riding as well as ziplining, you'll find you'd be positively spoilt for choice.

To make the most of your sun-dappled summer, Niseko Village has introduced its special value ticket plan, known as the 'Pure' Super Passport. For just JPY4,400 for adults and JPY3,300 for children 15 years of age and below, it opens up 11 of Niseko Village's fun and games to you, with unlimited play time. This includes trekking among the tree-tops on hanging bridges, a zipline forest adventure, bouncing and gliding down the biggest air cushion slider in town, kite-flying, mini volleyball and touring the park by golf buggy.

If you need a bit more excitement or variety, simply add to the pleasure with a medley of other activities, including participating in scheduled treasure hunts, woodcrafting sessions, exploring the local fields and



forest on horseback or on a mountain bike, and even a hot air balloon ride. Those wishing to work on lowering their handicap seriously can consider the two beautiful golf courses nearby – the Niseko Village Golf Course that's just right by the Hilton Niseko Village hotel and the Niseko Golf Course, a mere 20 minutes' drive away. The former is a challenging 704-yard course with a rare Par 6 hole and stunning views of the mountain range, while the latter is an Arnold Palmer-designed course with a reputation for being challenging – particularly at its signature Par 3 hole.

All that tearing about can also prove hot and thirsty work – especially in summer – and the best place to retreat to for a spot of refreshment would be the charming *machiya*-style shops and restaurants, collectively known as The Village. The most popular spots for lunch are, undoubtedly, The Crab Shack and Yang Shu Ten, for fresh-as-can-be seafood, served in a variety of styles as well as in the traditional Japanese ways of sushi, tempura and teppanyaki. If it's just coffee you're after, head to the Village Patisserie, where you





might just be tempted to give in and order a slice of cream-laden cake to go with your *ristretto*. After filling up, a short walkabout is always a good idea... except, perhaps, for one's wallet. The Village offers several stores specialising in beautiful, locally-sourced and crafted goods. All the gear you need (utilitarian or trend-conscious) may be sourced from iGate Ikeuchi, while iZone Ikeuchi offers an array of Made-in-Japan fashion and beauty products. If you haven't time to make your way to the pretty port town of Otaru, pick up some of its famous glassware at The Village's Otaru Taishou Glass Palace.

Once the kids have used up all their energy and are neatly tucked into bed, treat yourself to some 'me' time at the Wakka Spa or even a simple soak in one of the outdoor *onsen*. Once your weary muscles are soothed and you're gleaming and glowing, it's always a good idea to head to Two Sticks for a spot of Asian-style tapas, washed down with a mug or two of the local (and excellent) draught beer. There's live music from time to time, so make sure you don't leave your room without your dancing shoes.

The Hilton Niseko Village, with its beautiful panoramic mountain-view rooms, has always been the preferred choice of travellers all-year-round, but what makes things even more exciting is the news that The Green Leaf Niseko Village stays open for summer, for the very first time, this year! Its location at the foot of Mount Niseko-Annupuri is positively charming but true eating enthusiasts will appreciate the fact it is but a short stroll away from Milk Kobo – the famous and hugely popular dairy-driven destination that sends fans into a tizzy at

the mere mention of its ethereal cream-filled *choux* puffs, yoghurt drink and Milkuchen sponge cake. And what would summer be without the daily treat of an ice cream cone? Milk Kobo, thankfully, offers a mind-boggling choice of flavours (all delicious) but the popular ones are caramel, green tea and milk. Those staying at the luxurious Kasara Niseko Village Townhouse will also find Milk Kobo all-too easy to access. But, should you be too tired out after an entire day outdoors, make the most of your benefits as a Kasara guest by ringing for

your complimentary driver-on-call to ferry you there and back.

And just as ice cream is a staple of summer, so is the smoky, earthy treat of a barbecue. The Hilton Niseko Village's Flame Restaurant offers summer barbecue menus, featuring fresh local seafood, meat and vegetables, where you can cook your own supper while exchanging news from the day's goings-on. And to ensure the Japanese element remains strong, finish the night with a session of the almost-national pastime of karaoke singing. The Hilton offers dedicated rooms for wannabe songbirds, although reservations are, wisely, recommended.

There will also be a variety of special events and activities happening throughout summer at Niseko Village and these may include friendly golf competitions, fireworks, exciting food promotions and visiting vendors selling tasty treats. To the global jetsetter, Niseko may have made its reputation as a destination par excellence based on its powder snow. But it is now time to discover all the charm and beauty of this special corner of Japan in a different shade. This season's colour is undoubtedly green! ■

Time Out In Terengganu

Lose yourself in the simple pleasures of kampong life by the sandy beaches of the East Coast and watch your worries melt away with a little help from Tanjong Jara Resort.

Text Kirat Kaur Photography Yong Keen Keong



Amidst the lush luxury of Tanjong Jara Resort, soak up its signature and specially crafted experiences to rejuvenate mind, body and soul while revelling in a simpler (yet infinitely more satisfying) way of life.

Sucimurni Exercise

After contemplating the sun's golden rays breaking over the deep blue waters, begin your path to purity and well-being with the PURE *Sucimurni* exercises. These gentle stretching movements aim to balance the seven energy centres, or *chakra*. Each morning, Captain Mokh guides guests to invigorate these vortexes of energy through a range of movements inspired by the animals associated with each *chakra* – the deer, crane, bear, cat, turtle, eagle and dragon. As each *chakra* point is explored, you become more rejuvenated as you focus on each breath and muscle in your body, letting a peaceful stillness enter your mind. With a quiet mind and relaxed body, it's the perfect way to start your *Sucimurni* experience in this tranquil resort.



Kampong Sucimurni Lifestyle

To a mind exhausted by the bedlam of the city, the discord of traffic and the endless barrage of menial tasks, how refreshing is the quiet humdrum of village life? Play traditional Malay games, feed the excited goats or even admire the careful movements of the batik painter as you nosh on *keropok lekor* and fritters with the *Kampong Sucimurni Lifestyle* experience. Every Saturday evening at the Beachfront Anjung Garden, the lawn comes alive with the delicious aromas, laughter and flurry of activities typical of a Malay kampong. It's an enjoyable evening as you get a chance to engage with the local community and appreciate the simple life for what it is – living life the best you can while maintaining a respectful relationship with nature. That being said, it really is quite delightful sipping on refreshing coconut water plucked by a trained monkey from the tree before your very eyes.

Bicycle Tour Of Dungun

Charles Dickens once wrote: "It is not easy to walk alone in the country without musing upon something." The countryside has



a spellbinding effect on people, turning them introspective, and the same effect is felt when exploring the quaint fishing village of Dungun. The humble bicycle is synonymous with the kampong, with many Malaysians recalling cycling past orchards, visiting neighbours and heading for new adventures. Cycle along the shoreline with the sea breeze caressing your face, admire the town from a small fishing jetty and exchange stories with the villagers over a cup of deliciously thick *kopi*. Who knows, you might even be invited to join in a friendly football match on the famed Schumacher field, generously repaired by the retired German F1 driver who was absolutely taken in by the charming village.



Secrets Of A Malay Kitchen

Once you've discovered the breezy lifestyle of a Malay kampong, it's time to literally get a taste of Malay life. The effervescent chef will reveal the secrets of local flavours, starting with a trip to the morning market. See how seafood, produce and spices are selected and take delight in the calls of the vendors and the sight of various colourful local products. To complete the visit, eat like a local and enjoy a Malaysian breakfast courtesy of food stalls dotted throughout the market. Inspired by the sights, sounds and smells of the market, try your hand at creating some of the local cuisine. Feeling spicy? Maybe you could attempt a fish curry or, if you're feeling a little sweet, then a dish of piquant chicken roselle is the thing for you. Under the watchful eye of the chef, you'll uncover the mysteries of local flavours and cooking techniques – skills you could put to good use at your next dinner party back home.

Spa Village Tanjong Jara

Of course, no journey to serenity is complete without a visit to Spa Village Tanjong Jara. Shower yourself in traditional Malay herbs and oils with the *Dandan Puteri Tujuh* spa experience, where you'll be pampered with traditional grooming treatments of Malay princesses that have been practiced for generations. The world is quiet here and your aches melt away with each healing touch, beginning with *Urutan Gamelan*, a traditional Malay massage. The royal treatment continues with a nourishing mix of coconut oil, rice paddy stalks and pandanus leaves applied to your tresses to give it the gloss and shine of princesses of yore. Then, an herbal facial massage and body scrub using the medicinal turmeric and galangal gives you a majestic glow, followed by the most relaxing milk bath. You'll be lulled into a

blissful state, miles away from the noise of the world as you soak up the waters scented by jasmine, rose and tropical magnolia. The whole experience is completed with a healthful blend of herbal roots and flower buds for a tonic drink that comforts you from the inside. At the end of this experience, you'll float away looking like a true princess with ancient secrets of Malay nobility in your soul. ■

To find out more about Tanjong Jara Resort's Signature and Crafted Experiences, visit www.tanjongjaresort.com.



In Seventh Heaven

There's no better place to spend a stylish summer this year than at the MUSE Saint Tropez, which is all set to welcome you for its seventh summer season. *YTL Life* speaks to Celia Gumbau, PR and Marketing Manager, to find out what to see, do and soak up in the French Riviera's most sought-after seaside town this season.

Text: Diana Khoo



The French Riviera is a wonderful place to be in summer. It's hardly a secret as, for over a hundred years now, it has attracted the rich, famous, titled and privileged, who come to soak up the sun, frolic in the truly azure waters, as well as to socialise and enjoy the good life in truly world-class style. But, in an area that's studded with instantly recognisable jet-set playgrounds like Cannes, Monte Carlo and Nice, connoisseurs still regard Saint-Tropez as the queen of them all. And it's easy to see why.

Whether you arrive in Saint-Tropez by Ferretti or Ferrari, docking in style under the watchful gaze of the town's iconic yellow-domed lighthouse or from zooming in along the stunning *route des plages*, there are few better places at which to alight and refresh yourself after the long journey (preferably with a perfectly-chilled glass of the local rosé) than at the MUSE Saint Tropez. A bijou gem set atop a little bluff in picture-perfect Ramatuelle, the MUSE Saint Tropez, set amidst three acres of stunning, self-sustainable gardens, offers the welcome you seek. With just 14 suites (there are no mere 'rooms' here), take your pick as each is distinct in ambience and views, named after legendary 'muses' – hence the resort's name – like *Catherine* (Deneuve), *Romy* (Schneider) and *Edith* (Piaf). Once you've settled down in your expansive suite, after checking in at the newly redesigned reception by Philippe Xeri of Rock the Kasbah fame, take your time to decide upon your diversion of choice.

Considering it's summer, simply whiling the day away by the tempting swimming pool in your Eres bathing suit, accompanied by nothing else but the latest bestseller and a mojito, is certainly recommended. If the rum makes you peckish, the hotel's chef, Emilie Myotte, is a whiz at whipping up temptations that may be as healthy (or not) as you wish. Celia Gumbau, PR and Marketing Manager, notes: "We are delighted Emilie remains with us to

"No road goes through Saint-Tropez. There is only one that takes you there and goes no further. If you want to leave, you must turn back. But will you leave?" – **Colette** –

continue pleasing our guests with her great creations, like her delicious fresh fish, grilled for lunch on the barbecue daily, as well as classic Mediterranean favourites, like Nicoise salad and fresh melon with Serrano ham. There are also gluten-free options for guests who wish it. This summer, we will also continue to serve the famous ice cream by Ladurée, which our guests are crazy about." And, in keeping with the festive mood of summer, there will also be live music around the pool and thematic winemaker's dinners. "The dinners and music worked really well for us last summer, so we definitely are planning more for this season," she adds. "I must say how wonderful the property looks now that the gardens (designed by the celebrated landscape architect Sophie Agata Ambroise) have fully matured."

Should you wish to unwind after a long flight, the on-site spa, which uses products exclusively by Aromatherapy Associates, offers a wonderful selection of bliss-inducing therapies as well as firm, intuitive body massages that will unknot even the most hardened kinks, although, for summer, Gumbau recommends the Aroma Flex, which is a reflexology treatment combined with an aromatherapy back, neck and shoulders and leg massage. "Saint-Tropez offers so much variety of enjoyment, from wonderful beach restaurants to unique stores for a spot of shopping, as well as perfect beaches

to enjoy the sun and sea. But what I am looking forward to most this summer is, of course, welcoming our repeat guests with the same pleasure every year. After spending so many summers together, you can't help but feel they have become part of our family." Let the family tradition begin, we say. *On y va!* 🍷



Clockwise, from top left: Scoff a delicious Tarte Tropezienne at the casual but chic Senequier bar and café; Saint-Tropez in summer is a hotspot for the global elite; the MUSE Saint Tropez is a sanctuary of privacy and pleasure; Tuesday and Saturday mornings are best spent scouring the Place des Lices for treasures - both edible and vintage.

THE TOP OF SAINT TROP
Celia Gumbau's Top 10 Summer Suggestions



01 A visit to the local fresh market on Tuesday and Saturday mornings at the **Place des Lices**, where you can shop for wonderful local produce, from *confitures artisanales* to fresh *saucissons*, while munching on hot, buttery *croissant pignons* (the local take on the famous crescent-shaped pastry but made with almonds and the region's famous pine nuts).

02 Wake up early to discover the fresh fish market at the **Porte de la Poissonerie** near the harbour. From luscious langoustines to gleaming black mussels and plump white squid, there's so much to see, smell and buy. Afterwards, you can try working your charms on Chef Emilie to see if she will cook up your catch of the day for your meal later.

03 Have a coffee in **Senequier** – the famous bar that's located on the harbour – accompanied by a slice of the famous Tarte Tropezienne, a wonderful brioche-like cake that's filled with rich cream. Chase it with a nice long lunch at **La Plage des Graniers**, the new beach restaurant located next to the town of Saint-Tropez that reopens this year.

04 Do enjoy drinks and a show at **L'Opera**, a unique modern cabaret restaurant and bar located along the harbour for an exceptional, entertaining evening.

05 Have a walk on the **Sentier du Littoral**, a beautiful coastal path, to capture the essence of the South of France.

06 Rekindle romance below the region's famous pine trees at **La Pomme de Pin**, a family-owned restaurant where you can enjoy great Italian specialties.

07 Don't leave for home without buying a few pairs of Saint-Tropez's famous sandals from either **K Jacques** or **Rondini**, who have been making them since 1933 and 1927, respectively. The gladiator-like sandales Tropeziennes is a must to ensure your Saint-Tropez look is on point.

08 Watch the sunset at **La Ponche**, a charming harbour-side neighbourhood, in the old town. This is a very typical activity enjoyed by both locals and visitors to Saint-Tropez.

09 Enjoy the outdoor concert of **Les Nuits de la Citadelle** or the **Ramatuelle Jazz Festival**. Summer is festival season in Saint-Tropez and the Muse Saint Tropez's fantastic location means you are right in the heart of all the wonderful series of concerts planned for the summer season.

10 Do a spot of paddling at **Les Canoubiers**, a very famous local beach that is known more for its proximity to the house of Brigitte Bardot. Canoubiers was also once greatly preferred by the writer Colette.

Preserving The Past



Just a stone's throw away from The Majestic Malacca, Villa Sentosa offers visitors a chance to relive what life was like in bygone days in Kampung Morten.

Text **Maya Michael**
Photography **Edmund Lee**

The steady urbanisation of Malaysia has seen hundreds of villages demolished in the name of progress. In an age where dusty, old buildings are expected to give way to glittering high-rise monuments of glass, steel and concrete, it is comforting to know that there are still places that remain relatively untouched by the passages of time, which includes a not-so-hidden gem located in the very heart of the historical city of Malacca.

Known as Kampung Morten, this riverine Malay village was named after Frederick Joseph Morten, an Englishman who held various posts in the Malayan Civil Service

before retiring as Colonial Secretary of the Straits Settlements in 1938. The initial settlers of Kampung Morten were said to have originated from a Javanese village in Indonesia and migrated to Malacca after their land was acquired by the government to form a municipal market. Led by a village headman named Datuk Othman Muhammad Noh, the settlers eventually located a remote area that they could call their own, but due to the abundance of mud crab mounds and nipa palms, there was still plenty that needed to be done before the settlers could finally call this place home.

To develop the area, Datuk Othman decided to approach Morten for a loan of 10,000 Straits Dollars – a hefty sum back in those days – from a special government fund. Fortunately, a man named Demang Abdul Ghani who worked at the district office at the time convinced Morten to grant the loan. The fund was then used to construct a total of 100 individual housing lots and by 1922, the village was officially established and named after Morten as a token of the villagers' appreciation. To honour Datuk Othman's role in the development of Kampung Morten, the state government would later name the main street surrounding the village as Persiaran Datuk Othman (Datuk Othman's Crescent).

For those curious to learn more about the rich history of this village and its pioneering founder, they need only to drop by the village and keep an eye out for a mint green house. Known today as Villa Sentosa, this brightly coloured dwelling functions



as both a living museum and a home to the descendants of Datuk Othman. Upon entering one of the three metal gates surrounding the property, visitors will be greeted by Ibrahim Haji Hashim, the grandson of Datuk Othman. Born and bred in Villa Sentosa, the 77 year-old former veterinarian now devotes most of his time catering to tourists and curious

passersby looking to uncover more on what life in the village must have been like all those years ago.

From the outside, the façade of the house resembles that of the *Rumah Limas*, a traditional design commonly found in places such as South Sumatra and Sundanese West Java. The meaning behind this unique design derives from the Malay word for 'five' that also refers to the number of roofs that protect the main areas of the house. Built on stilts, visitors looking to escape the dreaded heat can seek shelter at the veranda located directly beneath the main structure. Other surprises to look out for include a chicken coop that

Clockwise, from far left: A glorious view of Villa Sentosa; the air well that opens up to the sky; pastel pink curtains add a feminine touch to the home; a well-preserved photo of Ibrahim's father from 1939; the chicest chicken coop in Malacca.

“The house was built in 1922. Most of it remains exactly as it was back then, however, we had to renovate the kitchen following a termite infestation.”



looks exactly like a miniature version of the home.

Upon entering the abode, one will immediately feel transported to a time long forgotten. According to Ibrahim, the house has remained exactly the same since it was first built 94 years ago with the exception of the *dapur* (kitchen) area that was renovated following termite infestation. “Since this is a private museum, we don't receive any funding,” Ibrahim explains, “Everything has to be done by us, including the maintenance and general upkeep.”

Located in the centre of the main living area is the air well that allows natural light in while promoting ventilation. Strewn throughout the home are several religious artefacts, various antiques and personal memorabilia that have been passed down from generation to generation. Among these items of interest include

a collection of traditional wedding garb used by family members during nuptial ceremonies conducted at the house; vintage porcelain tea sets acquired from China, Japan and Korea; ancient film cameras that had belonged to Ibrahim's father; and even a century-old gong that is said to grant wishes.

Ibrahim also points out a stack of guestbooks that have been signed by the many visitors to the villa, with the earliest signature dating back to December 29, 1990. The house has also hosted various VIPs including former Prime Minister Tun Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Dato' Sri Haji Mohammad Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak and Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, the eleventh Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia and eighth Sultan of Selangor, who had dropped by Villa Sentosa during an official state visit.



As for his fondest childhood memory of growing up in Villa Sentosa, Ibrahim reminisces, “Whenever it rained, water would get inside the air well and fill up in the main hall before draining out through the small gutters located near the front doors. These could be closed off to form a makeshift lap-pool, which was a lot of fun. My father would sometimes allow us to use his cameras to film our own homemade movies and, during the weekends, we would project the footage on the wall as a form of entertainment.”

Ibrahim also recalls mingling with the children who grew up in the surrounding area, including those who lived at the very same house that is now the Majestic Hotel. “The entrance of the hotel still remains very much the same as back then, while the high-rise structure towards the back was only added in much later,” he states. When asked on his thoughts about what the future might hold for Kampung Morten, Ibrahim simply says with a grin, “Although the river has seen better days, it also serves as a kind of moat and continues to protect the village from the threat of development.” Here's hoping that Ibrahim's prediction stands up to the test of time. ❏

Clockwise, from far left: Ibrahim Haji Hashim strikes a pose while standing beside the family tree; the villa's private bedroom has housed numerous newlyweds; a flowery fountain welcomes visitors to Kampung Morten; vintage china sets displayed at the villa; an entry from the grandson of Winston Churchill was spotted in one of the guestbooks.



HOME AWAY FROM HOME

After a long day of exploring the historical wonders of Malacca, there's simply no better place to return to than that of the comforts offered at The Majestic Malacca. Inspired by Peranakan traditions, guests can choose to pamper themselves at the hotel's luxurious Spa Village Malacca; feast on the hearty traditional dishes lovingly prepared at the restaurant located just above the concierge; while away the hours by lounging at the Library; or bask at the secluded pool area located beside the fully-equipped gym. Be sure to book your stay today by visiting majesticmalacca.com



Twilight Time

“Heavenly shades of night are falling”, so sang The Platters. If you’re at a loss as to what to do once purple-coloured curtains mark the end of day, *YTL Life* is pleased to present a roll-call of the jolliest things to do once it’s twilight time. After all, as the saying goes: ‘Neglect any regrets once the sun sets’. And who are we to disregard time-honoured words of wisdom?

Universal Studio

What: Star-gazing meditation at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali.

Where: It’s blissful enough being on the mystical Island of the Gods but, when you are actually tucked away in its unspoilt north, particularly in the wellness cocoon that is Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, the Zen ante is upped even further.

Why: Don’t miss the chance to experience the resort’s signature Starlight Gazing Meditation Session, which takes place on a floating platform in the sapphire-hued swimming pool, right by the black sand beach. Here, lie on your back and gaze up at the enormity of the star-speckled universe as music, comprised of chanting, electronic vibrations, chimes and bells, and designed to induce deep relaxation, plays. The aim is to coax the brain into a synchronised theta state of consciousness while being surrounded by a specially selected triumvirate of elements to induce blissfulness: sky, sea and sound. As you allow yourself to be immersed in the experience, you will find your body relaxing, mind clearing, breath regulated and spirit stilled. After all, we know the restorative benefits of flotation – a feeling many liken to being in utero... a deep, powerful, primal experience. Many top-notch spas now offer flotation tanks to help recreate the sensation of weightlessness, which is said to unleash the brain’s subconscious and aid rejuvenation and healing, but few can match Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali’s liberating floating meditation session out in the open, under the black velvet sky and buffeted by sea breeze. Truly, this reflective, inward-looking experience is an important step when seeking to restore wellness and peace to the spirit, soul and mind.



Screen Savers

What: Sand, sea and a stellar movie-going experience unlike any other.

Where: Gaya Island Resort, Sabah.

Why: Evening entertainment doesn’t always mean having to head to the nearest dive bar after dinner. Over at Gaya Island Resort, you can spend your nights relishing the great outdoors while catching up on your

favourite Hollywood blockbuster films – and, if you happen to be extra lucky, the nocturnal creatures at the resort might even decide to join in on the fun. Held nightly at 2100hrs with a different movie each night of the week, this cinematic extravaganza not only lets you get in touch with your inner cinephile, but also immerse yourself in the atmospheric surroundings of this gorgeous resort. Comfy, colourful beanbags are provided so that you can kick back and fully absorb the drama unfolding on the big screen. Peckish movie-goers will also have the option of ordering

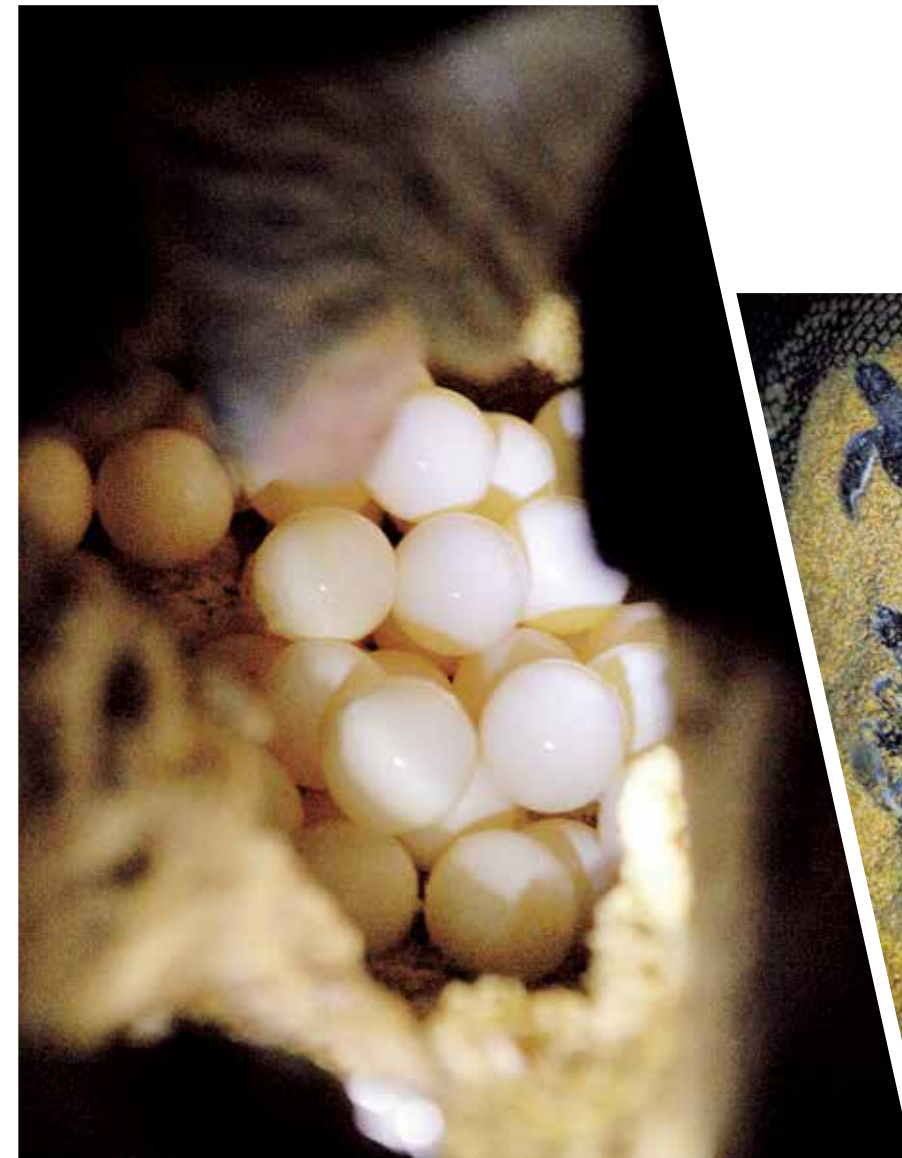
up any of the delicious munchies and drinks from the nearby Pool Bar, which is manned by the resort’s award-winning mixologist, Jeff Aiman. Depending on the weather, we recommend a refreshing glass of *Lemon Pink Soda*, which consists of sugar syrup, grenadine syrup and soda water, garnished with a slice of lemon. The only thing you’ll really have to worry about is dozing off to the soothing sounds of waves crashing on the nearby beach.

Drink With Me

What: Clever cocktails in the heart of olde KL.

Where: The Smoke House at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur.

Why: Presiding over The Smoke House's lounge and bar with the swagger and style reminiscent of an Asian Humphrey Bogart, barman Johnnie Yap is your go-to guy for some of the city's cleverest cocktails. You can go down the colonial route and ask for an old-fashioned *stengah* (planter-speak for equal measures of whisky and soda served over ice – *setengah* being the Malay word for 'half') or perhaps a gin *pahit* (essentially, gin and bitters, *pahit* being Malay for 'bitter'). If, however, it's a creative cocktail you're after, the drink to imbibe is undoubtedly the intriguingly-named *Code 55 + 2 Bulat* – also the hotel's signature cocktail. Local lore tells the tale of a naughty husband who'd been dining in The Majestic sometime in the 1930s with a lady friend who didn't happen to be his wife. A second (visibly angry) lady then entered the premises, promptly ordering something the bartender couldn't decipher, mishearing the words "a Colt 55 and two bullets" for a secret code to be served with two mysterious round objects (again, *bulat* being the local word for 'round' or 'circle'). Thankfully, that particular order never got served but the tale lingers on in the hallways of Kuala Lumpur's legendary hotel. Today, feel free to try the 'safe version', inspired by infidelity and the old saying that hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. The Smokehouse's version of the *Code 55 + 2 Bulat* is definitely more delicious than the taste of getting even – made with shandy, gin and whisky – as well as a test tube of grenadine, to macabrely symbolise the spilling of blood, should the barman have cottoned on to the lady's original request. If you prefer to have a drink accompanied by a little night music, mosey over to The Bar at the Colonial Café, where the Solianos, Malaysia's pre-eminent musical family, sing nightly and where the cocktails smack of happier occasions. Try the *Malayan Colada*, a local twist on the classic *Piña Colada*, or the *Jungle Bird* – a pretty and very *tiki* drink made using rum, lime, sugar, pineapple juice and Campari.



South China Bliss

What: Turtle-watching on the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia, while enjoying a few days of bliss at Tanjong Jara Resort.

Where: Your guide will take your private group (a minimum of four adults is required) to a secluded beach along the Terengganu coastline during the optimum turtle-watching months of May to September late at night to, hopefully, see a graceful green turtle emerge from the dark waters to lay her eggs on the very same beach where she was born, decades before. If the timing is right, it is also possible to watch baby turtles being released by the authorities as part of a conservation programme that is slowly but surely bearing fruit.

Why: Imagine watching a turtle appear like magic to give life or a delicate hatchling make its way into the vastness of the South China Sea against odds that seem near-impossible to beat (the survival rate for a green turtle is one in a thousand) to, one day, return to this very beach, guided by sheer instinct to renew the circle of life. If that doesn't take your breath away, we don't know what will.





Sailing Into The Sunset

What: Sunset cruising aboard a traditional Chinese junk.

Where: The Straits of Malacca, off Pangkor Laut Resort.

Why: One of the idyllic resort's most popular activities, particularly among couples and honeymooners, your island escapade somehow feels incomplete without spending one perfect evening bathed completely in amber light while watching the egg yolk-like sun slowly melt into the sea. It also helps that the charm factor is turned up by quite a few notches as the sailing vessel is none other than a traditional Chinese junk, crafted out of teak wood. Breathe in the briny air on the upper deck, which affords the best, uninterrupted views, while staff take turns to ensure your glass is topped up

with wine or champagne or to proffer nibbles: canapés or local snacks, like fried banana balls and Indian-style *vadai*. The cruise departs every evening from the resort's jetty and, should you wish to make a party out of it, do know that the junk accommodates up to 12 people comfortably. The sunset cruise is also the best way to get an idea of the gem-like island you are staying in – all virgin rainforest, secluded bays and hidden alabaster beaches – taking you past the main resort, all around the island, as well as the private enclave of The Estates at Marina Bay. Once night falls, you will be returned to the jetty where a buggy will be waiting to ferry you to dinner. Certainly the perfect ending to another perfect day in a tropical paradise.



Call Of The Wild

What: Night-trekking in the misty jungles of Cameron Highlands, Malaysia's premier hill station.

Where: Set off from the colonial luxury of the Cameron Highlands Resort at dusk to begin your nocturnal jungle trekking adventure. This trek takes approximately two hours and is for guests above the age of 12 only.

Why: If you've already trekked the length and breadth of the highlands, from Robinson Falls to Gunung Berembun and the Sam Poh Temple trail, try something different and infinitely more exciting by braving the jungle at night! Once the sun beds down for the night, the setting, sounds and sights of the cool forests change completely as your senses heighten and vision sharpens to make up for the diminishing light. For nature lovers, it is also a unique opportunity to listen to the night calls of animals, birds and insects that come out to play once night falls. These may include chirruping cicadas, owls or even the flutter of a fruit bat's wings as it flies around looking for its supper. After your trek, few things beat retreating back to the elegant splendour of the resort for a nightcap at the bar or, more comfortably, by the roaring fireplace while live piano music wafts in from the lounge. ■



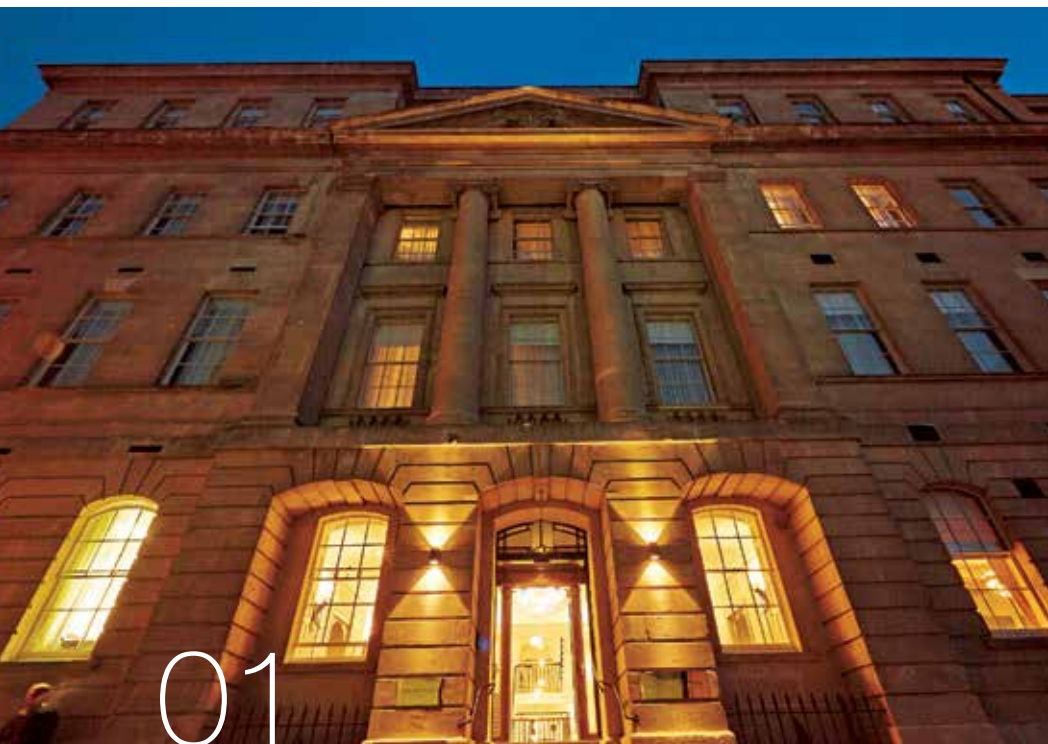
Summer's Here!

It's summer and there's no better place to be than the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bath. *YTL Life* picks 25 things you can do while in this bijoux gem of a city.

Text **Christy Yoong**

A summer break in the UK is just the antidote to the frenetic pace of modern life - glorious weather, long sunny days and no end of fun-filled activities to keep you occupied. For a change, head for the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bath. A little gem of a city, you'll

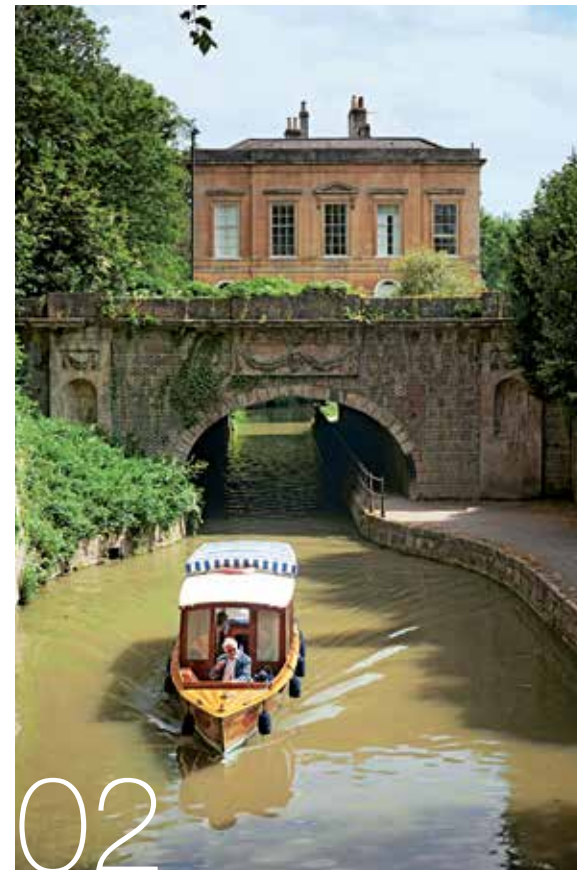
find everything you need here - and more - conveniently within walking distance, especially if you stay at The Gainsborough Bath Spa, where you can enjoy exemplary service, gracious settings and superb cuisine in the English county of Somerset.



01

Cool As Ice

After a long, hot day out, head back to The Gainsborough Bath Spa for the perfect way to cool down and unwind. The self-guided Bath House Circuit at the Spa Village Bath begins with a soak in a heated thermal pool before sweating it out in either the dry or infrared sauna. Cool down with handfuls of crushed lavender ice before relaxing in the main atrium pool, where you can float into oblivion. This might just be the most relaxing hour you'll ever have this summer!



02

On The Water

Take a champagne cruise down the picturesque Kennet and Avon Canal on the Lady Lena, the oldest electric launch in existence. Built in 1890, the Lady Lena comfortably fits up to 10 and is perfect for a lazy afternoon jaunt down the historic waterway. Jenkyn and Helen Knill, who run the Lady Lena, are more than happy to serve you a cream tea or even something more substantial to make the cruise more memorable.



03

Over The Roofs

Some of the best aspects of Bath can be found at the top of Thermae Bath Spa. Located in the heart of the city and immediately next to The Gainsborough Bath Spa, the spa's rooftop affords spectacular views of Bath and the surrounding hills. Sign up for the Twilight Package, which includes a three-hour spa and meal at Spring Restaurant, and watch the summer light fade away while relaxing in the open-air rooftop pool.



04

Shop Around

Staying at The Gainsborough Bath Spa means that the city's main shopping precincts of Union Street and Milsom Place are, literally, a stone's throw away. Tucked away in the side streets, however, are little hidden gems that reward the intrepid shopper - all just a short stroll away.



05

The One Bun

There are a few things that you have to do when in Bath and a visit to Sally Lunn's Historic Eating House is practically de rigeur. The Sally Lunn bun has been around for more than 300 years and has been enjoyed for just as long. Have it with a savoury - bacon is a good bet - or sweet filling, and you'll find out why Sally Lunn is famous the world over.



06

Al Fresco Time

The Royal Crescent is one of Bath's most visually stunning masterpieces, even in a city famous for its architectural marvels. You can get a glimpse of what life was like in 18th century Bath in the museum at No 1 Royal Crescent. Take advantage of the sunny weather and arrange for a picnic at the adjacent Royal Victoria Park. Al fresco dining's never had a better view.



07

Time For Tea

The Canvas Room at The Gainsborough Bath Spa is elegant and, yet, effortlessly cosy. Afternoon tea here is an indulgent, unhurried affair – scrumptious sandwiches and fresh scones with Devonshire clotted cream, all washed down with the tea of your choice. You can also choose to finish off with glasses of champagne, the perfect cap to a memorable afternoon.



08

Only Jane

One of Bath's most famous residents, Jane Austen immortalised the city in her novels *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*. The Jane Austen Centre and Regency Tea Room on Gay Street – just a few doors away from where Austen actually lived in Bath – are always worth a visit. If you're a fan, however, time your visit for the annual Jane Austen Festival, which takes place this year from 9 to 18 September. Be sure to sign up for the Grand Regency Costumed Promenade!

09



Sun Celebration

The prehistoric monument of Stonehenge is less than an hour's drive away from Bath. Also a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Stonehenge's iconic ring of standing stones date back as far as 3000BC. This year's Stonehenge Summer Solstice Festival takes place from 18 to 21 June, and you can expect sun-worshippers of a mystic kind gathering to mark the northern hemisphere's shortest night of the year.



life feature //

10

Music In The Air

The Glastonbury Festival is one of the biggest celebrations of contemporary performing arts. Held since 1970, the festival features music, dance, comedy, theatre, circus and cabaret, with hundreds of shows held at multiple stages around Worthy Farm in Pilton, which is less than an hour from Bath. This year's edition takes place from 22 to 26 June and is definitely a once-in-a-lifetime.

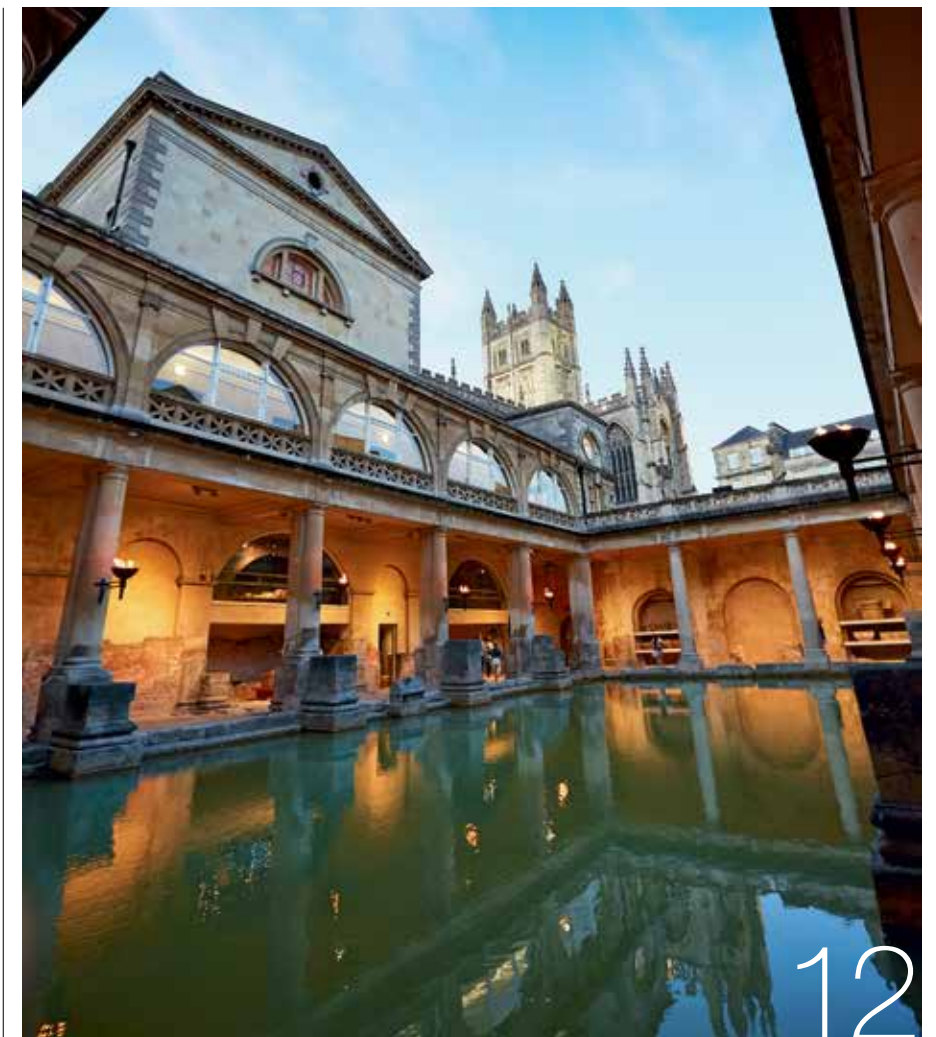


11



Gotta Have Shade

It's summer and you'll definitely need a hat. The British Hatter on Wolcot Street has all manner of fascinating headgear that will surely make you linger just trying to pick one out. In fact, you'll probably leave with a spare – just in case.



12

Roman Holiday

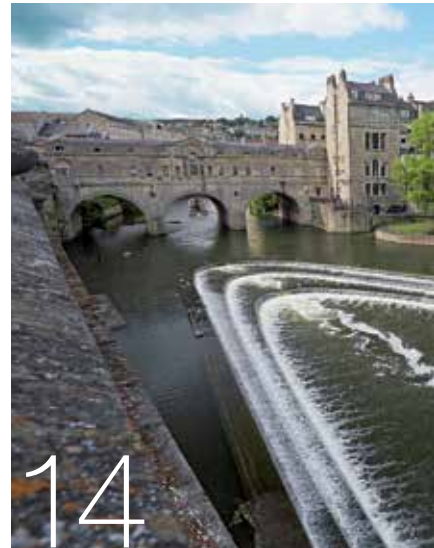
The Roman Baths is one of the city's most popular tourist attractions, drawing more than one million visitors a year. One of the best preserved Roman remains in the world, the Baths is both spectacular and educational. Throughout July and August, it is open until 10pm and illuminated by torch light, creating a magical atmosphere that transports you back in time.



13

Too Sweet

Hardys Original Sweetshop on Westgate Street is surely Bath's sweetest spot. A British institution, Hardys stocks enough compelling confectionery to tempt even the most sugar adverse. This emporium of sweetmeats will definitely draw you back again and again.



14

Weir Sight

Pulteney Bridge is one of Bath's landmarks. Completed in 1774, the Palladian style bridge is unique for the shops that line it on both sides. After browsing through the fascinating stores, stop for coffee and cake at The Bridge Coffee Shop. Bag a window seat for a gorgeous view of the weir in the River Avon below.



15

Spiritual Centre

Towering in the middle of the city, Bath Abbey is both spiritual centre and tourist favourite. Its splendid architecture – the fan vaulting is nothing short of magnificent – draws visitors from all over the globe, many of whom would have also stopped at the Roman Baths next door. Climb to the rooftop for a bird's-eye view of the city.



17

Artistic Moments

Bath's Holburne Museum is home to a superb collection of fine and decorative art, and is constantly putting up special exhibitions that are always worth a look. After a quiet afternoon of artistic appreciation, have a cup of tea and cake in the museum's Garden Café, which opens into the lovely Sydney Gardens, which Jane Austen, who once lived across the road from the Holburne, enjoyed tremendously.



16

Pint In The Sun

Walking is hard work, so just as well Bath is filled with many excellent pubs for a quick drink to quench that thirst. Both the Saracens Head and The Star Inn have been pulling pints for the longest time (the former dates back to 1713) and boast warm and welcoming ambiances. Alternately, bring your own to Parade Gardens and bask in the sun, while watching seagulls float above the River Avon.



18

Little Readers

The Bath Children's Literature Festival is the largest of its kind in the UK, drawing the biggest children's writers over 10 days of masterclasses, workshops, storytelling and readings. This year's event takes place from 30 September to 9 October at various venues around Bath.

19



Pimm's Time

It's summer and no cocktail shouts that more than a Pimm's Cup. Settle in the snug Gainsborough Bar with a book, where the expert bartenders are happy to make a Pimm's Cup exactly to your liking.



20

Cool Treat

There's something inexplicably pleasurable about eating ice cream with the summer sun in your face, and it is a delight that everyone – from child to adult – shares. There is no shortage of ice cream parlours around Bath, so find your flavour and grab a sunny spot. Our favourite is Kingston Parade, right next to Bath Abbey.



Gourmet Central

One advantage of being at The Gainsborough Bar is that it's right next to Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough. The German chef's British outpost offers creative cuisine that features the best of local and seasonal ingredients. Undoubtedly one of Bath's top fine dining destinations.



22

Silver Screen

If you're looking to get out of the sun, you'll do well to head for The Little Theatre. Inside this Art Deco building is state-of-the-art comfort and equipment ensure you a most pleasurable cinema experience. The UK's oldest surviving independent cinema screens the latest blockbusters, cinematic classics as well as films from around the world.

23



Nature's Touch

If you're staying at The Gainsborough Bath Spa, you'll find plenty of parks and green spaces within walking distance. Why not take advantage of the sunny weather and explore the Bath Skyline Walk that offers a myriad of wild flowers and elevated views. As you hike the six miles of marked footpaths, you will cross hidden valleys that are rich in limestone, flowers and tranquil beech woodlands, as well as views over Bath and out towards the Blackdown Hills. Don't forget to pack a picnic and good walking shoes.



Not A Guided Tour

If you want an in-depth guide to Bath and its amazing history, then the Bizarre Bath Tour is not for you. If it's pure entertainment, then Noel Britten and his hysterical show of Bath is a great way to spend a summer's evening.



Read This

What's summer without blockbusters to keep you company? Head for Bath's Topping & Company or Mr B's Emporium of Reading Delights for all the latest publications – and stay to browse the excellent selections that might just pique your curiosity. **✎**

Fashionably Sustainable

Who knew going green could be so fashionable? After opening the 2016 Fashion Week in Amsterdam, Monique Collignon now spreads her message of female empowerment and eco-consciousness to Malaysia at the Starhill Gallery Fashion Week. The vivacious designer tells *YTL Life* what keeps her going and her belief in sustainable fashion.

Text **Kirat Kaur**

If you didn't already know the name Monique Collignon, it's time, then, that you start paying attention. Named Dutch Designer of the Year in 2010 and Best Foreign Designer in the 2012 German Style Award, this spirited designer's dresses have been photographed on the red carpet numerous times, worn by the likes of TV presenter Giuliana Rancic, actress Carly Steel and singer Becky Baeling Lythgoe. Her designs are elegant, feminine and confident – perfect for a woman in control. "I like to empower women," Collignon says. "Through my designs, I want women to feel good and give them a little pep in their step, feeling comfortable and strong."

Collignon truly embodies her brand: she's stylish and sure of herself, and has a wonderfully effervescent personality. You really can't tear your eyes away when she's in the room. "I think and do a lot. I'm a woman of action but I always make sure I have fun. As the face of my brand, I want to set a good example for my team: when I am cheerful, they will be happy; if I'm not, then they will be



"I think and do a lot. I'm a woman of action but I always make sure I have fun. As the face of my brand, I want to set a good example for my team."

unhappy. I always say that Monique Collignon is a train moving to greatness. Hop on if you want to go the distance; otherwise, please get off!"

Behind this sunny disposition, however, lies a deep thinker who's aware of the less than bright side of life. "We must enjoy life and everything about it, but we must think about things. How beautiful would it be if you saved something of the world for the future? Even though I don't have children, I'd like for coming generations to still see fish swimming in the oceans and tigers roaming the jungles. Everyone is so busy focusing on insignificant things in their lives that they're missing the bigger picture. When you die, you bring nothing with you – it's what you leave behind that makes an impact."

After more than three decades in the world of fashion, Collignon is aware of the power it wields. "The fashion industry has been setting trends and dictating the evolution of style for years, and





life profile //

“These dresses are defiant but always fashionable, and I want women to be inspired by the elegance of the dresses. Yes, be powerful and sexy! But don’t forget to complement each other because that’s what a classy act does.”



we can harness this force to set an example for the people on the street. If the leading names in fashion embraced sustainability, then society will start paying attention and become aware of the fragile state of the world. Using Waste2Wear fabric in my designs has got people talking, and it’s a great platform to launch a significant discourse on sustainability.”

Waste2Wear made its fashion debut at Monique Collignon’s haute couture collection at the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Amsterdam in July 2015. Made of entirely recycled polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, this fabric seems like the perfect answer to the non-biodegradable plastic problem, with this environmentally damaging waste turned into sustainable polyester yarns. It’s a fascinating process, where the bottles are rigorously cleaned and sanitised before being processed into chips that are then melted. Yarn is extracted and combined with natural fibres to be woven into the eco-friendly Waste2Wear fabric that is used in garments, homeware and accessories.

About eight years ago, Collignon met Monique Maissan, CEO of Vision Textiles, which produces Waste2Wear, and was completely blown away. “I remember thinking, ‘Wow! What is she doing? What

is she thinking? How brilliant is this?” Four years later, Maissan sent her a swatch of the fabric that showed Collignon how beautiful and tactile the material is. “I called and said I wanted to work with her, and I needed to know *everything* about the fabric – from how it’s made to where. She gave me plenty of information and I even went to India and saw for myself how it is made. I had to make sure my clothes are made under fair conditions. We are in this world to have a win-win situation with each other, and it’s nice to work together as a society to achieve something together.”

“Monique (Maissan) is truly a pioneer in saving the planet, and she inspires me as a person and a businesswoman.” Spurred by Maissan’s passion and belief, Collignon decided to take a stand and incorporated the Waste2Wear fabric in her 2015 haute couture collection. “I wanted to make a statement with the collection, and it was amazing working with Waste2Wear. I could play with the fabric and see what it’s capable of. The response was incredible and I was head over heels in love with the fabric, so I expanded it in the 2016 Couture Light collection. I mean, it would be silly to use this marvellous fabric just once and leave it at that. I’m not doing this for publicity; I have long-term plans for this fabric and sustainable fashion in my designs.”

Monique Collignon’s Couture Light 2016 is a ready-to-wear collection and part of The Conscious Collection. About 70 per cent of the collection is made of Waste2Wear fabrics, where each garment comes with a label showing the amount of bottles used to create it. The collection draws inspiration from Collignon’s recent haute couture collection and is imbued with a fun 1970s vibe, and highlights the contrast of lightness and weight in the fabrics and colours. Collignon designed this collection with the aim of inspiring young women, not only with the eco-friendliness but also with its cheeky yet chic spirit. “These dresses are defiant but always fashionable, and I want women to be inspired by the elegance of the dresses. Yes, be powerful and sexy! But don’t forget to complement each other because that’s what a classy act does.”

In conjunction with Starhill Gallery Fashion Week, Monique Collignon’s stunning garments from the 2015 haute couture and Couture Light collections were on display at the luxury mall, which delighted Collignon: “Starhill Gallery is in a league of its own. I’ve seen pictures of the mall but, when I was outside looking in for the first time, I knew this place was special. There was a band playing in the mall and they were fantastic! Where else can you enjoy

shopping to live music? I feel perfectly at home here and, with all the big brand names, the girly side in me is very happy. I’m happy to be here, even if it is for nine short days. Looking at my collection from the outside, I love how well they fit in with the mall. Of course, seeing my name on big banners is pretty nice too!”

Indeed, Collignon’s pieces are breathtaking – floor-sweeping dresses, elegant skirts and classic silhouettes in ultra feminine soft lace, embroideries and a sea of ruffles. With such mastery of detail and design, it’s no wonder her work is on display at the Amsterdam Historical Museum and Hague Municipal Museum. She describes her creations as art pieces that grow naturally. “Some details cannot be specified. I see the form in my head and start sketching. Once the garment starts taking shape in my atelier, I can see it come alive and start adding some Swarovski crystals here, some fabrics there and voilà! As they say, the devil’s in the details! One of my favourite pieces is a brown dress with ruffles all over. It’s a lovely juxtaposition of simplicity and complexity. When the model wearing the dress walked down the runway at Fashion Week in Amsterdam, I could see some women trembling with excitement. I loved how effortless the dress looked despite the details and that’s how I like my designs: simple but outstanding.” ■

Your Time

Pamper yourself with these amazing fragrances and skincare products.



Summer Scent

With the sunny season approaching, dress your skin with **Diptyque's** *Eau des Sens*. Bursting with citrus freshness, this perfume promises a scent of softness and sensuousness, leaving a thrilling trail after you. A real pleasure for your senses, *Eau des Sens* perfectly blends orange blossom, bitter orange, berry gin, angelica and patchouli, making it suitable for everyday use as well as special occasions.



Overnight Cure

All those late sleepless nights, coffees and stress take a toll on your skin, and what better way to deal with it than through **Guerlain's** secret weapon – *Midnight Secret*. By simply applying it before bed, this cream guarantees to wipe out signs of lack of sleep the following day as it smooths out your features, replumps your skin and revitalises your complexion. The Hydronoctine complex found in the cream is a balanced fusion of eight ingredients that work wonders on your skin overnight, along with ginkgo biloba that helps to stimulate microcirculation and promotes detoxification, turning your tired, dull complexion into fully revitalised and glowing skin.



Super Serum

With the weather heating up intensely, it would be no surprise if your skin is badly affected. An immediate cure can be found in **La Prairie's** *Cellular Swiss Ice Crystal Serum*. This lotion is the first step in fighting unhealthy and dull skin. Loaded with youth-preserving Swiss Ice Crystals, which act as a defence against extreme environmental conditions, and Winter Daphne, a purified plant stem cell extract that boosts microcirculation and strengthens the skin, this serum keeps you hydrated and free from wrinkles and fine lines.



A Touch Of Rose

Leave a lasting impression with the sweet yet mysterious scent of **Amouage's** *Opus X*. Composed of different roses – namely rose centifolia, bloody rose and rose oxide, this perfume guarantees to not only channel radiance and seduction, but also to create a whiff of mystery and discovery. To further intensify the fragrance, final touches of ambararome, ylang-ylang and Laotian oud are added to produce a balanced and intriguing scent. ■



go
with
The Flow

Inspired by Neptune's realm, celebrated Malaysian fashion designer Melinda Looi showcases her socially conscious Raya collection emel by Melinda Looi titled 'Colours of the Sea', produced in collaboration with six celebrities and where part of the sales proceeds will be donated to Reef Check Malaysia, framed against the idyllic surrounds of Pangkor Laut Resort.

Photography **Zung The Photoz** Styling & Art Direction **Melinda Looi**
Hair **Centro Hair Salon** Makeup **MAC Cosmetics**

PERONI MODERN
KURUNG

This soft and sweet modern baju kurung is the perfect pastel piece for Raya. It features the textured sequin and embroidered fringe on the sleeves and hemline for added glamour.



PLANA EXCLUSIVE
PRINT CAPE

This emel Exclusive Print edgy cape is your go to statement piece for Raya. It features 4 looks that you can rock different looks during the festive season.



**ALATUS MODERN
KURUNG**

This modern baju kurung is simple yet a beautiful piece together with the soft tulle over the print. Featuring scattered crystals on the prints for that extra sparkle.



**STELLATA MODERN
KURUNG**

Melinda Looi has elevated the modern baju kurung and glammed it up with a twisted chiffon cape to create a look that is feminine, classy, elegant and modern.

**SINDONIS
EXCLUSIVE PRINT
MODERN KURUNG**

A comfortable yet fashionable must-have for all ladies this Raya! This fitted modern kurung features an exclusively printed fabric inspired by the coral reefs, with matching slim fitting mermaid cut skirt.



**PUSSILUS
MODERN KURUNG**

This modern baju kurung is a must-have statement piece for Hari Raya. Features contrasting panels on the bodice as well as on the sleeves with a ceramic brooch on the bodice.



Taking It Higher

Elevate your style with these bold and unique fashion pieces.



Free Zone

Making a rather unconventional move, the much celebrated Creative Directors of **Valentino**, Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pierpaolo Piccioli, give women the liberty to free themselves of fashion trends, focusing, instead, on creating unique looks. The duo's Spring 2016 collection is tactile, patterned, intense and experimental, giving ladies the chance to use style as an instrument for self-expression. In this collection, some standout elements can be seen, for example, where lace and pleating are combined in fantastic woven intarsia, with geometric motifs formed of stripes and chevron, while the exterior is covered with graphic patterns.



Stylish Overcoat

Jackets or overcoats can elevate your style while making a strong statement. However, finding one that suits your fashion sense can be a tough ask and **McQ by Alexander McQueen** might be your saving grace. Some of the highlights from the brand's latest collection include a gold parka that represents a unique take on metal, and a black polka dot parka in PVC that resembles a conventional raincoat but has each spot perforated rather than printed, giving you the chance to experiment with bold yet fun choices.



Hollywood Style

Dior returns with a bang with the *Diorama* handbag and even Academy Award-winner Jennifer Lawrence agrees. As the face of Dior's Spring/Summer 2016 campaign, the actress is seen clutching the fashionable signature bag that makes a perfect style accessory for any outfit. The bag comes with a part-leather, part-chain adjustable strap for added convenience, piped trim on smooth and grained leather or print and embroidery, and is perfect for both casual and sophisticated looks.



Sparkly Sandal

When it comes to shoes or sandals, most tend to play it safe and go with a colour that blends well with an outfit, with popular choice being hues of beige, black and brown. If making a grand appearance is your kind of style, however, then **Kenzo** is the brand to go to. In its Resort 2016 collection, the highlights are flat sandals and chunky heels with shiny, metallic fringes and cross straps, making them just the thing for fashionistas to step out in. ■

Sparkle And Shine

Be the talk of the town with these standout timepieces and gems.



Slim Fit

The latest *Slim d'Hermès Email Grand Feu* by **Hermès** is the epitome of haute horlogerie, marrying graphic art and horological skills in a perfectly balanced manner. This slender timepiece comes with the ultra-thin Hermès Manufacture movement H1950, rose gold case and an exceptional three-layer *grand feu* enamel dial. Completing the overall look is a matt Havana alligator strap crafted in the maison's workshops.



Straight To The Heart

The simple act of gifting flowers to show our love to someone has been in practice for the longest time. Taking this as inspiration, the craftsmen at luxurious jeweller **Mouawad** created the *Flower of Eternity* range as a contemporary take on this cherished tradition. The collection, which blends floral and heart-shaped motifs, is crafted from 18K yellow rose and white gold, and set with diamonds and coloured gemstones. The collection ranges from simple earrings to ornate four-piece sets, and is guaranteed to make you a show-stopper at any occasion.



Monkeying Around

The Year of The Monkey has inspired many brands and **Damiani** is no exception. The new additions to the jeweller's *Animalia* collection feature a pendant and a watch/bracelet, where an elegant lucky charm in the shape of a monkey is placed in the centre. A closer look at the pendant shows a cheeky monkey, clasping a stunning cabochon emerald while hanging lightly on a multi-strand diamond chain or a choker of frosted brown stingray. The piece is set in white gold and precious diamonds, in accordance with Damiani's classic technique of sliding prongs, resulting in the finest finish. ■



Starry Possession

Inspired by the shining stars in the sky and the deep blue of the ocean, **Omega's** *Constellation Tahiti* line comprises six quartz and three automatic watches. Further accentuating their beauty, the timepieces feature a Tahitian mother-of-pearl dial with diamond indices. This particular 27mm timepiece is encircled by a stunning diamond-paved bezel, with the date window to 6 o'clock, making it easy to read. The watches in this range come in a blend of stainless steel and 18K red gold, stainless steel with 18K yellow gold, or just plain stainless steel for those who fancy a simpler finish.



Green Goodness

With some help from the kindly Fung Chee Siang, affectionately called 'Farmer Fung', discover clean eating with vegetables grown organically in nature's haven hidden in the hills of Cameron Highlands.

Text **Kirat Kaur** Photography **Robin Liew**

The slopes of Malaysia's verdant Cameron Highlands are dominated by farms, covered with ring or hoop houses from an estimate of 3,000 farms. Yet, only a handful of these farms produce crops without chemicals and amongst these special few is Hatiku Agrikultur, the first farm in Cameron Highlands to be certified with the Malaysian Organic Scheme by the Department of Agriculture, Malaysia. Stepping into the farm, the first thing I noticed was the jungle-like atmosphere, serene and full of wild plants growing about, unlike any other farm I've been to before. "Close your eyes," instructed Farmer Fung after pleasantries were exchanged. "What do you hear?" Birdsong, crickets and leaves rustling in the wind was my answer. "That's the music of the earth, the most beautiful sound

ever made. Come, let us see more," he beckoned and I could immediately tell that this was going to be a very illuminating experience indeed.

As we walked past the wild plants, Farmer Fung explains, "The name Hatiku Agrikultur comes from the Malay words *hati* (heart) and *ku* (my) that means 'My Heart'" and his heart really does seem to beat to the rhythm of the land, infused with his soul for almost 20 years. "The wind brought me here," he declares. "I came to Cameron Highlands sourcing property for a friend and when I saw this unspoilt piece of land, I knew I could never leave. For the first time in my life, I fell in love at first sight." His friend eventually lost interest and Farmer Fung stepped up and started an organic



Clockwise, from far left: Trekking through the farm; spotting critters amongst the harvest; organically grown white radishes of Hatiku Agrikultur; Mas the farmhand collecting bunga kantan; a shed constructed with recycled glass bottles; Cameron apples or crystal apples grown on the farm; Farmer Fung elaborating on the farm's bounty.



“I came to Cameron Highlands sourcing property for a friend and when I saw this unspoilt piece of property, I knew I could never leave. For the first time in my life, I fell in love at first sight.”

became less mysterious once I realised that he wanted me to be aware of the presence of birds. “The birds are my friends; they protect my crops from not-so-friendly insects, eliminating the need to use pesticides.” Along with drawing in birds and boosting the environmental friendliness of the farm, the small number of crops also cleverly helps in preventing the insects from becoming a bother. Though he grows a great variety of produce, the numbers are small, making it unattractive for large colonies of insects to come and feed. Even then, he doesn't view the insects as his adversaries, truly believing they can coexist peacefully. “There are friendly insects and unfriendly insects.” He points to the cabbages flourishing nearby, “Can you see the holes on the outer leaves? That's the work of snails and you may think that it's bad, but look closely. The inner part of the plant, the cabbage that we eat is untouched.

They don't eat what we eat and when they die, their shells nourish the soil with calcium that lets my crops grow well. Tell me, are they really that bad?” Besides, he adores the sounds of the insects, declaring, “My crops get to grow in this majestic symphony of nature.”

As we traipsed between the plots of spinach, fennel, kale, broccoli, lettuce, cucumber, brinjal and much more, I had a hard time keeping still. Craning my neck in all directions, I didn't know where to focus with so many fascinating plants and insects swooping about. I discovered the flavours of the popular local dish of *laksa*, excitedly spotting *bunga kantan* growing wild that were then picked for me by a smiling farmhand. During the walkabout, Farmer Fung brought me on a journey of the senses as well, plucking some *serai wangi* leaves, rubbing them to release their sweet fragrance. A few steps further down, we were greeted by the bright hues of the nasturtium flower and nibbled on the petals, savouring the fruity-spicy flavour.

We climbed the hills and soon came to a rest in a spot overlooking the vegetable plots in the valley below. Gazing at the crops growing under us, Farmer Fung started to wax lyrical about the farm. “Look at this place, it's paradise. We're a million miles away from the noise of man in this unpolluted sanctuary.” Though running an organic farm is far more challenging than a commercial farm, he believes the efforts

farm. “At that point in life, I was asking myself: “Am I really doing something that matters for humanity? And then this place presented itself to me. When you start searching, the wind will bring you there.” So when the opportunity presented itself, he threw caution to the wind and dove into something which he had no knowledge of and never looked back. “I just go with the flow and treat nature with the respect it deserves and enjoy every single moment.”

The more Farmer Fung spoke, the more intrigued I became by his idyllic nature and honest words. “I have nothing to hide on my farm. Money is not the first priority

and neither is production, yield, or fancy technology. It's all about the working relationship I have with nature.” I was able to explore this special relationship that he has with the land through his intelligent system that incorporates the fundamentals of farming without using chemicals. The farm feels like a jungle because it mostly is jungle. Only five out of twenty acres of the land is used for farming with the rest of the flora being jungle trees to provide habitat for wildlife and one of the farm's best friends: birds.

Farmer Fung's earlier request to pay attention to the sounds of the farm

Clockwise, from right: The Chef preparing lunch; a light garden salad; sour-sweet passion fruit from the farm; fresh appetiser of juicy tomatoes and nasturtium; a sweet dessert dish featuring Cameron Highland's delicious strawberries and fruits of the farm.



are well and truly worth it as he gets to help make the world a better place and provide a source of responsibly grown produce to people. "I remind myself that most of my consumers are cancer patients or people ill with other diseases and I have a responsibility to give them good food. Food is medicine, after all."

When Farmer Fung began his endeavours, he came with ideals to cultivate the land but after some years he realised that the land was cultivating him instead. "The land has taught me about opening myself up to other possibilities and realise how life can be so unpredictable. I have learned much about patience,



gratitude and of a respectful relationship between man and nature." Perhaps it was his zeal or maybe even the sight of the birds swooping overhead, but at that moment I felt inspired to pick up a hoe and start working the land myself. "Just do it!" laughs the eccentric farmer. "Don't worry so much about the nitty gritty. The journey is difficult but success will come if you can learn to enjoy the process." Farmer Fung attributes the success of his farm to his own willingness to learn from others and making many mistakes along the way. "What a blessing it has been! Mother Nature gives me the freedom to experiment and I become learned through nature. All the work and years spent on the farm was worth every minute."

Farm to Table

It was quite an interesting morning spent exploring the land and learning so much about nature and its amazing ability to balance itself. Needless to say, I was famished and the sight of the Chef and Cameron Highlands Resort's staff smiling

as they greeted us while preparing lunch was a welcome one indeed. We were ushered into a quiet corner of the farm which Farmer Fung called the 'beach' and it's not hard to see why. It's an almost zen-like space next to a pond surrounded by vines and even a deck where Farmer Fung does his meditation.

While I was bubbling with excitement during the walkabout, I was now quietly soaking in the calm energy of the space as I sipped a deliciously refreshing glass of *pandan* and Black Face General plant (*Strobilanthes crispus*) tea. Before my eyes was a grand selection of produce from the farm picked out by the Chef. It was a beautiful bouquet of parsley, baby carrots, kale, radishes, fennel, passion fruit and plenty more greens that called out to the Chef as he ventured around the farm. Inspired by the ingredients, the Chef served up three courses of delicious creations that were light and healthy, perfectly complementing the harmonious spirit of the farm.

FRUITS OF THE EARTH

Let's have a look at the healing powers of these extraordinary plants that grow undisturbed at Hatiku Agrikultur.



Black Face General Plant (*Strobilanthes crispus*)
The plant's eyebrow-raising name is a direct translation of the Chinese term used to refer to the plant. The shrub thrives in Malaysia and has been traditionally used to treat snakebites, kidney stones, diabetes and has been proven scientifically to possess high antioxidant activity, anti-AIDS, and anti-cancer properties. Locally known as *pokok pecah kaca* or *pokok pecah beling*, the leaves are consumed in the form of a herbal tea, commonly with other indigenous medicinal herbs.



Tea Plant (*Camellia sinensis*)
The sight of the towering tea plant might be confusing especially when you're accustomed to the waist high shrubs in tea plantations, but this is just a sign of nature taking course as the plant will grow into a tree if left undisturbed. The health effects of tea have long been lauded and debated since the first infusions of the *Camellia sinensis* in China 4,700 years ago were used to treat asthma, heart diseases and drank for overall good health.



Garden Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*)
Also known as the Indian cress or monk's cress, the flowers of this plant are edible and used as an ornamental salad ingredient though it does add a zing with its lightly peppery taste reminiscent of watercress. Piquant condiments can also be made out of unripe seed pods soaked in spiced vinegar. Nasturtium contains the highest amount of lutein found in any edible plant- a real sight for sore eyes as lutein helps keep the eyes safe from oxidative stress playing an important role in the prevention of macular degeneration.

Again, I was surrounded by melodies of nature as the Chef elaborated on how each dish came to fruition with produce from the farm. There really is no better way to relish in the flavours on your plate than to birdsong blending together with the chirps of the crickets and gurgling waters in the pond. The strawberries tasted sweeter, the lettuce fresher and tomatoes juicier in a fare that sincerely fulfilled the romantic notion of being as close to the farm-to-table dining concept as possible.

At the end of the meal, some time was spent floating around in a raft made by Farmer Fung using recycled plastic bottles and packing Styrofoam. With the tranquil aura and sounds of nature, I could spend hours dreaming as I lay on the raft and gazed up at the sky. Soon, it was time to say goodbye and, before we parted ways,

Farmer Fung expressed hope that people would go home from Hatiku Agrikultur with a better appreciation for nature and practice a better lifestyle. "Look around you, isn't Cameron Highlands magnificent? We've been blessed with this incredible bounty by nature and we should all be grateful for it." While I was a little sad to leave this paradise, I was pleased to have had such a wonderful time learning about eating clean and armed with nutritious recipes for a lifelong organic culinary journey of my own. ■

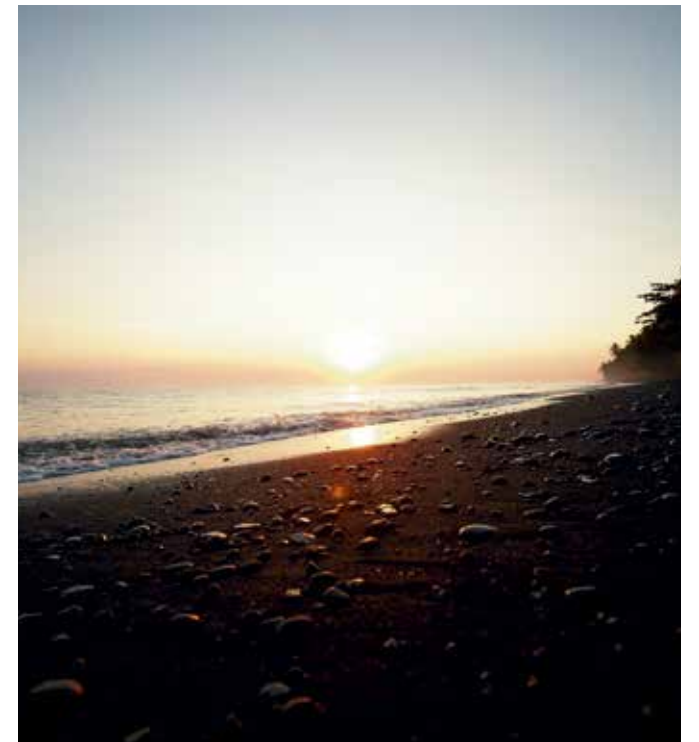
The Organic Culinary Journey is held from 8.30am to 1.30pm every Monday and Saturday, priced from MYR350 per person. A minimum of two persons and maximum of six persons is required to embark on this journey to good health. Visit cameronhighlandsresort.com for more information.



life feature //

Finding Balance In Bali

We might all harbour a desire to heal the world but, sometimes, that healing must first begin from within – from one's spirit and soul, before the body. Journey with *YTL Life* to a magical corner of the mystical island of Bali to find out where and how.



Clockwise, from above: Begin or end your day with yogic stretching; don't miss a visit to Bali's Mother Temple of Besakih, right on the slopes of the revered Mount Agung; Tembok is home to unspoilt, black sand beaches; Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali is a haven of wellness and rejuvenation.



It was Jalaluddin Rumi, the great Sufi mystic, one of the most passionate and profound poets the world has ever known, who wrote: 'As you start to walk out on the way, the way appears'. And, as we all know, life can take its toll – on our bodies, hearts and minds. Although sometimes cruel, there is still much beauty and joy to be derived from the passing days. To do so, it is imperative to reconnect with one's inner being. Even the world of science is beginning to come around. More and more reports are emerging on how we are made up of, more than mere flesh and bone, but of light and energy as well.

As such, nourishing one's spirit and soul is equally important as feeding the body. And, as you seek to better yourself, internally as well as externally, you will find, just as Rumi said, the way. Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, located in the north-eastern region of Bali, in the district of Tejakula Buleleng, is a special haven of rest and rejuvenation. Hidden behind groves of coconut and bamboo forests, step into a bijou but blessed little resort, where a gentler way of life is yours to live and learn.

Offering a host of healing and spiritual activities, find your path to wellness and peace of mind through restorative treatments, a wholesome menu designed to nourish and carefully curated therapies and excursions that will restore balance and vitality to

your life. Begin your day, for example, by awakening to the sound of birdsong, rather than the shrill ringing of an alarm clock. After dressing in cool cottons and linens that allow your skin to breathe, saunter out into the sunshine to sit down at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali's breeze-swept Wantilan Restaurant, ideally after a session of Hatha or Nyuwun yoga. Then, gently awaken your system and senses by breaking fast on fresh fruit, homemade yoghurt and a cold-pressed juice before deciding how you'd like to spend your day.

For those who wish to remain in the sanctuary that is Tembok, indulge in a variety of complimentary activities, including learning the art of brewing *jamu*, a traditional herbal drink infused with medicinal properties and based on ancient healing knowledge that has been passed down for generations. If spa life appeals, retreat to the resort's dedicated refuge of rejuvenation for massage or body therapies, or even learn how to whip up *boreh* – the quintessential Balinese body scrub that is also used as a curative and preventative treatment to ease coughs, muscle pain and headaches. If you are artistically inclined, find shelter under an intricately-carved balé, thatched naturally with *alang-alang*, to sketch or, perhaps, create *canang sari* – those beautiful offerings, fashioned out of coconut fronds and flowers. Rich in meaning and symbolism, these delicate gifts to the gods carry a wealth of meaning, depending on the colour of the flowers used as well as ingredients. Lime, for example, represents Shiva, while betel nut, blue and green-hued flowers are taken as a symbol of Vishnu. If you are feeling particularly creative, go on the resort's guided Creativity Walk, where you are encouraged to pick up items from the beach, be it a leaf, pebble or shell, to create your very own nature-inspired work of art.

The area surrounding Tembok is also rich in mysticism and culture, and no visit to this unspoiled part of Bali is quite complete without a spiritual experience. Sacred spaces dot the land, the most powerful of which is the Mother Temple of Pura Besakih. Located on the slopes of the revered Mount Agung, this is Bali's largest and holiest Hindu temple and dates back to 1284, when Javanese conquerors first settled on the island. Made up of a complex of 22 different temples, its name stems from the Sanskrit word *wasuki*, which means 'congratulations'. If you'd travelled to Tembok on the coastal road, chances are you would have seen Goa Lawah or 'Bat Cave' in Balinese, which houses another highly important temple that was established in the 11th century by Mpu Kuturan, a priest instrumental in the spread of Hinduism in Bali.

If you feel the need to undergo a ritual cleansing or perhaps wish to make a special prayer, ask the ever-helpful team at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali to arrange a visit to Pura Ponjok Batu for you. Just a short drive from the resort, you cannot help but feel the special energy of this sacred place as water, regarded by the locals as holy, gushes forth from black volcanic rock. Here, as you



Clockwise, from top: Undergo a cleansing rite at Pura Ponjok Batu; float away on thoughts and dreams over a session of starlight-gazing at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali; pay homage to the deity Indra at Tirta Empul.

Image Getty Images



kneel where sweet, fresh water runs out from the depths of the earth to meet, perhaps, Nyi Roro Kidul, the legendary goddess of the sea, allow the local priest to bathe you with the holy water, while uttering prayers for your wellbeing, peace and inner joy. If you wish to reaffirm your private age of Aquarius, journey on to experience yet another special encounter with water – this time, to Tirta Empul. Located in the village of Tampaksiring, this sacred spring is believed to have been created by the god Indra and, hence, possesses healing powers. Make an offering before settling down to enjoy a divine bath in the main pool of the temple, fed by the holy spring. If you feel your spirit needs to be refreshed, bring along a bottle to carry some water that has been touched by the gods back with you.

Once you are back in the lush folds of the resort, go on an organised Balance Walk – a contemplative, almost meditative, stroll on the beach that helps you refocus and rebalance, accompanied only by the sound of the surf and nature's symphony. Once the light begins to fade and Venus begins to show her face against a sky whose palette transforms quickly from shades of red, yellow and dusky pink to deep cobalt and, finally, ebony, retreat back to

the Wantilan for a feast that is designed to satisfy without guilt. Imagine dish after dish appearing before you... fragrant curries enriched with fresh coconut cream, steamed nutty-tasting red rice and broiled seafood that has just been bought from the fisherman who'd come calling in his brightly-painted *jukung*, all washed down with a freshly cut coconut or, perhaps, a herbal tonic. As the night sky begins to twinkle brightly, slowly rise up to make your way now to Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali's swimming pool for a session of starlight gazing – an innovative spa offering that beckons you to lie back on a floating platform to gaze at the stars and to take in the enormity of the universe – a grounding experience that, conversely, uplifts spirits. As the music plays, accompanied by the chirrup and calls of nightjars and crickets, it is tempting to imagine that each day can unfold as tranquilly and beautifully. You only need to be here, in this special part of a mystical island. Perhaps now is the time to recall yet another of Rumi's great aphorisms. Wherever, whenever you decide to step to walk out on The Way, perhaps it is also wise to remember that the entrance door to the sanctuary has always been inside you. ▣

For more information visit www.spavillageresort.com

Club Class

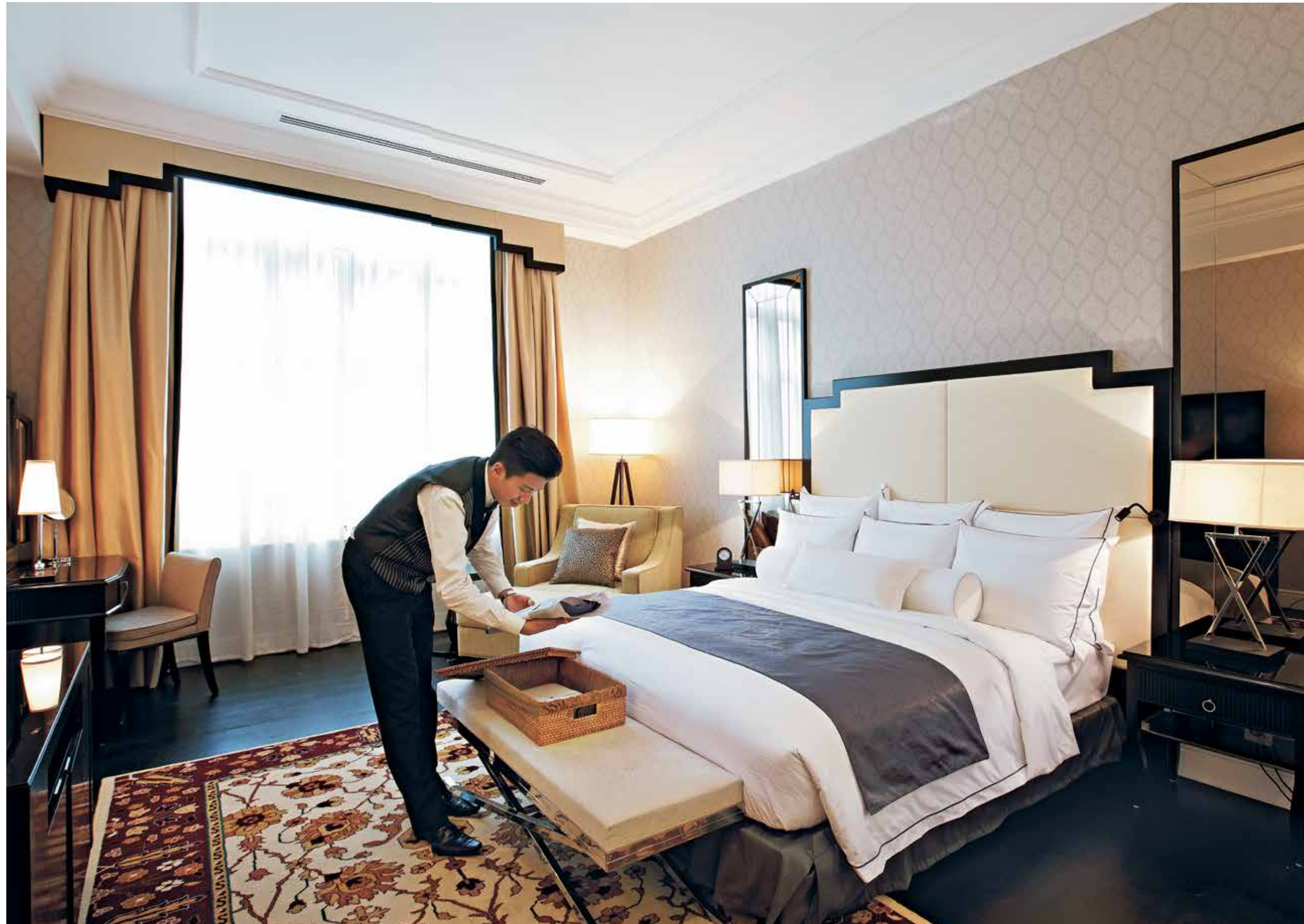
Imagine having a five-star haven you can retreat to, replete with all the benefits, boons and perks your heart could ever desire. Make that real when you elect to stay at The Majestic Wing of The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur, which then opens up the Majestic Club to you. As the old adage goes, membership does have its privileges.

Text **Diana Khoo**

The sun is just setting and the mood at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur suddenly gets a touch softer and slinkier. You are sitting on a barstool, under the golden glow of the cupola overhead, and, nearby, the members of Malaysia's preeminent musical family, The Solianos, are just getting ready for their nightly set. Johnnie, the Bogart-esque barman, of The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur, slides a cocktail your way – we can't get enough of his signature *Malayan Colada* and the planter's favourite of a *gin pahit* – and, slowly, the velvet vocals of Isabella Soliano begin to infuse The Colonial Café with a dream-like vibe that has got to be experienced to be believed.

It could be a scene straight out of a movie but if, by lucky chance, you happen to be staying at the grande dame that is The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur, it's a real-life motion picture that plays on day and night amidst the Old World elegance of one of the country's most beautifully preserved historical hotels. But why leave things to chance when you can make it real all-too easily? Simply by booking yourself into any suite at the Majestic Wing, a world of privileges and benefits is suddenly all yours to explore and experience.

It starts from the moment you open your eyes. At your preferred hour, your dedicated butler will bring you breakfast – in bed, should you so wish. Choose from a traditional pick-me-up of coffee, fruit and croissants, or opt for the more indulgent option of a Hainanese breakfast, featuring thick slices of charcoal-toasted bread slathered with that rich local coconut jam known as *kaya*. All the butlers assigned to the Majestic Wing are trained



CLUB BENEFITS AT A GLANCE
Perks and privileges not to be missed.

- Access to the Majestic Club Lounge in the Majestic Wing, where you can enjoy free-flow beverages throughout the day as well as afternoon and evening snacks. Come cocktail hour, guests can also enjoy special libations mixed up by The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur's own 'Johnnie the Barman'.
- Your choice of a continental or traditional Hainanese breakfast in your suite, served by your dedicated butler.
- The Majestic 24 privilege, where guests determine their own check-in time, with check-out a full 24 hours later.
- Complimentary two-hour usage of the Majestic boardroom for private meetings of up to 12 persons.
- Complimentary Wi-Fi, minibar and laundry.



professionals, who are on hand to ensure your stay is seamlessly smooth, managing everything from efficient wake-ups to lights-out. Should you require any further information or assistance, the hotel's double-keyed Les Clefs d'Or-certified concierge is ever ready to serve you at his desk.

You would, of course, have already checked in effortlessly and privately in the comfort of your very own Majestic Wing suite. Guests also have the added flexibility of a full day's stay, deciding upon their very own check-in time, with check-out 24 hours after. The hotel also understands not every traveller is privileged enough to journey purely for leisure. So, for those who have to answer the call of the wild, working world, The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur has also gone the extra lengths to make sure every facility is on standby should you require it. This includes complimentary two-hour use of the Majestic Boardroom, which accommodates up to a dozen participants comfortably, Wi-Fi (naturally) and laundry – a must to keep you looking sharp at the next morning's presentation. Your butler is also adept at all the services one would expect of a valet, and it's a cinch if you need a tie pressed or, perhaps, your shoes shined to perfection.

Every element of your stay at the Majestic Wing is designed to be, well, majestic.

Once the clock strikes five and the work day is done, retreat to the Majestic Club Lounge for a pre-dinner nibble and a luxurious libation. You can also ring in for your butler to mix you up a drink in the privacy of your own suite. The minibar is yours to ransack, with the compliments of the hotel. So be it work or play, by day or by night, we can't imagine a better way to savour your Kuala Lumpur sojourn than a stay that mixes history with modern luxury, old world charm with genteel graciousness, and a host of perks, benefits and privileges that come with each room reservation at the historical wing of one of the city's most dignified heritage hotels. It might not be an actual membership per se but if ever it offered one, sign me up post-haste, I say. ■

For reservations, please call (603) 2785 8000 or email tmklresv@ytlhotels.com.my



THE MAJESTIC WING
Where history and haute living meet.

Established in 1932 as The Hotel Majestic, it was described by worldly travellers as "truly majestic", "a beacon for travellers, a comfort for expatriates and stage for artistes of the global showbiz fraternity". Reopened in great style by YTL Hotels in 2012, The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur continues to entice and enthrall. On par with other great historical hotels of the region, including The Peninsula Hong Kong and The Raffles Singapore, the hotel is revered for its Neo-Renaissance and Art Deco design, conceived by the Dutch architect Van Leangeanderg of the firm Messrs Keys & Dowdeswell. Today, it wears a new cloak of simple sophistication, while preserving all the key notes of its storied past. The Majestic Wing is also under the protection of the Antiquities Act 1976 and interesting design accents to look out for include the airwells that flood the dining area with natural light and, of course, the marvellous gold-leafed dome under which The Solianos play every night.



Taking The Waters

The natural spring waters of Bath take centre stage in the wellness therapies at Spa Village Bath at The Gainsborough Bath Spa.

Text Christy Yoong



Clockwise, from left: Stretch out aqua-style in Spa Village Bath; soak in splendour in a private ofuro tub; leonine style reigns at Spa Village Bath's ice alcove; Freedom is an immensely liberating session of aquatic body therapy.



You should spend at least an hour on the Bath House Circuit, although this is flexible depending on your tolerance and how much time you actually have. Still, you should stay long enough to come away feeling totally refreshed and reinvigorated, and ready for the evening's pleasures to come. If you're staying in The Gainsborough Bath Spa, do note that in-house guests have complimentary access to the Bath House facilities daily between 7am-9am and 8pm-10pm.

Water Ballet

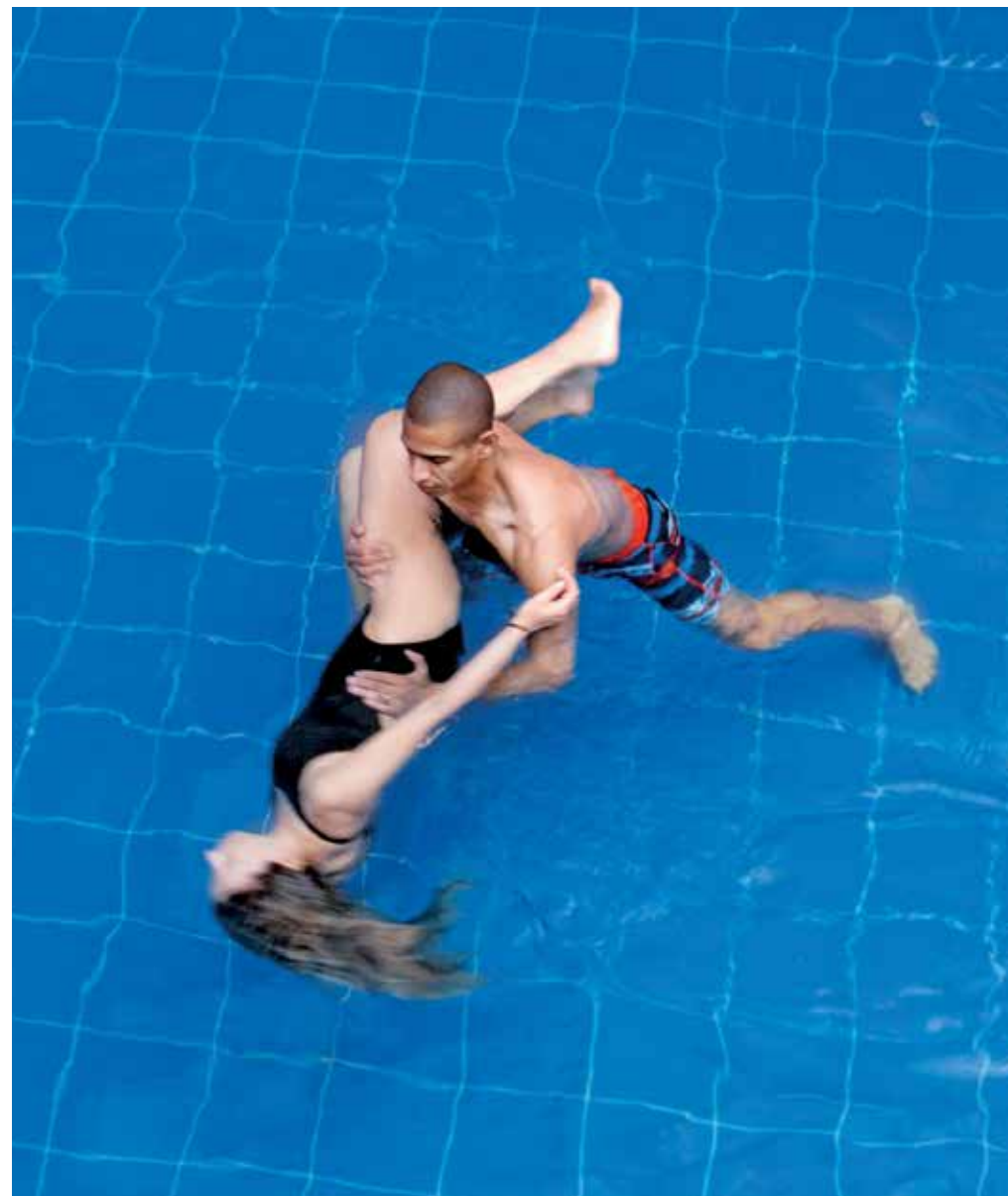
There's more to Spa Village Bath's aquatic therapies than just the Bath House Circuit. *Aquasana*, for example, is a 45-minute session that elevates classic yoga *asanas* to a whole new level. Suspended stretching is enhanced with gentle *tai chi* and invigorating karate movements to improve balance, mobility and flexibility, all conducted in a 34.5°C thermal water pool.

Freedom, on the other hand, is a much more intimate session. While it is as dynamic as *Aquasana*, *Freedom* requires you to let yourself go in the buoyancy of the thermal waters, and allow your expert therapist to guide and manipulate you gracefully through a set of body exercises, stretching you into deep relaxation. As you move, concentrate on your breathing and let your mind float away as the warm waters cocoon you in pure serenity. With the help of your therapist, you'll go through an uplifting workout that does wonders for your body, mind and soul. This is a treatment that needs to be experienced to be understood. *Aquasana* is designed as a group exercise but can be experienced as a private session while *Freedom* is one-on-one with your therapist - ask the Spa Village Bath staff when you make a booking. ■

Apart from the aquatic body therapies, Spa Village Bath also offers a full menu of therapies that include organic skin care, massages and traditional healing customs. Visit www.thegainsboroughbathspa.co.uk for more information.

It might seem like a long way to go for a spa treatment, but the award-winning Spa Village, in The Gainsborough Bath Spa, is well worth making the journey for, especially for its unique aquatic body therapy. Drawing its waters from Bath's natural hot springs - the only spa in the UK to do so - Spa Village Bath features three natural thermal pools of varying temperatures, traditional and infrared saunas, steam room, an ice alcove and elegant relaxation areas. The two-storey facility also features treatment rooms - there's even a couple's suite with private access to the natural thermal waters - tatami rooms for Asian therapies and a beauty salon.

The entire space is serene, softly lit by the natural light streaming through the four-storey glass atrium above the Bath House. In the finest wellness traditions of Bath, Spa Village Bath allows guests to 'take the waters' in private luxury. Beyond the spa, The Gainsborough Bath Spa also offers exclusive spa rooms, the only guest rooms in the United Kingdom to offer in-bathroom access to the thermal waters. While traditional Spa Village classic treatments are also offered, it is the aquatic therapies that set Spa Village Bath apart. Just be sure to bring your swimwear.



At Your Pace

The self-guided Bath House Circuit is just the remedy after a long day out, especially if you've been enjoying the myriad delights the city has to offer. Start with a 10-minute soak in one of the two smaller thermal pools. Both balneo pools are heated to different temperatures - from 35°C to 40°C - so pick the one that suits you best. Cool down with the lymphatic hose and a cup of cold water and, after a short break, head for the saunas. Here, again, you have a choice of either infrared or traditional sauna rooms. Both are equally effective in

relaxing muscles, and helping you work up a sweat and detoxify.

Stay as long as you can to absorb the beneficial heat before moving on to the ice alcove. Using handfuls of the crushed lavender ice that drop through the jaws of a lion's head, pat yourself down and cool off. Finish at the main atrium pool, where you can float in the natural thermal waters of Bath in peaceful contemplation. Neck jets are also available to help relieve any muscles that are still aching, while effervescent bubbles soothe your nerves.

The Ultimate KL Makan Guide

Hoteliers know the city best. In this light and in celebration of Kuala Lumpur's justifiably well-deserved reputation as a food haven, we recruit **Jeff Mong**, General Manager of The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur, to share his secret 'eat' list – the places to go and the things to try.

Photography **Law Soo Phye**

Afternoon Tea

"A traditional English-style afternoon tea might not be the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of eating out in KL, but you can't not have afternoon tea at The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur, the city's *grande dame* property, if you happen to be in town. Set within the hotel's historic interiors, sit down at the **Tea Lounge** and enjoy egg and cucumber sandwiches with a big pot of tea and, of course, our famous scones with authentic Devonshire clotted cream. My favourite cuppa will be the South African rooibos tea, though."

Roti Canai

"Singaporeans might call this dish of fluffy Indian-style bread *prata* but, here, it's *roti canai* and it's a great way to start your day. Call me biased but I think The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur's **Contango** restaurant's version is one of the tastiest around. The *roti* is made à la minute, and are light and fluffy, but what truly sets it apart is the *dhal* – the lentil curry that's a perfect blend of taste and texture. It's absolutely right. And, if I am not watching my diet, I'd indulge in this at least twice a week if I could."



Yong Tow Foo

"Yong Tow Foo, a collective term for vegetables stuffed with fish mousse, is a must-try when you're in Kuala Lumpur or 'KL' as we call it. Ampang is generally considered the go-to place and the restaurant I'd pick is *Foong Foong*, possibly the most famous. Popular items to try are the deep-friend *sui kow*, a type of pot-sticker, but my favourites are the stuffed okra and brinjal."



Teh tarik or 'pulled tea' is the ultimate accompaniment to *roti canai*.



Hokkien Noodles

"Don't confuse this with the Penang-style Hokkien prawn noodles. In KL, Hokkien *mee* equals a thumping big plate of thick noodles tossed in a hot wok with sticky, black soy sauce, lashings of meat and seafood, and, sometimes, topped with a raw egg, which is when it's referred to as 'moonlight noodles'. The ultimate place to indulge in this sinfully satisfying treat is **Kim Lian Kee**, at the **Lot 10 Hutong** food court. Established in 1927, this family has been famously serving up this delicious treat for four generations now."

Nasi Lemak

"Rice cooked in coconut milk and served with spicy *sambal* is the quintessential Malaysian thing to eat – day or night. There are several famous spots around town but, for an authentic Malay experience, I'd suggest you go to Kampung Baru, just a short taxi ride from The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur. There are two famous stalls there – **Mak Wanjo** and **Nasi Lemak Antarabangsa**. The latter is where I'd go, primarily as my hours are pretty long and it stays open really late. Perfect for a night owl hotelier like myself."



Banana Leaf Rice

"If you plan on enjoying a lazy afternoon by the pool, one of the best ways to get you in that lounge lizard mood is by preceding it with a hearty, filling banana leaf rice lunch. Many restaurants serve this simple meal of white rice, assorted curries, vegetables and meats on real banana leaf, although some have started using banana-print paper, which doesn't cut it for me. My preferred spot for this soporific feast is **Sri Nirwana Maju** in the upmarket suburb of Bangsar. Have it with fried chicken, deep-fried fish or deep-fried bitter melon, pickles and crispy *poppadoms*; then, find a place to lay back and just while the next few hours away. I guarantee it won't be a productive day following such a meal!"



Chili Pan Mee

"This is a very 'KL' dish and, although many copycats have spawned since, the original and most authentic place to sample this dish of noodles, minced meat, chopped scallions and crispy anchovies is at **Restoran Kin Kin** in the Chow Kit district of the city. It's always topped with the perfect poached egg, and it makes the most delicious mess when you mix it all up to enjoy with blisteringly-hot chili flakes. It is always served with a bowl of *sayur manis* leaf soup. If you like to enjoy your meals in comfort, they also have a stall at the food court in the Publika mall in Sri Hartamas."

Dancing Prawns

"Shopping can be a national sport here in Malaysia and, if all that retail therapy makes you hungry while you're in the main shopping zone that's known as the Golden Triangle, head over to **Shook!** at Starhill Gallery for a dish of hot, wok-fried dancing prawns. It's tossed and coated in a light, luscious mayonnaise sauce and is a real treat. If your palate is healthier, go to Fisherman's Cove nearby for the chef's famous grilled barramundi with aubergine. To die for."



Hainanese Cakes & Pastries

"In Malaysia, the Hainanese are regarded as the best cooks among the Chinese, and you should try and squeeze in an authentic meal if you can. There are many good cafés specialising in Hainanese cuisine, including its famous chicken rice, but one that offers good food with a charming ambience is **Yut Kee**. It was formerly housed in a wonderful pre-war building but has since relocated nearby to a new, but no less nice, space. The chicken chop and *belacan* fried rice are popular, but what I really like are its sweet treats. The toast with *kaya*, our local coconut jam, if you will, is lovely and I really recommend the marble cake and *kaya* roll. Perfect for tea or to takeaway!"



Jeff Mong is the General Manager of The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur. For more suggestions on what to eat and where, your friendly concierge at any of the YTL Hotels will also be a mine of tips and information.

Oyster Omelette

"Another stall I must frequent whenever I am at the **Lot 10 Hutong** is **Kong Tai**, which specialises in oyster omelettes. Savoury, chewy and topped with fragrant sprigs of coriander, it is best enjoyed with sweet chili sauce. Pair this with the aforementioned Hokkien noodles for a meal to remember!"



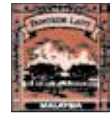


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REGARDED AS THE CRADLE OF MALAYSIAN HISTORY, EXPLORING MALACCA IS LIKE STEPPING BACK IN TIME, WHEN THE PORT-CITY USED TO WELCOME SPICE TRADERS, SULTANS AND WARRIORS FROM BYGONE DAYS. SOAK UP ALL THE MAGIC AT THE MAJESTIC MALACCA, ONE OF THE CITY'S FINEST HOTELS WHOSE STRUCTURE DATES BACK TO THE 1920S AND WHOSE INTERIORS ARE A REFLECTION OF THE CITY'S FINE PAST. WWW.MAJESTICMALACCA.COM

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Always in Season

KASARA
NISEKO VILLAGE
TOWNHOUSE



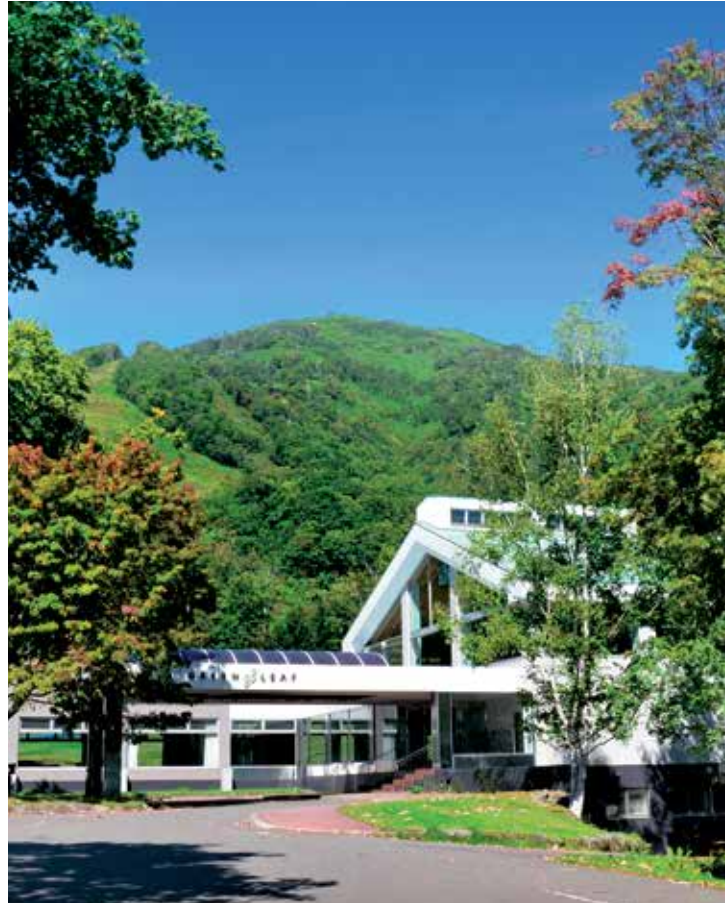
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THE SURIN
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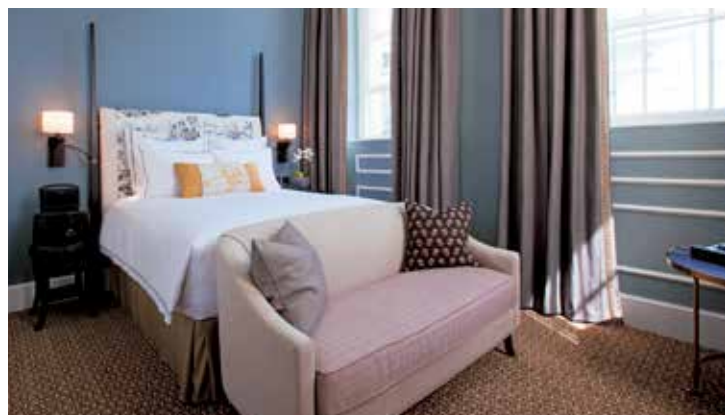
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SPA VILLAGE PANGKOR LAUT



SPA VILLAGE CAMERON HIGHLANDS



SPA VILLAGE MALACCA

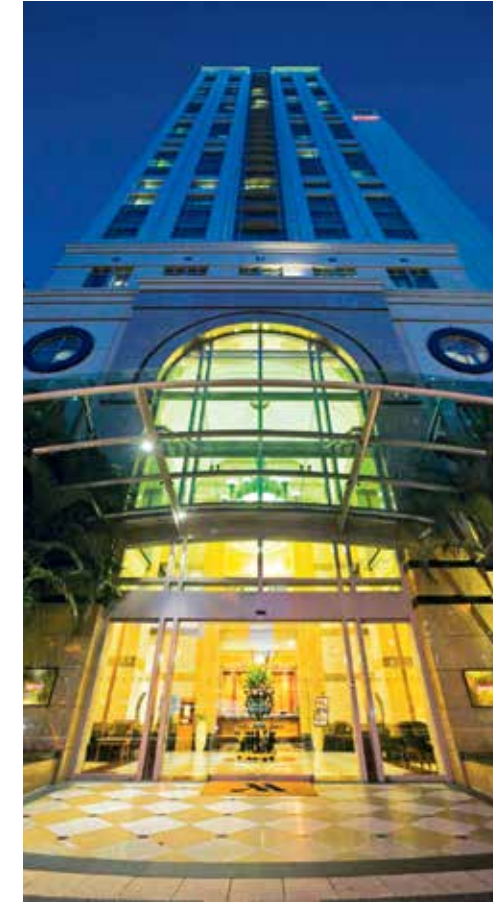
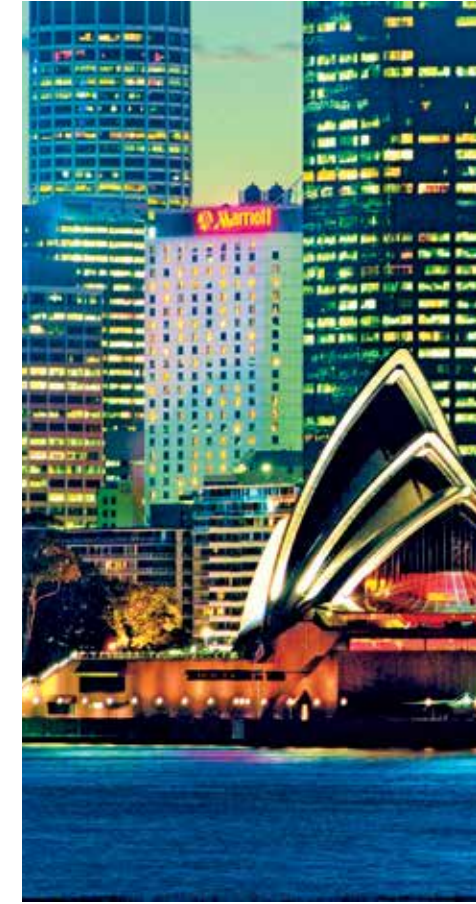


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