

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

# YTL

L I F E

## WEDDING WONDERLANDS

CELEBRATE YOUR BIG  
DAY IN STYLE AND  
LUXURY AT YTL HOTELS'  
FIVE-STAR RESORTS

## COOK LIKE A CHEF

EXPERIENCE THE  
ART OF MALAYSIAN  
CUISINE AT PANGKOR  
LAUT RESORT

## RAINFOREST RITUALS

DISCOVER THE HEALING  
CULTURE OF THE  
INDIGENOUS SEMAI  
TRIBE AT SPA VILLAGE  
CAMERON HIGHLANDS



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

# YTL LIFE

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I have often felt that the discerning quality of YTL Hotels has always been the diversity of what it has to offer. This is no generic franchise, every property is distinctive and its character is reflected not only in its look and feel but also in the very experience

that guests take away. I believe that this is also the appeal that attracts prospective wedding couples to our hotels and resorts.

For here there are no faceless event areas but spaces infused with the warm personality of our resorts, coupled with enthusiastic teams that are dedicated to crafting personalised experiences for all, and what is a wedding if not an experience at the most personal level.

In this issue of YTL Life we focus on exploring these authentic experiences in all forms, from weddings to ancient craft, in search of that personal touch that takes any experience to another level.

In Unique Unions the 12-day wedding ritual of the Peranakans, the unique heritage that infuses The Majestic Malacca, is revealed. Discover how destination weddings are redefined in Wedding Wonderlands. Original Odysseys ventures into creative spa therapies as Spa Village evolves the spa experience. The skilled artisans and craftsmen of Terengganu, where Tanjong Jara Resort resides, are explored in Heart and Craft.

As the pace of the world we live in increases, it becomes harder to take a moment and to reach out for that authentic experience. Within these pages, we hope that YTL Life brings it straight to you. To reveal that a dream wedding is possible without the logistical nightmare, that the essence of a culture and craft generations in the making has not been lost and that perfect rejuvenating spa therapy away from the world is just a decision away.

Authentic personalised experiences await you at YTL Luxury Resorts





**YOU GO, BOSS!** Premier hotel chain The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur has proven yet again that it isn't only their guests who are important to them; but also the people who work for the hotel. The five-star hotel, known for its stellar butler service, came out tops in this year's Hewitt's Best Employers in Malaysia (BEM) study for a record third year running. The hotel also topped the list in 2003 and 2005. The Hewitt study was conducted between Sept 1 and Nov 21, 2008 and involved three surveys of each participating organisation: the CEO/Most Senior Executive Questionnaire, People Practices Inventory and Employee Opinion Survey. The study also involved visits to the organisations for face-to-face interviews with employees and top management and for survey data verification. The Hewitt study is in its fourth year in Malaysia.



**IT'S GOOD TO BE GREEN** YTL Corporation Berhad has once again made a Top 10 list of green companies with green initiatives in Malaysia. The list was compiled and published by local lifestyle magazine KLue and highlights important

contributions by giant Malaysian corporations in today's global bid to go green. The article highlighted YTL Group of Companies' efforts to increase the total amount of renewable energy generated from 21GWh to 25.8GWh last year, which equates to almost 39% of their total energy use. This in turn has resulted in the decrease of the company's total level of emissions: the level of sulphur dioxide they emit each year has been reduced by over 60% in the last decade. Besides all this, YTL has also been taking initiatives to clean up rivers using a new technology and is involved in the Climate Change Week initiative. The corporation was also an active participant in this year's Earth Hour campaign.



**THROUGH DARKNESS COMES LIGHT**

YTL Corporation celebrated Earth Hour in grand style as it committed more than 20 of its iconic properties (including its resorts, and commercial and residential properties) to participate in the unprecedented event where millions from all over the world turned off their lights for one hour starting at 8.30pm on March 30, 2009. The celebration took on a two-prong attack as Lot 10 held a special Earth Hour unplugged performance where local pop group Trez, a cappella outfit 39 and rock band PG165 entertained the gathered crowd. Hannah Lo hosted the event while other local celebrities Stephanie Chai, Deborah Henry and Will Quah also showed up in support. Over at Starhill Gallery, the Tree Theatre Group initiated the countdown while Sean Ghazi and

Deanna Yusoff performed torch-lit crowd favourites like Louis Armstrong's *It's a Wonderful World* and *Dream A Little Dream*. Young environmentalist and performer, Jes Ebrahim also took to the stage singing songs about the environment which he is so passionate about. Before the lights were turned back on, The Five Arts Centre performed a contemporary piece entitled 'Wayang Lampu'. Shook! restaurant also got into the act with a specially-devised Earth Hour menu featuring the freshest organic foods in honour of Mother Earth.



**THE WORLD'S BEST!** Pangkor Laut Resort has done it again! At the recent 2009 Small Luxury Hotels of the World (SLH) Gala Awards held at the Salon Opera, Intercontinental Paris Le Grand, one of Malaysia's most luxurious resorts clinched 'Best Hotel', a truly distinctive and exceptional accolade in the world of luxury travel. The award was voted on by members of The Club of Small Luxury Hotels of the World (SLH), and granted to the hotel that exceeded guests'

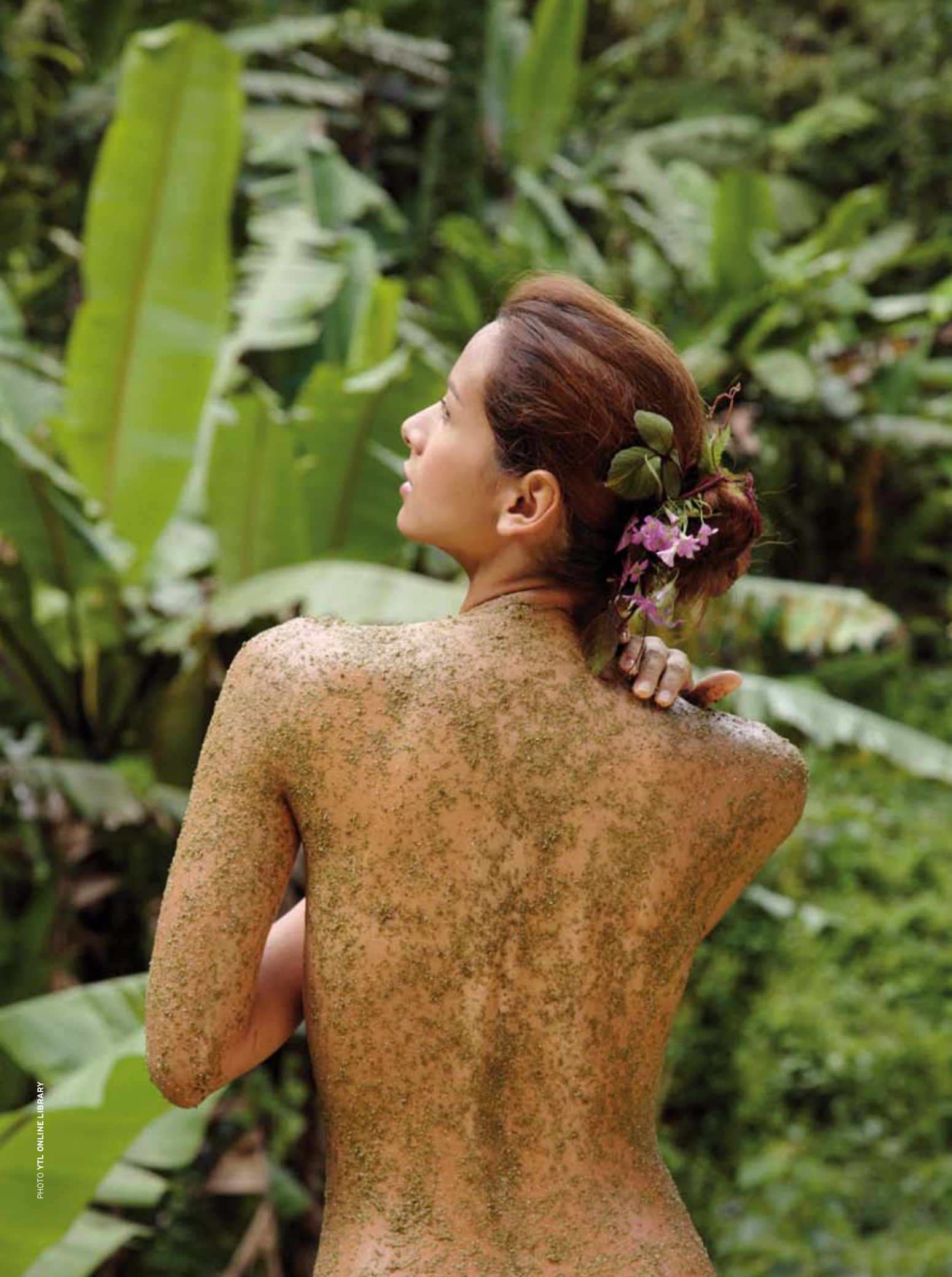
expectations through the exceptional delivery of The Club benefits, which left a lasting and memorable impression on the Club members. The exclusive private island Pangkor Laut Resort is not only world-renowned for its two million-year-old rainforest surroundings and its nod to eco-tourism but also for its attention to detail and the hospitality of its staff.

**SPA HURRAHS**

The luxury spa brand Spa Village continues to fill its 'trophy' cabinet when it was recently awarded two new accolades by two leading UK magazines, Elle UK and UK Tatler. The Malay-inspired Spa Village Tanjong Jara (pictured top right) was described as "luxurious but unpretentious" by Elle UK as it featured alongside nine other world-renowned spas (some in super exotic locales such as Oman, Halkidiki and Ischia) in the magazine's elite "Top 10 Super Spas" List. Over at the magical island of Bali, sister property Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali cemented its position in the prestigious UK Tatler Spa Guide's '101 Best Spas in the World', making the list for the second year running. The guide lists Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali under 'Natural Wonders and is described as "utterly unpretentious and authentic, but with a crack team of know-how therapists and deliciously inventive food... everything in the spa is 100 per cent natural while still being wondrously effective". Tatler's Spa Guide is renowned for its discernment and thoroughness when researching "the top spas that really work".







# RAINFOREST RITUALS

THE SEMAI PEOPLE ARE ONE OF THE OLDEST AND MOST PEACEFUL EGALITARIAN SOCIETIES IN THE WORLD. WHAT OTHER SECRETS DO THESE UNASSUMING PEOPLE HOLD? THE CAMERON HIGHLANDS RESORT'S LUSCIOUS SPA VILLAGE HAS THE ANSWER

BY OOI YING NEE PHOTOS BY JOHNNY MCGEORGE

JUST AS THE WORLD'S ECLECTIC CULTURES AND SUPERSTITIONS ARE ERODING IN THE WAKE OF MODERNISATION, ancient healing practices are under threat. Folk medicine as it happens is slowly being regarded as mere folklore.

As these wisdoms fail to transcend generations, botanical remedies for common ailments are now left to grow unnoticed. Neighbourhood Chinese medicinal halls, once fixtures in marketplaces, have long shut down. The rest now cater only to the dwindling few who still believe in these medicinal practices of yore.

And if ancient healing practices of more established civilisations are being usurped by advancements in Western medicine and pharmaceuticals, what more the largely unstudied and disappearing rituals of the Semai people?

The Semai are one of the largest of 18 Orang Asli indigenous minority peoples who called Peninsula Malaysia home long before the armadas of distant kingdoms came ashore. Yet there are only about 26,000 Semai left today.

While much of the Semai's culture is widely studied by anthropologists around the world, this semi-sedentary people remain as the country's true hidden secret. Contrary to the "primitive" label that has long tarnished the reputation of these shy, close-knit people, the Semai are a sophisticated bunch. For one, they live in an egalitarian society that espouses gender equality, a concept that otherwise more "civilised" cultures have lost or haven't yet grasped. Moreover, in Semai society, a confrontation is often met with resignation or a shrug. Giving and sharing is pervasive and rarely calculated. Resolute in upholding two primary values – non-violence and sharing – the Semai are also often referred to as one of the most peaceful societies in the world.

And some anthropologists have even argued that the Semai's animistic religion may be similar to the primordial religions that pre-dates, and may have been a precursor to, age-old Hinduism.

A Semai man is believed to have once said that the land is a "living entity, with spirituality and a sacredness of its own." His words are not only profound, but speak great volumes. The Semai



Ingredients used in the Semai spa treatment



The Spa Village Cameron Highlands offers guests a tranquil ambience to enjoy its Semai-inspired treatments

may very well be the rainforest's oldest and closest confidante, holding secrets of Malaysia's 130 million-year-old tropical Eden. Few, unlike the Semai, can identify some of 38 different wild species of fruitbearing trees and at least 51 species of traditional vegetables for consumption and cultivation.

and much less their in-depth knowledge of the jungle's secrets to health and wellness.

These previously unlocked secrets have nevertheless been unearthed at the Spa Village Cameron Highlands, located at the Cameron Highlands

## THE SEMAI ARE NOT ONLY DEPENDENT ON THE FOREST BUT SHARE A DEEP SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH IT

The Semai are not only materially dependent on the forest but share a deep spiritual relationship with it. They are known to harvest bark extracts, leaves and juices for healing rituals. What may seem like just a shrub or a weed, may in fact be one of the 45 different plants with healing properties known largely only to them.

Resort. In line with the Spa Village brand's ethos of honouring the ancient healing traditions indigenous to the locale where it operates, holidaymakers can now experience first-hand the Semai-inspired beautification and cleansing treatment, "Jungle Secrets of Anti-Aging For Her."

There is, perhaps, much we can learn from the Semai. Despite this, little effort has been made to highlight the Semai people's culture and traditions

In more ways than one, the extensive Semai "Jungle Secrets" package is a unique marriage of opposing notions. For one, it uses an amalgamation of ingredients from the region that are prized by people



A doting Semai father sharing an intimate moment with his son



The Semai-inspired treatments at Spa Village Cameron Highlands provide a window into the lives of this ancient tribe



The Semai folk can be seen all along the road up to Cameron Highlands selling produce scoured from the jungle like honey and petai





A view of the exterior of the Spa Village Cameron Highlands

The therapy is very much a convergence of the old and the new. It is a modern and luxurious spa experience that incorporates, without sacrificing the authenticity of, ancient Semai beauty regimens. The treatment draws from the age-old wisdom of Semai midwives, who apart from helping Semai women at childbirth, ensure that the woman's health, beauty and wellness isn't compromised soon after.

The half-day spa experience begins with the Spa Village Cameron Highlands' signature bath in a porcelain tub brimming with what smells like a refreshing vat of hot lemon tea. The spa therapist explains that the steamy infusion is in fact a blend of ginger, kaffir lime leaves, pandan leaves and tea. The integral Semai ingredient here is the essence of the Sepang bark that lends the bath its rusty red tint. Used traditionally by the Semai to help new mothers shape up from the inside out, the antioxidant is prized for its healing and cleansing properties.

While soaking, guests are given a tray of sugar and honey scrub meant to exfoliate the skin and a spreadable tea and honey paste that serves as a face mask.

from two very different worlds. One can expect to be pampered by concoctions of tea – prized by the English who brought it to Cameron Highlands in the first place.

But also, the Spa Village does its best to source the best ingredients known to the Semai. These elusive people may have an extensive knowledge bank of healing plants, but the fact is supply of these plants is scarce. Many of these plants are discovered by happenstance as they grow wild and scattered throughout the vast rainforest. Some plants are even impossible to source. For example, some Semai healing rituals use the buds of the world's largest flower, the elusive Rafflesia. Although the blooms are indigenous to the region, they should be gazetted, if they aren't already, as endangered species.

The signature bath is a beautifully sensual experience that is the pinnacle of the spa's offerings. This is exactly how the Spa Village has ratched up its luxury quotient that has earned it a handsome array of international awards. Quite unlike a dip in any urban spa, the Spa Village's therapeutic bath is an intensely personal experience that allows its guest to soak in complete solitude – away from the pitter patter of other guests and even the eyes of the attending therapist. The bathing experience not only soothes the tired body, but calms the mind.

And solitude seems to be the common element at play here. Instead of being rushed off to another therapy, the Spa Village invites its guests to take a moment to lay on the lounge, accompanied only by a luscious heated pillow comfortably placed on

your chest or your abdomen. The spa sojourner will be apt to find herself in a state of complete relaxation even before the highlight of the Semai spa experience commences.

Living a semi-sedentary life that is exposed to the harsh elements of the rainforest may be hard on the Semai. But the Semai are certainly no strangers to luxurious massages, which the Spa Village's adept therapists have mastered.

The massage is unique as it uses a sensual oil derived from black pepper, tea, jasmine and the key ingredients found in Semai healing rituals – minjau and patchouli. And the avid spa aficionado will be able to identify multicultural nuances in its techniques, be it the long kneading strokes akin to traditional Malay massages or the Thai technique of applying pressure to various points of the body.

Soon after, the guest will be treated to a delectable top-to-toe, warm body scrub of ground rice, green tea, jasmine and ginger. To allow the skin to absorb the healing properties of the scrub's fresh ingredients, she will then be wrapped up in an intimate cocoon made of layers of warm towels, as part of a therapy

reminiscent of the Semai's body binding ritual. The purifying effect of the exfoliant is so immediate, leaving the skin moisturised and refined, that it will surely put most commercial beauty scrubs to shame.

If a guest opts for an afternoon spa session, she will ultimately emerge from the spa just when the sun sets, leaving a vestigial vermillion hue in the sky. She will then be left to soak in the tranquility of her very own spa pavilion surrounded by the frosty mountain air and end her pampering experience on a refreshing note – with helpings of Spa Village's secret anti-aging Fountain of Youth brew.

The sybaritic "Jungle Secrets" therapy promises to invigorate the five senses and elicit a spiritual rejuvenation that is nonpareil. Without a doubt, the Semai spa experience is a boon to the weary soul, a perfect pampering for the woman wanting to escape the heat, dust and the bustle of the inner city below the verdant, highland plateau this resort calls home. But ultimately, the greatest luxury the therapy affords is the opportunity to be let in on the little known secrets of the Semai people and the ancient jungle in which they live. ■

## MORE LOCAL DELIGHTS

There is no better way to experience the diversity of Southeast Asia's age-old healing rituals and bouquet of therapeutic botany than a day at one of the six Spa Villages in the region. Renowned for its stellar menu of delectable spa offerings that espouses the healing culture of the locale, no one Spa Village encounter is the same. With therapies that promise to heighten your virility or purify the mind, you would be hard-pressed to find a therapy that didn't tickle your fancy or pique your curiosity.

### PENGANTEN MELUKAT

Traditionally used to prep the bride for her wedding day, this Balinese body cleansing therapy begins with the Mewangsul, the island's indigenous massage followed by the Meodak body scrub. The treatment continues with a moisturising slather of Empehan (fresh milk) and an indulgent Mersiram Sekar (floral bath). *Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali; www.spavillage.com*



### PERANAKAN SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES

Enjoy the healing heritage of the Baba-Nyonya, Malaysia's unique Sino-Malay people. Moulded around a person's cool or warm energies, this therapy combines age-old remedies using indigenous ingredients that are believed to cleanse and reinvigorate. Take for instance the Malacca Palm-Sugar and Honey Body Scrub, which helps replenish the vitamins and minerals needed to heal dry skin. Or the Shiok Shiok Sejuk experience that incorporates the hardboiled Egg Rolling Therapy (believed to settle hyperactivity and reduce swelling) and a yummy anti-inflammatory Cucumber Aloe wrap. *Spa Village Malacca; www.spavillage.com*

### TRADITIONAL ROYAL MALAY TREATMENT

Indulge in this regal Spa Village encounter that caters to the different needs of men and women. The man can look to improve valour and virility with the Hang Tuah traditional Malay facial and body massage. While the woman deserves nothing less than the Tun Teja body massage and beauty scrub that are indulging and fit for a princess. Together they will then relax in a herbal bath in their private garden, before receiving a typical Malay therapy — scented body steaming that uses specially blended oils. *Spa Village Kuala Lumpur; www.spavillage.com*





# COOK LIKE A CHEF

LEARN TO COOK  
THE MALAYSIAN  
WAY AT PANGKOR  
LAUT RESORT'S  
CHEF'S KITCHEN  
EXPERIENCE,  
A CULINARY  
ADVENTURE  
THAT WILL HAVE  
YOU NOT ONLY  
MANNING THE  
STOVES BUT  
CATCHING YOUR  
OWN DINNER TOO

BY TAN LEE KUEN  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KELVIN OON



# W

e stood on the rickety wooden planks of the fishing farm watching Hilde struggle with her line. "Lean in and let the line go slack," said Chef Dolis. "Then pull up and start reeling it in." Hilde did as instructed and sure enough, she was soon bringing in her catch, a small red snapper.

Hilde and Chef Dolis were part of a jaunty group out catching their own lunch as part of the Chef's Kitchen Experience at Pangkor Laut Resort. The growing popularity of culinary travel had prompted the Resort's Executive Chef Suni to create an exclusive dining experience at the Resort. The resulting Chef's Kitchen Experience is a gastronomical and pampering experience for the holidaymaker looking for a taste of local life through its food. Malaysians are rightly proud of their culinary heritage which is rich, flavoursome and varied, and guests at the Resort have a chance to learn to cook Malay, Chinese and Indian cuisine in half-day classes with breakfast, lunch and a massage thrown in for good measure.

The programme, now into its second year, has proven popular with guests. Keira Knightley has participated in it - two framed photographs of the actress smiling beatifically with the chefs hang on the wall of the Chef's Dining Room.

enough food for a party with much larger appetites than ours.

After breakfast, we were whisked away on a speedboat to the fishing farm. Along the bumpy way, we stopped by the corals to feed the fish and watch other tourists' attempts at snorkelling in a rather crowded bay of boats. The fishing farm on Pangkor Island is a quaint little number sitting about 200 metres from the beach. It floats on a crisscross of wooden planks, each box with a net full of fish, and a wooden hut in which the workers hide from the scorching sun. Ten wolf-like dogs roam the floating mass. The dogs were reared and live on the farm, fearful of neither water and people. Everyone had a hand in fishing, and our haul for the day was three red snappers and two garoupas, all of which would be served up later for lunch.

By now the sun was beating down mercilessly and we were rather glad to hop back on the boat and return to the Resort. The main portion of the day's experience was conducted in a little purpose-built outdoor kitchen in the Feast Village. Placemats and folders with the day's recipes were arranged in a semi-circle before a stove top; aprons and head scarves were thoughtfully laid out on the chairs for participants.

Our first lesson for the day was the preparation of 'Soto Ayam', or spicy Malay chicken soup. The essence of Malay cooking, and much of Asian

## THE CHEF'S KITCHEN EXPERIENCE IS A GASTRONOMICAL AND PAMPERING EXPERIENCE FOR THE HOLIDAYMAKER LOOKING FOR A TASTE OF LOCAL LIFE THROUGH ITS FOOD

There were no celebrities the day I participated, but two lovely couples up for a bit of fun and laughter - Herbert and Hilde from Austria and Jason and Anna from the UK. The cuisine was Malay, and our guiding chefs were Chef Ali Harun and Chef Dolis. Both chefs had been with Pangkor Laut Resort for well over 10 years, and were amiable and friendly.

The day started at 8.30am with a hearty breakfast which included toast, eggs, sausages, fried noodles, crepe accompanied by strawberries, salmon canapé and all sorts of pastries. The chefs went the whole nine yards with breakfast and certainly there was

cooking, is the intensive preparation of ingredients. The preparation of the soup alone involves 11 herbs and spices, including lemongrass, cumin, coriander and turmeric.

Herbert and Hilde started the show with Chef Ali and an assistant Malay chef hovering over them doing out instructions. With the ingredients beautifully prepared for us, they could get right down to cooking and it wasn't long before the fragrant smell of sautéed spices wafted in the air, whetting our appetites. There were plenty of laughs as Herbert played comedic sidekick to his wife who was expertly working the







ladle and it wasn't long before we were tucking into the clear, spiced soup.

After the light meal, we had an hour's break, and it was off to the calm oasis of the Spa Village for a massage. The massage given is according to the menu of the day, and today we were treated to a Malay massage, which is all about long, soothing strokes. I fell asleep, and woke up feeling much too relaxed to want to cook, but we still returned to the kitchen to prepare the main dishes.

European and Asian cooking, and the easy availability of Asian ingredients in Europe these days. "You can enjoy home-cooked Malay food at home now," Anna said playfully to Jason. They both live an hour away from London.

Over dessert, Chef Watanata, the executive chef of the Resort's other restaurant, The Straits, graced us with a fruit carving demonstration. The Thai chef regaled us with stories of her fruit cutting apprenticeship as well as the tips and techniques of her trade, all the while

## ...THE SALTY AIR WAS MAKING OUR STOMACHS GROWL AS WE SAT DOWN TO LUNCH ON FOOD WE PREPARED OURSELVES

For the main courses, we cooked up the chilli paste for the grilled fish (which was prepared by the professionals) and 'Rendang Ayam' (chicken rendang). Chicken rendang is a richly flavoured Malay dry curry, seasoned with a wonderfully fragrant mix of exotic spices, coconut, lemongrass and lime leaves. Anna and Jason had their turn behind the stove, working under Chef Ali's instructions.

carving and scraping away at a large papaya with a tiny sharpened fruit knife. The result was a delicate orange and green crysanthemum.

That shaping of the flower signalled the end of the Chef's Kitchen Experience and as the group disbanded, certificates of participation were handed out to our delighted little group.

By lunchtime, the aroma of the food and the salty air were making our stomachs growl a little. We were not disappointed with lunch and sat down to a scrumptious meal of food we had prepared ourselves and the fish we had caught earlier prepared by the kitchen. The participants laughed and talked over fish - steamed, grilled, fried and raw - and the chicken rendang. Talk turned to the difference between

"I really enjoyed the day. It was a wonderful way to experience a little bit of the local culture through its food," said Hilde and it was with warm smiles and a full stomach that the little group walked away, taking with them a slice of local life. ■

*For enquiries on the Chef's Kitchen Experience, call +603-2783 1000*

### CHICKEN SOUP/SOTO AYAM

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 400g raw chicken bones
- 150g chicken meat
- 1ltr water
- 40g onions
- 30g shallots
- 15g garlic
- 20g galangal, peeled, sliced
- 1 stalk lemongrass, bruised and tough outer leaves discarded
- 3 pcs lime leaves
- 50g potatoes, cubed
- 50g carrots, cubed
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh coriander/cilantro roots

- 1 pc cinnamon stick
- 8 pcs cardamom seeds
- 5 pcs star anise
- 3 pcs cloves
- 30g coriander powder
- 20g cumin powder
- 10g fennel powder
- 10g turmeric powder
- 20ml oil
- Salt and pepper

#### FOR GARNISH:

- Quartered tomatoes
- Sliced spring onion
- Fried shallots
- Coriander sprigs
- Lime wedges

#### METHOD:

1. Boil water, then add chicken bones to make chicken stock. Simmer for 20 minutes then strain, discard bones and reserve stock.
2. In an electric mixer, blend the onion, shallots, garlic and ginger to a smooth paste.
3. Heat the oil in a pot and sauté the blended paste together with the lemongrass and galangal at medium heat.

4. When fragrant, add cinnamon stick, cardamom seeds, star anise, cloves, coriander, cumin, turmeric and fennel powder. Add a little bit of water to make a loose paste.
5. Stir until mixture is even, then add lime leaves, potatoes, carrots and chopped coriander roots. Simmer for 20 minutes.
6. Garnish, serve hot, then enjoy.



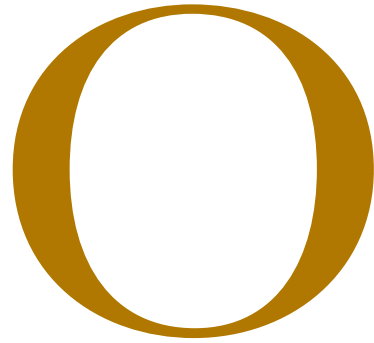
# A HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

IMMERSING HIMSELF IN THE SPA VILLAGE RESORT TEMBOK, BALI'S SIGNATURE 'SPA ACADEMY DISCOVERY PATH', **MATT ARMITAGE** NOT ONLY LEARNS HOW TO PERFORM THE 'EFFLEURAGE' ON HIS WIFE, BUT ALSO DISCOVERS JUST HOW DEEPLY THE BALINESE WAY OF LIFE HAS PERMEATED THE VERY CORE OF THIS FIVE-STAR SPA RESORT

ALL IMAGES YTL HOTELS







Of all the trends in travelling, cultural tourism has been one of the most rapidly expanding areas of recent years. While the benefits of this kind of trip are obvious - you get a more authentic snapshot of the way other cultures live - it doesn't always fit the bill. The adventure and exploration sound nice but sometimes you want to kick back and make the most of the touches and facilities that a luxury resort brings. Fortunately it doesn't have to be an either-or decision.

As my wife and I found, properties like the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali give you the best of both worlds. A small and intimate boutique resort in the Balinese village of Desa Tembok with just 27 rooms, two suites and two private villas, it's a low-key, relaxing retreat on the quiet and relatively undisturbed north-east coast of the island, nestling in the shade of the imposing Mount Agung.

And with a staff largely recruited from Tembok and its surrounding villages, the Resort and its guests are very much connected to this traditional community. Almost every family seems to have some connection to the Resort, whether it be as supplier of fresh fish, parent to a member of staff, or nephew or niece of someone working there.

A walk along the black volcanic sand of the beach behind the Resort at daybreak and sunset is always accompanied by an endless procession of smiling friends, cousins, brothers and sisters on their way to fish or to favourite swimming spots. Add to that the concerted effort of the staff to learn every guest's name and after a day or two you feel like you've been part of this extended family for years. It seems to be part hotel policy and part of the openness of the Balinese people.

Beyond the tree-lined gates

of the Resort, people carry on living in much the same way as they always have. Chickens and other animals wander through gardens and across roads. Old ladies sit on their porches watching the day pass by. Fishermen winch their boats in and out of the rocky surf.

And even if you don't venture too far from the Resort grounds, everything has been done to weave the Spa Village experience and Balinese culture together to give each guest a unique tailor-made experience. Take time out from the pool or the bale to learn how to make the intricately woven 'canang', a traditional handicraft made from young coconut leaves. This is the method used to produce the extremely complicated woven ducks that the housekeeping staff place on your bed in the evenings.

It's the same story at the Wantilan Restaurant where Chef Danny Lau puts together daily menus made from that morning's fresh local ingredients and always includes a number of local dishes like 'bakso'

- a light beef broth - amongst the options to give guests a chance to taste the hot and spicy food that is quintessential to this part of the world.

We chose to start our first day with an introduction to 'pencak silat' - a centuries-old Indonesian martial art that is an alternative to yoga - and watched as the fishermen took their 'jukong' boats out for the morning catch. Having the instructor to ourselves was just one element of the highly personalised experience that lies at the heart of the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali philosophy.

This customised approach is evident even before you reach the Resort. Guests are asked to choose between one of four of the Resort's signature 'Discovery Path' experiences - Balance, Creativity, Vigour and Spa Academy - and a tailor-made programme is put together and presented to them on arrival as they receive their welcome shoulder and neck massage.

'Balance' is about relaxation and centres on spa treatments and the space you need for reflection.

'Creativity' sets you on a path to experience the rich cultural history of the island with an insight into many of its arts and crafts conducted by the resort's own staff; and 'Vigour' is for those who want a more energetic experience, with yoga and 'silat' sessions as well as hill treks, snorkelling, diving and cycling all available.

We had decided on the more immersive Spa Academy experience, hoping to experience the Resort's world-rated spa and get to its core with a five-day Balinese massage programme. The Resort already contains a training facility for YTL's own spa assistants and personnel, and a special Balinese massage programme is also open for professional massage therapists who want to master its gentle techniques.

So, according to the Resort's Resident Manager, it seemed like a natural progression to make that teaching expertise available as a service to guests. Our seven-day, six-night Spa Village Academy package included 20 hours of private tuition in Balinese massage (though other options can be requested)







as well as a daily 50-minute spa treatment, so that you can relax and unwind and experience the way the professionals do it.

Unlike the course for therapists, it is aimed at couples that are absolute beginners and concentrates on practical, hands-on sessions rather than classroom lectures on physiology.

**AND THE LESSONS BEGIN...**

Admittedly, our first session was a little bit daunting, and it was coin-toss time to decide who'd strip off and lie down first. Although four hours of tuition a day sounds quite gruelling for a holiday, it's really just you touching your partner for a couple of hours before swapping roles. Fortunately, our able expert Ely quickly put us both at ease and got going with the demonstration.

Balinese massage is quite gentle compared to many of the 'urut' (traditional massage) strains in Indonesia and consists mainly of gliding strokes and pressure applied with the base knuckle of the hand. And while Ely made it look easy, applying the homemade Istri oil (which means woman in Indonesian) made of ylang ylang and pandan to my wife's back and sliding both palms in graceful arcs up her back, when I tried the

same thing it was more wrench than glide.

The trick, as I learned, is actually in the stance. Standing more or less sideways on to the massage table and swivelling at the hips with your knees bent allows your body weight to guide the motion smoothly. Another key is to always keep at least one hand in constant contact with your partner throughout the massage, as it maintains the feeling of togetherness and intimacy throughout the session.

It's also a lot more complicated than just sliding your hands round. Ely made it look easy by demonstrating a basic Balinese massage to me on my wife, explaining what she was doing and what each movement was called at every juncture. As we realised, it's not really a formal learning process: the sessions are taken at your speed, according to your knowledge and fitness level, and, of course, the amount of 'modelling' your partner is prepared to endure.

Once the demo was over and my wife fairly glowing with pleasure and relaxation, it was my turn to lay the hands on and get to work. The first thing that Ely taught me, after adjusting my appalling posture, was the different movements needed in Balinese massage, the most important of which is the palm slide.

According to Ely, the palm slide helps to increase the elasticity of the skin and helps your subject to relax as deeply as possible. That much of the work in Balinese 'urut' is done with this movement explains why it's so easy to fall asleep during the massage and wake up feeling invigorated rather than as though someone has been performing exploratory intra-muscular surgery with their thumb.

My favourite movement was the effleurage, a gentle stroking technique that helps to release the 'aaahs' and 'ooohs' from the 'patient' and is used to bookend the proper work on each section of the body. While some of the terminology can sound a little clinical - Ely trains professionals, after all - all these little actions with a partner are incredibly intimate, as my not ordinarily overly romantic wife duly noted.

With a flourish of effleurage from the base of my wife's spine and up to her shoulders and under her collarbone I proceeded, directed by Ely, to my first proper palm slide up her spine along the left shoulder and down the upper arm while my left hand rests at the base of the spine.

(the muscle healing and repairing drink taken after each treatment), we quickly developed a new appreciation for the levels of preparation, skill and effort all the Spa Village treatments actually take.

So, over the next few days we ran through the arms, legs (front and back), stomach and the all-important head and shoulders section by section before trying to weave them all together and perform the all-important solo massage on day five. By day four we were both able to pretty much run through the whole thing with minimal guidance from Ely, and by day five we could both execute a pretty good if not exactly spa standard massage.

While we felt quietly pleased with ourselves, we were not expecting the genuinely touching reception that awaited us at Taman Gili, the resort's laidback chill-out area by the Wantilan Restaurant. Ely and many of the other staff members who had helped make our stay so memorable were waiting to toast our success with canapés and cocktails.

Did this experience help improve our knowledge of

## THROUGH THE EXPLANATIONS OF THE BALINESE MASSAGE WE BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE GENTLE SPIRITUALITY THAT PERMEATES THROUGHOUT THE CULTURE

As I was nervous about the amount of pressure to exert, Ely counselled caution: areas like the spine can be damaged by too much or inappropriate force. Then, with an almost kneading motion Ely had me lift the flesh along the side and the belly in smooth horizontal movements towards the spine.

It may sound simple but the real trick is in seamlessly running the different movements together so that it feels like a continuous flow rather than a series of disjointed actions. But what really put it into perspective were the afternoon spa treatments.

As the week progressed we began to better understand the care and attention that went into making the massages and other treatments an enjoyable experience for the guest, as well as the physical demands it places on the Spa Village therapists. And with extra lessons in making the 'boreh' (the almost edible body scrub made from rice, cloves, ginger and galangal) and the 'jamu'

Balinese culture? Certainly, it was deepened by the amount of contact we've had with Tembok villagers like Ely. Through the explanations of the Balinese massage we began to understand the gentle spirituality that permeates the culture; through the 'jamu' and 'boreh' making sessions we began to understand the foods of the culture, whose ingredients are reflected by the food served at the Resort.

We met fishermen, labourers, shopkeepers and village elders. We had long conversations with at least a dozen members of the Resort staff and got to be on first name terms with around 30 of them. Everyone did their utmost to provide us with the most pleasurable holiday experience we could imagine; not in that ultra-efficient way, but with gestures like hand-signed cards on the bed. So, when we left the following morning for the spectacular trip to the airport at Denpasar via Ubud we hoped we left as friends as much as guests. ■



# HEART AND CRAFT

AT TANJONG JARA RESORT, GUESTS GET TO LUXURIATE IN THE CLASSIC MALAY ARCHITECTURE OF THE RESORT. BUT THEY CAN ALSO EXPERIENCE IT FIRST HAND THROUGH A HANDICRAFT TOUR WHICH TAKES THEM ON AN EXPLORATION OF TERENGGANU'S FINEST ARTS AND CRAFTS

BY TAN LEE KUEN PHOTOGRAPHS BY KELVIN OON



The reception at  
Tanjong Jara Resort is  
inspired by royal Malay  
architecture



**T**erengganu's position in the heartland of Malay culture has blessed it with an abundance of traditional arts and crafts. Together with Kelantan up north, Terengganu is home to some of the country's finest craftsmen, which means that visitors to the region can find a concentrated array of exquisite crafts in wood, metal or cloth. The craftsmen of East Malaysia are schooled in the traditional style by being apprenticed to a master. In most cases, knowledge is handed down through the generations of families specialising in a certain type of craft.

The prevalent crafts are dictated by the available local resources and Terengganu has a good supply of solid wood and copper, making it ideal for excellent woodworking and brassware. One particular type of wood, 'cenggal', is excellent for boat-making as it is tough, and water- and mould-resistant. As such, Terengganu is especially famous for its woodwork, primarily in making boats. And when the monsoon season comes, fishermen unable to go out to sea offer their woodworking skills, providing the industry with an abundant supply of skilled carpenters. Then there's also *songket*, an intricate brocade painstakingly woven with gold or silver threads, another speciality of the state. This cloth used to be the exclusive reserve of royalty, but is now commonly worn on auspicious and ceremonial occasions.

Due to its close proximity to these skilled craftsmen, the architecture and interior design of Tanjong Jara

Resort reflects the elegance of ancient Malay palaces. So authentic is its design that the Resort actually scooped the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. In fact, the work of skilled local craftsmen can be spotted all over the Resort. While on languid walks, keep an eye out for the eaves, which are usually cut out in the simplified shape of the clove spice, a common pattern in Terengganu. Eaves hide the edge of the roof and prevent rain from spilling indoors. The criss-cross pattern over the windows is a ventilation feature of vernacular architecture called 'sarang', or nest, and was a traditional way of cooling the house before air-conditioners became the norm.

Patrons of the Spa Village Tanjong Jara are given pretty batik sarongs as gifts, while the relaxation hut within the spa's walls hides an array of local handicraft on display. Admire the wooden cupboard with carved fish ornamenting its doors or the compartmentalised cupboard, a replica of a traditional piece of furniture found in the royal palace. The brass serving tray and teapot is also another local speciality, as is the ornate spice holder. In the library sit two antique musical instruments, testament to the fine craftsmanship of Terengganu.

Most spectacular of all is the grand reception area of the Resort. This area, with its pitched wooden roof and intricate latticework, was modelled after the Balai Rong found in old Terengganu palaces. The roof was especially commissioned and took five months to build, making for an impressive entrance.

In the interest of promoting local handicraft through experience, Tanjong Jara Resort offers its guests a

Handicraft Tour, led by the knowledgeable Captain Mokh., also the resident naturalist at the Resort. The full-day tour is conducted in Marang, Pulau Duyong and the state's capital city, Kuala Terengganu. Guests are given an insight into local life as they meet the individual craftsmen and hear their stories whilst witnessing them at work. Captain Mokh., an entertaining host with lots of interesting stories to tell himself, acts as translator.

The tour kicks off in Marang, a district famous for its

the individual blades. The price of a complete 'keris' starts from RM500 and can spiral up to more than a thousand Ringgit. According to the craftsman, F1 superstar Michael Schumacher acquired a Malaysian 'keris' on his last visit to Terengganu.

A more feminine craft would be batik designing and printing and for this guests are taken to the Noor Arfa Arts Complex. In true entrepreneurial spirit, Noor Arfa, a husband and wife team, transformed itself from a small shop in Terengganu into a mammoth

## THE KERIS WAS THE WEAPON OF CHOICE FOR ANCIENT MALAY WARRIORS, AND WALKING AROUND WITHOUT ONE WAS AKIN TO WALKING NAKED

seafood (a sculpture of a lobster and squid peeking out from a bowl graces the town centre) and its 'mengkuang' (screw pine leaf) products. Guests will visit the Lamaka trading centre, which is part of the government's One District, One Product campaign whose aim is to rejuvenate local handicrafts. Weaving 'mengkuang' has provided housewives around the area with much-needed income as they transform the leaves into bags, gift boxes, photo frames and such, which the centre will sell on their behalf. 'Mengkuang' grows wild in the jungles of Terengganu around bodies of water, and villagers supply the leaves.

The next stop on the tour is the 'keris' blade maker, who works in a little brick and zinc hut by the side of the road where the sounds of hammer against metal ring out in the air. Inside, you will find Pak Azmi and his nephew sweating over their work beside a fiery furnace, each pounding alternately on a sliver of metal made up of a mix of iron, copper and lead. The 'keris' was the weapon of choice for ancient Malay warriors, and in those days, walking around without one was akin to walking naked. The 'keris' blade is blunt, and death is caused by the poisonous composite of the blade. These days, the 'keris' has a purely ceremonial and decorative function, and Pak Azmi is one of only four remaining blacksmiths specialising in 'keris' blades in Terengganu.

The hilt of the 'keris' is made by craftsmen of another family who also work in a little shack outside their home. In this workshop, soot is replaced by wood chips and hammer with chisel. Three male generations sit in one shack, patiently carving and chipping away at the wood to fashion smooth, curved hilts (which are sometimes gilded with gold) and holders for



Weaving 'mengkuang' is a popular handicraft industry in Malaysia's East Coast

The Resort's Anjung Suite reveals intricate architectural details such as the eaves of the roof



TANJONG JARA RESORT ARCHITECTURE PHOTO YTL HOTELS



More Malay design influences can be seen all around the Resort, such as this cupboard in the Spa Village



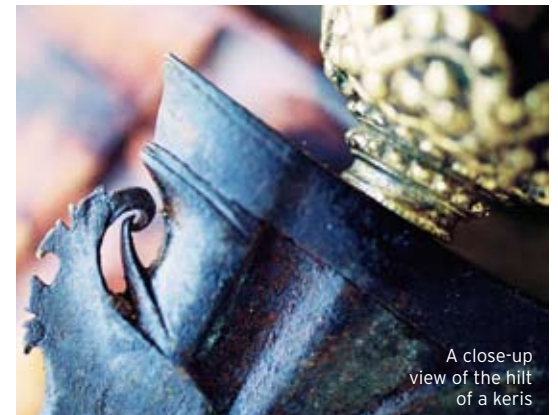
The famous boatmakers of Terengganu



The Resort's resident batik expert sketching a turtle



Keris makers hard at work in their workshop



A close-up view of the hilt of a keris

complex that houses a garden resplendent with gorgeous water features and a café to boot. The two-storey building has a shop on the first floor, while batik-printing, 'songket'-weaving, basket-making and glass-crafting demonstrations are held on the lower floor. It is not uncommon for visitors to order batik to be shipped back to their homes.

Batik is a wax-resist dyeing technique used on textile, done by hand using a pencil-shaped 'canting' or by using brass blocks to replicate patterns. In comparison with Indonesian batik, Malaysian prints are brighter and more colourful. The more popular motifs are floral or geometrical, as the Islamic religion forbids the depiction of animals in decoration. A reviving interest in batik over the last few years has helped increase its profile, and Malaysian batik designs have found their way into Italian fashion collections.

Next on the list is Pulau Duyong, a little island off the coast of the state capital Kuala Terengganu and home to the boat makers of Terengganu, who were recently the subject of a moving and educational one-hour documentary on The Discovery Channel. Boat making in Terengganu has a long history, and was largely influenced by Chinese boat-builders on ships en route to the ancient trading port of Malacca. Terengganu boat makers are some of the finest in the world and Pak Haji Dollah is the acknowledged master. The octogenarian does most of his work in his head, without needing to put any sort of blueprint on paper. His boats are the stuff of legends. It takes him up to three years to finish a small yacht, and upon completion it can cost than a million Ringgit. Students from the local university take up apprenticeships at his shipyard, ensuring that younger generations will carry on his legacy.

Finally, after a quick lunch, the last stop of the tour is at the brass-maker, working hard in a nondescript workshop in Kuala Terengganu. While silver is thought by Malaysian royalty to be the symbol of wealth and power, brass is the metal of the common people. The craft in Malaysia dates back to 500 B.C. during the Dong Son period, and it is believed that immigrants from South China were the ones who brought along their brass-making skills to Malaysia when they set up home on the East Coast. Brass goods range from pots, pans and kettles to vases, bowls, candelabras and musical instruments, and are still popular with Malay households today.

Terengganu is so much more than just beautiful beaches, breathtaking islands and the famous Rantau Beach turtles. With so much exquisite traditional handicraft as part of its tourism repertoire, visitors can easily take a little bit of Terengganu back home with them: a lingering memory of their visit to this idyllic and intensely cultural part of Malaysia. ■

*For enquiries on Tanjong Jara Resort's Handicraft Tour, call +603-2783 1000*



# UNIQUE UNIONS

THE PERANAKANS TRADITIONALLY CELEBRATE MARRIAGE WITH ELABORATE CUSTOMS AND RITUALS WHICH ARE ALL BUT ALMOST LOST TODAY. YTL LIFE DELVES INTO SOME OF THE MORE CURIOUS AND INTERESTING PRACTICES OF THE BABA-NYONYA 'KAHWEN DUA BELAS HARI' (12-DAY WEDDING) CELEBRATIONS BY EUGENE NG



THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT, today, many traditional customs and rituals often disappear in society's rush for modernisation. One prime example would be the elaborate 12-Day Wedding ritual of the Peranakans, a hybrid Malay-Chinese culture unique to both Malaysia and Singapore. It was widely practised in the past and was truly a decadent, serious and superstitious affair. But amongst the younger generation of Babas (male) and Nyonyas (female) today, a lot of this knowledge has been lost as it is usually passed down from

matchmakers, an archaic mantle few are keen to take on now.

Here is a potted guide to some of the more interesting long-lost facts about the traditions and beliefs involved in Peranakan marriages:

- Matchmaking was the norm in the past and the bride and groom usually didn't meet until the day of the wedding. In the past, boys who protested too vehemently at this permanent 'blind date' have been known to be disowned while girls escape with at most a pinch or a slap.

- Peranakan families are matriachal so it was usually the husband who stayed with the wife's family after the marriage. It is, however, also surmised that this practice stemmed from the fact that most of the grooms were immigrants and so had no family home in this country.

- The wedding ceremony reflects the Peranakan dual cultural heritage. The ceremony is Chinese in rituals, attire and practices, while the Malay influence can be seen in the form and manner of the language used, similar in the way Malay elders phrase their words during matchmaking (called 'pantun' which means using Malay in a lyrical manner).

- Symbolism is rife in Peranakan weddings. White symbolises purity, red for luck; during the first visit to the woman's house, the delegation must consist of an even number of female relatives (to symbolise fertility) while omens are also fervently noted. If the delegation visits while the family is eating a meal, it's a good omen. If it so happens the potential bride is washing her hair on the day, the marriage might actually be called off!

- In the past, all Peranakan marriages were expected to be sanctioned by heaven and if the almanac expert deemed the match unfavourable (based on observing

PHOTO CORBIS

the couple's lunar birth dates), the marriage would be called off with no ill-will between the two families.

- Four days before the wedding is 'Hari Kupas Bawang' (Onion Peeling Day), when friends and relatives gather to peel onions and garlic that will be used to cook and garnish the food served during the wedding. There is also a 'Hari Menyambal', when as many as 20 sambals are prepared to represent the harmony of the impending match, and also a 'Hari Tumbok Tepung' (The Day The Flour is Pounded) where rice is sifted, sorted, soaked then milled and pounded in wooden mortars.

- The actual 12-Day Wedding ceremony begins after all guests have left the wedding banquet. The ceremony is called 'Cheo Thau' (Initiation Ceremony) and is the most sacred. Offerings, prayers and rituals are performed. The bride and groom also dress in white suits, which will not be washed or worn again until each is eventually buried in them at their deaths.

- A Peranakan bride's wedding ensemble can weigh as much as 5 or 6 kilogrammes and features lots of jewellery. The Peranakans are known for their affinity for ornamentation and lavishness.

- A 'Jia Zhuang' (Wedding Trousseau) is presented to the daughter of a Peranakan family by her parents. The gift items vary depending on a family's financial status. In those days where assets and heirlooms were inherited only by sons, these gifts were a way of distributing some of the family wealth to the daughters.

- The marriage bed is called 'Ranjan Kahwin' and is often ornately decorated with beadwork and embroidery featuring motifs such as birds, rats and crabs (seen as fertility symbols by the Chinese.) A young child, preferably a boy from a family who has many sons, would be asked to roll three times across the bed before the wedding in the belief that his 'male energy' would increase the bride's chance of having baby boys.

- During the 'Makan Choon Tok', the first time the couple share a meal as husband and wife, both will perform their duty as caring spouses by feeding each other a variety of dishes. At the same time, two tall candles are also lit, representing bride and groom, with the first candle to burn out signifying that the one it represents would be the first to pass away.

- Perhaps the most curious thing happens on the last and final day of the ceremony. On this day, the marriage is confirmed by proof of the bride's virginity. Twelve elderly ladies, including the mothers of bride and groom are invited for the ritual. The bride's parents invite the groom's mother to inspect a bloodstained handkerchief (bim poh). She will be asked to test its authenticity by squeezing lime juice on the cloth as a false stain will run. However, the groom's mother will usually decline as it is demeaning to the bride and this task is left to the mistress of ceremonies. Once both sets of parents are happy with the inspection, a 'sireh' (betelnut) set is presented to the bride's mother as a sign of respect for the bride's virtue. ■

## HERE TODAY, HAIR YESTERDAY



Echoing its Peranakan heritage, the Spa Village Malacca in The Majestic Malacca draws plenty of inspiration from the culture of the Babas and Nyonyas. Inspired by the elaborate 12-Day Peranakan Wedding ceremony, each and every guest will enjoy a soothing pre-treatment Hair Ritual.

In the traditional Peranakan ceremony, the ritual is called 'The Berandam', where the bride's hair is groomed and trimmed and her fringe tied into tiny tufts at both sides of the forehead with either a white or red ribbon (symbolising purity and luck respectively). It is usually performed by the mistress of ceremonies and it is believed that she was able to tell if the bride-to-be was still a virgin. If the hair along the forehead tended to curl and did not respond to the comb, it signified that the girl was "experienced". Some Nyonya brides choose to retain these tufts as a symbol of their virginity until they gave birth to their first child.

Spa Village Malacca has adapted this ritual focusing on the cleansing and massaging of the hair and scalp along with the gentle combing of the hair. From a therapeutic standpoint, this process removes dead hair and helps unblock hair pores while the scalp massage invigorates, improves blood circulation and releases tension in the scalp. All this is done while you lie back, relax and recline in a comfortable chair while watching black and white re-runs of classic P. Ramlee movies, the 1960s Malaysian screen and music icon.

Each guest will also receive a Peranakan-inspired hair comb as a souvenir of their visit to the Spa Village Malacca. [www.spavillage.com](http://www.spavillage.com)



A romantic wedding scene featuring a bride and groom in formal attire, embracing and kissing under a white lattice archway adorned with hanging white flowers. The setting is a beach with waves and a sandy shore visible in the background.

# WEDDING WONDERLANDS

*Add more wow  
when you take your  
marriage vows as  
four of YTL Hotels'  
luxury resorts  
introduce distinct  
and gorgeous ways  
to start your life of  
nuptial bliss*

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## THE INTIMATE ISLAND

**Pangkor Laut Resort** - As the jewel of YTL Hotels' star-studded crown, the romance that can be found on this luxury private island resort cannot be understated. With picturesque sunsets, roaming wildlife, stunning ocean views, and a mysterious rainforest at its heart, Pangkor Laut Resort has already long been a romantic favourite amongst honeymooners and couples on weekend breaks.

The Resort does not lack man-made charms. Its Sea Villas are quite a sight to behold; the resident Spa Village Pangkor Laut is a multiple award-winner and offers a host of Aryurvedic, Malay and Chinese-inspired treatments. And its restaurants - Feast

Village, The Straits, Uncle Lim's - offer sensational Western and Asian cuisine.

So it wouldn't be hard to imagine how this intimate island could easily be the perfect location for a wedding reception. You could opt for the red carpet treatment all the way by chartering a private limousine, or arriving in style by helicopter, treating your guests to a cruise on a yacht or even a round of golf on a nearby course.

But the highlight will of course be when the couple tying the knot take their vows. And for this, the Resort's Emerald Bay will provide a spectacular backdrop for one of the most important moments of anyone's life.







## BALINESE BLISS

**Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali** - The Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali offers all visitors an opportunity to revitalise, both physically and spiritually, through its multitude of specially designed spa treatments. In fact, the whole of Bali is a highly spiritual place and on this serene island, secluded on its north side, the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali is an ideal location for those in search of a soulful wedding.

Putting paid to the old cliché that weddings are stressful affairs, this international spa resort will offer the beautiful couple and their guests a

completely relaxing experience instead. The Resort will take care of the necessary wedding details; couples can choose to conduct the nuptials at the Resort's beautiful black volcano sand beach and everyone can choose to indulge in Balinese massages and innovative spa treatments.

And by night, amazing moons have been seen and a blanket of stars covers the night sky over the Resort. Bali truly is a place of romance with soul and nowhere is that better experienced than at the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali.



## A ROMANTIC HIGH

**Cameron Highlands Resort** - Misty nights, nature in full bloom, red roses, succulent strawberries, and the perfect chilly highland weather to snuggle up to your loved one while sipping local tea, the romance of Cameron Highlands has long been known since the British discovered it as a respite from the scorching tropical heat of the lowlands.

Filled with unsolved legends, a sense of history and local folklore, this is all encapsulated in the bucolic Cameron Highlands Resort. The Resort is another favourite amongst couples looking for a romantic

weekend getaway and once there, it is easy to see why, not least because of the Resort's Spa Village which offers an intimate His and Hers spa treatment.

As a location for a wedding reception, the Resort will lend an air of grace and colonial charm to the proceedings. The ceremony will be held on a private terrace while the Resort will be decorated in a variety of beautiful local Cameron flowers. The blissful couple can even cuddle up by the fireside at night. Tranquility, natural beauty and romance: what better way to start married life.





### A ROYAL WEDDING

**Tanjong Jara Resort** - Set amongst swaying coconut trees, a golden sandy beach and rich with local culture, Tanjong Jara Resort is the epitome of the perfect Malay-inspired luxury beach resort. With architecture inspired by ancient Malay palaces, it also then makes for a royal location for a wedding.

sea. The extensive stretch of beautiful beach is ideal for couples to take long romantic walks as they contemplate their future. And the wedding party can be staged either on the beach or in the Resort's expansive gardens.

The marrying couple will find many gorgeous spots for photo opportunities at the Resort, such as the natural rock formations that jut out into the crashing waves of the

At Tanjong Jara Resort, the wedding couple can also opt to include Malay elements into their celebration with a traditional 'kompang' greeting or a performing 'gamelan' troupe during the reception. A grand affair can be expected by all.

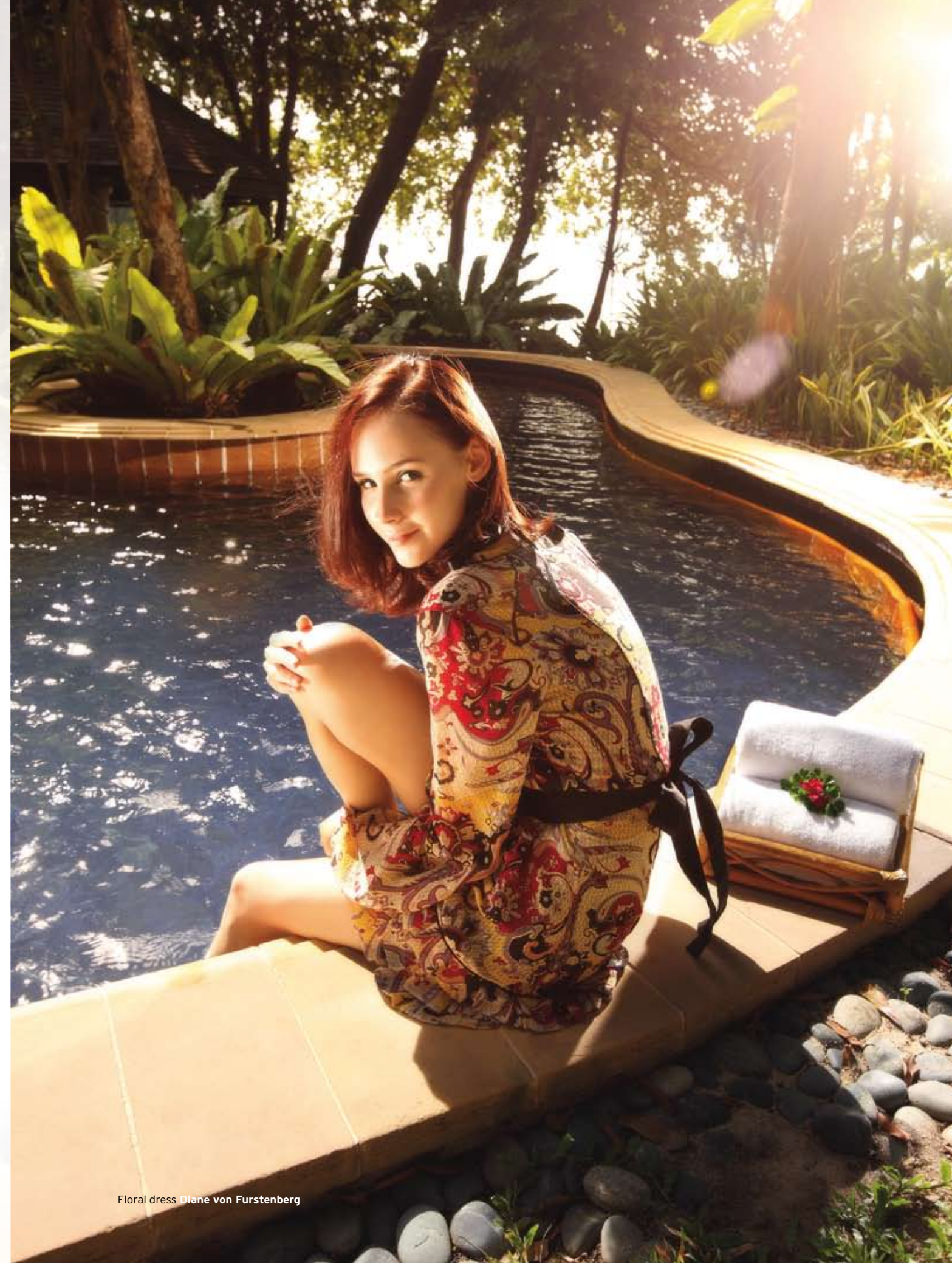
*To find out more about holding your wedding at any of these YTL Luxury Resorts, please call Michelle Lee at +603-2179 8114; email [milee@ytlhotels.com.my](mailto:milee@ytlhotels.com.my)*



# COCKTAIL CHIC

*Elegant party ensembles  
befitting the exclusivity of  
The Estates at Pangkor Laut*

PHOTOGRAPHY LO @ UNTOLD IMAGES ASSISTED BY GERARD  
STYLING YUGO THAM ASSISTED BY YUKI WONG  
HAIR & MAKE-UP TONYAN @ IVAN & MAX HAIR STUDIO  
MODEL YULIA P. @ MY MODEL MANAGEMENT  
SHOT ENTIRELY ON LOCATION AT THE ESTATES AT PANGKOR LAUT



Floral dress Diane von Furstenberg



Megan top, Michella songket skirt and chain necklace **Justin Yap**



Kaya dress  
and Phoebe heels  
**Justin Yap**







Floral dress **Diane von Furstenberg**;  
Gladi heels **Justin Yap**



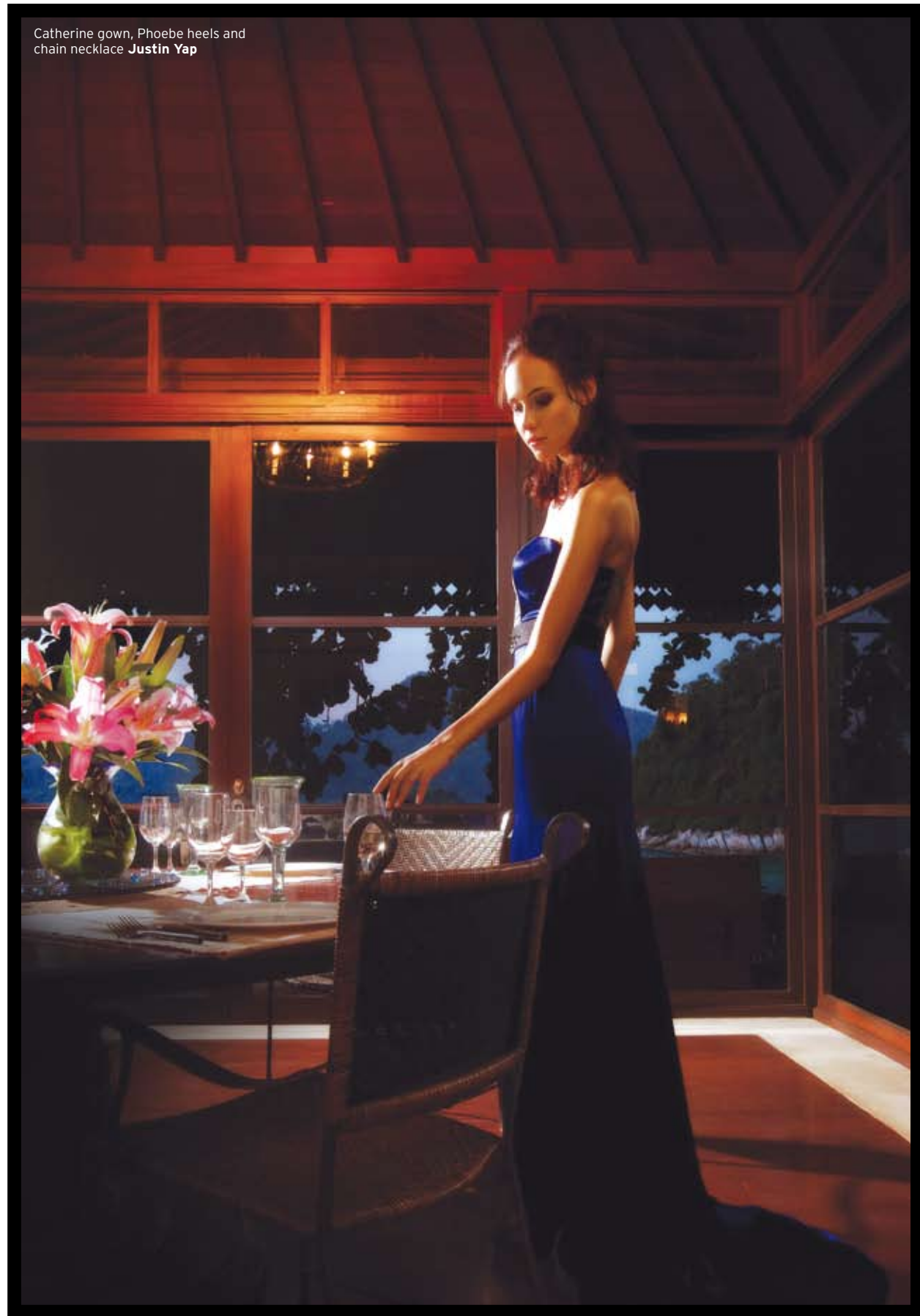


Yulia bustier top, Dani skirt and chain necklace **Justin Yap**





Patterned velvet dress **Diane von Furstenberg**; Ankle boots **Gucci**



Catherine gown, Phoebe heels and chain necklace **Justin Yap**



# THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE

COSMOPOLITAN LUXURY AND INTENSE PLEASURE ARE THE HALLMARKS OF THE WORLD OF DAVIDOFF BY ANIS RAMLI



THE NAME DAVIDOFF was once associated with the luxurious tobacco house. And then in 1980, Zino Davidoff SA was founded as a legally separated and independent company from the tobacco business. Since then, the name Davidoff has crafted a niche market for purveyors of fine luxury goods that today include leather goods, timepieces, fragrance, eyewear, textiles (ties), and writing instruments.

The name 'Davidoff' itself translates to 'good life', a fact that was distinctly personified by brand founder and Davidoff head, the late Zino Davidoff. Born to a Russian family in 1906, Zino embraced the passion for fine life upon inheriting the family tobacco business founded by his father, Henry, who opened the first shop in Geneva in 1911. Through energy and determination Zino steered the company towards success when he took over in 1930. In the next 25 years, Zino would build the company's reputation as an internationally renowned brand that

emphasises quality and prestige, courting celebrities, writers and politicians to embrace his brand and philosophy.

Zino's determination to offer the best quality products endeared him to his legions of loyal fans, and he in return would travel to the four corners of the globe searching for the next inspiration to perfect his crafts and offer nothing short of the best. His eye for impeccable quality led him to insist on only the world's finest craftsmen, respecting their work not just as a work of art, but also a personification of ingenuity and precision.

Zino was known to friends and colleagues as a man with a sense for essentials, who understood enjoying the moment, and who made this enjoyment a philosophy - it's the real things in life that make it worth living. Even after his demise in 1994, Zino's legacy has lived through the Swiss luxury brand that today offers some of lifestyle's most exquisite and luxurious

products. A man who appreciated the arts, Zino's aim for the World of Davidoff through Zino Davidoff SA was simple: for others to experience "pleasure and enjoyment of the beautiful things in life" through a varied range of premium products.

Zino Davidoff SA works with its licensed partners to create a range of lifestyle products that acknowledges the philosophy of the founder, Zino Davidoff. Each leather bag, writing instrument, fragrance and timepiece bear the quintessential Davidoff hallmarks of fine quality, style, authenticity, honesty and positive lifestyle embraced by Zino. The spirit of joie de vivre, combined with the company's professional expertise in treating every customer with special attentiveness, has contributed to the company's success today.

The year 2000 marked a new direction for the Davidoff brand as the company repositioned itself to meet the needs of a more active and modern target group. A new logo was unveiled to convey the contemporary lifestyle positioning and Zino Davidoff Trading AG was established to handle the luxury accessories products. In strengthening its position as a luxury lifestyle brand, the World of Davidoff revealed its 'Very Zino' lifestyle concept at the world's premier timepiece event, Baselworld 2008, with an exquisite collection that bears all the classic hallmarks of the World of Davidoff.

The watches in the collection were both subtle in approach yet iconic in style, combining the masterly composition of finest components and outstanding Swiss craftsmanship. The extended 'Very Zino' collection includes writing instruments produced by German craftsmen that are a celebration of precious metals with the finest leather. The leather collection, manufactured in Italy, forms a harmonious addition to the overall concept. Handcrafted stylistic details emphasise refined luxury with classic and informal styles perfectly tailored to all of the very different requirements of a modern lifestyle on the move. The leather range also highlighted new contemporary shapes that are both practical and stylish. With this launch, Zino Davidoff SA took an important step towards realising its vision of today - to become a leading global accessories brand on the luxury market.

The World of Davidoff is also home to some of the most iconic fragrances, including Davidoff Cool Water, introduced in 1988 and is one of the most successful fragrances ever to be launched. The legacy of Davidoff's unique sense of art de vivre is embodied in each Davidoff fragrance for both men and women.



In 2008, the World of Davidoff introduced the Davidoff Adventure Fragrance, with Ewan McGregor fronting its advertising campaigns. The scent and style of the new fragrance was inspired by the world's great wildernesses and raw, masculine emotion. With its air of adventure that is both daring and elemental, the new fragrance marks a new era for the Davidoff fragrance portfolio.

The World of Davidoff encapsulates the romance of travelling in luxury and style. With the launch of its first flagship store in the world in Kuala Lumpur's premier shopping centre Starhill Gallery, this luxurious brand will continue to be an inspiration to the global citizen with its lifestyle of motion and exploration. ■

*The World of Davidoff. Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery, KL; [www.davidoff.com](http://www.davidoff.com)*





# TAKING THE FALL

AS TEMPERATURES DIP AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY STILL HANGS IN A BALANCE, DESIGNERS SHOW VARIOUS APPROACHES TO FACING BOTH WITH STYLE BY CHOO ALING

## EASTERN PROMISE

**DIOR** - Notorious for his outrageously lavish spectacles, John Galliano's pret-a-porter collection effortlessly reconciled high fashion sensibilities with commercial viability. A riff on the orientalism of Paul Poiret, an artistic Parisian craze dating back almost a century, Galliano offered harem pants, rich gilded brocades, and Asian influences in general with the distinctive luxe Dior touch. Far from looking like an ethnic mish-mash from an arts and crafts bazaar, *ikat* patterns, *cheongsam* fastenings and paisley prints had never looked so lush and exquisite.



## KEEPING IT REAL (LANVIN)

**LANVIN** - Forget fantasy, Alber Elbaz was emphatic about offering wearable classic fashion which could be worn and re-worn for Autumn Winter. Elbaz evoked the 40s in the abbreviated, sober chic of the dresses and suits although the designer's exquisite cutting, with its bias wraps, drapes, subtle knots, and bunched bows added dimension and modernity. Make no mistake, there was nothing banally austere about this collection, Elbaz elevated it by sneaking in plenty of sparkle into the seams from time to time, adding giant tubular neckpieces and including accessories like fur stoles.



## COCOON CHIC

**BOTTEGA VENETA MEN** - When faced with the hard facts of life, Tomas Maier's response was to go soft - with the reassuring embrace of a much-loved cardigan. Knits were the foundation of Maier's Fall collection for men, in everything from the obvious (sweaters and such) to accessories (a cashmere bow tie). To maintain the illusion of reassuring feel-good fuzz, even materials like suedes, velvets, and cashmeres were treated to give them a gently worn character. The colour palette reinforced this comforting collection with a gentle spectrum of chocolate, mocha, and gray.



## DIVINE INTERVENTION

**BOTTEGA VENETA WOMEN** - Sultry eyes, sleek chignons and ruby lips adorned the models slinking down the catwalk swathed in Tomas Maier's tenderly glamorous collection which called to mind the screen goddesses of the golden age of cinema. As per Bottega Veneta's credo of stealth luxury, Maier's exquisitely realised pieces revealed themselves best at close quarters, like a cream coat over a strapless dress - only someone close enough to touch the wearer will realise that the dress is not matte cotton canvas but leather and can perceive the organza overlay of the coat. There was also a new undercurrent of eroticism to this collection like the lingerie corseting built into the rib section of covered-up jersey dresses which outlined the bosom but in an outrageously classy way.





## EIGHTIES IS ENOUGH

**GUCCI MEN** - Frida Giannini's men's collection for Gucci is always deeply rooted in music and this Fall, she was inspired by the all-singing, all-dancing Klaxons and the Mystery Jets. These two bands with their decidedly 80s vibe could easily pull off the shiny, tight little jacquard suits, primary-coloured shirts matched with skinny ties, leopard-print knits, two-tone loafers, tonic jeans and checkerboard trimmed cardigans which stalked down the catwalk. However, this is fashion for the unforgivingly thin as Giannini reduced the already wafer proportions of her menswear to a positively toothpick point.



## DISCO INFERNO

**GUCCI WOMEN** - Sexy glam is what Frida Giannini does best - no existentialist designer angst about offering anything apart from accessible clothes channelling current trends luxuriously which are then lapped up the world over. This collection would not look amiss in any glittery hedonistic nightclub as short, shiny and tight ruled. Boots were black, snug and thigh-high while leggings were patchworked in suede, leather, and patent. To top this off, Giannini showed kimono T-shirts or, for evening, tiny, drapery iridescent-crystal mesh dresses inspired by Tina Chow.



## OUT OF AFRICA

**LV MEN** - Building on Louis Vuitton's rich heritage as purveyors of fine luggage, menswear studio director Paul Helbers took "the travelling wardrobe of an African king" as the starting point for his Fall men's collection. Apart from the odd salamanders snaking around some of the hardware on the clothes, Helbers took a less literal route and placed emphasis on quietly luxe sartorialism. Some liberties were taken with pieces which departed from traditional luxury and offered a technological option like a cloque blouson in nylon rather than silk, or a jacket in a shimmering nylon and wool moiré.



## DYNASTY WARRIORS

**LV WOMEN** - Marc Jacobs unabashedly mined the 80s for more kitschy exuberant style although this time around Jacobs offered a snapshot of ruffles, ruching, and poufiness. Looking rather suspiciously like a homage to Christian Lacroix, lace, lamé and leather were worked into 80s proportions with a big nod to power shoulders which ran from grosgrain bow-smothered balloon puffs to the wide short coats almost as broad as they were long. For a leather goods company, bags are crucial and this iteration sprouted pie-crust frills and gilded monograms.





# LITTLE PLEASURES

DIMINUTIVE IN SIZE BUT NOT IN CRAFTSMANSHIP AND ENJOYMENT

COMPILED BY CHOO AI LING

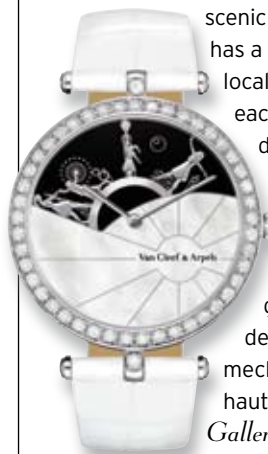


**FEMME CLUB** Befitting a collection dedicated to women, Montegrappa's Piccola range redefines the role of the pen as not merely a writing instrument but a glamorous personal accessory. Every detail of Piccola is femininity personified: the octagonal shape reaches up to create a slightly conic effect, the clip with the traditional rotating sphere features sinuous curves and the glittering resin reflects the enchanting soul of this pen. All these expressions of womanliness combine with the plissé band and the 18K gold nib in a pen which is small enough to keep in a purse. Made with platinum parts, the pens are available in purple, beige, red and blue, a big enough array of colours to match any outfit. *Available at Cortina Watch Espace, Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603-2142 1171*



**IN FINE FORM** Rado's all-ceramic True Collection possesses the kind of curved silhouettes which study the purity of lines. The Rado True Chronograph is now available in specially treated matte finish platinum which absorbs light and imbues the timepiece with a sensation of warmth. Under its dome of sapphire crystal, the galvanised dial underlines the monochrome impact of the watch and has strikingly clear graphics which offer excellent readability. Featuring three perfectly balanced counters, these three finely drawn circles echo the shape of the dial. Each counter reads with a direct-drive hand, while two are scaled for the seconds and minutes. *Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2144 3668; www.rado.com*

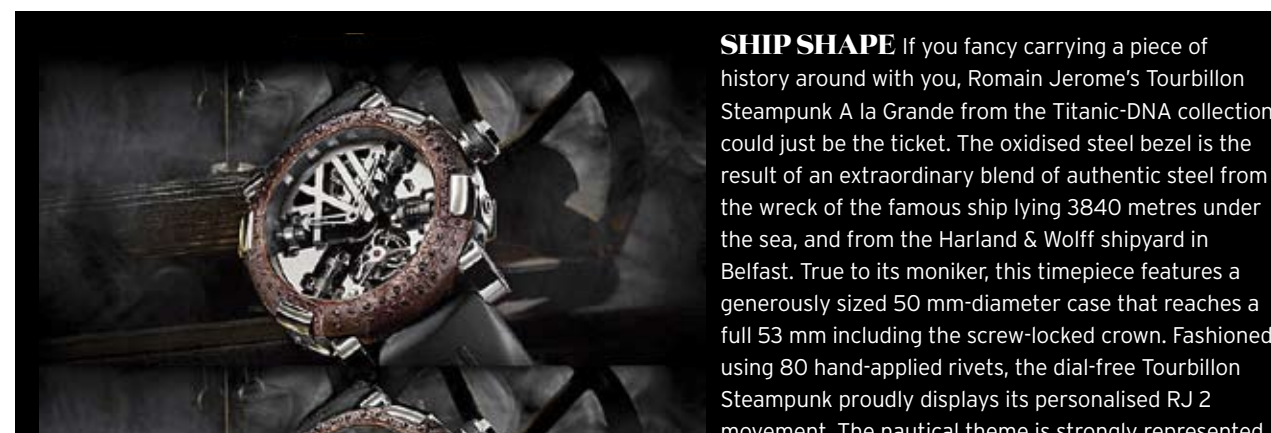
**A WALK TO REMEMBER** No stranger to exquisiteness, Van Cleef & Arpels charming woman's watch is a celebration of one of the world's most scenic cities, Paris. The aptly named Journée à Paris watch has a special disc with a female character enjoying Parisian locales. The partially viewable disc makes a full revolution each 24 hours and highlights sights like the Tuileries, Ile de la Cité, the Avenue Montaigne, the Paris Garnier Opera, the Eiffel Tower and Place Vendôme. Only 80 pieces will be available with a choice of 18K white or pink gold cases. The main dial is mother of pearl with gold inserts, and the black 24-hour disc is onyx with gold and various gems. The watch itself is beautifully decorated with 201 diamonds around the bezel while the mechanical movement inside ensures that this is as much haute horlogerie as it is jewellery. *Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2142 8669; www.vancleef-arpels.com*



**HEAVENLY BODIES** Since 2003, purism and innovation have been united in Montblanc's most famous new writing instrument line, 'StarWalker'. This year, the signature Starwalker is re-envisioned for continual fascination with the Black Mystery line with an intriguing pattern laser-engraved into a richly lacquered cap and body. Highly polished platinum-plated fittings and clip ensure a look of classic sophistication although now the traditional Montblanc star mysteriously "floats" in the crystal clear resin cap top. Available in rhodium-plated 14k-gold nib fountain pen, fineliner and reliable ballpoint, the updated Starwalker reaffirms its dynamic and cosmopolitan pedigree. *Available at Cortina Watch Espace, Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603-2142 1171*

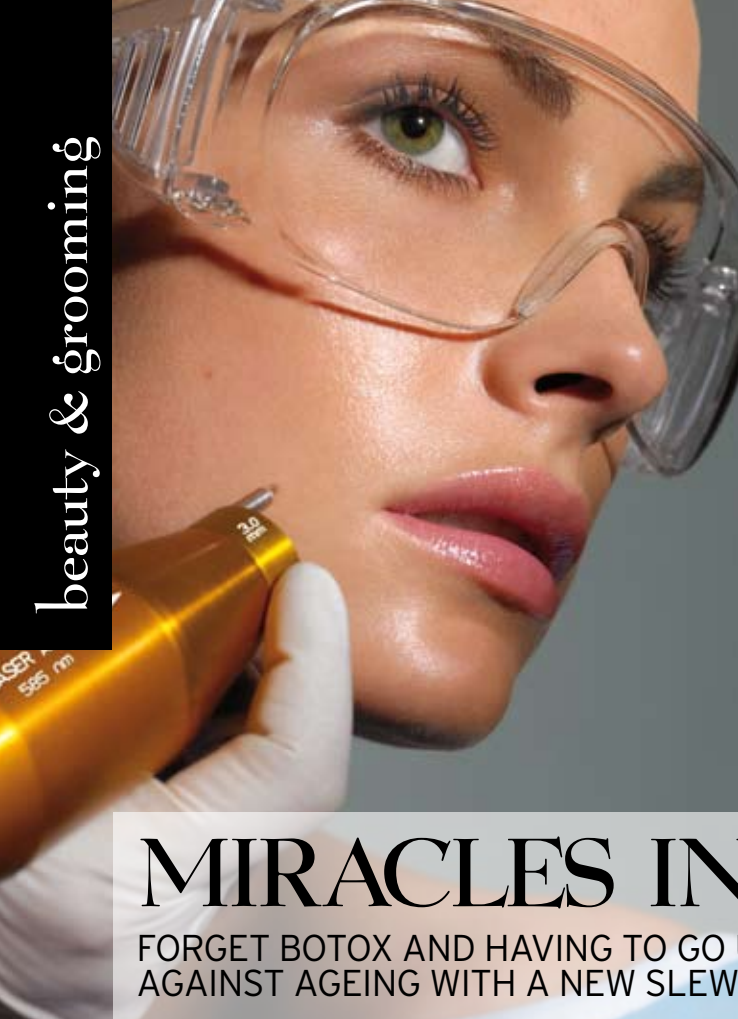


**TECH TALK** Despite looking rather macho, Richard Mille's RM 023 Automatic is apparently designed for both men and women. Like all Mille creations, the watch is focused solely on timekeeping and details like the winding rotor offer variable geometry which can be set to the owner's activity level before it leaves the workshop. The weight segment along the rotor's outer edge is milled from a special tungsten/cobalt alloy, and the rotor's ball bearings are created from synthetic ceramics while the double barrel system lowers wear and tear on the movement and evens out variations in the flow of power to the movement. This extreme care and attention to the rotor and winding aspects of the watch are directly connected with the necessity of an even energy supply and ensures timekeeping is as precise as technologically possible. *Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603-2142 0669; www.richardmille.com*



**SHIP SHAPE** If you fancy carrying a piece of history around with you, Romaine Jerome's Tourbillon Steampunk A la Grande from the Titanic-DNA collection could just be the ticket. The oxidised steel bezel is the result of an extraordinary blend of authentic steel from the wreck of the famous ship lying 3840 metres under the sea, and from the Harland & Wolff shipyard in Belfast. True to its moniker, this timepiece features a generously sized 50 mm-diameter case that reaches a full 53 mm including the screw-locked crown. Fashioned using 80 hand-applied rivets, the dial-free Tourbillon Steampunk proudly displays its personalised RJ 2 movement. The nautical theme is strongly represented by the transversal cross - symbolised on this model by four bolts vividly evoking watertight hatches used in the marine world and an off-centre bidirectional oscillating weight shaped like a ship's anchor on the rear of the movement. *Available at Khronos - Unique Horlogerie, Starhill Gallery; +603-2141 9021; www.romainejerome.ch*





# MIRACLES IN A JAR

FORGET BOTOX AND HAVING TO GO UNDER THE KNIFE. FACE THE BATTLE AGAINST AGEING WITH A NEW SLEW OF BOTTLED WONDERS ALL STORIES BY ANIS RAMLI

THE THING ABOUT BEAUTY THESE DAYS THAT IS WE ALL WANT TO SEE RESULTS FAST. If the wrinkle does not disappear overnight, the cream is destined for the bin. But lest we forget that Rome was not built in a day, having a face overhaul is best done gradually for more permanent and longer-lasting results.

A quick fix for ageing, wrinkly skin is Botox, all the rage and fashionable, but unforgivable to some, especially those who have witnessed first hand the horrors of frozen smiles and emotionless faces. But what about those who are, shall we say, financially-challenged? Are they destined to live out their golden years in an ever-losing battle against ageing? The good news is that Botox isn't the only solution available. With conventional bottles of lotions and potions - minus the headache of debilitating debt - it is now possible to get the same result without having to go under the knife.

Ironically, many of these new products have been developed by doctors who have advocated Botox for years. For example, Dr. Patrick Bowler, one of the UK's leading cosmetic physician and laser surgeon and author of *The Nervous Girl's Guide to Nip & Tuck: Look Ten Years Younger with 80 Non-Surgery Treatments*, has made good on the promises made in the book. His own range of Vitage skincare products brings idebenone, an otherwise exclusive-clinic-use-only ingredient, mainstream. Idebenone is considered one of the most powerful antioxidants available and, in Vitage, has the ability to repair and regenerate the skin.

Across the Pond, another doctor is making waves. Dr. Brandt's skincare range is much more than just a "doctor brand". As a practising celebrity dermatologist, Dr. Fredric Brandt searches for state-of-the-art ingredients and technologically advanced delivery systems that mimic his in-office procedures. His skincare range is the natural evolution of his professional practice and fans have experienced flawless, ageless-looking skin in minimal time. Among his most raved about products is the Laser in a Bottle Laser Relief that uses minuscule encapsulations to treat unwanted lines and wrinkles. This potent cocktail of green tea, and vitamins A and C, has Madonna calling herself a fan.

Similarly, research dermatologist Dr. Nicholas Perricone believes that the best approach to ageing is through a holistic practice of eating right, targeting inflammations with nutraceutical supplements, and taking care of skin with cosmeceuticals. His take on ageing is that "wrinkled, sagging skin is not the inevitable result of growing older. It is a disease and you can fight it." The Neuropeptide Facial Conformer from his Perricone MD Cosmeceuticals is based on his 'Brain-

Beauty Connection' philosophy, which essentially postulates that as we age, certain elements of the skin's repair system deteriorate too. In ageing, that element happens to be tiny strings of amino acids called neuropeptides that provide a link between the brain and the action of nerves in the skin.

The Neuropeptide Facial Conformer works by reintroducing the element to the body to help its own repair system retain youthful skin and halt premature ageing. It helps decrease the appearances of wrinkles while increasing radiance and elasticity, simultaneously offering other delicious side benefits such as reducing puffiness, dark undereye circles and the appearance of tiny veins.

And if you still need to be convinced of the virtues of bottled beauty therapies, listen to the words of Dr. Jean-Louis Sebagh. Once known as the Botox-go-to-guy in Hollywood, Dr. Sebagh says that "anyone can do Botox, but can they do a good job with it and stop you looking like a clown? Skincare will give you the glow." To illustrate his point, Dr. Sebagh created his own range of products that ultimately gave birth to the term the 'Sebagh Effect'. Central among the range is his Crème High Maintenance that uses hyaluronic acid to hydrate, linoleic acid to smoothen and green coffee extract to protect against aggressive environments. The result is skin that looks healthy, glows with beauty and whose lines have been subtly smoothed away for an ageless appearance. ■

PHOTO CORBIS

**DELICATE CYCLE** When skin is sensitive, it needs extra loving care. Beaubelle's Swiss Organique range not only works gently but contains 97 percent certified-organic ingredients, so the skin gets Earth's pure plant benefits and nothing else. Among these ingredients are organic lavender and jojoba oil - great calming and moisturising boosters - that are harvested and processed with great care to sustain their dynamic living elements. *Baubelle Skin and Body Care Day Spa, S15, Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery, KL; +603-2148 4898*

**EXTREME CARE** International skincare guru Dr Sebagh knows a thing or two about women's wrinkles with wrinkles. The former botox doctor has lasso-ed the latest peptide technology for its Serum Repair that provides a light 'tightening' and 'lifting' effect on skin. Also designed with potent hydrators to keep skin moisturised and happy. *Ken's Apothecary, Lot 10, KL*

**TALKING HEADS** Few things are more stressful than finding clumps of hair in the shower or in a brush. While hair sheds naturally, excessive shedding could signal a more serious problem. To get to the root of the problem, Nioxin hair care system is specifically designed to address thinning hair and hair loss problems, working on the concept of treating the skin where hair grows. Intrigued? Find out more at Etec Salon and if you are one of the first 50 customers, you get to experience the Scalp Treatment at a special rate of RM65 (RRP RM140). *Etec Salon, S26, Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery, KL; +603-2145 1218*

**BODY BLISS** From the Sundari Body range comes this soothing and moisturising blend of Coconut and Calendula Oils that provides superbly delicate hydration for the entire body. Based on Ayurvedic principles, Gotu Kola helps firm and tone while Lotus Oil calms the mind and skin. With a high concentration of quality natural botanicals and keeping harsh chemicals to a minimum, the oil is perfect for instantly delivering moisture to all skin types. *Spa Village Kuala Lumpur, The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur; +603-2782 9090*



# ORIGINAL ODYSSEYS

*The Spa Village experience can often take the unsuspecting therapy-seeker on unexpected and innovative journeys.*

*Here are four spa treatments that combine creativity with age-old healing wisdoms and will leave you purring in pleasure*

BY TAN LEE KUEN PHOTOS BY YTL HOTELS



**PHYSICAL OVA-TURES Egg Rolling Therapy** Think hard-boiled eggs and most people would think of making an egg salad. But the Spa Village has devised a totally unique use for this food and are using it as a tool for a therapeutic massage that combats hyperactivity. Wrapped in a muslin cloth, hard-boiled eggs are rolled onto the body. This is said to be extremely beneficial to stressed individuals who are sensitive to heat and prone to tight muscles and cramping as apparently hard-boiled eggs have the special ability to calm the mind and draw excess heat from the body. Delicious as a filling for a sandwich, in the hands of the Spa Village specialists, hard-boiled eggs now also make for... dare we say it... an eggs-cellent spa eggs-perience! *Destress with the Egg Rolling Therapy at Spa Village Malacca; [www.spavillage.com](http://www.spavillage.com)*





**SOLID AS A ROCK Tunku Batu (Heated Stone Therapy)** This is a unique therapy derived from the ancient healing practices of the Malays and the indigenous people of Malaysia, known as Orang Asli. Large stones are heated then used to massage the body. The stones exert pressure on the body and help hasten the body's elimination of toxins, alleviate joint pains, loosen tense muscles and even break down excess

fats. This popular Spa Village offering echoes its philosophy in honouring healing traditions of the region in which a Spa Village is located. Heated stone therapy has been used for centuries by locals as an addition to a normal massage. It is often performed on women in birth confinement while for men, the therapy is said to enhance agility. *Warm up with the Tunku Batu at Spa Village Cameron Highlands; [www.spavillage.com](http://www.spavillage.com)*



**SANDS-ON EXPERIENCE Tuam Pasir (Heated Sea Sand Therapy)** In keeping in line with its philosophy, Spa Village Tanjong Jara draws inspiration from the most bountiful of natural resources found in its surroundings - golden sea sand from its beautiful beach. This is an ancient Malay formula practised by our forefathers and is thought to have healing power for strength and vitality. It is often used for joint pains, severe inflammation and is a popular treatment for mothers in confinement. Hot sand, fenugreek and blackseeds are heated in a frying pan then wrapped into a cotton pouch. The therapist applies medicated oil to the affected area and uses the pouch to apply a therapeutic pressure massage. Truly a spectacular vernacular spa experience. *Experience the sands of time with the Tuam Pasir treatment at Spa Village Tanjong Jara; [www.spavillage.com](http://www.spavillage.com)*





**MIXED MESSAGES Campur-Campur** Reflecting the cultural melting pot that is Malaysia, the Campur-Campur treatment is something of a distinct signature of the Spa Village. As its name suggests ('campur-campur' means 'a blending of varieties' in Malay), this therapy combines the best of techniques in Malay and Thai massage. An original creation of the Spa Village, this internationally renowned spa brand demonstrates its quest for constant innovation by combining touch, tone and aromatherapy in this tantalising

therapy. So popular amongst loyal purveyors of Spa Village, the Campur-Campur treatment can be found in almost all Spa Villages. During the session, a traditional steam pouch filled with steamed herbs is pressed along the body as the scent of lemongrass and pandan (screwpine) leaves engage the olfactory senses. *Engage in the Campur-Campur treatment at Spa Village Kuala Lumpur, Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, Spa Village Malacca and Spa Village Pangkor Laut; [www.spavillage.com](http://www.spavillage.com)*



**ASTRAL HEALING Starlight Gazing** Through its signature four 'Discovery Paths' therapies, the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali already demonstrates an innovative approach to the world of luxury spa treatments. But with its utterly hypnotising Starlight Gazing treatment, it has stumbled upon an outright winner. This treatment doesn't involve any massage techniques, or special ingredients. It is as simple as it comes and is pure genius: all you do is float on an inflatable mattress in the Resort's swimming pool under a starry, starry night while listening to "theta" wave music, the same music astronauts listen to on their return leg to Earth. It is relaxing, meditative and therapeutic, and has even been described as a perfect way for one to heal from within. *Float away with the Starlight Gazing treatment at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali; [www.spavillage.com](http://www.spavillage.com)*



# FREE VOLUPTION

THE GLOBAL RECESSION HAS COMPELLED BIG COMPANIES TO CHANGE THE WAY THEY REACH OUT AND ENGAGE THEIR CUSTOMERS

BY MATT ARMITAGE



in lightened pay packets and rising bills.

For a small business, it could potentially make the difference between breaking even and going under, and when you consider that a simple text message is enough to instantly activate a promotion, it's a considerable marketing tool. But Twitter isn't the only technology that's allowing companies to forge closer links with their customers.

Companies are building special applications - called widgets - and creating groups for platforms like Facebook that keep customers up to date on the latest developments on products, services and promotions. While it may be of limited benefit to say, an air freshener manufacturer, others like global software company Autodesk are using these tools alongside traditional marketing efforts to provide a more customised and responsive service.

WITH ECONOMIC RECESSION BITING HARD IN MANY COUNTRIES, companies are having to rethink their plans to engage consumers. For many companies, that has meant swapping from paid services to free ones. Many companies are finding that the social networking tools that are bringing people and communities together can also be used to create compelling content for their businesses.

Many firms, especially in the service sector have been using employee blogs as a 'value added' service for years, often acting as an unofficial tips and service channel for customers getting to grips with a new product or service. But with online services like Twitter they are finding they can have a real time relationship with customers that is designed to promote their business. The micro-blogging network is currently taking the world by storm, complemented by its compatibility with geo-tagging which tags the location of people who post their comments through GPS-enabled 3G cellphones.

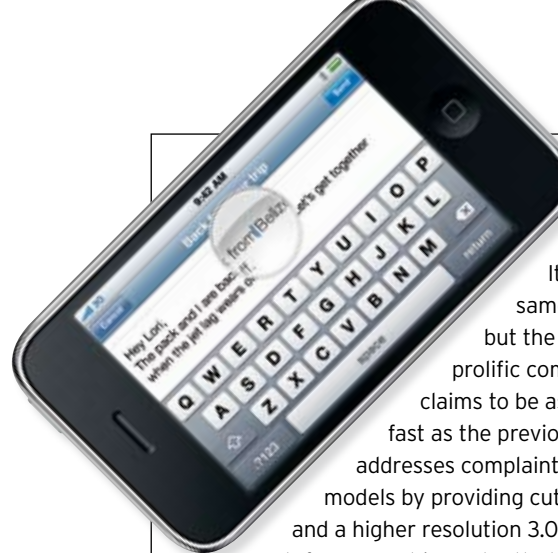
A coffee house with a loyal following can post promotions like 'buy one get one free for the next two hours' to boost traffic on a slow afternoon. It's certainly not a replacement for websites and blogs, but it's an easy and free way of reaching out to and rewarding customers who are also feeling the recessionary pinch

It also helps to humanise businesses that are often seen as international monoliths. By following blogs, tweets and Facebook groups written by identified individuals, customers are able to forge a genuine relationship with the posters, even if they have never met or spoken in person.

The revolution has even reached as far as the holy grail of the television commercial. By using sites like YouTube where people can upload videos free of charge, companies can bypass the costly procedure of buying TV advertising space, and in the process allow their video shorts to be more creative, compelling and longer than the predetermined lengths of most commercials. And importantly, as these sites track the numbers of views and allow viewers to post comments, you can gain instant feedback on your efforts.

Admittedly, it's something of a reversal of some of the 'free' models being touted before the downturn, like the ad-supported model that was supposed to provide everything from free music downloads, to cellphones, software suites and even airline flights, in exchange for sitting through a number of adverts. Now it's the advertisers themselves who are looking for free solutions rather than providing them for others. But it may well have changed the way we communicate with the people we buy from forever. ■

PHOTO CORBIS



## FULL SPEED AHEAD

It might look the same as the iPhone 3G but the new 3G S from the prolific computer company claims to be as much as twice as fast as the previous model. It also addresses complaints about previous models by providing cut and paste, MMS and a higher resolution 3.0MP camera with autofocus. Most importantly, the highest spec model now includes 32GB of storage which makes it a genuine convergence device that can hold most of your music, video and still image needs. Other highlights include a nifty compass application that integrates with other geo-tagging applications, and a voice control function that works with your music library as well as your address book. And for data security types there's Remote Wipe which allows you to erase the phone's data if it's lost or stolen. [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)



## RED ALERT, PART DEUX

Want the ultimate still camera with a massive 24MB resolution? Not content with upsetting the film industry with its modular camera system, RED now seems intent on making its cameras dominate the still arena too. The company ruffled feathers by making HD cinema quality movie making available at a fraction of the hundreds of thousands of dollars movie cameras traditionally cost, and has been used in major movies like the recent Tom Hanks blockbuster *Angels & Demons*. Now that same modular system will take industry beating stills and still be set up for eye-watering motion capture. [www.red.com](http://www.red.com)



**APE TECH?** Nothing to do with monkeys really, this wee beastie may look like a voice recorder but the Pico is actually a projector capable of broadcasting images up to 50-inches wide onto any suitable surface. Great for air warriors who can't fit a full projector into their hand luggage, it's just as much fun for the hotel suite or the waiting lounge, especially as you can play direct from the integrated SD card slot. And it can also record direct from an AV source and encode directly onto a memory card. Tiny twin

speakers complete the package but you can plug in your own. It will also connect to computers, iPods and other media storage devices to give you maximum flexibility. [www.aiptek.com](http://www.aiptek.com)

## WE LOVE THEM, YEAH, YEAH, YEAH!

We don't often cover games but the September release of a special Beatles themed edition of the rock star fantasy titled, *Rock Band* for Xbox, PlayStation and Wii is too good to miss. Coming complete with mock-ups of Ringo's drum kit, Paul's Hofner bass and John's Rickenbacker guitar, players take on the role of their favourite Beatle while performing some of the band's best loved hits. You reprise their career from the early days to the height of fame and even follow their steps into the hallowed Abbey Studios to 'record' some of the material. [www.rockband.com](http://www.rockband.com)



**A BEAUTIFUL GAME** It's so much easier to justify toys when they look like art. A collaboration between GRO Design and TIM Modelmakers, 'The Beautiful Game' redefines the horrible space taking lump that is the foosball table. With its stadium-style arching shape, the interior features a state of the art lighting system that is more art gallery than bar floor and the polished handles and chrome players with their etched numbers demand to be called sculpture. Best of all, you can play it and tell your other half you're participating in an act of social and existential performance art rather than playing with the boys in the basement. [www.eleventhgame.com](http://www.eleventhgame.com)



# FOWL PLAY

MOODY, SEXY AND REFRESHINGLY WITTY, TORONTO-BASED ULTRA IS A RESTAURANT CUM BAR THAT HAS ITS TONGUE FIRMLY IN CHICK

BY AZIZ DRAIM



CHANGE IS GOOD, but when done extremely well, change can be great. For the past five years, Ultra Supper Club has been Toronto's foremost night joint. World-class cuisine and infectious music have attracted the city's most beautiful people to this place. Which then begs the question: why on earth would owner Charles Khabouth want to fix something that's not broken?

"After five years, we felt it was time to push boundaries," he divulges, "to explore the next evolution of the Ultra brand while at the peak of our success." For starters, Khabouth shortened the name - doing away with its somewhat pretentious label - to just Ultra. It's a name that is easily more 'hip' thus the interiors now have to rightfully justify the new image.

Enter Toronto's very own award-winning creative firm Munge Leung, the very people responsible for the restaurant's original look. With every intention to produce something that "pushes boundaries", the designers stepped outside of the box and into... the chicken pen?

"It's a pretty surreal thing to see 13-foot images of chickens in a restaurant/night club," says Kevin McCall of Device222, Munge Leung's sister company. McCall is of course referring to the scary-looking roosters printed on to transparent screens now delineating the space within Ultra's main dining area. These images are the works of artistic photographer Stephen Green-

Armytage. Dirty yet delicious farm animals though they are, through the lensman's expert eye for portraiture, the domestic birds are represented here as noble beasts that wittingly lend much-needed notoriety to the restaurant cum bar.

Yet the feathered fantasy doesn't end there. When entering this establishment, one comes across a prominent 25-foot table made of solid oak with Baroque-inspired aluminium legs shaped into various bird legs. The handiwork of designers from Castor, the table is big enough to fit 24 diners and is also used as an impromptu runway when necessary. Elsewhere, a white feather backdrop anchors the bar while oversized light fixtures in the lounge area have feather motifs lining the inside of the light shades. The fail-proof colour scheme of red and black gives the interior a sexy attitude.

"Well, besides the immediate humour (there are) a few additional connotations that we are playing with here," McCall reveals. "We're really poking fun at the night club scene (especially in Toronto)" he continues, referring to the 'cock fight' male clubbers get into when competing for the opposite sex.

Then there's that whole notion of chickens as noble beasts. "We seek to draw attention to the viewer that chickens are beautiful animals, not just for consumption," McCall adds. "I'll be interested to see how much chicken they sell here for dinner." ■



**FLUID LINES** Sinewy curves have always been one of Royal Selangor's strong trademarks. Arresting design is another. In its new Domaine collection, Royal Selangor infuses these two strengths into a range of sleek champagne accompaniments. All elegant lines and sexy curves, single and double chillers plus an ice bucket are complemented by a caviar chiller, flutes, trays (all in pewter) and a cork extractor made of Stannium™, a new alloy by Royal Selangor. The only other accessory that you'll need then? A bottle of bubbly, of course. [www.royalselangor.com.my](http://www.royalselangor.com.my)

**A SPACE ODYSSEY** Reflecting the need for practicality and the avoidance of anything excessively trendy or showy in these troubled economic times is the Kubrick chair by designer Marc Sadler. Conveying a classic shape and traditional elegance, the chair is also defined by updated materials namely a polyethylene body with iroko wood legs. Available in a lawn-swing, swimming pool and illuminated version, the sporty armchair adapts easily to any space and environment, indoor or outdoor. [www.serralunga.com](http://www.serralunga.com)



**BLOW IN THE DARK** Japanese wunderkind nendo takes the traditional chokin paper lantern and reinterprets it as 'Smash', a specialised polyester that can be manipulated through hot press forming technology. Its light rip-proof skin allows it to emit a beautiful glow when light passes through, making it the ideal lamp material. Due to its unique properties, 'Smash' also allows the user to shape it like one would when blowing glass. The end result promises a collection of objects whose varied imperfections are reminiscent of the infinite formal mutations of viruses and bacteria in response to environmental changes. It's a revolutionary technology that literally takes your breath away. [www.nendo.jp](http://www.nendo.jp)



# A SOPHISTICATED TOUCH

THE ARMANI/CASA 2009-2010 COLLECTION EXPLORES UNDERSTATED GLAMOUR AND ITALIAN ELEGANCE IN A CELEBRATION OF TEXTURES AND EXPERT CRAFTSMANSHIP

BY AZIZ DRAIM IMAGES COURTESY OF ARMANI/CASA



Meanwhile, the store located at Via Pisoni 2 consists of a permanent space dedicated to showcasing kitchen systems by Armani/Casa. Currently taking pride of place is the label's second kitchen system "Calyx", which is borne from a collaboration between the label and Italian company Dada. Like Armani, Dada produces kitchen systems of the highest aesthetic value and functional content.

**BEAUTY BEYOND SKIN DEEP** In spite of the various collaborations, the new Armani/Casa 2009-2010 collection

to conceal the kitchen's working area behind wide doors. The result? A kitchen that is free from visual clutter. Additionally, since it occupies the outer rim of a room as opposed to the entire area of a room, the Calyx system can either be revealed as a practical area or hidden from view within the living or dining room it resides in.

Here's another plus side: Calyx is made of an exclusive selection of materials, finishes and colours that stay true to the Armani aesthetic code. The system's exterior skin is lacquered in a

AS SEAMLESS AND SOPHISTICATED as the mark he has sewn into the world of high fashion, designer Giorgio Armani's good taste has created an exclusive style of subdued glamour for the world of modern living. That style comes courtesy of Armani/Casa.

Now nearing a decade since its launch, the new Armani/Casa collection offers an ever-greater degree of versatility and individual awareness to the most discerning

clientele with the launch of a new kitchen, an exclusive new line of furnishing fabrics as well as several numbered and signed limited edition pieces.

This collection - unveiled at the Salone del Mobile 2009 - is displayed in a series of single brand stores located in Milan. Each store carries one of three principal themes: furnishings, kitchen design and textiles.

In the neighbouring two stores at Via Manzoni 31 and 37, the interior design label has introduced a delicious range of new furnishings and accessories made to aid one's quest for residential harmony. Six new limited edition pieces, or 'jewel furnishings' as they are referred to, are displayed here. All are strictly made in Italy, produced from matchless materials through precise craftsmanship before each one of them is then numbered and signed by Armani himself. The space at Via Manzoni 31 is also reserved for Armani/Casa's exclusive line of textiles for interior design developed in a partnership with textiles firm Rubelli.

breathes as one: it's a refreshingly sophisticated and sensual offering. Meant to be a delight to the senses, the collection is defined by top-notch skills and technology expressed in precious finishes that are in a class of their own. Fancy some lizard skin on your sofa, chaise lounge or perhaps as an accent to a writing table? How about greige leather printed with a shagreen effect on a limited edition cocktail bar, or some beautiful rosewood with its entrancing grain pattern to tease the onlooker?

Rich and multi-textured, the collection also sees the use of sophisticated varnishing techniques involving liquid metal or black nickel to emphasise opulence and radiance. The palette is signature Armani: warm hues intermingle with earth, tobacco, greige, charcoal grey and dark green.

**NOT SEEING IS BELIEVING** Bringing the notion of 'sleek and seamless' to a new height, the new Calyx kitchen can be best described as the "disappearing kitchen." This is due to a revolutionary and very practical design that allows its user

sophisticated shade of greige and recess handles adorn the doors. On the other hand, the interior of the doors and cladding of the entire vertical surface inside are created in plain silver-colour techno fabric, then covered with glass panels. Black hard granite defines the countertop while shelves and drawer interiors are brushed a sexy shade of green.

**THE FABRICS OF BEING** No cosmopolitan abode is complete without rich fabrics. Armani/Casa's first range of interior fabrics - a collaboration with Rubelli - is a feast of jacquards, damasks, velvets, curtain fabrics and, of course, yards and yards of silk. Designs find inspiration from the 20s and 30s, reinterpreting materials and decorative themes, among them the stylised treatment of plant motifs, sinuous lines and animal prints. Reptile print-effects find their way onto velvets while one particular jacquard reveals a print reminiscent of briarwood. Classic Armani designs of checkerboard canvas, chess squares, plains and mini patterns are renewed to bring a new dimension to the luxurious standard of living Giorgio Armani advocates. ■



# NATURE'S BOUNTY

THE DINING EXPERIENCE AT SPA VILLAGE RESORT TEMBOK, BALI REFLECTS ITS CORE PHILOSOPHY: FRESH, NATURAL AND IN THE CASE OF THE FOOD, ORGANIC. AND THE MAN BEHIND IT ALL IS CHEF DANNY

BY MATT ARMITAGE PORTRAIT BY MATT ARMITAGE



CHEF DANNY LAU JOINED YTL HOTEL'S PANGKOR LAUT RESORT IN 2002 AS A KITCHEN HAND, rising quickly to the position of Sous-Chef under his mentor Chef Wai at the acclaimed Fisherman's Cove restaurant at both the Resort and its sister establishment at Kuala Lumpur's Starhill Gallery. With a unique talent for combining flavours and ingredients, his meteoric rise came as no surprise and as such, he was the natural choice to conceptualise and run the kitchen at Wantilan Restaurant, Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali's signature dining outlet.

**WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT HAS YTL HOTELS GIVEN YOU FOR THE RESTAURANT?** I have been very lucky. YTL Hotels as a company has always had a very strong environmental and eco-vision for its properties, as well as its work on initiatives in the wider community. So, given the location and size of the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, we knew we had the perfect opportunity to try something that would cut down on our carbon footprint and reduce the food mileage as well as to benefit the local community in terms of sustainable food production and to ensure that our guests

**HOW BIG IS YOUR TEAM AT WANTILAN RESTAURANT?** I have five staff, all local Balinese. I have a pastry chef and a local chef, Nioman. We're a small but very supportive team. I immediately fell in love with the Balinese culture and people when I got here. The lifestyle here is very friendly and relaxed and people do things out of the goodness of their hearts.

**WHAT WAS YOUR VISION FOR THE RESTAURANT?** Our concept - running through the whole resort, the spa and the restaurant - is to focus on fresh local ingredients, in particular, organic ingredients. My vision for the restaurant has always been to enhance the spa experience for the guests. As the spa treatments are based on simple, natural ingredients I wanted that same philosophy to be evident in the menus I created.

**WAS IT A DELIBERATE CHOICE TO USE ORGANIC PRODUCE?** We wanted everything to be as fresh as possible, and we also wanted things to have the goodness and the extra taste that using organic ingredients brings. And the black soil - the volcanic soil - here is amazing, so many fabulous things can grow in it. And coming here and having the freedom to explore a new island, ingredients and cuisine meant I could expand my knowledge and feed that into the resort menus. A lot of items like mesclun salad and runner beans that would normally be imported can be grown here organically. And working with the farmers has given me the opportunity to experiment with growing many different foods.

You can even enjoy Chef Danny's superb cuisine in a private dining setting at the Resort



were getting a dining experience that was as healthy as the spa treatments they were sampling.

**DO YOU GROW ANY OF THE PRODUCE AT THE RESORT?** It's in our plan to have a herb garden and grow some other things here. We hope to have that fully operational in the next few months. We're still a very young resort and anything to do with growing takes a lot of time to establish. Our relationship with the local village is excellent and we source as many of the fresh items, especially fish, as we can from the villagers.

**WHERE DO YOU GET THE REST OF THE PRODUCE?** We work with some organic farms in the region of Kintamani, near Mt Batur, about an hour's drive into the hills from

Tembok village. It's a highland region so the climate is much more temperate than down here at the coast. That's one of the reasons we're able to grow so many items that would normally have to be air-flown.

**DOES WORKING WITH FRESH AND SEASONAL PRODUCE PUT EXTRA DEMANDS ON YOUR KITCHEN?** It's one of our biggest challenges. It forces us to be very flexible and creative. We're very lucky to have so many fishermen working close by, supplying us with fish and seafood straight from the nets. Take a walk down the beach and you'll see it's only 50 metres from the resort to where the fishermen keep their boats. So what they catch they bring straight to us.

PHOTO YTL ONLINE LIBRARY





Seafood comes straight from the nets of local Balinese fishermen



**SO YOU REALLY DO PLAN IT ALL THAT DAY?** Every day, early in the morning I go and inspect the catch and we start designing the menus from there. For guests who stay for seven or eight or nine nights, they will see and experience and taste the diversity in what we are able to do here. Every night will be a different dining experience.

**THAT'S WHY THE RESTAURANT HAS A SET MENU IN THE EVENINGS?** Yes, because everything is fresh and because we want to put together an experience for the guests, the best way to manage those goals is with a hand-crafted set menu. Obviously, we also consider any dietary requirements specific guests have, so the menu can be tweaked according to individual needs.

**AND ALL THAT HELPS TO SET WANTILAN APART FROM MOST SPA RESTAURANTS?** Yes, of course. Another one of the benefits of being a relatively small resort is that we are catering in quantities suited to a fine dining experience. It also allows us to gather direct feedback from the guests about individual menus and combinations of foods, which is especially valuable as our clientele comes from so many different countries with so many different national palates that are suited to different combinations of food. So that way, we are more able to customise the dining experience to our guests' enjoyment. ■



# CHAMPAGNE SUPERLUNAR

LI YEN CHINESE RESTAURANT ADDS A DASH OF  
DECADENCE TO THIS YEAR'S MOONCAKE FESTIVAL

BY EUGENE NG

CHINESE PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD CELEBRATE MANY FESTIVALS YEARLY, each with its own symbolism, rituals and food.

The Mid-Autumn Festival, better known as the Mooncake Festival, certainly has all of these elements. Held on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month, the festival originates from the time of the Yuan Dynasty (1200 A.D. to 1368 A.D.). The first mooncakes were used as containers for secret messages that informed the people of China to revolt against the ruling Mongols on that particular day. The rebellion succeeded and a new tradition was born.

Today, children can still be seen around neighbourhoods on lantern parades but the most popular and favoured experience during this time is the giving and receiving, and of course, consuming of these symbolic mooncakes. Traditionally, mooncakes are round or rectangular pastries, consisting of a thin tender skin enveloping a sweet, dense filling usually made from lotus seed paste. And to further push the element of symbolism, a mooncake can also contain a whole salted duck egg yolk, representing the full moon.

In recent years, mooncakes have undergone a rapid evolution, and now, all sorts of mooncakes can be found using all sort of ingredients: red bean, durian, coffee, walnuts and all manner of new and inventive combinations.

None, however, sound as tantalisingly luxurious as The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur's star offering this year: Moët & Chandon Champagne Mini Ping Pei. After thorough experimentation, the chefs at this five-star hotel's award-winning Cantonese restaurant, Li Yen, have come up with a delicious recipe that infuses the famous bubbly into the ping pei skin. Led by Dim Sum Chef Tan Tiong Guan (Li Yen's dim sum enjoys a fine reputation in the city), the restaurant is also offering other varieties of mooncakes including Durian Mini Ping Pei, 'Kam

Tui', White Lotus Paste with Double Egg Yolk, Lotus Paste with Single Egg Yolk, Red Bean Paste and more. ■

*Li Yen's Mooncake Festival promotion runs from Sept 3 to Oct 3, 2009. Opening hours: Noon-2.30pm (Mon-Sat), 10.30am-2.30pm (Sun) and 6.30pm-10.30pm (daily); +603-2142 8000*





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



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

**Intimate Experiences**

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

**Emerald Bay**

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

**Rainforest Revelations**

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

**Privileged Tranquillity**

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

**Integrated into the Environment**

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

**Sterling Service**

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





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



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

**The Spa Village**

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

**High on Golf**

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

**Taking Tea**

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

**The World's Most Innovative Spa**

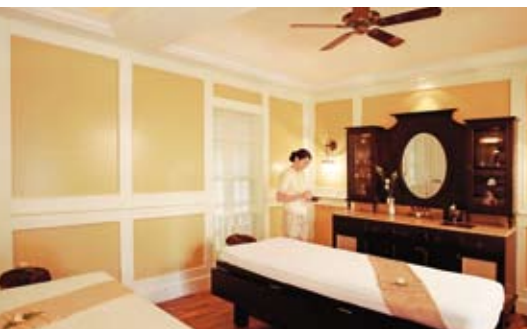
The Spa Village Tanjong Jara was recently awarded 'The World's Most Innovative Spa' by UK's Tatler Spa Awards, a testament to the unique nature of the Malay healing culture found only on the East Coast of Malaysia. Ancient Malay healing traditions are honoured through the signature Asam Roselle, 'Panglima'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

**Diving off a secluded Island**

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

**The Heart of Malay Culture**

Culture is an integral part of the Tanjong Jara Resort experience, and this manifests itself in a myriad of ways. Guests can enjoy cooking lessons which will introduce them to the various culinary arts of Malaysia. Or indulge in activities like playing 'congkak', learning the Malay martial arts 'silat' or go on handicraft tours to witness traditional 'kris' blacksmiths, batik painters, 'songket' weavers and shipmakers at work.





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



The Majestic Malacca is the first luxury hotel and spa in the historic city of Malacca. Faithfully restored and lovingly refurbished by YTL Hotels, the 54-room Majestic Malacca resonates with historical significance even while it has been thoroughly updated to cater to the needs of today's upmarket traveller. Architecture, décor and dining all reflect the legacy of this ancient city's history, and take guests on a luxurious journey into the past. The Majestic Malacca also houses the newest Spa Village which offers luxury-spa seekers such delights as the warm-energy treatment of Malaccan palm sugar and honey scrub and a hot nutmeg and rice rolling body massage. An icon of Malacca's past has now become something to be desired in the present. Tel: +603-2783 1000; [www.majesticmalacca.com](http://www.majesticmalacca.com)



**Following the Path**

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

**Meditate upon the Stars**

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

**Cuisine Designed to Rejuvenate**

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

**The Peranakan Spa**

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

**Dining Sensations**

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

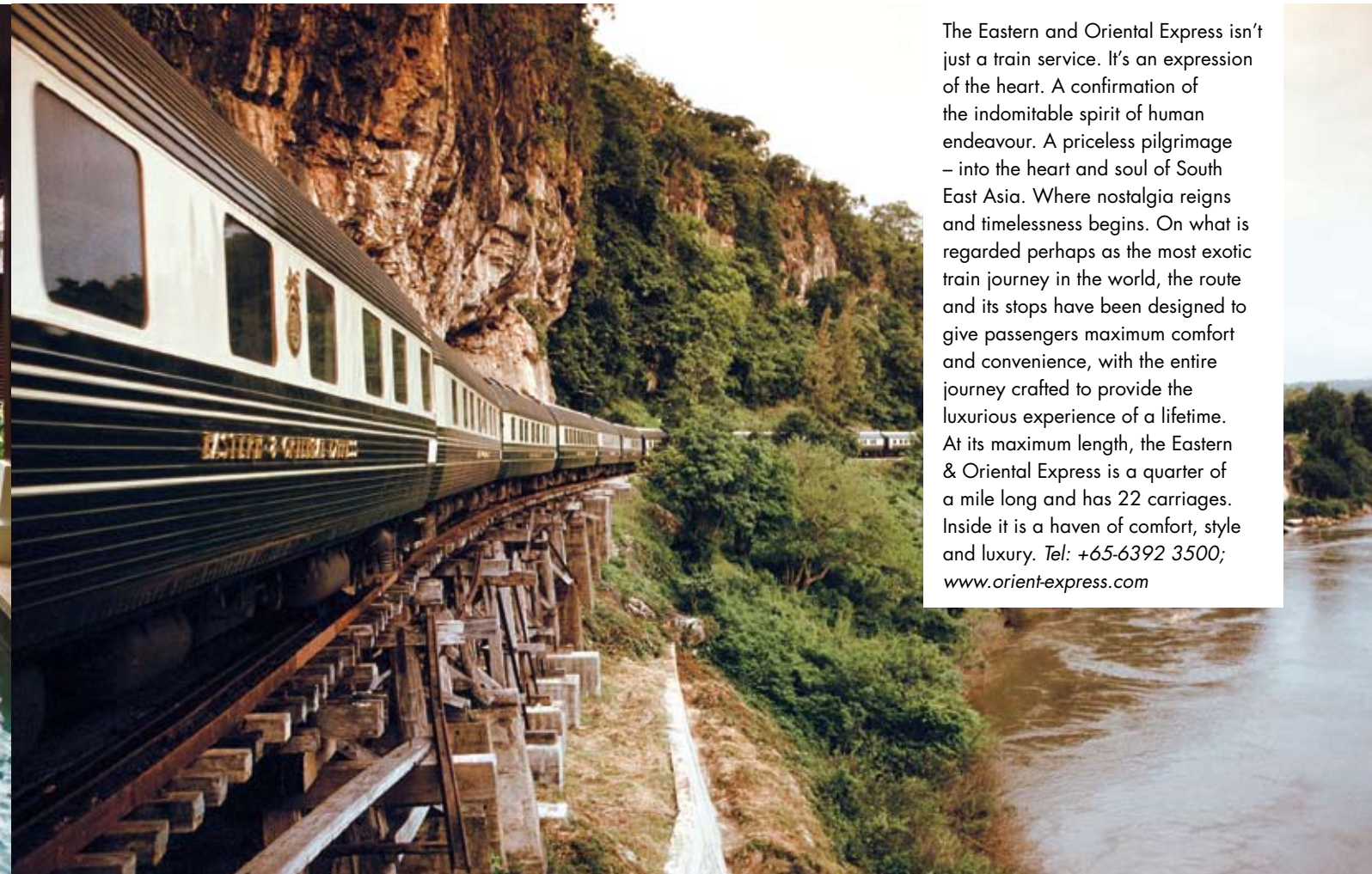
**A Haven of History**

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





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



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

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

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

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

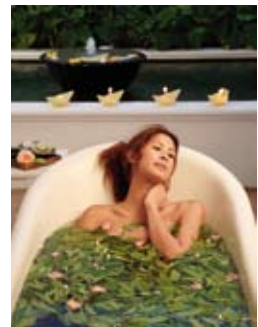
**Spa Village Kuala Lumpur**  
With treatments anchored in the cultural diversity and rich healing heritage of the region, KL's most stylish urban retreat combines ancient practices with a host of the most blissful spa therapies.

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

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

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

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





Set amidst a tropical forest on a craggy cliff overlooking the beautiful emerald green of the Andaman Sea is this lesser known gem on the YTL Hotels portfolio of luxury holiday destinations. Located just 15 minutes away from Phuket International Airport on the island's quiet, undeveloped North Western coastline, Villa Tassana offers the privileged visitor a vacation of modern sophistication married with a hearty dose of Thai hospitality. Spread out over a generous 2,800 square metres, the Villa features 3 large bedrooms with ensuite bath and dressing areas, a 15 metres swimming pool, separate living and dining pavilions, a kitchen and even a maid's room. For those looking to 'get away from it all', Villa Tassana is ideal for a spot of splendid isolation, or for spending quality time with family and friends, all while enjoying nature in all its glory, and warm, homely 5-star service. Tel: +603-2783 1000



The latest jewel in YTL Hotels' stellar collection of properties began life as a manor house stable in the late 17th century. Today, it has been lovingly restored and transformed into an elegant, high-design boutique homestay. Featuring an eclectic mix of interiors spanning the Art Deco period of the early 1900s in the lounge right up to its sophisticated contemporary kitchen, Bray House is an experience of the English gentry lifestyle with bespoke service and an intimate atmosphere. Designer furniture, vintage accessories and vivid splashes of colour create an atmosphere that marries the modern and the classic. Each of the three bedrooms has its own theme: a lullaby of white, for example, or a symphony of Tuscany red in another. The House also has a courtyard and water feature created from a natural spring found in the garden. Tel: +44 1628 771171; email: [info@braycottages.com](mailto:info@braycottages.com)



**Thai-Style**

The Villa is staffed by one dedicated attendant and a chef who between them will address all your housekeeping needs, unobtrusively coordinate all aspects of your tenancy and best of all, prepare fantastic homestyle Thai dishes for all your meals and even upon special requests. The food is top-notch homecooking so be prepared to fall in love with Thai cuisine.

**The Rarest Luxury**

The most precious aspect of the Villa Tassana experience is the intimate privacy it affords. Perched above a secluded cove, enveloped by the sight and sounds of nature, away from the madding crowd and with only your own party for company, it truly encompasses the contemporary essence behind the romantic notion of 'splendid isolation'. A rare luxury indeed, if not the rarest.

**Island Activities**

Naithon Beach, Andaman White Beach and Hin Kaw Beach are a mere five minutes drive away. Guests can also enjoy the first-class spa and sports facilities located at the neighbouring Trisara Hotel. There are three fantastic golf courses nearby, including the exclusive Blue Canyon, and also a range of luxury motor yachts available to explore Phuket's many bays, islands and dive locations.

**Ye Olde England**

Located in the idyllic village of Bray, near Windsor, experience the heart and soul of old England with its twee period houses, traditional pubs complete with beamed ceilings and fireplaces and a parish church that dates back to 1293. The county of Berkshire, one of the oldest in England, is also blessed with magnificent buildings and picturesque woodlands scenery and riverscapes.

**Culinary Excellence**

Humble Bray is considered one of the culinary centres of the world housing many famous restaurants. The most internationally renowned are The Fat Duck owned by Heston Blumenthal and Michel Roux's Waterside Inn, which each boasts three Michelin stars. No wonder then that Bray is also home to numerous ultra-desirable residences of many well-known British celebrities.

**Sterling Service**

All housekeeping needs will be addressed during your stay but the services of a butler and private chef can be accommodated upon request. The House's Concierge service include aiding with restaurant reservations and arranging excursions to nearby Windsor for a private tour of the famous Eton College, Henley-on-Thames, river cruises, golf, horse-riding and other English country pursuits.





The JW Marriott Hotel Kuala Lumpur was designed with the business traveller in mind. Located in the city's business district, this five-star deluxe hotel is the ultimate venue for meetings and functions. Facilities include 48 flexible meeting room options (including a grand ballroom) within the property, the adjoining Starhill Conference Centre and the Carlton Conference Centre at The Residences at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, all of which are connected via link-bridge. There is also a Business Centre providing a full range of business services. Rooms feature ample workspace, a plush high-back executive chair, broadband connection and other standard communication services (two-line speaker phone, fax modem, voicemail). Tel: +603-2715 9000; [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)



Based on the philosophy that great service should never merely be reactive and compliant but anticipatory and spontaneous, The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur is Malaysia's only 5-star luxury boutique hotel offering a full personal butler service. Its location in the heart of the city's prestigious Golden Triangle district makes for easy access to the trendy Bukit Bintang area: Starhill Gallery, one of the city's premier shopping centres, is linked to the hotel via an enclosed sky bridge. With 365 elegantly appointed guestrooms (including 110 suites and 1 penthouse), 25 meeting rooms, three exceptional restaurants and an award-winning 'tropical' Spa Village, The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur is one of the city's finest business hotels where combining business and pleasure is as effortless as the masterly service it provides. Tel: +603-2142 8000; [www.ritzcarlton.com](http://www.ritzcarlton.com)



#### Starhill Gallery

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

#### Feast Village

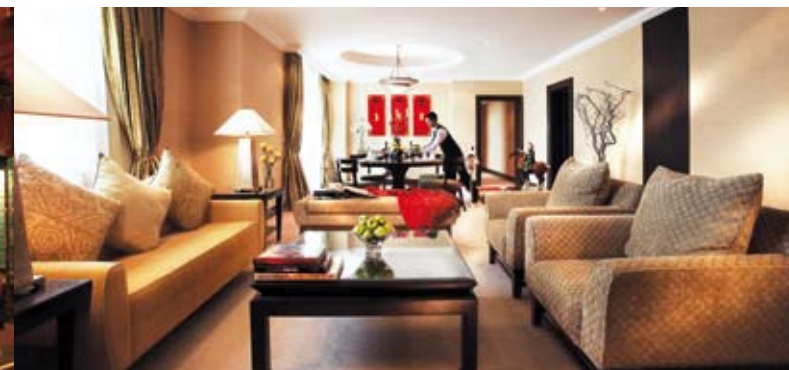
On the lowest level of Starhill Gallery, guests can enjoy a unique dining experience at the Feast Village, where 12 restaurants are brought together to create a multi-ethnic culinary experience like no other in the world. Design draws from nature here; walls are asymmetrical and serve not to separate, but rather provide peaceful enclaves where people feel at rest. Rice paper from Japan combines with slate and ikat from Indonesia, granite from China, silk from Thailand, and timber from Myanmar to create an essence of Asia. The Feast Village is truly one-of-a-kind.

#### The Residences at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur

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

#### The Carlton Conference Centre

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





# MOVE OVER, MADONNA

HELL HATH NO FURY LIKE A WOMAN DUMPED BY HER HUSBAND FOR A YOUNGER SUPERMODEL BY LADY CRISTAL CHAMPERS

DISNEYLAND'S FIREWORKS display pales in comparison to Lady Prudence's celebration of freedom at her stately home. She is celebrating her 'D-Day' - no, not of the military kind but D as in Divorce from her husband who dumped her for a young Russian model younger even than their youngest daughter. Although the fire has long gone out of the marriage, for Lady Pru, it is the loss of prestige and face. She may need him like a hole in the head but her pride is wounded.

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned," snarled Lady Pru as she went on the rampage, cutting off the sleeves of all her husband's favourite designer suits and dispatching the rest to the local charity shop. His priceless collection of fine wine and vintage brandy was auctioned off at a charity event and the rest she toasted to her freedom with guests at her summer garden party. This, she knows, will hurt him more than anything else in the world.

Like me, Lady Pru does not do doom and gloom. Blue blood runs in her veins, albeit illegitimately. Her great grandmama, a royal mistress, was known as a 'frisky filly' in her younger days - wild and free and ready to be ridden, and with a reputation to have romped with more Lords, Viscounts and Earls than in Burke's Peerage aristocratic listings.

So Lady Pru decides to celebrate her single status in style with a garden party. With her stiff upper lip curled into a fake smile, she welcomes her guests with air kisses and air hugs so that she won't crush her impossibly flamboyant hat designed by the divine high society milliner Anton Marriette. The hat is shaped like a cat lying down on a cushion, modelled after her beloved Bengal cat Queen Sheba.

Queen Sheba wears a diamond-studded collar and sleeps on the softest silk cushion in a miniature four-poster bed draped with the finest French lace in gold and black to match her exquisite golden fur peppered with black spots. She feasts only on smoked salmon, choice cuts of steak and lactose-free milk. At the garden party, cat and lady parade among the guests poised and elegant but ready to flash claws whenever a guest mentions her husband and that Russian 'bit of fluff' as Lady Pru calls her.

This lavish party is basically an 'up yours' to her ex-husband. She wants to show him that she has moved on. Her guests are mostly aristocratic wives who

have been abandoned by their husbands for younger models. This First Wives' Club is of the same ethos as Ivana Trump with her most famous pronouncement when she divorced Donald Trump: "Don't get mad, get everything!" These ladies are triumphant in their new lives living in luxury with their big fat alimony and the de rigueur toyboys.

Lady Pru has her very own arm candy whom she acquired at her last London soiree in Annabel's, London's favourite watering hole for high society. Across the room was the hunkiest young Cuban 'stallion' barely out of nappies, olive skin, dark curls and eyes that shone like a wild animal. Lady Pru, a skilled huntswoman, went for the kill. She purred, "What's your name?" The young man, aware of his spell on this middle-aged lady on the wrong side of fifty but loaded, flashed a seductive smile and said, "I am Moses". The crowd parted like the Red Sea on the dance floor as Lady led Moses away to her boudoir.

At the garden party, Lady Pru parades her toyboy like a prized thoroughbred. If Lady Madonna can have Jesus as a toyboy, why can't Lady Pru have Moses? Not to be outdone, Lady Pru is now checking out orphanages in Africa to adopt a child or two. Move over, Madonna! ■



ILLUSTRATION EDWARD MAK