

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

# Y T L

THE R

## HAUTE HIGHLAND

HIGH-FASHION HEATS UP THE COOL OF CAMERON HIGHLANDS RESORT

## PHUKET'S VILLA TASSANA

A SLICE OF HEAVEN & HOME

## THE BUTLER DID IT

EXPERIENCE THE EXCLUSIVE SERVICE OF THE RITZ-CARLTON, KUALA LUMPUR

## UNDERSEA ODYSSEY

DIVING ON PULAU TENGGOL: TANJONG JARA RESORT'S BEST-KEPT SECRET



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## UNDERSEA ODYSSEY

Forget its elegant Malay charm, quiet simplicity and luxurious reputation, the world-renowned Tanjong Jara Resort's best-kept secret could very well be Pulau Tenggol, a diving haven with an abundance of some of nature's most beautiful coral life and marine creatures.



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Photography **Gerry Chin**  
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Makeup **Jessie Chong**  
Models wear dresses from **Karl Lagerfeld**, from **Designer Bridal Room**; Shot on location at **Cameron Highlands Resort**



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

YTL HOTELS  
11TH FLOOR, YEOH TIONG LAY PLAZA, 55, JALAN BUKIT BINTANG  
55100, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

**PRODUCED BY**

BLU INC MEDIA SDN BHD (COMPANY NO. 7408-K)  
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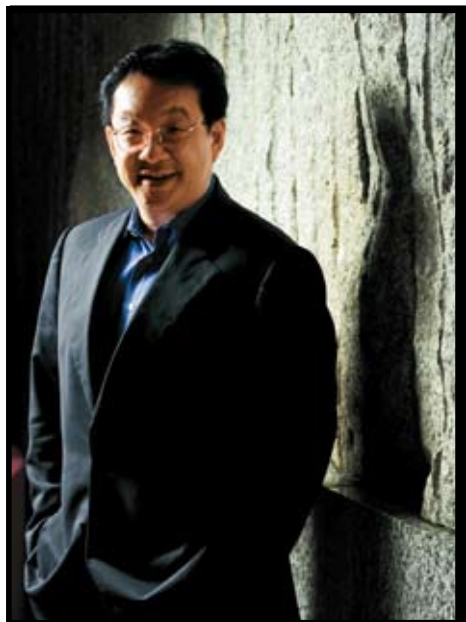
MEDIALUX SDN BHD  
NO. 38-3, JALAN PJU 5/11, DATARAN SUNWAY, KOTA DAMANSARA  
47810 PETALING JAYA, SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

**PRINTED BY**

KUM PRINTER SDN BHD  
LOT 9, JLN 51A/243,  
46100 PETALING JAYA, SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

**BluInc**

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Luxury is evolving to become based more on experiences than on material possessions, and the sophisticated consumer seeks an increasing array of unique sensations and pleasures. Human relations lie at the heart of such luxury and are part of delivering differentiated and authentic experiences.

In this issue of YTL Life, we explore the human aspect of luxury, and delve into

the software behind some of the luxury experiences within the YTL collection.

We take you behind the scenes of the world famous butler service at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, and reveal some of the secrets to the art of anticipation in the world of hospitality. We embark on a journey back in time when we speak to the former owner of The Majestic Hotel in Malacca, and discover the rich history and heritage that has been preserved in this first YTL Classic Hotel. We discover a rich underwater

world through the lens of our resident dive instructor at Tanjong Jara Resort.

There is a conversation with Chef Judith Sakata, the Executive Pastry Chef behind the exquisite desserts and pastries at YTL Hotels. She shares with us her experiences as a pastry chef from producing one-of-a-kind creations fit for a King's birthday to tips on how to tell a good pastry shop from one that is more ordinary. We also present you with Midsummer Nights Feast at Starhill Gallery in Kuala Lumpur, a first of its kind gourmet festival combining culinary talents from YTL's master chefs and visiting celebrity chefs with the theatrics of The Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre.

We hope you will enjoy discovering the hidden textures behind some of the experiences within the YTL luxury lifestyle, as much as we have enjoyed sharing them with you.



SERVICE WITH A SMILE:  
THE HUMAN TOUCH

PHOTO JIMMY KHOO PORTRAIT LEON





**ARABIAN DELIGHTS** The world renowned Pangkor Laut Resort in Malaysia's Straits of Malacca has traversed oceans and crossed continents with the recent unveiling of Pangkor Laut Luxury Resort, Residence & Spa Village, a multi-module resort property being developed off the coast of Dubai's luxurious Jumeirah coastline. To be built on the equally exclusive The World - a development of 300 man-made islands that form the map of the world - the 7-star establishment will comprise of luxury residences, a deluxe hotel as well as dining, retail and leisure facilities including the five-star Spa Village brand spread out over a 1,600,000 square foot island. Pangkor Laut Luxury Resort, Residence & Spa Village was officially launched on May 13 at The Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marina, where 300 potential investors and media members enjoyed an evening of champagne and caviar.



**GREEN GIANT** YTL Corporation flexed its green credentials once again when they launched YTL Climate Change Week 2008 in April this year. The week-long event began on April 29 at the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (KLPac) with a free public screening of The 11th Hour, a provoking and inspirational documentary produced and narrated by Leonardo DiCaprio and which addresses and proposes solutions for this very issue. Other highlights included a business conference on 'Energy Security and Climate Change in the 21st Century' and the launch of the book WASTEconomics: Turning Waste Liabilities into Assets'. At the same time, YTL Corp also announced the acquisition of Malaysian-based Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) developer, SV Carbon, now known as YTL-SV Carbon Sdn Bhd, a pioneer in energy and CDM consulting as well as renewable energy technology, and which marks the birth of the corporation's environmental division. In April too, YTL's UK-based Wessex Water was honoured with The Queen's Award for Enterprise in the Sustainable Development category, a coveted commercial prize in recognition of its all-encompassing green approach to work.

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**OH, FOR THE LOUVRE OF ART** Tan Sri (Dr.) Francis Yeoh, Managing Director of YTL Corp, demonstrated his generosity and love for art at a recent live auction at the Louvre in Paris. Under the auspices of the American Friends of the Louvre, which was founded by the Musee du Louvre in 2002 to strengthen ties between the Louvre and its American public, five generous art patrons offered to host guests at fabulous houses and castles in exotic destinations all over the world. This included Kip Forbes' Château de Balleroy in Normandy, David Copperfield's private retreat at Musha Cay in the Bahamas and a specially-conceived package by Yeoh which includes luxurious experiences aboard the Eastern and Orient Express train and his private island Pangkor Laut Resort. Yeoh is the South East Asian Chairman of International Friends of the Louvre. His exclusive 'private house party' package raised US\$250,000. Iconic 80s band Duran Duran performed a "hits only" concert on an evening which culminated with the auction held under the iconic I. M. Pei pyramid.





Celine Dion at the press conference at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur



John Legend at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur



Welcoming Incognito at the JW Marriott



Incubus arriving at the JW Marriott



George Clinton being greeted by JW Marriott General Manager Mr. Christian Bock

**ISPY** So where do celebrities and superstars stay at when they come to KL? If photographic evidence is incontrovertible in court, then we have proof than the Ritz-Carlton Kuala Lumpur and JW Marriot are choice destinations. During the Malaysian GP in March and the corresponding Sunburst Music Festival 2008, George Clinton, Incognito, Incubus and Che'nelle all stayed at JW Marriott while John Legend stayed at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur. In April, The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, was the official hotel of Celine Dion during the KL leg of her 'Taking Chances World Tour 2008'. Can you say, "May I please have your autograph?"



# CHINN UP

On March 19, celebrity chef Bobby Chinn took centre stage at Starhill Gallery's Feast Village. The ebullient chef with his eponymous fusion restaurant in Hanoi, Vietnam, and his own TV show ('World Café Asia' which airs on Discovery Travel and Living) conducted a Master Cooking Class at Starhill Gallery to showcase his talent and recipes from his new Vietnamese cookbook 'Wild Wild East'.

Taking a cue from the name of the book, the evening saw Bobby, along with YTL Group Executive Chef Kevin Cape, host dinner at a fully-booked Shook! in the Feast Village at Starhill Gallery. Top of the list was Guest of Honour Dato' Yeoh Soo Min, Executive Director of YTL, the woman who had earlier officiated the book launch. Other VIPs included Ms. Ruth Yeoh, YBhg Dato' Nordiana Zainal Shah and a host of ambassadors from the embassies of Australia, Japan, Ireland and Sweden.

All enjoyed a casual evening with a touch of rock 'n' roll and an array of fine dishes and wine: Crab Salad Nom Cua and Seafood Ceviche with Mangosteen Qoi Hai San paired with Goldridge Estate Sauvignon Marlborough New Zealand 2006, Blackened Black Cod on Braised Banana Blossoms complemented by a Goldridge Estate Pinot Noir Marlborough New Zealand 2005 before ending on the sweetest of notes with a Crème Brûlée and, of course, Vietnamese Coffee.



Crème Brûlée



Blackened Black Cod



Dato' Yeoh Soo Min flipping through the Wild Wild East cookbook



Chef Kevin Cape, Bobby & Chef Wai



(L-R) Ambassador of Sweden Her Excellency Helena Sangeland & husband, Mr Patrick Orhammar with YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Seri (Dr) Yeoh Tiong Lay & Miss Ruth Yeoh Pei Cheen



(L-R) Dr Vibeke Riemer, Mr Lars Kolind, Dato' Yeoh Soo Min, Tan Sri Dato' Seri (Dr) Yeoh Tiong Lay, Puan Sri Dato' Seri Kai Yong Yeoh, Her Majesty Queen Silvia, His Majesty King Carl, Dato' Yeoh Seok Hong & Datin Kathleen Yeoh



His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf (left) presenting a souvenir to YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Seri (Dr) Yeoh Tiong Lay witness by Mr. Lars Kolind



Chairman of World Scouts Foundation, Mr. Lars Kolind & wife, Dr Vibeke Riemer with Dato' Yeoh Seok Hong & wife, Datin Kathleen Yeoh

# ROYAL WELCOME

On April 6, YTL Corporation founder Tan Sri Dato' Seri (Dr) Yeoh Tiong Lay and his wife Puan Sri Datin Seri Kai Yong Yeoh hosted a private welcome dinner at the Carlton Conference Centre for two royal guests staying at the five-star The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur. Held in honour of His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, Honorary Chairman of the World Scouts Foundation, and Her Majesty Queen Silvia during a private visit to Malaysia, the majestic dinner was also attended by other dignitaries and VIPs including Ambassador of Sweden Her Excellency Helena Sangeland & husband, Mr Patrick Orhammar (Chairman of the World Scouts Foundation), Mr Lars Kolind and wife Dr. Vibeke Riemer, Dato' Yeoh Seok Hong & Datin Kathleen Yeoh, and Miss Ruth Yeoh, daughter of YTL Corporation Group Managing Director Tan Sri Dr. Francis Yeoh.

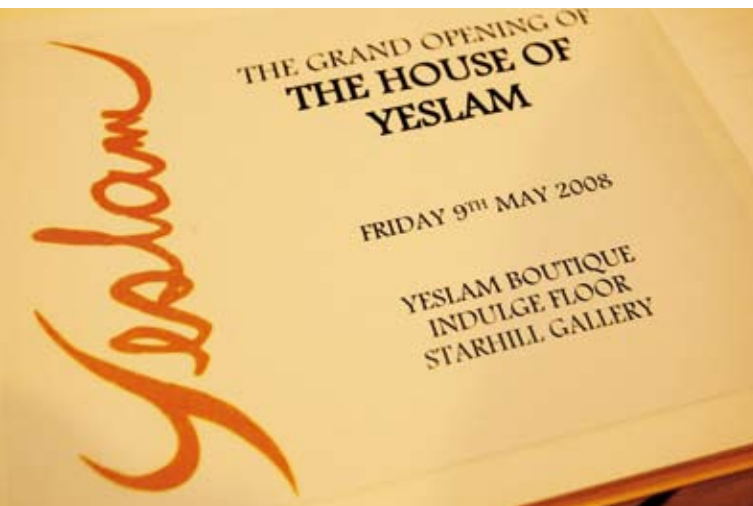


Their Majesties King Carl XVI Gustaf (centre) & Queen Silvia of Sweden with YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Seri (Dr) Yeoh Tiong Lay



(L-R) Miss Kimberly Hiu, Miss Lily Hiu, Puan Sri Sherina Aris, Puan Sri Datin Seri Kai Yong Yeoh, Miss Jenny Hiu and Dato' Yeoh Soo Min





# AN EVENING OF DREAMS

Saudi Arabian luxury house Yeslam was launched in May at an intimate and elegant soiree at its flagship Asian boutique at Starhill Gallery, Kuala Lumpur. Curtains of organza, glittering crystals, white lilies and a specially created non-alcoholic cocktail fittingly named The Yeslam Dream greeted guests, a mix of high society and members of the media. They were the privileged first few to have the opportunity to feast their eyes on Yeslam's array of fine leather accessories, watches and even to sample the signature Yeslam Dream perfume, the evening's door gift.



# OF HERITAGE AND HOROLOGY

Watchmaking heritage, five-star luxury and high society came together when Longines, the famous Swiss winged hourglass watch brand held a soiree to celebrate its 175 years of watchmaking. Held at the elegant boutique hotel The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, and in collaboration with high-end rag Malaysia Tatler, the gala event saw his Excellency Dr. Urs Stemmler, Swiss Ambassador to Malaysia, and Mr. Claude Jaunin, Longines Regional Sale Manager Asia Pacific, in attendance. On showcase were the exquisite timepieces from the Longines Heritage Collection of the Watchmaking Tradition Line, which embodies the expertise and essence of the brand.





# T

**THE QUEST FOR THE PERFECT HOLIDAY DESTINATION** is a task that seems almost impossible to quantify. Just what makes that destination, or holiday, perfect? Think back to all the holidays, those precious holiday moments that you somehow just seem

to remember while looking out the bay window at the rain trees on those nostalgic rainy afternoons.

People cherish holiday memories for many varied reasons. It could be because it was a joyous family gathering after years of absence; or a trip abroad where you fell in love; a country that you've waited years to visit; an extremely fun holiday with a group of friends, in fact, the most fun you've had in years; or a funny incident that happened. Whatever the reason, holidays are when timeless memories are often made.

Just 15 minutes away from Phuket's international airport on the north-west coastline of this gorgeous island - blessedly undeveloped and as far away from the clichéd tourist trappings - there is a little known but amazing holiday destination (so amazing it is that it's almost a sin that it's so little known) with all the potential to create these sort of exclusive and intimate moments.

In fairness though, this 'destination' is really just a villa. Fair enough, it's not just a villa, because it is quite immaculate. For starters, besides being far from the madding Phuket crowd, it is set amidst a lush tropical forest and sits atop a rugged cliff overlooking the Andaman Sea. At first sight, you will know that this is a slice of heaven. Welcome to Villa Tassana.

In fact, you can almost always at least glimpse the Andaman Sea from practically every part of the villa, but for the most you get breathtaking panoramic views, a beautiful emerald green sea shimmering in the sun, its waves lapping up private beaches or crashing against craggy rocks. You're loath to take your eyes off it.

**EXCLUSIVE LUXURIES** It isn't hard to imagine just what type of holiday you could possibly have at Villa Tassana. The Villa has three very large bedrooms (each at least 65m<sup>2</sup> in total size): the master bedroom upstairs and two others downstairs - each elegantly appointed Thai-style with a king size bed, day bed, desk and an en suite bathroom

the size of a small unchartered Thai island that comes with a massive walk-in closet. The rooms are also equipped with standard hotel amenities like air-conditioning, safety deposit box, colour TV and satellite programmes, IDD telephone, internet connection in one of the downstairs bedrooms and all basic toiletries. They are luxurious and utilitarian at once.

On top of that, this spacious 2,800m<sup>2</sup> double-storey detached building has a separate living and dining pavilion, a 15m swimming pool, another dining area poolside and giant lounge sofas, deck chairs and two upstairs balconies overlooking that magnificent view. At all times, there is a definite feeling of wide open spaces, not least while looking out to the Andaman. This is what a private villa should be like.

What makes Villa Tassana unique and so elusively desirable is that it is the only one of seven similar villas within this particular guarded compound that is available for rent to the public all year round. The other six - belonging to an Englishwoman who uses her villa for her yearly three-month holiday on the island, two Singaporeans, two Canadians and an Australian - are mainly used privately by its respective owners.

Villa Tassana, or Villa 5 as it is less romantically known, is owned by the managing director of Malaysia's YTL Corporation, Tan Sri Dr. Francis Yeoh, and falls under the management of YTL Hotels, known for their excellent brand of luxury spa resorts such as Pangkor Laut, Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, The Majestic Malacca, Tanjong Jara and Cameron Highlands Resort.

Besides getting full run of the villa itself, all guests will also be attended to by a personal chef, and an attendant who will address all your everyday housekeeping needs like the laundry, the daily cleaning of the villa, the serving of meals and even the turning down of the beds in the evenings five-star hotel-style. A third lady, who oversees the maintenance of the entire grounds, will also coordinate all other aspects of your tenancy, or any other requests you might have.

**HOME IS WHERE THE GOOD FOOD IS** Belonging to the same exclusive collection of YTL Luxury Escapes as the Estates at Pangkor Laut, Villa Tassana translates into a sort of casual luxury: modern sophistication married with a heart-warming dose of homeliness and that famous Thai hospitality. A



A rear view of the luxurious Villa Tassana

## SET AMIDST A LUSH TROPICAL FOREST ATOP A RUGGED CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE ANDAMAN SEA, VILLA TASSANA IS A SLICE OF HEAVEN

request at the start of our stay for the chef to cook "only food that you will cook for family at home" resulted in the mouth-watering appearance of home-cooked Thai specialties from the well-equipped villa kitchen for the rest of our stay.

Green curry, a really delicious version of 'otak-otak' (a rich, creamy steamed fish dish with spices and coconut), a to-die-for tom yam soup, sweet chilli fried fish and even a special request for a Thai kerabu with deep fried fish stomach were provided, much to our delight. The level of service and attention you receive here is unparalleled.

We didn't have enough time to test the extent of the chef's skill in other culinary areas, but if you are the sort who likes to go local while on holiday, then Villa Tassana's authentic version of homestyle Thai cuisine will beat hands down most of the other food you will eat at randomly picked restaurants.

Be warned though, if you want to sample the main dinner courses, watch out for the pre-dinner "snacks", which include scrumptious fare like deep fried shrimp won ton and Thai spring rolls and are



The stylish pool





The master bedroom



The living room at Villa Tassana



The giant master bedroom bathroom is quite a sight to behold and fit for king

served in more than ample amounts that you can easily overeat and spoil your appetite.

When I was a young boy, my favourite holidays were the ones where my parents would book a couple of seaside bungalows, and we would then travel with my mum's sister's family and a few of my parent's friends and their families, and we would spend a week there, the children playing on the beach

what Villa Tassana has to offer are young high-flying executives looking to get away from it all for a while with their other halves and some of their other friends or simply for an extra-special occasion. The best way to make full use of this sort of exclusive private luxury is to bring lots of bottles of wines (or any other choice alcoholic beverages), a few good books and the patience and willingness to quiet things down for a bit. It is an amazing way

## ITS NATURAL BEAUTY AND UNPRETENTIOUS VERSION OF 5-STAR LUXURY IS ENOUGH TO REALISE THAT VISION OF A PERFECT HOLIDAY

and swimming in the sea, the adults either lazing around doing nothing, going fishing or playing a game of cards. We would have a barbeque on one of the nights; there would be lots of laughter and the kids would always be really, really sad when the vacation would come to an end.

Villa Tassana reminded me of those wonderful holidays of years gone by. Ones where families truly got to spend some quality time together instead of being forced to go shopping for hours on end or trudge from one tourist site to another as they tick down their must-see list. This is the sort of holiday that is getting harder to come by these days.

Another set of holidaymakers that would love

to escape the everyday stresses of reality and to ready yourself for a return to the rigours of the real world.

There are some activities guests can enjoy at Villa Tassana. While it doesn't have its own private beach, the white sands of Naithon Beach, Andaman White Beach and Hin Kaw Beach are a mere 5-minutes away and transportation can be arranged. Even a walk around the villa's compound, verdant with tropical trees and shrubbery, alive with the sound of frogs and other wildlife, is a rare treat. Think quiet reflective solitary moments and you're well in the ballpark.

And continuing its close association with high-

TRISARA PHOTO WWW.TRISARA.COM

end spa treatments, while Villa Tassana does not feature the renowned Spa Village brand, the next door Trisara Hotel's spa centre is exclusively accessible to Villa Tassana guests. Trisara Spa uses only organic products and offers an extensive range of services (see sidebar) that can be enjoyed in the privacy of the Villa or at one of the spa's treatment rooms. Guests can also enjoy the gym, tennis courts and the yacht and diving facilities at Trisara.

And further down the road, golf nuts who cannot be away from the greens for too long can go for a round at the exclusive Blue Canyon golf club, a 15-minute drive from the resort with another two championship courses a further five-minutes away. So there's plenty to do.

But all these are just the icing on the cake of Villa Tassana. Its natural beauty, unpretentious version of 5-star service and luxury, and the opportunity for a spot of splendid isolation is more than enough to realise that vision of a perfect holiday.


Ultimately though, any holiday, whether with friends or family, is always what you make out of it, but it is almost a certainty that you will be really, really sad to leave Villa Tassana. ■

*Villa Tassana is located at 60 Moo 6 Srisunthorn Road, Choengthalay, Thalang, Phuket, 83110 Thailand. For bookings and enquiries, call +603-2783 1000 or email [travelcentre@ytlhotels.com.my](mailto:travelcentre@ytlhotels.com.my)*



More views of the Andaman



A diver in a black wetsuit and scuba gear is swimming in the upper left, holding a bright flashlight that illuminates a large sea turtle swimming towards the right. The turtle has a distinctive black and yellow patterned shell. They are surrounded by a vibrant coral reef with various types of coral and sea fans. The water is clear and blue.

# UNDERSEA ODYSSEY

FORGET ITS ELEGANT MALAY CHARM, QUIET SIMPLICITY AND LUXURIOUS REPUTATION, THE WORLD-RENOWNED TANJONG JARA RESORT'S BEST-KEPT SECRET COULD VERY WELL BE PULAU TENGGOL, A DIVING HAVEN WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF NATURE'S MOST BEAUTIFUL CORAL LIFE AND MARINE CREATURES

BY LOO KIT CHOONG

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF YTL HOTELS

**THE SECRET IS INDEED OUT.** If there is one place in Peninsula Malaysia where you can go diving in style, it has to be the East Coast. But not just anywhere in the East Coast; it has to be at the Tanjong Jara Resort, a five-star luxury resort facing the South China Sea and located a mere 8km from the small town of Dungun.

Tanjong Jara Resort's reputation certainly precedes itself. It is named after the golden sandy beach it lies upon and is embraced by the blue-green waters of the South China Sea. It houses a world class spa specialising in the traditional art of Malay healing, and it is an altogether charming yet decidedly modern and sophisticated resort influenced design-wise by the typical Malay kampong house.

But you can now add underwater diving to that list of highlights and whether you're a beginner or an experienced diver looking for new and interesting dive sites, this is the place to do it.

Just off the coast of the resort, around 45-minutes by speed boat, lies one of Terengganu's lesser-

known islands, Pulau Tenggol. Made up of a cluster of several islands, the main island itself forms part of the Terengganu Marine Park. But don't be fooled by Pulau Tenggol's comparatively compact size. At 50 hectares, it is still a serene underwater haven that is home to spectacular dive sites that will mesmerise even the most seasoned of divers with its coral formations and abundance of underwater life.

Here is where you dive in style. When guests stay at the Tanjong Jara Resort, all trips to Pulau Tenggol are guided by its in-house expert dive instructor, the, err, flamboyantly named Richard Smith. An affable Englishman with an infectious laugh and a deep love for diving, all resort guests will get the benefit of his insider experience and intimate knowledge of the various Tenggol dive sites.

After two years off the diving scene, I was really glad when Richard took me through the safety drills of mask-clearing, air supply retrieval, and then, literally, to the deep end of the pool to practice the safety stop and the emergency ascend. He then proceeded with the biggest dos and don'ts, a revision which



included a short lesson in buoyancy. And you should know, Richard is a patient coach who never compromises on the safety of his guests.

After two hours of practice, he deemed me ready to get back to the seas. But this would have to wait until the next day and I spent the evening eagerly anticipating the magic of Tenggol I had heard so much about.

**TO THE EDGE AND BACK** The next morning, after a hearty breakfast at the resort's Di Atas Sungai restaurant (which means 'Atop the River' and which, by the way, serves up a most delicious nasi dagang with flavourful fish curry), we set off for our first stop, Tokong Timor (East Temple). Surveying the site and noticing a group of 10 divers already down in the depths of the blue, Richard decides to move on to dive spot number two, the ominously named The Edge. Always one to emphasise the quality of the dive, he has made this snap decision on the basis that there is no need to jostle for space when you are in a place as vast as the ocean.

One member of our dive party, a Portuguese by the name of Bella Legatheaux who has dived the world over from Cuba to the Dominican Republic, the Maldives and even The Great Barrier Reef, excitedly took photos of the nudibranch and later told us she had never seen anything like it before. We continued to see many colourful Christmas Tree worms and a puffer fish along the way.

I was more excited by a friendly Hawksbill turtle that was grazing on the corals oblivious to our presence. Schools of Fusiliers and Jacks populated the waters, with an occasional stingray or inquisitive clown fish peeking up from corals as we swam by. There truly is a lot to see at the Grace.

A little Suckerfish (Remora) became my unexpected dive buddy at this site. They are welcome companions to many larger creatures like sharks and rays and even divers. They stick around to clean up leftovers from their hosts' mouths, an aquatic dental floss, if you so will, but I don't remember my legs having had dinner yet.

## I MIGHT BE A RELATIVE DIVING NOVICE BUT [PULAU TENGGOL] IS BY FAR THE BEST IN TERMS OF THE DIVERSTIY AND RICHNESS OF SPECIES

The Edge is a good 30 metre descent to the bottom of the ocean. Once down there, you are immersed in a surreal underwater kingdom of pliable pastel corals and curious sea creatures. The sheer abundance of live corals and the flurry of fishes swimming all around you will make you wish your tank never runs out of air. I may be a relative novice in terms of the number of places dived, but this is by far the best dive spot in terms of the diversity and richness of species. A personal highlight of this particular dive must be the huge Humphead Parrot Fish I spotted going about its everyday business.

**NUDI BEACH** Tenggol is particularly blessed with an endless variety of nudibranch - a miniature sea slug that lives on the corals. They are mostly as large as the tip of your pinkie but what they lack in stature they make up for with flair: vivid, vibrant colours in the most gorgeous of combinations - greens with orange, dark blues with pinks and purples. Because of their size, it takes a trained eye to spot them and it is Richard who points out two to three of these stunning little creatures at our second and most amazing dive spot, the aptly named Amazing Grace.

**THE BLUE TEMPLE** After a simple lunch of sandwiches and fruit on the idyllic Tenggol island beach, we returned to Tokong Timor, pinpointed by a dull rock outcrop populated by seagulls and our final dive spot of the day. Here, we were privy to even more underwater beauty as we were given the chance to view in full glory the coral walls that formed a dazzling mass of olive greens, mauves, neon greens, and blues while giant boulders loomed amongst an abundance of sea life.

Tokong Timor is exhilarating. I was particularly fascinated by a group of fishes completely occupied in frenzied feeding, attacking the corals like they hadn't eaten in days! Then I found myself trying to hug the gently sloping rock fringe, and trying not to stray too far away from the rest of the group. It was the perfect drift dive for me.

In between dives, Richard shared with us his knowledge about the species that swam through this part of the world as they migrate from one sea to another. According to him, the magnificent whale sharks and graceful manta rays can be sighted in



ALL PHOTOS YTL HOTELS

Above and below: Pulau Tenggol is filled with stunning and colourful coral and marine life



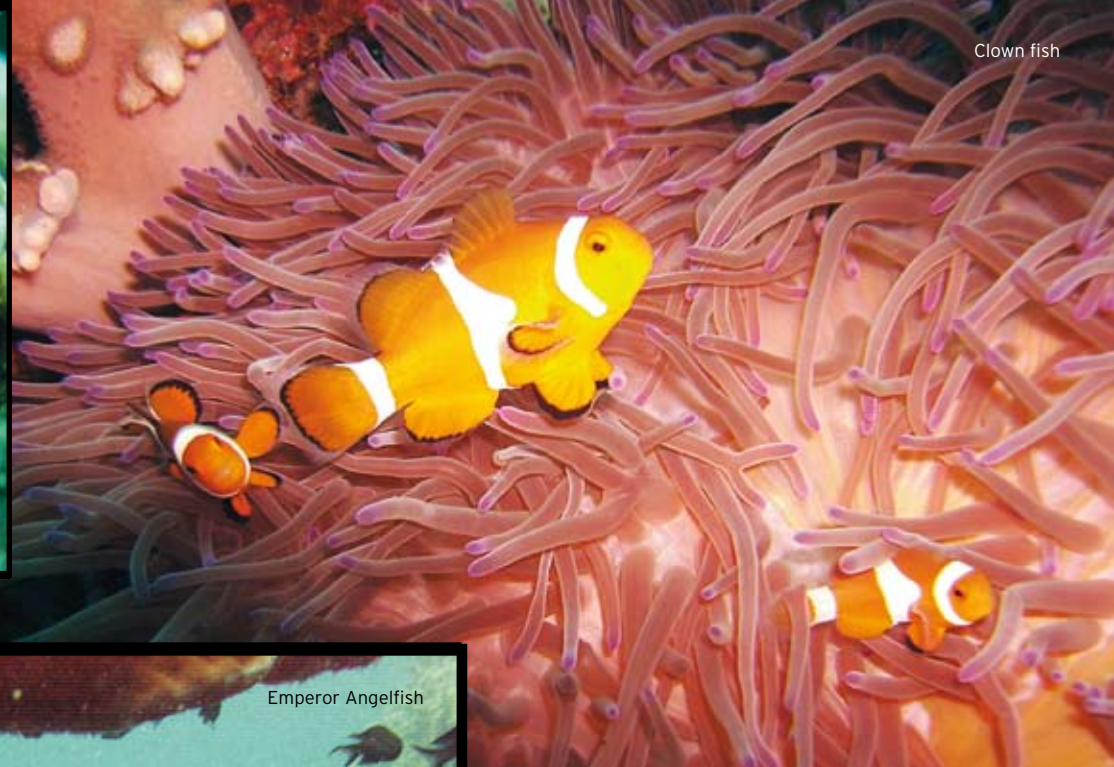
Divers with a Hawksbill Turtle



Nudibranch



Clown fish



Emperor Angelfish



Damselfish



A school of Parrotfish



Boring Clam



Christmas tree worms







Tanjong Jara Resort's Nelayan Pool

## THOSE WHO DIVE HERE ARE EXTREMELY MINDFUL AND ARE STRICTLY PASSIVE SPECTATORS, SO MARINE LIFE ISN'T AFRAID TO THRIVE



Tanjong Jara Resort's dive instructor Richard (L) sharing dive stories with a guest



A turtle tale to tell the folks back home

ALL PHOTOS LOO KIT CHOONG, TURTLE PHOTO: YTL HOTELS

these waters in March, April, September and October due to the plentiful plankton during this time. The plus point about diving in Tenggol is how its marine animals are not afraid of divers, and so don't hide or dart away when they see a group of divers clad in black coming their way.

As Richard puts it "There are fewer divers here so the marine animals aren't afraid of strange black two legged creatures and because, those who chose to dive here are extremely mindful of the marine life and are strictly passive spectators, marine life isn't afraid to thrive here."

I was tired out by the end of the third dive but contented and happy. We made our way back to the resort to be greeted by what's known as Sucimurni Kampung Lifestyle held every Saturday, where little huts are set up serving local delicacies like apom balik, keropok lekor and cucur udang. And besides this excellent spread of local snacks, the other thing about staying at Tanjong Jara is that you don't have to worry about trudging up the beach with the heavy tank on your back. You just jump off the boat.

Fortified by a short nap, I made my way to the resort's Nelayan Restaurant to wrap up this perfect day with drinks and an absolutely delicious seafood dinner. While I indulged in a wicked chocolate cake topped with creamy vanilla ice-cream for dessert, I pondered how the spectacular marine life at Pulau Tenggol and Tanjong Jara Resort had engaged all my senses today: sight, sound, touch, and after that meal, smell and taste as well. There must be some irony in that. ■

*Dive packages and a host of other activities are available at Tanjong Jara Resort; for more info, call +603-2783 1000 or email [travelcentre@ytlhotels.com.my](mailto:travelcentre@ytlhotels.com.my); or visit [www.tanjongjararesort.com](http://www.tanjongjararesort.com)*

### 5 MINUTES WITH RICHARD SMITH



ALL PHOTOS LOO KIT CHOONG

Having 'accidentally' ended up in Tanjong Jara Resort as its resident dive instructor, Richard Smith has since racked up more than 2000 dives under his belt. He describes this dive site as "world class diving from a world class resort" but, more importantly, shares three very important tips on how to always dive safe:

1. Pick a reputable operator. Safety must always come first so any dive operator that does not insist on seeing your diver's certification (either PADI or NUI) before they take you out of a dive, well, let's just say there's something fishy going on then.
2. Check the dive centre's equipment. They must all be in good condition and well-maintained.
3. Ask the operator how many divers they take out at one go. There should be no more than 5 divers so that attention to each dive member is not compromised especially in terms of safety and in pointing out interesting sea life.



The dive centre at Tanjong Jara Resort



Pulau Tenggol's idyllic beach





# THE BUTLER DID IT

AND AT THE RITZ-CARLTON, KUALA LUMPUR, WITH ITS EXCLUSIVE ALL-ROOM BUTLER SERVICE, YOU CAN CERTAINLY EXPECT SO

BY MATT ARMITAGE PHOTOGRAPHY JIMMY KHOO



# T

HE TRUTH IS, travelling can be a complicated affair. Whether for business or pleasure, it is often a complex exercise: having to make reservations, find out if you might need additional inoculations, apply for visas, book flights then pack. Then there are the check-in, security

and immigration procedures at the airport and waiting for your luggage on that carousel. Finally, you'll need to check-in to your hotel.

If you are on a business trip - and there are many men and women who do so today - that's a lot of things to do, and that's even before that presentation at this afternoon's very important meeting.

Those in the know, those who have travelled extensively and stayed in many different places, those who have endured permanent residency in countless countries, will tell you that often, the best level of service one can experience is more anticipatory than when purely delivered on demand. The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, is one such place that lives by this notion, where service is by intuition, second nature. A 10-year old boutique property in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, the hotel boasts 251 guest rooms among which are 114 luxury suites, but more importantly, it is the city's first all-room butler service boutique hotel. In a decade, it has built itself

the perfect opportunity to glean background information on the guest that will help them to make your stay that much more pleasant and personal. A cold towel, fresh juice and fruit platter also await you and, procedure complete, the butler will then start to unpack your suitcase for you, that is, unless you prefer otherwise. Some people are, of course, knickers-shy.

Your needs attended to, the butler then retires. But at the push of a button on the phone, he or she will come running to refill, remove, rearrange, or just about do anything that begins with 're' you may be able to think up. Freshly squeezed juices, tea and coffee are all available on a free-flow basis at the press of a button.

Beyond unpacking, what the butler does from then on is really up to you. Their role is to be as obtrusive as you require, and as they are dedicated only to you, they really are at your beck and call. Shining shoes, pressing clothes, serving refreshments if you need to hold an impromptu in-room meeting with colleagues or clients - it really is all about your individual needs.

For the traveller (whether business or pleasure) with no immediate pressing engagements on the agenda, all the books will tell you that a good soak in the tub often does the trick in dissolving the tension of the day, especially if your butler has drawn it for you

filled with essential oils, added a mountain of foam on top, and left you a glass of cognac or champagne and maybe even a freshly prepared cigar on the side of the tub.

It's easy to feel pampered here and unlike most other hotel rooms, you may not be itching to get out of this one. Take into consideration a list of amenities that includes High Definition flat screen TVs, DVD players, iPod docks in all rooms in addition to a slew of international awards for its spa, restaurants and service levels and you can understand how this can be your indoor kingdom. Or alternatively, you can plug straight into the complimentary broadband at the workstation and download the logjam of email that has accumulated while you crank up the tunes on the Altec Lansing desktop music player.



Upon arrival, your personal butler will greet you at the lobby and escort you straight to your room where the check-in formalities will be conducted

Surprisingly, though, it's what's outside the hotel where this service really comes into its own. You might be tempted to press the call button every few minutes for the first couple of hours but there really is a limit to what you can think up for a valet to do. Unless you're booked for a long stay there are probably only so many suits and dresses to press and hang, only so many shoes to clean.

So, it's in an organisational capacity that your butler really shines. Hotel concierges have long been the eyes and ears of a city, but there's a limit to the amount of personal attention they can lavish on you. Your butler, on the other hand, is solely concerned with you and as a result their recommendations for dinner, lunch or places of interest should be a closer reflection of your personality.

And their knowledge of the city and the surrounding countryside means they can easily put together trips and tours that really suit you. Put simply, your butler is a city-insider who will fast-track you around town.

Very importantly, 30% of The Ritz-Carlton Hotel's butlers are female, a reflection of the growing number of female business travellers. Again, it's a simple thing but important to the comfort of female guests: a reassuring presence in the hotel room and an uncomplaining same-sex companion at your side when you may need it. But then it's always the simple things that make all the difference.

Not that there's anything wrong with staying in and ordering room service. As well as the 24-hour kitchen, guests are also able to order from seven-

time Five Star Diamond Award-winning Chinese restaurant Li Yen, one of the city's finest. When the butler brings in the food and sets up the dining table complete with flowers, it transforms a modest choice of French onion soup and wagyu beef into something that feels like a real occasion.. Quite marvellous.

Of course, there are some things about The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, that can't be experienced in the room - like the well-appointed 24-hour gym and pool at the Health Club with its TV-equipped relaxation booths, or the award-winning Spa Village Kuala Lumpur, with its private treatment cabanas and separate lap pool, set in a rooftop tropical garden.



The butler service includes the unpacking of your luggage

24HRS BAG YESLAM

## THE BUTLER'S ROLE IS TO BE AS UNOBTRUSIVE AS POSSIBLE, BUT AS THEY ARE DEDICATED ONLY TO YOU, THEY ARE AT YOUR BECK AND CALL

a reputation for its unparalleled level of service.

So, in anticipation that most travellers - particularly long-distance ones - will be tired when they reach the hotel, The Ritz-Carlton Hotel offers the luxury of an in-room check-in as part of that butler service. Upon arrival, you will be met by a dedicated personal butler assigned to you for the duration of your stay, and who will direct you straight to your room from the hotel lobby without you having to stand at the check-in counter while muttering under your breath that all hotels really should have bar stools at such places. No more spooling through pockets and bags to find passports and credit cards.

This bar-stool negating, no more spooling service also has the advantage of giving the butler





The hotel's butler service is accentuated with fine touches like this



The butlers are given daily briefing sessions to ensure that service quality is always maintained

One essential experience is Afternoon Tea at The Lobby Lounge. As you sink into the vintage leather of the plush sofas you notice that the room is dominated by a large Russian-style samovar, indicating that these folks take their tea seriously. And with over 40 varieties to choose from, it's a tea aficionado's paradise, with unexpected concoctions like Grannies Garden, Strawberries with Yoghurt and the whiskey-infused Irish Malt to try out.

And that's before you get to the food. The scones are freshly baked and deliciously flaky, accompanied by bitter orange marmalade and raspberry jam; the biscuits are covered in chocolate lavender, and then there are the sandwiches, pastries and fancies. It's a tall order, and it's perfectly possible that it will have you fleeing back to the safety of your room to escape into that butler-drawn bath. Pure decadence. Which is what The Ritz-Carlton Hotel butler service is all about. ■

### HERE'S HOW THE BUTLER DID IT

**SUBJECT: SUE**  
**YEARS OF SERVICE: 1 YEAR**

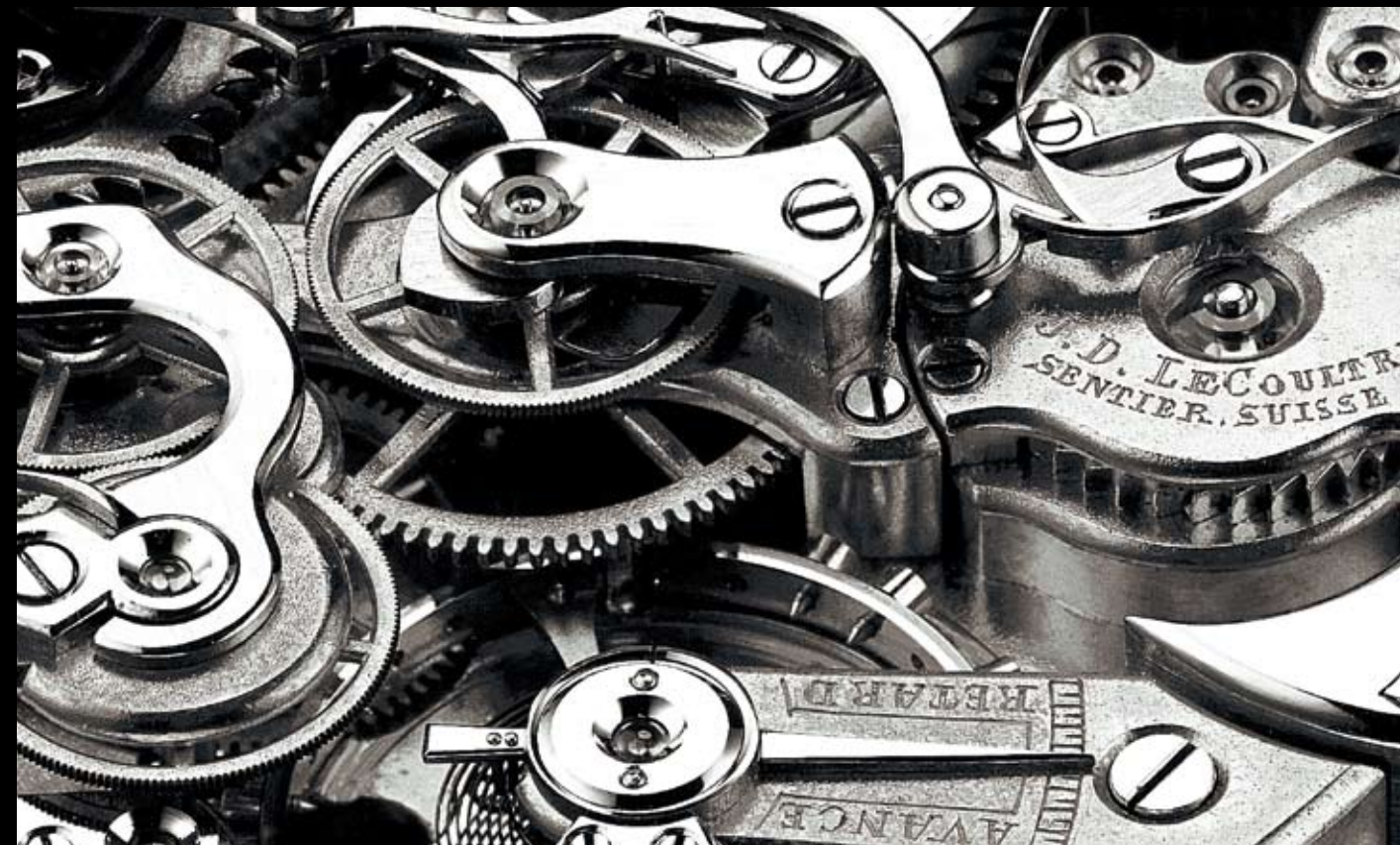
**So what's the job all about?** Service. In fact, that's what attracted me to this job. As butlers, we need to know how everything at the hotel works and we are given hands-on experience in every department during our training. We might be on-call 24-hours a day, but as butlers, we get to engage more with the guests as people and you can really learn something about their culture.

**What makes a good butler?** A lot of what we do is about anticipation. You have to be proactive. Some of the guests may not have used a butler service so you need to explain to them everything you can do for them, and just to go ahead and do it when they are unsure. You have to be detail-oriented and able to communicate precise information to your guests. Our role is to improve the quality of your stay and raise it above the ordinary.

**What kind of traveller benefits most from this service?** A lot of our guests are business travellers, and because they are usually short-term, we take on almost a personal assistant role to them. We try and do all the little things that make life easier for them so they feel more at home.

**What do you love about your job?** The challenges and the rewards. With a lot of guests you don't share a common language so you have to work very hard to meet their needs. Fortunately, we have Arabic, Japanese, Korean and Mandarin speaking liaison officers on staff, and I work very closely with them to make sure the guests are happy and that we can communicate.

# TIME TRAVELLERS



*Travel and time are luxuries for the privileged few. Only artisans at the top of the horological hierarchy have the expertise to marry the two. At the recent watch fair Baselworld 2008 in Switzerland, some of the world's leading watch brands exhibited collections that truly are a must for those with wanderlust.*

COMPILED BY OOI YING NEE; ALL WATCHES FEATURED ARE AVAILABLE @ STARHILL GALLERY, KL





## RICHARD MILLE

### RM 020 TOURBILLON POCKET WATCH

Predecessor to the modern day wristwatch, the pocket watch has become a horological convention, unleashing the timekeeper from the constraints of the public clock tower or the homebound standing clock. Revisiting that Golden Age of a personal timekeeper, Richard Mille brings a thoroughly modern and improved interpretation of a classic. The RM 020 is the first pocket watch to make use of a non-metallic, carbon nanofiber baseplate. A material originally utilised in US Air force jets, it can withstand varying mechanical, physical and chemical conditions and temperature. Adhering to a time-honoured tradition, this timepiece features the tourbillon escapement driven by a double winding barrel, first invented in the 19th century for the pocket format timepiece. Its technical innovation notwithstanding, the RM 020 is aesthetically pleasing with all versions having a central titanium caseband and a choice of both front and back bezels in either 18 carat red gold, white gold or titanium. [www.richardmille.com](http://www.richardmille.com)

## BOUCHERON

### REFLET XL JEWELRY WATCH

Bring home a piece of the House of Boucheron's eminent Parisian address, 26 Vendôme Place, with the Reflet XL Jewelry Watch. To commemorate its 150th anniversary, Boucheron recreated 26 limited edition silver and platinum pieces inspired by the brand's 1947 Reflet collection. Undoubtedly the crown of the collection of seven evolved watches, this Reflet XL is bejewelled with 3.70 carats of diamonds. Encased in the alligator strap jewel is the sublime GP 4000 movement that is visible through a whimsical, elliptical window. The Reflet XL was given a highly admired interchangeable strap system. The current strap reincarnation mirrors the invisible sliding clasp mechanism that underpinned the success of its Reflet predecessor. The largest Boucheron ever produced, this modern classic has a case size of 45mm. [www.boucheron.com](http://www.boucheron.com)



## VILLEMONT

**LES HEURES DU MONDE** You, the sojourner who lays his head in a different city every night, wake up to the timepiece that tells time on a 12-hour scale day or night in 24 different cities be it Hong Kong, Dubai, Tokyo or Moscow. This complex watch is unexpectedly user-friendly: effortlessly switch between time zones and the date and daylight savings will automatically correspond. This timepiece isn't just a testament of Villemont's technical innovation. Limited to 88 pieces, the latest and the first Villemont timepiece to sport in-house self-winding, mechanical movements encapsulated in an 18 carat gold case and presented on a brown or olive green alligator strap. [www.villemont.ch](http://www.villemont.ch)



## CORUM

### ADMIRAL'S CUP CHALLENGE 44 SPLIT-SECONDS

A tribute to the international yachting regatta, Corum's 31-jewel self-winding, split-second chronograph should be standard issue equipment for the serious yachtsman. Although every detail suggests function is central to the watch's design, this chronograph is sleek, dark and uncompromisingly masculine. Its vulcanised rubber strap, crown guard and carbon bezel are not only symbols of ultra-modern technical sophistication but lends the chronograph its rugged reliability. The model's signature 12-sided case is capped with a bezel made of carbon prevalently used on sailboats. Its black lacquered dial is adorned with distinctive nautical pennants around the flange, while its second, minute and hour counters are luminescent in red lacquer. [www.corum.ch](http://www.corum.ch)



### ROMVLVS LARGE DATE

An extension to the 40-year old Romvlvs collection that revisits the triumphant Caesars of ancient Rome, this timepiece features a new specially designed CORUM self-winding movement that powers a large date display. Easily the most elegant piece in the collection, this timepiece plays on the aesthetics of luxurious satin, steel and red gold. The red gold of the bezel, distinguished by a cambered profile and engraved roman numerals, stands out beautifully against the satin-brushed stainless steel case, on which the back is engraved with the crown of laurels. The refined elegance of this model is expressed in full, however, through a magnificent white satin strap. If you ever feel the need to dive into the deep with this timepiece – coupled with an alternative central linked steel bracelet of course – it is water resistant up to 50 meters. [www.corum.ch](http://www.corum.ch)



## MÜHLE-GLASHÜTTE

**TERRANAUTI CHRONOGRAPH** You don't have to be in the forward fuselage of an airplane to know what a cockpit looks like. Its sleek, functional luminescent dials juxtaposed against a saturnine face, the Chronograph was designed to resemble an aircraft cockpit instrument. But the watch's modern aesthetic is simply a bonus. The satinised steel casing houses unique complications of woodpecker regulation and rotating elements developed by Mühle, ensuring each Chronograph functions with a pilot's precision. [www.muehle-glashuette.de](http://www.muehle-glashuette.de)



# BVLGARI



**DIAGONO PHASES DE LUNE** Cultivate an affinity for celestial travel with this 18-carat pink gold model with its exclusive display of moon phases and retrograde date and day display. Accoutred with Bvlgari's in-house automatic winding movement, the BVL 347 caliber, the watch powers an oscillating disc that displays the waxing and waning of the moon as well as its eight phases. Fastidious in high-quality workmanship and technical sophistication, the timepiece's complication comprises of 347 hand finished and assembled components that are visible through a transparent backcase. With only 350 pieces available in the world, each timepiece is assigned a number that is engraved on the side of the oversized 42 mm case in brushed and polished 18 carat pink gold. [www.bulgari.com](http://www.bulgari.com)

**DIAGONO CALIBRO 303** Realised to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Diagono, the Calibro 303 comprises 75 different elements and is the fruit of unsurpassed attention to design. Made unique by a new, signature bezel with a flat, white gold profile, this handmade, self-winding chronograph has an especially thin profile that renders the watch urbane instead of unwieldy. A creation that requires 3,520 man hours and use of 10 different materials, it is equipped with Bvlgari's BVL 303 caliber movement, and has exactly 303 components that make up the complication. True to its characteristics of a sports watch, every piece is tested for water resistance to a depth of 100 meters. [www.bulgari.com](http://www.bulgari.com)



**DIAGONO TOURBILLON** Inspired by the Greek word "agôn" or "competition," the classic Diagono is the sporting watch made with high-precision mechanics for the ever-mobile man. A device of gold, steel and rubber, the Classic reinvention sports a flat, new bezel on its oversized case. The dials have a sophisticated relief treatment, which lends depth and luminosity to the ensemble. The refined, hand-applied indices and réhauts render this watch even more precious. Using only top-quality Swiss movements, this watch is available in GMT and chronograph versions, as well as women's sizes. [www.bulgari.com](http://www.bulgari.com)

# YESLAM

**THE AVIATOR** You needn't clock any flight time to be a high flyer. Precision timing and chronograph are no longer the only complication required on an aviation watch. Yeslam has developed a timepiece for and by a modern day pilot that is up to par with the advent of greater flight technology. The Aviator gives true airspeed for any altitude and indicates airspeed with just one turn of the bezel. Designed by a pilot with over 3,500 hours of accumulated flight time on Learjet and Cessna business jets, the Aviator is an invention that synthesises innovation and design. With a dial adorned in beautifully engraved fan blades and an overall look simulating a jet engine, bound by dark leather, this timepiece is an unparalleled objet d'art.

**ARABESQUE** Yeslam's haute horlogerie contains excellent surprises for the ardent enthusiast. This timepiece exudes watchmaking mastery in Swiss provenance with its Flying Automatic Tourbillon and complementary GMT Grande Date counter. Each oversized watch case is embellished with stylised

centuries-old Arabic geometric motifs in either enamel or finely hand-engraved white gold dials. The Arabesque collection is certainly a masterpiece that combines the tried and true heritage of two worlds.



**MASTER EIGHT DAYS PERPETUAL SQ** Jaeger-LeCoultre celebrates its 175-year legacy as the renowned watchmaking virtuoso by giving the patrons of Salon International de Haute Horlogerie a sneak peek at its special edition legendary Master Control watches. The most universally appealing of the lot is the 18-carat pink gold Master Eight Days Perpetual SQ that is the only perpetual calendar watch to offer an 8-day power reserve. Celebrated for their innovative complications that have achieved numerous patents, Jaeger-LeCoultre gave this timepiece a skeletised movement inspired by the principle of the planisphere. An imaginary latitudinal and longitudinal map emblazoned with celestial motifs make up the movement of Jaeger's pièce de résistance. [www.jaeger-lecoultre.com](http://www.jaeger-lecoultre.com)

# JAEGER-LECOULTRE

## REVERSO SQUADRA HOMETIME BLACK

Equestrianism is the transcontinental art of horse riding and the origin of the Reverso collection. The Squadra is a new addition to the line of 500 reversible watches that is emblematic of the horseback sport Polo. But it also embodies the intelligibility of an ideal travel watch thanks to Jaeger-LeCoultre's patented, exclusive Hometime/Travel time system. On one red, openworked hand, the watch provides a reference for the time at one's home; its other gold-plated hands display real time. Rectangular apertures at 9 and 3 o'clock serve respectively as am/pm indicators and travel time display. Driven by the mechanical Jaeger-LeCoultre Calibre 977 movement within its stainless steel case, the watch is stable and protected from distortion even upon impact. Readily available in stainless steel or limited to 500 pieces in pink gold. [www.jaeger-lecoultre.com](http://www.jaeger-lecoultre.com)





# OMEGA



**THE SEAMASTER JAMES BOND 007 COLLECTOR'S PIECE** Another Seamaster that commands attention, this wrist is an homage to the brand's longstanding association with the debonair spy. A new addition to the Omega family, the stunning diver's watch is back – in black – and gleaming with elegance. This watch features a self-winding movement fitted with Omega's friction-reducing, Co-Axial escapement that ensures long term accuracy. Engineered with a polished, lacquered dial with black gold plated and illumining markers, this piece is made even more dazzling with its quintessential red "007" logo. [www.omegawatches.com](http://www.omegawatches.com)



**CONSTELLATION "OMEGA 160 YEARS" GENTS'** Find your place in this stellar Constellation with a glamorous new timepiece. A virtuous icon, this 18-carat gold timepiece's bezel is trimmed with 40 diamonds. Available in red or yellow gold and bi-colour gold and stainless steel editions, each model features a striking skeletised caseback engraved with the words "160 years," which marks the Omega's anniversary in watchmaking. The Constellation "OMEGA 160 Years" Gents' is the first watch in the Constellation 95' family to be driven by the exclusive self-winding OMEGA Calibre 2500 also featuring the revolutionary Co-Axial escapement. [www.omegawatches.com](http://www.omegawatches.com)



**COUNTDOWN 0 - SEAMASTER XXIX LIMITED EDITION** Be one of the rare few to wear world history on your wrist at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. Omega will release 88 remarkable Seamaster XXIX watches that will only be available at the Games beginning on Aug 8, 2008. The polished 18-carat yellow gold emblazoned with an ivory dial is inspired by its predecessor the Seamaster XVI produced to commemorate the Melbourne Olympics in 1956. This sports mastery also celebrates Omega's 25th anniversary as Official Timekeeper in 1957. Never one to honour fanfare at the expense of excellence, the heart of this watch ticks with the OMEGA Calibre 2403, a chronometer with its proprietary 21st century Co-Axial technology. [www.omegawatches.com](http://www.omegawatches.com)

# VAN CLEEF & ARPELS



**MIDNIGHT IN PARIS** Never will you miss the city of love's midnight sky again with Van Cleef & Arpel's timepiece. This watch, which comes with a pink or white gold case, has a dial adorned with a map of stars. Replicated on an aventurine glass dial accented with hand-painted gold stars, the watch has a rotating disk that imperceptibly turns 365 days a year to unveil whichever portion of the constellation as seen in the Parisian sky. Its caseback is equipped with a calendar that allows its wearer to choose his own view of the stars. [www.vancleef-arpels.com](http://www.vancleef-arpels.com)



**SECRET DUO** Let neither time nor travel tear ethereal lovers apart. A wrist-sized 18-carat gold case set with princess cut diamonds, the Secret Duo conceals two secret drawers and their dials are made to tell the time in two zones. Functional yet romantically ornate, the timepiece is a fusion of the brand's taste for sophisticated mechanisms and its jewellery making tradition. Inspired by the brand's Atlantide Parisian-influence jewellery collection, the Secret Duo in white gold boasts a Cresse d'Eole Fairy motif set with round and baguette cut diamonds against a blue lacquer dial while the pink gold variety adorns an Amphirite seahorse décor on a black lacquer case. Complementary to each case design, whimsical matching "charms" are attached to the crowns of the secret drawers. [www.vancleef-arpels.com](http://www.vancleef-arpels.com)



**LADY ARPELS JOUR ET NUIT** The designers of this Lady Arpels must have been inspired by poet Ralph Waldo Emerson's lyrical verse – "Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not." Hidden in its dainty white gold case lies a poetic complication; the Jour et Nuit has a disk that turns round the clock to unveil a yellow sapphire-studded gold sun or a round diamond and white gold moon on its aventurine glass sky. Though this satin-strapped watch may never see the sea floor, it is waterproof up to three atmospheres. [www.vancleef-arpels.com](http://www.vancleef-arpels.com)





## ROGER DUBUIS

**KINGSQUARE** Roger Dubuis has procured reverence in the world of watchmaking by producing pieces not only flamboyant in design but also in technical mastery. Its men's Kingsquare collection is a testament to this, characterised by a complex yet sporty 40mm case design. Showcasing a distinctive landscape of three horizontal facets, the sapphire crystal is not merely functional, but also a feature of the aesthetic. Available in 18K white gold, rose gold or titanium, all pieces include sapphire crystal casebacks exposing the signature Manufacture movements. Exclusively mechanical, each Roger Dubuis movement has earned the prestigious Geneva Seal, an accolade symbolising the very best in Genevois watchmaking. The Kingsquare men's collection comes in three versions, with one featuring a flying tourbillon and another, a skeletonised dial. The ladies collection, including a flying tourbillon option, is available in two versions of titanium, white gold or rose gold. Housed in a 33mm casing, the face is adorned with 8 half-pearls and further accented with rose gold, rhodium, black rhodium or white gold. A distinct floral design dial surrounds a central guilloché zone. An exclusive model - limited to 28-pieces in white or rose gold - features a skeletonised dial and an intriguing lattice of openworked hearts. The tourbillon carriage is also decorated with ruby hearts and a second hand shaped to resemble Cupid's arrow. [www.rogerdubuis.com](http://www.rogerdubuis.com)

## MONTBLANC



### PROFILE LADY ELEGANCE

**DIAMONDS** If diamonds are a girls' best friend, then the Profile Lady Elegance will be a much coveted companion. An exemplary specimen of high-carat jewellery watchmaking, impeccable stone-cutting and impossibly intricate calculations define the 43 facets of the perfect 'Montblanc Star' centrepiece. Along with the unique 0.1088 carat Montblanc cut solitaire, the piece shimmers with 482 flawless Wesselton diamonds of a total 1.82 carats, undulating across the mother-of-pearl dial and on to the 18 carat white gold case and strap. With a further Montblanc Diamond of 0.055 carats to light up the winding crown, this elegant slice of ice is the perfect piece for any discerning diamond lover.

### STAR NICOLAS RIEUSSEC MONOPUSHER CHRONOGRAPH

A panegyric to the innovation of modern time-keeping, Montblanc's Monopusher pays homage to the genius of Sir Nicolas Rieussec. Rieussec is the name synonymous with the 1821 innovation coined a "time writer" i.e. the "chronograph", derived from the Greek "chronos" for "time" and "graphein" for "writing." This rose-gold piece also houses Montblanc's first in-house movement - the Montblanc Manufacture Calibre MB R100 (manual wind) - to be admired in detail through the sapphire crystal case back. Featuring a classic column wheel with vertical clutch, the innovative twin barrel movement generates a power reserve of 72 hours. Bridges and plates are rhodium plated and the piece is water resistant to 30 meters. Available in 950 platinum, 18 carat white or yellow gold or red gold. [www.montblanc.com](http://www.montblanc.com)



## LONGINES MASTER COLLECTION RETROGRADE

A tribute to the synthesis between its technical and aesthetic heritage, the Longines' Master Collection Retrograde Collection is a sober and elegant interpretation of its horological tradition. The Retrograde Collection is unique in that it offers functions like day, date, seconds and a second time zone on a 24-hour scale in a movement with automatic rewinding, and where the hands indicating these various functions instantly fly back to their starting positions when they've reached the end of their travel, tracing out a graceful ballet of movement. Another distinguishing feature of this collection is the blue hands. The Retrograde model is housed in a stainless steel case with a transparent sapphire crystal case back and is available in 41mm or 44mm diameter sizes in either steel bracelet or alligator-skin strap in black or dark brown and triple folding clasp. [www.longines.com](http://www.longines.com)

## ROMAIN JEROME THE RUSTED STEEL T-OXY III CHRONOGRAPH

Typical of Romain Jerome's tactical mastery, the brand unveiled the Chronograph as part of its collection of watches made with rusted steel parts from the Titanic and authentic steel from the Harland & Wolff shipyard in Belfast, where the vessel was constructed nearly a century ago. Aside from its oxidised steel bezel, the watch's small chronograph counter design takes after those of steam engines - the hands are inspired by the anchor of the Titanic and the unbalance takes the shape of a piece from the wheelhouse - and its refined finishes echo the greatest naval achievement of the Belle Époque. Limited to only 2012 pieces, the watches are available in variations of black, with texture and hues obtained by vaporising charcoal dust from the wreck itself.



## WATCH THIS SPACE



Perpetually fascinated with the phenomenon of time, the German Watch Museum Glashütte - Nicolas G Hayek foundation, brings to life the fine art of watchmaking in an exhibition commemorating the history of Glashütte, the origins of the German watchmaking industry and achievements in Horology.

Inaugurated in May to celebrate the 130th anniversary of the German School of Watchmaking, the unique museum guards the rich cultural heritage of the town, while promoting the craft, education and science of watchmaking.

Established in the fully renovated building of the former School is a horological glossary of more than 400 unique Glashütte pocket watches, wristwatches and pendulum clocks from different periods. Along with marine chronometers and escapement models, historical certificates and patents, tools and workbenches as well as astronomical models and metronomes are all displayed in a very artful fashion in the 1000m<sup>2</sup> exhibition space.

Wander through the exhibition and you'll find quarters dedicated to the celebrities and founding fathers who made Glashütte an important centre of fine German watchmaking and watchmaker training, such as Ferdinand Adolph Lange, Julius Assmann, Adolf Schneider and Moritz Großmann.

As a modern and experience-oriented "time world", the museum should not only appeal to watch enthusiasts but also to laymen, families and young people.





# PAST & PRESENT

YTL LIFE TAKES  
A STROLL DOWN  
MEMORY LANE  
AS WE SPEAK TO  
MADAM LEONG SIU  
YING, DAUGHTER  
OF THE FORMER  
OWNER OF WHAT  
IS TODAY THE  
MAJESTIC MALACCA,  
AND DISCOVERS  
NEW STORIES ABOUT  
OLD, OLD PLACES

BY BOEY PING PING PORTRAITS BY LEON; ALL OTHERS YTL HOTELS





**THE MAJESTIC MALACCA STANDS TALL** and proud overlooking the Malacca River. Just this year, this almost 80-year old building was given a new lease of life when its fortunes were resurrected as the newest addition to YTL Hotels' chain of luxury hotels. It is also considered to be the very first 'YTL Classic Hotel'.

moved into their new home two years later.

Then in 1931, tragedy struck. Leong died of tuberculosis, leaving his eldest son, Alex (Madam Leong's half-brother), entrusted with the entire family estate. Alex, however, did not quite possess the business sense or the prudence of his father

finally commenced restoration work on the building with a vision of returning it to its former glory. In January 2008, after an investment of RM30 million The Majestic Malacca was reborn.

**WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR FATHER?** I really can't remember much as he died a few years after we moved into the house. I was only five-years-old. He kept to himself most of the time and didn't really speak to us (the children). Father came from China to KL to work for Loke Yew. Later, he worked for Haw Par Village but

Today, it stands proud once again on the banks of the Malacca River. But it echoes the past not



A Leong family portrait taken outside 188, Jalan Bunga Raya, Malacca; Madam Leong is absent

*This photo was taken on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 1930 - Family group. Liu Ying was not able to be included.*

The Majestic Malacca now has a future. However, as you turn a right corner in downtown historic Malacca, then travel a few hundred yards up a one-way street, then suddenly catch sight of this beautiful and grand hotel whose façade speaks of the past but whose patina is one of contemporary gloss, you realise that this is a place whose four walls would have many a tale to tell.

and the Leong family was forced to sell the mansion within the next two decades.

The mansion at 188 Jalan Bunga Raya switched hands to a member within the Leong family in 1952 before it was finally sold off to a Lim Heng Fang in 1955 who converted the premises into what it has again become today: a hotel. He named it Majestic Hotel. It had 24 rooms.

The Majestic Malacca began life in the 1920s as the pride and joy of a Chinese immigrant, Leong Long Man. A Guangzhou-born businessman who first came to Singapore before moving on to Malaysia, he decided to build a mansion to accommodate a growing family; he wanted the children of his third and fourth wife to live comfortably together under one roof. Construction began in 1927 and the family

For the next four decades or so, the Majestic Hotel became a permanent presence in Malacca, surviving the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s before it finally closed for business in 2000 due to dwindling tenancy rates. It then remained dormant for the next six years, lying quietly in ruins, its history in the past, its future awaiting. In 2006, YTL Hotels



188, Jalan Bunga Raya, Malacca, as it stands today

just in terms of the stories it holds but in what it has become: a lovingly restored, utterly charming and exclusive boutique hotel that truly reflects the city's multi-faceted past. Hints of Portuguese, Dutch and Baba-Nyonya are combined with every imaginable modern luxury you would expect from a world-class 54-room hotel.

wasn't happy with that job and s decided to move to Malacca with his third wife. In the end, he made money from owning over 300 acres of rubber estate and as his wealth began to accumulate, he decided it was time to start a family and settle down in Malacca for good. It was there that he built his fortune and this house.

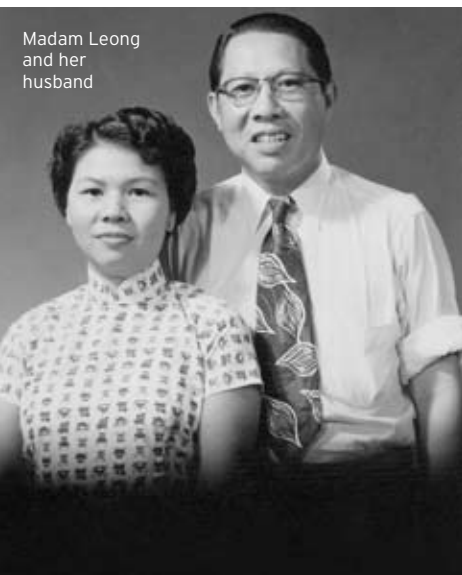
Yet it is the stories of yore about the hotel that inexplicably draw us back to it. When Madam Leong Siu Ying, the 83-year-old daughter of the original owner, Leong Long Man, was invited back to her former home, she was filled with emotion at the sight before her. This sprightly grandmother was gracious enough to sit down with us to share her fond but now distant memories of a place she once called home.

**WHAT DID THE HOUSE MEAN TO YOUR FATHER?** It was an achievement for him as he had come from China empty-handed but later owned a house, a car, and even had his own driver and gardener. My father bought the land from St. Peter's Church and then proceeded to start building on it. According to my mother, father bought tiles from China and spent almost every evening supervising the building of the house.





Madam Leong and her family



Madam Leong and her husband

**WHAT MEMORIES DO YOU HAVE OF MOVING INTO YOUR NEW HOME?** I was only two or three-years-old then. I remember running about the whole house. This was my playground. I was a naughty kid and I would always climb to the rooftops of the back quarters to play.

**WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT THE BUNGALOW?** We had a really big backyard. You can imagine just how big it was since they've managed to turn it into a hotel. We raised chickens, ducks and turkeys in our backyard which also had a seesaw and swing. We used to watch processions of very long tongkangs (boats) floating down the Malacca River as they passed in front of our house which faced the river. Those days, the river was very broad and could park seven tongkangs. Now, with the reclaimed land, you can't even park a motorboat!

**WHAT MADE YOUR HOUSE UNIQUE FROM THE REST?** Ours was the only house in Malacca that had swing doors. They were specially ordered from

## I REMEMBER RUNNING AROUND THE WHOLE HOUSE. THIS WAS MY PLAYGROUND. I WOULD CLIMB TO THE ROOFTOPS TO PLAY

China, along with our marble table and chairs. At that time, our house was the biggest house in Malacca. There were three or four link-houses, a primary school and another bungalow down the road but ours was still the biggest.

**WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER OF YOUR DAYS**

**IN MALACCA?** My brother, sister and I used to cycle along Jonker Street. Then in 1939, the Shaw Brothers built City Park, which is something like BB Park in Bukit Bintang. They had the Cantonese 'wayang' (opera), the bangsawan show, Chinese Broadway, ronggeng stage (a kind of Malay dance) and Thai dance. That was where we went for entertainment before they built the first English theatre, Capitol.

**WHERE DID YOU GO TO FIND GOOD FOOD?** We used to go to the Central food court in Jalan Bunga Raya for porridge and char koay teow. It was a small town and there were no big restaurants then. We were living in the Sleepy Hollow of Malacca!

**WHY DID YOUR HALF-BROTHER DECIDE TO SELL OFF THE PROPERTY?** My half-brother was given control of the family property and we had no say as to what happened to it. There was profit to be made and my half-brother got greedy. By then I had gotten married and moved to KL.

**HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT PARTING WITH THE HOUSE?** I felt as if I had lost the house to someone else. At first, they said they would turn it into a cancer treatment centre. Later, when I found out that they had turned it into a hotel. I couldn't imagine how they could fit 24 rooms into our house. I asked them whether each room had an attached bathroom and they said yes! It was just a basic hotel with no gym and swimming pool, more like a budget hotel to cater to travelling salesmen. Later, when I read in the papers that the hotel had been taken over by YTL, I was glad because I knew they would do a good job. At least I am now confident that a piece of my family history is preserved.

**HOW SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT IS MAJESTIC HOTEL NOW COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL MANSION?** The front part of the house hasn't

changed much. We used to have wooden screens with coloured glass to partition off the rooms. There were five rooms upstairs and four or five rooms downstairs. Now, some of the walls have been broken down to make way for the dining area. My favourite part of the house? My bedroom, of course! But that is obviously no longer there. ■



A deluxe room at The Majestic Malacca

### A NEW LEASE OF LIFE



Restoration work for Majestic Hotel started in late 2006 when Gsd Architect was commissioned to rebuild the hotel to its original condition while conserving the early architecture. Zaidan Tahir, the architect and designer in charge of the project, says, "We were controlled by the museum department which meant conserving the original floor tiles and moving an entire staircase from the outside back inside the house. There was no blueprint and

we had to go back to the site and draw everything from scratch."

Luckily, most of the house remained intact. As none of the roof tiles needed replacing, all that was required was to clean the mildew and dust off each tile, to return it to its original colour.

A quarter of the original floor tiles were broken and since there was no way to find replacements, tiles

belonging to a room which was later converted into a library were used to take the place of the broken tiles. Zaidan says, "It was a tedious process as we had to remove each tile one by one. They had to be manually chiseled very, very carefully because they were quite fragile."

"We had no choice but to redo the floorboards as they were pretty much rotten. Also, the floorboards had started sinking in some places, creating an undulating effect. The rest of the work was simple, for instance, replacing the old window shutters and giving the signage a new coat of paint."

The other major change was the addition of a 10-storey building which was once the servants' quarters. "It was a bit of a challenge as the space was tight so instead of having a middle and side corridors, we only had a single loaded corridor facing the hospital," explains Zaidan.

However painstaking the process was, the final result is a shining testament to Malacca's storied past. And future.



A woman with long brown hair is standing in a doorway, looking upwards and to the left. She is wearing a white, sleeveless, halter-neck gown with a deep V-neckline and vertical pleats. The background shows a dark interior with a doorway leading to a brightly lit area with a chandelier.

# HAUTE IN THE HIGHLANDS

ATTITUDE AND ALTITUDE: HIGH-FASHION ARRIVES AT THE CAMERON HIGHLANDS RESORT, WHERE THE BEAUTY OF COLONIAL ELEGANCE, TEA PLANTATIONS AND ROSE GARDENS MAY MAKE YOU DIZZY WITH DELIGHT

PHOTOGRAPHY GERRY CHIN / GREY SPACES    STYLING WEECHEE

Silk crepon halter vertical seamed gown Karl Lagerfeld,  
from Designer Bridal Room





Cotton poplin shirt dress with post-it dickey and mineral belt **Fendi**



Post-it organza dress **Fendi**





Charmeuse silk cocoon gown **Michael Ong**



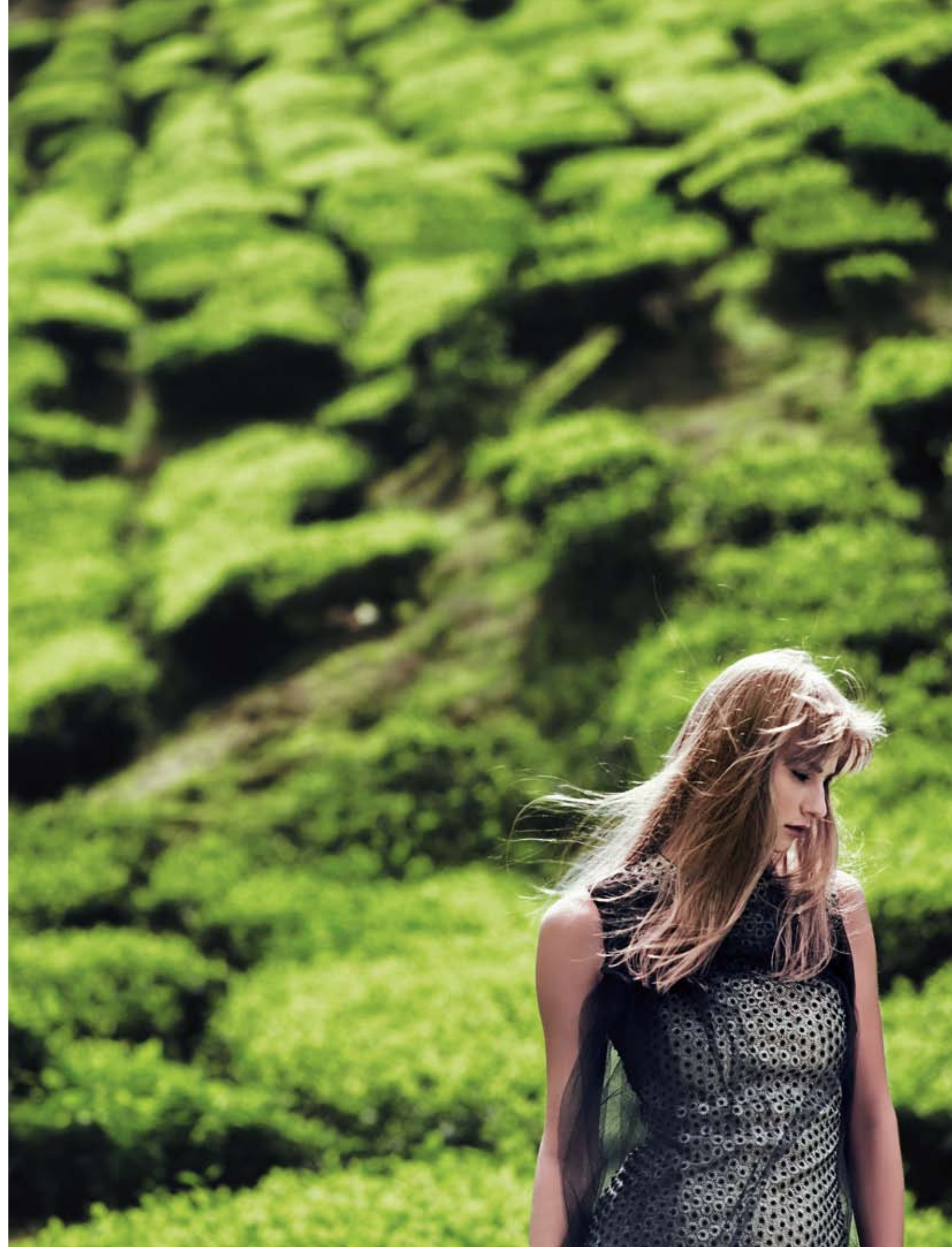
Silk faile sheath and silk draped dress **Khoon Hooi**





Swarovski accented bustier puff gown Michael Ong





Embroidered tulle mist shift dresses **Bernard Chandran**





Charmeuse silk cocoon gown **Michael Ong**



Printed gazar dress **Dior**





Printed mousseline bustier dress  
Dior; cashmere cardigan Givenchy





Printed canvas bootie sneakers  
Alexander McQueen for Puma, from Venue



HAIR JACK CHOONG  
MAKEUP JESSIE CHONG  
MODELS LIA & EMILY, FACES MODELS MANAGEMENT  
SHOT ENTIRELY ON LOCATION AT CAMERON HIGHLANDS RESORT & BOH TEA  
PLANTATIONS; SPECIAL THANKS ROBERTSON'S ROSE GARDEN  
ALL CLOTHES (EXCEPT MICHAEL ONG, BERNARD CHANDRAN, DESIGNER BRIDAL ROOM) AVAILABLE AT  
STARHILL GALLERY, KL



# THE ART OF MODERN LUXURY

THROUGH ITS CORE VALUES  
CAMPAIGN, LEADING FASHION  
HOUSE LOUIS VUITTON IS  
SHOWING THE WAY FORWARD  
IN TODAY'S LUXURY LIFESTYLE  
BOOM BY GOING BACK TO ITS  
ROOTS: TRAVEL BY OOI YING NEE





AS THE WORLD USHERS IN A NEW ERA OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, there is a growing population of consumers hungry to spend their new-found wealth on living a lifestyle once afforded only by the upper echelons of society.

For example, Shanghai's The Bund has been turned into a luxury district comparable to London's Bond Street. New York's Madison Avenue now has a rival called Bukit Bintang - home to Starhill Gallery which hosts the glamorous Old Hollywood throwback that is Louis Vuitton's resplendent Malaysian flagship store.

Luxuries such as travel, art appreciation and exquisite wares are swiftly becoming ordinary constituents of a modern lifestyle. More and more

In 1854, Louis Vuitton, the eponymous founder of this world famous brand, anticipated that travel would soon be an art de vivre in society. And so he designed luggage and handbags for the sole purpose of this "new" lifestyle. In recent years, judging by the luxury house's decision to recruit cutting-edge designer Marc Jacobs and its fashion-focused advertisements, it would seem that priority has been a focus on fashion.

But Chairman and CEO of Louis Vuitton, Yves Carcelle, stresses otherwise, as the brand's latest global Core Values campaign seeks instead to remind its clients of its origins. "The purpose of the Core Values campaign is to refocus on travel as Louis Vuitton's fundamental and defining value and to restate to a global audience our 150-year

unlike its other product-pushing advertisements that feature scantily, albeit artfully, clad Hollywood ingénues like Scarlett Johansson donning patent-leather ankle boots. Instead, it asks its audiences to think of travel, not as a trip, but as a personal journey or a process of self-discovery. To convey this message, Louis Vuitton engaged exceptional personalities "who have made extraordinary journeys in the course of full and fascinating lives" to star in a series of stunning, ethereal and emotional visuals shot by legendary portraits photographer Annie Leibovitz.

In a New York hotel room, so bright it warrants draping black, skull-and-crossbones scarves over its bed side lamps, Keith Richards is captured strumming the "Blues in C" at 3am. A Louis

Graf and Andre Agassi laced in a riveting embrace makes for a powerful composition that asks if there is "any journey greater than love?"

In another visual, the Soviet Union's last leader Mikhail Gorbachev is dressed in a decorous pinstriped suit and a wool coat that befits the frigid Eastern European climate. He is gazing out from the back seat of an old-world limousine - his still unfastened Louis Vuitton luggage propped by his side posthaste - as he journeys pass the graffiti-ed remnants of the Berlin Wall, the very symbol he felled at the apex of his political career that gave new freedoms of expression, press and travel to Eastern Europeans.

Make no mistake about Louis Vuitton's choice of Gorbachev as its poster boy; wealthy Russians, who have come into their own after the fall of The Wall, are now choice luxury consumers.

But also, triumphant personal journeys have been closely intertwined with the origins of the Louis Vuitton house. In 1835, Vuitton embarked on a 400km journey by foot armed only with the ambition to get to Paris. By happenstance, he became an apprentice for a trunk-maker and arrived at destination Paris in 1837, not as a simple boy from the provinces, but as a purveyor of fine leather goods with

a tall order book of clients including the likes of Empress Eugenie, the wife of Napoleon III.

Apart from travel, there is also a resurgence in art appreciation that is palpable throughout the world. In the last two decades, the art market has grown in tandem with the economic development of countries like India and China. And since Louis



Two of the ad visuals from LV's recent Core Values campaign featuring Keith Richards and Mikhail Gorbachev (R)



of our disposable income is being spent on non-necessities such as covetous high-fashion and the purchase of art. The World Tourism Organisation estimates that between the year 2000 and 2007 as many as 898 million people travelled internationally. But while everyone in this modern world can travel, few know travel the way Louis Vuitton does.

heritage as the pioneer of the art of travel."

Louis Vuitton's senior vice-president for communications and marketing Pietro Beccari calls the campaign "groundbreaking for its vision of travel, which revisits our heritage in an entirely fresh way; groundbreaking for its choice of spokespeople..." The Core Values campaign is

Vuitton-monogrammed guitar case is flat on the bed serving as makeshift coaster to a dainty cup of tea.

Timeless French actor Catherine Deneuve is photographed perched on the iconic brown and gold monogrammed trunk in a hazy Paris train station. The image of tennis power couple Steffi





Fabrizio Plessi's 'Luxury is Slow' installation



Monogramouflage boots by Murakami

Bag by Stephen Sprouse

Under Jacobs' creative direction, Louis Vuitton has collaborated with underground designer Stephen Sprouse, who splashed graffiti all over its leather bags in 2001; and Takashi Murakami, known also as the "Japanese Warhol" for his ability to fuse art and commerce seamlessly, who designed the stark white and Technicolor monogram bags in 2003 and also recently made world headlines for having a full-fledged Louis Vuitton store selling products accented with his designs at the heart of his Brooklyn Museum exhibit.

More recently, Louis Vuitton commissioned one of Europe's pioneers of video art Fabrizio Plessi to create exclusive artwork for the inauguration of the largest Maison outside of Paris at Canton Road in

Hong Kong. Instead of incorporating water and fire in his installations, as he is famous for, Plessi created a video installation of molten gold cascading fluidly like heavy satin drapes. The installation entitled "Luxury is Slow" was presented on a huge LED video screen for six months after the March 14 inauguration.

"People come to Louis Vuitton not only for shopping, but also to experience a certain 'way of life'. The

idea to integrate artworks in a store universe was therefore a question of affinity; luxury and art are both expressions of emotion and passion; they both search for the exceptional and give us an alternative view of the world," Carcelle says.

But Louis Vuitton's greatest commitment as a patron of the arts is the establishment of the Foundation for Creation, an art and cultural exhibition complex that will house the Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy (LVMH) group's art collection as well as a rotating roster of works by

PHOTOS: LOUIS VUITTON

Vuitton has become a brand synonymous with luxury lifestyle, the brand is fervent in its efforts to maintain a rich and varied association with the world of art.

To a certain extent, Louis Vuitton's creations, whether a unique piece of handcrafted luggage or haute couture apparel, share the same currency as art. Both artists and brand seek to create one-off, signature pieces that will be appreciated for their idiosyncrasies.



The flagship LV store in KL's Starhill Gallery

other contemporary artists. The complex, designed by Frank Gehry, who also designed the famous Guggenheim Museum of Bilbao, is slated to be inaugurated in 2011. The Foundation is a journey Louis Vuitton is embarking upon to discover new artists from around the world. But it is also to fuel creative expression and contemporary creation, which has always been the driving force behind the brand.

Louis Vuitton's initiatives outside the fashion realm may underpin its position as a true luxury player, but the brand has to face a new challenge that will not fade away so quickly. Although the brand must stay relevant to the lifestyle of its consumers and meet the surging demand for

its goods in new markets, it must continue to safeguard its high-end value.

But there may already be an answer to this quandary. Earlier this year, Louis Vuitton released a compelling 90-second film to relate its core values for the first time in history. As the film pans over mirage-marred scenes of children kicking a soccer ball in a field, or a man's silhouetted profile – it asks the viewer if the person creates the journey or otherwise? Louis Vuitton has experienced enduring success throughout its 150-year history. And much like the film itself asks, one question then remains: "Is it the brand that creates the journey? Or does the journey create the brand?" ■

### TRANSITORY MOMENTS



If luxury and art are both expressions of emotion and passion – as Louis Vuitton's chairman and CEO Yves Carcelle proclaims – then this luxury fashion house has indeed been busy blurring those lines.

At the new landmark Louis Vuitton Maison Central Hong Kong, "An Artificial Rock", a glistening modern steel sculpture designed by artist Zhan Wang that is strangely reminiscent of the mercurial, intelligent liquid metal in the 90s movie Terminator 2, is the centerpiece of the Maison's main gallery.



When Louis Vuitton reopened its Canton Road Maison, its largest outside of Paris, it incorporated a bookstore and art gallery to house and display photography related publications and exhibits. And the first to exhibit his work is Hong Kong's Hollywood actor Chow Yun Fatt, who, although better known for his ability on screen, has also proven to be a budding maverick behind the camera, judging by his "Moving Pictures" exhibit.

His black and white photos, whether a self-portrait or of a flower or a grand sky, are a tribute to the beauty around him and a reflection of his journey thus far.

Chow's exhibit is a rustic, almost cinematic reel of "vacation photos" of his physical journey from Paris, where he attended the opening of the Champs-Élysées Maison, to his working travels in China and the Bahamas before ending in Hong Kong, in time for the inauguration of the Canton Road Maison where his exhibit remained until June 15.

LV STARHILL GALLERY PHOTO: CHOEN LEE; SIDEBAR PHOTOS: LOUIS VUITTON



# RADAR TO WEAR

FASHION THIS FALL REVOLVES AROUND ENVELOPING THE BODY IN CHIC CONFIGURATIONS OF FABRICS. COLOURS ARE MORE MUTED AND TEXTURES ARE CHOSEN TO FEEL DELICIOUS AGAINST THE SKIN SO THAT THE CHANGING OF SEASONS NEED NOT BE AT THE EXPENSE OF STYLE

BY CHOO AI LING

## A FINE ROMANCE

Making her debut as **VALENTINO's** successor, Alessandra Facchinetti's pre-fall collection remains faithful to the fashion house's ladylike sensibilities with touches of her flair for proportion play, fabric manipulation, and couture-like embellishments. Softly gathered bell sleeves are a recurring feature and balance out the rigorous tailoring of shirts, jackets and coats. High necked blouses on the other hand look romantic instead of severe, courtesy of the diaphanous, sweetly patterned material.

KEY ACCESSORY: Unapologetically feminine, this black python clutch adorned with an oversized bow will make an easy transition from day to night.



## AMAZING GRACE

**ASPREY** continues its reinvention as a slick, quietly purring vehicle for modern British luxe with Hakan Rosenius' new collection inspired by the female characters of Hitchcock movies. The elegant, detached and understated sexiness of Hitchcock's femme fatale was updated with an edgier feel and is expressed in sombre hues of charcoal grey, deep lilac and pale pink with defined and structured tailoring. Pieces contrast volume with body conscious elements while textures are deliciously tactile, encompassing bouclé, tweed, chiffon, leather and Mongolian lamb.



KEY ACCESSORY: Every Hitchcockian heroine needs a smart handbag and this grey polished alligator 167 bag is meticulously detailed with a palladium-plated rod handle and lined in lambskin.





## THE ODD COUPLE

Juxtaposition was the key theme to Marc Jacobs' pre-fall collection for **LOUIS VUITTON** which played with masculine-feminine, rich-poor, sportswear and military influences in a sophisticated, soigné way. Colours like grey, taupe and khaki are decidedly urban although splashes of colour enliven the most sober ensembles. Sleek and subtle tailoring is evident in the suits, jackets and dresses with just enough draping to keep things interesting. Jacobs also takes the floral trend into fall with a charming cocktail dress in floaty, sheer chiffon.

KEY ACCESSORY: The classic men's Richelieu is glammed up with heels and gold metallic leather as an offbeat look for day or night.



## EASY DOES IT

Relaxed casuals make a return to **LOUIS VUITTON** pre-fall men's collection although staples like cargo pants, jeans and sports jackets are given a luxurious twist. Cashmere, superfine micro-fibers and corduroy offer supreme comfort without sacrificing function and, although the colour palette does not veer far from neutrals, the startling petrol blue jacket is perfect for making a statement without saying too much. For occasions which demand a dinner jacket, Marc Jacobs makes a concession with two quirky interpretations: a coat with a removable mink fur collar and one in unexpected canvas.

KEY ACCESSORY: Subverting the throwaway appeal of the high top sneaker, LV offers an ultra high maintenance version in beige suede.



## HIPPY CHIC

Rock chick deluxe with heavy references to Russian folklore best sums up Frida Giannini's richly realised Fall/ Winter collection for **GUCCI**. Billowy-sleeved embroidered peasant blouses, tapestry coats, short chiffon print dresses with flippy skirts, and a plethora of cropped ribbon and stud-embellished vests and coats in shearling and Mongolian lamb stopped short of costume when itemised into separates. With this highly decorative and opulently textured collection, Gucci wholeheartedly embraces maximalism.



KEY ACCESSORY: Dangerously high and heavily studded with gold buttons, this sexy boot has just enough embellishment to get noticed.



## GYPSY KINGS

It was apparent that Frida Giannini was listening to gypsy punk band Gogol Bordello while she was designing **GUCCI**'s Fall men's collection from the tousle-haired, Kohl-lined models stalking the runway. Folkish prints, low slung pants, and scarves and chains dangling with coins and charms were the order of the day, although the military inspired jackets are the kind of pieces which will transcend seasonal trends.

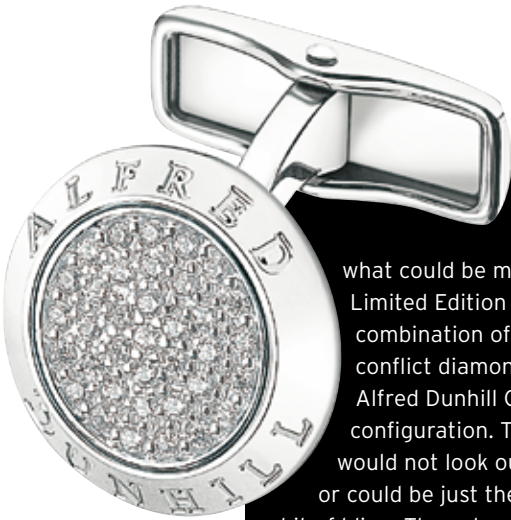
KEY ACCESSORY: Updating the Gucci signature monogram with a suitably regal crest, this document bag is eminently stylish without being OTT.





# REST IN PIECE

CLOTHES MAY MAKE THE MAN (AND WOMAN) BUT ACCESSORIES ADD THE FINISHING TOUCH COMPILED BY CHOO AI LING



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For the ultimate in luxury, what could be more decadent than Dunhill's Limited Edition Diamond cufflinks? A tasteful combination of sterling silver and non-conflict diamonds, they come in the classic Alfred Dunhill Coin design or geometric Eight configuration. These glittering accessories would not look out of place at a formal event or could be just the ticket if you're feeling like a bit of bling. They also make wonderful gifts as they come presented in an opulent lacquered box. *Dunhill @ Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2141 9340*



**EXCESS ALL AREAS** A non-conformist and true original, the artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser plays muse to Montblanc's latest Limited Edition range of writing instruments. As imaginative, colourful and extravagant as the late artist, the fountain-pen is made of solid yellow gold and has a slightly twisted hexagonal shape which corresponds to Hundertwasser's flowing forms. Body and cap are richly decorated with blue lacquer inlays, matt patterns and coloured stones while the number of pens pays homage to the artist's name: 100/100. One hundred richly decorated fountain-pens, created for admirers and collectors searching for something extraordinary. *Montblanc @ Cortina Watch Espace Boutique, Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2142 1171 / 1161*



**WILL YOU MAGGIE ME?** Casting its staid English image aside, Mulberry enlivens its iconic Maggie range with bold injections of colour. Rich raspberry, gorgeous green and winter white pop in high gloss leather or, for ultra decadence, there's a bronze snakeskin option. For the party girl, envelope clutches are also included which feature new hardware to enhance and toughen up an otherwise polished look. *Mulberry @ Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2144 8001*



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**THE GLITTERATI** Although sunglasses may often be used to disguise oneself, that doesn't mean that glamour should be sacrificed. Go undercover in style with Yeslam's sunglasses which have been encrusted with rhinestones. Sprinkled judiciously on the rim of the lenses and/or the arms of the eyewear, these chic shades come in a variety of styles like aviator, wraparound or angular to best suit the facial shape of its wearer. *Yeslam @ Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2143 4366*



# GENDER BLENDER

SO WHO'S WEARING THE PANTS THESE DAYS? IN A FASHION WORLD HELL-BENT ON CONSTANTLY BREAKING ALL THE RULES, SARTORIAL ANDROGYNY IS STILL STOMPING DOWN THE RUNWAYS IN THE NAUGHTY NOUGHTIES BY STEPHANIE TAN

THERE IS A MYTH FROM PLATO'S SYMPOSIUM that people were once hermaphrodites. That is, until the Greek god Zeus split them into two as punishment, and this is the reason why humans, up till today, have a lifelong yearning to find their "other half".

This theory finds no better expression than in fashion, an industry whose creative freedoms has allowed it to strive through the ages to marry both both these seemingly disparate halves. While androgyny was adopted by rebels in previous decades as a fashionable means of countering the stifling expectations of society (with some shock value thrown in for good measure), it has

now become more norm than taboo, more fashion statement than a declaration of personal liberties.

The fact is that androgyny has transcended both time and social context, and is here to stay. This can only be a good thing, obliterating one of the last few points of differentiation between the sexes and radically challenging our perspectives of ideal male/female beauty.

Its firm foothold in the fashion industry is most evident in the sea of sexually ambiguous waifs treading today's runways and pouting out from glossy print advertisements. Like the latest Burberry ad that features model du jour Agness Deyn, who at times resembles a 14-year-old boy with her cropped hair, gangly limbs and flat chest. Meanwhile, surrounding Deyn in the ad are rosy-lipped male models with windswept hair and cheekbones sharp enough to cut glass.

As men are experimenting with eyeliner and women are buttoning up their vests, it's easy to forget that androgyny was once emblematic of sweeping social changes.

Of course, androgyny has always been more apparent in women's fashion, its progress parallel to the advancement of women's rights and gender equality. One only needs to keep in mind that trousers were once considered distinctly "unladylike" before World War I came along and women who replaced their army-enlisted husbands in the factories started demanding for more functional clothing.

In those days, actresses Katharine Hepburn and Marlene Dietrich helped to propel the unisex trend, repealing conventional notions of what a "proper lady" should wear by donning slacks and tuxedos. They never had to utter a word in protest; what they had to say was all in what they were wearing.

Coco Chanel also played an influential role in redefining women's fashion of that era and liberating them from the constraints of their impractical garments. She championed trousers, shortened hemlines and boxy jackets with a decidedly masculine silhouette.

Fast-forward to the 60s, a decade during which Twiggy exploded onto the modelling

scene to epitomise the androgynous Mod look with her cropped hair and boyishly slender figure. But while the girls of the 60s aspired to look like boys in spite of the Mary Quant miniskirts they paraded in, the "pretty boy" emerged to replace the rugged matinee idols of decades past. The likes of Humphrey Bogart and Cary Grant had been usurped by sensitive, foppish-haired types like Paul McCartney.

Then the 70s came, when Diane Keaton was immortalised on screen as Annie Hall, her character ever so nonchalantly attired in menswear. But no one wore androgyny on her sleeve (of a classic white men's shirt, no less) better than singer Patti Smith who was at once defiant and totally at ease in men's clothing.

If the 60s and the 70s hinted at things to come, then the 80s was a none-too-subtle slap in the face of conventional female dressing with its power suits and outsized shoulder pads. The purpose of exaggerating the shoulders to a nearly comic proportion seemed to lie in projecting an image of strength as women everywhere started scaling new heights of the corporate ladder and breaking ranks in old boy networks.

And while women tried to emulate men to get ahead in their careers, men got in touch with their feminine side - if only on the big screen. Dustin Hoffman donned dresses and a bad wig for Tootsie which, despite the abundance of cross-dressing jokes, also explored serious gender issues. And in the same year, the gender-bending comedy Victor Victoria was released, with Julie Andrews starring as a - wait for this - woman pretending to be a man pretending to be a woman.

In addition, the rising popularity of androgynous icons such as David Bowie and Boy George further pushed the envelope of social conventions. Both artistes wore makeup and flamboyant outfits on stage. This depiction of cross-dressing signalled that

society was adopting a more open attitude in response to shifting gender roles.

By the 90s, androgynous chic had turned from a symbol of counter-culture into a full-fledged, mainstream trend. The fashion industry started churning out stick-thin, gaunt-cheeked male models with delicate, almost girlish features. Gone were the days of Fabio and his buff counterparts. It seemed that the male model of the 90s was more likely to be nibbling on celery sticks at a salad bar than doing bench presses in the gym.

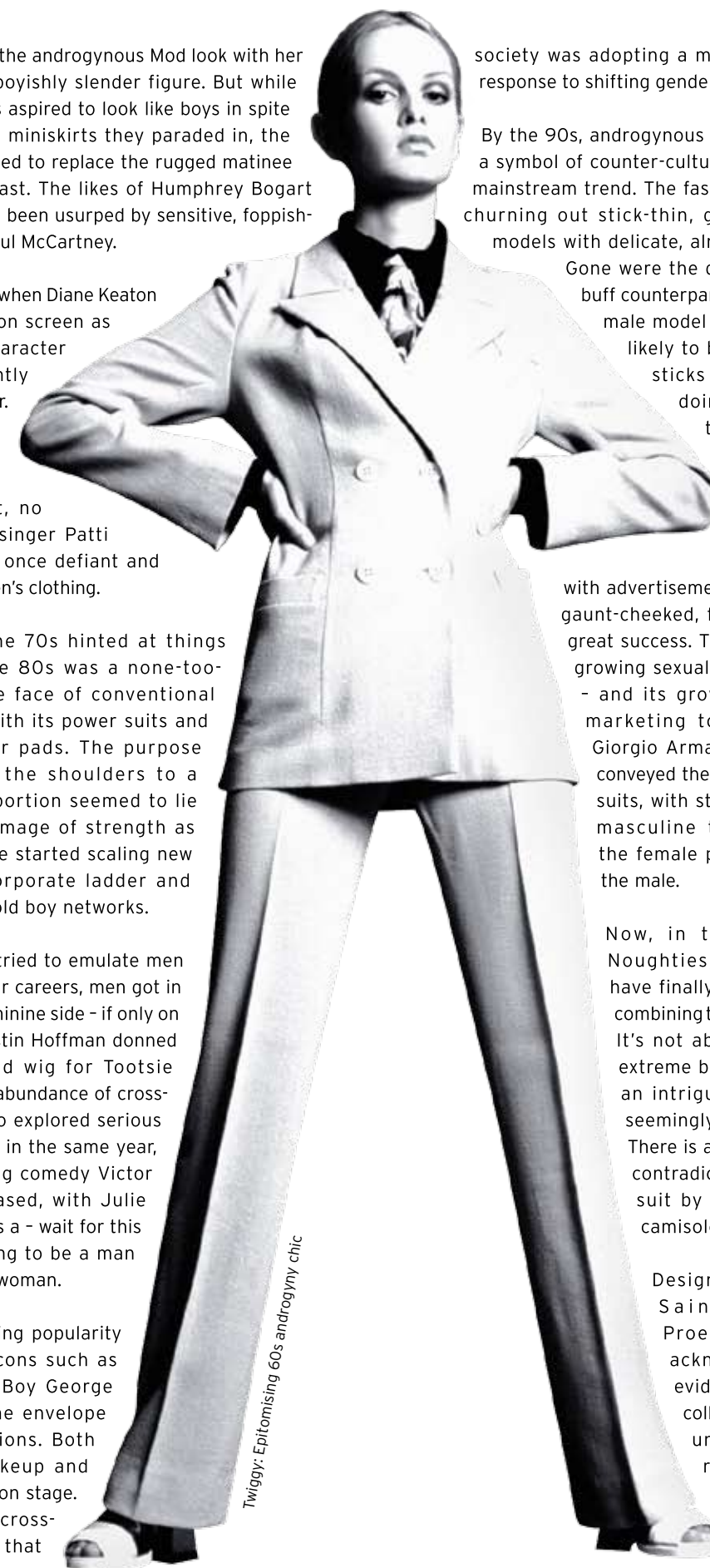
Calvin Klein launched its unisex fragrance, cK One, accompanied with advertisement images of slouchy, gaunt-cheeked, flat-chested waifs, to great success. This demonstrated the growing sexual power of androgyny - and its growing potential as a marketing tool. Designers like Giorgio Armani and Helmut Lang conveyed the message that trouser suits, with strong, sleek lines and masculine tailoring, flattered the female physique as much as the male.

Now, in the anything-goes Noughties, it seems that we have finally mastered the art of combining the best of both worlds. It's not about taking it to the extreme but rather on creating an intriguing combination of seemingly disparate elements. There is a certain sex appeal in contradicting a smart trouser suit by wearing a lacy, silk camisole underneath.

Designers such as Yves Saint Laurent and Proenza Schouler have acknowledged this, as is evident in their Women's collections for Fall 2008, unveiled in New York recently. They have taken liberties with classic menswear pieces, such



Marlene Dietrich: The start of a revolution



Twiggy: Epitomising 60s androgyny chic

DIETRICH & TWIGGY PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES



as a tailored white shirt, and reworked it with voluminous sleeves or a distinctly girlish bow. Alexander McQueen showcased dramatically fluffy fur coats for men that would bring out any gentleman's inner diva, Nina Ricci's collection for women saw models sauntering down the runway in menswear pieces with a feminine twist and soft tailoring.

Androgyny is not about hiding or denying one's sexuality. It's about embracing the best of both worlds, while rejecting traditional gender stereotypes. So much so that it has now become clear that the question of "who wears the pants" has become an ambiguous and irrelevant one of our times. ■



A/W 08 androgyny  
(clockwise from centre):  
Proenza Schouler, Nina Ricci and YSL



Diane Keaton in Annie Hall



PROENZA PHOTO GETTY IMAGES; ANNIE HALL PHOTO CORBIS; NINA RICCI & YSL PHOTOS: IPS

advertorial

# HAUTE HEDONISM

MIDDLE EASTERN LUXURY ARRIVES IN THE FAR EAST IN THE SHAPE OF YESLAM, A BRAND WHICH SHOWCASES THE PERFECT MARRIAGE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST



For the last decade or so, the Middle East has begun to exert more and more of an influence in more and more aspects of our general lives. This year the luxury lifestyle market has joined the ranks of tourism and cuisine and welcomes a high-end Saudi Arabian brand to our retail landscape.

Driven by the ideology 'The Art of Discreet Hedonism', the new Yeslam boutique in Starhill Gallery is its first in South-East Asia, having already established posts in Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Mekkah and Geneva. Meaning 'to bless' in Arabic, Yeslam was founded a mere two and a half years ago by owner Yeslam bin Ladin and offers a range of premium luxury goods from the finest leather goods to accessories such as sunglasses, cufflinks, silk scarves, perfumes and even precious timepieces.

There is nothing discreet, though, about Yeslam's meteoric rise in the world of luxury goods. During his student days in Lebanon, he vowed he would one day create perfumes – a big love of his since childhood – and it is through this very thing that his eponymous brand was born. The fragrances Yeslam For Him and Yeslam For Her launched the ship in 2005 and today has, metaphorically of course, docked at Kuala Lumpur.

The entire range of Yeslam products all stem from the philosophical and aesthetic instincts of its founder. Inspired by

the age-old refinement of the East and exposed to the more modern European state-of-the-art expertise, Yeslam the man and the brand have successfully married the pair and created a unique and desirable point of view: the best of Eastern artistry and the best of Western quality.

From creating more perfumes including the classic Passion and Dream, Yeslam then focused his energy onto another of his passions – watches – and together with two expert watchmakers in his own workshop dedicated to watch-making have sought to create the finest timepieces in accordance with the grand watch-making traditions.

The brand has since expanded into leather goods and fashion accessories, but Yeslam's destiny still remains to continue in his pursuit of horology perfection. In testimony to that, Yeslam will release The Aviator, the very first watch ever that can be used in flight calculations of True Airspeed (TAS) for a virtually unlimited amount of combinations of flight levels and indicated airspeed.

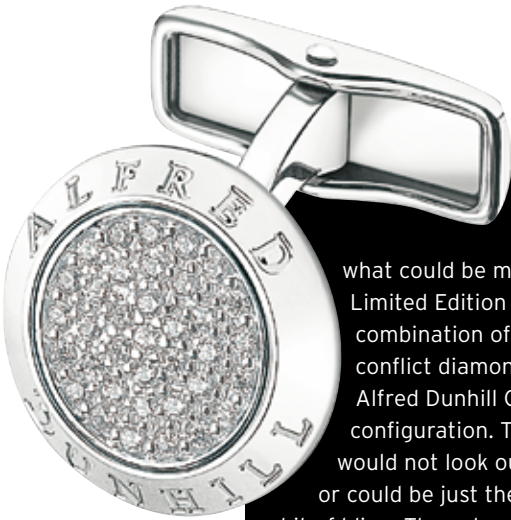
A revolutionary creation and a statement that Yeslam has truly taken flight.

Yeslam @ Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery, KL, +603-2143 4366; [www.yeslam.ch](http://www.yeslam.ch)



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# SATISFY YOUR SOLE

DRAWING ON ANCIENT TRADITIONS, ASIANEL PROVIDES AN OASIS OF HEALING AND REJUVENATION THROUGH THE FEET

BY BOEY PING PING

"WHERE CONGESTION EXISTS, disease will result," as circulation is life while stagnation is death. In the world of traditional medicine, this is a belief that has been held firm for centuries, and time and time again, ancient healing methods have demonstrated their ability to decipher anomalies and find solutions to illnesses that even the most advanced science cannot resolve.

Today, contemporary health and well-being practitioners are more and more inclined to combine these age-old therapies with more Western-style treatments. The result? Indulgent spa therapies that offer the best of both these worlds.

Foot reflexology is the curative art of applying appropriate pressure to the reflexes of the feet to stimulate subtle energies that bring relief to areas of the body where tension exists. The benefits of reflexology are manifold: from aiding blood circulation and energy flow to relieving stress, soothing tired feet and bodies, and improving the body's overall immune system.

Asianel Reflexology Spa is one such place which takes you on a journey to gain insight on how a foot massage technique can restore the body's energy flow and promote its natural ability to heal. But only at Asianel do you truly enjoy a holistic approach to reflexology, where acupressure blends with aromatherapy and luxurious spa offerings to stimulate all five senses - sight, sound, smell, touch and taste.

The journey begins with a spa therapy - delicious milk baths, botanic scrubs and a cool yoghurt or warm mud foot mask - to relax your feet and mind. A head, neck, shoulder and hands massage continues the sojourn. When all tension is released, the nimble fingers of Asianel's experts start to work their magic on your feet.

Here, the foot reflexologists are trained in the Rwo Shur method which combines thumb-sliding and firm pressure techniques in a pain-free manner that yields tremendous results. All this is done as you lie back in your suede, chiropractic approved massage chair, while enjoying the tranquillity and privacy of your own spa pavilion.

Asianel personalises its foot spa therapies to meet your needs, offering 'Healing' or 'Rejuvenation'. While the healing menu provides relief to familiar health problems and symptomatic conditions, the rejuvenation menu celebrates your inherent love to be pampered with all things luxurious. New from the rejuvenation menu, 'Sole Power' begins with a refreshing, vanilla-scented foot wash followed by a soothing, lavender, sea salt foot bath. The 90-minute spa ritual continues with a hand, neck, shoulder and hand massage and creamy yoghurt foot mask before the tension in your feet are rubbed away during a reflexology treatment.

*Asianel Reflexology Spa @ S17, Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2142 1397*

CAVIAR PHOTO CORBIS



**GRAPE EXPECTATIONS** The Anggur Indrani is a lavish body treatment which employs succulent grapes to create a decadent, 2-hour-long beautifying ritual. A skin-smoothing scrub is made from crushed grape seeds to exfoliate and bring life back to tired, lacklustre skin. Clusters of tiny precious grapes are smashed and applied all over the body which is then cocooned in banana leaves to draw out impurities and soften skin. The grand finale: long, sensuous massage strokes with aromatic grapeseed oil soothe tired muscles and nourish the skin. @ Spa Indrani, S27, Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2782 3868



**TRUTH AND NAIL** Not your run-of-the-mill nail spa, NailClinique transforms ordinary services into extraordinary experiences with the ultimate manicure and pedicure treatments performed in a luxurious setting with stylish décor. NailClinique offers the latest technology in nail service, employs professionally trained nail technicians, indulges your every whim and fancy and creates experiences that exceed your expectations. From time-tested therapies to modern treatments, you'll find everything you need to revive the skin, guard against premature aging and create beautifully manicured nails. @ NailClinique, S18, Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery +603-2142 8018



**MADE FOR MEN** Beabelle MEN further simplifies grooming for men into three effortless steps with these Swiss-made products: Freshen, an oxygenating skin cleanser, Smoothen, a skin-calming shaving gel, and Pamper, a dual-function soothing aftershave-cum-moisturiser. Beabelle MEN employs a holistic approach to skincare with pure essential oils that awaken the senses and oxygen-enhancing ingredients that maximise skin's oxygen intake. Made from the highest quality and natural essences of plants, each product offers active elements that enhances skin's natural glow. @ Beabelle Body Care Day Spa, S15, Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery +603-2148 4898

GRAPE & TEETH PHOTOS CORBIS; NAILS PHOTO GETTY IMAGES



**TOTAL WELLBEING** LivingWell Studio was born out of the belief that living full and healthy life ought to be accessible to all who seek it. People should derive pleasure from their existence by enjoying the best of what life has to offer, including a range of specialised integrated healthcare services to enhance their personal wellbeing and quality of life. LivingWell Studio gives you access to the expertise of a team of professional and internationally trained doctors skilled in cosmetic dentistry. From teeth whitening to resin bonding, porcelain and veneers, crown, bridges and state-of-the-art CEREC 3D ceramic restorations, this integrated healthcare centre provides the perfect setting for restoring and revitalising the spirit, mind and health. @ Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2141 4828



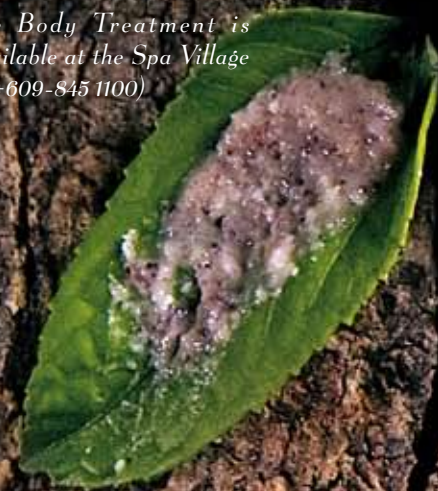


## THE DARLING BUD ROSELLE FLOWER

**PALATE** Edible flowers have been back in vogue for a few years already. The Roselle may not be the most popular choice of floral ingredient in this part of the world, but in Senegal, the Roselle gives distinction to a fish and rice dish called 'Thieboudienne'. It can be drunk as tea, used as flavouring and on occasion, processed into sweet pickle, jelly and jam. In Malaysia, the Roselle flower is known as asam paya or asam susur.

**BODY & BEAUTY** The Roselle is a type of hibiscus and has been in used in folk medicine as a diuretic, mild laxative and in treatments for cardiac and nerve diseases. The plant's greatest boast is how it assists in forming collagen and in absorbing vitamins, thus improving skin texture. Its high vitamin C content also aids anti-aging.

*The Roselle Body Treatment is exclusively available at the Spa Village Tanjong Jara (+609-845 1100)*



# THE BEAUTY OF FOOD

THE SPA VILLAGE FAMILY OF LUXURY SPAS PRIDES ITSELF ON MORE THAN THE USE OF INDIGENOUS PRODUCTS IN ITS RANGE OF EXCLUSIVE SPA TREATMENTS. IN MANY INSTANCES, THESE BEAUTY THERAPIES INCLUDE THE USE OF FOODS THAT DO WONDERS NOT JUST ON THE PALATE BUT ON THE BODY TOO

PHOTOGRAPHY CHOEN LEE  
TEXT & STYLING CHOO AI LING



## FRUIT FOR THOUGHT PAPAYA & CALAMANSI

**PALATE** Papayas are best eaten raw but also delicious in salads, curries and stews. It is rich in an enzyme called 'papain' useful for tenderizing meat and other proteins. Calamansi, on the other hand, is rarely eaten raw (although amazing as an ice cold drink) but its zest and juice are popular additions in Thai, Malay and Nyonya cuisines. Interestingly, a generous squeeze of calamansi juice over a cold papaya is a food match made in heaven.

**BODY & BEAUTY** Papayas are used to remedy digestive problem and as a topical application for cuts, rashes, stings and burns but is most valued for its healing and skin-softening properties. The calamansi's high acidic content is used in beauty treatments to lighten the skin.

*Experience the Papaya Gentle Body Scrub treatment at Spa Village Kuala Lumpur (+603-2782-9090) which combines the use of both these fruits in this 2,000 year old Far East treatment.*



## SHIOK THERAPY HARD-BOILED EGGS AND CUCUMBERS

**PALATE** Hard-boiled eggs are often found in sandwiches, salads or (as in Malay cuisine), fried then cooked in a sambal or a curry. Cucumbers are eaten in salads, as soup and pickled. They may be considered as more of a companion rather than main ingredient but they are certainly among the world's healthiest foods. Hard-boiled eggs and sliced cucumbers are classic components in the iconic Malaysian dish nasi lemak.

cramping and swelling and drawing out excess heat from the body.

*The Egg Rolling Body Therapy and Cucumber Aloe Wrap are part of the signature Shiok Shiok Sejuk Experience (Cooling) at the Spa Village Malacca (+606-289 8000), an all-body spa package comprising four different therapies.*

**BODY & BEAUTY** Cucumber has long been prized in the world of beauty for its cooling, hydrating benefits and to improve complexion and to soothe swollen eyes and sunburn. Hard-boiled eggs rolled on the body as massage tools have the ability to settle hyperactivity, calm the mind, aid in



OXIDIZE RUSTY TILE FROM THE MELE COLLECTION GUOCERA





### UNITY IN TRINITY MILK, CINNAMON AND GINGER

**PALATE** There's nothing quite like a glass of really creamy fresh milk. Milk is also processed into a variety of delicious products like cheese, ice cream, yoghurt, butter and cream. Ginger is one of the most popular spices and is a vital addition in all types of cuisines the world over and makes an exotic cup of tea too. The bark of the cinnamon tree is widely used as a spice to flavour meat dishes, curries, stews, desserts, candies, tea and even liqueurs.

**BODY & BEAUTY** In beauty circles, milk is a luxuriant treatment when it is added to bath water as it softens and nourishes the skin. Ginger is used to aid with water retention while cinnamon calms the mind.

*The Empehan (Milk Scrub) and Meodak (Boreh Body Scrub) utilising ginger and cinnamon are part of the signature Penganten Melukat treatment at the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali (+603-2783 1000)*



### COCO LOCO COCONUT AND COCONUT CREAM

**PALATE** The basis of the cuisines of South-East Asia would collapse all at once if there were no such thing as the humble coconut. Used in shredded, liquid, milk and cream form, it is a vital and versatile ingredient in curries, sauces, desserts and even as a drink, best when the coconut is still young.

**BODY & BEAUTY** Coconut oil is thought to have anti-aging properties and has proven beneficial to some when applied on the face. It is rich in lauric acid which is known to be anti-viral, antibacterial and anti-fungal. Indians have traditionally, for thousand of years, been using coconut oil to condition the hair and to maintain its lustre and colour.

*Pamper yourself with the Coconut Crème Hair Treatment at Spa Village Pangkor Laut (+605-699 1100)*





## **BERRIES THE HATCHET STRAWBERRIES**

**PALATE** Who doesn't like strawberries? They are beautiful to look at and at their best are simply delicious eaten on their own or with a dollop of cream. They are always nice in desserts - meringue, cheesecake, ice cream - and curiously, are also said to be extraordinary eaten in sandwich form... with a dash of pepper no less!

**BODY & BEAUTY** The Romans believed strawberries brought relief from depression, infections and fevers, as well as ailments of the kidneys, liver and blood. Strawberries contain Vitamins C, B5, B6 and K as well as folic acid, potassium, riboflavin, copper and omega-3 fatty acids. When crushed and pureed, the paste is used for softening the skin and to cool inflammation.

*Enjoy the Fresh Strawberry Escapade at Spa Village Cameron Highlands (+605-491 1100)*

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





# R FOR REMARKABLE

SO JUST WHAT IS THE NEW MERCEDES R-CLASS? NEVER MIND THAT IT DEFIES EASY CATEGORISATION, TAKE A SPIN IN ONE AND YOU'LL SOON BE ROLLING YOUR R'S IN PURE DELIGHT BY ELLFIAN ABDUL RAHIM

THE NEW MERCEDES R-CLASS has a little bit of an identity crisis. What is it? An SUV? An Estate? MPV? Or is it a crossover hybrid that defies definition? Whatever it is, whatever you think it is, or whatever you want it to be, it isn't a far stretch to say that, quite incredibly, Mercedes has managed to make the world's most schizophrenic car yet.

But if schizophrenia were a psychological disease that even remotely resembled the all-new Mercedes R280, then it is a condition that many wouldn't mind having. Here is a car that offers generous hauling ability for six or seven and is blessed with a very lively and usable poke from a refined V6, 3-litre engine that puts out a very healthy 228bhp. This happy combination means that the R-Class is a pleasant, relaxing way to eat away the miles. And mind you, this is just the base model for the series!

Unlike the rest of the range, the R280 comes only in rear-wheel drive. But unless you're planning a spot of impromptu off-road trail-blazing, you'll barely notice the lack of all-wheel drive ability offered on its bigger engine class-mates, but it doesn't help to allay the sense that the R-Class doesn't know what

it wants to be. All the same though, this is one set of wheels that handles all its pretences seriously and switches roles with sublime grace and ease.

Aiming to muscle in on the sales of similarly flavoured competitors like the Audi Q7, Merc has placed an extra seat into the R's second row, turning it into a regular seven-seater in one fell swoop. Only it's not quite that simple. The R280 sits on a slightly shorter wheelbase, with just one row of three seats in the back. So you get a whacking great boot to stash all of your baggage, although rear passenger legroom is less generous than the R's still-hefty footprint would suggest.

Equipment and specification levels are also generous. Each model has automatic headlights and windscreen wipers, parameter speed-sensitive power-assisted steering, automatic climate control and 19" alloys with five spokes and 255/50 R 19 tyres. This all combines to give driver and passengers pleasant motoring experiences in the long or short haul.

Electric adjustment of the front seats is coupled

with a reach/rake adjustable steering column to give the driver a perfect seating position. Just remember to read the owner's manual before any cross-country adventures because trying to figure out such trivialities as how to shut off the rear wiper can be a bit of a chore in the dark (not to mention dangerous!) halfway through a 600km jaunt, especially when the instrument panel is reminiscent of that in a jetliner's cockpit!

Measuring 5157mm from nose to tail, the body of the R-Class is akin to a luxury saloon in size but is considerably more spacious inside. This is due primarily to the sophisticated vehicle concept and a dimensional design that has been ingeniously planned right down to the finest detail.

Each of the vehicle's passengers can sit back and relax in comfortable individual seats which offer the added luxury of armrests in the second row. The list of optional extras includes a centre console between the individual seats in the second row with extra stowage compartments along with large cup holders for holding both cups and bottles upright.

Those keen on sports and recreational activities looking for a versatile car that can adapt to all manner of tasks quickly and easily are also catered for by the new R-Class: the four seats in the rear fold flat individually, allowing the load capacity to be expanded to as much as 2,385 litres, a figure which clearly eclipses the load space offered even by most station wagons. Loading and unloading is particularly straightforward, courtesy of the level load floor measuring over 2.20 metres in length and the generously proportioned tailgate.

Quite apart from making travelling in the grand sports tourer an extremely comfortable experience, the very latest innovations from Mercedes also make it an extremely safe one too. PRE-SAFE®, the multi-award-winning anticipatory protection system (available as an option), detects critical handling situations and immediately springs into action to prepare occupants and vehicle alike for an imminent collision.

Precautions include pulling the driver's and front passenger's seatbelts taut, moving the electrically adjustable front passenger seat with memory function to the optimum position and automatically closing the sliding sunroof. These measures improve the seating position of the vehicle's occupants prior to impact, thereby enhancing the restraining effect of the seatbelts and airbags.

Six airbags are fitted as standard, and ISOFIX child seat mounting points with top tethers are fitted to all rear seats. The front passenger seat includes the Mercedes-Benz automatic child seat sensor, which deactivates airbags when an appropriate transponder-equipped baby seat is used. Remote central locking and tyre pressure loss warning system are also standard. All this is alarmed and immobilised, and numerous cubby holes and storage areas in the cabin help keep valuables away from prying eyes.

But the biggest joy about the R class is reserved for the driver. All engine models are partnered as standard by the 7G-TRONIC seven-speed automatic transmission, which itself comes with a noteworthy new feature in the form of the DIRECT SELECT wand on the dash to aid gear selection.

This electronic transmission control system has allowed Mercedes engineers to dispense with the conventional automatic selector lever in the centre console and to replace it instead with a lever on the steering column. Additional gearshift buttons on the steering wheel enable drivers to manually pre-select the seven forwards gears, just like in a Formula One racing car. This allows the power reserves of the six-cylinder engine to be harnessed to optimum effect in any driving situation.

The firm footing of a beautifully designed chassis, the electronically controlled 4ETS traction system and ESP team up to offer top-notch driving safety and keep the R-Class safely on course, even in very bad road conditions. These systems are all part of the vehicle's standard specification, as is the AIRMATIC all-round air suspension. This is interlinked with the ADS Adaptive Damping System, offering motorists the facility of raising the body by up to 50mm when driving along rough roads. At high speeds above 120km/h, the body is automatically lowered by 20mm to reduce wind resistance.

So, the R-Class is a car that wants to be a MPV. It wants to be both practical and sporty by riding high for comfort and low to the ground to hug the curves. It offers all manner of creature comforts yet is fully prepared for any eventuality with a brace of cutting edge safety tech. Finally, it's blessed with unconventional and very contemporary good looks.

At the end of the day, though, the Mercedes R280 is not so much a car that doesn't know what it wants to be; remarkably, it's more like an over achiever that tries to be the best at anything it does. ■





# SHELF LIFE

THE SMART MONEY FOR THE FUTURE WILL BE ON SMART HOUSES BEING THE WAY FORWARD. EVEN TODAY, A HOST OF SMART TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE HOME IS ALREADY OPENING NEW DOORS BY MATT ARMITAGE

TODAY'S URBAN TECH-WARRIOR RARELY VENTURES OUTSIDE HIS FRONT DOOR without a full complement of smart phone, laptop, media player, digital camera and in any more of the dozens of gadgets that have become so crucial to his daily life. But his home is likely to be the same bog standard bricks and mortar set-up that people have been living in for generations, its only concessions to technology being the HD home theatre system in the living room, a microwave for the evening ready meal and the thermostat that controls the heating and air-conditioning.

Only recently, techno houses like Bill Gates' reputed US\$30m Washington State mansion were the stuff of science fiction, with their computer controlled cores, voice activated lighting and water and waste recycling systems. But spurred by a worldwide housing boom and TV channels creaking with

home makeover programming, so-called smart technology is finally starting to make its appearance in the more modest arena of the suburban cul-de-sac.

More than that, smart housing will become the suburban cul-de-sac if manufacturers like flat-pack giant Ikea get their way. Selling more than 800 units of their easy assemble BoKlok (it means 'live smart' in Swedish) timber homes in Sweden a year, it's an intelligent return to the ideals of the pre-fabricated movement of the 1950s that had its apogee in the environmentally friendly geodesic domes designed by Buckminster Fuller, built from aluminum recycled from decommissioned World War II planes.

But while modular flat-packs like BoKlok may be an answer to the world's social housing needs, it's the tech that's going

on inside that's really changing lives. Like the Bea's, a retired British couple who are attempting to live with zero carbon emissions on the remote Scottish island of Unst. Aided by winds that regularly gust in excess of 150kmh and a location so far north that the sun never sets in midsummer, they are ideally placed for this wind- and solar-powered experiment.

Yet the interior of their off-the-peg frame-house has more in common with the likes of Bill Gates super-mansion than you might imagine. Their light comes from that darling of the designers, the LED, which uses a fraction of the power of standard incandescent or fluorescent bulbs. Under-floor heating is powered by a pump that draws warmth from the air and rainwater is harvested for non-potable uses.

Not that smart living is all about ecology, but with oil prices on a seemingly upward trend, more and more people are putting energy efficient devices to work in our homes. High pressure steam is reducing water consumption in washing machines, microbe resisting refrigerators switch to low energy modes when the doors haven't been opened for some time, or at a more basic level, there's the ultra-efficient Eco kettle which can boil the water for a single cup of tea in 35 seconds.

Electrically charged privacy glass has transformed many a glass-fronted high rise from public freak show into minimalist paradise. And many of us now watch our fridges - like the Whirlpool CentralPark Connection - intently, thanks to LCD TVs embedded in the door. In fact, with remote security systems ranging from WowWee's Rovio, a wifi and camera-

equipped robot, to motion detection systems that send out text messages as they simultaneously contact your home security service, we can now spend our time watching our home on TV from anywhere in the world.

But for most of us, the most visible introduction of smart technology is in our entertainment systems. From Sharp's theatre-like 108-inch plasma screens to wireless systems from Bose and Phillips that allow you to set up and stream different music and movie content to multiple sources throughout your home. With the addition of outdoor wireless speakers like those from Acoustic Research, you can even link the pool and the barbeque pit to your sound source.

Apple's new super-light MacBook Air notebooks have jettisoned the cumbersome disks and drives, relying instead on streamed media content from a central core, and easy portability throughout the home. But if it's space you're running short of, you can follow the trend of many Londoners who are burrowing below their properties to create more living space: like the basement playroom and fitness room whose mesh floor can be triggered by remote control to recede and reveal a heated lap pool below. Now that's really smart living. ■

Eco kettle: Hot water for the rest



The Whirlpool CentralPark: TV is cool again

Macbook Air: Air today, everywhere tomorrow

PHOTO CORBIS





**WAY TO GLOW** You want to reduce your eco-footprint and more importantly avoid the horrible stop-start traffic that gives you tennis elbow and distemper? Try the Puma Bike, also known as the Glow Rider, from its Urban Mobility range. Unlike most folding cycles, its styling is more rugged mountain than unicycle, and its almost full-size wheels and disc brakes ensure a smooth ride and quick-stopping power. And at 15 kilos it packs small and light enough for most urban transport systems. Plus, it has a killer app: forget lights, this bike glows in the dark.

<http://um.puma.com>



**YOUR BATH IS READY** The industrial revolution might have brought us iPods and production sports cars but, by and large, it put paid to the legions of household staff that used to hang around 'below stairs'. In those days, a valet would have your bath drawn for you and the only thing you had to do was disrobe. These days you have to do it all yourself, and you always have to wait half an hour for the water heater to crank into life. Unless you have Unique Automation's Bath-o-Matic, that is. Connected to the Net you can tell your bath how much water to pour, how hot and what bubbly bath to add and, what with its integral heater, it will circulate the water and keep it at the right temperature until you say otherwise. [www.bath-o-matic.com](http://www.bath-o-matic.com)



**DANCE THE ROOMBA** Robot-dogs and dancing androids are all very well, but what do they really do for you? If we want to get all Asimov about it, robots should be there to serve us, our unthinking mechanical slaves. This is something that the human creators at iRobot understand, and it's why their Roomba 570 performs that most essential and unsexy of tasks: vacuuming. Using its inbuilt sensors, the disc shaped Roomba will roam your home sucking up dust and never complaining about its lungs or lumbago. [www.irobot.com](http://www.irobot.com)

**I LEICA IT** Purists will claim that no digital camera matches the resolution or the quality of the humble 35mm camera. And while that may be true, actually buying your film and getting the prints developed is getting more difficult in these days of memory cards and computer screens. So, if you have to go digital bring the best of analogue with you in the form of the distinctly retro-looking Leica M8, a serious 10MP shooter that delivers incredible clarity and colours. But be warned, don't be expecting fancy gadgets like image stabilisation and auto-focus; this is a back to basics machine that demands as much of the photographer as it delivers itself. [www.leica.com](http://www.leica.com)



**PAPER FOR KINDLING** Admittedly, at over two thousand years, it's had a good run; but let's face it, paper has been screaming for an overhaul for ages. And while computers take care of our writing needs, there's still a big gap in the market to replace those irritating, tree-felling books and magazines. Enter Amazon's amazing Kindle: at under 300 grams it's lighter than a paperback, and it connects wirelessly with Amazon's Kindle bookstore, allowing you to download any of more than 100,000 titles direct to the machine. Plus, its flicker-free electronic paper display won't tire your eyes like traditional LCDs and consumes so little power it'll only need charging every couple of weeks. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



**ESPRESSO YOURSELF** There are two kinds of coffee machine: the kind with more buttons than the flight deck of a Jumbo Jet that eventually reward you with a gourmet standard cup of hot java, or the kind of one touch, easy-to-use machines that dispense over-boiled nonsense that tastes like the vending machine at work. Taking some of the complexity out of the process is the Francis Francis! X1 pump coffee maker. Styled after a 1950s diner, the X1 comes in a variety of Formica colours and has flip switches and a temperature gauge that simply scream old fashioned values. Tastes nice, too. [www.francisfrancisuk.com](http://www.francisfrancisuk.com)





# ART FOR ART'S SAKE

THE CITY OF VILNIUS, LITHUANIA, WILL SOON CELEBRATE ART AND CULTURE IN ZAHA HADID'S LATEST MASTERPIECE DESIGN FOR THE GUGGENHEIM HERMITAGE MUSEUM

BY ABDUL AZIZ DRAIM PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF ZAHA HADID ARCHITECTS

IT IS A SMOOTH STRUCTURE that seems to have simply emerged from a blob of liquid steel. Or could it perhaps be an alien formation made from metal that has willed itself to life? This liquid metal pushes forwards and outwards, bestowing its body with scales, texture and sinuous dorsal fins before it freezes and just ceases to grow. And in its mature state, it becomes a polished biomorphic entity, striking in its beauty and purpose.

This will be the new Guggenheim Hermitage Museum, located in the city of Vilnius in Lithuania, and it will be a masterpiece of architecture that is futuristic, organic, imaginative and poetic all at once.

Conceptualised by the brilliant architect Zaha Hadid, the design for this eventual museum and cultural centre in this emerging European city was actually the subject of a competitive bid between Zaha Hadid Architects, Studio Daniel Libeskind and Studio Fuksas. Her win was announced last April by a six-member jury that included Lithuanian Prime Minister Gediminas Kirkilas, Hermitage Director Mikhail Piotrovsky and Guggenheim Director Thomas Krens.

"I am delighted to be working in Vilnius on the Museum & Cultural Centre," Hadid shares. "The city will be the European Capital of Culture in 2009 and has a long history

of art patronage. With such an interest in the arts, Vilnius will continue to develop as a cultural centre where the connection between culture and public life is critical. This museum will be a place where you can experiment with the idea of galleries, spatial complexity and movement."

Spatial complexity and movement have been a hallmark of Hadid's work thus far. For the Guggenheim Hermitage Museum, there is a suggestion of velocity and fluidity and in spite of its metallic allusion, there is a sense of lightness as the building appears to hover above its site defying gravity. And yet, despite these complexities, it doesn't scream for attention. Instead, it enigmatically whispers its existence.

Futuristic buildings may be commonplace these days but Hadid's architectural language always seems to find a new voice reflecting the innovative design trajectory that she advocates, one that finds its inspiration in the latest digital design technology and fabrication methods.

But whether it is a language, a modernist sculpture or the embodiment of a poetic vision, Vilnius will soon have an architectural gem that will become the heartbeat of its cultural renaissance. ■

[www.zaha-hadid.com](http://www.zaha-hadid.com)



**OPEN AND SHUT CASES** French brand - Pinel & Pinel - is choosing to redefine luxury by reinterpreting the leather trunk from mere storage box to a beautifully clever space-saving solution for your every need. The Visio Trunk is a portable home cinema that comes with a Bang & Olufsen BeoVision 6-26 LCD and DVD player while the Soprano Trunk is fitted with the BeoSound 3000 with BeoLab 3 speakers and enough drawer space for 480 CDs. The Bike Trunk carries a folding bicycle by Brompton (you can even choose which bike model you want) and the Picnic Trunk for Krug champagne is wrapped in brown colt leather with red interiors with drawers that carry every picnic essential from Thermos bottle and picnic stools to silverware and truffle slicer. The door forms a table too. Finally, we have the iTrunk, delivered to you with an iMac G5, JBL sound system and Canon mobile printer. Each trunk (except the Picnic trunk) comes in 51 choices of leather dressing, with no pretentious monogram in sight. [www.pineletpinel.com](http://www.pineletpinel.com)

**BOX-OFFICE SUCCESS** Australian-based skin and hair care brand Aesop proves that the simple act of recycling can go a very long way. The brand's latest outlet in Flinders Lane, Melbourne, boasts an interior predominantly made up of industrial grade cardboard boxes. Stacked and lined or flattened and sliced to create visually stunning walls and display shelves, these boxes inject an organic and contemporary feel into the store, proving that inexpensive alternative building materials can produce the most expressive of interiors. The brainchild of interior architects Rodney Eggleston and Anne-Laure Cavigneaux of award-winning March Studios, this look was meant to be temporary before a more permanent interior scheme was implemented. But due to overwhelming response from clients and visitors alike, the boxes will take pride of place in the store a little while longer than planned. Here's to thinking outside of the box. [www.archstudio.com.au](http://www.archstudio.com.au); [www.aesop.net.au](http://www.aesop.net.au)



**CREAM OF THE CROP** Designer Tokujin Yoshioka clearly has a love for pastries. Following the success of his 'Pane' chair - Italian for 'bread' and a reference to the baking process the chair undergoes to give it its shape - Tokujin brings forth the 'Panna' chair, the latest member of his series of innovative furniture. 'Panna' is Italian for 'cream', and like its namesake the cushy seater resembles a giant cake embellished with rows and rows of piped icing. Designed in collaboration with Italian furniture house Moroso, 'Panna' made its global premiere through a series of installations in Milan and New York late last year. Like its predecessor, 'Panna' expresses the designer's respect for fibres, using quilted industrial fabric to suggest how a series of free cells can create strength in numbers. This design manifesto was practised in his installations as well; he created fantasy landscapes in Milan using 3 million drinking straws while in New York, he used approximately 30,000 sheets of tissue paper. [www.tokujin.com](http://www.tokujin.com); [www.moroso.it](http://www.moroso.it)





# THE SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS

SOME THINGS IN LIFE DON'T COME EASY, BUT FOR CHEF JUDITH, YTL HOTELS' EXECUTIVE PASTRY CHEF, SHE'D RATHER THEY COME SWEET

BY EUGENE NG PORTRAIT BY CHOEN LEE

WE'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE: to get what you want in life, you just have to go out and get it for yourself. Forget silver platters and silver spoons. If you've had to sacrifice much and work up some sweat, blood and tears to get to where you are, the reward is always that much sweeter.

That sweet smell of success is something that Judith Sakata, the Executive Pastry Chef of YTL Hotels, can definitely relate to. Of course, you could say all the sugar she has to work with

has a lot to do with that but if chefs have a reputation for being hardworking, highly determined and passionate people, then Judith is their poster child.

Judith's career in chef whites didn't begin until she was in her late 20s. A Malaysian by birth, she married young, dropped out of college and moved to Tokyo with her Japanese husband where for the next decade or so, her career was "raising two children," she says with a big laugh.



"Then one day," the affable and utterly charming Judith excitedly relates, "I went to a cake exhibition in Tokyo. The pastries and desserts on display were amazing and I thought they were the work of a pro pastry chef. Then I found out they were all done by students and housewives from this school. I

could speak Japanese and just wouldn't give up," she reveals, eyes twinkling.

Then in 2005, she decided that she needed to expand her career horizons. At the same time, her kids had flown the coop

## YOU NEED GUMPTION TO BE A PASTRY CHEF. AND A LOVE FOR THE WORK YOU DO. TRUST ME, THE KITCHEN IS NOT A GLAMOROUS JOB

was so amazed and in that moment, I suddenly knew what I wanted to do. I wanted to go to school and learn to become a pastry chef and make all these beautiful desserts."

To put herself through the Imada Minako pastry school that had inspired her in the first place, Judith worked three part-time jobs. "It's a good thing I went through a really steep learning curve. The level of pastry-making in Japan is so high that it is almost considered an art form. Even the French do not dare enter pastry competitions these days because they know the Japanese will beat them," she laughs.

By her own account, pastry school was a kid's playground compared to the reality of hitting the job trail after she graduated. A late-20s housewife and mother fresh out of school didn't exactly make for the best of resumés but the chefs in Tokyo didn't know they had to contend with Judith. "I had to bang on so many doors, some of them three times even. It took a lot of patience and guts but I kept saying to them, 'Give me a job. I will work hard.' I really need to learn."

Of course you can already guess that she finally hit pay dirt and within the next 8 years, Judith went from washing baking trays and peeling fruit to heading the pastry section at Retoh, a Tokyo restaurant where she learnt "the backbone of my trade" and how to use red bean and green tea in desserts. "In the end, they realised I



and the inexplicable yearning for home that all expatriates eventually go through set in.

"So I was having dinner at Shook! with my mum one night while I was back in KL. This was in 2005 and I said to her, 'This is the restaurant I would like to work in!' So I just called up and asked the guy in charge, 'How can I get a job here?'" A few months passed and just as Judith was on the verge of accepting a job at the newly-opened world famous Nobu in the Atlantic Hotel in The Bahamas, she got the call from YTL Hotels offering her the opportunity to work in setting up Tiffin Bay in Starhill Gallery. The rest as they say, is, history. "I really wanted to come home," she says.

As YTL Hotels Executive Pastry Chef today, Judith heads a centralised pastry kitchen which supplies various hotels and restaurants under the YTL Hotels banner including The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, JW Marriot, Pangkor Laut Resort, The Majestic Malacca, Shook!, Jackie Chan Cafe and even the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (KLPac).

But more than that she is also living a bigger dream, that of one day providing a training ground for young people who might not otherwise have an opportunity to pursue creative jobs such as becoming a pastry chef. In other words, she's giving some of herself back, paying it forward.

Ever since being at the helm for just over a year now, she has set up links with the Malaysian Institute of Baking (MIB), where many students from the school will be given the opportunity to gain some real work experience by working at the YTL Hotels' pastry kitchen for the last six months of their industrial training.

"The good thing here is that if you are smart and hardworking, you will be promoted. I've noticed that in Malaysia, young people are far too often kept in their place for far too long. And now, after a year of building the foundation for the centralised pastry kitchen, we will soon have more room to be more artistic with our pastries."

"A lot of my staff now actually come from MIB," she beams. "I remember when I was at Tiffin Bay and I met three young people from that school and I was so impressed by their drive and their hunger to learn. So to be able to in some small way help these young people is really great."

As a leader and as a person, Judith is truly inspirational. Positive, motivated and in equal measure humble too, you simply cannot help but be taken by her warmth and charmed by her enthusiasm.

"I'm never ashamed to say that I'm not good at some things," she reveals. "In fact, just last year, I had to learn from scratch how to build a cake in 3-D when I was called upon to create a cake for our Agong on his birthday. I studied with Just Heavenly and actually created a 3x3 foot golf bag cake

complete with clubs and a putting green! The funny thing was that during the function, the golf bag sugar started to slide but when it did, it made it look even more real because it looked like leather," she laughs.

This year, as our Agong is from Terengganu, the ever-ambitious Chef Judith has planned to create a masterpiece of confection of an underwater scene, building corals from pastillage sugar, fishes and sea animals out of sponge sugar and colouring caster sugar like sand. "It's going to be really fun and exciting to see how we are going to achieve this. How can I not love what I'm doing here?"

Life, quite obviously, is sweet for Chef Judith. ■



Judith's spectacular golf bag cake creation

Faberge eggs cakes presented to the Agong for Raya 2007

### 5 QUESTIONS WITH CHEF JUDITH



**What is your culinary philosophy?** Never serve someone something you yourself wouldn't eat. In order to know your product, you have to be in it so you have to eat and know everything that goes into it. I think my staff has an inside joke about Chef Judith and her tasting spoon.

**What would you say makes a great pastry chef?** Gumption and

stamina. Only a small percentage of people are born with talent. To be honest, I consider myself a better manager of people. Oh and patience and a love for the work you do because trust me, the kitchen is not a glamorous job.

**What sort of jokes do pastry chefs make?** The joke is we never have an off day. Ha ha.

**Tell us an inside secret as a pastry chef.** Whenever I go to a pastry shop, there are two things I will try to see what level the shop is at: the cheese and chocolate desserts. Some chefs might say they are the easiest ingredients to work with but to me, they are actually the hardest to bring out all the flavours. Sometimes the simpler the recipe the harder it is to perfect.

**Is it true that all pastry chefs would like to be 'real' chefs?** Let's just put it this way: I'd rather be peeling strawberries than onions!

ALL CAKE PHOTOS AND AFTERNOON TEA AT THE RITZ-CARLTON YTL HOTELS



# A TIME TO FEAST

STARHILL GALLERY'S 10-DAY MIDSUMMER NIGHTS FEAST FESTIVAL WILL CELEBRATE FOOD, ARTS AND THE GOOD LIFE BY EUGENE NG ALL PHOTOS YTL HOTELS



THERE ARE SO MANY DIFFERENT ELEMENTS that can constitute just what 'the good life' is. However, there are two things that will certainly fit into that definition and the best thing about food and culture is that you don't really have to be extremely wealthy to indulge in them.

For 10 days, Starhill Gallery will host a festival that celebrates these two exciting aspects of human social activity at the 'Midsummer Nights Feast', a name, quite obviously, inspired by Shakespeare's famous 16th century rom-com.

Described as a "fantastical journey into a world of imagination, enchanting culinary experiences, and magical encounters with theatrical performances", Midsummer Nights Feast will be staged as a theatrical festival featuring gourmet cuisines by guest master chefs invited from around the world, and specially created art performances by the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (KLPac).

Among the epicurean highlights for the event will be a Gourmet Festival that will see the Feast Village at Starhill Gallery transformed into a gourmand's paradise featuring an array of cuisines - from Mediterranean to Middle Eastern, Italian, Thai, Korean, Japanese, Chinese and closer to home, Malaysian and Nyonya cuisines.



Look out for celebrity guest chefs such as Bobby Chinn and Aussie master chef Stephen Mercer who will both create menus and conduct chef classes. Other chefs from various Feast Village restaurants including Enak KL, Gonbei, Fisherman's Cove, Jogoya, Shook!, My Thai and Vansh-KL will also hold cooking classes.

The festival will also mark a momentous YTL Corporation milestone with the launch of the YTL Fresh Food Programme, inspired by the corporation's Group Managing Director YBhg Tan Sri Dato' Dr Francis Yeoh CBE who declares, "the goodness of fresh foods is the single most fundamental enjoyment of the good life!"

Complementing this celebration of good food and good wine will be a range of theatrical performances masterminded by local theatre doyens YBhg Dato Faridah Merican and Joe Hasham. Guests can enjoy exciting shows by the KLPac Sinfonietta String Ensemble, a Midsummer Nights Ballet, Broadway Hits, Stompers Children's Musical Activity and even a murder mystery sketch aboard the luxurious Eastern & Oriental Express, which is also globally renowned for its culinary excellence.

The climax of this 10-day extravaganza will be the "Grand Harvest Night", an evening of exotic Spanish Flamenco, Middle Eastern belly dancing, Western Country music, traditional Chinese er hu music and Malay dances, echoing the unique cultural and culinary diversity represented at Feast Village. ■

*Midsummer Nights Feast will be held at Starhill Gallery, KL. For more info, +603-2782 3882; [www.starhillgallery.com](http://www.starhillgallery.com)*





# CHAOS THEORY

FINE ARTIST DAVE WHITE'S BRAND OF ART IS ROOTED IN THE CLASSICISM OF FINE ART BUT DRAWS INFLUENCE FROM CONTEMPORARY POP CULTURE PROVIDING BOTH CONTRAST AND ORGANISED CHAOS IN HIS WORK

ALL STORIES VVBY MATT ARMITAGE

AS A FINE ARTIST, Liverpool's Dave White is slightly unusual. With his tattoos and skater-boy attire, and an interest in sneakers that borders on the obsessive, White looks more like an in-your-face graffitist than a celebrated expressionist. Certainly his subject matter is pop, if not downright street, and White is an enthusiastic proponent of street style's collaboration culture, working closely with brands like Nike and Adidas on custom designs of their footwear, as well as artistic interpretations like his large form 2007 oil painting piece 'Aircraft Carrier' that featured a carrier steaming as if to battle, its warplanes replaced with Nike's Air Force One series shoes.

In KL for a recent sneaker-themed demonstration, YTL Life quizzed the artist on his motivations and why his latest exhibition, Superheroes, has him painting 10-foot tall characters from action comics.

**YOUR SUBJECT MATTER INCLUDES SNEAKERS AND CARS, EVEN BUNNIES AND SUPERHEROES. IS THERE A SERIOUS MESSAGE AT PLAY HERE?** Absolutely, there always is. I'm a humorous man, I suppose [laughs]. It's [about] capturing the essence of all human emotion, especially in

the portraits. Once you're confronted with a six-foot Hulk, there's the whole rage element to it.

**SO IS IT FAIR TO CALL YOU A POP ARTIST?** I think that's a fair comment in the sense that some of the works have been iconic objects in themselves. But when people see the work in the flesh it's much more about expressionism, it's much more about the actual paint. For the Superheroes, for example, the starting point is a flat comic. When you see one of the images from 30 feet away it just looks like a flat comic but when you get up to it it's three inches thick in oil paint and has nothing to do with the original source.

**IN WHAT WAY?** It's the chance element of the way the paint forms and splats, it's taking something that's perfect to a certain extent and breaking it down. Along that journey there are all kinds of textures and surfaces and violent applications and subtle applications of the paint that add to the final image.

**ON THE SUBJECT OF SUPERHEROES, WITH THAT EXHIBITION YOU'RE ESSENTIALLY REINTERPRETING CHARACTERS THAT ALREADY EXIST AS DRAWINGS. WHAT ARE YOU ADDING TO THOSE CHARACTERS OR**



**PERSONALITIES?** When you see them in the flesh it's quite a moving experience. As I mentioned before it's about emotion. Each Superhero has been taken from a specific image in a comic book: I've zoomed in and taken them out with no text; it's just rage, love, surprise, anger, insanity. The tricky part is taking something that's instantly recognisable and adding that chaos element.

**IS THE WAY YOU APPROACH THE WORKS THEMSELVES CHAOTIC?** For every painting there's a very accurate but spontaneous under-drawing. With the Superheroes that's a three-day thing. With the kicks, because they're smaller, that's a couple of hours sort of experience. But once the paint is mixed, once I've got all of the colours that I need, it's a battle until it's done and it never stops.

**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE SUCH A TRADITIONAL MEDIUM LIKE OILS RATHER THAN A MORE STREET APPROACH?** I'm a fine art painter through and through, have been for 20 years. Some of the things I find most interesting - a

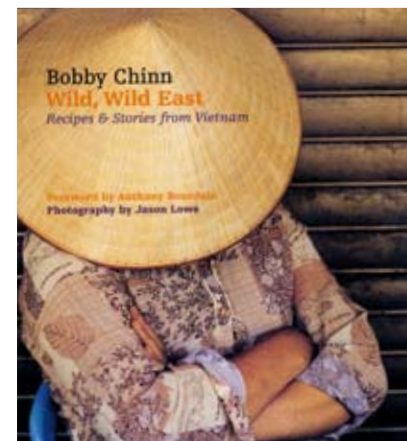
Ferrari F50, a Coke bottle - they're beautifully aesthetic things to look at but they've been designed for a purpose; their functionality is really important. So, to immortalise something that is very much an object of today - in a pop sense - and to use media that is very traditional like oil paints is a great contrast. Things in the colour and the texture, the way the paint flows, the way the colour develops, it becomes its own entity. It looks like that thing but [at the same time] it's so far removed from what it is.

**FINALLY, YOU STAGED A MAJOR EXHIBITION AT THE 2004 LIVERPOOL BIENNIAL, WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS YEAR'S CAPITAL OF CULTURE STATUS WILL BRING TO LIVERPOOL?** I hope it shakes off the unfortunate reputation that Liverpool and Scousers have. The whole investment, the opportunities that are arising - I hope that the local people benefit as well as the business and the commerce that comes in as a result of it. Once that part's over for the year, I hope Liverpool continues to develop. ■

[www.davewhite.me.uk](http://www.davewhite.me.uk)

## BOOKS

WILD, WILD EAST: RECIPES & STORIES FROM VIETNAM  
BOBBY CHINN  
CONRAN OCTOPUS (2007)



**EAST MEETS WEST** Bobby Chinn is unstoppable these days. Ever since his show World Café Asia premiered on the lifestyle TV channel Discovery Travel & Living, his fame has skyrocketed across this region, his name today a household one. Fast-talking, wise-cracking, cocky and confident, he exemplifies all the characteristics that chefs are thought to possess: singular, unexpected and really interesting.

The Bobby Chinn express train reaches another milestone with the release of his first cookbook 'Wild Wild East: Recipes & Stories from Vietnam', described on the back of the book's cover as "A true culinary adventure told by Hanoi's enfant terrible, Bobby Chinn." Hanoi, of course, is the Asian city where Bobby has honed his craft and built his reputation as a chef over the last decade or so. His eponymous restaurant located on a prime lakeside spot in busy Hanoi is reputed to be the first Western fusion restaurant in the city.

Wild Wild East is no ordinary cookbook. And at the end of every chapter of recipes, Bobby regales the reader with a no-holds barred retelling of stories culled from his years in Hanoi. By comparison, his writing style isn't as razor sharp or as acerbic and punchy as that of Anthony Bourdain, his fellow celebrity chef-at-large (and who writes the foreword here), but his blow-by-blow accounts of eating dog meat and a near disaster with gazpacho and gasoline are exciting reads and, surprisingly, aren't deterrents to building up an appetite.

There are plenty of recipes to try out. From street food to sauces, seafood

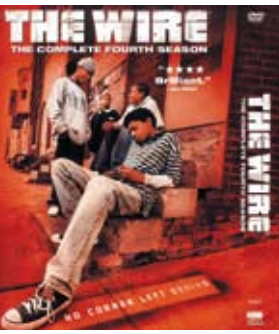
to salads, they range from classic Vietnamese to Bobby's own culinary creations. Don't be afraid of the chunky text; waded through the numerous stories that accompanies the recipes and you'll soon discover they are relatively easy to follow. And like his persona, and perhaps owing to the brief spell he spent working as a stand-up comic, the recipes are also peppered with silly asides: for example, the recipe for BC's Grilled Chicken Wings "serves 1 Hungry American or 4 Vietnamese".

Special mention has to go to the photography and design of the cookbook. Enticing food photos are interspersed with vibrant scenes of Hanoi life and its people (all by Jason Lowe) and the grainy matt paper effortlessly exudes an overall feel of old-fashioned nostalgia and warmth.

Wild Wild East, though, isn't a historical recounting and retelling of one of the world's most complex cuisines. In many ways, it is the way forward, the new way on how so many of us view food these days. Where in a shrinking world, there are no more culinary absolutes but a global fusion of tastes, flavours and personal experiences. - Eugene Ng



# FILM/VIDEO



## ON THE WIRE

Not since the days of Star Trek and Cagney & Lacey has a TV show inspired such blind loyalty in its audience. A cop show in name, The Wire has never quite shared the sky-scraping ratings of other HBO

shows like The Sopranos, but its shiny eyed adherents loudly claim it to be the finest TV series ever written.

Taking its name from the wiretaps used by police to gather information on organised crime, the show's five seasons have followed a group of detectives in the depressed and deprived inner city of Baltimore, using the show as a cover to explore the institutional corruption

and social problems that plague many of our urban centres.

Devised and scripted by former crime reporter David Simon and Ed Norton, a former detective, the show avoids taking a moralistic tone. In fact, many of the series' most sympathetic characters are its most amoral: Bodie the street corner kingpin, Chris the quiet assassin and Omar the stick-up artist all have you rooting for the bad guy. Its most honourable character, Bubbles, is a life-long heroin addict and police informant.

It's in these murky waters that characters find damnation and redemption: like the head-cracking Carver whose attempts to steal drug money go comically wrong and who slowly transforms into an officer bent on the redemption of the young men and boys who sell crack

on street corners. Or Prezbylewski, a brutally inept street officer and code-cracking genius who finally finds a niche in Baltimore's resource-starved public teaching system.

Into this mix floats a mysterious criminal known as The Greek, politicians who fund their law and order pledging campaigns with drug profits, a doll-house furniture making detective and a plot so dense and intricate that it's far easier to follow on DVD. And above them all lie the machinations of the politicians and bureaucrats to whom the crime blighting taxpayers' lives is merely statistics, money and power.

*The fifth and final season of The Wire is released on HBO Home Video DVD in August. All seasons are available through retailers and Amazon.com.*

# MUSIC

**SINGING IN THE RAIN** For the past 11 years, Malaysia has been host to one of the most formidable events on the world music calendar. While events like WOMAD tour the globe and steal the headlines, few festivals can match the power of actually holding their event in the rainforest itself. From a handful of people sitting around under the stars, the Rainforest World Music Festival, held in the shade of Mount Satubong in the Malaysian Borneo state of Sarawak, has become a three-day shebang drawing up to 30,000 partygoers from around the world.

And though world music may have something of a middle-aged beard and sandals image, the average attendee of RWMF is anything but old and worthy, as evidenced by the thousands of sweaty people fuelled by the local arak leaping up and down in the steaming heat. At previous events we've spotted Canadian



roots artists Genticorum getting vocal tips from members of Mongolian throat singers Egschiglen, leading Madagascan musician and cultural ambassador Kilema making it his personal mission to introduce himself to as many of the festival attendees as possible and a member of Scottish fiddle punks the Peatbogs Faeries spending much of his time wandering the site in a bush hat and heavy boots while clutching a bag of bananas. It's that kind of a weekend.

This year's festival features a line up that includes the warm island grooves of Trinidad's Sheldon Blackman and the Love Circle, who fuse calypso with

reggae, jazz and hip hop, Poland's Beltaine with their energetic mix of middle European freak folk (think Gogol Bordello) and the soulful duo Yakande from Gambia. Then there's the visual comedy of the UK's New Rope String Band and the hypnotic, percussive guitar frenzy of the Congo's acclaimed Kasai Masai. Greece's Ross Daly Quartet brings together European, Middle Eastern instruments in a unique exploration of world sounds. Not to mention one of the highlights of the three-day RWMF: an explosive performance from Japan's Hiroshi Motofuji, acknowledged as the country's best taiko drummer.

And that's without mentioning the workshops and impromptu jams and performances that make roaming the 14-acre festival site with its longhouses, tree huts and lakeside cafés an unrivalled pleasure.

*From July 11-13 at the Sarawak Cultural Village, Santubong, Sarawak; www.rainforestmusic-borneo.com*

# LISTINGS



## PORTRAITS OF PARADOX

The first solo show by Malaysian fine artist Yau Bee Ling sees the Klang-born oil painter tackle the superficiality of human relationships through the medium of her instantly recognisable layering of her vibrantly coloured canvases in a show entitled Portraits of Paradox. Tackling communication and claustrophobia, the works have a surface innocence that belies the deeper issues of unresolved deceit and jealous rage. *July 14 to August 5 @ Wei-Ling Gallery, +603-2260 1106/07; www.weiling-gallery.com*

**TWIST** Sculptor Multhalib Musa is rightly known as one of Malaysia's leading contemporary artists, and many of his 'fluid metal sculptures' can be seen at landmark buildings throughout Malaysia. 'Twists' sees the sculptor delving further into his exploration of energy and drama, creating a series of pieces that cast metal as an almost viscous, pliable form that allows the artist to experiment with light as one might with liquid. *June 23-July 10 @ Wei-Ling Gallery, +603-2260 1106/07; www.weiling-gallery.com*

# AT KLPAC

**DRUM SLICES III** Following the overwhelming success of Drum Slices I and II, Hands return with another not-to-be-missed show with more spectacularly choreographed pieces of Chinese drum and percussion music by the Hands Percussion Team. Featuring power-packed performances by young drummers aged between 4 and 18 years, the previous Drum Slices concerts have won three 2006 BOH Cameronian Arts Awards (Best Group Performance, Best Production Values and Best Original Composition for 'Emotions'). A night of music and movement as Hands deliver a delicious variety of sight, sound and sensation! *July 4-6 @ Pentas 1*

**HSBC CLASSICS PIANO FESTIVAL '08** The HSBC Classics Piano Festival 2008 promises a varied programme of performances, lecture recitals, masterclasses, exhibitions and, of course, the HSBC Classics Piano Competition. Featuring local and international, young and established artistes, the HSBC Classics Piano Festival looks set to move classical music development in Malaysia forward. Designed to continue raising



the bar for young pianists, July will see the contestants compete in the semi-final and final legs of the competition. *July 7 to 13 @ Pentas 1, Pentas 2 & IndiChine*

**THE ALL-AMERICAN BOYS CHORUS** The All-American Boys Chorus has performed to standing ovations all over the world. The Chorus's most recent overseas concert tour, extending nearly a month during summer 2005, saw them performing in Singapore,



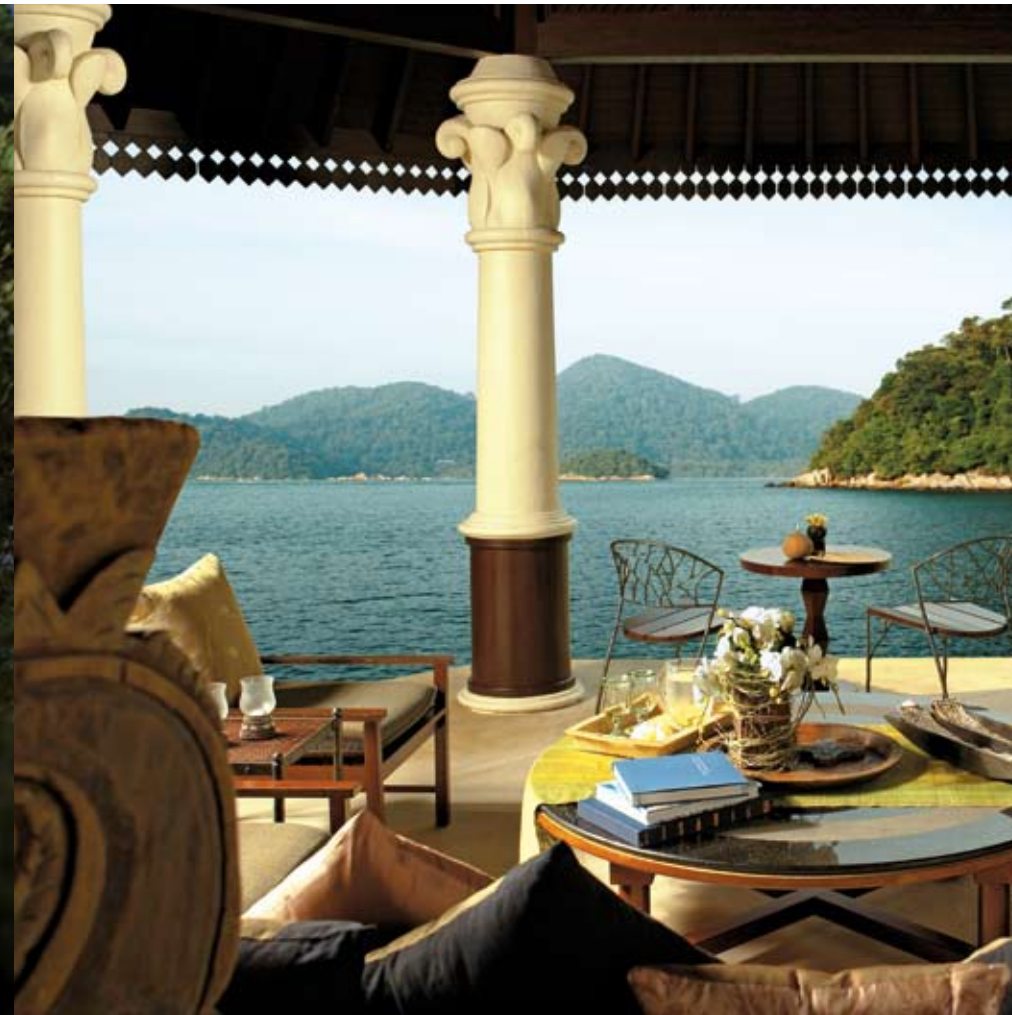
Korea, China and Japan. Factor in 40 previous concert tours to various provinces of Canada and the U.S., and it's clear that members of The All-American Boys Chorus are true musical ambassadors. *July 18-20 @ Pentas 1*

**THE EDGE** Directed by KLPac's Director-in-Residence and chief facilitator of T4YP (Theatre For Young People), Chris Ling, The Edge is a new musical by Nick Choo about six characters whose lives are inextricably entwined with that of a man who has just committed suicide. The six question their involvement, if any, in the running up to the man's suicide, and what they may have done to prevent it. A workshop performance in KLPac's IndiCine, The Edge promises a fresh new work with fresh new talents. *July 23-27 @ IndiChine*

KLPac @ Sentul Park, Jln Strachan (off Jln Ipoh), +603-4047 9000 (Box Office) or +603-2094 9400 (The Actors Studio @ Bangsar Shopping Centre); more info at [www.klpac.com](http://www.klpac.com)



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



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

**Intimate Experiences**

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

**Emerald Bay**

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

**Rainforest Revelations**

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

**Privileged Tranquillity**

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

**Integrated into the Environment**

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

**Sterling Service**

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





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



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



**The World's Most Innovative Spa**

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' treatments.

**Diving off a secluded Island**

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

**A Unique Cooking School**

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

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



**Following the Path**

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

**Meditate upon the Stars**

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

**Cuisine Designed to Rejuvenate**

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

**The Peranakan Spa**

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

**Dining Sensations**

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

**A Haven of History**

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

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





YTL's multiple award-winning Spa Village brand has developed an international reputation within the luxury spa market and grown from strength to strength over the years. Besides the original Spa Village Pangkor Laut, there are now five other Spa Villages – Spa Village Kuala Lumpur, Spa Village Tanjung Jara, Spa Village Cameron Highlands and 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](http://www.spavillage.com)



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

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

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

**Spa Village Tanjung Jara**  
The new 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.





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



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



#### Starhill Gallery

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

#### Feast Village

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

#### The Ritz-Carlton Residences

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

#### The Carlton Conference Centre

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





# ROCK AND ROLL SHEIKH

OUR RESIDENT JETSETTER DOES DUBAI

BY LADY CRISTAL CHAMPERS

St Tropez, Monaco, Bahamas, Barbados. Been there, done that, have the designer T-shirts. The new playground for the rich and famous is now Dubai. The Millionaires' Wives (MW) or Gold Diggers (GD) are bored with yesterday's paradises and London, New York and Paris are so passé, darling. Today, romantic deserts with shimmering sand and Arab sheikhs in splendid white robes riding on Arabian stallions like a mirage among the rippling dunes is the place to go to flex their husband's credit cards and top up that tan.

Lady Prunella and I were invited by our friend Estelle to stay at her palatial home in Dubai, a home so large that she doesn't even know where her kitchen is since everything is brought to her by her servants. She has bagged herself an Arab billionaire whom she nicknamed "Sheikh Rock and Roll". The story goes that when she was first introduced to him in a London nightclub, amid the cacophony of rock music, she had shrieked, "Oh cool! Let's shake, rock and roll."

Rumour also has it that when an Indian tycoon once asked her if she had been to the Taj Mahal, she'd replied "Yes, many times. The chicken masala there is very nice." So ok, there is an Indian restaurant by that name in London. Then at another high society soiree, a Russian Countess, into eastern mysticism enquired if she was also into Feng Shui. Estelle declared, "I tried it once but I am not keen on all that raw fish and that green hot stuff." Ahh, bless.

Thankfully though, what she lacks in brains, Estelle makes up for with her beauty and a great body, albeit surgically enhanced. Her tastes are very nouveau riche though as she blings herself from head to toe with diamonds and she has a penchant for very revealing outfits, just the way her 'Arabian knight' likes it. She has been mistaken for a high class hooker many a time.

In reality, Dubai is a city on steroids developing at breakneck speed. It is one big building site. But you don't get the smell of the sea or the sand; instead, there is only the whiff of money in the air. One of Estelle's favourite haunts is the Burj Al Arab, that seven-star luxury hotel in the shape of a sailing ship. It houses a shopping mall laden with designer goods; almost like an upscale Aladdin's cave where Estelle and the army of visiting MWs can be found repeating the phrase "Charge it!" over and over again. But if you think that being a millionaire's

wife is a fairytale come true, think again. It is a life in perpetual motion of jet-setting in private planes, plastic surgery, botox and having to be seen in all the right places with the right people. It is also a contrasting life of material security but emotional insecurity, with the constant fear of being traded in for a younger more beautiful thing a fearful reality.

Pru has heard rumours that her husband is eyeing a gorgeous young Russian model, young enough to be their daughter. Her husband is notoriously well-known for his groping hands, hence his nickname 'The Octopus'. Pru feels threatened but not beaten. When the going gets tough, the tough goes shopping. Pru has bought half of Dubai and even picks up an Italian toyboy modelling at one of the fashion shows in the mall. Seething with anger at her husband, she thinks two can play the game. She invites her newfound toyboy to spend a few days in her holiday villa in Marbella but he says he will join her only if he can bring his boyfriend along! Poor dear, that's the story of her life: right place, wrong man. ■



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