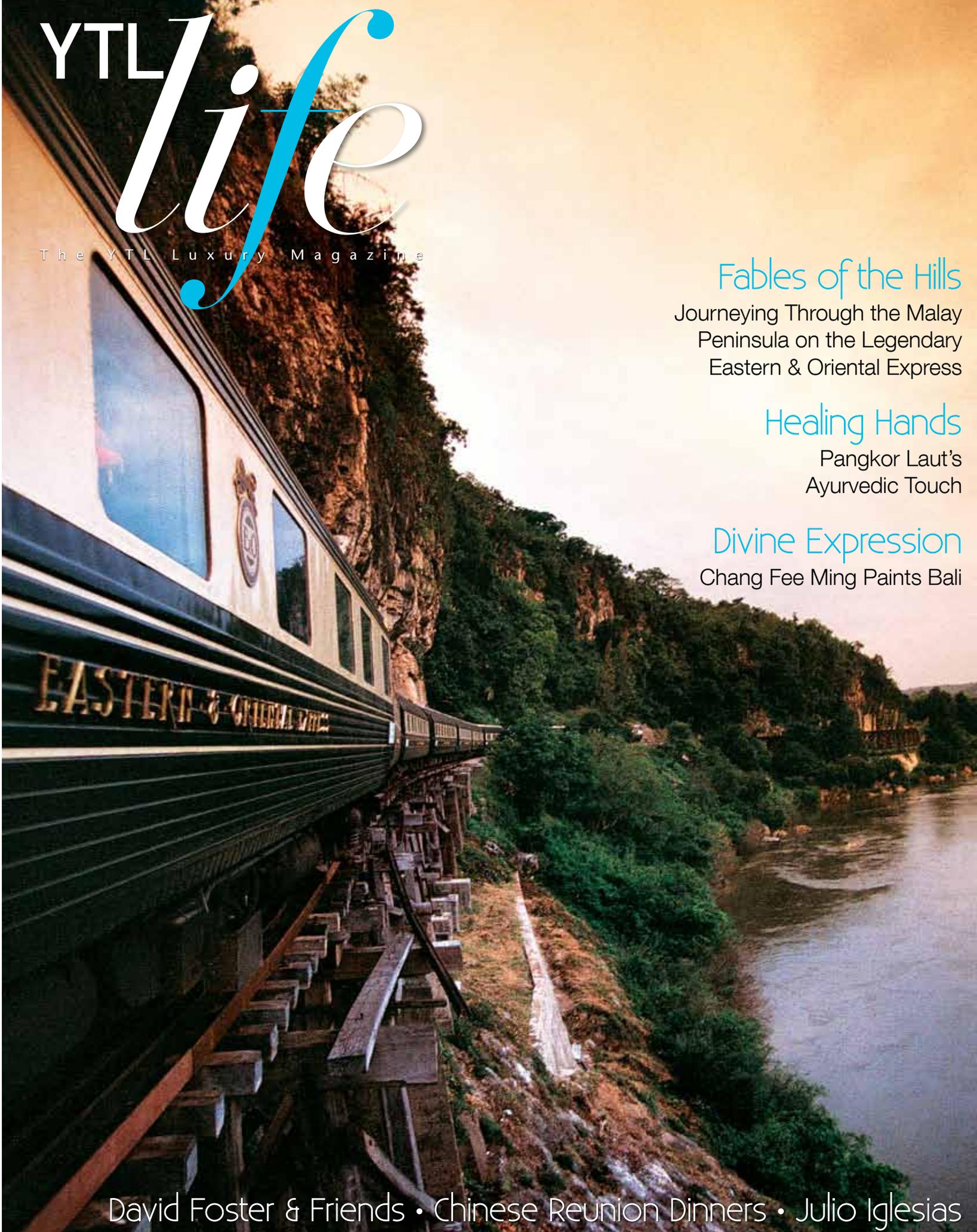


YTL *life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine



Fables of the Hills

Journeying Through the Malay Peninsula on the Legendary Eastern & Oriental Express

Healing Hands

Pangkor Laut's Ayurvedic Touch

Divine Expression

Chang Fee Ming Paints Bali

David Foster & Friends • Chinese Reunion Dinners • Julio Iglesias

FeastVillage

at STARHILL GALLERY

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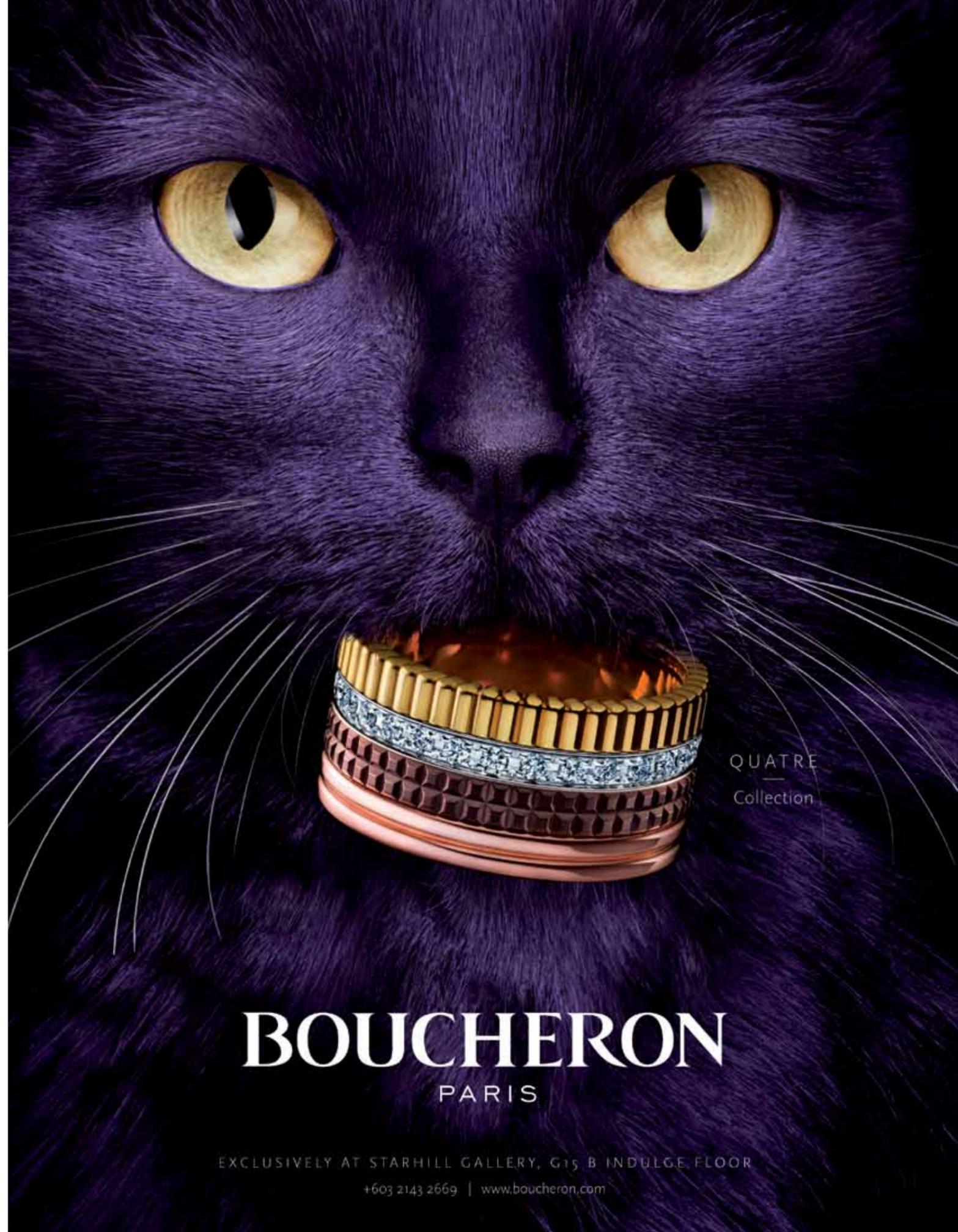
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A Note from Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh

The spectacular Starhill Gallery was relaunched recently by His Majesty The King of Malaysia in the company of legendary Grammy-award winner Julio Iglesias. The iconic new facade transforms the thriving landscape of Bintang Walk with an architectural masterpiece that symbolises the worldwide appeal of this "Gallery of Rich Experiences" and its contribution to Kuala Lumpur's transformation as a world-class city and shopping destination. Starhill Gallery today is the ultimate statement of taste and style in food, fashion, living, beauty and art; recognised all over the world as one of the most prestigious malls in Asia. We welcome you to come and discover your own rich experiences soon.

Julio Iglesias then performed at the YTL Concert of Celebration in Bukit Bintang, with an audience of 100,000 in attendance. The free open-air performance is the fourth of a series of international concerts. This is our way of giving back to the city and the people of Kuala Lumpur, both of which had so readily embraced and welcomed the Bukit Bintang rejuvenation project when it was initiated in 1999.

We also recently witnessed the launch of Shook! Shanghai and the Swatch Art Peace Hotel Residences, two projects in China of which we are especially proud. With the former's opening, we introduced Shook!'s lauded brand of east-meets-international cuisine abroad; while the latter marks our enduring friendship and collaboration with Switzerland's Swatch Group.

Amongst many other exciting future developments at YTL Hotels, we will soon see the unveiling of our brand new luxury property, Gaya Island Resort, located in a private enclave in Borneo. In all our properties and endeavours, we strive to tread lightly on the environment. We will continue to make every effort to create properties that meld seamlessly into their surroundings. By doing so, we hope that our guests have opportunities to enjoy nature's bounties in pristine and verdant environments – a rarity in today's fast-developing world.

Our aim at YTL Hotels has always been not just about offering treasured experiences for the present generation, but also for generations that follow. With that, we hope that your stays at our properties are fondly remembered, and always treasured.



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

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Honours in Time

The Watch of the Year Awards held at Starhill Gallery in December 2011 represented a glittering finale for Starhill Gallery's annual A Journey Through Time. Among the guests in attendance were not only watch aficionados but also many of the region's leading corporate personalities including members of Forbes Asia Billionaire list. And, as part of the evening's entertainment, Malaysia's perennial jazz queen Dato' Sheila Majid regaled the audience with songs from her illustrious career.

1. Dato' Jimmy Choo, Dato' Yeoh Soo Min, Datuk Dr Victor Wee, Tan Sri Yeoh Tiong Lay and Tan Sri Francis Yeoh. 2. Sabah and Antoine Bakache. 3. Tay Liam Khoon and Tanny Tay. 4. Hans Isaac, Dato' Yasmin Yusuff and Amarjit Chhina. 5. Franc Vila, Dolly Cheong, Dr Bernard Cheong and Frank Low.



3



8



9

6. Malaysian singing legend Dato' Sheila Majid. 7. Joseph Yeoh and Daniel Khoo of The Hour Glass. 8. Anissa Ferdjoui and Thierry Gasquez, President of Passion Horlogere Paris. 9. Datin Angie Ernam of Van Cleef & Arpels takes home Tourism Malaysia's Most Revered Watch Award for its Extraordinary Dial Lady Arpels African Landscape Series timepiece. 10. The judges and winners of A Journey Through Time V's celebrated watch awards.



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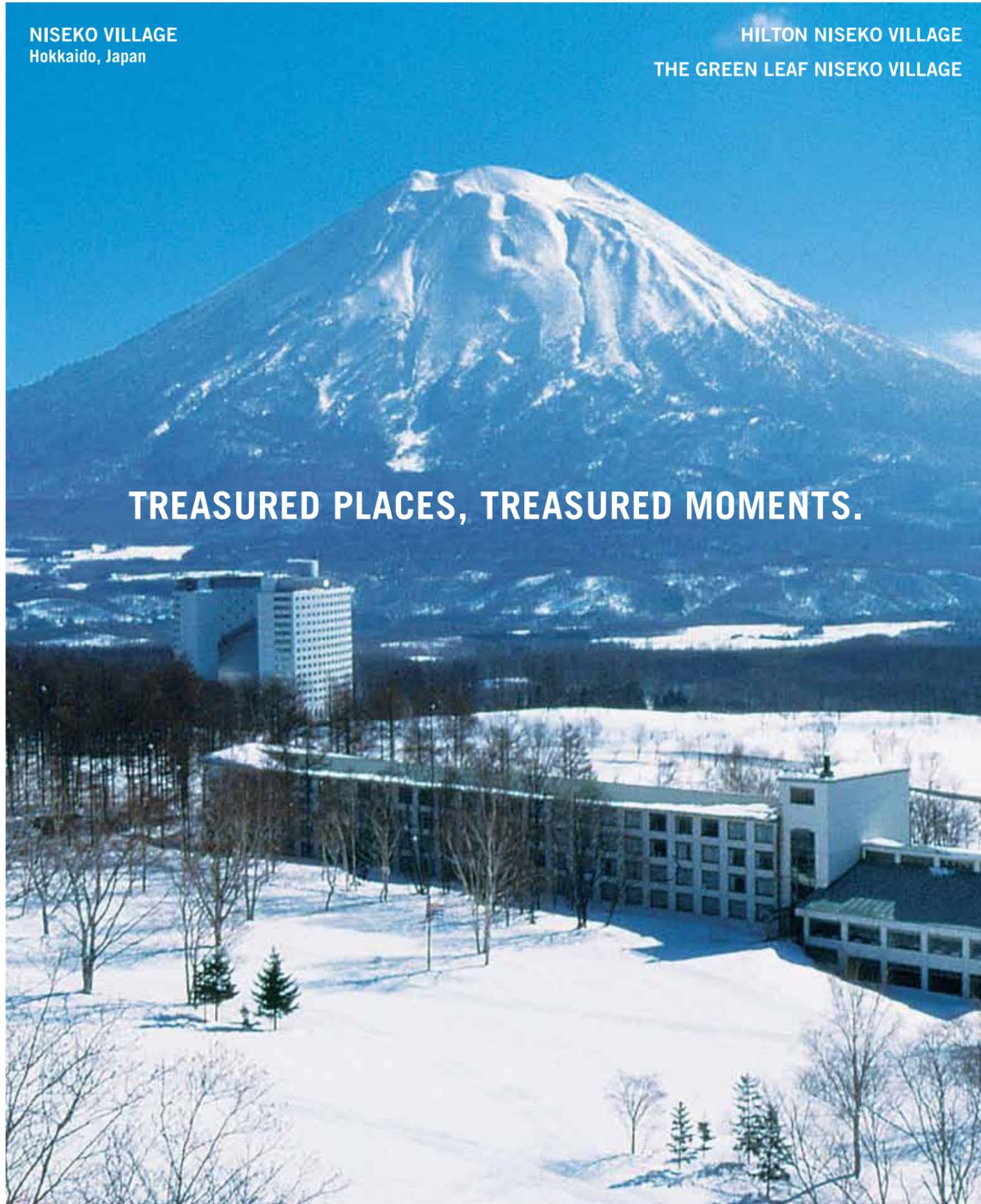


10

NISEKO VILLAGE
Hokkaido, Japan

HILTON NISEKO VILLAGE
THE GREEN LEAF NISEKO VILLAGE

TREASURED PLACES, TREASURED MOMENTS.



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1

David Foster and friends live in Kuala Lumpur

The Grammy-award producer along with his coterie of international stars converges at the hip Kuala Lumpur nightspot, Rootz.

Canadian composer, songwriter, producer, singer and musician, David Foster together with singer Michael Bolton and British tenor Russell Watson was spotted at one of Kuala Lumpur's most popular nightspots, Rootz - the after-party location for the David Foster & Friends Live in Asia Tour 2011 concert.

Yeoh. One of the highlights of the David Foster & Friends concert was David Foster's honourable mention to Tan Sri Francis Yeoh who went on to say: "I've heard that David has a big heart from many superstars and I truly think he has the biggest heart I have ever come across. He has a heart of gold... no, platinum! He is so raw and genuine with not a single ounce of plastic. I'm really privileged to be his friend," he said.

The trio were hosted by YTL Corporation Berhad's Managing Director, Tan Sri (Dr) Francis

1. Michael Bolton, David Foster, Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh and Russell Watson. 2. Michael Bolton and Arianna Teoh. 3. Ashanti. 4. David Foster and Cleo Tan. 5. Earth, Wind and Fire's Philip Bailey. 6. Yeoh Keong Hann, Michael Bolton and Joseph Yeoh. 7. Russell Watson.



3



4



5



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7



6



life events //

1

Concert of Celebration

His Majesty The King Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin and Her Majesty The Queen Sultanah Nur Zahirah recently officiated the relaunch of Kuala Lumpur's iconic Starhill Gallery. Later that evening, Grammy Award-winner Julio Iglesias was the star at the fourth YTL Concert of Celebration, heralding the rebirth of Starhill Gallery with its new futuristic glass and steel facade created by international design consultancy Sparch. An audience of 100,000 was in attendance at the complimentary open-air concert on the Bukit Bintang street where the legendary Iglesias amazed the crowd with renditions of his classic hits.

1. Starhill Gallery by night. 2. His Majesty The King Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin and Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Yeoh Tiong Lay. 3. Julio Iglesias, Tan Sri Dato' (Dr) Francis Yeoh, His Majesty Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin and Her Majesty The Queen Sultanah Nur Zahirah. 4. Julio Iglesias.



2



4



3



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Looking Sharp

The opening of the Leo boutique, a men's multi-brand designer store at the Starhill Gallery, Kuala Lumpur combined thrilling entertainment and fabulous company. The exclusive event featured a guest list of the city's movers and shakers.

1. Joseph Yeoh, Tan Sri Francis Yeoh, Ida Lokman and Eric Eoon 2. Lilly Low and Maureen Teoh 3. Dato' Sheikh Jamal and Charmaine Lim. 4. Nilou de Luca Gabrielli, and HE Folco de Luca Gabrielli, Ambassador of Italy.



Visionary Pursuits

YTL Hotels invited members of the media and associates to the book launch of Journey to Tembok, by Malaysia's foremost watercolourist Chang Fee Ming. The tome showcases original artworks that draw attention to the picturesque area in and around the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali.

1. Chik Lai Ping, James McBride and Wati Sharron Hopley. 2. Manfred Kurz, Laurent Myter, Cheryl Loo and Andreas Grosskinsky. 3. Lisa Teo and Chang Fee Ming 4. Guests mingling at the launch and media appreciation evening.



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YTL's newest events, attractions and not-to-be-missed experiences.



01

All Natural

The latest additions to the spa menu at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali centre on the island's herbal healing traditions. Utilising plant ingredients and the wisdom of ages past, amazingly restorative treatments like the Chocolate and Coffee Indulgence captivates the senses and nurture the body. This signature treatment comprises a body scrub of freshly crushed coffee and cocoa beans, a cocoa and aloe vera mask, and is completed with a vanilla bean and coconut massage. Then, there's the Massage Under the Stars, a sensory starlit beach-side experience that calls upon the powers of herbal oils to release stored tension in specific body areas.

02

It's an Honour

At the recent Hospitality Asia Platinum Awards 2011-2013 (HAPA), the acclaimed Pangkor Laut Resort was named the 'Resort of the Year in Asia'. It was further mentioned in the service excellence, spa of the year, signature luxury resort, signature spa experience, most authentic Asian cuisine restaurant for The Straits, best front office, best concierge and best housekeeping classifications. A gold excellence mention in the signature luxury resort category was given to the East Coast gem Tanjong Jara Resort; while the luxury getaway Cameron Highlands Resort obtained a similar accolade in the signature boutique hotel/resort category.

03

Walk to the Past

A must do activity at the acclaimed Cameron Highlands Resort is the Jim Thompson Mystery Trail. The Thai silk magnate's mysterious disappearance took place 45 years ago on March 26. Steeped in intrigue, this headline-making mystery is remembered on a special trek into the countryside and adjacent jungle. The trail includes a venture into Moonlight Cottage, the location where Thompson was last seen. It later progresses into the deeper recesses of greenery that continue to echo with unanswered questions and lingering vestiges of nostalgia.



04

By Invitation Only

Yet another feather in an already well-plumed cap of accolades for the world-renowned Pangkor Laut Resort is its recent entry to the Virtuoso luxury travel network. Spanning a selection of insider luxury destinations across the globe, Virtuoso is the go-to source for travellers seeking bespoke getaway holidays. Their team of expert travel advisors endeavours to fulfil the exacting requirements of their clients, and is equipped to present unparalleled access to the ultimate properties in hot spots around the world.

05

Winter at Niseko Village

Among the action-packed winter activities available at Japan's Niseko Village are cat skiing, snowmobile adventure, cross-country ski, guided snowshoe tours, reindeer sledging and snow rafting. Those with families in tow will find the Snow Park featuring The Snow Caverns, the brainchild of renowned installation artist Hirohiko Takenaka, a compelling draw. Here, artful interconnected dome caverns provide the ideal terrain for exploration; while at night, the attraction is illuminated from within, and emanates an out-of-this world glow.

06

Sunset Dining

The postcard perfect setting of Emerald Bay at the award-winning Pangkor Laut Resort in Malaysia is just the location for a romantic dinner under the moonlight. The resort's expert chefs have devised a memorable menu featuring an international menu prepared with Asian flair. Dining couples are attended to by personal butlers, ensuring the experience is destined to be treasured.

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

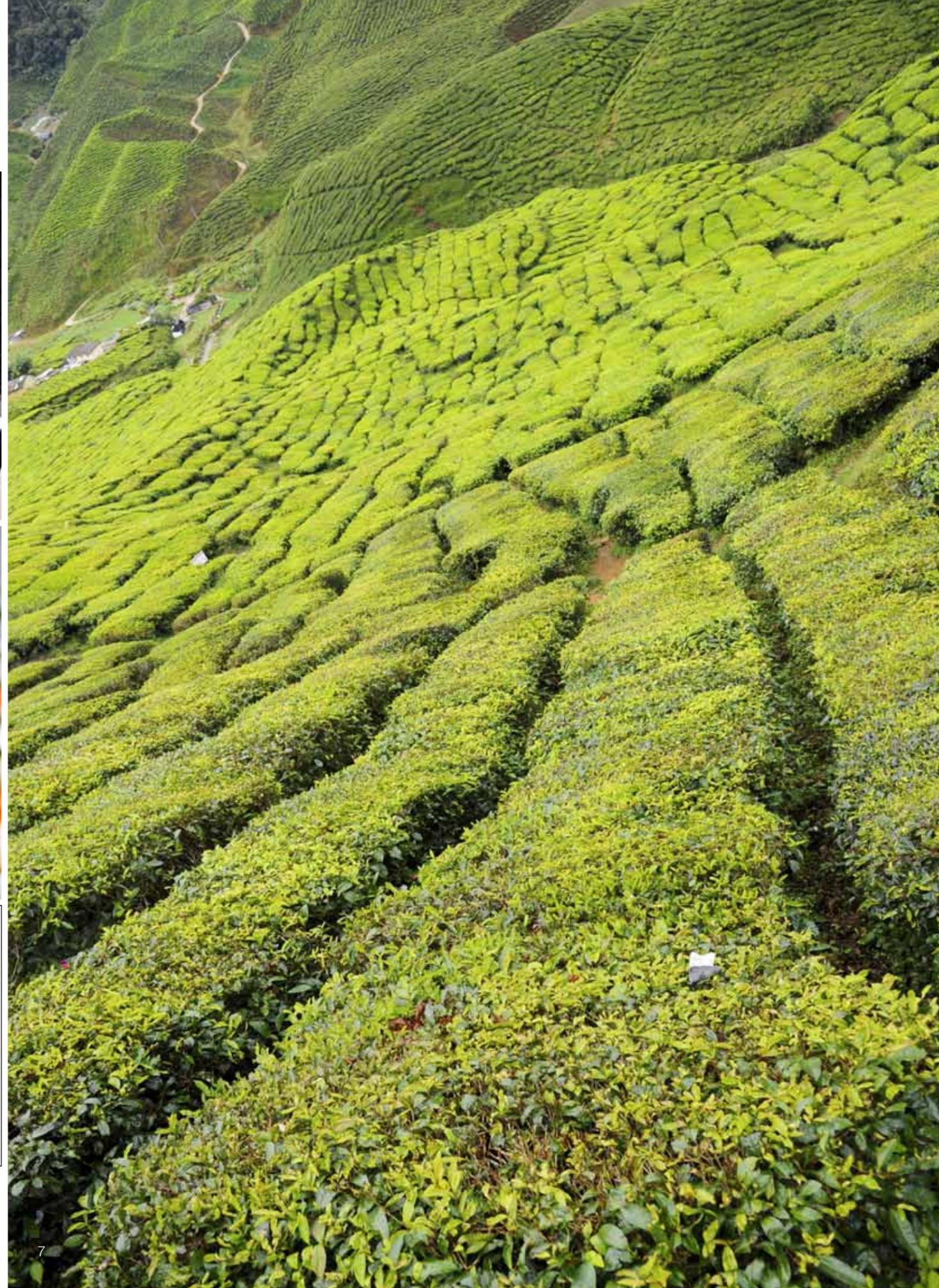


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6

FABLES OF THE HILLS – An Overview
 Day 1: Depart from Singapore.
 Day 2: Arrive in Kuala Lumpur, overnight in Cameron Highlands.
 Day 3 : Explore Cameron Highlands and Kellie's Castle.
 Day 4 : Visit Kuala Kangsar and Penang.
 Day 5 : Cross-over into Thailand and visit Surat Thani.
 Day 6 : Explore the River Kwai area and the scenic stretch along the Tham Kasae Viaduct.
 Day 7 : Arrive in Bangkok.



7

- 5. The elegant 'green train'.
- 6. Chef Yannis Martineau ensures every morsel served on board the train is a sophisticated mouthful.
- 7. Verdant tea plantations are a signature of Cameron Highlands, one of Malaysia's most popular hill stations.
- 8. Guests spent the second night of the Fables of the Hills journey at the Cameron Highlands Resort in Malaysia.

copious flutes of Laurent-Perrier, it was certainly a little tricky manoeuvring one's way back to the cabins, given the train's constant swaying and swaying, but it was wonderful being able to retire to the lavishly-appointed cabin, which, by now, has been transformed into an elegant little sleeper by Khun Weenus, my dedicated 24-hour cabin steward.

From City To Hill Station

We awoke to find the train already settled and waiting at the old Kuala Lumpur Railway Station – a Moorish edifice, designed by famed colonial architect, AB Hubback and completed in 1910. As we stepped off the train, we were delighted to be given a truly rousing welcome, courtesy of two playful lions and the entire musical ensemble of traditional Chinese drums, cymbals and gongs, from a local lion dance troupe. We were then divided into groups, according to our pre-selected excursions. I chose a walking tour of old Kuala Lumpur and explored a trail that led from Dataran Merdeka (Independence Square) to the beautiful Masjid Jamek mosque as well as the Sin Sze Si Ya temple, founded by the most famous Kapitan Cina, Yap Ah Loy, before finishing at a traditional pre-war *kopitiam* (coffee shop) for local-style elevenses, consisting of hot coffee and toast with *kaya* (coconut jam). I loved how

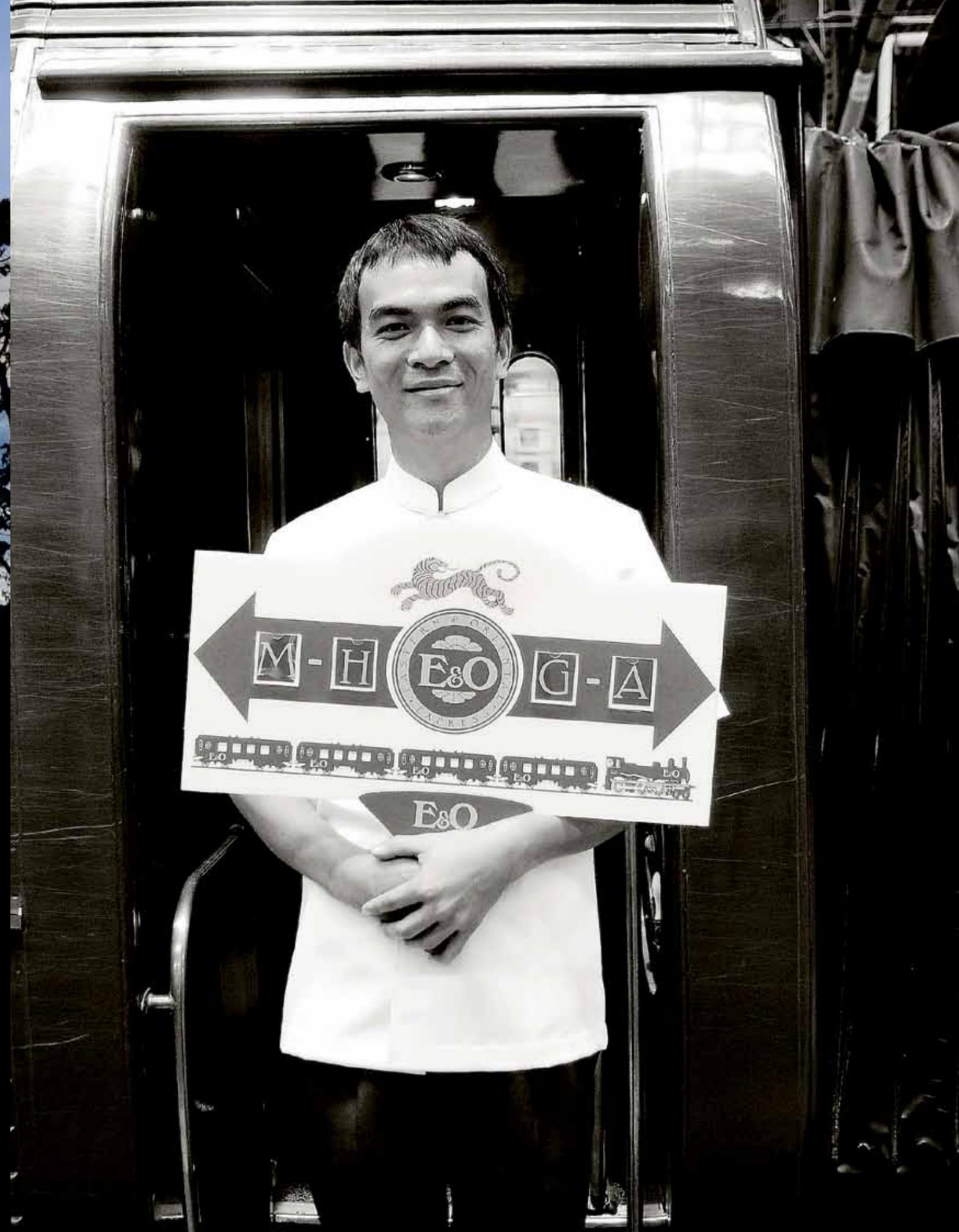


8

A FABLED JOURNEY

Last year, the legendary Eastern & Oriental Express launched its Fables of the Hills land voyage, a journey that takes guests on an enlightening trip from Singapore, all the way up through the Malay Peninsula, to Bangkok. *Diana Khoo* embarks on the rail experience of a lifetime.

Photography by Sharon Lam





“Moonlight Cottage was the last spot Thai silk magnate Jim Thompson was last seen alive.”



1. Sunset view from Moonlight Cottage, Cameron Highlands, Malaysia. 2. Khun Chuchak Phipookiew directs guests to their carriages. 3. Champagne and canapes prepared by the Cameron Highlands Resort team. 4. The E&O's resident pianist, Peter Consigliere, ensures the nights end on a rousing note.

“Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.” I've always loved this thought, inspired by the great American poet and essayist, Ralph Waldo Emerson, on how we can either add to or diminish our surroundings, simply by choosing to be who we are. But, on a lighter note, I have since discovered that we *can* travel, discover and carry the beautiful with us – by journeying on the legendary Eastern & Oriental Express.

The Journey Begins

Evoking all the glamour and exoticism that wouldn't seem out of place in an Agatha Christie novel, it is certainly true that, in Miss Christie's own words, “to travel by train is to see nature and human beings, towns and rivers; in fact, to see life”. For those unfamiliar with the charms of the Orient-Express, do know that once you are in your cabins on board these legendary trains, it's all about being enveloped in old world elegance – think panels of intricately-inlaid

cherry wood and elm burr, all adorned with decorative marquetry. It's certainly thrilling to hear the sound of the station master's whistle as, after a few chugs and jerks, the long-awaited journey begins. Each cabin is thoughtfully fitted with large picture windows, allowing scenes of idyllic countryside life to pour through. Trundle past temples, dedicated to Indian and Chinese gods, as well as traditional kampongs, plantations of rubber and oil palm trees as well as open fields of long grass, punctuated by clumps of elephant ears.

Certainly, for a service that's been running the tracks for the past 18 years (the Eastern & Oriental Express, or 'E&O', began operations in September 1993 and was the first train to transport passengers directly between Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, in collaboration with Malaysian and Thai railway authorities), the sight of the elegant 'green train' still brings rural children running to greet it as well as

put smiles on the faces of townsfolk and villagers whenever it stops at a certain point. The Fables of the Hills journey began in January 2011, with its second chapter taking place recently in October. The Eastern & Oriental Express' land voyages are generally limited to just four a year, with each trip accommodating no more than 60 passengers, while no less than 40 staff will be on board at all times to ensure guests are pampered and looked after in the train's legendary style. Each day is also complemented by a host of interesting activities, including off-train experiences, unique excursions and accompanying guest lecturers at specific legs of the trip, to ensure each guest stops, sees and gets introduced to the heart and soul of the journey's elements.

The 7 day/6 night Fables of the Hills journey really begins when the sun sets and the champagne corks start popping. A welcome cocktail is traditionally held to introduce guests to each other. For those familiar with the English gentry's way of entertaining, an E&O land voyage could well be likened to a house party at a stately home... albeit on wheels. The resident chef, Yannis Martineau, conjures up Michelin-worthy meals, despite working out of a tiny kitchen that constantly rattles and, occasionally, bumps.

Eating onboard the E&O is definitely an occasion and most nights see the international assembly of guests dressing up in grand style. On my recent journey, I met guests from 12 different countries, coming from as far as Uruguay and Mexico, to Colorado and Northumberland. After a sumptuous dinner of a warm scallop and cheese soufflé and braised beef cheeks with *bak kut teh* herbs, not to mention



“Chef Yannis Martineau and team conjure up Michelin star-worthy meals, despite working out of a tiny kitchen galley which constantly shakes, rocks and rattles.”

the guide shared with us interesting little anecdotes, especially on how the Sin Seng Nam coffee shop used to be nicknamed 'The Vatican', as the rubber planter set would often shout out 'Hallelujah' as their cold beers were served. We then returned to the train for lunch as well as to ride on to Tapah, where we would disembark to travel overland to the famous Malaysian hill station of Cameron Highlands.

Named for William Cameron, a British surveyor who mapped out the area in 1885, Cameron Highlands is renowned for its unique ecosystem, cool climate and verdant tea plantations. En route up the winding road that cuts through the highlands and two of its three main towns – Ringlet, Tanah Rata and Brinchang – we stopped by to visit a Senoi settlement, where the headman (known locally as the Tok Batin) demonstrated the fine art of dart-blowing, before proceeding to Tanah Rata, where we were in for a treat. A special marquee had been set up in the pine-studded gardens of Moonlight Cottage – usually off-limits to the general public as it was the bungalow where Jim Thompson, the man credited with reviving the Thai silk industry, thus earning him the nickname 'the Silk King', was last seen, having mysteriously disappeared after going for a walk in 1967. Up until today, conspiracy theories abound regarding Thompson, including being eaten by tigers or assassinated, as he was suspected of being a double-agent. Canapés, sushi and champagne were served to us as we eagerly breathed in the crisp, cool air while taking in the magnificent scenery. The little Tudor-style bungalow remains uninhabited but is opened up on special occasions (this would only be the fourth time since Thompson's disappearance that the house was opened to visitors) for the most special of guests.

9. Looking out into the Malaysian countryside. 10. A little Senoi girl gives a shy smile while travelling from Tapah to Cameron Highlands. 11. A vibrant performance by local drummers welcomed us to the royal town of Kuala



9



10



11

As the sun set, we proceeded to the elegant Cameron Highlands Resort, part of the YTL Group's luxurious portfolio of properties, where we bed down in stillness for the night. Facing the 18-hole Tanah Rata golf course, the resort is a bijou gem,

comprising 56 colonially-appointed rooms and suites. The resort is certainly the ultimate hideaway; hidden amidst swathes of mist and perched on a little hillock, regally surveying the comings and goings of Tanah Rata. There is as much or as little to do here as you wish – from hunting for crimson cargo in one of the numerous strawberry patches around, hiking a rambling jungle trail or nursing a *stengah* (a favourite colonial cocktail comprising a half measure each of whisky and soda served over ice, derived from the Malay word for 'half') at the resort's cosy Highlands Bar. Guests may also choose to go on a variety of complementary excursions, from a visit to the renowned Boh Tea plantations and visitor's centre, to submitting oneself to the sybaritic pleasures of a spa treatment at the Cameron Highlands Resort's award-winning Spa Village, or retracing the steps of the original search party who hunted for Jim Thompson, under the watchful eyes of resident guide and naturalist, S Madi, known to the locals as both the 'Thompson Hunter' as well as the 'Orchid Hunter'. Exceedingly knowledgeable, he is able to point out the many treasures ensconced within the highlands' dense foliage, including bamboo orchids, sinister-looking strangler figs and wild citronella – ideal for keeping leeches and mosquitoes at bay.

Once the day is done, wind down the day with pre-dinner drinks at the bar or, perhaps, the resort's Jim Thompson Tea Room, where resident pianist Stephen Oswald Ooi can be found playing jazzy numbers almost nightly, before moving on to an elegant dinner at The Dining Room or, even, *sukiyaki* and *shabu-shabu* at the resort's Japanese restaurant, Gonbei – simply perfect fodder for the chilly highland nights.

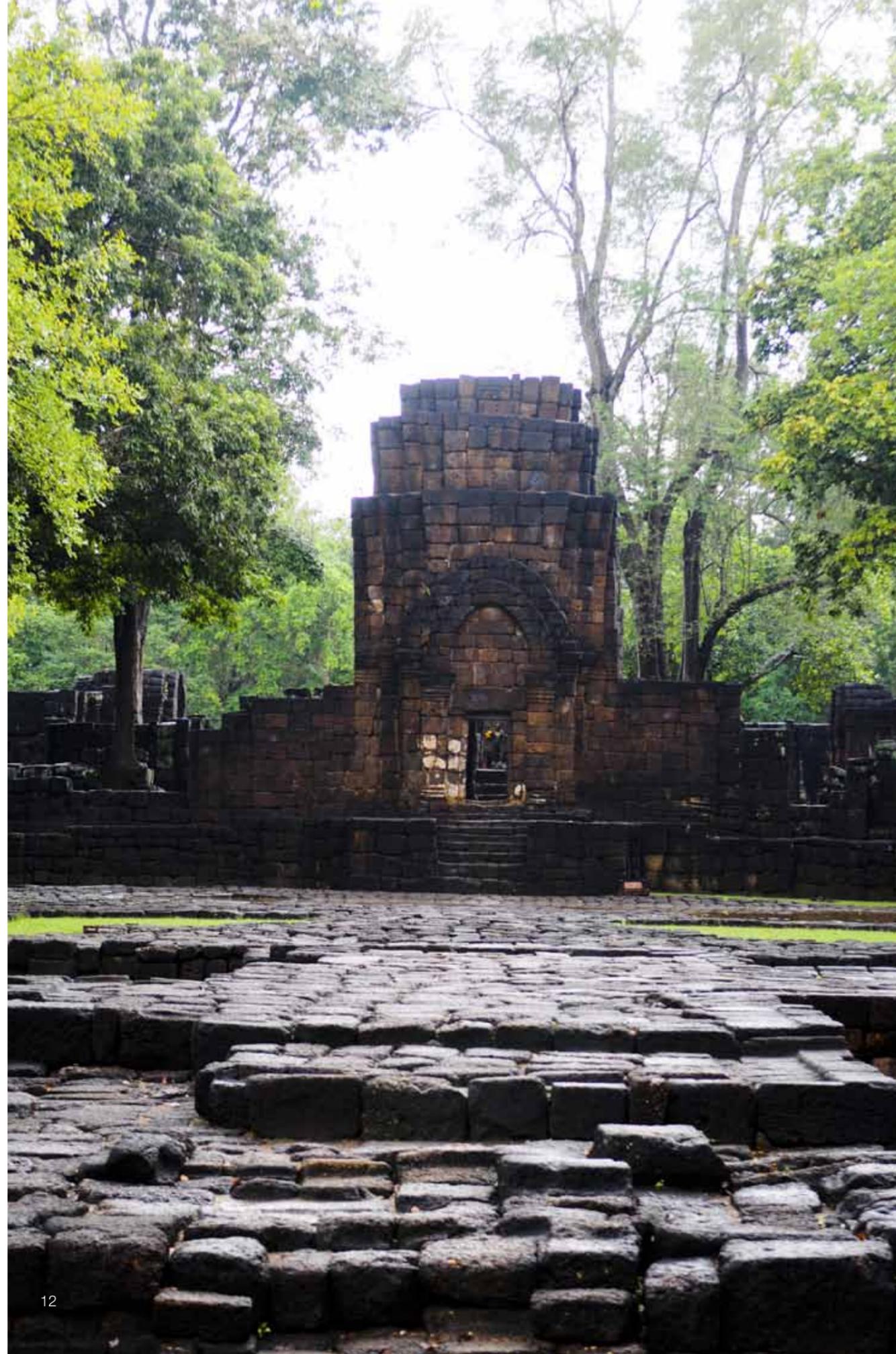
Island Calling

From the highlands, we continued our journey, first by road, to Ipoh, before re-boarding the elegant green train to make our way to the royal town of Kuala Kangsar, where we spent the next day exploring the many regal sights, including the Perak

Royal Museum, the Galeri Sultan Azlan Shah and the majestic Ubudiah Mosque, where the royal mausoleum is also to be found. As a rare treat accorded to guests travelling on the E&O, we were allowed into the mosque's inner sanctum – a beautiful space, furnished with beautiful Persian carpets from Esfahan, upon which the faithful may pray.

From Kuala Kangsar, we travelled further north to reach Butterworth, where we were welcomed by the infectious beats of a Bhangra performance, synonymous with the Punjabi community. And, from there, it was just a short ride across the Penang Bridge to reach the Pearl of the Orient. We arrived on the last night of the nine day-long Festival of the Nine Emperor Gods and there was a distinctly celebratory feel in the air. We immediately proceeded to one of the island's most renowned sights – the magnificently-elaborate and ornamental Leong San Tong (Dragon Mountain Hall) of the Khoo Kongsi, a clan house dedicated to those of the surname 'Khoo' and whose ancestry can be traced back to Sin Kang Seah in China's Hokkien province. From there, we enjoyed a traditional trishaw ride to yet another cultural treasure, the Pinang Peranakan Mansion, which showcases the richness of the Peranakan (or Straits Chinese) culture in a traditional home setting. Here, one can see many interesting exhibits, including a Nyonya bride's *tik koay* (wedding headpiece), *kasut manik* (the beaded slippers so beloved of the Peranakan ladies) and rare porcelain sets.

Penang is, indeed, an island teeming with culture and history. And, we journeyed on in search of the rare and wonderful. After a quick stop for tea at a local Indian restaurant, where constitutions were fortified with sweet tea and piping hot *vadai* (lentil cakes), we continued on by foot to meet the island's last-surviving *songkok* (a traditional head-cap worn by Muslim men in many South-East Asian countries) craftsman as well as a cheerful octogenarian joss stick maker, who has been plying his pure sandalwood offerings to the gods for over six decades now.



12

“As the train crosses over into Thailand, subtle changes can be detected...from the scenery to the cuisine.”



13



14

12. Meung Sing, an ancient Khmer city which dates back to the 13th and 14th centuries. 13. A puppeteer surprises and delights guests during dinner on board the train. 14. A pig-tailed macaque undergoing training at the Monkey Training College in Surat Thani, Thailand.

15. A mahout and his charge at the Maha Muang Singh elephant village in Kanchanaburi.



15

Sauntering Into Siam

After a sumptuous dinner on the island, we returned to Butterworth where we would spend the night on board the train, deep in blissful slumber, even as we crossed the border at Padang Besar into Thailand. The wonderful part about travelling in such a privileged way was that one needn't worry about stumbling out, bleary-eyed, to settle immigration procedures. Your cabin steward would have efficiently seen to everything, dutifully returning your passport and other travel documents to you by the time you awake, along with your breakfast of choice.

Although the idea of spending an entire week on a train might seem unbearably long to most people, there is, in fact, always something to do. The staff of the E&O ensure guests are constantly being pampered, enriched and enlightened. There would, for example, be a talk given by a guest lecturer on board prior to arriving at a historical place of interest or, perhaps, a tutored tasting of luscious tropical fruit. For those who've spent the past few days thoroughly exploring, foot massages may be enjoyed in the Library during the Thai leg (pardon the pun) of the journey. And, though there isn't a gym onboard, those wishing to burn off some calories would find it adequate exercise enough, walking the length of the train, which can stretch to half a kilometre if running on 22 carriages.

As we crossed over into Thailand, Chef Yannis expertly tweaks the menus, ensuring there is now a taste of Thailand in every meal – a subtle but palpable difference as compared to the Malaysian-influenced flavours we've been enjoying. And, certainly, each meal on board the train

is a culinary *chef d'oeuvre*. From classic French creations like lobster medallions with crispy bacon atop a mushroom velouté to contemporary interpretations on South-East Asian cuisine (think rack of lamb marinated with tandoori spices and crab salad with curried dressing), it's not uncommon to bump into a steady stream of your fellow passengers walking from Carriage A all the way to the observation car at the other end in order to work off the sheer lavishness of the meals.

We pulled up into Surat Thani station on the afternoon of the fifth day and we were taken to visit the province's very first Monkey Training College. Monkeys have been used to harvest coconuts in the province for over a hundred years now, but this particular college is renowned for its gentle yet highly-effective ways in training their 'students' – usually pig-tailed macaques. Run by Somchai Saekow, the school prides itself on the quality of its 'graduates', all of whom eventually become highly sought-

after employees at Surat Thani's numerous coconut plantations. As it is the second last night of the journey, dinners on board the train become increasingly formal (as well as fun, seeing most of the passengers are, by now, well-acquainted with each other) and guests are duly encouraged to display some glamour. Certainly, most nights end up with a lengthy sing-along session, fuelled by champagne and accompanied by Peter Consigliere, the train's pianist, whose repertoire has to be heard to be believed.

Crossing The Bridge

One of the highlights of the Fables of the Hills journey would, undoubtedly, be the crossing over the historical River Kwai Bridge in Kanchanaburi. Here, guest speaker and one of the founders of the Thailand-Burma Railway Museum, Hugh Cope, shared with us his personal insights into the war and the infamous Death Railway. From here, we travel to Wang Po, where we visit Meung Sing, an ancient Khmer city dating back to

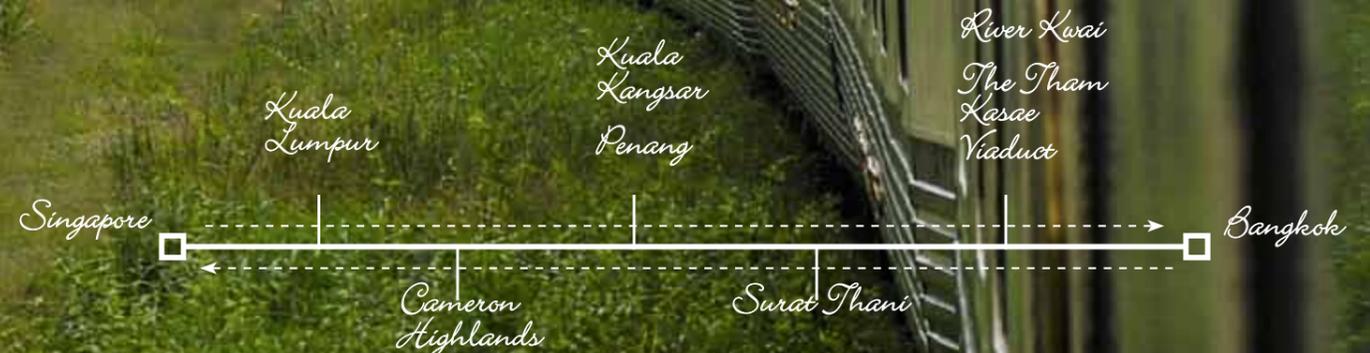
the 13th and 14th centuries, as well as to an elephant camp for an exhilarating ride atop a pachyderm. As we return to the train for the last night of the journey, it comes as a sudden surprise that we've come to the end of a trail of enlightenment and utter, unbridled enjoyment that spanned over 2,000 kilometres, from Singapore, right up the spine of Malaysia, and, finally, into Thailand.

It was quite fitting that the skies were overcast and gloomy as we approached Krung Thep Maha Nakhon, or the 'City of Angels', as many like to refer to the bustling metropolis that is modern-day Bangkok. Certainly, as we pulled into the historic Hualampong Station and disembarked to find the entire crew lined-up in order to

bid us farewell, it was hard to ignore the sudden distinct sadness and heaviness of heart.

In this day and age of high-speed and instant gratification, it is a great luxury to be able to enjoy the journey as much as the destination; which brings me back to Emerson's great saying on how, when we travel, we must carry what we find beautiful with us, lest we find it not. Having travelled and ridden on the wave of the Eastern & Oriental Express' inimitable brand of luxury, hospitality and graciousness, I'd like to think it was I, instead, who was being carried all these days. ▣

For more information on the Eastern & Oriental express or to book your next journey, visit www.orient-express.com or email oereservations.singapore@orient-express.com





Auspicious Dining

With the Year of the Water Dragon fast approaching, YTL *Life* explores the various dishes and ingredients rich in symbolism that are served at the all-important reunion dinner feast.

Text by **Cheryl Ow** Photography by **Yong Keen Keong**

The origins of Chinese New Year are steeped in mythology and legend, but the most commonly accepted belief centres around a ferocious beast called Nian. The carnivorous terror was said to have the head of a lion and the body of an elephant.

Come winter, food would be in short supply for Nian as many animals leave the forest for their annual hibernation. So, Nian would ravage nearby villages in search of sustenance, killing all who stood in its path. Nian was a strong beast, forcing villagers to cower inside their homes every night.

One night, however, a child dressed in red ran across Nian's path and managed to scare it away. Baffled but bemused, the villagers realised that the beast was afraid of the colour red and of fire and loud noises. Emboldened by this newfound knowledge, they hung red lanterns and red spring scrolls on their doors and windows, and lit fires in front of their houses. As Nian approached, the crowd began knocking vociferously on their metal kitchen and farming utensils and stuck bamboo into the fire, conjuring loud cracking sounds. Nian retreated into the forest and was later said to have been captured by the Taoist monk, Hongjun Laozu.



Opposite page: Li Yen's sumptuous interiors; this page: goji berry or kei chee represents good fortune; the traditional art of taking tea.



Above: The decorous Shanghai restaurant is the perfect venue to rekindle familial bonds.

As people celebrated their freedom, the day felt like an auspicious beginning following hard times. They called this day *Guo Nian* (or passing Nian) – the day before starting anew. The origins of the Chinese New Year eve reunion dinner, though, are not as clear. One can only assume that, given the size of China, it was a call for the return of family members from around the land to reunite for the festive season.

The dinner, also known as *wei lu* or *tuan yuan*, translates to mean 'surrounding the stove' and was coined from what is the highlight of the feast – a hot pot or steamboat. A huge metal bowl, with a hollow tube in the centre, filled with soup and boiled with meats, seafood and vegetables. Hot rocks or burning charcoal were used to cook the food and, as this archaic method would take hours, dinner was an opportune time to

rekindle family ties around a hot stove brimming with heart-warming fare.

In modern times, however, before any Chinese New Year meal can commence, the *yee sang*, also known as *lo hei*, or prosperity toss, must officiate the occasion. Made of vegetables, crunchy preserved biscuits and topped with raw fish or seafood and a honey-lemon sauce, the idea is to mix the ingredients, lifting them high into the air with chopsticks while shouting your New Year wishes.

The dish is believed to have come from Chaozhou and Shantou in China, but today's version was popularised by Singapore's Lai Wah Restaurant during the Lunar New Year of 1964.

Every dish served during the reunion meal holds great significance and symbolism for the year to come. It is a time for indulging in a meal that consists of many opulent dishes, each with auspicious representations associated with longevity, good luck, health, wealth, happiness, career promotions and satisfaction. The idea is to sample every dish on the table to fully reap the benefits in the New Year. Dishes that are chosen are based on either the homophone of its name or its significance to the occasion.

Goji berry (*kei chee*) boiled in soup, for example, are favoured for their colour as red represents good fortune. On the other hand, another popular ingredient to the feast, a black sea moss resembling strands of hair called *fat choy* in Cantonese, has a name that sounds similar to the term for prosperity.

Like the red dates, chicken has no homophonous contributions to the feast but is cooked with the head and feet intact to signify 'completeness' from start to finish.

This time of celebration is also when choice ingredients like abalone, prawns



An exclusive Shanghai creation: fried beancurd foie gras dim sum.



Above: Braised dried oyster with sea moss in brown sauce. Below: Condiments and ingredients for Shanghai's signature yee sang.

and oysters are brought out. While not considered as luxuries today, in ancient times, when even rice was a precious commodity, these were real treats.

Raw or dried, each variant of oyster has its own significance. Served raw, the shelled food signifies abundance and its Chinese name – *sheng hao* – can also mean 'flourishing at its best.' Dry oysters, or *hou see*, mean 'good things'; abalone, or *ba u yu*, can also mean 'guaranteed abundance', while the word for prawns, *ha*, is the sound of laughter and meant to usher in lots of happiness.

In keeping with Chinese culture and its attendant symbolisms, one of the biggest taboos of the occasion is the use of knives, scissors or sharp objects of any kind. This is to avoid severing the family's good fortune for the year and, as a result,

dishes of fish, fowl or foliage are prepared and served in their entirety.

Fish, or *yu*, phonetically sounds like the word for abundance. Usually steamed, the head and tail are kept on the fish and it is intentionally not finished to symbolise continued abundance at the start and end of the New Year. Fish or meat balls portray togetherness and a continuous bond with their circular shapes, a symbol of the reunion that is strictly served in even numbers to bestow 'double happiness' on the family.

Also on the menu are vegetables like green vegetables (*sang choy*), said to ensure everything remains fresh, bamboo shoots, or *xun*, which can also mean 'smooth sailing', and sea cucumber, whose Chinese word literally translates to mean happiness (*hoi sam*).

“The Chinese New Year eve reunion dinner was, essentially, a call for the return of family members from around the land to reunite for the festive season.”

without rice and noodles. Like the fish and chicken, care is usually taken to ensure the noodles are not cut as they are meant to represent longevity. *Lap mei fan*, a rice dish cooked with duck and other waxed meats, rounds off the meal, representing a big family filled with children and grandchildren.

For dessert, the sweet of the season is a sticky rice cake known as *nian gao*. The word *nian* can be pronounced to mean 'year', while *gao* can also mean high. As such, eating the *nian gao* is said to symbolise the 'onward and upward trajectory of one's life in the coming year'.

The entire dining experience lends new meaning to the idea that you are what you eat. But, Chinese New Year is nothing if not a time to enjoy and cherish the happy times and people in our lives ■

Quail eggs and dumplings are used in the meal to represent wealth in the form of gold ingots – the golden yolk of the egg for its colour and the dumpling for its shape. In olden-day China, a coin would be placed in some of the dumplings and it was believed that anyone who bit into it would enjoy a year of great wealth ahead. No reunion dinner would be complete



SEASON OF FEASTING

Celebrating the annual Chinese New Year reunion dinner in opulent locations is a trend that's fast-gaining favour amongst families in Asia. As such, the award-winning Shanghai restaurant at the JW Marriott, Kuala Lumpur proves an excellent choice to hold such an event. The restaurant's Master Chef, Wong Wing Yeuk, has created three exclusive set menus especially for the occasion. Each dinner presentation unveils enticing delights like traditional salmon with jellyfish *yee sang*; hearty double-boiled superior abalone soup with fish maw and chicken; succulent steamed chicken with wolfberries and Chinese herbs in rice wine sauce; as well as tempting black sesame dumplings in walnut cream. Then, there is a Shanghai exclusive – a variation of the *yee sang* dish, accompanied with a delicious savoury and sweet peanut sauce, made by the restaurant's chefs using a recipe unique to the restaurant. For reservations, call 03-2719 8288.

Meanwhile, Master Chef Leung Kwai Hong at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur's Li Yen introduces six special set menus available from 1 December 2011 – 6 February 2012. Amongst the amazing variety of traditional Chinese delicacies served are the restaurant's signature yee sang; piping hot claypot rice with waxed meats and sausages; crispy deep-fried prawns with mayonnaise; delectable braised sliced abalone with dried oyster and sea moss; and wholesome double-boiled assorted nuts and snow fungus in sugar syrup. The set menus, each catering for a table of 10 diners, are priced between RM1,388++ to RM6,088++. For reservations, call 03-2782 9033.

Like Fine Wine

Superstar Julio Iglesias lit up the streets of Bukit Bintang with his seasoned show-stopping style in a recent concert.

Text by Mark Lean



Grammy Award winner Julio Iglesias has a fondness for Malaysia, having performed in the country on many occasions over the past few decades. "I sang in Malaysia last year (in 2010) in a beautiful theatre (in the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre)," he shares. Last December, the Spaniard belted songs under the stars at Bukit Bintang with audiences spanning young and old. "When I played in Europe recently in a stadium, there were people of different ages. Fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers and kids... everybody," he continues.

The timeless crooner has no plans to slow down even after selling over 300 million records worldwide in 14 languages and releasing 77 albums. "I have learned to be disciplined every day. That's why I'm talking to you right now. I am making a return to your country... it is a great privilege for an artist," explains Iglesias in an interview several months back. "Normally, we come to sing only once. I first came to Malaysia over 30 years ago."

For Iglesias, Malaysia holds a special place in his heart: "It's the people, the mix of cultures, religions and races, the ambience and the progress of the country. Kuala Lumpur is a completely different city now compared with 30 years ago. The progress... it's amazing."

"In an open air concert, I will be on-screen with more people than in an enclosed environment. I love to perform in front of people. At my Malaysian concerts over the years, the communication with the audience is what makes those experiences special," explains the Madrid-born singer.

As the man responsible for Billboard Chart Toppers like "Moonlight Lady" and "To All the Girls I've Loved Before", the 68-year-old is an experienced hand in building connections that transcend countries and cultures. "I have a relationship with people who care about

The Latin crooner is a master of timeless showmanship.

“It’s the biggest privilege to be going to new places and an even greater one to come back because it means people have you in their hearts.”

me... it’s the biggest privilege to be going to new places and an even greater one to come back because it means people have you in their hearts,” he explains with quintessential Latin charm.

Iglesias ups the musical ante with his latest album *Numero 1*, a compendium of remixed tracks spanning the star’s illustrious career. The compilation of hits features unforgettable duets of Iglesias with superstars like Frank Sinatra, Willie Nelson and Diana Ross – a feat achieved through cutting-edge audio technology. “I’m a classic kind of guy. I was born with music and I die with music. With digital technology, this is made even more amazing as I am able to record the music of the past few decades. The sound today is better. But, in a classic situation, when you have a great song, you have a great song,” says the star.

Clearly, his son Enrique has inherited his father’s considerable talent and charm. “He is a champion. You can’t advise champions. You can only teach them when they are young. He is amazing,” says the proud parent. He adds: “I didn’t expect Enrique to be a singer. I didn’t expect Julio to be a singer. Life changes, so circumstances change.”

When asked about the lessons in life and career that have inspired him, Iglesias admits that he “wasn’t a good singer till five minutes ago.” He continues: “These inspirations come from the lessons, the different colours and the passion of life. And since I’m not a young guy, the strength resulting from my life experiences is a source



Clockwise: The many faces of Julio Iglesias through the years.



of inspiration as well. It’s not easy for me to conduct 25 interviews a day all over the world.”

This consummate dedication also extends to a vocal versatility that has seen him perform in a variety of languages, a skill not many internationally acclaimed singers possess. “Whether I sing in Tagalog, Bahasa or Japanese, I take the words from my heart. I learned the languages although I don’t speak it; I learned the meanings of the songs and I learned that music has the same meaning all over the world.”

For the consummate master of romance, Iglesias’ takes a philosophical approach to loving and living. “My idea of romance is my wife and I, still together after 20 years. I’m happy and excited that, with my music, I can feel alive. I still go to the beaches and swim in the big ocean and I’m happy to feel the waves,” he offers.

And to cap off the interview on a high note, the star cites that, when not touring, he enjoys life to the full. “You have to drink a very good wine; wines that are older than I am. When you buy wines 35 years ago, the 61s, the 52s, the 47s, the 82s... you buy them for eight dollars a bottle. Now, a bottle of the same wine is worth 10,000 dollars,” he shares. **W**





Born in the coastal town of Dungun, Terengganu, on the east coast of Malaysia, Chang Fee Ming enjoys a unique affinity with the sea. In 2001, his work *Swahili Coast* encompassed scenes of the east African region. A decade on, the self-taught Chang, a leading light in the South-East Asian art fraternity, offers beautiful and thoughtful illuminations of Tembok, a region surrounding Bali's northeastern coast.

"I started to travel to Bali in the mid 1980s. It eventually became my second home. In recent years, I started exploring the northern section of the island," says the 52-year-old artist. We meet at the Club Lounge of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur. With classical music piping through the sound system and canapés served all day, the lounge and its rarefied setting is a world away from the islands and seascapes that Chang knows and loves so well.

"I began sketching," he continues, "I thought, maybe, one day, I would be focussing on Singaraja in my work. About three years back, I was approached by Dato' Mark Yeoh, Executive Director of YTL Hotels. He suggested I introduce the island's north in my art. It was during the time when Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali had just opened."

With *Journey to Tembok*, Chang taps into the inherent spirituality and humanity of his chosen location. "Singaraja is where one of Bali's oldest kingdoms is located. It is an area with very strong cultural roots. On the other hand, Ubud is renowned around the world as the island's artistic heart."

As one of Malaysia's foremost watercolourists, Chang has held solo shows in Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Bali. He has also been a part of collective exhibitions in Malaysia, Australia, Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, China, Indonesia, the United States, Canada, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Brazil.

The Artist and his Destination

In the book *Journey to Tembok*, Chang Fee Ming captures for posterity a series of poetic and true-to-life watercolours featuring vignettes of Balinese culture and life. **Mark Lean** speaks with the itinerant artist about the sources from which his many inspirations derive.



Opposite page: The artist's depiction of a sukun tree. This page: fish wrapped in a Balinese-style banana trunk fibre.



Chang Fee Ming, one of Malaysia's foremost watercolourists.

"I'm happy to be using watercolour as a medium. Watercolour is an amazing thing. Each stroke you make will not be the same as the next. Every medium has its own challenges. I work using layers, creating new colours. The challenges never end," he says. "When I was in Tibet, for example, I found that capturing the blue and aquamarine skies, getting it right, was a challenge."

Although his work possesses an international appeal, including recognition by Christie's and Sotheby's, he remains a master at distilling the authentic essences of bustling villages, teeming markets or even luxury resorts.

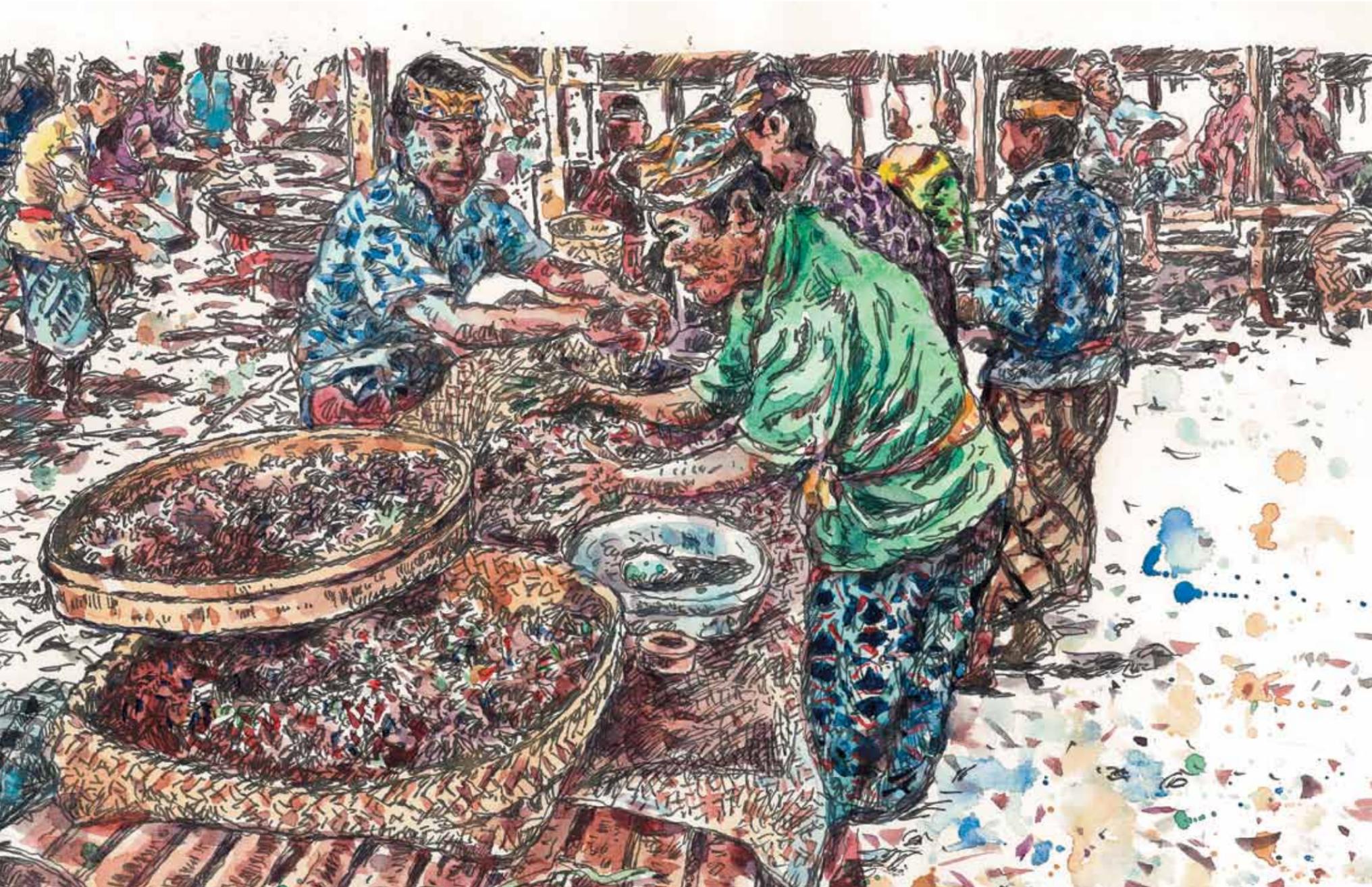
"In Singaraja, the temple motifs and the statues have a special character. The area around Tembok is very untouched, wild even. It's like a raw file on your computer. It's unprocessed. Just by sitting at the restaurant at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, you will notice that the green expanse next to it has coconut trees and palm trees that feel so natural, so pure," he says, vividly bringing to mind striking images of idyllic island life. "There is also a fisherman whom I met who has a boat, a *jukung*, unique to this part of the island."

Chang remains in touch with his craft. By doing so, his connections to the world, its people and places are intertwined, presented as artistic observations with nary a trace of judgement or a hint of commercialism. "As an artist, I work on how I feel. For example, in the markets, I am drawn to ordinary people. In the Tembok series, I tried to bring the journey to the reader, beginning from the airport to Tembok, a journey lasting three hours. I wanted to highlight how, if one paid attention, one will discover many interesting and beautiful nuances," he explains.



Left: A temple statue at Candidasa, located on the journey to Tembok.

Right: A sketch of a man the artist met at Pura Dalem Balingkang with the majestic Mount Batur in the background.



“Chang is a man who remains in touch with his craft. By doing so, his connections to the world, its people and places are intertwined, presented as artistic observations with nary a trace of judgement or a hint of commercialism.”



Above: A group of Balinese men preparing lawar, a delicacy made from herbs, greens and different types of meat, served at auspicious events. Right: frogs are a recurring motif in *Journey To Tembok*.

Market scenes are particularly fascinating to Chang. A market, after all, is where most aspects of temporal living are played out. “Before reaching Tembok, there is the amazing Tianyar market where there are all kinds of activities – the culture, the people and the ordinary lives of the villages. It is very meaningful,” he says.

As one gets acquainted with Tembok through the pages of Chang’s book, one soon realises that the artist did not intend to create either a discourse on culture or a perfectly bound art travelogue. “Many things mentioned in the book happened coincidentally,” he admits. Instead, *Journey to Tembok* represents the artist’s extrapolation on the beauty of day-to-day existence, the simple life, on a tropical island. “The first thing I do when I

arrive at a destination is to head straight to the markets. I’m not one for gallery mingling,” he says.

Chang’s *Journey to Tembok* is one of many journeys that led to as many self-revealing destinations – both as man and artist. “After leaving school in Form Three, I learned from people from all walks of society. This process has shaped both the person I am and my art,” he offers. In recent years, he has ventured beyond his chosen sphere of watercolours. “I worked on a series of paintings during the filming of director Tsai Ming Liang’s *Visage*, which was shot at the Louvre in Paris. I would like to take things to the next level,” says Chang. And what would that next level entail? His reply: “I will continue to travel, to learn and to grow.” ■

FOSTER, FOUND

David Foster's repertoire of award-winning songs began making their musical mark way back in 1971 and he's still not done. The Hit Man's recent turn in Kuala Lumpur for the one-night only David Foster & Friends 'Live' concert was, predictably, a sold out success. He talks to *YTL Life* about what it means for him to be on tour, his next big project and why, for the past 29 years, he's not been inside an elevator.

Text by **Kenneth Tan** Photos by **Universal Music & JAG Concerts and Events**

Coming to Malaysia for his first performance, David Foster found his fame had hugely preceded him, with excited fans flying in from Singapore, Jakarta and as far as Australia to catch a glimpse of their idol. After all, when David Foster turns up with four decades of hits in tow, it's not something to miss. What's more, his presence on the road also heralds the arrival of equally remarkable star quality – celebrities that make up the 'Friends' portion in the tour title. His recent Asia-Pacific tour included Michael Bolton, Charice, Ashanti, Philip Bailey and British tenor Russell Watson, names, Foster says, would have each packed the house on their own.

In fact, an estimate of 50 or more artistes, each of whom have run successful solo tours on their own, have participated, at one time or another, in the hugely successful David Foster & Friends tours over the years. Even today, glowing praises are paid to Foster's undeniable touch in shaping raw talent into superstars. He's discovered the likes of Michael Bublé, Josh Groban and, most recently, the pint-sized Filipina with the big voice, Charice Pempengco. Over Foster's long career, he's also collaborated with top names in the business, from Michael Jackson, Madonna, Whitney Houston and Prince, to Celine Dion, Mariah Carey, Barbra Streisand and Beyoncé. His work



The 'Hit Man', David Foster.



Michael Bolton belting a medley of award-winning hits. Opposite: Filipino star Clarice Pempengco.



“David Foster is someone who knows exactly what to do with the right voice, making him a dream producer for any singer.”

takes on such a scope that both The Bee Gees and N'Sync – representative of vastly different musical times – are part of his body of work. At the press conference, Michael Bolton, whom Foster has known for about 25 years, summed up the legendary career of David Foster as “someone who knows exactly what to do with the right voice, making him a dream producer for any singer.”

The presence of artistes such as Bolton at the press conference also turned up the fun factor, with plenty of witty repartee and jokey moments. At one point, Foster was asked about his initial impression of seeing Charice on Oprah but, given that the question was vaguely phrased, his response was, “do you mean Oprah or Charice?” prompting laughs. That was followed with, “Is Oprah known in Malaysia?” to loud choruses of “YES” from the press pack. “Okay, Oprah, you can come out now,” he says, waving at the door with mock enthusiasm. Laughs all round. Foster was also quick to recognise the star quality of his fellow artistes, saying that they had all been on Oprah, save maybe the Brit-born and based Watson. To this, Watson drolly retorted: “I sing opera.”

The night before the concert, the trio of Bolton, Foster and Watson were at Shook! restaurant in Starhill Gallery as guests of YTL Corporation’s Managing Director Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeh. As the Shook! house band began, Watson’s sonorous timbre was soon heard at the table, with Bolton joining in on a rendition of songs from Puccini’s *La Boheme*, Foster playing the role of conductor. That kind of camaraderie is part of the reason Foster is so in love with the idea of touring under the David Foster & Friends banner. “Someone once asked me, would I like David Foster to be my friend,” he says. “And that got me thinking about what kind of friend I was. I realised that, to me, friendship works on a deep level and, if I got a call from someone like Michael Bolton at 3am, wanting me to drive 100 miles to get him out of trouble, I would do it,” Foster says.



"Also, it would be impossible for me to do this tour without these big voices, because the show would just be me playing the piano," he smiles. "For a long time, I was making music in a room, without any idea of who the people were, the ones buying the records and enjoying the music. So, when I finally got to see them on the road, it was exhilarating and a great feeling."

Being on tour, however, also had its challenges, particularly as Foster has vowed not to step into an elevator after a freakish two days of incidences back in 1982. "I remember that I was in New York producing music for the Broadway production of *Dreamgirls* and we were staying in the Le Parker Meridien hotel when we got stuck in the elevator," he says. "The next day, I was going to

visit Roberta Flack and she lived in an apartment building and I got stuck again in the elevator. That was two days in a row and, since then, I've not been in an elevator."

This is why Foster's chief concern with hotels is the accessibility to rooms via stairs. It was to his great delight that The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur provided that easy access and more. "Well, let me just say this, the level of service in Asia is so far above the level of service in America and then, when you stay in a place like The Ritz-Carlton, which is known all over the world for great service, you just can't miss," he says. "Obviously, you want a great bed and I need stairs to get to my room but, just as important for me, is that, the quality of service is so elevated." The

idea of touring appeals to Foster greatly and he envisions the ideal combination of touring for two months in a year and going fishing for the remaining 10 in time to come. Outside of producing music, which he continues to do with astonishing volume and speed, his pastimes revolve around tennis, boating, fishing and snow skiing, to which he admits he's not good at but loves it all the same. "At the end of the day, and I don't drink other than maybe a couple glasses of wine a week, I like to get in bed and watch TV," he says. For him, a favourite vacation spot is where he grew up, on Vancouver Island in British Columbia.

The island certainly holds a lot of memories for him and he still remembers how he started a band that played at weddings at the age of 12, knocking on doors of

the brides' parents to discuss the music he would be playing with his band. "They would ask, 'who are you?' and I'd say, 'I'm the piano player and you're gonna listen to my band, you hired us. And then I'd say, 'don't worry about a thing, the music is gonna be great.'"

Half a century later, that thirst for music has yet to be slaked. In addition to the concert dates and working with artistes on new records ("we have a Michael Bubl  Christmas album and I want it to be bigger than Lady Gaga"), Foster is also working on a Broadway musical of 30s cartoon and sex icon Betty Boop. "I've been calling it a New York Broadway but it's really just a Malibu musical right now," he says. "I've written 21 of 24 songs and, with all due modesty, they're incredible. I've always felt there was a Broadway musical in me and we have our first reading, a great director,

great producer and I'm really excited because it seems a long way away but it's getting closer."

Foster's indefatigable reserves of energy also extends to his leadership in the David Foster Foundation, which provides financial support to Canadian families with children in need of life-saving organ transplants and also works on increasing public awareness of organ donor registration through campaigns in North America. His stewardship of the Foundation had kept him up till 3am in a conference call the night before his performance. "It's a big job but it's my job. I always say, when you reach a certain position in life, it's your responsibility to give back," he says. "The whole point of being here is to try and leave the world a little bit better than when you came in." ■

Above: Philip Bailey from the band Earth, Wind and Fire; Opposite: British tenor Russell Watson.



On a Culinary Trip

Mark McEwan, shining star of the Toronto culinary scene and well-known face of cooking television, shares a glimpse of life as a celebrity chef and the pivotal conversation that led to fame.

Text by **Petrina Jo Fernandez** Photography by **Yong Keen Keong & Asian Food Channel**

It was his first visit to the food hub that is Kuala Lumpur and Mark McEwan was smitten. At an interview at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, where he was staying while in town to launch Asian Food Channel's Celebrity Chef Series, McEwan was inspired by the down-to-earth Malaysian approach to food. "I love how nobody is afraid to get dirty at the table here," he enthused. "You eat fish on the bone, seafood in shells – it's very exciting to prepare for and partake in. Despite this being a very short stint, my time here has been most enjoyable."

The seasoned restaurateur began his early culinary career with stints at various hotels, including being the youngest chef at the Sutton Palace Hotel, Toronto. He also had the opportunity to cook for Pope John Paul II in 1984, but soon felt that his calling lay elsewhere. "My wife and I were about to get married and it felt like a new beginning in more ways than one. I sold my sports car, hawked everything I owned and bought a one-third share in a restaurant," he reminisces. Pronto, the restaurant of which he was partial owner, took flight but internal disagreements between the partners on operations saw a parting of ways. McEwan took his share and went on to build North 44: "It

was my first construction project and I spent way too much money but it was a learning process and I came out of it more business savvy."

McEwan has gotten accustomed to the unrelenting financial pressure and the fame that comes with being a celebrity chef. After all, expansion is expensive. During the last 21 years, he has built another handful of restaurants, selling two of them. He started his own fine foods emporium, bought over a catering company and launched his own cookware line.

"*The Heat with Mark McEwan* was born out of a conversation with a producer friend while skiing a few years ago. We were discussing the disparity between what was currently depicted on television cooking shows, and the more holistic demands that are actually made of a chef. I was used to conversations at cocktail parties about what I do as a chef, how we pull off feats such as large dinners, and I thought food aficionados would enjoy a real behind-the-scenes look at the nitty-gritty aspects of the restaurant business."

The project kicked off with a pilot of Murphy's Law proportions. "Typically, nothing ever goes wrong at a catering

Opposite page: Chef Mark McEwan

– you just prepare and present. This, however, was a clear disaster and everything that could possibly go wrong, did. We were scrambling around to fix things and come up with impromptu solutions. The network loved it and, based on those 15 catastrophic minutes of filming, it gave us two whole seasons.”

As McEwan journeyed with viewers through the highs and lows of the restaurant industry, his Canadian hometown was experiencing a promising boom: the explosion of gourmet cuisine. A meat-and-potatoes staple was rapidly replaced with a fine understanding of diverse cuisines. The “young” city found itself developing a food culture of their own, quickly creating culinary interactions between chefs, restaurants and diners.

“I represent what the modern Canadian chef has become,” says McEwan. “We are a melting pot of cultures – I’m part Scottish, Canadian and American – and our cuisine is a reflection of this. While the great European cities have always enjoyed an inherent appreciation for food, we are a self-taught nation with the advantage of strong European and Asian experiences to draw upon. I was trained in classical style of French cuisine, influenced by the Asian kitchen and have an on-going love affair with Italian techniques; I take subtle cues from all.”

McEwan’s unpretentious approach to food advocates purity and proportion in taste, eliminating the mistake of confusing the palate with too many contradicting flavours. “I believe there should be only one big story on the plate with two supporting plots, keeping the choreography down to just a few key characters,” he says, remarking on his impatience with frills and campaigning instead for hearty cooking that inspires in both taste and presentation.

How did the progression from chef to restaurateur come about?

I got older. You can’t keep feeding 150 people every day; that’s a young man’s



Opposite page: Chef Mark McEwan in action; this page, above right: a table setting at McEwan’s ‘Heat it Up’ event in Kuala Lumpur; below: autumn salad with woodland mushrooms, truffles, quail egg and garlic toast.

“I represent what the modern Canadian chef has become. We are a melting pot of cultures. I’m part Scottish, Canadian and American – and our cuisine is a reflection of this.”



game. My partner and I built one restaurant and then another, and another. I’m 54 now. I am having more fun in the business than ever before.

The top five ingredients you always have on hand.

Double-zero flour, kosher salt, fleur de sel, a wonderful olive oil – a good stable brand is great for cooking but I also always have on hand something exquisite for a finishing - and sundried tomatoes. I always buy premium and do it on a good budget. You must never sacrifice quality.

What is something we will never catch you doing in the kitchen?

Yelling, because I don’t believe it solves anything. I get really quiet instead and my employees know they’re in trouble. I don’t say a word; I just start fixing the problem, whatever it is. I refuse to baby-sit and I don’t condone bad attitudes in my

kitchen – I enjoy working with a team of great people who know when to put their heads down and work and am driven by the same vision and goals.

Let’s hear a little about your restaurants. What is the atmosphere like at ONE?

ONE Restaurant is situated at The Hazelton Hotel, Toronto. It has a great ambience, with high ceilings, contemporary décor and a pretty terrace that sits 125 patrons. It possesses perhaps the most eclectic menu of all my restaurants with a fusion of Asian, French and Italian tastes. I love that it has a very tongue-in-cheek feel and it’s a terrific place to people-watch because it attracts such a diverse crowd. A must-try here is the lobster spoon, butter-braised with vermouth and laced with sea salt – I wanted to take it off the menu once and the regulars nearly rioted. It is definitely one of our most successful starters.



What should we look out for at North 44?

The squab here is simply beautiful. We roast the breast with seasonal fruits and it sits on a bed of rice and onion puree, and the caramelised flavor of the onion comes through perfectly. Fruits and vegetables are rotated quarterly so we get the best produce of every season and they add sweetness to the hearty flavour.

Tell us about the famous burger at Bymark.

That is perhaps the most talked-about (and expensive) burger in the area. It is the manifestation of a tongue-in-cheek burger with ground tissue ends of a prime striploin made into a patty and stacked with fresh sliced porcini mushrooms and an exquisite truffle aioli in between fresh buns. It’s just the greatest burger you will ever have and it will set you back by about US\$36. ■



beautiful life //

*Chic
check-in*

Printed silk crepon
blouse and shorts,
Louis Vuitton.

Majestic Journeys

*Exploring Malacca, a city
drenched in history, calls for
captivating looks that exude
timeless, classic style.*

Photographed by Aaron Lee at The Majestic Malacca, Malaysia Photographer's
Assistant Sean Styling Wee Chee Makeup Deirdre Chong Hair Mae Liew
Model Irena/Andrews Models

*Savour
the day*

Plisse silk peach
skin tubular dress,
Khoon Hooi.



beautiful life //



*Figuratively
speaking*

Abstract knit cardigan
coat, M Missoni; thong
sandals, Louis Vuitton.



Plated pleasures

Denim jacket and Swiss polka dot skirt with tulle edge, Red Valentino.



Formal approach

Silk cotton jersey wing dress, McQ; thong sandals and perforated leather shoulder bag, Louis Vuitton



*Study in
Style*

Silk crepe de chine
draped dress, **Khoon
Hooi**; *Miss Dior* peep
toe pumps, **Dior**.

beautiful life //

Raising the bar

Monogrammed
barrel bag, **Louis
Vuitton**; horn rimmed
sunglasses, **Dior**.



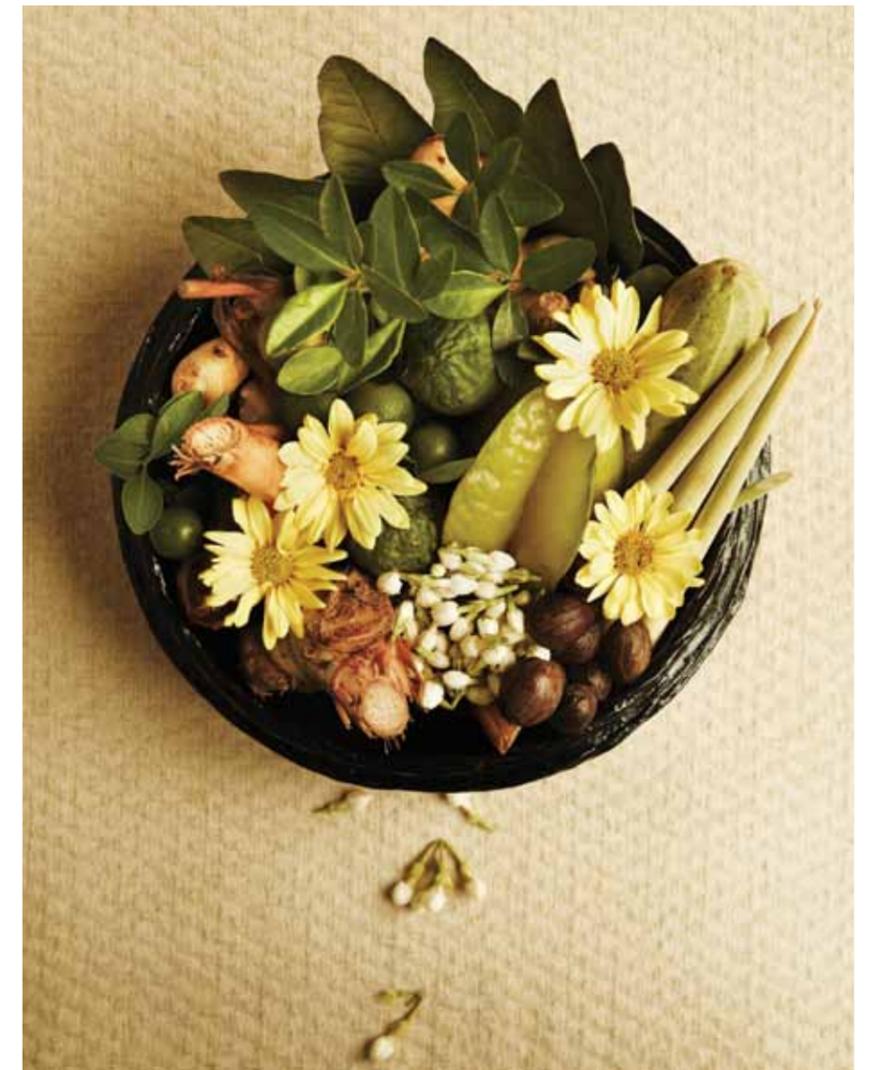
On the outside

Perforated leather
jacket, mini skirt
and knit cardigan,
Louis Vuitton.

beautiful life //

Fusion Print

Beaded leather and
waffle knit dress, **Louis
Vuitton**; Suede and
acrylic shoulder bag,
M Missoni.



Supreme Alliances

Celebrating collaborations of precision, flair and creativity, ingeniously engineered by the world's most illustrious brands.



Window Art

The link between commerce and art is nothing new, especially for luxury brands that emphasise its artisanal heritages and the role of craftsmen in their products. **Fendi** designed a twist to such partnerships recently by collaborating with budding artists from the prestigious Royal Academy of Art, creating special window displays to mark the opening of its Sloane Street store in London.

The students, from the institution's Product Design Department, made innovative use of Fendi's signature craftsman techniques along with discarded materials, in homage to British design. "I was amazed to see so many projects, each giving Fendi and our materials new life, different meanings and witnessed *fatto a mano* (Italian for 'handmade') so loved by young new generations," said Silvia Venturini Fendi of the eponymous house. The project gave an insight into the possibilities of bridging heritage with futuristic vision. And now, the brand is also regarded as rich in street credentials amongst a new and rising set of luxury aficionados.



Rings of Fire

Inspired by ancient Chinese myths especially for the upcoming Year of the Dragon, Spanish jewellers **Carrera y Carrera** reveals the *Circulos de Feugo* collection. A marriage between fine craftsmanship, items from the collection composed of rings, pendants and earrings, pay tribute to the house's heritage of elegance. This is matched in equal measures with inspiring levels of skill, creating pieces that are opulent, alluring and sparkling.



Just in Time

Nexus-Aston Martin Racing (AMR) Team, partnered by **Jaeger-LeCoultre**, left rivals in the dust at the recent Malaysia Merdeka Endurance Race (MMER) 2011, by completing 277 laps to win the championship in the 12-hour endurance race. The winning team conquered what is popularly regarded as Asia's biggest race, attracting international teams and drivers from world-renowned endurance series including the Le Mans 24 Hours, Dubai 24 Hours and Nurburgring 24 Hours. Next up, after its sensational win, AMR could be headed for Abu Dhabi for a similar race. The MMER win underscores the historic ties between Jaeger-LeCoultre and Aston Martin, since the 1920s. The watchmaker and the sports car company share a common pursuit of excellence and an avant garde spirit. The bonds were formally sealed in 2005, when the two big names developed a collection of timepieces. The first design was a gentleman's watch, inspired by Aston Martin's automobile features and Jaeger-LeCoultre's legendary performance model, *Memovox 1965*.



Contemporary Chinese

Established in 1978, **Shiatzy Chen** "embodies the new look of China" Since its first store opening in Taipei, the brand has created fashion silhouettes from past and present inspirations. In the process, it has perfected an Eastern aesthetic that is at once elegant and grand. Immaculate design is accompanied with sheer poetical brilliance. Shiatzy Chen continues to succeed in crafting a fashion identity that is authentically Chinese yet timelessly stylish. Scheduled to open in Kuala Lumpur's Starhill Gallery in January 2012.



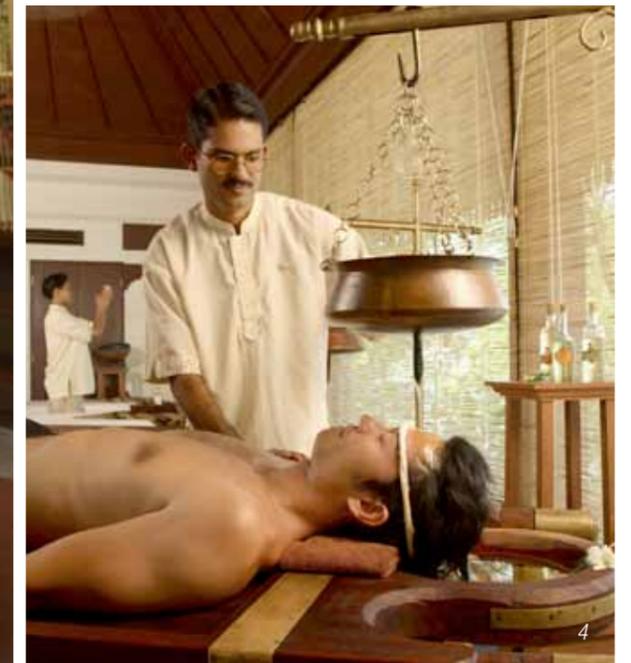
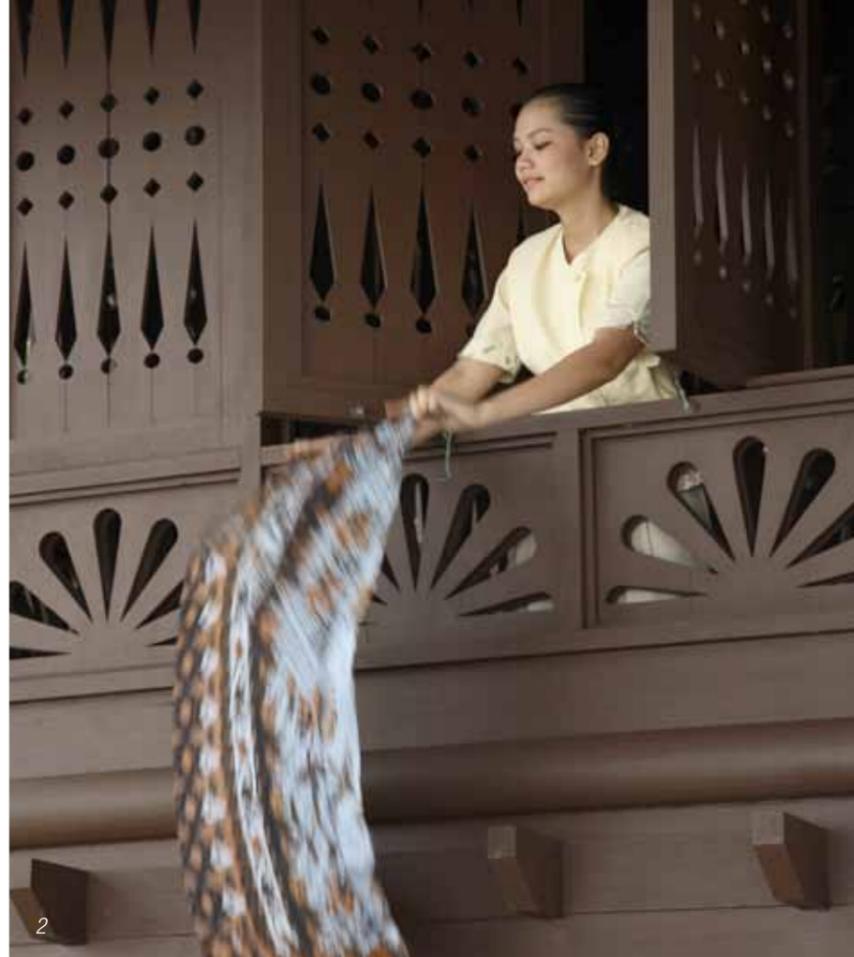
A passageway leading to the treatment rooms at Spa Village Pangkor Laut.

Lined by a tranquil shore with a stretch of beach resembling a soft velvet beige blanket is Spa Village Pangkor Laut, a healing enclave located within the internationally-acclaimed resort. Here, on the fringe of an ancient rainforest considered the playground of a variety of increasingly rare birds and other forest creatures, guests may sample treatments from China, Japan, India, Thailand, Bali and Malaysia. The award-winning spa is regarded around the world as an unparalleled wellness retreat, one that faithfully adopts age-old Asian healing practices administered by a team of expert therapists.

It spans eight treatment pavilions; three 'healing huts', each specialising in Chinese herbal, Ayurvedic and Malay therapies; three spa huts, three gazebos to nap or relax in; a spa boutique; along with 22 spa villas offering picturesque views of the calming ocean. Rather than being a spa conceived as a showcase for modern holistic treatments, this island treasure is a genuine response to traditionally tried-and-tested therapies that have continued to heal and nurture through the generations. In a similar spirit, the 5,000-year-old Ayurveda healing modality originating from India, and described by the ancients as the 'science of life', is practised authentically by the therapists at Spa Village Pangkor Laut.

A Healing Path

The Ayurvedic therapies at Spa Village Pangkor Laut help to rekindle one's links with emotional and physical vitality. On a rainy afternoon, **Mark Lean** explores these revered treatments that have been practised through the ages.



1. The Ayurvedic 'healing hut' is where guests begin their treatments. 2. As a gift, an ornate sarong is presented to each guest. 3. The Ayurvedic consultation room. 4. A therapist administering the sirodhara treatment.

According to the spa's manager, Dr Jayachandran, who also oversees its Ayurvedic programme: "Our concept is to incorporate the healing practices of the region for health and well-being. Ayurvedic treatments are in line with our concept and are perfect choices for guests who seek relaxation, rejuvenation, stress management and to reduce toxin accumulation in our body." He adds that "complimentary consultations with the in-house Ayurvedic doctor are offered. After analysing the body constitution and present health conditions, the doctor will design tailor-made healing programmes for guests."

The consultation takes place in one of three open-air 'healing huts'. Traditionally, the Ayurveda prescriptions are most effective after two to three weeks of treatments, allowing the body to safely

heal and adapt to the various shifts in diet, climate, stress levels and lifestyle habits. At Spa Village Pangkor Laut, the Ayurvedic spa menu focuses on revitalisation with the use of oil therapies rather than a medical approach followed by Ayurvedic hospitals. A brief question and answer session about my diet and lifestyle leads to the following recommendations: "no shellfish, no alcohol and no spicy or salty food". In a perfect world, these words of advice would be easily adhered to. Sensing my doubt, the doctor suggests that I, at the very least, abstain from shellfish "for at least three months," before saying, convincingly, "You will see and feel the difference."

This is soon followed by my afternoon of Ayurvedic treatments, beginning with the spa's signature bathhouse experience, a relaxing rite of passage popular with many of the spa's guests. After being drenched,

soaked and sluiced in piping hot and ice cold water in rapid succession, I'm soon ready to meet my therapist, Subeesh.

Trained at an Ayurvedic hospital in Kerala, he is one of the spa's resident therapists skilled in the finer points of this ancient healing practice. He starts off with a detoxifying and cleansing ritual called *dinacharya*. This comprises a rigorous teeth-brushing with medicated powder, followed with a swift gargle of medicated oil. (To maintain authenticity, all Ayurvedic products used at the spa are sourced from India.) A massage using specially distilled oils comes next, untangling, in an instant, the knots in my shoulders – the result of too many long journeys and days spent sitting at a desk. This is soon followed by a sense of immediate calm enfolding me as the tropical rains wash over the spa's lush landscaped gardens.

Guests who embark on the week-long Ayurvedic treatments have the opportunity to experience treatments like *sirodhara* and *takradhara*, both of which entail the continuous pouring of medicated herbal oil or buttermilk onto the middle of the forehead, around the area between the eyebrows known in spiritual circles as the 'third eye'. This, apparently, has a calming effect on the innermost sections of the brain that govern the nervous system. By doing so, the treatment effectively lowers stress levels and kick-starts a feeling of profound relaxation.

There are also Ayurvedic beauty treatments for face and scalp. A variety of herbs and plants like vetiver, *tulsi* (holy basil), *amla* (Indian gooseberry) and acacia are used in the traditional hair therapy. This treatment, used to combat hair loss and excessively oily scalp, comes in the form of powder and

not as a shampoo – it's widely believed that the latter encourages a drying effect on hair follicles. Meanwhile, the *mukha lepam* (face pack) facial is an excellent skin cleaner. The treatment unblocks pores, removes toxins and imparts the skin with renewed vitality.

"The majority of the guests feel great after the treatment, be it a simple rejuvenation or treatment for back pain, neck pain or to relieve stress or for detoxification," says Dr Jayachandran.

Conventionally, the benefits of an Ayurvedic regime are noticeable after several days as one's energy levels soar, sleep patterns improve and the ruddy glow of good health reappears. Internally, the immune system is fortified; the nervous system is systematically cleansed, while the body's internal force, or *oja*, is successfully replenished. ■

All About The Rain

With its inviting 'Everybody Loves Rain' package, the luxury Tanjong Jara Resort welcomes travellers seeking a relaxing getaway.

Text by **Mark Lean**

Inspired by the Malay palaces of the past, Tanjong Jara Resort, on Malaysia's east coast, is exquisite in design and warm in hospitality – even during the monsoon season. Spanning a beautiful stretch of its golden sandy beach, the award-winning luxury resort is perfect for a weekend getaway, offering easy access from Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

As temperatures dip during this time of the year, the 99-room resort is occasionally covered in a blanket of rain, transforming into an especially inviting setting perfect for rest and relaxation. The cooler climate also helps to magnify the benefits offered by the healing Malay therapies characteristic of the east coast.

With the 'Everybody Loves Rain' package, guests may sample the best that Tanjong Jara Resort has to offer, including the 'Raindrop Retreat' spa experience with treatments mined from potent Malay healing traditions. To further complement the cooler and wetter weather, the resort's resident 'menu master', Chef Ann, has devised a series of delicious local and international dishes that maximises the use of fresh local produce.

Meanwhile, at the sublime Spa Village Tanjong Jara, a specially designed three-day programme created in harmony with the rain, the Raindrop Retreat, will warm, nurture, comfort and detoxify the body. The restorative treatments offered include Ramuan Demah (Heated Herbal Poultice Remedy – 100 minutes), Malay Massage (50 minutes) and Tungku Batu (Heated Stone Therapy – 100 minutes).

The 'Everybody Loves Rain' package (for a minimum two-nights' stay) includes



Opposite page: Tanjong Jara Resort's brilliant blue-hued pool; this page; left: a selection of herbs and condiments used in Malay cuisine; right: take time to enjoy Spa Village Tanjong Jara's range of Raindrop Retreat treatments.

accommodation; return flights on Firefly between Singapore or Kuala Lumpur to the nearest airport from the resort; return airport transfers between the airport and resort; three meals a day and a two-day Raindrop Retreat package spa experience. In addition, guests will enjoy one night's complimentary accommodation if the rain level reaches more than 3cm each day. The extra night(s) can be used to extend their current stay or can be redeemed on their next visit. Prices start from RM1,960 per room per night.

Both the 'Raindrop Retreat' programme and 'Everybody Loves Rain' package are available from November 1, 2011, to February 28, 2012. Guests must travel by February 28, 2012; travel dates exclude peak periods. Guests will be informed of such periods by the YTL Travel Centre at the time of booking. ■

For more details, contact travelcentre.my@ytlhotels.com or travelcentre.sg@ytlhotels.com.



Cold Comforts

The ideal opportunity to pay close attention to nurturing skincare regimes arises as temperatures take a dive.



Call in the Marines

Thalgo has long been renowned for diving into the sea, bringing to the surface marine technologies equipped to battle the early signs of aging. The latest product ranges centre on three main programmes: collagen, hyaluronic and silicium. Each exclusive range has been created to address skin conditions like fine lines, deeper wrinkles and even has lifting and firming benefits on the contours of the face. Rich in active natural ingredients and devised after years of research in the Thalgo laboratories, these new products speak to women with unique skincare demands, no matter at what age.



Taking Flight

For a man ready to embark on an adventure, celebrating the ride with an epic poem, Eau d'Ikar is the scent to take along with him. The eau de toilette by **Sisley** is hailed as fragrance of elegant yet intricately composed simplicity, encased in an artwork bottle with an abstract wing and man's torso etched in the glass. Lightness and intensity playfully bounce off with hints of bitter orange, carrot seeds, orange pekoe tea, leather and sandalwood. The keynote of Eau d'Ikar is the scent of a Mediterranean shrub, Mastic, in the top, heart and base notes.



Filling the lines

Turning back the ravages of time is made easier with **Kiehl's** Double Strength Deep Wrinkle Filler. The product gives the appearance of smooth skin instantly. It comprises a combination of high performance hyaluronic acids along with polymers, peptides and silica. Over time, the key ingredient, fragmented hyaluronic acid, is imparted to the skin, effectively improving the skin's elasticity, refining and defining facial contours.



The Perfect Balm

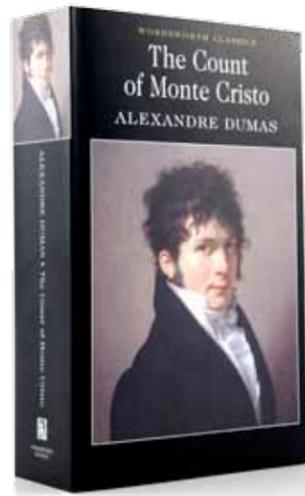
"My mission when I set out to develop Extra Repair Moisturizing Balm was simple: to cut through the clutter and focus on what skin really needs to look fresher, smoother and healthier – what all women want." – **Bobbi Brown** on her signature skincare balms, conceived a decade ago after a ski trip to Telluride, Colorado. Since then, these cult moisture-rich and texture-perfect products have been wowing beauty insiders the world over.

Read & Listen

Globetrotter and Asia Pacific CEO of Spanish jewellers Carrera y Carrera, Marc Hag, has an occupation that sees him in Tokyo one day and Kuala Lumpur the next. Here, he divulges his top book and music picks – personal selections gleaned after spending many years browsing book stores in airports and railway stations around the world.



On a recent stop-over in Kuala Lumpur, Hag had an opportunity to talk about Carrera y Carrera's latest collections, including amongst others, the glittering Year of the Dragon offerings. Known as the *Cirulos de Feugo* collection, it reflects Carrera y Carrera's regard for the Asian region. Items from the collection are composed of a series of awe-inspiring rings, pendants and earrings that are characterised by decidedly Oriental flourishes.



My Favourite Books

1. **The Count of Monte Cristo** by Alexandre Dumas – I downloaded this as my first e-book on my phone so I could read it while travelling. The story is quite straightforward: a young sailor is unjustly imprisoned by four envious friends and forgotten for 14 years. After his escape from prison and having discovered a large fortune, he begins to take his revenge – an exciting read.

2. **Don Quijote** by Miguel de Cervantes – This classic was on my bookshelf for many years. I hadn't read the original Spanish version as it was tough to read. Then, I chanced upon a translation written in a much more up-to-date style. We are talking about 1,200 pages, which, for a classic, is normally not very exciting. But this time a round, the book made for a thrilling read. It describes not only the follies of a man who wanted to be a medieval knight in the middle of the 16th century, but it also portrays the



lives of the people around him in down-to-earth and humorous ways. This book also holds special significance. I left it in a newspaper kiosk in downtown Tokyo the day the earthquake struck. Given the scale of the disaster, I did not think about the misplaced book for months until, by chance, I passed by the same kiosk again. When asked, the shop assistant looked into her shelves and there was the book. It was kept safely for me all this time, which made me very happy.

3. **Acquired Tastes** by Peter Mayle – Peter Mayle, renowned for his book *A Year in Provence*, wrote a charming story about the best life has to offer and how it's best appreciated. The book discusses cigars, caviar, second homes and tailor-made shirts. Mayle questions whether all these items are really necessary. I still remember his arguments against obtaining a second home and for tipping hotel staff generously – advice which I still follow today.



My Favourite Music

1. **Gloria, Nisi Dominus and Credo** from Vivaldi – From Vivaldi, you would normally expect baroque music with trumpet and violin accompaniments. But this album is different. It has a quiet solemnity and great vocals – perfect music to relax to.

2. **Tango Mestarit** – I picked this album up at Helsinki airport during a business trip. At that time, I was interested in tango music and bought it when I saw the word 'tango' on the cover. I could not understand a single word of the lyrics, which were in Finnish. I then realised that there is a strong tango movement not only in Argentina but also in Finland, where they localised the lyrics – perfect for times when I want to just listen to the music.

3. **Max Raabe und das Palast orchester** – Max Raabe with his Palast orchester interpreted these songs from the 1920s and 1930s in front of enthusiastic audiences both in Europe and the United States. The result: nostalgic tracks arranged with a modern touch and featuring superior sound quality. This makes for very easy listening and the lyrics are quite humorous to sing along to with the family.

Imagining Perfection

Two impressive sound systems and a superlative image creation device redefine how life looks and sounds.



Designer Audio

Introducing **Steinway Lyngdorf's** S-Series sound system. Composed of an impressive range of fully digital prestige sound equipment, the S-Series merges super drivers, boundary woofers, complete digital amplification and the brand's RoomPerfect™ technology. The result: authentic sounds that bring to life the excitement and the thrill of a personalised cinematic experience. Featuring a range of mounting options, the S-Series products come in matte black or satin silver – the perfect audio and interior accompaniment to any stylish abode.



Luxe Sounds

Perfect pitch is the holy grail of every audiophile. Every component of an audio system is a vital component in the system, to the music lover who demands sound quality true to the original performance. When nothing less than the best suffices, a sound system from **TAD (Technical Audio Devices Lab)** might fulfil expectations. A subsidiary company of Pioneer, TAD is world renowned for engineering expertise and cutting-edge audio components that re-create an awesome sound experience eerily true to the original – like a live performance – right in the comfort of home. Many celebrated artists have recorded with TAD professional studio monitors, and TAD speakers play a major role in the digital re-mastering of musical masterpieces. The perfectionist can indulge in pro equipment such as TAD D600 Disc Player, which re-produces music almost exactly like the original performance, TAD M4300 and M2500 power amplifiers, and TAD Speakers.



Peak Performance

Economical is not a term usually associated with a top-of-the-range automobile marque like **Porsche**. But all things being relative, the prestige car-maker has rolled out its new *Panamera S Hybrid*, hailing the model as “the most economical Porsche of all time”. That means a best-case fuel consumption of 6.81/100km and CO2 emission of 159g/km. These statistics place the *Panamera* streets ahead of all the other hybrid vehicles in the luxury class.

The new model achieved its sparing values using optional low-friction Michelin tyres. The all-season tyres were developed specifically for the *Panamera*. Looks-wise, the car's exterior bears a striking resemblance to the *Gran Turismo* series. Its unique features, however, are the *Panamera S* hybrid emblem on the rear, and hybrid badges on both front doors.



Take a Shot

Leica is renowned for its devices that capture award-winning images coupled with imparting photographers with unparalleled cachet. According to Sunil Kaul, Managing Director, Leica Camera Asia Pacific, “The *D-Lux 5* is the most successful digital compact cameras from Leica, and the *Titanium* is following a tradition of limited series of cameras. The excellent and the premium appearance will be delivered with beautiful leather case made of high quality calf leather. We take extra time and effort in designing and crafting these products not only because our audience anticipates the finest, but because they expect the extraordinary.” And, one can't get more extraordinary than a Leica.



life of luxury //

performance, value and flexibility that is making tremendous waves in the country and beyond.

We are the only mobile operator in Malaysia that established a nationwide footprint from day one. Over 65% of Malaysia's population can now have access to the most advanced wireless network in the world at the country's lowest rate. YES is the first and only operator to provide high-speed data coverage along the entire stretch of Malaysia's North-South Expressway – running from the Singaporean border to the Thai border.

YES is the only wireless service provider that brings together mobile broadband, mobile telephony (voice and SMS) and cloud-based services, all in a single account offering performance that is over three to five times faster than 3G with uninterrupted mobile connectivity even at speeds of over 160km/h. The YES network is designed to be identity oriented – just like the Internet. All subscribers need to access the YES network and cloud based services is a YES ID. The YES ID also comes with a 018 mobile number resulting in the convergence of the worlds of Internet and telephony, thereby unlocking new innovations and consumer surplus.

YES also does away with SIM cards; subscribers only need one account to access multiple devices. The YES network supports concurrent connections enabling multiple devices to log on to the Internet using the same YES ID. With a mobile number attached to each YES ID, this advanced architecture enables calls and text messages to be routed concurrently to all devices and services signed in using the same YES ID. For the first time in Malaysia, your mobile number follows you wherever you are; whether you're on a computer, a mobile phone or a tablet device.

The YES facility is available in all YTL Hotels' properties as well as in transportation taking guests to and from the properties. How have guests' responses been?

Responses to our commitment-free mobile Internet rental service have been tremendous.

Internet connectivity has become an essential travel amenity as travellers both on leisure and business trips want to stay connected to the people and information that are important to them.

Guests really love the fact that with the YES Huddle they can experience true mobile broadband connectivity beyond the confines of the hotel room. This allows travellers to stay connected to their favourite social networks or important work emails, while still enjoying the many wonderful sights and sounds of Malaysia.

Due to high demand, we will be expanding our Internet for rent service to more hotels and resorts in the near future. We are also now looking at offering the service at major entry points into the country such as at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA). ■

Saying YES!

YTL *Life* speaks with the Chief Marketing Officer of YTL Communications, Reggie Chee, about the company's brightest innovations – YES, one of the most advanced 4G networks in the world.

How do you anticipate YES to transform the Malaysian communications platform?

YES is already transforming the mobile communications landscape in Malaysia. Just into our first year of commercial operations, YES has been recognised as one of the most advanced 4G networks in the world. Our innovative network and amazing 4G-based services have also won a place amongst global leaders in the broadband industry by winning the "Best New Service" in the prestigious Broadband InfoVision Awards 2011.

These wonderful achievements come as a clear acknowledgement that YES places Malaysia at the global forefront in the adoption of next-generation wireless technologies. Our wonderfully innovative service is unlike any other in the world. YES offers unsurpassed

Donna spa
STARHILL GALLERY

Relax & Relaxing for Body Mind & Soul

Room Massage Service for • JW Marriott • Ritz-Carlton • Mandarin Oriental • Grand Millenium

Signature Donna Massage

Healing Massage

Handed down for 4000 years, this healing massage reduces pain in tensed and stressed muscles, especially at the neck, shoulders and back areas. It restores the body's natural balance, leaving you feeling light and easy after the massage. Ideal for travellers and businessmen.

60 minutes RM240 nett • 90 minutes RM360 nett • 120 minutes RM480 nett

Balinese Massage

Calming Massage

Feel extremely relaxed as our calming massage's soft yet firm strokes effectively improve blood circulation, relax body tissues and promote energy flow in the body. It eases your mind, body and soul as you slowly drift off to sleep.

60 minutes RM240 nett • 90 minutes RM360 nett • 120 minutes RM480 nett

Amazing Massage

Hot Compress Package

Before the massage, a warm ball of herbs with healing properties is gently pressed on your body to relieve aches and pains. This helps to open up pores and the medicinal heat induces relaxation.

90 mins = 60 mins massage + 30 mins Compress ball RM360 nett

120 mins = 90 mins massage + 30 mins Compress ball RM480 nett

French Facial Paradise

Cryo Facial Mask & Shooting Eye Treatment (from Institute Esthederm Paris)

Feel refreshed as our products and facial massage give your face the touch it requires after a tiring day.

60 mins facial + 20 mins Neck, Shoulders & Foot Massage RM380 nett

Neck & Shoulders Massage - 40 minutes RM150 nett

Foot Massage - 40 minutes RM120 nett
- 60 minutes RM150 nett

Manicure - 45 minutes RM 90 nett

Pedicure - 45 minutes RM 90 nett

* Winner of the best couple spa award (Harpers Bazaar 2009)

* Best Massage in Kuala Lumpur (Time out Magazine 2010)

* Things to do in Kuala Lumpur (Lonely Planet)



Note: Services are offered in the comfort and privacy of your room between 10am till 1am (last call at 12am), 7 days a week.

Please Contact: +603-2142 4899 for more details and booking. Address: S20 & S27, Pamper Level, Starhill Gallery, Kuala Lumpur. Website: www.donnaspa.net

Warming Winter Fare

There's far more to Japan's ski capital than perfect snow. **Catherine Shaw** looks beyond the slopes to Niseko's newest culinary star.

This winter, there is a new – and rather compelling – reason to visit Niseko. The phenomenally-popular ski resort, tucked away in the stunning alpine mountain landscape of Japan's northernmost island, is fast becoming as renowned a gourmet destination as it is for its legendary slopes and powdery snow. Leading this very welcome culinary revolution is the newly revamped The Green Leaf Niseko Village. Its winning blend of exceptional seasonal produce, meticulously sourced from the region, and a passion for producing warming winter fare, perfectly complements the outdoor attractions.

Located at the base of Mount An'nupuri, the low-slung 200-room winter getaway boasts one of the best ski-in/out locations in the area and has garnered numerous awards for its stylish contribution to Niseko Village's already considerable natural attractions. At the heart of the hotel's distinctive contemporary new look - created by New York's award-winning Champalimaud Design - is the hip Tomioka White Lobby lounge which draws a glamorous crowd thanks to its welcoming vibe, cosy leather sofas, signature fireplace and bar, serving innovative cocktails (try the Tomioka White, the perfect off-piste reward after a hard day on the slopes), sake and fine wines.

But it is the enticing winter cuisine that offers the greatest temptation to abandon skis and stay indoors for a little dining indulgence. This winter, the hotel has created a stunning menu of Hokkaido's very best produce; from mouthwateringly fresh seafood plucked from the nearby sea and fresh-water lakes, and



The Green Leaf Niseko Village's snow-clad entrance.



life cuisine //

Opposite: Goshiki's sophisticated pared-down interiors. Above left: a chef preparing piping hot delicacies; below left: an assortment of meats and vegetables cooked on a Shichirin, a portable clay cooking stove.

rockfish seasoned with *saikyo miso* paste to Kurobuta *shabu shabu* are firm favourites for later in the day when you've worked up an appetite. The restaurant sports a striking open kitchen while the soaring vaulted ceiling provides wonderful views over the snow-clad ski slopes. This winter, the signature dish is all-you-can-eat snow crab legs – a gourmet opportunity to indulge in one of Niseko's most popular delicacies.

The Crab Shack, a casual new seafood restaurant unveiled this season, is conveniently located on the slopes next to the Green Leaf Niseko Village. While at the Ski Center at Niseko Village, a more informal menu prevails, offering diners a unique experience of Japanese *izakaya*-style dishes, again featuring Hokkaido ingredients. Another perfect winter warmer is grilled red king crab legs cooked on a Shichirin, a portable clay cooking stove that delivers food perfectly prepared to your plate. Freshly-boiled hairy crab with hot sake served in its shell is another tantalising must-have as is the grilled Rausu mackerel, famous for its vibrant flavour and succulent flesh.

The Green Leaf Niseko Village also boasts a lively wine list featuring a collection of champagnes, wines, beer and whisky. Try a highly original delicate white wine from Tsukiura winery for a perfect pairing with Japanese delicacies (the wine from this small winery, using grapes grown only in the company's farms in the town of Toyako, was served at the World Summit at Lake Toya in 2008), a smooth sake or perfectly brewed beer from a Hokkaido brewery. Altitude, the Green Leaf Niseko Village's rooftop terrace is a thoroughly modern retreat for off-piste relaxation – enjoy a refreshing cocktail or light snack while you drink in the fantastic views. The unique outdoor space has direct access from the slopes, a wood-burning fire pit and spectacular views.

Work it all off afterwards – Niseko has world-class slopes with terrain and lifts to suit every level of skier or snowboarder as well as tree skiing and backcountry terrain. There are plenty of other things to do, including driving snowmobiles and snow rafting, and reindeer sledging. Remember, all it takes is an hour's skiing to burn 400 calories – it's the ultimate combination: a ski resort for gourmets. *Itadakimasu!* ■

“A perfect winter warmer is grilled red king crab legs cooked on a Shichirin – a portable clay cooking stove.”



GETTING THERE
The nearest airport to Niseko is Sapporo's New Chitose Airport with direct flights between most major domestic and international airports. The flight from Tokyo (Haneda) is around 90 minutes. Niseko is about two hours by car and three and a half hours by train from New Chitose Airport.

the island's famously delicious vegetables including potatoes grown in Soga, famous throughout Japan as the *crème de la crème* when it comes to the very best flavour.

Hokkaido is famed for its natural produce thanks to its cool summers and rich soils. Goshiki (which means, 'five different colours' in Japanese), the Green Leaf Niseko Village's signature restaurant, features a delicious winter buffet at breakfast and dinner showcasing a colourful fusion of Japanese, Asian and Western dishes (it is also open for lunch). Start the day with traditional Japanese-styled omelette, tofu and Matsumaezuke-dried squid or grilled sausage with sautéed bacon and potato. Snow crab and grilled



life Cuisine //



Feast Village's Latest Star

Royale Vietnam amazes with its variety of authentic cuisine, served with style.

Starhill Gallery's Royale Vietnam recreates cuisine from the country's storied imperial court. Highlights from the menu include the light and tasty chicken salad accompanied by crunchy pickled lotus root; the rich and earthy wagyu noodle soup with silken noodles; and the deliciously hearty fried fish and beef rolls wrapped in a medley

of fresh vegetables and condiments. For dessert, try the rich yet refreshing banana sago in coconut juice. A further draw for coffee aficionados is the specially brewed Vietnamese coffee, filtered and served with a dollop or two of indulgent condensed milk. *Feast Village, Starhill Gallery. Tel: 03-2143 9778*



Chic Brews

Presenting Kuala Lumpur's latest place to be seen – Starhill Tea Salon

Cultures and continents blend beautifully at the Starhill Tea Salon, a cosy, intimate space that celebrates the history and appreciation of tea. The expansive menu features perennial brews that have evolved through the centuries. The beverage has enjoyed a special role in the cornerstone of empires from east to west. Tea was first discovered in China, introduced to India, and later emerged in England and Europe. At Starhill Tea Salon, the fine art of tea appreciation is brought to life once again, encouraging one to sit back and relax with a steaming pot of your favourite brew amidst the frenetic buzz of Bukit Bintang. *Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery. Tel: 03-2719 8550*



Island in the Sun

Explore Pangkor Laut Resort, a luxury resort set on its own private island, through the eyes of its resident naturalist Yip Yoon Wah. A published author and expert on local flora and wildlife, Yip is an animated guide well-versed in the magnificent sights and sounds of this veritable slice of Paradise.

"Pangkor Laut Resort has a variety of natural landscapes, much of which is hidden away by the mantle of dense rainforest untouched by man. The undulating topography spans low coastal hills to valleys. The jagged coastline is interspersed with rocky outcrops and sandy bays, including Emerald Bay, which has been accurately described as the world's largest swimming pool! This variation in topography allows for a rich diversity of micro-habitats for its flora and fauna."



Yip Yoon Wah, Pangkor Laut Resort's resident naturalist.



Many varieties of birds, including the buffy fish owl, call the rainforest fringing Pangkor Laut Resort home.

life moments//

Hornbills are a friendly sight, especially during breakfast time; they amuse guests with displays of aerial acrobatics.



Pangkor Laut Resort is the ultimate haven for relaxation, allowing one to do as much or as little as one pleases.





"Blessed with diverse natural landscapes, the resort boasts lush tropical vegetation - it's pleasing to the eye and appealing to the senses, and forges a harmonious whole with nature."



Amidst pristine greenery of a centuries-old rainforest, a vibrant collection of wildlife, including rare nesting bats, can be viewed on the daily nature walk offered by the resort.



“Visitors enjoy the jungle walks immensely when learning more about the tropical flora and fauna.”



“Pangkor Laut Resort has been developed to blend in with the natural environment as well as to preserve its bio-diversity and the ecological balance of its flora and fauna, the conservation of which holds paramount importance.”



schools of fish, then head to a nearby fish farm to learn the finer points of fishing. From sun and sea, you'll return to Pangkor Laut Resort to indulge in a relaxing massage at the spa.

Then, after a well-deserved pampering session, make time for a lesson conducted by the resort's chefs in how to cook delicious South East Asian cuisine. As a memorable finale, sample the dishes that you helped to prepare in a sumptuous feast.

A GIFT OF ART

With each treatment at Spa Village Pangkor Laut, guests are presented with their very own sarong. The beautifully ornate piece of art, created using time-honoured techniques, makes for a treasured memento, recalling the spa's indulgent therapies based on Asian healing modalities.



AL FRESCO RESORT DINING

Pangkor Laut Resort's Fisherman's Cove has all the ingredients necessary to conjure a delicious evening repast. With dazzling sea-views, the restaurant offers a truly unique symphony of Western Grill, fresh seafood and Italian cuisine. The dynamic open show-kitchen and state-of-the-art design invite all guests to journey into the exciting world of Asian fusion cuisine.



THE CHEF'S KITCHEN EXPERIENCE

Let Chef Danny take you on a trip to an outlying island where you can feed

Explore The World of YTL Hotels...



SHOOK! SHANGHAI AT THE SWATCH ART PEACE HOTEL CHINA

Perched on a space of symmetry and proportion, Shook! Shanghai features the skills of four epicurean chefs with four distinct cuisines. A show kitchen – dubbed the ‘Ferrari’ of kitchens, is where its signature dishes are created around the senses. The menu flirts with seasonal trends with whispers of Chinese, Japanese, Southeast Asian and modern Western, yet flexible enough to transport you anywhere your heart and palate desire. Another highlight at Shook! Shanghai is the showcase of the world’s finest wines and champagnes, including rare vintages from 1945 through 2000. Shook! Shanghai also houses The Time Bar and The Swatch Art Peace Hotel Terrace on the roof top overlooking a stunning backdrop of the Pudong skyline.



Tel: +86 (21) 6321 0021
www.shookrestaurantshanghai.com

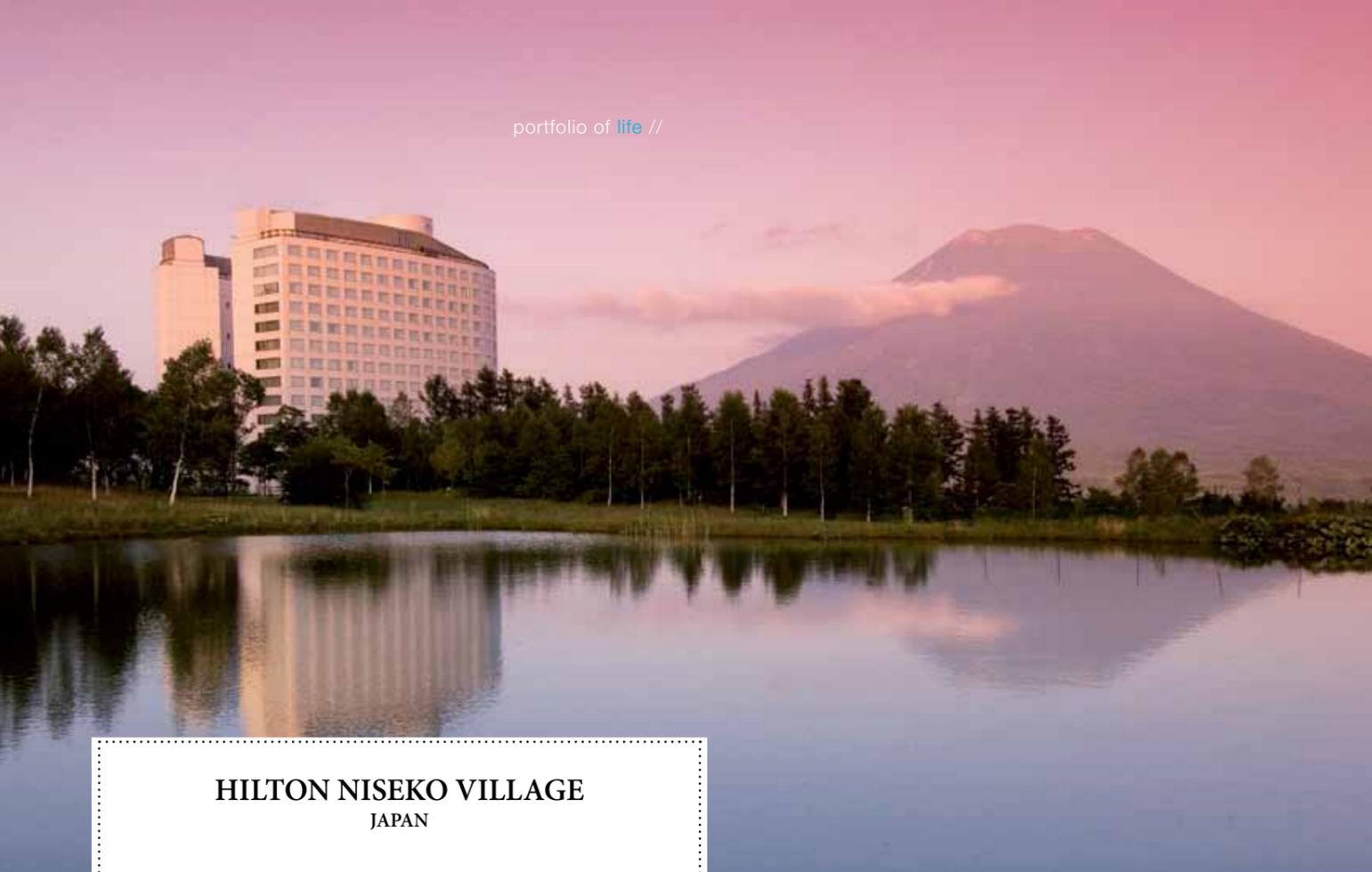


THE GREEN LEAF NISEKO VILLAGE HOKKAIDO, JAPAN

Located in the heart of Niseko Village in Hokkaido, the newly unveiled The Green Leaf Niseko Village is the premium contemporary resort in Niseko, appealing to guests who want to enjoy a seamless experience of stay, snow and ski. The 200 room ski-in, ski-out resort is perfectly placed for all activities and a variety of dining options including the Lookout Café and the hotel's rooftop bar, Altitude. Alternatively relax in the forested *onsen*, a therapeutic natural volcanic hot spring guaranteed to soak away tension and time.



Tel: +81 (0)136 44 3311
www.thegreenleafhotel.com



HILTON NISEKO VILLAGE JAPAN

Set at the foot of the Niseko Annapuri Mountain, the Hilton Niseko Village is the perfect base from which to enjoy a huge variety of outdoor activities throughout the year. Ski on powdery slopes during the winter season, and enjoy family-friendly facilities such as the Niseko Ski Village ski school, Niseko Kids ski programme, a luxurious spa, and five restaurants.

There are also two 18-hole championship golf courses nearby (one designed by Arnold Palmer), a tennis complex, an equestrian centre and a unique nature-based activity area called 'PURE' complete with tree-trekking and beginners golf.

Tel: +81 136441111
www.niseko-village.com



CAMERON HIGHLANDS RESORT MALAYSIA

Set amidst tea plantations and rolling hills, this tranquil 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 largely unchanged since its colonial heyday, this 'little corner of England in Asia' is still dotted with Tudor-style cottages, a place where scones and afternoon tea will not seem out of place.

The resort with its tall French doors, timber-beamed ceilings, plantation shutters and a fireplace add old-world charm to the surroundings. It also houses a Spa Village as well as an eighteen hole golf course and 56 luxuriously appointed rooms and suites which weave in wondrous colours and textures of Jim Thompson's famous silks.

Tel: +60 3 2783 1000
www.cameronhighlandsresort.com



PANGKOR LAUT RESORT MALAYSIA

Pangkor Laut is a privately owned island located three miles off the west coast of Malaysia along the Straits of Malacca. This piece of paradise has been 2 million years in the making, and it is here one finds one of the world's premier award-winning resorts nestling in the shade of forest giants as old as the land.

There are no other resorts – just secluded bays curled around pristine beaches, evening skies woven with colour, and a deep sense of serenity reserved exclusively for guests. A combination of luxury, natural beauty and age-old wilderness woven together to produce an environment where peace and magically memorable moments are the currency.

Of the island's 300 acres, only a fraction has been developed to house the resort and its eight estates. Wooden buildings blend seamlessly with the forest as if nature had been the architect dictating how walls curve around foliage, and roofs open up to allow trees to continue on their journey to the sky.

Tel: +60 3 2783 1000
www.pangkorlautresort.com



THE ESTATES AT PANGKOR LAUT RESORT MALAYSIA

In a small secluded cove near Pangkor Laut Resort rests the eight wonders that comprise 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 placed amidst gardens of astounding beauty.

Comprising two, three or four bedrooms, each Estate offers a private infinity-edge pool, as well as 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 at one of the resort's restaurants or to go for a treatment at the Spa Village.

Tel: +60 3 2783 1000
www.pangkorlautestates.com





portfolio of life //

THE MAJESTIC MALACCA MALAYSIA

The historic city of Malacca is steeped in a rich tapestry of multicultural influences reflected in its heritage architecture, diverse lifestyles and eclectic cuisine.

Located on the banks of the river which in yesteryear teemed with Chinese junks and spice-laden vessels from all over the world, The Majestic Malacca provides a glimpse into the splendid saga of an extraordinary empire.

The Majestic Malacca is an integral part of Malacca's colourful history. The original serene mansion, dating back to the 1920s, remains at the heart of the hotel, whilst a new building has been created, mirroring the original architecture, to house 54 spacious rooms and suites.

From the original porcelain flooring, teakwood fittings, intricate artwork and antiques, to the finely crafted Nyonya cuisine, every aspect echoes the history of the region, and offers a beguiling journey through this enchanting heritage.

Tel: +60 3 2783 1000
www.majesticmalacca.com



TANJONG JARA RESORT MALAYSIA

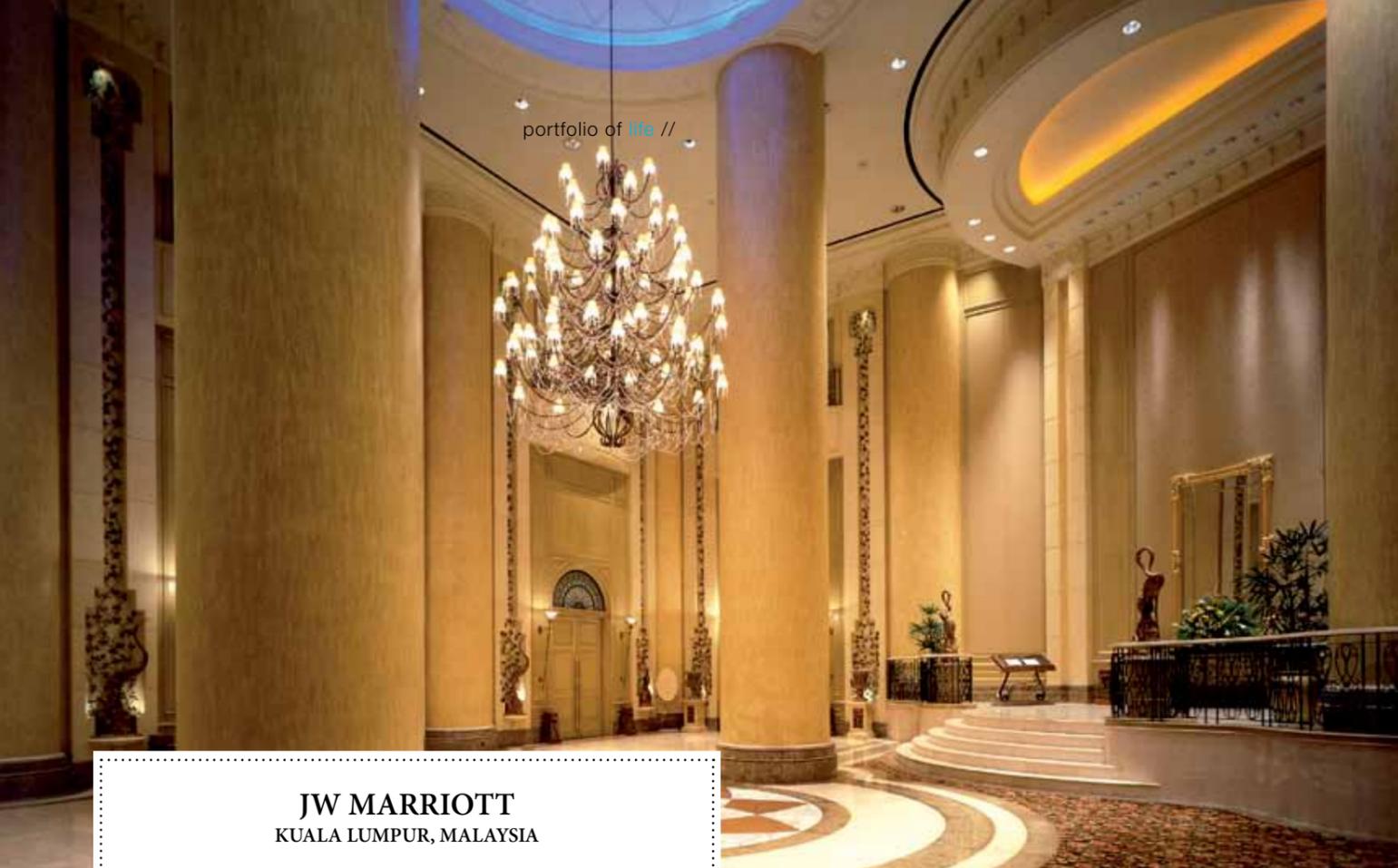
Located on the east coast of peninsular Malaysia, Tanjong Jara Resort is a sanctuary of luxury and well-being steeped in age-old Malay traditions. Designed to reflect the elegance and grandeur of 17th Century Malay palaces, Tanjong Jara is a 99-room resort embodiment of the gentle Malay art of service and hospitality.

The philosophy of the Resort is as unique as the Resort itself. Based on the Malay concept of *Sucimurni*, which emphasises purity of spirit, health and well-being, Tanjong Jara encourages true rejuvenation of both body and spirit.

Tanjong Jara is an opportunity to withdraw from the pressures of this ever-changing world by offering a chance to immerse oneself in a sanctuary of serenity and beauty.

Tel: +60 3 2783 1000
www.tanjongjararesort.com





JW MARRIOTT KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

Guest rooms at JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur offer the ultimate in comfort and convenience, designed with the discerning business traveller in mind. An ample work area with adjustable desk lighting and ergonomic chair provides a comfortable environment for executives. Desk-mounted electrical outlets, two-line speaker telephones with call-waiting facility, fax modem and voice mail make for easy communication around the world.

Accommodation comprises 561 guest rooms with 294 Deluxe Kings, 172 Deluxe Twins, 25 Executive Deluxe Rooms, 19 Studio Suites, 32 Junior Suites, 2 Executive Studio Suites, 2 Executive Junior Suites, 8 one-bedroom Suites, 3 two-bedroom Suites, 2 VIP Suites, a Chairman's Suite and a luxurious Presidential Suite.

The 29-storey hotel recently opened three new floors comprising mainly suites with contemporary design and luxury fittings. Marriott Marquis Platinum and Gold card members and guests occupying suites enjoy access to the JW Lounge – with its complimentary breakfast, light refreshments and evening cocktails.

Tel: +60 3 2715 9000
www.marriott.com



THE RITZ-CARLTON KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

Discover the exclusive Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur and experience a place where ancient rivers converge and a modern city beckons guests to explore the sights, sounds and flavours of Malaysia. Located downtown in the Golden Triangle business district, this distinctive five-star luxury hotel in Kuala Lumpur is conveniently accessible to upscale shopping, dining and entertainment. At The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, guests can indulge in soothing spa treatments, delectable cuisine or simply relax in the exceptional comfort of their rooms and take in the best the city has to offer.

The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur is the city's first award-winning full-butler hotel featuring 365 guest rooms and suites. The fresh style of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur is influenced by a variety of themes reflecting Malaysia's diverse artistry of ethnic cultures. The dark toned woods with angular designs reflect masculinity while details like brass inlays add a touch of elegance. Rich earthy tones in the carpet and wall coverings are used to create a cosy, warm home-away-from-home ambience, while hidden modern technologies add a modern yet subtle flair.

Tel: +60 3 2142 8000
www.ritzcarlton.com





VILLA TASSANA PHUKET, THAILAND

Set amidst a tropical forest on a craggy cliff overlooking the beautiful emerald green of the Andaman Sea is a gem on the YTL Hotels portfolio of luxury holiday destinations. Located just 15 minutes away from Phuket International Airport on the island's quiet, undeveloped North Western coastline, Villa Tassana offers guests a vacation of modern sophistication married with Thai hospitality.

Spread over a generous 2,800 square metres, the villa features 3 large bedrooms with ensuite bath and dressing areas, a 15 metre swimming pool, separate living and dining pavilions, a kitchen and a maid's room. For those looking to get away from it all, Villa Tassana is staffed by one dedicated attendant and a chef specialising in delicious home-style Thai dishes.

Guests can also enjoy the first-class spa and sports facilities located at the nearby Trisara Hotel. There are three excellent golf courses nearby, including the exclusive Blue Canyon course, and a range of luxury motor yachts available to explore Phuket's many bays, islands and dive locations.

Tel: +60 3 2783 1000



THE SURIN PHUKET, THAILAND

The Surin Phuket offers guests a choice of 108 thatched cottages that sit cosily under a canopy of coconut groves, where landscaped slopes gently descend to meet a private stretch of sandy shore.

The appeal of the spacious 89 one-bedroom and 19 two-bedroom cottages is further enhanced with private verandahs, secluded sun decks, and handcrafted teak floors.

Renowned for its warm island hospitality and rustic serenity, The Surin Phuket also provides spa services, dining venues, meeting facilities and recreational activities. The Surin Phuket – a veritable gateway to a tropical island paradise.

Tel: +60 3 2783 1000
www.ytlhotels.com





SPA VILLAGE RESORT TEMBOK, BALI, INDONESIA

Dawn rises and an indigo curtain of stars is drawn back from the sky, exposing a dramatic landscape of soaring peaks that sweep down across grassy lowlands to the black volcanic sand that kisses the blue of the Bali sea. You are in Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali and the day has just begun.

Inspired by the award-winning Spa Village Pangkor Laut, Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali embraces the same healing ethos of celebrating the local culture, honouring the ancient remedies of the region and infusing each visit with the essence of the surrounding scenery.

Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali is a place of peacefulness and calm, combining the therapeutic value of its beautiful location with an ancient and rich cultural heritage. Reflecting the spirituality of ages the environment here is soft and serene; its people go about their days in a caring manner that brings calm to the harried and peace to the stressed; here, at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali it is possible to recapture one's sense of self.

Tel: +60 3 2783 1000
www.spavillage.com



EASTERN & ORIENTAL EXPRESS

The Eastern & Oriental Express is more than a train service: at its maximum length the quarter of a mile in length train is a haven of comfort, style and luxury and the perfect vantage point from which to tour the region. The Restaurant Cars, Saloon Car and Bar Car are located at the centre of the train, while the Observation Car with its open deck area is located at the rear.

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 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 luxurious bedroom.

Chefs onboard the E&O Express are internationally renowned for their tantalising variety of Eastern and European dishes, using the finest fresh seasonal ingredients.

www.easternandorientalexpress.com





portfolio of life

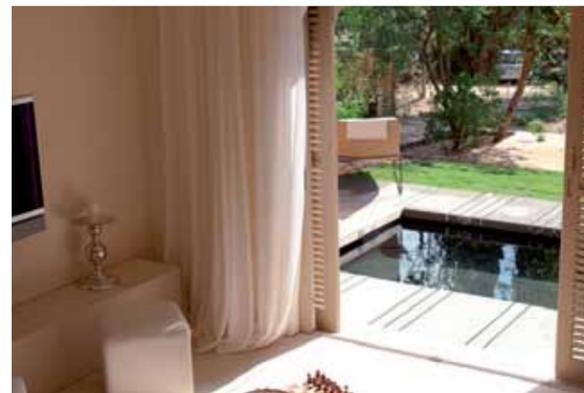
MUSE HÔTEL DE LUXE
FRANCE

Bardot would no doubt approve of Saint-Tropez newcomer, Muse Hôtel De Luxe, just minutes from the Place de Lices by car, situated on the stunning Ramatuelle 'route de plages' road set amongst an ecological landscape of terraced gardens.

Fifteen ultra chic suites (ten featuring private plunge pools) are dedicated to famous muses such as 'Edith', after Edith Piaf, 'Catherine', after Catherine Deneuve and 'Lauren' after Lauren Bacall. Each suite sports a unique interior but all blend seamlessly with cool stone floors and mamorino wall finishes. Thoughtful touches include a 42" Loewe plasma screen with over 100 channels, a PlayStation, iPad and iPhone.

Designed with pure lines, a cool elegant reception area and outdoor water cascades, the hotel is a reflection of architectural simplicity, immediately stamping its original and stylish signature on the Saint-Tropezian landscape.

Tel: +334 94 430 440
www.muse-hotels.com



BRAY HOUSE
ENGLAND

An elegant private home dating back to the late 17th century, Bray House has been restored and transformed into an elegant, high design boutique home stay. Featuring an eclectic mix of interiors spanning the Art Deco period of the early 1900s, Bray House is a unique experience of the gentrified English lifestyle complete with bespoke service and intimate atmosphere.

Designer furniture, vintage accessories and vivid splashes of colour create an atmosphere that marries the modern and the classic. Each of the bedrooms has its own theme: a lullaby of white or a symphony of Tuscany red in another. Bray House also features a private courtyard and a natural spring found in the garden.

The idyllic village of Bray, near Windsor, is quintessentially English with its period houses, traditional pubs with beamed ceilings and fireplaces and a beautifully restored church dating back to 1293.

Tel: +44 162 858 3505



1. Spa Village Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

This unique retreat offers the world's most sophisticated therapies integrated with traditional healing practices of the region. Paying tribute to Malaysia's fascinating cultural diversity and rich healing heritage, this most stylish of spas seamlessly blends ancient and modern practices, using natural local ingredients to deliver blissful relaxation and rejuvenation.

2. Spa Village Tanjong Jara Malaysia

At Spa Village Tanjong Jara, time-tested health and beauty traditions are revived in the most comforting surrounds. Guests can benefit from a comprehensive programme of therapies created using unique ingredients from indigenous herbs and plants, along with the skills of resident Malay healers.

3. Spa Village Malacca Malaysia

The Spa Village Malacca is the world's only spa to base its therapies on the healing heritage of the Baba-Nyonya or Peranakan culture – a unique combination of Chinese and Malay influences. The spa is spread across the first two floors of the new wing and provides a serene environment in which one can rest, recuperate and rejuvenate in the care of some of the world's best therapists.

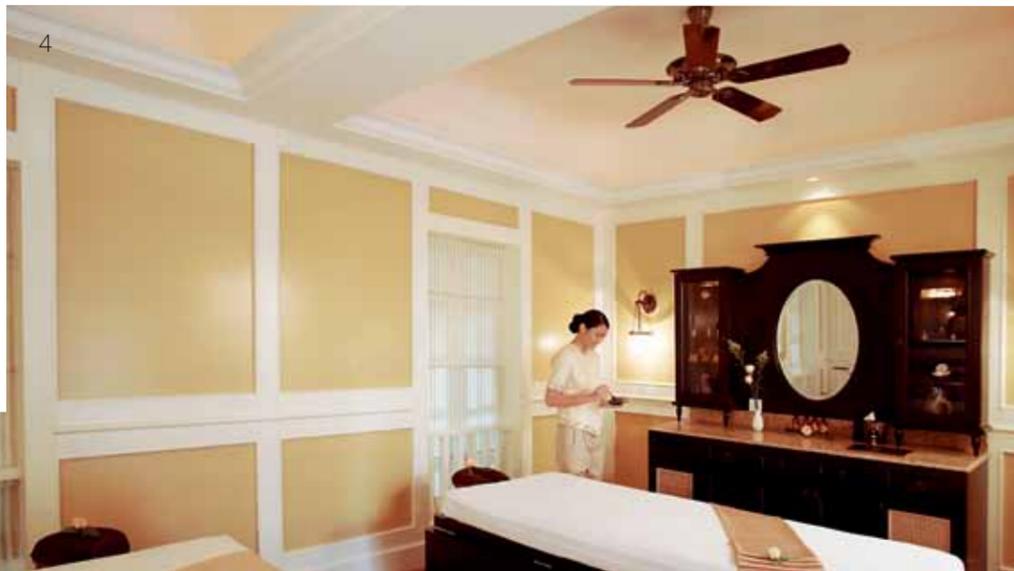
4. Spa Village Cameron Highlands Malaysia

Cameron Highlands Resort features the third wellness centre of the award-winning Spa Village brand with a wide range of sophisticated treatments and healing therapies inspired by the restorative properties of tea. Each guest luxuriates in a signature tea bath before every treatment. Cameron Highlands Spa Village offers tranquil indoor and outdoor treatment rooms, tea bath rooms and a fully-equipped gymnasium.

5. Spa Village Pangkor Laut Malaysia

The Spa Village at Pangkor Laut Resort is a unique ultra-exclusive retreat that extols the healing cultures of Malaysia's diverse history of people and cultures and vast abundance of exotic natural resources. The abundance of Malay, Chinese, Indian and Thai practices make this the ideal tranquil setting for complete rejuvenation of body and soul.

Tel: +60 3 2783 1000
www.spavillage.com





portfolio of life //

FEAST VILLAGE
KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

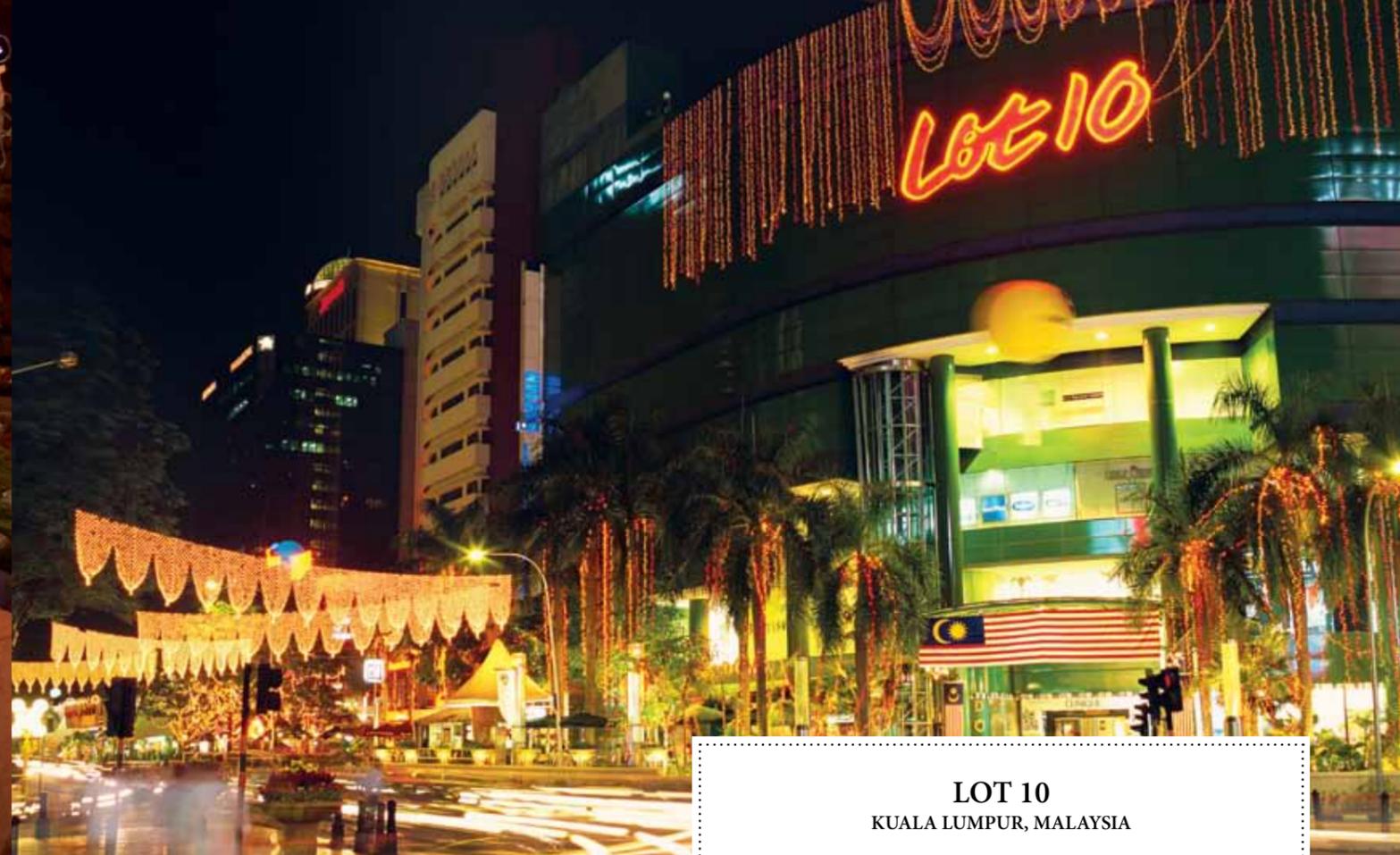
Feast till your heart is content in our Feast Village, a dramatic, stylish dining haven with a village charm. Here, you will find 11 uniquely designed restaurants serving a mix of world-class cuisine and providing a display of culinary skill embodied in a chic and contemporary atmosphere.

Restaurants and bars at Feast Village include Fisherman's Cove, Luk Yu Tea House, Pak Loh Chiu Chow, Tarbush, Sentidos Tapas, Shook!, Jake's Charbroil Steak, Vansh, KoRyo Won, Enak, My Thai and Village Bar.

The design of Feast Village is inspired by nature. Walls are asymmetrical and serve not to separate, but rather to provide peace enclaves where people may relax.

Rice paper from Japan combines with slate and ikat from Indonesia, granite from China, silk from Thailand, and timber on Myanmar to create the essence of Asia from a design perspective, making Feast Village truly one-of-a-kind.

Tel: +60 3 2782 3855
www.starhillgallery.com



LOT 10
KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

An iconic architectural landmark since the 1990s, the shopping and lifestyle destination, Lot 10, has undergone significant renovation from its basement to its rooftop bringing in a new age of modern style.

The Forest in The City theme is immediately apparent in the inspiring drama of the rooftop of Lot 10. Mature trees of dappled barks and emerging foliage rise above manicured shrubs to greet guests with a refreshing welcome of abundant green.

A dramatic landscape that emulates towering cliffs of overhanging ferns and flora, and a variety of tropical plants against the skies of Kuala Lumpur serve as the stunning backdrop for a unique host of urban lifestyle pursuits and experiences that are exclusive only to Lot 10 at the rooftop.

www.lot10.com.my



It Takes A Star

Actress Michelle Yeoh is recognised around the world for her film projects including Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the 1997 James Bond instalment *Tomorrow Never Dies* and followed this year by *The Lady*.



Image from Icon Magazine

In the Luc Besson-directed film, the Ipoh-born star takes on a role of a lifetime, bringing to the big screen a bio-epic based on the life and the struggles of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Yeoh speaks exclusively to *YTL Life* about the multi-faceted activities, ranging from headlining films to humanitarian efforts she champions both in Asia and internationally.

An indulgence I would never resist is... pink champagne.

My favourite rooms are... the study and the bedroom.

The book(s) on my bedside table are: *The Perfect Hostage* by Justin Wintle; *The Lady: Aung San Suu Kyi Nobel Laureate and Burma's Prisoner* by Barbara Victor; and *Freedom From Fear* by Aung San Suu Kyi.

My favourite way to relax is... watching a good movie at the cinema.

Style is... all about having confidence and personality.

The most memorable place I have travelled to recently... the Sea of Cortez near Mexico. I swam with sea lions; I saw whales as well as a variety of birds.

The people who have inspired me the most... I am inspired by people from all walks of life.

What makes me smile... children.

The projects I am currently working on are... publicising my latest film *The Lady* and working on the Campaign for United Nations' Decade of Action for Road Safety.

A lasting memory from my childhood is... fishing with my dad.

When life doesn't go my way... I find a new path.

If I wasn't doing what I am doing now, I would be... I am having too much fun to think about that. However, sometimes, I wish I were a doctor. ❏



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