

YTL *life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine

Azur Like It
Spring Arrives in
Saint-Tropez

**Cuisine Sans
Frontieres**

Chef Martin Yan on
Eating, Drinking & Living

Sound Trek

Celebrated Film Music
Composer, Michael Brook

The Art of Jamu • SIHH 2011 Report • Tomas Maier

A gallery that's steeped in luxury and swathed in splendour.

STARHILL
GALLERY
A Gallery of Rich Experiences

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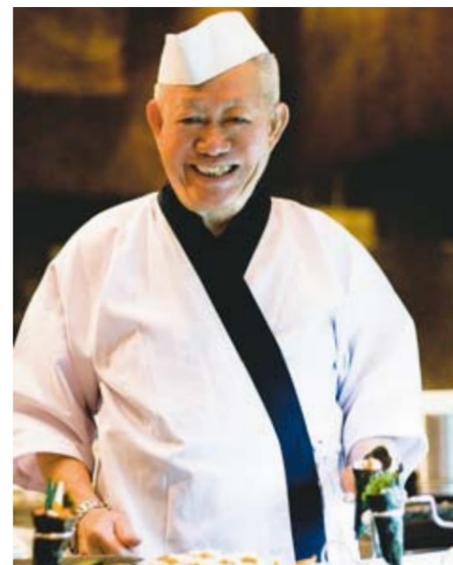
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権兵衛サン GONBEI SAN

Authentic Japanese Cuisine

Re-Opening at
Starhill Gallery with
Master Chef Lew



Icon of Authentic Japanese Cuisine In Malaysia

It's a culinary *tour de force* in Japanese cuisine at Gonbei San with Master Chef Lew, a pioneer who created the Soft Shell Crab Maki in the 1970s which was replicated by other Japanese restaurants in Malaysia.

For the first time, Master Chef Lew and his son Head Chef David Liew will join forces in a "Father-and-Son" collaboration to continue the legacy of signature dishes. Only at Gonbei San in Starhill Gallery.

Reservation +603 2782 3801 Operation hours 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm, 6:30 pm - 11:00 pm
www.starhillgallery.com Starhill Gallery, Relish Floor, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur.



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A Note from Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh

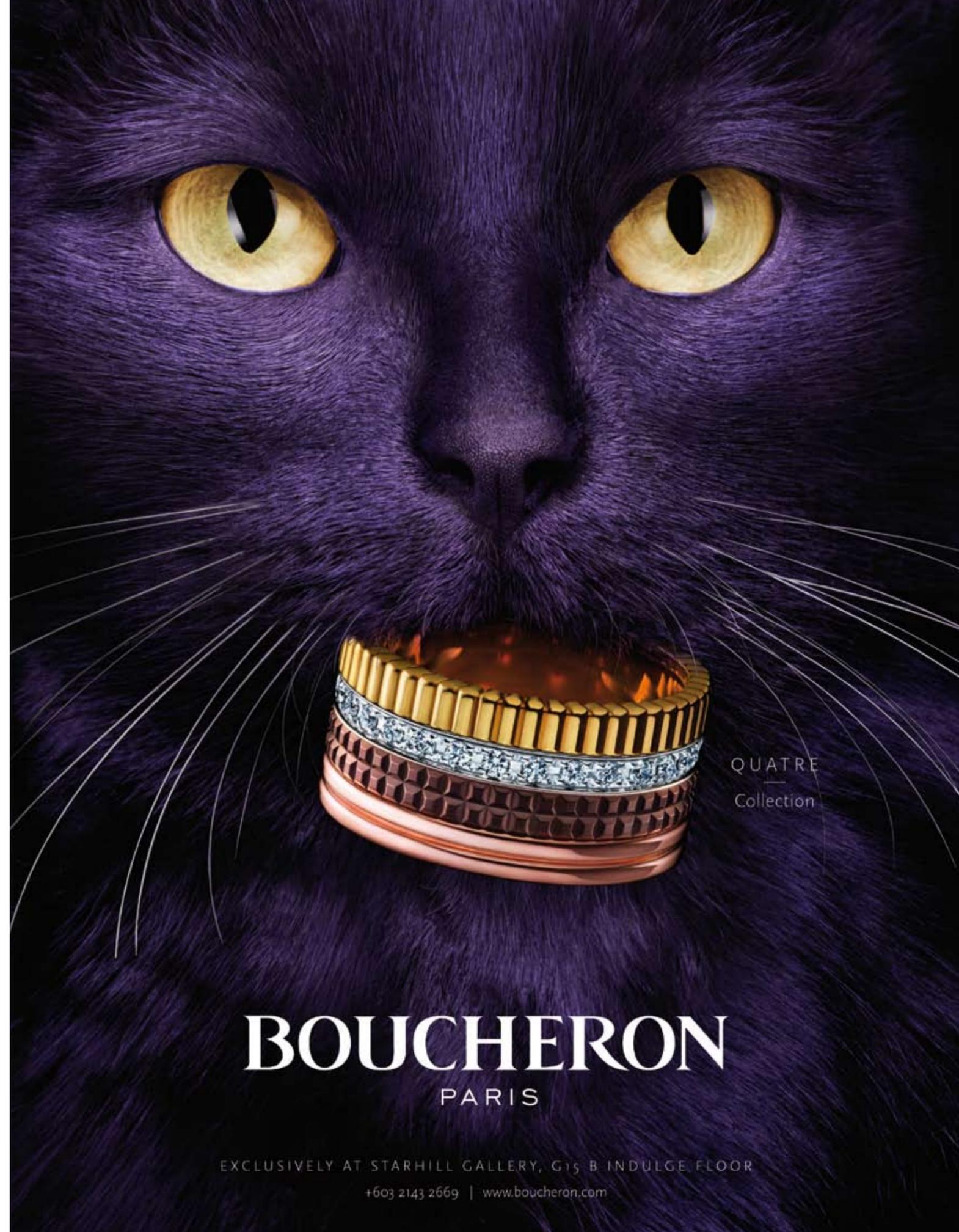
As the Muse Hôtel de Luxe in the South of France reopens to welcome spring, it is a signal to herald the French Riviera's new social season. In just over a year, we are delighted to note that this YTL Hotels property has established itself as a beautiful new face on the Saint-Tropez scene. Its M Restaurant is particularly popular with the visiting jet set. Read how its chef, Nicolas Le Toumelin honed his unique brand of cuisine, which the restaurant is increasingly renowned for on page 14. Still on the subject of food, we are pleased to have welcomed world-renowned chef, Martin Yan, as he travelled through Kuala Lumpur recently.

Guests at our properties around the world might also have noticed exciting new music filtering through the public spaces. This special soundtrack represents a synergistic collaboration between YTL Hotels' music specialist Gavin Aldred and celebrated Hollywood composer Michael Brook who was responsible for the soundtracks of the Oscar winners *The Fighter* and documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*, amongst others.

On a daily basis, we are fed news on how the planet is in turmoil: strings of natural disasters happening all over the world and stories of countries facing drought and famine. As a concerted effort to highlight these environmental issues, YTL Corporation recently held concurrent Earth Hour events at the group's properties around the world that brought home a key point: as stewards of this earth, it is our duty to protect and to conserve the world's resources for the generations that follow. We aim to do our part in spreading the green message. We hope each and everyone does likewise.



Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh
Managing Director
YTL Corporation



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TREASURED PLACES, TREASURED MOMENTS.

MUSE HÔTEL DE LUXE
Saint-Tropez, France



NISEKO VILLAGE
Hokkaido, Japan



SWATCH ART PEACE HOTEL RESIDENCES
Shanghai, China



SPA VILLAGE RESORT TEMBOK, BALI
Bali, Indonesia



PANGKOR LAUT RESORT
Malaysia



TANJONG JARA RESORT
Malaysia

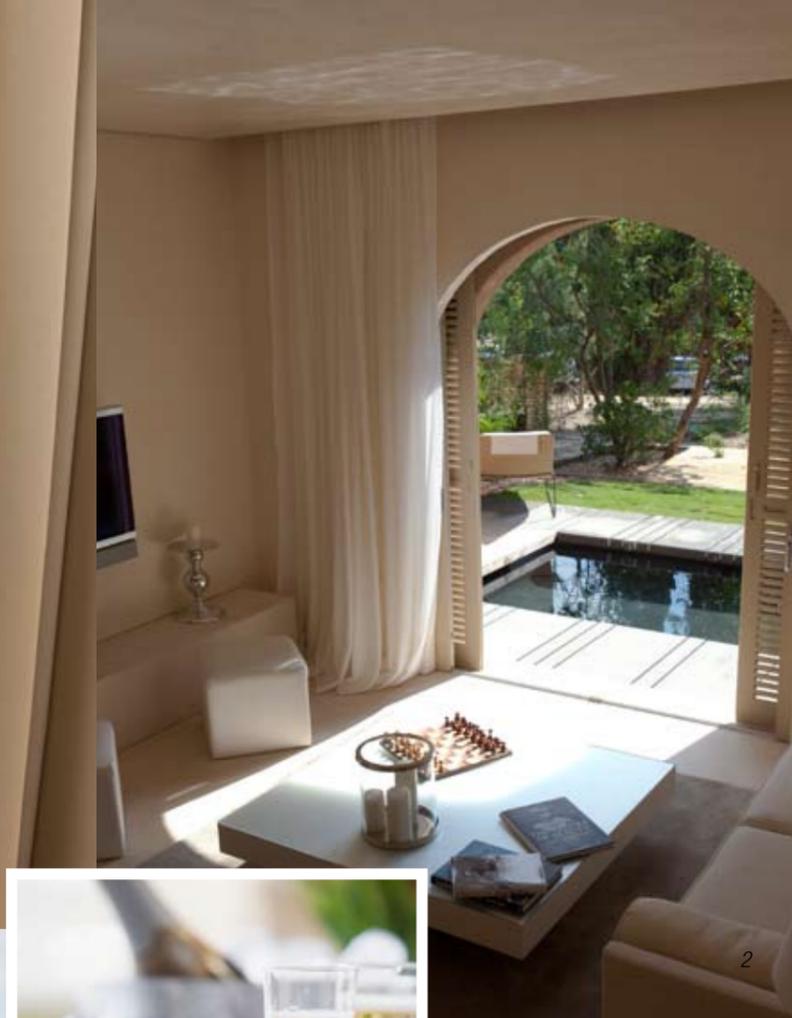
Saint-Tropez ♦ Niseko Village ♦ Shanghai ♦ Pangkor Laut ♦ Tanjong Jara ♦ Bali ♦ Phuket
Borneo: 2011 ♦ Koh Samui: 2013

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YTL HOTELS
www.ytlhotels.com



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3

Tropezian Chic

Celebrate the season of style at the sleek Muse Hôtel de Luxe, which is set to reopen this April.

Situated on the Ramatuelle 'route de plages' road and nestled within a beguiling landscape of terraced gardens, the elegant retreat comprises 15 impressive suites (10 with private pools) overlooking the magnificent landscaped gardens. This dream setting is just minutes from Saint-Tropez Place de Lices, considered as one of the world's most stylish epicentres.

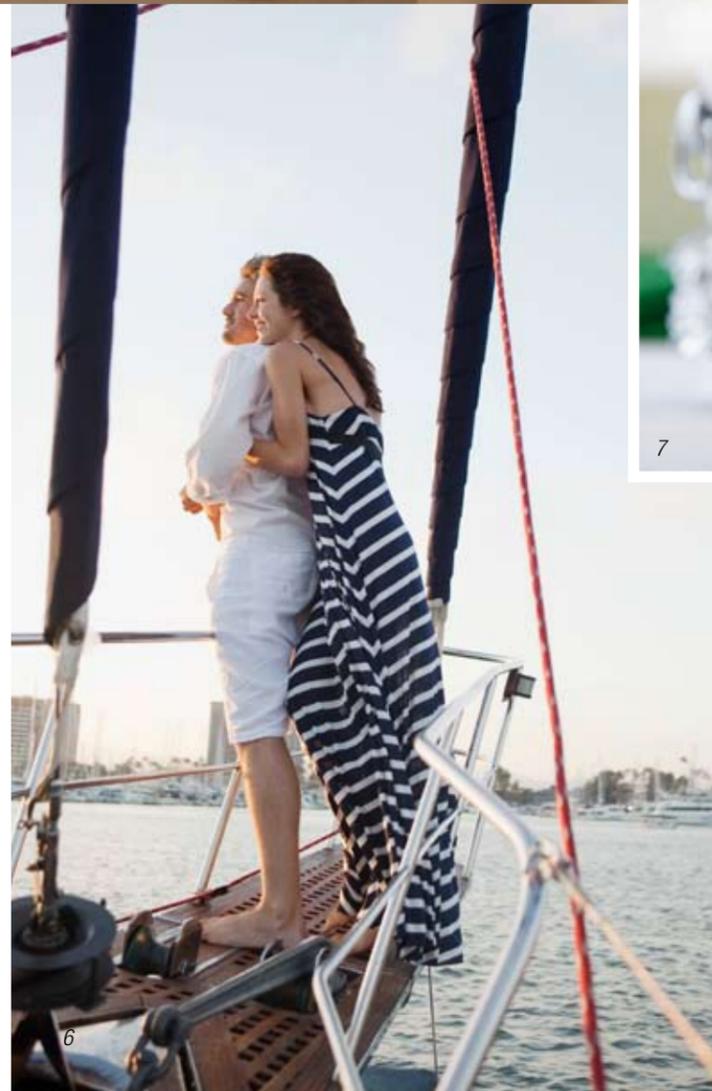
Each of the 15 luxuriously appointed suites, designed as a private residence, has a private garden. 10 suites feature swimming pools affording a sense of privacy. The interiors of each suite are set in warm, creamy off-white and beige tones and subdued lighting while in-suite massage tables set the perfect ambience for the most restful therapies. The spacious suites can also be transformed into party areas for guests to entertain and indulge in fine wines from the in-suite private wine cabinet while relaxing by their private pool.

While each suite is characteristically individual in their decor and ambience, all share cool French stone flooring, mamorino wall finishes and stylish cool furnishings. Exclusive retro-chic furniture made-to-order and carved by the Henryot Company is reminiscent of the elegant exuberance of the Art Deco period, but softened with fine, sensuous materials like linen, cotton and silk, all by Pierre Frey. ■



7

(1-5; 7) Aspects of Muse Hôtel de Luxe that personify an ultra chic lifestyle; (6) One of the many private yachts docked in Saint-Tropez harbour.



6



5



4

The Taste of Summer

As the Muse Hôtel de Luxe reopens this April for the 2011 season, Chef Nicolas Le Toumelin of its M Restaurant, lets us in on the simple elegance of his cuisine.



life on the cover //

Breton-born Chef Nicolas Le Toumelin is in his element when discussing one of his great passions in life — the freshest seafood prepared in the traditional French style. These standout creations at M Restaurant, the flagship dining room of the Muse Hôtel de Luxe in Saint-Tropez, are flavoured by a bounty of locally sourced herbs and condiments. In a little less than a year, his signature dishes at M Restaurant—together with his bubbly personality—have won him admirers amongst Saint-Tropez's beau monde and the international jet set such as actress Michelle Yeoh and actor Olivier Martinez.

"The past year was an exciting time for us at M Restaurant. Within that short span of time, we have become accepted as part of the Saint-Tropez scene. In fact, as a hotel restaurant, M's immense success is something we can all be proud of," says the beaming 33-year-old chef.

What are the signature flavours at M Restaurant?

I have divided the flavours into seafood and truffle-based menus. In terms of flavour, I am trying to achieve tastes that are as natural as possible. I source fish from small villages in the region and in Brittany. In terms of products from Provence, I make the most of flavours and ingredients like olive oil, lemon as well as fresh herbs like basil and thyme. I have also designed a menu with Chef Clement Bruno, who bases his entire menu on truffles. So we have signature dishes like potato and truffles cream. We also bake a truffle-based pastry with foie gras and sliced pickles.

What are your favourite seasonal ingredients?

I have been working in many restaurants over the past 15 years. And I tend to base my cuisine around seafood. As the hotel is open during the summer, I use products that are available during that period of time, such as aubergine and ripe juicy tomatoes. The cuisine is quite light; it's not heavy. People in the South of France are always health-conscious, always careful about what they eat.

Do you have any culinary inspirations?

London-based chef, Pascal Proyart, taught me all I know about preparing seafood. He showed me various techniques as well as imparted me with the love of creating the finest fish dishes. He continues to be a true inspiration for me.

When Muse Hôtel de Luxe and the M Restaurant reopens this April, what specialties have you in store?

I have picked a small selection, around 20% of the same dishes I had on the menu last year. There is the Andalucia gazpacho, a light soup with a lot of spice mixed with king crab from Alaska. I will keep the black ink risotto with cod. I will also produce



Top: Sesame tuna tartar with poached quail egg
Bottom: Black cod with squid ink risotto with a white tomato emulsion

new dishes with sea bream and lobster. Last year, we did not feature any pasta dishes on the menu. But, there is a demand amongst diners at the restaurant for such dishes, so this year, lobster pasta will be on the menu.

Do you think there is a culinary trend that signals a return to traditional flavours?

There have always been basic ideas and concepts related to French cooking that cannot be avoided, and if you try to avoid them, those very ideas will come back to you [in a variety of ways]. For instance, our clientele at the M Restaurant has a penchant for traditional French cuisine, so we work to refine tastes and flavours, while making the most of the region's freshest and most delectable ingredients.

What is your view of fusion cuisine?

When I lived in London about 10 years ago, there was a big fusion cuisine wave taking place. The city is very cosmopolitan. There was a huge connection between Thai, Japanese and Italian cuisines and some chefs began to create fusion dishes. To some extent, I found this interesting, but I also found it to be slightly dangerous as it takes a long time, a lot of effort and immeasurable technique to be an expert in fusion cuisine. There are some things I believe should be worked on but I am not a believer of fusion cuisine. My style remains decidedly French. But, naturally, I have in my repertoire of Asian dishes. Since joining YTL Hotels & Resorts, I have incorporated several dishes from Kuala Lumpur, such as Shook!'s legendary Dancing Prawns which has been equally well-received in Saint-Tropez. ■



Clockwise right: Henri Matisse's *Fauteuil Rocaille*, 1946, at Matisse Museum Nice; Matisse Museum; Artist Armand Pierre Fernandez in his studio; Museum of Fine Arts in Nice.



P This side of paradise

For over a century, the Côte d'Azur or the French Riviera has been the epicentre of style, and culture for aristocrats, artists and celebrities. Experience these artistic inspirations on a personalised journey showcasing some of the world's most exquisite works of art.

Text by Noelle Lim

Attracted to and drawn in by the light, the vivid colours and the phenomenal vistas of the Mediterranean coastline, some of the finest artists in history have discovered their muses in that inspiring locale. They include, amongst others, individuals like Pierre Auguste-Renoir, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and Marc Chagall and their modern art successors – César, Yves Klein, Arman, and Niki de St-Phalle. The incandescent landscape provided the perfect setting for these artists to exchange ideas, and unearth a new appreciation of colours. Some of their greatest and most expensive works were produced during these days and evenings spent in South of France.

Pierre Auguste-Renoir (1841-1919)

Pierre Auguste-Renoir relocated to Cagnes-sur-Mer to experience the warmer weather and spent his last 12 years there. By then, he had established himself as a master of Impressionism and some of his greatest works were produced before his move to this region. 11 of his paintings and sculptures in his private collection and personal items remain housed in the villa where he lived. Renoir was also a mentor to Matisse and helped sharpen the latter's focus on colours, and most importantly,

encouraged him to push the boundaries of art.

Henri Matisse (1869-1954)

Often hailed as one of the most important French painters of the 20th century, Henri Matisse was famous for being the ringleader of the Fauvist movement that broke away from Impressionism. Matisse had experimented with different styles, from Impressionism to abstraction, but his move to the French Riviera in 1905 to recover from bronchitis was a pivotal point in his career. It was here he decided to abandon three-dimensional effect for simplified pure colours, flat shape and strong patterns, a style where he felt he found his calling.

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)

Spanish artist Pablo Picasso had gained fame and notoriety before he moved to the South of France where he continued living the high life. When in Vallauris Golfe-Juan in 1947, he developed an interest in ceramic, and produced over 4000 of them at his Fournas workshop. He also lived in Château Grimaldi, now converted to become the National Picasso Museum in Antibes, before settling in Cannes in the 1950s where he established his studio in a sumptuous

19th century home called La Villa California, overlooking the Mediterranean.

Marc Chagall (1887-1985)

One of the most famous Russian-Jewish artists, Marc Chagall was a fiercely independent visual and stained glass artist, rejecting the intellectualism of Cubism and the realist style that had besieged his peers, and instead, veering to surrealism to depict joy. His love for life was re-discovered when he moved to Saint Paul de Vence in 1950, following the death of his wife. The master's appreciation for vibrant hues was sharpened following commissions to create the stained glass windows at Saint Paul. His works were colourful, dreamlike and included elements of Russian folk art, icon painting, scriptures and fantastical characters.

Raoul Dufy (1877-1953)

Nice-born Raoul Dufy is most famous for his colourful and exuberant French landscapes painted in the Fauvism style, characterised by distinctive black lines, skeletal structures and thin washes of colours. His works, ranging from cheerful scenes of peasants in the market to fashionable people at chic parties, can be seen in *La Foire Aux Oignons* (1907) sold by Sotheby's in 2007 for US\$8,027,012, and *Fete A Sainte-Adresse* (1906) sold in 2004 for US\$3,144,000.

Yves Klein (1928-1962)

Despite a relatively short career of a mere eight years, Yves Klein, a Nice-born artist is credited for being an early post-modernist who straddled the period from modern art's pre-occupation with material objects to the conceptual rigour of contemporary art. A charismatic showman, he identified himself as "the painter of space". Like other artists who come from South France, he had a heightened sense of colour, and explored spirituality and aesthetics using pure colour and performance. His most famous works include monochromatic gold and intense ultramarine blue paint elements, referred to as International Klein Blue (IKB). At a Sotheby's auction in 2008, his work *MG9 Gold Leaf on Panel* (1962), a monochromatic gold painting, was reportedly acquired by Francois Pinault, head of the luxury conglomerate PPR, for the record price of US\$ 23,561,000. ■

ON THE ART TRAIL

The art trail along the French Riviera begins at Vence to Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, including Cagnes-sur-Mer and Nice.

Renoir; Renoir Museum, Chemin des Collettes, Cagnes-sur-Mer.
Tel: +33 04 9320 6107

Picasso: National Picasso Museum, Place de la liberation, Vallauris.
Tel: +33 04 9364 7183;
Château Grimaldi, Antibes.
Tel: +33 04 9290 5420;
André Villers Photography Museum, Mougins.

Matisse: Rosary Chapel, 466 Avenue Henri-Matisse, Cagnes-sur-Mer.
Tel: +33 04 9358 0326;
Villa Le Rêve, 261 Avenue Henri-Matisse, Cagnes-sur-Mer.
Tel: +33 04 9358 8268;
164 Avenue des Arènes de Cimiez, Nice. Tel: +33 04 9381 0808

Series of Biblical Messages; Marc Chagall Museum, Docteur Ménard, Nice. Tel: +33 04 9353 8720;
guided tours retracing the footsteps of Chagall to art studios in Saint Paul de Vence.

Information is available at Tourism Office Saint Paul de Vence, 2 rue Grande, Saint-Paul.
Tel: +33 04 9332 8695

Raoul Dufy's works together with the work of Jules Chéret, can be viewed at The Museum of Fine Arts - 33 Avenue des Baumettes, Nice.
Tel: +33 04 9215 2828

Yves Klein's abstract works are at The Modern and Contemporary Art Museum, Promenade des Arts, cedex 4 Nice.
Tel: + 33 04 9713 4201
mamac-nice.org

YTL Celebrates Earth Hour 2011

Across the globe, 36 YTL subsidiaries and properties in Malaysia - Power Seraya and Wisma Atria, Singapore; Wessex Water, United Kingdom as well as the Green Leaf Niseko Village in Hokkaido, Japan - participated in the global celebration of Earth Hour 2011.

This year, YTL Corporation continued its support for Earth Hour, which took place on Saturday, 26 March 2011, by extending the symbolic hour of darkness from the initial 60 minutes to 90 minutes. The event was a combined effort to urge residents in cities like Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to participate in the largest global collective effort designed to send a decisive message of hope and action. It was estimated that based on a mere 15 properties in Malaysia and Singapore turning off their electricity supply from 8.30pm to 10pm, YTL Corporation cut over 1,298 kg of CO2 emissions, which is equivalent to almost 1,000 working days of computer usage.

"Earth Hour stands for what we've been passionately advocating over the last decade – environmental protection, energy efficiency and contribution to sustainable development. This year's Earth Hour holds greater meaning and relevance with the crisis happening in Japan so we are ramping up efforts to raise donations for the quake victims. While we've pioneered and celebrated Earth Hour in Malaysia since 2009 and led numerous climate change initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region, this is the first time YTL is presenting a street event to mark Earth Hour in Singapore," said Ruth Yeoh, Executive Director of YTL Singapore and Director at YTL-SV Carbon, YTL's in-house carbon credit and Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) consultancy.

Yeoh adds, "As stewards of our Good Earth, we are very excited to have this opportunity to share our experiences in climate change with the nation. Beyond Earth Hour, YTL has always been a strong supporter of WWF and its initiatives. We had the privilege of partnering WWF in our green efforts previously, supporting a US\$100,000 grant towards the protection of Malaysia's most precious resources through the YTL-WWF tiger conservation programme in Malaysia."

Present during the Earth Hour 2011 event at Wisma Atria, Singapore was Tanjong Pagar GRC MP Baey Yam Keng, YTL Singapore Executive Director Ruth Yeoh, Orchard Road Business Association (ORBA) Chairman Sng Ngoi May, and model and international celebrity Denise Keller, who is an advisory member for The Climate Project, a non-profit social enterprise headed by former United States Vice President Al Gore. ■



This page: Scenes from YTL Corporation's Earth Hour celebrations at their properties in Malaysia, Singapore, Japan and the United Kingdom. 1. Ruth Yeoh (second from right), Executive Director of YTL Singapore, mark Earth Hour with friends and associates. 2. Earth Hour is celebrated in Kuala Lumpur, along the popular retail strip of Jalan Bukit Bintang. 3. Celebrities like Henry Golding and Deborah Priya Henry turned up as a show of support.



This page: YTL Corporation celebrates Earth Hour with events at their properties in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Activities included live entertainment, dining by candlelight and special performances.

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



01

Dive Season Returns

Diving and snorkelling are amongst the most popular activities at Tanjong Jara Resort which is located on Malaysia's east coast. During the months of March till October, avid divers from around the world converge on Pulau Tenggol, a beautiful and secluded island just a 45-minute boat ride away from the mainland. A designated protected zone, the area around Pulau Tenggol presents a vast variety of colourful marine life ranging from double-headed parrotfish, yellowtail fusiliers and sea turtles, to eagle rays, black-tipped reef sharks and barracudas.

02

About the Oracle

In a continuation of the Oracle, a mind, body and spirit retreat held at the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali recently, a new facilitator specialising in specific holistic modalities is introduced to guests at the resort each month. In April, Nicky Kassapian, an advanced craniosacral therapist, Usui *reiki* master, practitioner and a personal coach, is on hand to offer her expertise, followed by Aditi, the creator of a meditation technique known as NowSpace, who will teach guests the power of living in the moment and overcoming the various sources of stress in one's life in May.

03

Tea is Served

In keeping with Cameron Highland's colonial heritage, afternoon tea is served at the Jim Thompson Tea Room in Cameron Highlands Resort. A delicious assortment of finger sandwiches, sweet and savoury pastries and warm, delicious scones are presented with Devonshire clotted cream and homemade strawberry jam. Indulge in these tea time treats in an elegant setting where the finest Jim Thompson fabrics and furnishings recreate the genteel atmosphere of an English colonial home – the perfect venue for a cosy afternoon retreat.



04

The Stars are Shining

When night falls and the sky reveals a plethora of stars that are seemingly close enough to grasp, a unique event takes place at the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali. The resort offers a one-of-a-kind treatment where guests lie weightless on a floating platform set adrift on the swimming pool. A specially selected soundtrack developed by NASA for astronauts in training is the ideal complement to this stress-relieving therapy. Stargazing on a moonlit night at the resort is a not-to-be-missed experience.

05

Spring at Starhill Gallery

Spring is traditionally known as the season for rejuvenation and optimism. This April, Starhill Gallery showcases the finest things that life has to offer spanning fashion, cuisine, luxury and sustainable lifestyles as well as luxury getaways. A series of exciting events are planned in the next few months, amongst which includes "A Feast of Spring" specialties that make the most of the freshest seasonal ingredients and finest flavours by the international restaurants located at Starhill Gallery.

06

Wedded Bliss

Fairy tales do come true at Tanjong Jara Resort where a "Royal Wedding" package promises an unforgettable experience for both the happy couple and a hundred guests. Couples may choose to wed in a variety of novel ways such as holding an undersea ceremony at Pulau Tenggol, in a garden wedding setting with a beautifully manicured lawn adorned with fairy lights under a softly draped gazebo on the beach or amidst a romantic setting of glowing lanterns by Teratai Terrace with the beats of a traditional *gamelan* playing softly in the background.

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

Tours of Duty

Meet Captain Mokh, a man with a military past whose present mission as Tanjong Jara Resort's resident naturalist is to introduce guests to nature's many wonders.

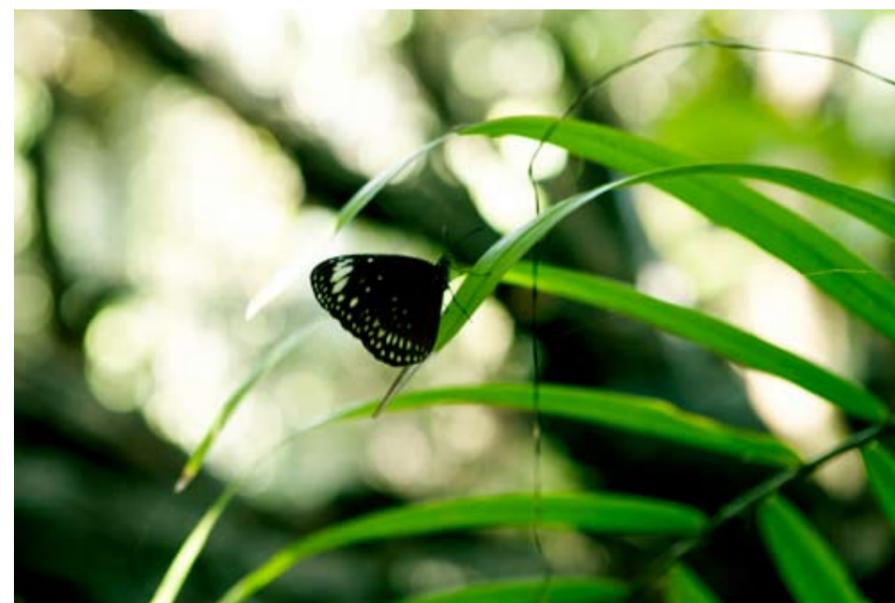
Text by **Helen Oon**



Clockwise: Captain Mokh at Tanjong Jara Resort; indigenous flora and fauna seen on the nature walk.

Captain Mokh (short for 'Mokhtar'), Tanjong Jara Resort's resident naturalist, has a commute to work quite unlike that of any city slicker. Instead of braving smog and gridlocked city streets, he makes strides on his vehicle of choice, a trusty bicycle, which meanders along almost deserted coastal roads fringed by coconut trees swaying in the breeze brought in by the South China Sea. The picturesque environs surrounding the resort, located in the state of Terengganu on Malaysia's east coast, resembles a quintessential Malay *kampung* or village. Here, Captain Mokh is in his element. Amidst well-manicured gardens and beautiful casuarina trees that have stood the tests of time and storms, the erstwhile army captain guides an assortment of resort guests through the best nature pursuits available in and around the resort.

Bright and early at 7.30am, Captain Mokh conducts a workout with a difference – a specially created exercise class known as *Indera Deria*, a cross-cultural combination of yoga, *tai chi* and *silat* (a traditional form of Malay martial arts). The morning class takes place by the resort's electric blue-hued infinity pool, described



by the good captain as a potent spot to soak up the restorative powers of water and sun. After just one session, guests may notice a significant surge in energy levels, setting a bright, optimistic mood for the rest of the day.

Another way to break into a sweat is to join the daily bicycle tour to the local village. Take a trip through rustic wooden houses inhabited by friendly locals or head to the market, the village's social and commercial heart. Sample delicious fare such as Terengganu's famed deep-fried fish crackers, known as *keropak lekor*, best eaten with a deliciously spicy and sweet homemade chilli sauce. A man who knows the area like the back of his hand, Captain Mokh delivers an engaging running commentary, providing guests with invaluable insider knowledge of the locale.

For nature lovers, a trek into the hinterland with Captain Mokh is highly recommended and thoroughly enjoyable. The walk starts with a tour of his much-loved herb garden filled with medicinal plants and herbs. This is followed by a short walk to Jara Hill where Captain Mokh impresses his charge with in-depth knowledge of traditional Malay holistic therapies. These effective local healing techniques have, for centuries, made use of the medicinal properties of local flora and fauna to cure both topical and external ailments. For the adventurous, after a hearty breakfast at the resort, an adrenalin rush-filled expedition to the 250-metre Cemerung Waterfall –an hour-long trek into remote jungle regions –is a great opportunity to work up an appetite.

An expedition by fishing boat organised by Captain Mokh, on the other hand, snakes up the Marang River, traverses mangrove territory, and culminates by arriving at a small tucked away village. Along the way, visitors have front-row views of the local wildlife performing, as if on cue. Amongst the actors include cheeky macaques, soaring sea eagles, vibrantly hued kingfishers, and monitor lizards in military camouflage.

The expedition calls at Kampong Jenang, a village seemingly unspoilt by time. Here, women still weave traditional baskets and mats, while palm sugar, an essential ingredient in Malay cakes and desserts, is the local cottage industry. "My aim is to give the guests the opportunity to experience and observe the Malay village lifestyle in the very heartland of Malay culture on the east coast," says the friendly Captain Mokh. ■

More on Captain Mokh

Affectionately known as Captain Mokh, Captain (retired) Ahmad Mokhtar Mohamad's passion for and knowledge of the wild was sparked during his career in the military. He joined the army in 1965, and was commissioned in Sandhurst, England as a military officer. Later, he joined the Malaysia Special Forces and rose to the rank of captain. It was at this time that he was seconded to the Special Task Force that dealt with the communist insurgency in West Malaysia and Sarawak, Borneo. As an undercover agent, Captain Mokh was sent to live with the Batek aboriginal tribe in the jungle around the Taman Negara area for three years. There, he kept the communist forces under surveillance and gathered intelligence about issues concerning national security. In this most remote of regions, he was accepted by the tribe who taught him the secrets of the forest including the vast curative properties of medicinal and edible plants. As the guardians of the forest, the Batek tribe believes that everything in nature should be respected. "The Batek tribe was very suspicious of outsiders. At first they were wary of my presence but as time went by, I was gradually accepted into their community. I felt privileged to learn from them. They taught me to see, touch and discover the traditional value of plants," explains Captain Mokh.

When he retired from the army in 1996, he became an instructor at an outward bound school. He went on to open and operate Tasik Chini Resort and later managed the Marang Resort & Safari Recreational Centre before joining Tanjong Jara Resort back in 2002. "As the resident naturalist, my daily tasks are to liaise with guests, bringing life to the resort's "Unmistakably Malay" concept. We organise activities for our guests to immerse themselves in the culture and heritage of Terengganu," he remarks enthusiastically, before adding, "I want to develop a special programme and activities for children since we have been getting more and more children at the resort. The objective of programme is to expose them to the beauty and value of nature by their participation in the many activities available. We organise trips to the Elephant Sanctuary at Tasik Kenyir. I would like to share my knowledge with other people, especially to the younger generation. They are the future guardians of the forests".



Clockwise: A pristine stretch of beach; two examples of exotic plants growing in the wild.



THE TANJONG JARA EXPERIENCE

Heaven is only seven steps away at Tanjong Jara Resort, a resort with an almost infinite stretch of golden shoreline, and a magnificent tropical garden fringed by a pristine rainforest. The resort is tranquility personified. It is the perfect setting to experience the *Way of Sucimurni*, the Malay spa philosophy, comprising wholesome living practices achieved through the "purity of spirit, health and wellbeing". Dedicated to the "sacred centre of life force energy", Spa Village Tanjong Jara offers a total holistic lifestyle experience. This includes a series of pampering massages, healing therapies, engaging activities and cuisine tailor-crafted to the individual's needs in a seven-day programme known as *Syurga Tujuh* or the Seven Steps to Heaven. The numerous benefits of each session include chakra alignment, *chi* balancing and stress reduction, in other words, complete relaxation. www.tanjongjararesort.com

"My aim is to give the guests the opportunity to experience and observe the Malay village lifestyle in the very heartland of Malay culture on the east coast."

Action-packed Niseko

As the perfect all-weather holiday destination, Japan's Niseko Village offers a wealth of activities for the adventure-inclined.

Text by **Catherine Shaw**

As the winter snows slowly melt, Japan's premier ski destination of Niseko Village – long known for its deep powdery snow, groomed mountain slopes, and picture-perfect landscape – trades stylish ski suits and snowboards for all things 'green' as it transforms itself into a highly desirable summer outdoor getaway. The reinvention is even more impressive when one considers how, instead of resting on its well-earned laurels as a winter wonderland par excellence, the popular alpine retreat has successfully unveiled a tantalising portfolio of all-season activities ranging from the sedate to the decidedly adventurous.

Niseko's stunning natural landscape makes for a truly spectacular setting for Japan's most popular fine weather activity: golf. The pièce de résistance is the 6,805 yard 18-hole, Par 72 Niseko Golf Course,

designed by international golfing legend Arnold Palmer. The course, which enjoys wonderful views of Mt Yotei, is considered one of the most difficult and strategic courses in the area featuring well-placed bunkers and stunning rolling fairways, including the famously challenging Par 3 fifth hole (an undulating green guarded by a pond and guard bunker).

Nearby, the Niseko Village Golf Course offers variety of play at different levels; the Par 73 18-hole course at 6,845 yards is set within the stunning forest at the base of the ski resort, one of Hokkaido's most panoramic mountain landscapes. World-standard facilities, a challenging layout and perfectly manicured greens with fairways separated by white birch and larch that change with the seasons – not to mention one of the few Par 6 holes in the world (the 10th measures 721 yards,



This page: Golf, adventure biking and tree-trekking are among the summer activities offered at Niseko.





ORGANIC TEMPTATIONS

Despite Niseko's transformation into an international travel destination, the local population remains predominately focused on farming as can be seen from displays of fresh vegetables at local farm shops bearing named photographs of the proud farmers – the excellent produce easily rivals the famed Niseko snow. The region is justifiably famous for its delicious carrots, asparagus and potatoes. During summer months, a visit to a local organic farm, vineyard or to Milk Kobo, a farming cooperative known for their milky ice cream and creamy cheesecakes made from Niseko milk, is already a must on any gourmand's travel itinerary.

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 2 hours by car and 3.5 hours by train from New Chitose Airport.



out of bounds down the left side and with water in front of the green) make this course a firm favourite among local and international players

For beginners, Hilton Niseko Village's driving range and two full-sized practice golf holes offer a stress-free opportunity to practice their golf skills. The 506-room iconic hotel with five world class restaurants is located at the very epicentre of outdoor activities, which include a 23-court tennis complex, a horseback riding park and outdoor adventure activities for young guests.

But it is not just stressed urbanites and golfers who are revelling in Niseko's summer attractions. The destination is also now more child-friendly with a wide choice of activities that makes it a firm favourite with families. At Niseko Village Pure Action, tree trekking is one of the most popular draws – an entire walkway structure was handmade by Pure staff using natural materials, logs and wood from the Niseko Village grounds. Routes include suspended wooden bridges and ladders and hanging features made of rope. Descending from the routes is via ziplines. There is a simple route specially designed for beginners and smaller children with a second, more challenging version for older or more adventurous trekkers. Participants are always safely harnessed.

Niseko Village Pure Action also features a huge inflated outdoor adventure park where inflated landing pads encourage safe exploration of climbing walls, a trampoline, a high wire and elevated swings ideal for

active play by children or adults. A range of other exciting outdoor activities such as horseback riding, white water rafting, paragliding, hot air ballooning, mountain biking, volleyball, nature walking, mountain hiking and a soon-to-be-launched golf program for children means there is enough choice to keep even the most active entertained.

For the culturally inclined, there is plenty on offer: from traditional Niseko sake, sweets, the tea ceremony, Japanese *taiko* drums and learning how to cook Japanese food. Indoor classes include jam and ice-creaming-making classes, pottery and silver and hemp accessory classes. Alternatively, join renowned local glass artist Tsuneo Kitajima to design and make your own glassware pattern at Glass Gallery Doumu as a memento of your visit.

For those looking to relax, Niseko is home to Japan's other favourite activity: soaking in hot spring waters. The mineral-rich waters of the Hilton Niseko Village and Green Leaf Niseko Village indoor and outdoor *onsens* offer an exceptional opportunity to indulge in this timeless retreat while taking in the stunning mountain landscape. ■



ARNOLD PALMER GOLF

Arnold Palmer has created about 300 golf courses around the world, winning numerous awards for designs of golf that blend technical excellence with a high respect for nature. Palmer says, "I believe in traditional, straightforward design that produces courses with lasting quality that are exciting and enjoyable for all players. The designs are founded on the principles and strategies of the game and are sensitive to the land and the environment."

OBON

Although summer in Niseko is relatively uncrowded, book well ahead during the Obon holiday (usually in mid-August) as harried Tokyoites stream north to escape summer in the city.



Right: White water rafting is a popular activity

Top: Horseback riding
Bottom: The entrance to Niseko Village Pure Action



LUXURY Frequencies

Introducing a designer playlist of tracks created exclusively by YTL's very own music man Gavin Aldred.

“Music is the sense that most hotels neglect” explains Aldred, “but it makes a huge difference to one’s perception of a place.”

After 10 months working around the clock across several time zones and between studios in Los Angeles and London on a marathon project for YTL Hotels, Gavin Aldred is looking relaxed but also a little relieved. His company, Soundcells, specialises in creating exclusive music for hotels, upmarket stores, private clubs, luxury brands, and advertisers around the world. “Creating 24 hours of original music was a tall order” he recalls.

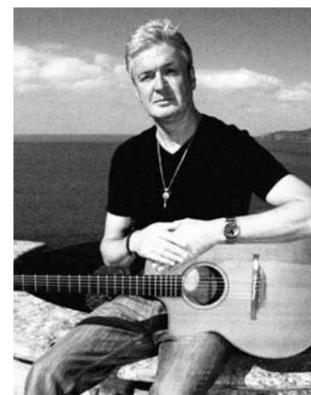
Commissioned in late 2009 by YTL Hotels, the project was an inspired leap of faith to extend the “treasured moments” theme of the hotels into “treasured sounds”. “Music is the sense that most hotels neglect” explains Aldred “but it makes a huge difference to one’s perception of a place. While each YTL property is deliberately individual and unique, they all share common values of quality and service, with a real sense of caring for the guests and going that extra mile to provide not just a happy stay but also happy memories of the stay. Music is a part of that magic of memory.”

After much debate, they decided to concentrate their efforts on 3 key areas: reception, pool, and spa. “I constantly travel the world staying in hotels so I think I have a real sense of what a guest wants” says Aldred. “For example in the reception areas we wanted music that contributes to a calm atmosphere and helps orientate the guest, particularly new arrivals. It’s a stressful moment, arriving in a new place and not knowing your way around. We wanted to slow things down a little and make checking-in a pleasure. These first impressions literally set the tone of the whole stay”.

Similar analysis was applied to the psychology of guests in the spa and pool areas. One element was the tempo of the music. In the spa areas it is never faster than the resting rate of a human heart, around sixty beats per minute. “This helps people relax and chill-out” Aldred explains. This attention to detail is evident everywhere, for example in reception the frequencies of the sound are carefully calibrated by Soundcells mixing engineers so as not to interfere with the normal frequencies of the human voice, allowing easy communication between staff and customer.

With access to some of the best composers, musicians, and technical recording staff in the world in LA, it’s no surprise that YTL’s new sounds are peppered with contributions from well-known names such as British diva Julia Fordham and Hollywood movie composer Michael Brook, who acted as a music advisor on the YTL project whilst he was busy composing the soundtrack to the Oscar-nominated film *The Fighter* starring Mark Wahlberg.

Plans are underway to launch a range of CD’s exclusive to YTL Hotels under the “Treasured Sounds” label. “This is a great way to take a little of the magic of your stay home with you – it’s not just great new music - it’s your YTL memory”. ■



YTL's very own music man Gavin Aldred.

CUISINE SANS FRONTIERES

Despite being on international television for over 30 years and with 3,000 (and counting) television cooking shows, several best-selling cook books and millions of fans across the globe, to his credit, Chef Martin Yan, the first Asian to successfully break into the US mainstream media, remains irrepressibly enthusiastic over sharing his love and knowledge of Chinese food.

Text By **Diana Khoo** Photography by **Mohd Jabir Suhirlan** Location **Li Yen, The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur.**

Always armed with wit, humour and a bagful of tricks, the image of Martin Yan executing his lightning-fast cleaver chop or his acrobatic flair with a pair of chopsticks and a hot wok has been seared into the culinary consciousness of millions of viewers around the world who, for the past 30 years now, never tire of tuning in to his brand of creative (and entertaining) Chinese cookery. His favourite party trick is demonstrating how to debone a chicken in just 18 seconds while endlessly chatting and regaling his audiences with jokes and anecdotes. "My main aim has always been to show people that cooking, especially Chinese cooking, can be a lot of fun," he says. "Everyone's always happy. No one's ever told me otherwise all these years. Maybe it's because I'm the guy with the knife," Yan wisecracks.

In Kuala Lumpur recently to promote his *8 Treasures of China* tour with the Asian Food Channel, Chef Yan took time out to speak to YTL *Life* on his love of food and cooking and how it has enriched and flavoured his life and career so beautifully.

When did you first become interested in cooking?

When I was growing up, even basic provisions like oil and fabric were always rationed and I went to bed hungry most times. I lived on the third floor of an apartment block in Guangzhou, China, and I remember telling my neighborhood buddies how when I grew up, I wanted to be a cook or work in a factory that produced food, figuring you'd never go hungry if you worked in a kitchen. That is also the reason why many poor Chinese families always want their sons to become apprentice chefs.

You were also the first Asian to make it big in American mainstream media.

Things just happened. My friend Frank Lee had asked me to help set up his restaurant, Lee's Garden, in Calgary, Canada. And as fate would have it, I got invited to be a guest on a television program. It was a disaster, though. It was winter and the temperature was -40C. I'd kept my groceries in the car and everything was frozen.



This page, left-right: Siu mai with spicy tomato sauce; Chef Yan is also a prolific cook book author; fresh ingredients are a mark of Chef Yan's cooking.

But they were nice enough to ask me to come back the next week. Again, I had no experience but somehow, time flies in a studio and I had wanted to demonstrate five recipes but ran out of time. So I cheekily remarked I'd have to come back again next week. The producers seemed to like my style, offered me a deal and, I guess, that was the start of it all.

When did you realise you wanted to make a career out of cooking?

I was a sponsored foreign student from Hong Kong and I began looking for work the second day I arrived so I could have some pocket money. I'd initially found work in a restaurant as an assistant cook but decided to wait tables instead, thinking I'd make a bit more with tips. I'd heard that there was a lady named Madam Wu who owned a successful restaurant and taught cooking classes as well. When I found out she charged USD18 per hour for the classes, it seemed a fortune compared to the 65 cents I was earning. So, I went back to the University of California, Davis, where I was studying, and asked if I could teach cooking lessons.

I'd even come up with a fancy name – The History, Culture & Science of Chinese Cuisine. I know I didn't have any experience at all but I wanted to try. It helped the campus coordinators were also sympathetic as I told them I'd have to return to Hong Kong if I didn't find the means to continue funding my education. So, we came to an agreement that if I could get 15 students, I had a class. So, I put up a paper on the notice board and just willed it to happen. I ended up with 36 names and had to split them into two classes. My English wasn't great so I asked them to watch my movements, which probably accounts for a lot of my dramatics now, and, in the end, I made enough to get myself through graduate school – all by teaching cooking!

What have been your greatest career highlights, though? I mean, you've hosted over 3000 shows to date, broadcasted all over the world.

Honestly, every day is a highlight. I'm a curious kind of guy and I'm always thankful I'm alive and able to see and experience so much, not to mention so many new things to learn and discover. I

remember once being in Lijiang, an ancient town in Yunnan whose history dates back at least 800 years, while taping my *Hidden China* series. I had wanted a different story angle so I went to live with this family, with four generations living under one roof and whose patriarch was an 87-year-old woman. One day, she, her two sisters and a few neighbours all put on their carrying baskets and took me out for a trek. They were all in their 70s at least and hiked up the hill, singing all the way, while I could barely breathe! Remember, Lijiang sits at an altitude of around 8,000 feet above sea level. It then dawned on me how you really don't need much to be happy. These women didn't even have electricity. They only had candles and kerosene lamps and yet were so happy and full of life. I then vowed to learn to be like them. To live life simply and to enjoy every day as it comes. That's why I can tell you every day is a highlight for me. It's ultimately all about attitude.

What do you love most about your work?

I really love what I do, being able to inspire people to cook at home. I enjoy myself and derive great satisfaction from being

able to make people happy and impact lives. But if my television series were to end tomorrow, I'd still feel as if I'd done enough. Fortunately, people still ask me to do things.

I've also heard you once acted in a movie called *Rice Rhapsody*. What was the experience like?

I've actually acted in three movies in my career. I can't act but I got the chance to star opposite Sylvia Chang, a famous Taiwanese actress, singer, writer and producer, in *Rice Rhapsody*. I enjoyed the experience a great deal and actually created a lot of my own movements and reworked much of my character's script. I'm the sort of guy who just talks and talks and I absolutely cannot memorise stuff. I like being spontaneous and I am a master of winging it!

What are the qualities you feel every good chef needs to possess?

You definitely need a capacity to learn and to respect others. Never ever think you don't need to learn once you're a master chef. Stay humble.

“Chinese culture has a lot of virtues that are tremendously valuable to, not only us Asians, but also the world in general.”
-Martin Yan-



Above: Deep-frying Yin Yang vegetable pockets.
Opposite: Chef Yan at a cooking demonstration organised by the Asian Food Channel at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur.

What are your favourite kitchen tools to work with?

Any Asian kitchen needs a good, sharp knife. It also helps to have a good wok and steamer. I even travel with my own chopping board. I tend to work very fast so I do need to have my own knife as I am used to its weight and size. If not, I'd end up cutting myself.

Where's the farthest you've ever travelled for a good meal?

It would have to be the time I flew from New York to London for dinner. A friend of mine was actually doing some fundraising in London and he'd asked me to come over. I was in NYC doing a show for NBC at the time but I did fly in for the night. It was worth it as I enjoyed a meal prepared by three master chefs, including Jacques Pépin who, by the way, loves Asian food. I still remember the dish he prepared - an amazing combination of quail with bread stuffing and *kai lan*. Awesome!

With so many television shows, appearances, cook books and new recipes, how do you organise yourself and your kitchen?

Thankfully, I have a great team to back me up and make sure I show up wherever I am supposed to be on time. In fact, I think as long as I show up on time, they don't really care. I don't have an agent or manager, just three to four full-time, exceedingly dedicated staff. This way, I can still retain some form of control over my life.

Do you have any favourite ingredients to work with?

I love tofu and use it a lot. I also always have noodles in my fridge as well as a bottle of XO sauce. You can use it with everything.

You're no stranger to Malaysian food...

I love the street food of Malaysia! I love *bak kut teh* (herbal pork rib soup) and *laksa*, which has so many different ingredients and flavours; oh, and Ipoh noodles. Malaysia's flavours are just so unique and explosive.

What's your idea of comfort food?

When we were living in Guangzhou, we always kept a few chickens in a cage. I remember how, on special occasions, my mother would take one of them, steam or serve it in a casserole, dressed with Chinese sausages and shitake mushrooms. It was truly a dish of my childhood and a true comfort food for me.

What is your favourite Chinese food and wine pairing, though?

I think Chinese food, especially Cantonese, is excellent with wine. I especially love the multi-course banquet meals, where you get all kinds of meat and vegetable dishes, sometimes up to 10 courses.



It's a great way to pair wine with a variety of things. I do like sweet and sour dishes with a dry type of wine while Chablis goes well with milder flavours or fish. And I enjoy pairing lobster with Merlot or Pinot Noir as well and casserole dishes with Cabernet Sauvignon – it makes it very rich and enjoyable. I also live just over an hour from the Napa Valley and graduated from University California, Davis, which houses the Robert Mondavi Institute for Food and Wine Science. I think it's got the best viticulture and oenology program in the world. But I must add that I enjoy saké and Shaoxing wine as well.

What, to you, would be the ultimate industry accolade?

Again, I'm happy and thankful for all that I've achieved but I do remember when Julia Child wrote the introduction to one of my books, *Chinatown Cooking*. It was the first-ever introduction she's written for a cook book. When it was published, I drove to Santa Barbara, where she lived, to personally deliver a copy. She loved *dim sum* so I prepared some simple ones for her in her own kitchen as well as lemon chicken, which she loved. That was a very special moment for me as she passed away just eight months later. I've also met and cooked for several celebrities, including Bill Cosby and Jane Fonda. But what I really love is making my audience laugh. If I can't do that, I've failed.

And what does your family think of all that you've achieved so far?

I have twin boys, aged 18, going on 19. I'd always make them help out whenever I had to do personal appearances and I'd joke: "You should be happy to help because your daddy's famous." And they'd reply, 'Yeah, well, there are so many other people living on reservations and places like that and they probably don't know who you are.' But, one day, I was doing a live event in a stadium which attracted 45,000 people. It was then that my boys finally admitted their dad had an audience! 🍷



Martin Yan's Spring Rolls With Spicy Avocado Dip

INGREDIENTS

- 3 peeled shrimps
- 2 slices cheese
- 3 sheets of spring roll wrapper
- Salt
- Pepper
- Dip
- 1 ripe avocado
- 2-3 bird's eye chilli, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Juice of 1 lime
- Salt
- Pepper

METHOD:

1. Devein and poach the shrimps.
2. Grate the cheese (cheddar or cream cheese may be used) and mix with a little salt and pepper.
3. Wrap each shrimp with a little cheese around each spring roll wrapper.
4. Deep-fry until golden brown and drain on paper towels.
5. Scoop out the avocado flesh and mash well. Season with lime juice, chili and salt and pepper to taste.
6. Serve dip with spring rolls.

life feature //

Signature Flavours

Shook! Shanghai sets a new standard of fine dining on the city's iconic Bund.

Text by Catherine Shaw



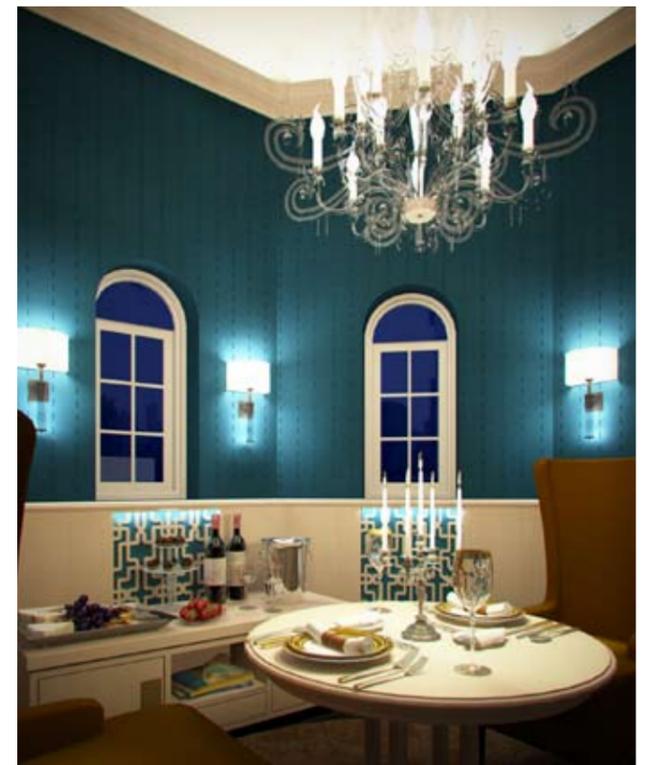
The chic world of stylish fine dining is alive and well in Shanghai at Shook!, the city's newest dining sensation due to be unveiled in late April 2011. The innovative gourmet concept, which brings together a truly spectacular array of Asian and modern western cuisines in one of the city's most prestigious addresses on the famed Bund, is led by renowned international celebrity chef Kevin Cape. His impeccable credentials include being feted as Britain's "Best Newcomer of the Year," acting as the first British Executive Sous Chef at the famed Connaught Hotel, and representing Britain as National Chef in international competitions and numerous TV appearances and promotions around the world including the most prestigious James Beard foundation in New York. Chef Kevin also worked for many years as the creator of the elegant dining experience as Executive Chef on the Eastern & Oriental Express, one of the world's great trains – making this sensational chef the perfect choice to lead the restaurant's launch in China.



Opposite page: A view of the Shanghai cityscape
Clockwise: truffle martini; The Show Kitchen; confit of slow-cooked salmon; The Corner Room; Chef Kevin Cape

Chef Kevin's passion for food is matched by his creative skills: "I like to break rules by mixing styles and by mixing flavors," says the gregarious chef who has embraced his new life in Shanghai. "My style may be a break from tradition but I believe good food doesn't need to be unnecessarily complicated. Imagination and passion are very important when creating a wonderful dining experience, as both comes through in the food." His cooking celebrates fresh and natural dishes – a signature creation is lamb chop cooked in a European style and coated with spicy Massaman sauce and garnished with Thai pickled tomatoes, or a lemon-flavoured risotto topped with a simply steamed fish served with Panang Sauce, of Southern Thai origin.

"The location of the restaurant in the heart of the Bund couldn't be better," says Antonella Mascimino, Swatch Art Peace Hotel Director and Corporate Director of Guest Experience & Customer Relations Management for YTL Hotels. "It creates a sensational backdrop to the restaurant's activities while the Swatch Art Peace Hotel is an incomparable icon on the Bund with truly spectacular views over Shanghai. There isn't anything else like it and in the renovation of this stunning building everything in terms of the interiors has been kept as much as possible to the original so it is a unique experience. The interiors of our Shook! restaurant are very modern with a touch of chinoiserie but the building itself is pure heritage so it makes for





Clockwise: seafood chowder; the semi-private dining room; beef tenderloin; the Wine Cellar



an interesting overall experience. It really is a beautiful collaboration between Swatch and YTL".

Certainly stylish touches like the open kitchen, a pièce de résistance Swatch Watch-inspired chandelier, lacquer finishings and shoji-style screens create a winning blend of traditional and modern, comfortable and chic. There is a variety of table settings from secluded private enclaves to elegant open dining with 84 seats in the restaurant and 12 around the bar. Both lunch and dinner will be served. The sleek interiors are courtesy of Bangkok-based Orbit design, a renowned interiors firm and with offices worldwide, specialising in food and beverage outlets. In this project, they have certainly achieved a restaurant with an interior as dazzling as anything the kitchen turns out.

"I designed all the kitchens," explains the chef as he proudly shows off a stunning open-plan kitchen suitable for hosting a large team of chefs creating cuisines from Japanese to Chinese and Malay-style. "I had the opportunity to open the first Shook! in Malaysia so it is an incredible honour to take it international," he says. "Here I have been particularly fortunate to create exactly what I wanted in the kitchens and I must say that this is easily the most spectacular kitchen in China."

Keen to add a sense of excitement to dining, he refers to the fifth floor dining area as "the playground," reflecting his fresh approach to fine dining. The sophisticated scene is set at the entrance with a stunning floor-to-ceiling wine cellar corridor.

"The starting point is the wine," explains Swatch Art Peace Hotel Food & Beverage director Julien Laracine who has worked closely with the chef to ensure guests enjoy a stunning dining experience at every level. "We have more than 300 different wines and all the classics of wine from around the world. The talking point is our incredible vertical wine collections. The wine cellar indeed houses two rare collections of fantastic Bordeaux wines – Château Cheval Blanc and Château d'Yquem --of every consecutive vintages going back to 1945. We also have exquisite cognacs, blended from casks going back to 1858."

Once within the main part of the restaurant, Laracine says he wants guests to experience the great interaction that comes from the unique Shook! concept. "This has all the elements of Shook! in Kuala Lumpur but transported and taken to a different level for the Shanghai context," he explains. "Obviously we have the best of the best so we have included elements of Malaysian cuisine - because that's where this original idea of dining originated - then Thai, Chinese and Japanese and modern western dishes." However, Chef Kevin does not like the word 'fusion' and prefers to use 'whispers' when he explains what his food is about. "I get upset when people use the word 'fusion' as this is not what I do. I take the best of things from different areas and then transport them into a different direction in regards to the presentation. I don't want to dilute flavours: if I make Tom Yum soup, for example, then it is Thai-style Tom Yum – but I bring a twist to it. For instance, I find lemongrass fiddly so now we put the soup into a French press and press it at the table so you get all the beautiful flavours but it is much easier to eat. It also makes for an interesting presentation."

Presentation is all important throughout the dining experience and so every detail has been carefully thought through, explains Mascimino whose focus on guest experience covers even the tiniest of details.

"For sashimi we have lacquered trays with little drawer compartments for soy sauce. It's all about playing and interacting with a well trained staff. For chopsticks, we offer a beautiful selection from all over the world. It is about adding little dimensions. I want to have fun in my kitchen and enjoy the way we interact with guests," says Chef Kevin. "This means we will be creating salads or carving meats at the table and guests can ask for things to be prepared in ways that they like."

"We also expect the Time Bar to be a key attraction at Shook!", says Laracine. The chic design of dark woods and black stones accentuated with elegant cream leather is the ideal backdrop to the bar's unique molecular mixology lending a whole new perspective to libations, especially with innovative recommendations for both men's and women's individual palates.

Nearby, The Gallery offers a uniquely designed multimedia banquet hall for stylish receptions, media events and social gatherings while the roof terrace is undoubtedly the perfect place for pre-dinner cocktails or after dinner drinks while taking in the lights of the city. Here one finds two of Shook! Shanghai's most intriguing architectural cupolas housing the Blancpain Room and Corner Tower for the most private and romantic of dining experiences.

With a cellar stocked with fine vintages, an impeccably mannered staff and a thoroughly exciting cuisine that elevates the place above other stylish Shanghai dining rooms, Shook! is set to become a Shanghai dining institution. ■

SOME SHOOK! SPECIALITIES

Snow white dancing prawns: stir-fried prawns with hot mayonnaise and sprinkled with honey glazed walnuts.

One kg ribeye steak: each steak will be numbered. A Shook! tag will be hooked up to the bone. Numbers ending with 8 will receive a complimentary bottle of Möt & Chandon Grand Vintage 2003

CHÂTEAU CHEVAL BLANC

Cheval Blanc is one of Bordeaux's most respected wines, reigning supreme at the top of the St. Emilion's hierarchy for most of the past 50 years. About 100,000 bottles of this distinctive wine are produced each year at the Château (with about 40,000 produced at Le Petit Cheval). Happily for oenophiles it also has one of the broadest windows of drinkability – tasting notes demonstrate Cheval Blanc produces a "decadently exotic wine of unbelievable depth and richness."

CHÂTEAU D'YQUEM

Yquem is undoubtedly one of most unique wines in Bordeaux, the only wine to be elevated to the supreme rank of 'Premier Grand Supérieur' in the 1855 Classification. The wine's legendary aging potential consistently results in remarkable complexity and elegance making vintage Yquem one of the most highly sought after.

Sound Trek

Canadian film music composer Michael Brook shares his views about his creative process, the messages behind the music he creates and the advantages of staying under the Hollywood radar.

Text by Mark Lean

Celebrated film music composer Michael Brook in his studio.

“The goal in my music is usually to create emotion that serves the film I’m working on... I try to bring a little of the idea that life isn’t usually that simple or easily resolved into my music.”



Come Oscar time, film music composer Michael Brook might not be a magnet for the paparazzi on the red carpet. His stellar career achievements, nevertheless, precede him. Among the projects the Toronto-born Brook was involved in last year include *Country Strong*, a film starring Gwyneth Paltrow about a country music star who gets her groove back, and the Academy Award-winning film *The Fighter* with Mark Wahlberg and Christian Bale. In an exclusive interview with YTL *Life*, Brook speaks about his most recent projects.

How differently would you approach composing music for a movie like *Country Strong* compared with a feature such as *An Inconvenient Truth*?

An Inconvenient Truth had a unique challenge in that a lot of information has to be absorbed by the audience. We found that putting any music in the scenes where Al Gore was explaining science or politics immediately felt wrong as it seemed like there was an attempt to manipulate. The emotion that music brought seemed inappropriate. So we ended up only putting music where he was talking about his personal life and history. This was also a way of cuing the audience that it’s okay if you don’t totally pay strict attention in some bits. A big goal was to give people little breaks throughout the film. Otherwise, they would glaze over and stop following the argument. Essentially the music acted as an information flow rate adjuster.

In *Country Strong*, the mandate was more on trying to bring a stronger focus on the complex intertwined relationships of the four principal characters. Also, sometimes there were multiple emotions in a scene and the role of the music was to very slightly amplify one feeling or another. Another goal was to sometimes refer to events in the past; for example, the loss of a baby, which was part of the subtext but not overtly present in what was being said or done.

What are your views on environmental conservation?

It makes total moral and economic sense to me to make things as efficient as they

can while acknowledging that there are diminishing returns at some point. I am puzzled by and sceptical of much of the criticism of environmentalism. Sure, most of us do not like to be preached at and sometimes a subset of environmentalists can be obnoxious or unrealistic. But the main thrust of organisations like The Union of Concerned Scientists, for example, is that improving the environment can be a win-win scenario, creating high quality jobs, saving money and reducing pollution.

In what ways do you incorporate that viewpoint – as well as viewpoints in general – in your work?

The goal in my music is usually to create some emotion that serves the film I’m working on. I suppose one viewpoint that does pervade my work is one of ambiguity and lack of resolution. I try to bring a little of the idea that life isn’t usually that simple or easily resolved into my music. Some people prefer a more black and white approach, but there is definitely a niche for the more nuanced, shades of grey, approach.

2010 was a busy year for you. What has been your ultimate highlight last year?

Well, I got to work on some amazing projects last year. It was an incredible run. I suppose that the highlight was actually working on six films in six months and have people be happy with the results. Also, writing about 200 pieces of music was the fun part.

What techniques did you apply in order to achieve a result that had strong impact yet contained an understated delivery?

With *The Fighter*, the score had to convey drama and emotion. Many of the scenes in the film are very realistic; they were almost documentary in style, which made any overtly cinematic music sound false. I ended up making quite subliminal music. So the challenge was in some ways similar to *An Inconvenient Truth* where music functioned to support but not take the lead.



Have you ever wanted to be either an actor or a director as these individuals often enjoy a higher profile in the industry?

I’ve never aspired to either of those jobs. I know some people with quite high profiles, and there are definite perks but the downside is not trivial. I wouldn’t mind being a bit better known. There is probably an optimal profile height. People really can have too much money or be too famous. Money and fame can take up a lot of time and taint many relationships. I’m happy to say that this is not a problem I have.

What is the most challenging aspect of the work you do?

It definitely has to do with the schedule and the pace I am required to work at. I like deadlines but often film schedules really can lower the quality of one’s life. I have a three year-old son, and although I am lucky to be able to work at home, sometimes I barely see him or my wife.

What projects are you currently working on?

I’m working on a documentary called *Undefeated*; it’s about a high school football team in Memphis. ■

Left: Gwyneth Paltrow and Vince Gill performing. Top: Academy Award-winning film *The Fighter* with Mark Wahlberg and Christian Bale.

Secret Garden

Tattered linen portrait collar jacket, suede lattice belt and chiffon handkerchief miniskirt by Christian Dior; ebony and ivory bangle by Louis Vuitton.

Sizzle & Shine

The Estates at Pangkor Laut, the exclusive beachfront retreat at the award-winning Pangkor Laut Resort is the scene for RTL Life's haute summer fashion narrative featuring the world's most coveted labels as well as compelling Malaysian designers.

Photography: Aaron Lee Styling: Weechee Makeup: Annie Gho Photographer's assistant: Howard Koh
Hair: Delon Lim/ Miko Hair Studio Stylist's assistant: Linda Danca Model: Dasha Astashina/ Andrews Models
Location: Pangkor Laut Estates at Pangkor Laut Resort



Sea Queen

Silk cotton surplice top by Khoon Hooi; monogrammed cashmere voile scarf by Louis Vuitton; metal plate necklace by Christian Dior; goggles, stylist's own.



Cruise Control

Wrinkled metal silk jacket, metal jersey washed silk tank and washed cotton gabardine pant by Bottega Veneta; nappa lambskin mini bag with tassels by Loewe; aviator sunglasses by Ray Ban.

*In From
The Deep*

Lurex knit top
and 'Tambour'
automatique diving
watch by Louis Vuitton.



Upon reflection

Indulge in a little
introspection in a figure
hugging '50s-inspired
pinstripe wool bustier
with velvet strap and
full skirt. Louis Vuitton
Patent leather gloves,
stylist's own.



*Empire of
The Sun*

Crinkled polyester
jumpsuit, paillette
cummerbund, 'Levant'
monogrammed empire
bag and patched suede
sandals by Louis Vuitton.



Raising the Columns

Silk georgette toga dress by Jendela KL; paillette cummerbund by Louis Vuitton; snakeskin chain cuff and plexiglass & metal bracelet by Fendi.



Check Mate

Grosgrain and knit coat with taffeta sash by RED Valentino; metallic lace tank by Louis Vuitton; latex leggings, stylist's own; tricolor 'Lady Dior' bag by Christian Dior.

Cool Rider

McQ by Alexander
McQueen's striped
knit dress with
detachable sleeves;
by sunglasses by
Porsche Design;
cuffs by French Kiss



*Easy-Glam
Moment*

Silk mousseline halter
dress by Khoon Hooi;
metallic snakeskin belt,
stylist's own; snakeskin
chain cuff and plexiglass &
metal bracelet by Fendi.



Left: A student at Bottega Veneta's Artisan School, Creative Director Tomas Maier

downturn shoppers are more careful, preferring to purchase pieces that are timeless such as Bottega Veneta. However, this does not mean the label's goods are not fashionable or identifiable. The brand is famous for its handwoven leather which adopts a technique known as *intrecciato* to create a latticework effect. This trademark design appears on its bags, shoes, jewellery, womenswear and menswear, and even a home interiors range.

A finely crafted heritage

Bottega Veneta is one of few luxury brands that offer the consumer a range of lifestyle accoutrements, spanning leathersgoods and chairs to the finest porcelain china. "The design aesthetic of the brand has remained fairly consistent over the past decade. But, the types of products we design have changed. We started with handbags and small leathersgoods. Today, we offer a full range of lifestyle items," explains Maier.

Founded in 1966 as a handbag and luggage maker in Vicenza, Italy, Bottega Veneta was a sought-after brand in the 70s and 80s, favoured for its handwoven leather carriers. But, for some reason, despite its no-logo fashion principle, the label didn't exactly fare well in the minimalist 90s. Among those who tried to revive its fortunes included British designer Giles Deacon, accessories designer Stuart Vevers and stylist Katie Grand. Unfortunately at the turn of the century, the company was on the brink of bankruptcy.

But by 2001, the company was acquired by the Gucci Group, Maier was appointed as creative director and the brand was reborn with a new identity, one that emphasised the idea of restrained opulence, while capitalising on its timeless *intrecciato* weave. Andrew Preston, Maier's partner of more than 20 years and COO of his eponymous label Tomas Maier was once quoted in *Vanity Fair* as saying, "Tomas is Mr. Discreet. He is discreet, the product

Understated Allure

At a time when bold logos are somewhat de rigueur, Bottega Veneta prides itself in showing luxury minus the ubiquitous branding. In fact, as its creative director Tomas Maier explains in an exclusive interview, it is the brand's whispered extravagance that has made it coveted by the fashion elite.

Text by **Dazman Manan**

The best things in life aren't necessarily flashy objects but subtle and meaningful items with impeccable finishing and a heritage imbued with honourable craftsmanship. This basically sums up the world of Bottega Veneta. While some prefer something stamped with a significant signature when it comes to designer goods, others favour low-key luxury. These individuals often opt for Bottega Veneta, a brand which does not require a showy motif to prove its prime position in the high fashion world. The Italian label's highly venerated status has firm foundations in its finely created products and the traditional ways in which they are crafted.

"For me, something is luxurious if it is rare, of the finest quality, and personally meaningful. The luxury of a Bottega Veneta product lies in the fact that it is made by hand by highly skilled artisans working with the finest quality materials. The design of Bottega Veneta also emphasises the personal nature of luxury, the intimacy, for example, of subtle, functional elements or small details that only you know are there," explains its creative director, Tomas Maier in an exclusive e-mail interview.

This explains why the brand thrives even in less economically robust conditions, because it stays faithful to its roots. It is a core classic and during a financial

Left: A look from the Spring / Summer 2011 Collection, Bottega Veneta's store in Starhill Gallery



is discreet. The old Bottega motto from the 70s was 'When Your Own Initials Are Enough.' Perfect for Tomas. Streamlined, only for those who know."

On the view that minimalist design is the direct result of minimalist thought, Maier thinks the opposite is true. "It requires more thought to design something minimalist," he notes. His hard-thinking was rewarded. In 2007, the company recorded a staggering US\$130 million in revenue. Not only did its leathergoods become coveted but slowly and surely, Bottega Veneta's ready-to-wear also became haute commodities loved by the international fashion cognoscenti.

Red-carpet glamour

When actress Sandra Bullock took to the red carpet at the 2010 Golden Globe Awards ceremony, the style and shade of her gem-coloured gown captured international media attention. Naturally, the strapless amethyst number was a Bottega Veneta. The brand has undeniably experienced tremendous growth in recent years but Maier says there isn't a specific section of the business that he intends to focus more on in the near future. "All areas matter and need to be treated with full attention".

He adds that the artisanal leathergoods, which is the cornerstone of the brand, will continue to grow. "Artisanal leathergoods are the heart and soul of Bottega Veneta and I think they always will be". The brand even established a craft school ensure the time-honoured tradition lives on.

In fact, the Cabat bag, a handwoven leather unconstructed tote, was the item

that reinvigorated the brand but Maier is modest about its stellar success. "I think that kind of thing happens only rarely. I didn't set out to design an iconic bag and I don't design with that goal now. There are a number of successful and enduring bags in the line that I have designed over the years—the Veneta, the Roma, the Aquatre—and I'm always delighted when a design proves to be especially well-loved," he explains.

For spring 2011, the brand presents the Cigar Cocco Lave large Cabat in brown-and-black crocodile skin. Probably the ultimate of all its Cabat carriers, this exotic number is tagged at a cool US\$80,350. This season, the hobo-shaped Veneta comes in white, among other colours, with frayed accents leaving it looking slightly unfinished. But, with all Bottega Veneta products, attention to detail was given even to the fraying.

Fashion insiders feel that Maier's winning ways can be credited for the fact that he has given the millennial consumer a new way of shopping for luxury products. It is not about showing off blatant insignias but appreciating and collecting special pieces that are desirable because they are beautiful and well-made. Items that, years later, may become heirlooms. The brand's also been described as having a "discreet individuality" appeal to it.

For spring/summer 2011, Bottega Veneta offers both women and men effortless clothes with understated, expert tailoring that lends delicate intricacy to the outfits. It's a season of ease, informality, and unobtrusive sophistication. The palette is neutral and cool while shapes are casual and roomy. Materials are airy, light, ranging from the classically luxurious to newer, technically-advanced fabrics, all with an easy feel.



How does the brand cater to the Asian market?

"The brand operates in a consistent manner everywhere in the world. If there are colours or styles that are particularly popular in one country, we try to accommodate those preferences, but we don't develop specific products for specific countries. Our customers travel all the time. It's important that they find one Bottega Veneta everywhere they go," Maier explains.

He adds the brand is very well-received all across Asia. "We have found a customer who understands craftsmanship and appreciates a more discreet, understated approach to luxury. We'll do well in Asia by doing what we've always done offering fine craftsmanship and timeless design to men and women who have their own sense of style". And, as these fans of Maier's sense of style believe, true luxury always whispers, it never shouts. ■



*Elegance
is Dew*

Sergio Rossi Cachet Peep toe
Platform; Valentino Garavani
Beaded Leather clutch

in full bloom

*This season's hottest accessories are a
celebration of beguiling colours, surprising
fabrics and elegant embellishments.*

Photography by Leon Bin Yee



Chic Cache
Louis Vuitton Plastron
Cosmopolitan necklace; Louis
Vuitton Galuchat Art Nouveau
Amethyst purse; Christian Dior
pink Rendezvous wallet



Textured Effects
Valentino Garavani Lace
heels; Valentino Garavani
Rosier clutch

Elements of Style

From high fashion to *haute horlogerie*, the rules of fashion are constantly evolving and always fascinating.

Runway Magic

Reminiscent of the 70s, an era associated with disco and decadence, Louis Vuitton's Spring/Summer 2011 advertising campaign captures the decadent glamour as shown during the brand's runway show. "We started from the very beginning this season, talking about glamour and something very stylised, very glossy," says Louis Vuitton's artistic director Marc Jacobs. "We arrived at something which I would compare to the Eiffel Tower lighting up every hour on the hour – something of artifice that's just so gorgeous and glamorous and beautiful, that you are completely mesmerised by it."



Paradise Revealed

The sun shines bright and beautiful as Christian Dior drops anchor at a South Pacific naval base. This basically sums up the brand's spring/summer 2011 collection that features a masculine-feminine mix between sailor-style and bird of paradise references. Peacoats and parkas in crisp white and navy nubuck leathers contrast with rich prints of hibiscus, orchids and palms. Floral pattern and petal details with nautical folds and knots are lured into a new adventure with lace insets and exotic galuchat print. Accessories too are island-inspired such as flower-detailed thongs, seashell bracelets, feathered high heeled espadrilles with rope straps, and frayed Lady Dior bags with crocodile handles.



Precious Time

For Van Cleef & Arpels, time is synonymous with poetry. Every season the maison creates dream-like timepieces with a bold creativity that never ceases to surprise.

Using the techniques of enamelling, mother-of-pearl inlay or gold engraving, each watch dial tells a story. For example, the *Timeless Oiseaux de Paradis* timepiece tells the legend of the Birds of Paradise: elusive, it floats endlessly in the air, never coming down to earth. The *Lady Arpels Extraordinary Butterfly* collection come with names inspired by butterflies found in various cultures while the *Lady Arpels Extraordinary Hummingbirds* range feature these nomadic birds on dials encrusted with precious stones, champlevé enamel and three-dimensional enamel.



Gift of Sight

Luxury watchmaker Omega recently announced it will work with actor and brand ambassador Daniel Craig to support ORBIS International and its Flying Eye Hospital in the fight against preventable blindness. A special timepiece – the Hour Vision Blue – has been created to celebrate the partnership. Omega has guaranteed that at least US\$1 million from its sale will be donated to ORBIS, an organisation which delivers eye care to people some of the world's most remote regions. Omega president Stephen Urquhart says: "Omega is pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to ORBIS' remarkable mission. It's particularly gratifying to be working with Daniel in support of an organisation whose work we all believe in."



Healing Potions

At Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, medicinal traditions such as *jamu* and *boreh* that show the natural path to vibrant health, have been passed from one generation to the next.

Text by **Mark Lean**



Opposite page: *Jamu* is served to all guests at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali
Top: The resort's staff with a carrier of *jamu*

The mystical island of Bali, spiced with history and myth, is once again registering on the radar of international world travellers. Thanks to author Elizabeth Gilbert's *New York Times* book list best-seller *Eat, Pray, Love* and the subsequent movie adaptation starring Julia Roberts, the island where the gods are believed to reside, is brought into renewed focus as the destination where visitors come to achieve balance between body, mind and spirit.

The inspiring manner in which the sea and the mountains carve the island's topography is very much like how a seasoned stone artisan would craft a beaming statue of the goddess Parvati. To the northeast corner of the island, near the black volcanic sand beaches of Lombok, peace reigns. A virtually untouched part of the island, this is where the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, backed by the sacred 3,142 metre Mount Agung, is located.

I ask Ni Wayan Sri Armini (or 'Sri' for short), the spa manager, what the locals think of Gilbert's book. The young lady gives a shy, almost enigmatic smile. She continues to pulverise a fistful of just-plucked herbs with a large grey pestle pounder. We are at the spa's office and makeshift work space, surrounding stacks of plants and roots still bearing traces of the soil from which they were taken.

Dark mahogany cupboards brim with the freshest herbs, roots, fruits and spices, all of which are sourced from the village markets and farms surrounding the resort. The tantalising, almost delicious, aroma of over a dozen local herbs and spices fill the room; it is a harmonious blend of scents that would not seem out of place in the busy kitchen of an Indonesian home.

Sri is making a tonic known as *jamu*, a special liquid concoction made from plants, roots, barks, leaves, honey, fruit and one or two other essential ingredients. The *jamu* maker, usually an elderly lady, but in this case, Sri keeps these ingredients a secret. In Indonesian culture, *jamu* is the panacea that alleviates everyday ailments. The healthful tonic also functions as a beauty aid and a body fortifier. "Ingredients like *beras kencur* (a variation of rice) and finger root possess invigorating properties that strengthen the male reproductive system. *Kunyit assam* or turmeric and tamarind helps one lose weight," explains Sri. At Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, two *jamu* recipes are highlighted. *Kunyit assam* has been created especially for women; while *beras kencur* is targeted at men.



Top: Ingredients used in the preparation of jamu
Bottom: A boreh treatment

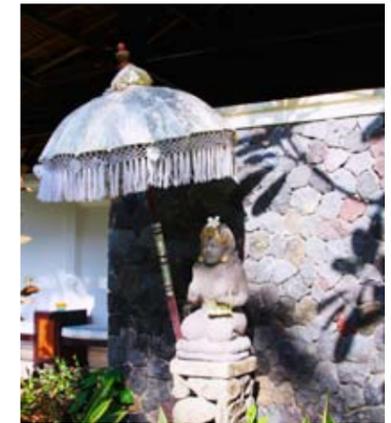
One of the activities at the resort is a daily introduction to *jamu*-making, a popular activity with guests. Considered in the Indonesian archipelago as a booming cottage industry amounting to millions of dollars each year, the traditional art of *jamu*-making speaks to the cultural sensibilities of the local populace. The main *jamu* ingredients highlight turmeric for its astringent qualities, tamarind for blood cleansing and ginger to assist in digestion. These can be readily sourced from the garden in most Indonesian homes, termed by locals as an *apotek hidup* or "living pharmacy". A vast compendium of spices including cinnamon, nutmeg, mace, cloves, fennel, black and white pepper, cardamom, coriander, cumin and caraway seeds are used in the creation of *jamu* potions.

Sri explains that "fresh ingredients, sourced from the local area are delivered once every two days. This guarantees the potion's efficacy". She adds, "Galangal, ginger, rice, and cloves are all easy-to-find ingredients." It is best to drink *jamu* prepared on the same day, although there are shops located all over Indonesia selling pre-packaged boxes of the different variations of *jamu*. But, according to Sri, "Drinking freshly prepared *jamu* is comparable to savouring a cup of gourmet coffee. The pre-packaged version, on the other hand, is like instant coffee".

While the health benefits of *jamu* are numerous, its topical counterpart *boreh*, a body scrub made from a judicious mix of pounded cloves, galangal, ginger and rice, exfoliates dead skin cells and warms tired, knotted muscles. For Balinese families, *boreh* is the scrub used before weddings as part of the bride and groom's grooming ritual. It signifies a break with the past and entering the threshold of a new stage of life. At Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, guests may experience these age-old traditions and therapies for themselves, emerging reenergised, and replenished with vigour and grace. ■



"Ingredients like *beras kencur* or finger root possess invigorating properties and strengthen the male reproductive system. *Kunyit assam* or turmeric and tamarind helps one lose weight."



THE ORACLE RETREAT

Over the years, the guest therapist programme at Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali has been a highlight for guests to the resort. A carefully chosen selection of experts specialising in massage, art and meditation has enriched the lives of guests even after their departure from the island. With Oracle, a retreat for mind, body and soul, which was held from 10 – 17 March 2011, participants benefited from the wisdom and knowledge offered by facilitators like Diana Manilova, Marc Cofer, Wanny Winsloe, Mike Tan and Dewi Hopley. These individuals, through the own personal experiences, have forged powerful modalities that collectively heal, nourish and fortify body, mind and spirit.

Oracle is an opportunity to take a break from life, staying and experiencing the way of life in a place of beauty as well as a chance to slow down, simplify and embrace the moment. It is also an opportunity to remember what nourishes and inspires so that one steps back into life renewed, replenished and balanced.

The programme is set to continue in the following months with the introduction of new therapists, each imbued with the skills and empathy needed to bring renewed relevance, meaning and happiness to one's life. The setting at Spa Village Tembok Bali is the perfect location for this rebalancing to take place. There is a real sense of togetherness, which is reflected by the staff's warm smiles and a genuine intention to assist.

According to Diana Manilova, a facilitator at the recent Oracle Retreat, "When you balance body, mind and soul, we start to enjoy our lives. Having all three gives you enough energy to experience happiness, miracles and the beauty of creation. We find purpose in life, and magic in our hearts."



Inspired Beauty

In an exclusive interview with *YTL Life*, Kerstin Florian and Charlene Florian Barker of the cult spa brand Kerstin Florian discuss their favourite spa treatments and the future of an industry that has experienced phenomenal growth in recent decades.

Text by Dazman Mahan



Top) Kerstin Florian's Correcting skincare range.

For a while now, the Kerstin Florian brand has been quietly building a stellar reputation amongst spa aficionados and beauty insiders alike. The family-run company, which formulates its product ranges based on natural resources including thermal mineral water, mud, algae, herbal extracts and essential oils, is located in Lake Forest, California. Established in 1978 by Kerstin Florian, a spa expert with over 40 years of experience in the industry, the company produces over 100 professional and retail products and over 25 exclusive treatments for facial, body, bath and sun as well as offer manicures and pedicures.

"A spa experience is about taking time out, allowing the body and mind to rest to generate new energy and to clear your thoughts. It allows you time to work on yourself. All of this is very beneficial for overall wellness," explains Florian. The youthful-looking 60-something entrepreneur says she creates "spa experiences" for herself everyday with her own rituals. "I start by taking a short walk. Then I have a body scrub and a thermal bath. Before going to bed, I get a massage with an aromatherapy oil for a good night's sleep," she says, before adding, "Anyone can start by creating a personal program. Being happy is also very important in maintaining your well-being. Happy hormones help you to feel balanced and appreciate life".

Her passion for the business started at the age of 12. At that point, Florian already knew that her life would somehow involve the synergy of beauty and nature and finding ways to bring that idea to fruition. Her first break into the American world of skincare took place in 1967 courtesy of legendary beauty pioneer, Aida Grey. "I was able to work under Aida's tutelage for 10 years. I eventually became the managing director of 28 Aida Grey Salons".

By 1978, Florian began reflecting on her original goals of merging beauty and nature, a well-recognised concept today which was considered revolutionary then. At the Surf & Sand Hotel in Laguna Beach, California, Florian offered nutritional consulting, facials, meditation classes and body treatments in addition to creating some of her own skin care products, complete with hand-typed labels.

Nearly 10 years and three expansions later, she decided to move on and focus on teaching others the real source of inner health



“Kirsten Florian focuses on the real source of inner wealth and outer beauty.”

and outer beauty. It was then that she began a spa consulting business with a list of reputable clients. Her spa philosophy and product line emerged from first-hand knowledge of the most renowned spas in Europe, years of research, travel, and work discovering healing ingredients derived from nature. “Natural spa treatments and ingredients are better because they contain a life force not found in man-made concoctions. They are often full of important minerals, vitamins, anti-oxidants and other nutrients. When you have a treatment with natural ingredients, you feel like you have been touched with something that produces a result, leaving you feeling relaxed and energised. Coupled with the human touch, it can produce an extraordinary experience,” explains the company’s vice-president, Charlene Florian Barker.

According to her, Kerstin Florian products are 90 per cent paraben-free and are created with unique natural resources, like salts, mud, marine elements, essential oils and phyto-therapy. “We have a balanced approach to formulation with a strong emphasis on the importance of lifestyle for optimum health and well-being.”

The products are a sophisticated blend of Swedish simplicity, historical European spa tradition and age-old Oriental philosophy. This blending has resulted in an ideal regimen for today’s active women and men looking for a natural, simplistic and yet, extremely effective approach to health and skin care. The results are undeniable: healthier looking skin, more energy, reduction of stress and increased flexibility.

Florian recommends asking a lot of questions before deciding on one’s treatment as there are a variety of spa treatments available. “Most spa professionals will steer you in the right direction. I suggest while at the spa, incorporate the steam session, a bath, a scrub, a massage and take time for relaxation. Drink water, eat something healthy. Ask for a recommendation for a home programme (facial or body programme, or exercise) to extend the benefits of the treatment.”

Personally, she loves a Caviar Facial especially just before a special event. “It gives me time to completely relax and gives my skin an immediate glow. I also love the Lavender Dreams Body treatment for an all-over body experience that leaves me feeling completely rested”.

Florian feels the key to her success is using high-quality pure natural resources, innovative technologies and research, and an East-West philosophy. “It’s all part of good health and preventive health measures. None of us can maintain the look of a 20-year-old forever. Following the traditional European spa concept that stresses healthy nutrition, a good fitness program, psychological well-being, and proper care of the face and body, we can grow older being in balance and reflecting a true beauty that comes from within.”

So how often should one indulge in a spa experience? “It depends on what you want to accomplish. If you’re interested in getting your skin in shape, it is recommended to have a series of six facials within six months. A professional aesthetician can



put together a plan customised to the needs of your skin which includes both professional treatments as well as home care. A professional series can address such problems like loss of elasticity, hyper-pigmentation and loss of vitality. If you are strictly going to a spa for a pampering, relaxation massage, every individual is different. Personally, I like to have at least one treatment per month, be it for the face or the body,” explains Florian.

In terms of what we can expect from spas in the near future, Barker notes that programmes will focus on alternative modalities. These include programmes to treat more specific conditions such as boosting the immune system, curing colds, detoxification and superfood nutrition.

As for the future, she believes the spa business holds a wealth of opportunities both for the brand and consumers. “We see spas as an educational centre where people can learn about lifestyle: proper nutrition, regular exercise, psychological well-being as well as proper care of the face and body. This is the core of our philosophy as a brand. We have always been a spa brand and plan to stay on that course”.

(Top) Charlene Florian Barker and Kerstin Florian.
(Bottom) One of the brand’s best-selling product ranges.

The Spa Villages at YTL Hotels and Resorts carry the Kerstin Florian range.



Visual Visionaire

New for Spring 2011 is Kanebo's *Coffret D'Or* featuring elegant packaging and subtle shades. Products such as the one-of-a-kind *Essence Stay Rouge* have the combined benefits of a lipstick and lip gloss. The *Eyes Appeal Eyeshadow* palette contains colours and textures that highlight without looking too over-the-top.



Fabulously Floral

The timeless fragrance of Issey Miyake's *L'eau D'Issey* has been given a feminine update with the introduction of *L'eau D'Issey Florale*. The scent has a rosy, transparent freshness of a dew drop embodying purity, balance and simplicity. Bottled in a luxurious glass cone featuring architectural lines, the fragrance is designed to transcend time and trends. In the words of Issey Miyake: "Design is not philosophy, it's for life". The same can be said for his signature scents.



Heaven Sent

Burt's Bees' delicately scented *Mama Bee* products that leave skin soft and gentle to touch. Included in the range is the *Belly Butter* that helps diminish the appearance of stretch marks resulting from pregnancy. There is also the *Nourishing Body Oil* that works hard to keep skin hydrated, supple and moist. It also provides a comforting massage for both mother and baby. The *Leg and Foot Crème* formulated with peppermint oil and rosemary extract soothes tired legs and feet.



Seeing Is Believing

Long and thick eyelashes can create more dramatic-looking eyes. Sisley's latest *Phyto-Mascara Ultra-Stretch* has a curling, lengthening and volume-enhancing formula. The soft and creamy texture will not dry out, run or crumble, and is very quick-drying. The result? Lashes that are well-coated, perfectly defined, flawlessly separated and soft to the touch.

Spring Fling

Add magic to your look in this season's most enchanting hues and fragrances.



The Great Escape

Ô d'Azur, the latest fragrance from Lancôme, is inspired by their 1969 classic *Ô de Lancôme*. An ode to femininity and elegance, the delectable scent was created by perfumers Domitille Bertier and Sophie Labbé. "Mouth-watering Sicilian bergamot blends seamlessly with crisp rose, energised by lemon essence and the vibrancy of musky notes, enveloping the fragrance in a veil of voluptuous sensuality," says the duo about their exciting new creation.

Read & Listen



Maximilian Büsser

Founder of the boutique watchmaking company MB&F, famed for its Horological Machines, the Geneva-based Maximilian Büsser reveals to YTL *Life*, the books and music that have inspired him to take the path less taken. It is a path which has, for him, made all the difference, both professionally and personally.

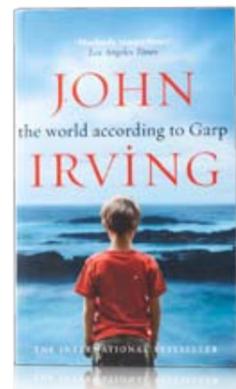
My Favourite Books



1

1. **Oscar and the Lady in Pink** by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt – These are the letters of a dying boy of 10 addressed to God. They are found by 'Mamie Rose', the Lady in Pink of the title, who visits him in hospital in the pink uniform worn by nurses on the children's ward. The letters describe 12 days in the life of Oscar, and are filled with funny, moving characters. These twelve days may be his last, but thanks to Mamie Rose, who forms an affectionate bond with Oscar, they are destined to become legendary.

novel first when I was 16 and it is the only novel I have ever read a second time in my life.



2

2. **The World According to Garp** by John Irving – I was brought up in a serious family, and discovering Garp and his incredibly rich, weird and humorous take on life, was comparable to a wake-up call. He was telling me: it was perfectly fine not to be like all the "others". Garp learns from the women in his life, struggling to become more tolerant in the face of intolerance. The story is decidedly rich with "lunacy and sorrow", and the sometimes ridiculous chains of events the characters experience still resonate with painful truth. I read this

3. **The Fountainhead** by Ayn Rand – Two years ago, an old friend whom I had not seen for a while gave me this book on hearing the story of MB&F. She told me, "I think you will relate to Roark". The Fountainhead's protagonist, Howard Roark, is an individualistic young architect who chooses to struggle in obscurity rather than compromise his artistic and personal vision.

The book follows his battle to practice what the public does not understand (his work will be considered later as the beginning of modern architecture), while his colleagues get rich and famous giving their clients what they want; for instance, the baroque trend of the moment. Roark followed his way without any compromise even though virtually no one understood or liked what he was trying to achieve. Significantly, the book's title comes from a quote at the end of the book: "man's ego is the fountainhead of human progress."



1



2



3

My Favourite Music

1. **I've Got My Own Hell to Raise** by Bettye LaVette – This album exudes a raw power from a woman who, having started singing at the age of sixteen, was never recognised or rewarded during the course of her life. But, she continued doing what she loved most. Suddenly and unexpectedly at the age of 61, the industry and the public recognised her amazing talent and fantastic energy on this album. I must humbly admit I first heard of her through this incredible album. I believe strongly in the album's subtext: "never give up if you love what you do."

it means it comes from guts and not from the marketing executives. The song "Hells Bells" has a timeless quality. It is as contemporary and relevant as the day it was released on 25 June 1980, more than 30 years ago. I am not a fan of hard rock, but this album is just fantastic! With 49 million copies sold to date worldwide, it is the second-highest-selling album of all time!

2. **Back in Black** by AC/DC – This album is the icon of an era. It contains raw power. The word "raw" defines my tastes because

3. **My Favourite Songs** by Chet Baker – What a destiny, what an incredible raw talent. A fragile rebel who destroyed himself slowly before accidentally killing himself at the age of 59 while all the time living only for his music. His rendering of "My Funny Valentine" is a masterpiece. 🎷



In Perfect Time

There is never a dull moment during Geneva's Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie (SIHH). We present the year's horological highlights; a glowing testimony to the indefatigable efforts of watchmakers whose craft continue to astound and amaze.

Text by **Kenneth Tan**

The 21st Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie (SIHH) may have taken place in the cold of winter. But, insulated from the harsh elements, the grandiose-sounding City of Fine Watchmaking in Geneva's Palexpo, where the Salon was held, was a hub of constant movement and chatter as dealers, VIP clients and journalists converged upon the exhibition spaces to discover the latest delights by some of the watchmaking world's greatest names.

Inside, Jaeger-LeCoultre celebrated the 80th anniversary of its Reverso and thus proceeded to have its brand ambassador and Hollywood starlet Diane Kruger at its booth. This, notably, caused quite a stir. In addition, the brand also unveiled a triumphant creation in the Reverso Répétition Minutes à Rideau. This piece interlaces the high complication of a minute repeater with the iconic Reverso mechanism, allowing its user to draw the 'curtain', and thus release the pure crystalline sounds of the chiming gongs.

Another icon of horology, the Royal Oak Offshore of Audemars Piguet, is picked to be the means in the brand's ongoing corporate responsibility projects. The former governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger, who has maintained close association with the brand, lends his name to The Legacy Chronograph, available in a muscular 48mm case of ceramic, titanium and pink gold. Proceeds from the sales of the 1,500 pieces will fund the 'Gubernator's' After School All-Stars Foundation that helps keep children in schools.

From the 'workshop of ideas' that is Panerai, 2011 recalls a rare dial of bar-shaped hour markers from the 30s, of which only two surviving examples were found and used as test samples. This Italian brand, inextricably linked to the militaristic association of its past, also issued the Luminor Submersible 1950 3 Days

Richard Mille's RM026 features white gold snakes encrusted with rubies, diamonds and emeralds white gold snakes for a combination of esoteric sensibility and technical horology.

Automatic Bronzo, a case that denotes a symbiotic relationship with its wearer, with the patina of its case aging to the external agents of air, humidity, heat and wear. None of which, however, the brand hastens to add, will alter the properties of the material but will, instead, make the piece look entirely unique.

Another brand that has unearthed a novelty from the riches of history is Parmigiani, the brand most famously associated with the restoration of precious and rare mechanical objects such as Fabergé eggs and the famous Breguet Pendule Sympathique Clock, which was deemed irreparable by experts. It was not nonetheless, a bridge too far for Michel Parmigiani who laboured for 1,600 hours and then sold the clock for a cool million US dollars at an auction.

This year sees Parmigiani's same devoted application on a Hegirian Calendar, first inspired by a model sent in by a Muslim merchant. The result is a complex mechanism measuring the Islamic lunar calendar, which keeps perfect sync over a lunar cycle of 30 years, far longer than the original model from which it was derived. For those thrilled by the world of speed, the Bugatti Super Sport hearkens to the body of a wing on the iconic car. The winding manual Calibre Parmigiani 372 within the dial had to be designed in two planes to match the contours of the new case.

Meanwhile, the exuberance of Roger Dubuis embarks on a new era with their latest RD680 self-winding mechanical movement. In its ode to the player, the Chronograph La Monegasque Big Number draws inspiration from the casinos of Monte Carlo and encases the RD680 in a 44mm rose gold case.

As with years past, Van Cleef & Arpels succeeds in drawing emotion from the realms of fantasy with its take on Les Voyages Extraordinaires. The series of dials under the collection are described by CEO and Creative Director Nicolas Bos as an extension of the many extraordinary adventures of Jules Verne's fertile imagination. African and polar landscapes, mountain peaks, the underwater world, erupting volcanoes and galactic vistas adorn dials via the notoriously difficult enamelling technique, and fine sheets of gold and silver are applied as a base to dramatically increase the brilliance of the dials.

As with the rest of its poetic complications, the brand's high jewellery timepiece caps Verne's extraordinary adventures with a representation of foliage and flora. Emeralds and sapphires make for flowers and leaves, while diamonds entwine like creepers

as two mischievous tails of black onyx and diamonds hint at the disappearing bodies of small monkeys.

And then of course, there are times when watchmakers search for that sense of immortality through their craft that they invent a piece of such complexity, it would behove the viewer to simply stand back and offer a resounding round of applause. Such a piece made a debut during SIHH 2011 in the form of Greubel Forsey's Invention Piece 2. A total of 594 components combine in a glorious celebration of gears, jewels, bridges, plates and whirring tourbillons... four to be exact. This dizzying quadruple tourbillon can be housed in a case of either platinum 950 or 18k 5N red gold.

Another watchmaker famed for his maverick designs and an almost cavalier disregard for trends is Richard Mille, who was spotted walking the corridors of SIHH rather jauntily. It could be that his star has been on the rise since his inception in the world of watchmaking. It could also be that in his range of scintillating novelties this year, he has the pleasure to once again defy those who think they've got the Mille enigma figured. To the new RM033 which features a round case – and a departure from the tonneau shaped cases, Mille says it's simply something he felt like doing.

On another piece, Mille shows his haute joillere chops with the placement of a bejewelled serpent on a dial. There's also the RM038, a watch designed for Bubba Watson who places at World No 2 on the PGA tour. Watson's wrist, as Mille suggests, is the ultimate test bed for his timepieces, as the hard-hitter Watson averages one of the longest drives on the Tour. And this, Mille says, will ably demonstrate that his creations can adapt to extreme shocks, and deliver on lightness and comfort as well.

Parisian jewellery house Cartier, which does a roaring annual trade of several billion euros across the globe, seems intent on catching up in its timepiece extensions. To add to the resounding success of last year's masculine Calibre de Cartier, this year sees the integration of the house-patented Astrotourbillon movement - in which a tourbillon dances across a dial every minute – into the Calibre case.

In addition to the high stakes chronometry that Cartier has pulled off, including an Astrorégulateur and Pasha de Cartier skeleton flying tourbillon, the brand also makes a case for the artistic crafts. The old school techniques used in splitting, dyeing and selecting tiny stones for a mineral turtle dial looks exceedingly laborious and the wood marquetry of a bear on a dial entails the sourcing of 10 species of natural European wood. Then again, perhaps it's not altogether unusual that Cartier takes such pains to get it right. After all, if there's one thing the brand knows, it's how to give the clientele what they want; even if the latter may not know that they want it, yet. And that innate quality of watchmakers in creating desirable trends, is possibly the greatest proof of what it takes to stay ahead in the game of time. 



[clockwise] At Cartier's exhibition area, intricately assembled dials meet the eye; A wall of Reverso lined up at the Jaeger-LeCoultre booth show visitors the journey so far; Audemars Piguet's Legacy Chronograph is a part of the brand's thrust in corporate responsibility; The minute-repeater high complication in the Reverso chimes in the 80th year of an icon.



Life is Beautiful

For all-encompassing style, indulge in the following lifestyle accoutrements where superior design meets to-the-moment technology.

A Sleek Drive

As the next instalment in the Porsche story, the *Porsche 918 Spyder* stays true to the marque's DNA. The vehicle, an open two-seater features innovative lightweight construction with sophisticated contours, perfectly sculpted surfaces and the personality of a racing car. Inside, its carefully considered ergonomics include a console centrepiece and three central free-standing instruments, all are designed to create a feeling of greater space.



Talking Smartly

Success has a new formula and it's the E7 from **Nokia**. Since its launch the device has been making waves internationally. It is an innovative business smartphone that delivers the best-possible user experience with touch-and-type capability on a full keyboard and stunning four-inch capacitive touch display. Other benefits include the USB support feature that enables file-saving onto a compatible memory stick. Mail for Exchange, Microsoft Communicator Mobile and support for intranet and extranet portals. Its Microsoft Share Point Server, meanwhile, offers professionals direct, secure and real-time access to corporate systems, all of which ensure you stay on top of your game, no matter where in the world you are.



Hot Seat

Designers from the André Kikoski architectural agency created this piece of furniture to be used in the Wright, an eatery located at New York's Guggenheim Museum. "The layout was very simple, almost monastic," explained Kikoski of the restaurant's interiors. Sharing a similar design aesthetic as Frank Lloyd Wright, modern classics such as the Guggen chair, with its sleek and clean lines, has now been recreated by designer interiors firm **Ligne Roset**. The exact dimensions of Kikoski's original creation were meticulously followed, ensuring the Guggen chair's utilitarian yet sophisticated design will surely lend a stylish touch to any home or workplace.



Crystal Clear

Japanese artist Ryuzo Kawai lends his talent to **Daum's** latest crystal pieces. At once quirky and collectible, Momiji and Yoshito, two of the pieces, depict a small girl in deep meditation, with a stone on her head that signifies burden. Yoshito is a reflection of the artist's personality – portrayals of his empathy and generosity. It was designed to inspire hope and courage to anyone facing challenging times.

Cuisine Talk

YTL *Life* speaks to Eric Guth, general manager of Autodome and Shook! at Shanghai Swatch Art Peace Hotel, who oversees the exciting restaurant and bar concepts at YTL properties both in Malaysia and abroad.

Text by Mark Lean



In the past year, Autodome has rolled out new F&B concepts such as Teeq, Hutong@Lot 10 and the upcoming Shook! at Shanghai Swatch Art Peace Hotel. What do these restaurants have in common?

They share a common DNA including fantastic design with open kitchens, premium location, and passion to create amazing and relatable cuisine with the freshest products. When combined, these elements led to our success story.

What are their special characteristics?

Shook! is a culinary theatre playing every night with various partitions in a grand environment. There is a great jazz band; the atmosphere is fantastic; it is *the* place to see and be seen. Hutong refers more to Malaysian roots, the family memories that are captured through a culinary culture and heritage, and, of course, a different price point. Teeq is more of a culinary bridge to reach the upcoming successful generation with its sexy, chic and energetic environment featuring a delectable choice of dishes.

People say that the F&B scene is always changing, always evolving. How does one adapt to this change?

We adapt by creating concepts which are pioneers in their field. We create timeless spaces that you can adjust enhance or re-invent to the current market trend, and working with open-minded people who understand the need for humility, flexibility and creativity.

Judging by its popularity during lunch hour, Hutong @ Lot 10 has been a complete success. How was this achieved?

Hutong fulfills needs that everyone understands. Simplicity, passion and emotion! Everyone has a dish, of their childhood imprinted in their memory that as a child left a lasting impression. Hutong brings Malaysians back to their growing up days and culture. It is priceless and so beautiful to see three generations cooking together! It is the assurance that Malaysian roots still have space to grow and will always remain. Cuisine is an extremely strong symbol in people's hearts! Besides this, the uniqueness of its design, the layout and Hutong's story make a fantastic showcase of Malaysia to visitors who can enjoy extraordinary variety, a unique panel of flavours at a very reasonable price and, in a hygienic and safe environment. The value is unbeatable.

What can a diner at Teeq look forward to in terms of cuisine and the overall experience?

A relaxing environment with a roof top garden in the heart of Kuala Lumpur's Golden Triangle is already a unique selling point. The cuisine is vibrant and exciting. It can please a young couple, a group of people who want to warm up before a party, or business associates hosting an informal dinner.



Above: Lot 10's Hutong
Below: Eric Guth, tastemaker extraordinaire.

Shook! at Shanghai Swatch Art Peace Hotel will open in the next few months. How different is it in terms of its cuisine to Shook! Kuala Lumpur?

Shanghai is a different market. The location of Shook on the Bund sets the restaurant in the most amazing and competitive location in Shanghai. All the key players are there. For us, the first thing was to see what could work from Shook! Kuala Lumpur in Shanghai in order to keep our identity and to create synergy between the two restaurants. Then, we worked on the adjustment of some of the dishes to enhance them. We created new dishes as an element of differentiation with Shook! Kuala Lumpur. Bringing Shook! to the next level was a fantastic challenge. But, in essence, Shook!'s core philosophy remains the same. This includes uncompromising quality of the products, perfect cooking techniques and delicious and authentic cuisine. Dishes are always artistically presented. This is what, we hope, remains in our guest's hearts and memories.

Conversely, in what ways are both restaurants similar?

The open kitchen, which creates the close proximity with our guests, the choice of four cuisines, Chef Cape who set up Shook! Kuala Lumpur, chic, elegant and stunning interior design, an engaging bar area, and of course, Bordelaise First Growths.

What are your favourite dishes at Shook!?

Snow dancing prawns! It is a dish so amazing that when you try it, you will always go back for more. It's a dish any chef would love to create! The longevity of a dish is the mark of the greatest chef. ■

Beyond The Bamboo Curtain

Presenting Starhill Gallery's latest culinary sensation – Gonbei San.



The newly refurbished Gonbei San at Starhill Gallery is set to become Kuala Lumpur's hottest dining room. The eatery's name derives from "Gonbei", a typical farmer's name in ancient Japan, while "San" refers to a mountain, symbolised by magnificent bamboo peaks at the eatery's dramatic entrance. In the spirit of Gonbei San's genuine hospitality, bamboo is significant as a symbol of vitality in both its service and delicacies that awaits diners.

At the entrance, guests are greeted with a hearty announcement of drumbeats, heralding greetings of "irashaimase" or "welcome" to a journey into time-honoured Japanese culture and tradition. Begin with a sampling from the wide array of *sakés* and *shochu*. Each selection is meticulously blended and specially selected to enhance your dining experience at Gonbei San.

At the helm of Gonbei San is the city's undisputable master of Japanese cuisine, Chef Lew Tet Sin who brings almost 40 years of his legendary expertise in creating authentic Japanese cuisine. His specialties are prepared using highly prized ingredients imparted with the freshest flavours.

Besides Chef Lew's cuisine, diners are also privy to the restaurant's statement-making interiors adorned with *objets d'art* personifying the beauty and the subtleties of Japanese culture. These works, depicting the four seasons of life, are inspiring in their beauty and especially rich in symbolism. A dramatic wooden wall of robust carvings immortalises the family crests of a thousand Japanese family names in a celebration of authentic design. ■



OYSTERS AND BUBBLES
At Village Bar in Starhill Gallery Kuala Lumpur's Feast Village, air-flown Pacific oysters are paired beautifully with Moët et Chandon or sparkling wines from the New World. The "Marriages Made in Heaven" promotion is available daily from noon to midnight. For reservations, please call 03-2782 3852.

Centuries of Elegance



The allure of Malacca is still very much alive here in this magnificent mansion. The colourful wooden shutters. Ornate cornices. Intricate Peranakan tiles. Welcome to The Majestic Malacca - a YTL Classic Hotel. For reservations, call +606 289 8000 or contact YTL Travel Centre at +603 2783 1000. Otherwise, visit www.majesticmalacca.com




**THE MAJESTIC
MALACCA**
A YTL CLASSIC HOTEL

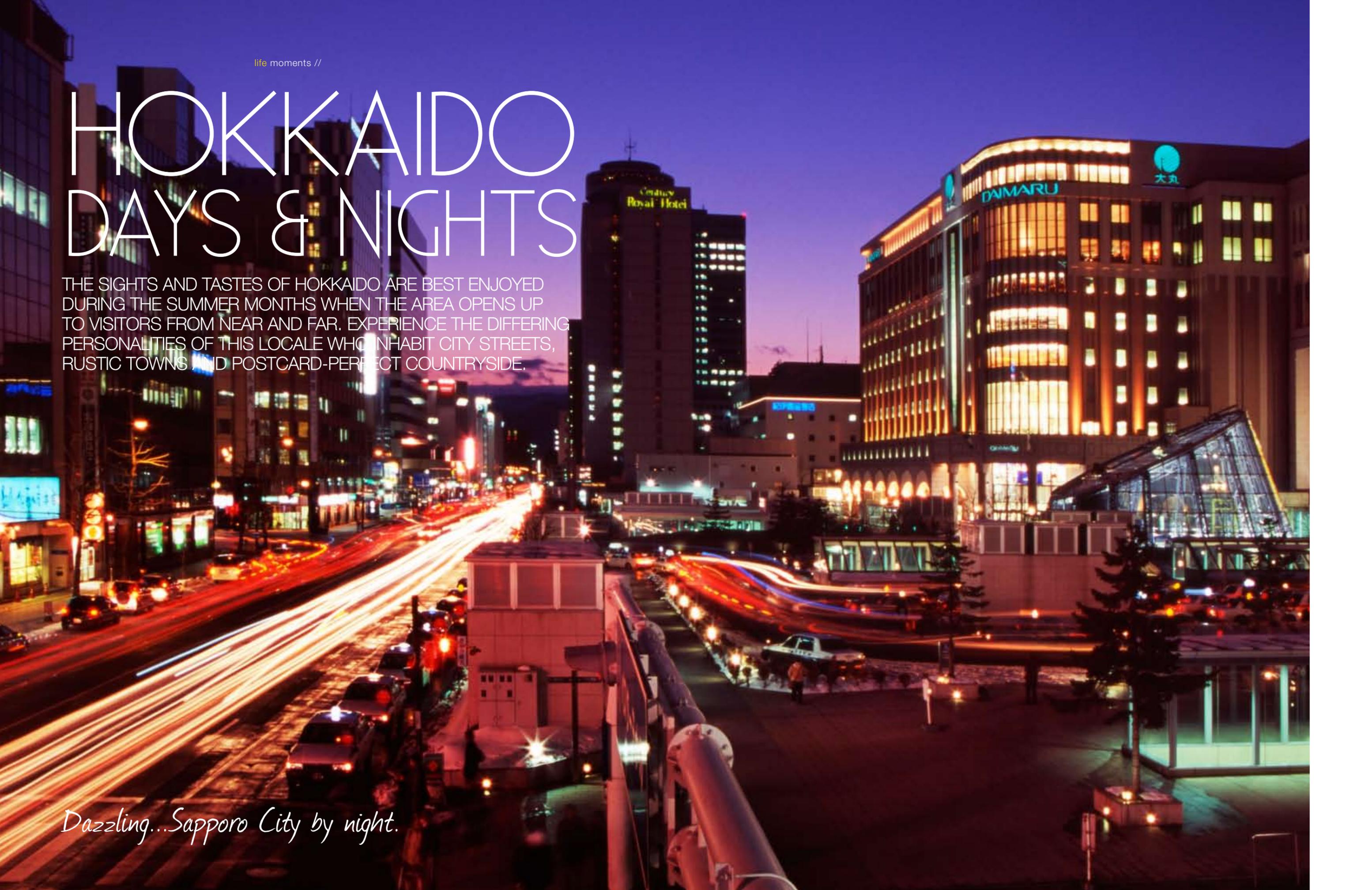
Amidst Centuries of Culture and Commerce

life moments //

HOKKAIDO DAYS & NIGHTS

THE SIGHTS AND TASTES OF HOKKAIDO ARE BEST ENJOYED DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS WHEN THE AREA OPENS UP TO VISITORS FROM NEAR AND FAR. EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERING PERSONALITIES OF THIS LOCALE WHO INHABIT CITY STREETS, RUSTIC TOWNS AND POSTCARD-PERFECT COUNTRYSIDE.

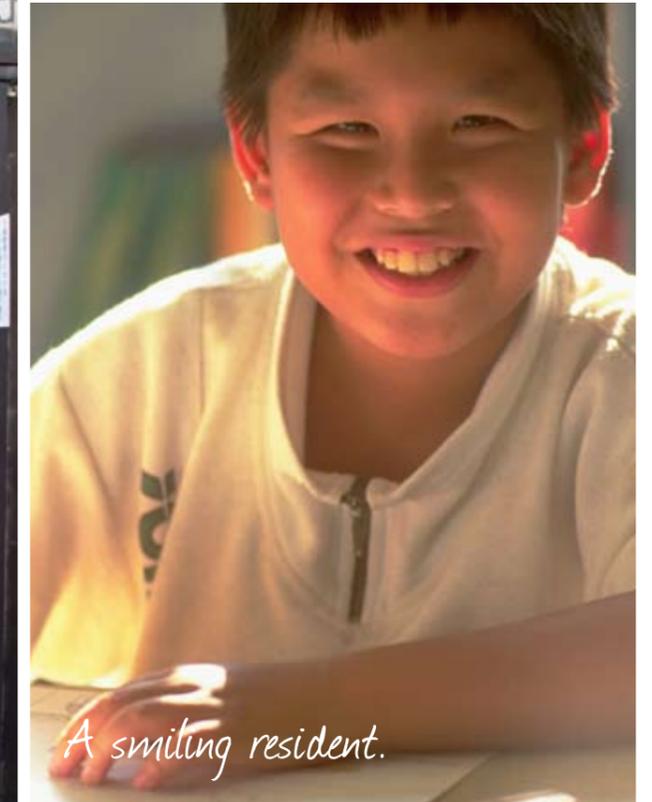
Dazzling...Sapporo City by night.



A bustling market scene.



Restaurant-lined lane.



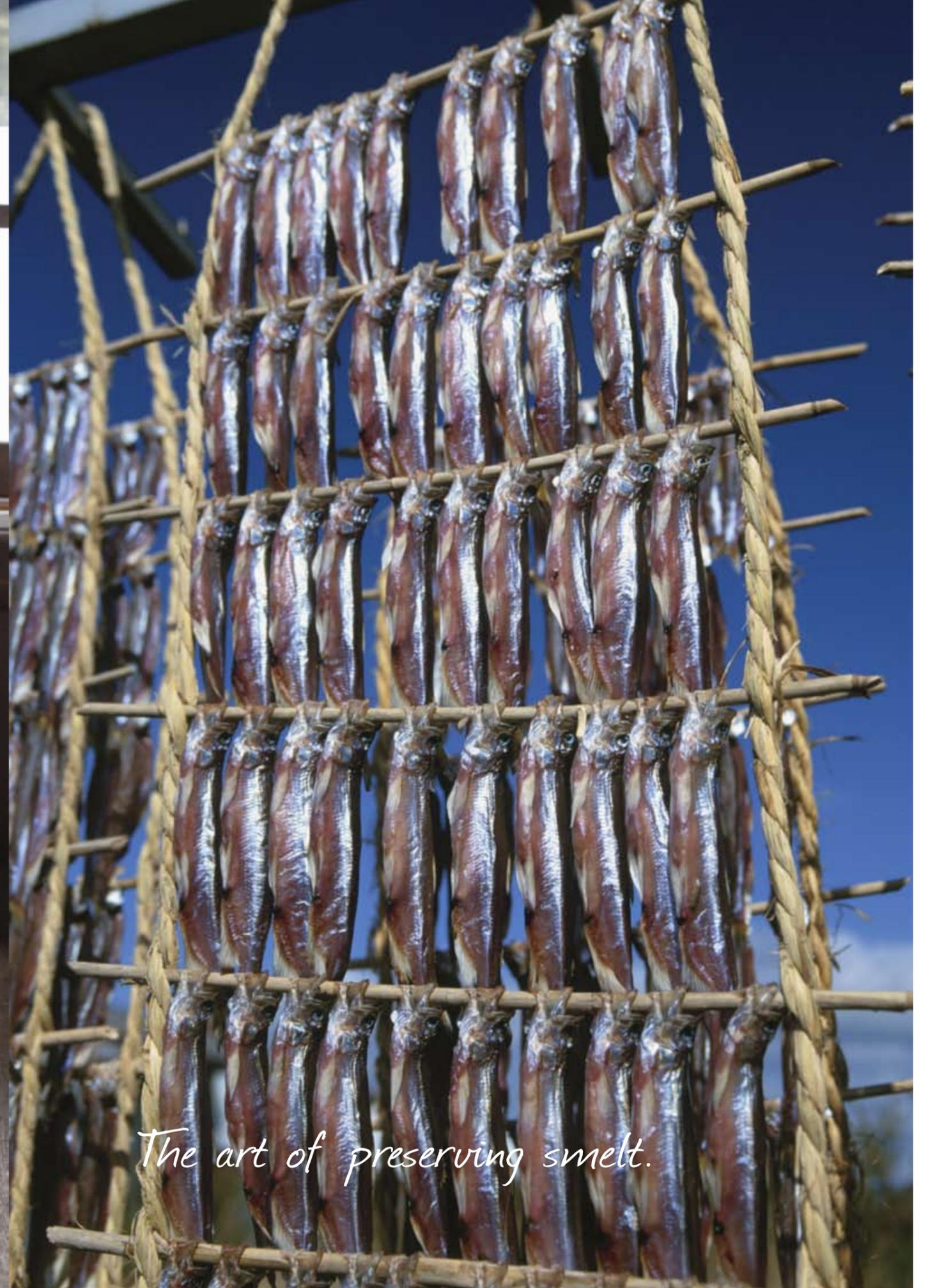
A smiling resident.



Priests taking a rest on the sidewalk.



A Japanese youth.



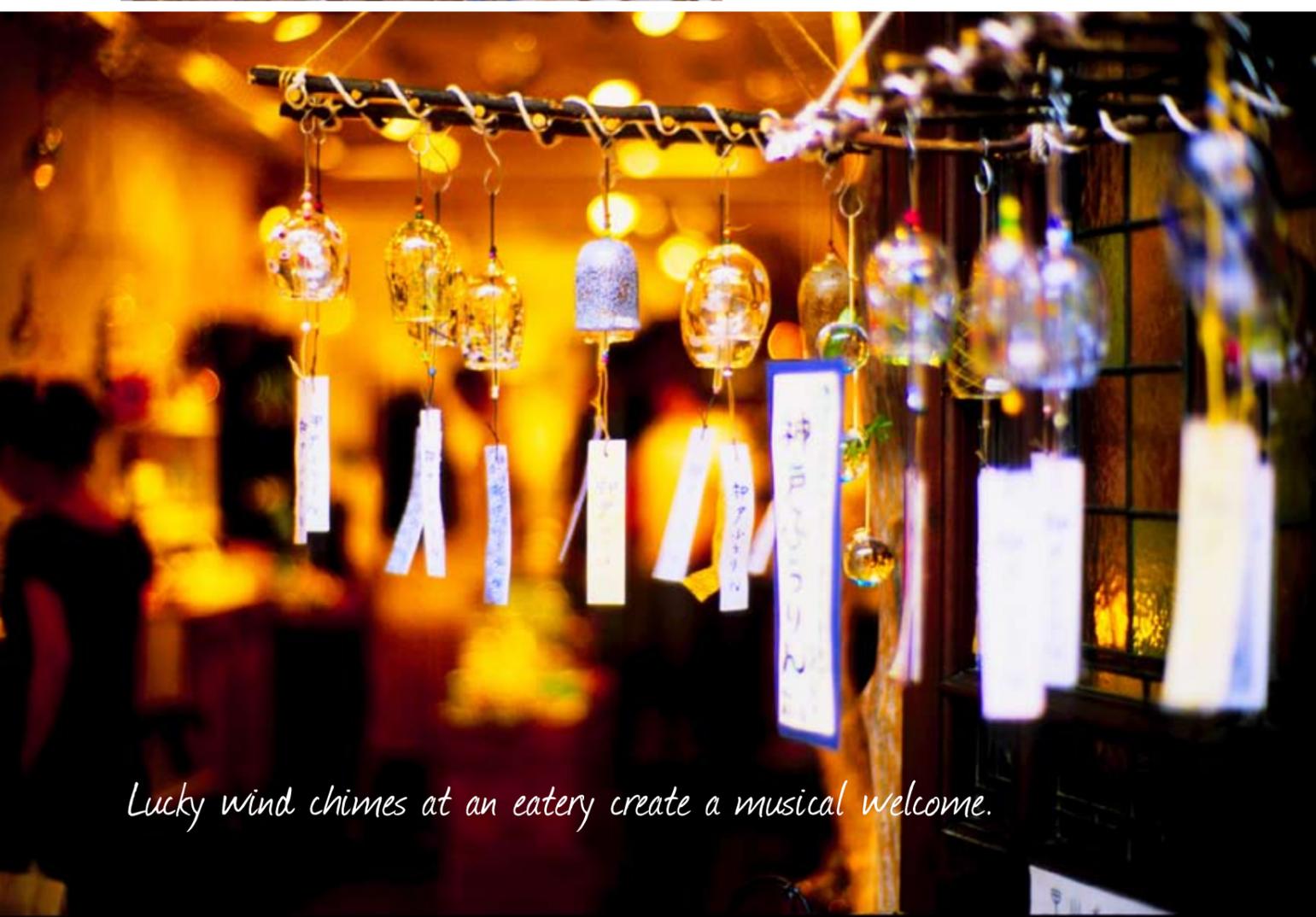
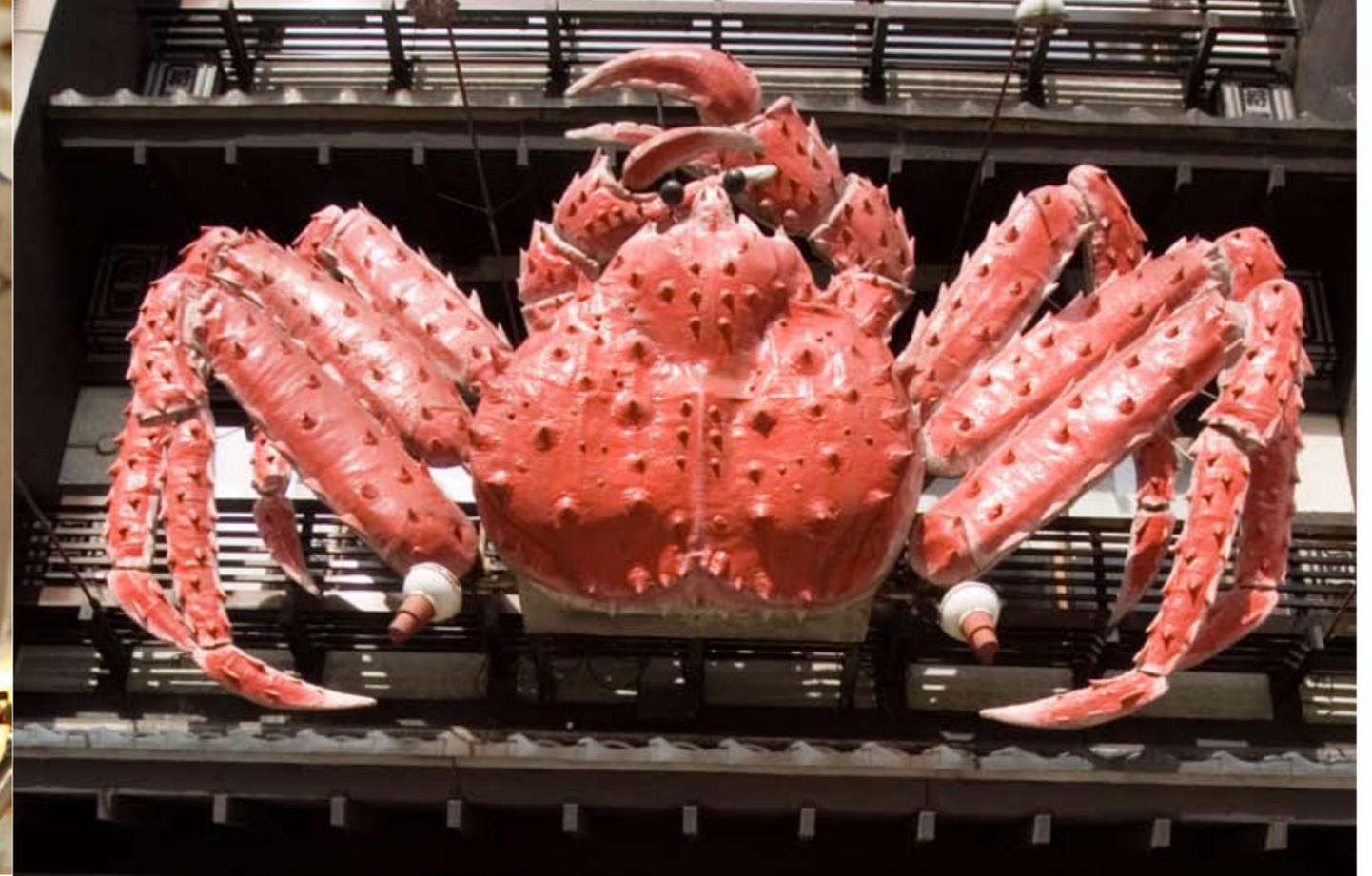
The art of preserving smelt.



Cherry blossoms.



Chef preparing local delicacies.



Lucky wind chimes at an eatery create a musical welcome.



The entrance to one of the city's many famous seafood restaurants.



Traditional paper lanterns.



A bowl of natto.



Fields of lavender.



Kimono-clad women.



A renowned produce of the Hokkaido region.

Explore The World of YTL Hotels...



SHOOK! SHANGHAI AT THE SWATCH ART PEACE HOTEL CHINA

(Opening 2011)

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.

The Swatch Art Peace Hotel Residences which YTL Hotels will manage opens early 2011.

Tel: +86 (21) 6321 0021

www.shookrestaurantshanghai.com.cn



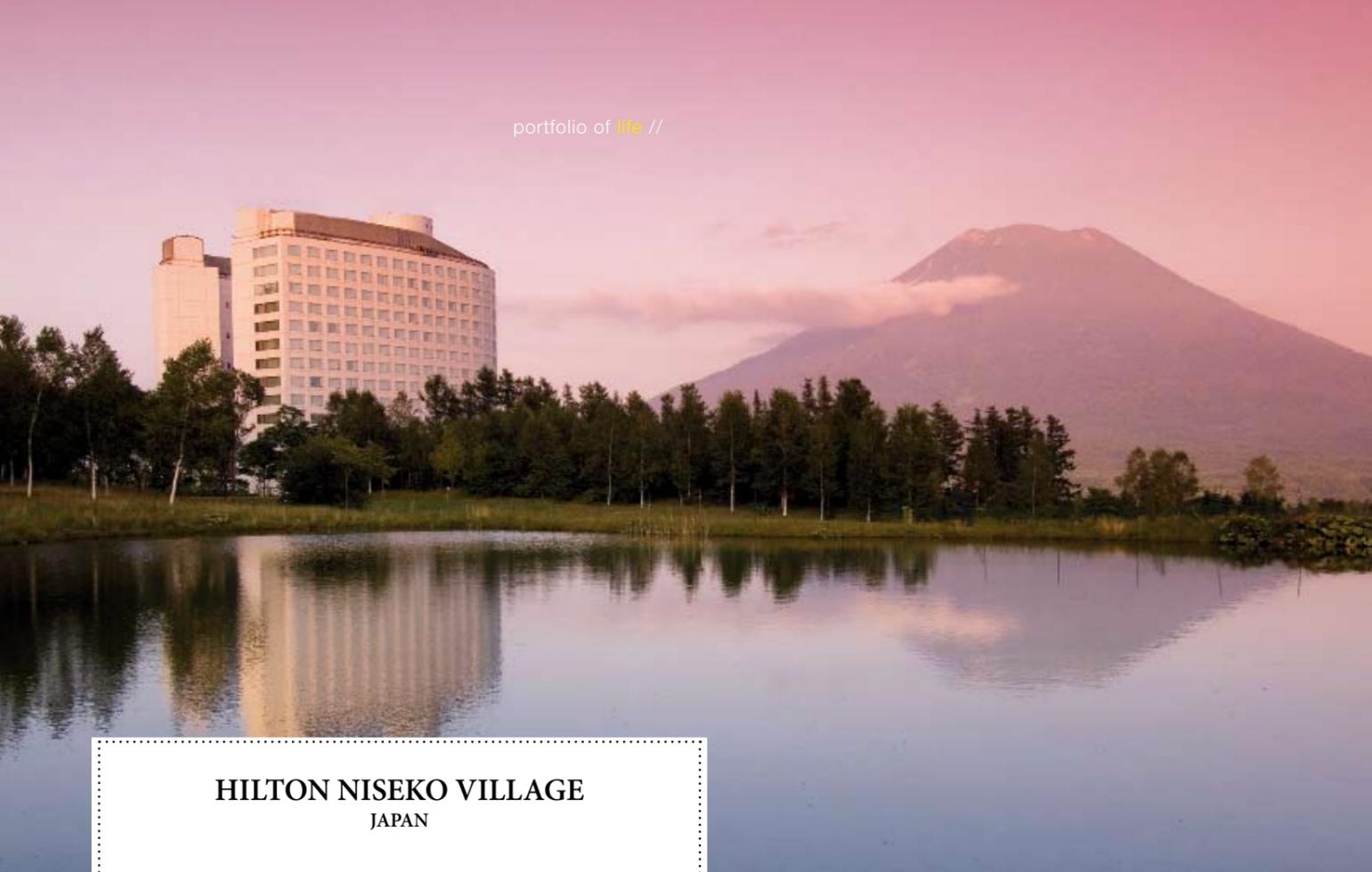
THE GREEN LEAF NISEKO VILLAGE HOKKAIDO, JAPAN

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 Annupuri 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.pangkorlautesates.com





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

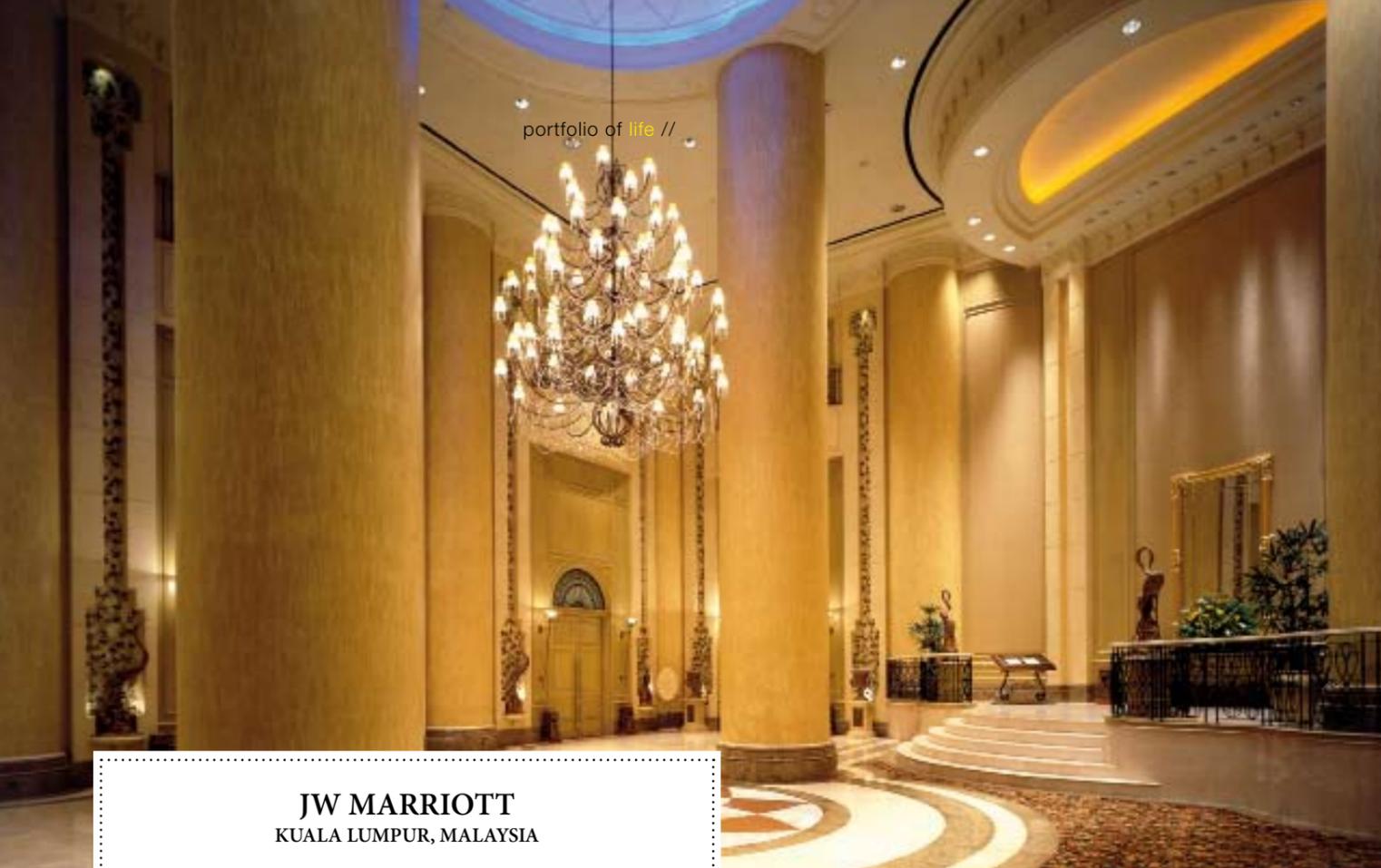
Located on the east coast of peninsular Malaysia, Tanjong Jara Resort is a sanctuary of luxury and well-being steeped in age-old Malay traditions. Designed to reflect the elegance and grandeur of 17th Century Malay palaces, Tanjong Jara is a 99-room resort embodiment of the gentle Malay art of service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





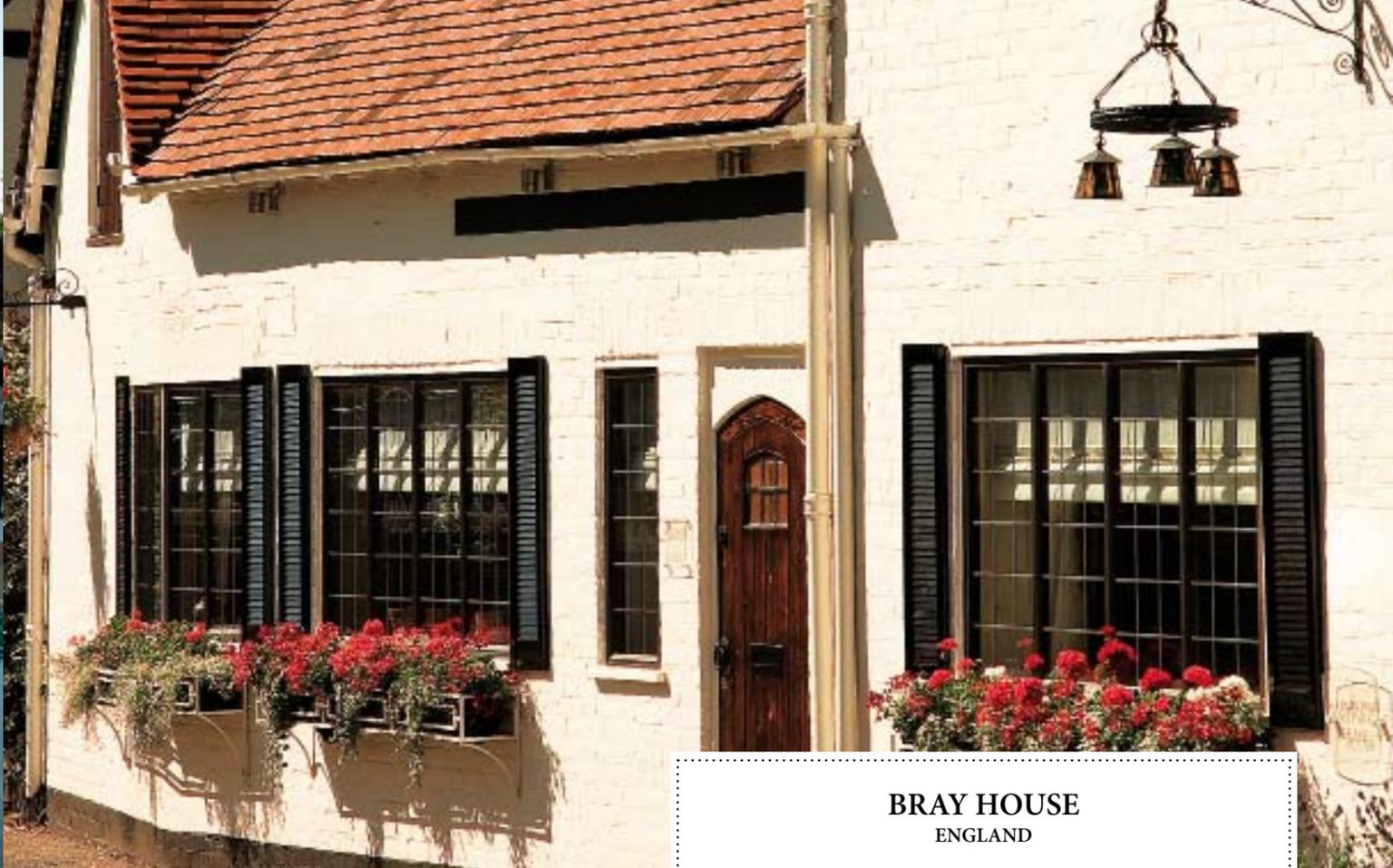
MUSE HÔTEL DE LUXE FRANCE

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.

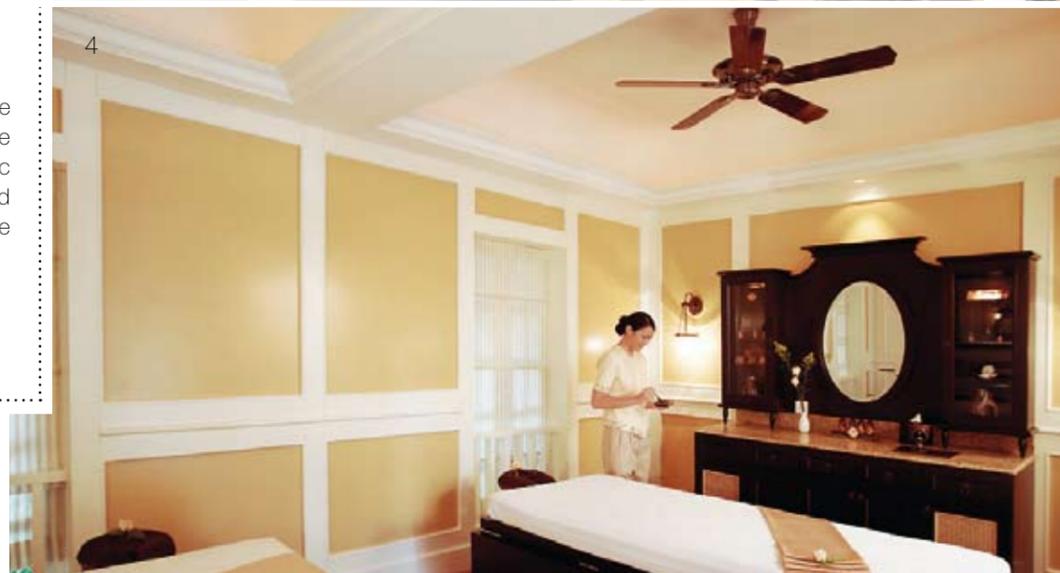
4. Spa Village Cameron Highlands Malaysia

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

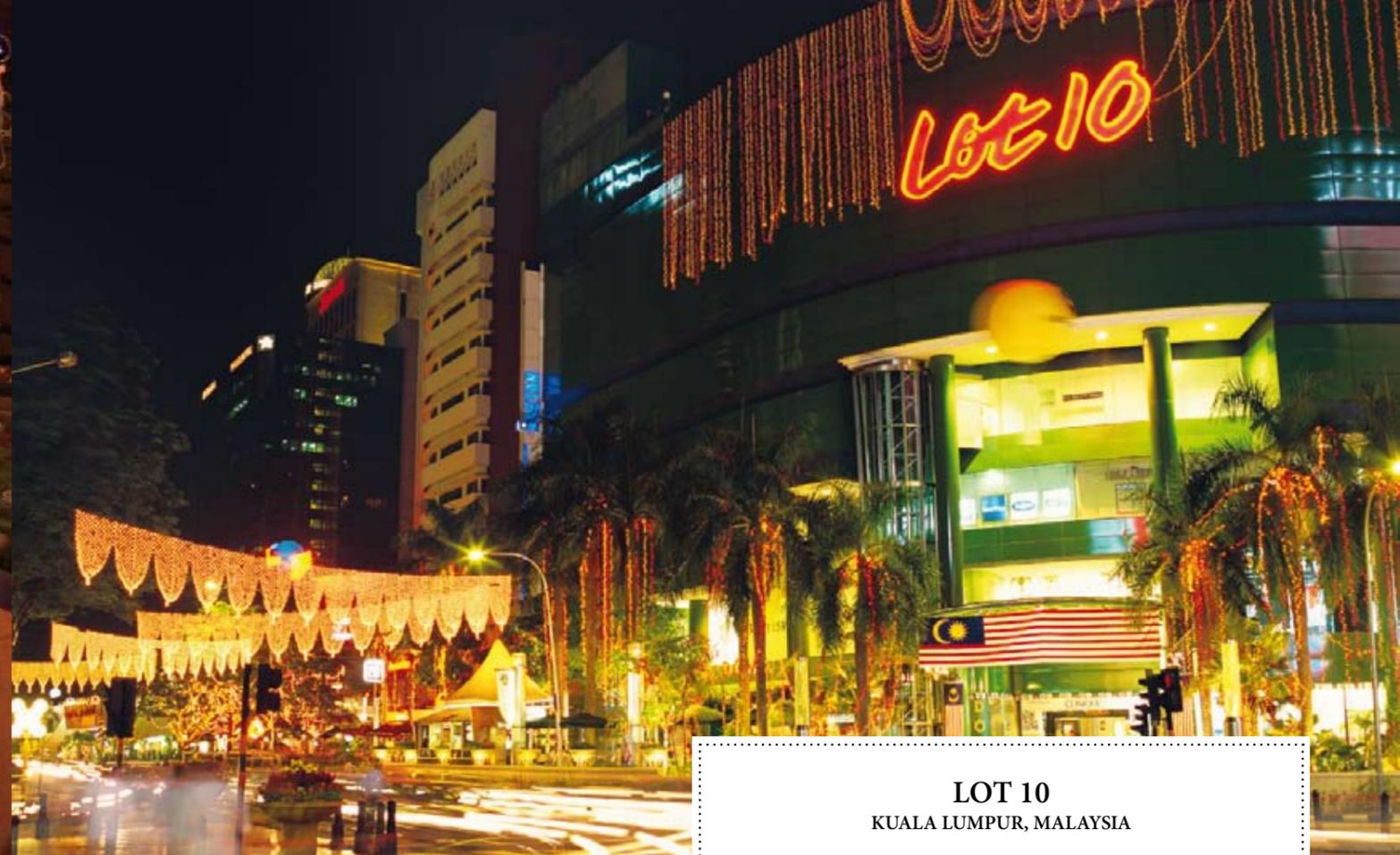
Feast till your heart is content in our Feast Village, a dramatic, stylish dining haven with a village charm. Here, you will find 11 uniquely designed restaurants serving a mix of world-class cuisine and providing a display of culinary skill embodied in a chic and contemporary atmosphere.

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



my life //

Hollywood Confidential

Kathy Greenberg is a writer for both television and films. Among others, she wrote for Pixar Animation on the Academy Award-winning, *Ratatouille*. YTL *Life* caught up with her on her recent visit to London for the premiere of her latest Elton John/Disney animation *Gnomeo and Juliet* starring James McAvoy and Emily Blunt.

An indulgence of mine...is definitely the strongest cheese I can find, and oh, red wine. I'm also a little obsessed with perfume and probably spend more on that than anything else. I'm a big fan of Frédéric Malle's range.

My favourite room would have to be...my dining room on a Sunday afternoon with 12 people crammed around the table. I live in an early 1900s rustic Italian house so the dining room has wood beamed ceilings. And I love cooking for friends: nothing beats the smell of garlic and onions simmering in a pan.

My personal style...I would say is bohemian; I like things that are elegant and comfortable. And I love big chunky jewellery.

In my fridge you will find...lots of bacon, liver, lardons, butter, cheese (naturally); basically everything high in fat.

A lasting childhood memory...would be hiding under the table during my mother's raucous dinner parties. She liked to recreate Julia Child's recipes and someone would always end up, head down in a rum cake, sleeping.

The people who inspired me the most...that's hard but I really appreciate artists who challenge us in an absurdist way, from Monty Python to Banksy to Ferran Adria's liquid olives! And chefs, in particular Daniel Rose at Spring in Paris and Thomas Keller.

When life doesn't go my way...I try to laugh. A sense of humour is key. I look at the bigger picture. Watching *The Great Muppet Caper* also helps.



The books on my bedside table...right now I'm reading about neuroplasticity in *The Brain That Changes Itself* by Norman Doidge, about our brain's incredible capacity. I think neuroscience is fascinating. Oliver Sacks stories are great on this. And *Zombiekins* (for work) – it's a children's book about stuffed animals that eat brains. Oh, and *Winnie the Pooh*.

Can you be yourself in your work or do you have to play the industry game? It's a really fine line; you want to have an individual voice and be edgy but you have to work with hundreds of people, especially in animation; focused, intellectual, people. It's a machine.

Your latest creation *Gnomeo and Juliet* appeals to all ages, doesn't it? Yes, there's a wee bit of blue humour to catch the adult audience and go over the heads of the children. There's enough to keep the grown-ups interested; it's cute, really romantic and the animation's beautiful. It's very different to my next project *The Gaggle*, an adult romantic comedy.

I'd like to travel to...India. I haven't been yet and I'd love to go. Bali is a favourite place of mine, also New York and Paris, where I've just come from. LA is great but you are driving around in your car the whole time – all your experiences are then of your own choosing whereas in Paris, you can wander and just come across things.

If I wasn't doing what I'm doing now...I would make cheese. I would have loved to have been a chef. Also I love textiles; everything about them: hoarding them, making things, dyeing stuff. I also like collecting drawers of little scraps of fabrics. I'd just spend my time taking them out and looking at them.

My favourite way to relax...would be to go to one of YTL Hotels' Spa Villages in Malaysia. ❧

TOGO chair. Design: Michel Ducaroy.
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In Malay we call this Sucimurni. In Malaysia it is Tanjong Jara.



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