

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

# YTL



**PRIVATE PARADISE**  
THE ESTATES AT PANGKOR LAUT:  
THE ULTIMATE VACATION DESTINATION

**MAJESTIC MALACCA**  
LUXURY & HERITAGE ARRIVE IN  
MALAYSIA'S HISTORIC CITY

**BEDTIME FANTASIES**  
ONE MAN ATTEMPTS TO FLY INTO THE  
EYE OF OUR DREAMS

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## BED TIME FANTASIES

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Image of The Estates at Pangkor Laut **Robert Miller**

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

# YTL LIFE

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What an exciting time it is to be living and working in Asia today! It doesn't matter where one travels or does business within the region; there is an overriding sense of excitement, promise, and possibility that infuses every experience and interaction.

Whether one buys into the theory of regional decoupling from the American economy or not, there is exciting evidence of massive ongoing

growth and development in this part of the world. All of which contributes towards an improved quality of life for those of us who are privileged enough to be here in this momentous era.

Together with positive economic change we are seeing an improvement in the lifestyle of the people of the region, and a rapid move towards the demand of luxury products and services that facilitate and enhance this emerging way of life.

No longer is the centre of the world of luxury to be found in Paris, New York or London, but is now rather in Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. We are in the midst of a luxury lifestyle revolution that is sweeping the region!

Within YTL, we have been preparing for this revolution for some years now and we are

well placed to provide a range of experiences that complement and add value to those seeking a life of luxury.

There is little that gives me greater joy than seeing our customers and their families enjoy the many and varied luxury opportunities within the YTL portfolio.

In this issue of YTL Life, you will read about some of the offerings within the YTL luxury lifestyle. We introduce you to The Estates at Pangkor Laut, one of the world's most exclusive resorts; we unveil the beauty and intimacy of the Majestic Hotel in Malacca; and we invite you to experience some remarkable private dining experiences in a variety of exquisite locations.

There are interviews with a number of the participants in the hugely successful recent watch fair at Starhill Gallery, and a conversation with Kevin Cape, the Executive Chef guiding the varied dining experiences in every one of our world-class restaurants. All of this contributes in giving you a taste of the exciting opportunities that are available.

I hope that you will enjoy reading our magazine. We have created it especially for you - to provide a window into the luxury lifestyle that is there for the taking... designed purely for your enjoyment. We hope you will share it with us.



ASIA: LIVING LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

LOUIS VUITTON PHOTO CHOEN LEE PORTRAIT LEON



**WINNING ENTRIES** YTL spas continue to garner international accolades. At the recent AsiaSpa Awards held in Hong Kong, Spa Village Kuala Lumpur was named the Urban Spa of the Year while its big sister, Spa Village Pangkor Laut, bagged the Spa Exterior of the Year Award. Winners were voted for by 28 independent judges consisting mainly of spa personalities and writers who set the benchmarks in the region. "It is truly an honour to be seen as an equal among our industry colleagues," says YTL spa division manager Chik Lai Ping.

**TITANS OF TENNIS** Two of the greatest tennis players in living memory came to stay at the Ritz-Carlton Kuala Lumpur in November last year. Roger Federer and Pete Sampras, who own 26 Grand Slam titles between them, were in town to compete against each other in a sold-out match billed as the 'Clash of Times'. During a meeting with Tan Sri Dato' (Dr.) Francis Yeoh, Sampras claimed that his room "might be the best I've ever stayed in!" The Tan Sri, of course, is no slouch on the tennis court himself, having been Tennis Captain at Victoria Institute in 1974. The Ritz-Carlton Kuala Lumpur also hosted World No. 2 Rafael Nadal and Richard Gasquet.



**AN ISLAND ODYSSEY** YTL and Lehman Brothers are set to enter into a joint venture to develop a five-star hotel and residential villas in Koh Samui, Thailand. Valued at RM270 million, this project will comprise a mix of luxury beachfront and hillside villas, residential villas and loft apartments. The site was carefully chosen to ensure both exclusivity and convenience: located on the northeast coast of Samui, it is flanked on both sides by private beaches which allow for optimal sea views. At the same time it retains a proximity to the Koh Samui region's airport and visitor infrastructure, which includes a host of shopping, dining and entertainment options.



**BRAND VALUES** YTL was recently listed as one of Malaysia's Most Valuable Brands. This was quite an honour, for the names that YTL rubbed shoulders with on that list were nothing short of illustrious: the top 30 brands included such heavyweights as Maybank, Maxis, Genting, Petronas and Astro. YTL owes much of its branding success to its focus on quality and consistency in all of its enterprises; from providing everyday infrastructure through its subsidiary Wessex Water, to pioneering the concept of luxury shopping with Starhill Gallery. The YTL brand has come far since its origins as a humble construction company.



# A JOURNEY TO REMEMBER

STARHILL GALLERY'S SPECTACULAR 'A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME 2007' WATCH AND JEWELLERY FAIR PROVED THAT TIME IS ULTIMATELY, THE GREATEST LUXURY BY NIUH JIT AUN



Louis Vuitton Watch Craftsmanship Workshop

Ask any serious watch collector what the highlights of the haute horlogerie calendar are and you will be told that they are the Basel and SIHH Fairs in Basel and Geneva, Switzerland, respectively. Typically held in early April every year, the two events are where the latest luxury timepieces are unveiled for the rest of the year. However, these fairs are more to the numerous global luxury watch retailers who flock to them and rather more difficult for the average watch collector to attend due to significant logistical obstacles.

Hence, there were smiles of delight among the Malaysian watch collecting community when Starhill Gallery announced that it was hosting 'A Journey Through Time 2007' from December 3-12, 2007, a watch fair targeted more at watch collectors than industry bigwigs. And through they did to witness and marvel at some truly spectacular timepieces and special jewellery pieces that were being exhibited. For many of the city's upper class, plus many foreign visitors, you could say that Christmas came early.



Benoitt Louis Vuitton



Miss Malaysia past and present: Elaine Daly (R) and Deborah Henry



Siti Nurhaliza performing



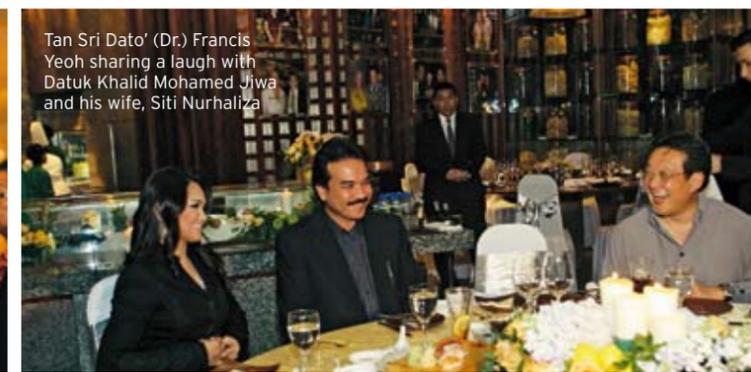
Mr. Christopher Forbes giving a speech at the 'YTL & Forbes Night'



Tan Sri Dato' (Dr.) Francis Yeoh (L) leading the way along with the DYMM Raja Perlis as VIPs arrive for the 'YTL & Forbes'



(L-R) Ruth Yeoh, John-Francois Meyer and Jacob Yeoh



Tan Sri Dato' (Dr.) Francis Yeoh sharing a laugh with Datuk Khalid Mohamed Jiwa and his wife, Siti Nurhaliza

For the serious watch enthusiast, visiting 'A Journey Through Time 2007' was almost like being a kid in a toy store: so many toys to see, touch, feel and savour, a visual orgy for the collector who demands to view (and ultimately buy) the latest, greatest and most inventive timepieces the world has to offer.

But not only were rare watches on showcase, Starhill Gallery also welcomed the opening of four new watch boutiques - the

first two mono-brand boutiques Richard Mille and Blu, the other two multi-brand Khronos and Precious Atelier - further strengthening Starhill Gallery's undeniable attraction as a luxury watch destination.

Also on show at the fair were stunning jewellery pieces by Starhill Gallery's numerous jewellery tenants, with the highlight being Korloff's 88-carat black diamond, the largest of its kind in the world, being roughly the size of a large



Noryn Aziz performing



Richard Mille at Boutique Launch of RM012



Omar Sharif Christopher Layton Dalton & Ning Baizura



Datin Azrene



Fashion from Asprey



Ning Baizura performing



Tan Sri Dato' (Dr.) Francis Yeoh (L) chatting with Tan Sri Dato' Seri (Dr.) Yeoh Tiong Lay



Mr. & Mrs. Bernhard Lederer at the opening of the new blu boutique



Tan Sri Dato' (Dr.) Francis Yeoh (L) and John-Francois Meyer



Winners of Starhill Gallery Watch Awards 2008



(L-R) Cameliã, Steffanie Chua and Maggie Abang Saufi



Sarimah Ibrahim and guests



Starhill Gallery Favourite Ladies' Watch Award 2007 - Jaquet Droz Tiger Eye Petite Heur Minute



The grand finale

strawberry. Black as night, it still sparkled with fire within. Quite simply, amazing.

Attended by royalty from around the region, high society and thousands of casual visitors, 'A Journey Through Time 2007' proved to be a resounding success. All guests were treated to spectacular fashion shows and nightly entertainment programmes by major performers such as Ning Baizura and Sean Ghazi throughout the 10 days.

This truly outstanding fair ended with a gala dinner where an awards ceremony was also held. Among the big winners were Villermet's Arctic Explorer Limited Edition Lewis Pugh, which scooped the 'The Starhill Gallery Active Lifestyle Watch Award 2007', Jaeger LeCoultre's Reverso Grand Complication A Triptyque with 'The Starhill Gallery Watch with Complications in Movement Award 2007', Jaquet Droz's Tiger Eye Petite Heur Minute with 'The Starhill Gallery Favourite Ladies' Watch Award 2007' and Audemar Piguet's Royal Oak Chronograph

Offshore Jalan Bukit Bintang, which won 'The Starhill Gallery Favourite Men's Watch Award 2007', a distinct nod to Kuala Lumpur as a burgeoning top destination for luxury watches.

Newcomer Richard Mille was also a winner on the night, with the RM012 Tourbillon flexing its creative muscle and making its presence felt with 'The Starhill Gallery Innovative Design Award 2007'. The last award presented was the 'Tourism Malaysia Most Revered Watch Award 2007', also going to

another newcomer, Blu, for its Majesty T3, a beautifully crafted rotating tourbillon watch.

Apart from the above Starhill Gallery Awards, the YTL Spirit of Classical Art Award 2007 was also presented at the gala dinner to honour the artistry of timepieces. This award went to Van Cleef & Arpels' Lady Arpel's Centenary. But the true winners were the organisers of 'A Journey Through Time 2007' as well as the ones lucky enough to attend the event. ■

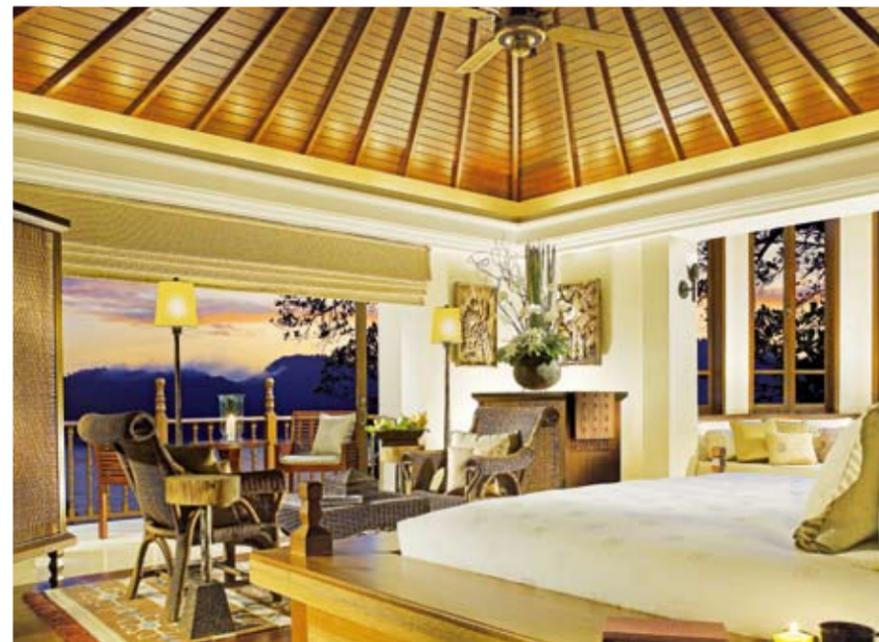
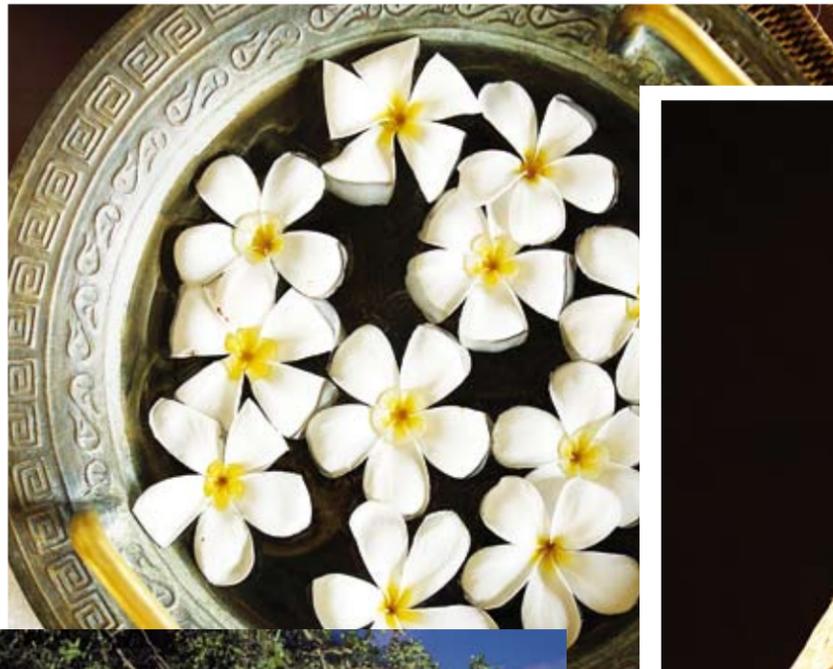


# PRIVATE PARADISE

OPULENCE, ISOLATION  
AND STELLAR SERVICE. THE  
ESTATES AT PANGKOR  
LAUT COULD JUST BE THE  
ULTIMATE LUXURY HOLIDAY  
DESTINATION IN THE WORLD

BY CHUAH SEONG CHIN

ALL PHOTOS YTL HOTELS



Truth be told, I love a good resort hotel as much as the next person - particularly given the stunning selection of properties on offer in Asia. But there are times when one should indulge in a holiday experience scaled down to a more intimate level, in a place that offers complete privacy and the freedom to explore new horizons on one's own terms. And thus, what with necessity being the mother of invention, The Estates at Pangkor Laut seemed like the perfect locale for what was recommended to me as a jaunt into 'solitary indulgence'.

These eight exclusive residences are clustered around a horseshoe-shaped bay; some are set right on the beach while others, on the ridge above, nestle among ancient trees. Each Estate comes complete with its own swimming pool, landscaped garden and separate living and sleeping rooms scattered around each compound. As if that's not enough, each also comes with a butler service and even a personal chef, so the promise isn't just that of a luxury resort experience, but of ultra-luxury service too.

The island itself is also a thing of wonder. As a self-professed island snob, I require that all the islands I holiday on look like the picture perfect postcard - swaying coconut trees, alabaster sands, crystal clear waters, and a lush tropical jungle in the background - and Pangkor Laut is all that and more. In fact, over the years, The Estates at Pangkor Laut has won numerous media accolades and has attracted countless celebrities to sample its charms. Not only do they stay and fall in love with the place, but they apparently can't stop coming back.

Joan Collins, for instance, is said to have spent a honeymoon there; and the late Luciano Pavarotti - so struck by the place was he - almost sang out in that beautiful tenor of his: "How beautiful God has made this paradise!" Oh how beautiful indeed.

My home for the next few days is to be Estate Five, which is tucked into the hillside and has towering trees as its dominant feature. A meandering sandstone pathway leads the way through manicured gardens which permeate the air with the scent of Morning Glory, Frangipani and Hibiscus flowers. This estate, the largest of the eight, boasts three sleeping rooms scattered about the property - each of which are self-contained and offer the utmost privacy.

The high-ceilinged interiors are tropical-colonial in style, with polished hardwood floors and a palette of muted colours providing a chic contemporary edge to traditional Malay kampong sensibilities. Each

bedroom is appointed with a four-poster bed and a jacuzzi, and the views on all sides are incredible. The entire space is crafted with refined sophistication and with each and every need thought for.

As the days progress, I discover that I rather enjoy the reading pavilion that forms the hub of the compound. Here, I while away hours, lulled by birdsong and the lazy twirl of the carved wooden ceiling fan. Occasionally, I spy long-tailed macaque monkeys swinging from vine to vine while the calls of oriental pied hornbills punctuate the peace.

It is interesting to note that the island is large enough to sustain an abundance of wildlife, yet small enough to have escaped Man's exploitation. Nature lovers will enjoy close encounters with a variety of species of birds and plants, including native orchids, yellow pied hornbills, white-breasted sea eagles, crab-eating macaque monkeys and tropical iguanas.

On a couple of mornings, I wake up to the 'rowwow' (or is it 'wakowwakowwakow') of a pair of hornbills and on a particularly pleasant day, even share breakfast with a peacock. The reason for these close



encounters with nature is that The Estates was built with a minimal impact approach, meaning that great care was taken to ensure the landscape of the resort not only blended in with the natural surroundings, but became integrated with it.

Mirroring current sensibilities regarding sustainable and low-impact development trends as well as the existing eco-tourism credo, it is good to note that only 15% of the island has been developed, and that all roads on the island are cantilevered onto the hills to prevent harming even a single tree. This allows virtually the whole of this 300-acre island to remain covered in virgin rainforest - estimated to be more than two-million years old.

But as celebrated as The Estates are for their natural beauty, what sets them apart from other luxury

resorts of its ilk is the spectacular service it offers along with its spectacular scenery. Each Estate provides guests with a private chef and two butlers on hand to provide housekeeping. You can be private and peaceful, or active and social: each Estate offers guests the opportunity to do exactly as they wish.

the very next morning to whisk them straight to the resort. The service here is, in a word, amazing. My personal chef for the weekend also passes with flying colours. Each night, we plan breakfast, and then at breakfast, we plan lunch and so on. Every request is met: pisang goreng, Hainanese chicken rice, chicken chop, shrimp dumplings, seafood soup and pasta with garlic butter sauce. And to work off those extra calories, the Resort can arrange for island-hopping excursions, fishing trips and nature walks with the resident naturalist.

For me, I experience many special moments on long leisurely strolls along the gorgeous Emerald Bay. The water is never less than 87°F and the sun is almost always shining. You can walk along the shoreline in perfect peace and solitude, rarely coming across

## ...AND THE LATE LUCIANO PAVAROTTI - SO STRUCK BY THE PLACE WAS HE - EXCLAIMED, "HOW BEAUTIFUL GOD HAS MADE THIS PARADISE!"

Every day, as I walked past numerous staff who, bow after bow, greet me with their contagious smiles, I realise what makes this place so special: it is not just the wildlife, or the fancy place I am staying in, but the exceptional service. The gentle, sincere smiles, the grace and efficiency with which they go about their daily tasks, and their concern in making my stay as perfect and memorable as possible. I can safely say that there is no task, unless it is humanly impossible, that the staff at The Estates would not attempt in order to fulfil the request of a guest.

For example, after my arrival, I am ushered to the Resort's renowned Spa Village for pre-dinner relaxation therapy and when I return to my new 'home', imagine my surprise to see all my shirts unpacked and pressed (and I didn't even have to ask for it). Later on, after the Resort Manager finds out that I was unable to bring my wife and kid along for this trip due to the haste of plans, she makes two well-placed phone calls and I soon learn that a private limousine will be dispatched to my apartment

another soul, and even when you do, it is obvious you are both under the same quiet spell that this special island casts on you.

As my stay draws to a close, one evening, I walk along the beach and think to myself: an island holiday can be as seductive as it is illusory, especially one as unique as this. I am aware that this will soon be over and that I will have to face my reality once again, sans butler and personal chef, and in the noise and bustle of the city once more. But for now, I can hear those hornbills calling again (we've become fast friends), and so I am off to treat myself to more of the essence of the Estates' ethos: pure luxury in complete privacy. But wait... is that Joan Collins I spy over there on yet another honeymoon? ■

### HOW TO GET THERE

Transport to The Estates at Pangkor Laut comprises of two standard options. The first is a 3-hour limousine ride to the Lumut International Yacht Club from KL followed by a 45-minute cruise on the 64-foot private yacht, the YTL Lady. The second more glamorous option would be a 45-minute helicopter transfer from KLIA right to the resort's private helipad. For bookings, call +603-2783 1000, email [travelcentre@ytlhotels.com.my](mailto:travelcentre@ytlhotels.com.my) or visit [www.pangkorlautresort.com](http://www.pangkorlautresort.com)



# HEAVEN SENT

STEEPED IN MALAY CULTURE AND INSPIRED BY NATURE, TANJONG JARA RESORT IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO STAY AS YOU EXPLORE MALAYSIA'S FABLED EAST COAST STATE DURING 'VISIT TERENGGANU 2008'

BY HELEN OON ALL PHOTOS BY ALVIN LIEW

LEGEND HAS IT THAT AN ANCIENT TRAVELLER SAILING ON THE SOUTH CHINA SEA spotted a light along a coastline in the distant and exclaimed 'Terang' (meaning 'light') to which his companion enquired, 'Anu?' ('where?'). They named that fabled coast 'Terengganu',

Stretching over 244km of golden sand that fringe the east of Peninsular Malaysia, Terengganu is flanked by Kelantan to the north and shouldered by Pahang to the south, the three making up the country's famous East Coast states. This is the heartland of Malay culture where age-old customs and traditions still prevail and life is unhurried and laidback, though it is reluctantly being dragged into the 21st century.

Traditional Malay villages dot the shoreline, nestled among coconut groves where chickens, goats and cows still roam free. Off its coast lie the islands of Redang, Perhentian Besar and Perhentian Kecil, Pulau Kapas, Pulau Lang Tengah and Pulau Tenggol, each of these precious 'jewels' surrounded by powdery sand bathed by turquoise bath-warm waters teeming with corals and marine life. It is a magnet for divers and sea sports enthusiasts.

Colourful fishing boats berth cheek-by-jowl on the beach, their fishing nets draped on their decks

awaiting the next fishing expedition. Children laugh and play along the beach where it is safe for them to be left alone without the dangers of big cities. Women in traditional Malay costumes tend to coconut plantations while others mind their food stalls selling local delicacies such as the delicious 'keropok lekor' - a type of soft fish cracker, the state's favourite snack which, when eaten straight out of the wok and spiced up with chilli sauce, is finger-licking good.

Terengganu's hinterland is cloaked in verdant rainforest harbouring nature's treasure trove of wildlife, exotic plants, lakes and waterfalls that will keep intrepid explorers enthralled and enchanted for weeks. It is a haven for sun worshippers and adventure seekers to catch the rays, shoot the breeze and surf the waves without the ugliness of over commercialised tourist spots in some South-East Asian destinations.

Tourism came late to Terengganu and infrastructure is still being developed. With a new and bigger airport in place and highways built, it is gaining momentum and an increasing number of tourists are flocking to enjoy its golden beaches and its islands. This year, the state government declares 2008 'Visit Terengganu Year' with a hive of activities set in motion to attract visitors.

A beautiful sunrise casts a heavenly glow on Tanjong Jara Resort's infinity pool in Terengganu

Terengganu is also the annual venue of the famous Monsoon Cup - dubbed "the Formula One of sailing". Held in December (right in the middle of the monsoon season between November and February), when the sea is whipped into a restless mass of giant waves by the strong wind - it is perfect for a match race among the top sailing enthusiasts in the world.

There is accommodation to suit all budgets, from basic wooden chalets on the beach and home-stays with Malay families to boutique resorts. But the grande dame of Terengganu is Tanjong Jara Resort near the town of Dungun. Serenity is its middle name and the resort is a blend of tranquillity, exclusivity and activity with an unmistakably Malay undertone.

Awarded the prestigious Aga Khan Award for architecture, the 99-room resort is designed to reflect the elegance and grandeur of 17th century Malay palaces harking back to an era when Malay kings lived in sublime splendour and wielded both political and religious power. It is a complex of

The waves join in with their rhythmic tempo, making it all sound like a soothing lullaby.

Tanjong Jara, as with the rest of Terengganu, offers a respite for frazzled cityfolk to escape the rat race and to re-energise their body, mind and spirit. The Resort's spa mantra is 'Sucimurni', the Malay word for 'wholesome living through purity of spirit, health and well-being'. Tantalisingly, the stress-buster programme is called 'Syurga Tujuh' or 'Seven Steps to Heaven' in harmony with the newly extended Spa Village Tanjong Jara, voted as 'Most Innovative Spa' in the world by Tatler magazine this year.

It is a carefully designed seven-day holistic lifestyle that aims to balance the seven chakras of the human body by incorporating yoga and carefully selected treatments. Chik Lai Ping, the Spa Division Manager, elucidates: "Each chakra is traditionally represented by a different colour of the rainbow which reflects different emotions, starting with red at the bottom up to violet at the crown. Ideally all the chakras should

## TERENGGANU IS THE HEARTLAND OF MALAY CULTURE WHERE AGE-OLD CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS STILL PREVAIL

elegant chalets and buildings constructed in local timber and furnished with rich fabrics, each room commanding a view of the sea. Set in a landscaped garden of exotic tropical plants and coconut palms fringed by an expansive beach, the resort is designed to work in harmony with the landscape, capturing the stunning vista of the magnificent golden sand right at the doorstep of the resort.

As befits a palatial design, the entrance and reception area is grand and imposing with a commodious foyer flanked by a stretch of serene water features with gushing fountains as koi fish swim among the aquatic plants. Just a stone's throw away, a walled garden harbours a small swimming pool, one of two in the resort with the main infinity pool located at the far side, right by the beach.

Accommodation is categorised and named after various living quarters of traditional ancient palaces and houses of Malay architecture such as the Anjung rooms and suite, and the Serambi and Bumbung rooms. Casuarina pine trees stand sentinel along the edge of the beach providing shelter from the wind that seems to sigh and whisper among the branches.

be balanced and aligned. However, the majority of individuals who visit us have some (chakras) which are overactive and others that are closed down or under-active. Our traditional Malay healing methods are carefully selected to systematically stimulate and re-align the chakras."

The spa treatments are centred on an ancient Malay healing philosophy passed on from generation to generation and are incorporated into the spa menu through consultation with experts in the field such as Sairani, the Spa Village consultant and trainer whose family is a leading authority in the field of traditional Malay therapies and medicine. She is also responsible for the spa's lotions and potions that can be purchased by guests who wish to create their own spa experiences at home.

All therapists are professionally trained and the spa's star masseur is Pak Yahya, a Malay Healer. His knowledge and expertise is derived from observing and helping his grandmother who had especially chosen him from among his many siblings to be her apprentice ever since he was a teenager because he had, in her eyes, a 'special gift'.



Terengganu is home to a large fishing community



Diving off Pulau Tenggol, one of Malaysia's best-kept dive secrets



The East Coast of Malaysia boasts many picturesque scenes like this one

Coconut picking, often using monkeys to scale the tall trees, is a common sight and is a favourite must-see amongst tourists



Batik painting: Another favourite tourist attraction



This bell at the Tanjong Jara Resort is sounded when the fishing boats come back in, signalling for guests to head down to the beach to select their fish of choice for the evening's meal



Attap weaving: a traditional Malay craft still widely practised today

COCONUT PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PEAK MAGAZINE



Malay-style architecture is a hallmark of the Tanjong Jara Resort

Pak Yayha explains: "Not everyone can be a healer. They need to be blessed with a special gift to be able to absorb the knowledge and gain enlightenment in the art of healing. My grandmother could sense that I was born with such a gift and she trained me to heal through massage and concocted her own massage oil and ointment from herbs and medicinal plants. Now I can sense my daughter, Yasliana, also has the gift and I am passing my knowledge to her. Sadly my other four children do not possess the gift."

Aside from the spa experience, the resort offers activities that are geared towards the core principal of the 'Syurga Tujuh' with energy-boosting guided bicycle tours of villages, nature walks, eco-adventure cruises on the Marang River or jungle trekking to the beautiful Chemerung Waterfall. The resident naturalist, Captain Mok, a former military man whose knowledge of the jungle and its bounty is second to none, is at hand to guide the expeditions.

For those partial to aquatic sports and a spot of underwater gazing, a 45-minute boat ride will reveal Malaysia's best kept diving and snorkelling secret,

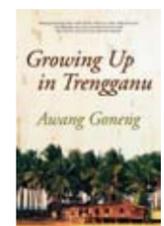
Pulau Tenggol. Its pristine crystal clear waters are rich in marine life of all shapes, sizes and hues, and together with the colourful coral gardens, make an amazing kaleidoscopic underwater vista.

To stimulate the mind, kite making and batik painting lessons are available from a local artist while gourmands and budding chefs can work the wok with Chef Ann, the Menu Master who will take you to the local morning market in nearby Dungun to shop for ingredients. The colourful market is an assault on the senses, with the cacophony of the traders amid the vivid colours of local fruits and vegetables setting the scene ablaze. Chef Ann dishes out the art of Eastern culinary skill in her indomitable style packed with useful tips and flavoured with a large helping of humour.

With chakras aligned, yoga positions mastered, body, mind and spirit rejuvenated and recharged, frazzled city slickers will be ready to join the rat race again to live their high octane lives and take the world by its throat, of course, only after having taken seven steps to heaven. ■

### HOW TO GET THERE:

Tanjong Jara Resort is accessible by a 55-minute flight from Kuala Lumpur to Kuala Terengganu plus a one-hour transfer from the airport. For reservations, contact YTL Travel Centre at [travelcentre@ytlhotels.com.my](mailto:travelcentre@ytlhotels.com.my) or [www.tanjongjararesort.com](http://www.tanjongjararesort.com); +603 2783 1000. For a pre-holiday read on Terengganu, 'Growing Up In Terengganu' (sic) by Awang Goneng is a great choice, giving valuable insight into the simple village lifestyle and the people of Terengganu as the author recalls his amusing and adventurous experiences growing up in his village. It is published by Monsoon Books and available in major bookstores in Malaysia (RM39.90) and Singapore.



# BED TIME FANTASIES

PHOTOGRAPHER THIERRY BOUET FLIES INTO THE EYE OF OUR DREAMS AS HE DOCUMENTS THE INTIMATE YET UNEXPLORED RELATIONSHIP PEOPLE SHARE WITH THEIR NIGHT TIME SANCTUARIES

WORDS & PHOTOS BY THIERRY BOUET FROM GETTYIMAGES.COM TEXT EDITED BY YUNG RO HAN

The bed of Christian Basquiat, interior designer, at his home in Paris' 9th arrondissement. After moving to the top floor of the building he had lived in for a decade on the 2nd floor, he joined together the maid's quarters, opened up the roof, fitted a glass wall and ceiling, and placed his bed underneath.

THE STANDING BABAS ARE MEN who have taken a vow never to sit or lie down for the rest of their days. They sleep standing, suspended from harnesses. After about 10 years, their legs are swollen, enormous and covered in varicose veins. After that they deflate, becoming just bones covered by skin.

Most of the rest of us, of course, tend to sleep in a more banal manner; which is to say, we sleep in beds. And these beds don't differ all that much from each other either: horizontal, rectangular, with sheets, covers and pillows. The lack of variation is enough to put one to sleep. Unsurprisingly, there is even a statistic which claims that a third of all beds in the Western world are from Ikea.

Why is there this paucity of imagination where beds are concerned? After all, it is usually the most satisfying piece of furniture in the house. It abolishes weight. We are born and we reproduce in bed, and the lucky ones even die there. Beds frame our lives.

So where are the people who make their beds live up to their dreams?

I decide to go in search of them, these bed fantasists, and to document them. But they are an elusive tribe. After all, beds are most found in the most private of sanctuaries so the task is a formidable one. I do get a certain pleasure in asking a person I have just met, "What is your bed like?" The reaction is normally benevolent, but somehow, I have yet to pick the right person using this method. As it has turned out, it works much better when I get referrals.

From the very first image, my one condition is that I insist that the person (or persons) feature by their beds, or even better, in them. It is fundamental that the bed should be inhabited. It's the relationship between the two that is key, as when a pet-owner and his pet begin to resemble each other. Hotel beds, then, hold no interest for me: their extravagant covers and sheets are just decorations and do not involve their occupants.



Architect Gilles Ebersolt has adapted the 'Ballule' (also known as 'The Zorb'), most commonly used for hurtling down hills for fun, and transformed it into this rather quirky floating bed



Raphaele Bianchi, bed-tester, spends her night in this polycarbonate module on the roof of her apartment home in Paris. It is a prototype of micro-architecture named 'Post-it' and attracts interests from museum and galleries, but struggles against building regulations and permission from other tenants.



Author Gerard de Villiers' bedroom emulates a pre-war brothel. A feature of excess, the erotic blue-tinted mirrors make the king-size bed seem even bigger.



Michou, a personality of the Parisian nightlife, sleeps sitting up while his partner sleeps flat. The reason: he refuses to wear a hairnet or curlers.



Sculptor Daniel Hourde's black granite tomb-inspired bed at his Paris 5th arrondissement home. His partner has since relocated to a different bedroom.



The bed of artist Paolo Callia, who since working on Federico Fellini films in the 1970s, has retained an excessive taste for baroque. He sleeps on one bed and has another for his recreational activities.

Finally, I would have loved to do a tour of ethnic beds, but it would have taken me years to cover Africa, Asia, the far North, and the most hidden parts of the world. I have therefore chosen to focus on beds which no climate, culture, or tradition can constrain to a norm, other than the fantasies of the person who owns it.

A subset of bed fantasists make their beds the jumping-off point for philosophising on love and relationships. Sculptor François Pascal is a case in point: he has constructed a bed in the shape of an open-cage and explains that it is a metaphor for the act of love-making. This bed, he says, represents "the freedom that we gain and lose" in a sexual relationship.

Then there is Olivier Urman, an artist, who sleeps on a giant woman constructed out of acrylic fur. Urman spends his nights between her legs, with his head between her breasts. It thus ensures that he never has to sleep alone. If one does wish to pass the night with another living human being, then Urman has a lady friend (who chose not to be photographed) with a bed that promises the most intimate of sleeping arrangements. Made with an arc-shaped frame, this bed would enable a couple to hold themselves one on top of the other, face to face, without experiencing the unpleasantness of weight.

A less intimate, if more practical, arrangement is to be found in the home of Michou. He owns an electric bed where the mattresses are technologically separate. In other words, they work like the heating in nice cars, where each seat can regulate its own temperature.



A 3-D reconstruction of New York vertically above the bed of designer Pucci de-Rossi, gives a feeling of vertigo to anyone lying on the bed and an impression of hovering over the city



In order not to sleep alone, Olivier Urman, artiste, created this bed sculpted from bultex foam and acrylic fur and named it 'Mavellous Mother Nature'

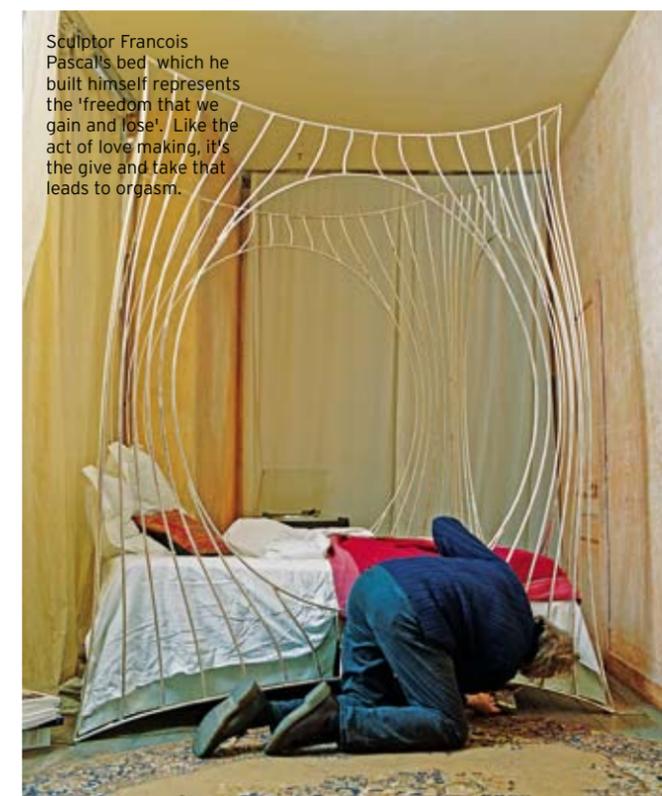


Real estate agent Bruno Ledoux has an entire room dedicated to Napoleon's field camp bed. Experts have identified this as the last bed in which Napoleon slept at Sainte-Helene.



A fan of China, illustrator Hippolyte Romain brought back this Mandarin bed which literally occupies his whole bedroom.

## WE ARE BORN AND WE REPRODUCE IN BED, AND THE LUCKY ONES EVEN DIE THERE. BEDS FRAME OUR LIVES



Sculptor Francois Pascal's bed, which he built himself represents the 'freedom that we gain and lose'. Like the act of love making, it's the give and take that leads to orgasm.



Fashion stylist Chantal Thomass uses shades of pink for her decor, furniture and linigerie in order to facilitate better dreams.

This whimsical bed by interior designer Jean Royere, was bought by Chloe Blum at an auction at Christie's. Chloe's preferred occupation is 'doing nothing' and she does so mostly lying down in this bed as it is the only piece of furniture in her new apartment.



Antiquarian Bill Pallot's apartment features a different style in each room. For his bedroom, he chose the 70s and his bed with its moulded plastic base is a product straight from that era.

# PRECIOUS ENCOUNTERS

At the recent 'A Journey Through Time 2007' watch and jewellery fair, YTL Life got the chance to discover in depth the inner workings of two premium watch brands, Blu and Roger Dubuis, and



to view for the first time in Malaysia the famous Korloff Noir, the world's largest black diamond



Patrick-Louis Vuitton with his mobile trunk bed, invented by his grandfather Georges, the son of Louis Vuitton. The bed was first ordered by the explorer Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza for his bivouacs at the end of the 19th century

dreams. These are the beds which seek to break down all boundaries of space and time, exploring as they do the exotic and the alien.

Hippolyte Romain, for instance, imported an authentic Mandarin bed from China. This ancient artifact had to be dismantled at its port of origin, and then was reconstructed in his present room from thousands of pieces of wood.

Bruno Ledoux, on the other hand, was such a fan of Napoleon that he managed to get hold of the field camp bed in which the Emperor supposedly died at Saint H el ene. He has dedicated a whole room in

We are said to 'drift off' when we fall asleep. And there is a certain group of bed fantasists who literalize this concept of travelling into space for their sleeping spaces. Interior designer Christian Basquiat, for instance, opened up the roof of his home in Paris' 9th arrondissement, fitted a glass wall and ceiling, and placed his bed underneath. Every night, the stars are now his bed-mates.

Rapha le Bianchi takes this stratospheric idea one step further; she spends her nights in a polycarbonate module that is attached onto the top of the roof of her apartment home. This structure was designed by S ebastien Rinckel and is a prototype of micro-architecture named, rather appropriately, 'Post-it'. Bianchi might have a magnificent view over the whole of Paris, but her sleeping module struggles against building regulations and is not very successful in getting permission from other tenants.

The designer Pucci de Rossi, finally, prefers to create the illusion of verticality, rather than actually suspend himself in space. On his ceiling is a 3-D reconstruction of New York which gives a feeling of vertigo to anyone lying on the bed - there is an impression of hovering over the city. The cheeky part is that Central Park is represented by a mirror. While some have prioritized the weightlessness of sleep, others have focused on the limitlessness of

his house to it. And he is still working on perfecting this Napoleon-themed sleeping space of his: since this photo was taken, he has ordered figures of those who were present at the famous French sovereign's final moment from the Gr evin museum.

Daniel Hourd  and Chantal Thomass stand as opposites in terms of their bed fantasies. Hourd , a painter and sculptor, has chosen to metaphorically bring his death forward by sleeping on a tombstone. He has the props to match: there are Christ figures in the alcoves and heavy curtains draped around the area. Naturally, Hourd  plays dead for the camera. Thomass, meanwhile, takes her bedroom decoration as an excuse to revert to girlhood. She lives in a bed which looks like it is made for a baby-doll: the colour pink is simply everywhere.

As for me, the bed I am most charmed by is one that I would like to take with me, after photographing it. Designed by Patrick-Louis Vuitton, it fits in its own case when folded. Despite my pleas, offers and praise, Vuitton won't even think of giving it to me. A shame, as this camp bed would have got me out of my normal bed, in my normal room, in my normal building, in my normal town. I would have slept everywhere. I would have rented hotel rooms and ignored their own beds. As it is, I realise how lucky I am to have chosen photography, which enables me to travel. ■

# DESIRES OF THE FLASH

FLASHY AND EXTRAVAGANT OR ELEGANT AND UNIQUE: EACH ROGER DUBUIS WATCH IS A DARING STATEMENT ALL UNTO ITSELF BY HELEN OON



A stunning jewellery piece from the 'Follow Me' range



Excalibur Gioia, a racy number in white gold is encrusted with 388 diamonds while the mother-of-pearl dial glitters with another 112.



Excalibur JFK, meaning 'Just For Kings', boasts the world's first 'co-axial chronograph, single-pusher, central hour, minute, seconds, instant large date and flying tourbillon'

In the world of haute horology, a Roger Dubuis watch can easily be considered a truly daring fashion statement. Anyone who has seen either its TooMuch or Follow Me ranges would easily testify to that. Never understated, these flamboyant creations of this luxury watch brand are for those who exude confidence and for those who dare.

But that is just one side of Roger Dubuis. Its other collections, such as Excalibur, Hommage and S.A.W. exercise more restraint and practice simple elegance and are coveted by those who enjoy power-dressing. Think David Beckham first. Now think Bill Clinton and you'll begin to comprehend the two extremes Roger Dubuis straddles.

So what makes Roger Dubuis tick? "Quality, design, trend-setting power and exclusivity," declares Mr Hanspeter Pieth, the Managing Director of Roger Dubuis Asia during the recent 'A Journey Through Time' luxury watch exhibition at KL's Starhill Gallery. "What sets Roger Dubuis apart is its quality and non-conformist approach that give our watches that extra edge."

Those in the know would immediately recognise a Roger Dubuis watch with its bold designs that transform a simple timepiece into a bejewelled work of flair and ostentation. Others might simply call all that embellishment "bling".

"We find Asian clients are more flamboyant. They like lots of bling in their watches," agrees Pieth, who started life dealing with fine jewellery but entered the luxury watch industry with Roger Dubuis in February 2007 and now spearheads all its Asian branches. "Asians are also very knowledgeable on this subject."

The seed of Roger Dubuis was planted, ironically, in the world of furniture sketching, the first foray into design by the brand's founder and president, Carlos Dias. As an avid collector of fine watches himself and a devotee of horology, he turned from collector to creator in 1995 when

he founded a company called SOGEM SA (Societe Genevoise des Montres). But it wasn't until 1999 that Dias acquired the 'Manufacture' label for his budding company, "when I felt it deserved the title" as he himself has put it.

By 2003, the Roger Dubuis brand name was in a position to conceive and fine tune its own highly complicated watch movements and to regulate the mechanisms that drive them. And by 2007, Dias managed to rack up an impressive portfolio of 28 different movements, which, for a relative baby in this highly competitive industry was quite an achievement. Not quite something you can sit on or sleep in, but much better, for a Roger Dubuis is a statement of individuality and on occasion, pure brazenness.

So in-demand are these timepieces that Dias has limited production to a mere 28 pieces for all Roger Dubuis gold models. This then allows him the chance to offer his glittering clientele unique models with variable combinations of movements, dials, cases, gem-settings and straps. "Our best selling range is GoldenSquare," says Pieth. "But then again, Excalibur and the Follow Me, TooMuch and MuchMore watches and jewellery are equally popular."

The Roger Dubuis brand has rapidly expanded globally and currently has boutiques in major cities such as Geneva, Madrid, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Bangkok. This is no big surprise, though, because Roger Dubuis watches are quite simply unforgettable. "But most of all," says Pieth, "each piece is designed with great passion by Carlos Dias himself with a touch of glamour and a hint of provocation to spice it up."

All we know is that as far as high-end, luxury watch brands go, Roger Dubuis is sometimes too hot to handle. And that's a good thing. ■

*The Roger Dubuis boutique is located at Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, KL; [www.rogerdubuis.com](http://www.rogerdubuis.com)*

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROGER DUBUIS

# A DIAMOND IS FOREVER

AND IN THE CASE OF THE KORLOFF NOIR, THE WORLD'S BIGGEST BLACK DIAMOND, IT IS ALSO THE STUFF MADE OF LEGENDS BY HELEN OON



It isn't the largest diamond in the world but the 88-carat Korloff Noir can lay claim to being the largest black diamond known to exist. Emanating a mysterious glow, the Korloff Noir's dark facets catch the light and twinkle like stars in the firmament, captivating all who set eyes on it.

But no one is more spellbound by its magical power than Daniel Paillasseur, president of luxury brand Korloff and custodian of the black diamond. When he speaks of it, his eyes sparkle just like the Korloff Noir.

"Life is an encounter," he philosophises. "Thirty years ago, my partner's grandfather came to me and asked me to close my eyes and open my hand. He placed an object on my palm. When I opened my eyes, I saw this huge black diamond and it was love at first sight."

The Korloff Noir is steeped in history and its origin harks back to Russia during the aftermath of the country's revolution in the 1920s. A Russian aristocratic family by the name of Korloff Sapojnikoff from St. Petersburg fled the country in fear for their lives and the only thing they managed to smuggle out was this one very much prized black diamond. The rest of their journey to Europe is shrouded in mystery but legend has it that whoever touches the Korloff Noir will be blessed with good luck, prosperity and happiness.

As for Paillasseur, the Noir's magic has worked wonders on him. When he formed his company in 1978, Paillasseur named it after the Korloff family and the black diamond has been revered as its talisman and epitomises the very soul of the establishment.

Born in 1948 in Lyon in France, Paillasseur has diamonds in his blood. He has always been fascinated by this precious stone and over the years, has established himself as a jeweller of the highest calibre. At 30 years old, the Korloff name has grown into a global brand that symbolises luxury, quality and exclusivity with links to many luminaries from the world of the rich, famous and royal. "We have many famous clientele, but we are discreet and our client list is confidential."

Blessed with a creative talent that knows no bounds and fired by a passion and fertile imagination, Paillasseur creates exquisite and cutting-edge jewellery, accessories, haute couture and watch collections with a touch of Bohemia. He boldly mixes materials and combines colours that challenge conventional ideas. He is a visionary and has the uncanny foresight to

analyse trends and to discover new market both in France and abroad.

The Korloff brand is today synonymous with exquisite contemporary jewellery. The company works in alliance with generations of diamond cutters who are constantly pushing the boundaries to perfectly capture the beauty of the diamonds.

This dedication to researching and improving the penetration of light into the diamond has led to the birth of the 65-facet Korloff Cut, the secret of its brilliance lying in the 41 facets on the crown and the 24 facets on the pavilion. The company has also introduced lacquered mother-of-pearl creations with signature collections bearing romantic names such as 'Miss Paris' to epitomise Parisian elegance, while 'Papillon' denotes a diamond-winged butterfly freed from its chrysalis to alight on the neck of a woman like a soft kiss.

Daniel Paillasseur's dream is to craft Korloff into "a veritable work of art" as he attempts to make life imitate art. His empire is expanding globally with 47 boutiques in major cities, each designed like an art gallery. "Once through the magnificent black front door, you will no longer be protected from the Korloff spell," he laughs.

The legend of the black diamond lives on through Korloff and Daniel Paillasseur. ■

*Korloff is located at Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, KL; [www.korloff.fr](http://www.korloff.fr)*



Daniel Paillasseur: has diamonds running through his blood

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF KORLOFF

The blu Majesty  
Tourbillon M3



# THE BLU WAY

WHERE TIME AND SPACE AND IMAGINATION  
ALL FORM PARTS OF THE UNIQUE VISION OF  
BERNHARD LEDERER, FOUNDER, PHILOSOPHER  
AND GENIUS BEHIND THE AMAZING BLU  
WATCHES BY MATT ARMITAGE

"Most people are ruled by time rather than ruling their own time," muses Bernhard Lederer, the main man, brains and technical director of blu. Still a relatively unknown in these part of the world, blu is the latest and most original luxury watch brand to arrive on our shores with the recent opening of a new boutique at KL's prestigious Starhill Gallery.

In the world of blu, technical genius and the nous of a philosopher appear to have given birth to a range of watches that sets imaginations alight. A quick glance through blu's catalogue of watches (since its inception in 2000) is enough to tell you that the brand exists well beyond the mainstream of the prestige timepiece business.

blu watches evoke visions of planetary systems, almost as if each watch existed in its own universe. You will find no chronographs, not even a second hand, at blu. And in some instances, such as the blu Sunset, a conscious decision has been made to separate the hour from the minute hand. "The hour hand is embedded deep into the dial while the minute hand is very light. Like a ballerina, she dances on the high road," says Lederer with a flourish. "When you ask someone the time, they will say 'it's 20 past' or '10 to'. They don't tell you the hour. Why? Because there seems to be a difference between hour and minute. It's an indication that you are not guided by time but you are its master."

Mastering time is a subject that Lederer returns to frequently. "If you're really honest nothing is so important you need to know the time down to the exact second. In daily life, unless you're a scientist you don't need a watch that rules you. When you become the master of your own time, this is the moment that you begin to understand the art of the timepieces we create."

Lederer has managed to inject this abstract idea into the very essence of his creations. "Watches are not instruments to make your life more complicated - you shouldn't need a manual to understand them. If you have 9, 10 hands on the dial they bring confusion. They put pressure on you, which is something I don't think watches should do. They should be instruments that serve you."

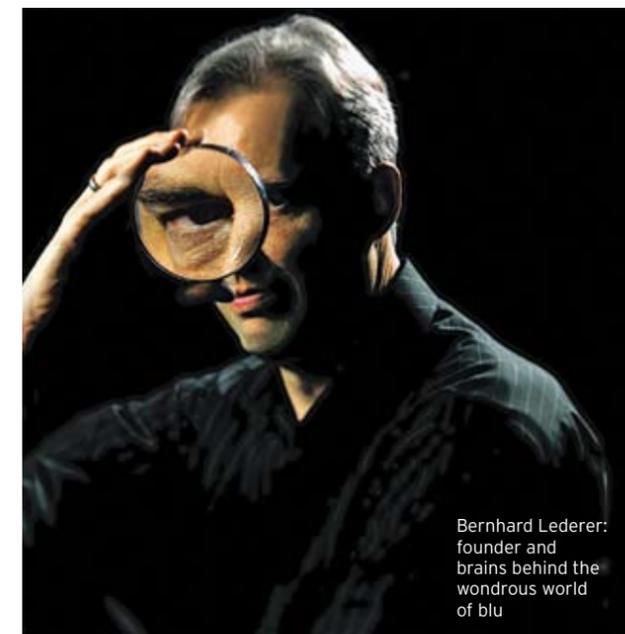
Lederer's journey into the world of horology began out of pure curiosity to know how things work. "Isn't it a miracle that all that fits into a tiny box like the case of a wristwatch?" was the question that got the ball rolling. It then led him to an apprenticeship at the restoration department of the Abeler Museum in Wuppertal, Germany, and now to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Lederer is keen to point out that he considers his watches to be "different from" rather than "superior" to other marques; but he acknowledges that his reputation as a master watchmaker coupled with his creative vision set blu apart. "It allows me, when I have the initial idea, to think of the technicality behind it," he explains. "In other companies

you have a design and a technical department. It becomes a fight between the two until they reach a compromise. And this will never be as strong as the original."

But the magic of blu appears to be in those "initial ideas", essentially a form of mechanical whimsy on Lederer's part. Yet the answer to his inspiration is a simple one: "Just life. To be awake and to walk through this life with open eyes. It's just like in nature; when you see a beautiful tree, you can't tell what the seed it grew from looked like." As the mysteries of life and the universe of blu should be. ■

*The new blu boutique is located at Starhill Gallery, Jln Bukit Bintang, KL.*



Bernhard Lederer:  
founder and  
brains behind the  
wondrous world  
of blu



The blu  
boutique  
at Starhill  
Gallery

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF BLU

# COLONIAL SPLENDOUR

CAMERON HIGHLANDS  
REVISITED REVEALS THE  
ROMANCE THAT DREW THE  
BRITISH THERE

BY MATT ARMITAGE

PHOTO: YTL HOTELS

The architecture of the  
Cameron Highlands  
Resort echoes the  
region's colonial past

# T

EA PLANTATIONS AND STRAWBERRIES AREN'T UPPERMOST IN PEOPLE'S MINDS when they think about Malaysia. White sandy beaches, azure seas and steaming jungles are the norm, whereas hydroponic market gardens

trip a little more slowly into the brain. Yet Cameron Highlands in the state of Pahang is the leading source of locally grown vegetables and flowers for Malaysia and Singapore, and is Malaysia's sole producer of strawberries and the country's main tea growing centre.

Its location - deep in the mountainous forestland running along the borders of Pahang and Perak states - makes the Camerons, which is a collection of small townships, an unlikely Malaysian holiday destination. This probably explains why this 1500m high plateau was only 'discovered' during an 1885 mapping operation by British surveyor William Cameron. Its altitude and climate - rarely exceeding 25°C in its hottest moments - were deemed suitable

for the growing of tea and the Camerons' became an important source of what was then considered one of the British Empire's major cash crops.

Further development of the area came in the 1920s when the use of cars and vans became more widespread, and the region became an accessible bolt hole for colonial Britons seeking to escape the never-ending humidity of the lowlands. A full day's bone-cracking and radiator-wearying journey in the cars of the period, the same trip now takes little more than three hours from the centre of KL.

Taking the fastest route up, we exit the North-South Highway at Simpang Pulai near Ipoh, quickly leaving behind the sleepy, dusty small towns of the country's hinterland, with their chaotic mix of old wooden shophouses, markets and new developments. In their place, the occasional Malay longhouse, cut into the hillside, swings into view, while young orang asli (indigenous people) sell petai (a highly spicy bean) and other vegetables collected from the forest at stalls by the roadside.

And while we all prize the sunshine, this is one





Despite being in tropical Malaysia, the cool hills of the Camerons are reminiscent of the mossy forests found in more temperate climates

journey best attempted when it's overcast. At a certain point in the climb the road merges with the sky and we experience the otherworldly sensation of driving through the cloud cover. Rolling the windows down to let the clouds roll into the car provides a humbling, if rather damp, experience.

Then it is a final climb towards the Kuala Terla township and the start of the highlands for the

the roads are filled with ageing Land Rovers, their battered bodies painted with the letters CH that limit them to the Highlands and its surroundings, their bodies almost invisible against the deep green vegetation coating the coloured hills.

It's easy to see why the Camerons became so cherished by the colonial era's expatriates. More than the temperate climate, it offered a comforting

## IT MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE THINNING OF THE AIR, BUT IT'S HARD TO FEEL A SENSE OF URGENCY HERE

most breathtaking section of the journey. The climb up the outside face of these vast hills with their petrifying sheer drops leaves you totally unprepared for a plateau twice the size of Singapore to suddenly heave into view around a corner.

That it's lined with hydroponics tents and neat rows of lettuce, cabbage and other vegetables just adds to the oddity of the image. It's unsettling as it genuinely feels as though you've driven through a hidden portal connecting Asia to Europe. Here

vista to homesick officials who might not see their homeland for 10 years at a time. Today it's one of the most sought after locations in the country, where bungalows enjoy sweeping views over acres of tightly clipped tea bushes and where real estate prices rise daily.

It's hard not to be infected by the Highlands' romance: it's an outdoors kind of place, designed for long strolls and afternoon tea, and its relaxed pace has made it something of a haven for

PHOTOS: JIMMY KHOO

honeymooning couples. It may have something to do with the altitude and a slight thinning of the air but it's hard to feel any sense of urgency here.

Breakfast easily becomes lunch, then afternoon scones, and then dinner. But whatever lethargy overwhelms you it's certainly worth getting out of bed to watch the sun rise. The stunning 18-hole course of the Cameron Highlands Golf and Country Club in Tanah Rata makes a spectacular background for the sunrise, as you watch the mist slowly burning off the holes and the surrounding forest while the sun grows steadily stronger.

The par-71 course is Malaysia's highest, and certainly most picturesque, with its mountain backdrop and the water features that run through its greens and fairways. Of course, if golfing is not your thing you can do as we did and enjoy the same view with less effort by breakfasting on a balcony at the Cameron Highlands Resort just in front of the club.

Not that we intended on a day of laziness. We had our hearts set on conquering Mount Brinchang, the highest peak in the Highlands at around 2000m, and one of around 30 recognised trails, taking from a couple of hours to several days. But more than just getting to the top of the tallest mount (there's also

an access road that allows you to go up by car), we were keen to wander through the grotto-like mossy forest that makes up the latter part of the trek.

Thanks to its height and the constant moisture of passing clouds, the forest is an ideal environment for dozens of varieties of moss which carpet the ground. In this serene, picturesque but moist setting, we quickly regret our lack of wet-weather gear as, up in the cloud canopy, weather conditions can change in an instant. Having started with blazing sunshine, the clouds rolled in as we arrived at the vantage point at the summit and a mist of rain began to fall, allowing only silhouettes of peaks to appear in the distance.

However, for something less strenuous, one of the most popular trails - thanks to its relative ease and its dash of mystery - is the Jim Thompson Trail. A short two-hour trek (with minimal uphill work) that brings you onto the edge of the Golf Club at Tanah Rata, it follows a similar course to the one supposedly taken by American designer and industrialist Jim Thompson when he disappeared without a trace on Easter Sunday 1967. Thompson was a former US Intelligence officer who is credited with reviving the Thai silk industry in the 1950s and 1960s.



Inside the luxurious Cameron Highlands Resort

a fine visit - but none of them can compete with the BOH centre's 'tea house', a modernist rectangle which juts out from the hillside, offering incredible views from its balcony and totally at odds with its pastoral surroundings.

But pastoral is really what the Highlands are about, and it all comes down to the fresh produce. At the stalls and stores in Brinchang and Tringkap (or at the Saturday night market in Gunung Brinchang), roses and lilies are sold straight from the fields, as are the strawberries and speciality hybrid fruits like the 'buah cinta' that tastes like a cross between a passion fruit and a mango. Another must-try delicacy is the deep-fried mushrooms that are sold everywhere around the Highlands.

Certainly there was no sign of him when we tried the route, but then we had been concentrating on the numerous orchids and pitcher plants that lined the route. Our guide showed us tracks made by orang asli hunters as well as pointed us in the direction of an asli burial ground he claimed was always shrouded in mist (but not accessible to tourists).

In any case, the rain at the top of Mount Brinchang made it too slippery for us to take the same path back, leading to a 7km trek down the access road that winds through BOH's Sungai Palas Tea Plantation. With the shower over, the sky clears again and we strolled leisurely to the plantation's visitor's centre, watching with keen delight as harvested tea is sent overhead on zip lines to trailers waiting on the road.

There we took a tour through the factory, seeing the various grading, drying and chopping processes that turn green leaves into aromatic black teas. You can tour other plantations in the region - the Bharat Tea Plantation, for example, also makes for

And if you aren't already tired out from the day's exertions you can take a ride up to stroll along the main street of Tanah Rata, Cameron Highlands' main town. From its art deco town clock - now with integrated skateboard park - to the charmingly run-down taxi station, the town is a visual throwback to the 1950s, complete with a plaque commemorating the opening of the post office in 1956 by Tunku Abdul Rahman, who would become an independent Malaysia's first prime minister a year later. And regally sitting above it all is the Victorian influenced Convent Primary School, a former military hospital.

But one thing's for sure, whether you spend your time sipping cocktails by the fire in the evening, teeing off at dawn or standing at a precipice on a mountain top, you'll be able to appreciate what those colonial visitors must have felt when they first laid eyes on Cameron Highlands: rounding a corner and effectively leaving one world for another. ■



Fresh produce, and in particular tea, have contributed to Cameron's fame

TEA-CLIPPING PHOTO: YTL HOTELS; CAMERON HIGHLANDS RESORT PHOTO: JIMMY KHOO



## WHEN IN CAMERONS, STAY AT THE: CAMERON HIGHLANDS RESORT

Cameron Highlands Resort has more than a touch of colonial-era glamour: from the liveried staff at the lobby area to the welcoming reception rooms with their open fireplaces. The place just oozes quiet elegance and indulgence.

All of the 48 rooms and 8 suites have commanding views over the adjacent Cameron Highlands Golf and Country Club and its surrounding hills. In fact, breakfast on the balcony is one of the highlights of any stay here, as your table is piled high with everything from home-made jams to a gorgeous waffle and mascarpone combination.

As for the rooms themselves, the white-washed walls, polished timber floors and hard woods of the four-poster bed and the other furnishings add to the colonial glamour, while large flat-screen TVs bring everything up to date. The bathrooms follow a similar pattern by juxtaposing luxurious white and black marble finishes with high-tech integral 'rain' showerheads.

To add a touch of real colonial atmosphere, Cameron Highlands Resort can also provide you with a personal butler, available to meet your

needs 24-hours a day. The experience of having your valet accompany you on day-trips to set-up a hampered picnic lunch is as novel as it is romantic.

After a strenuous day on the golfcourse, the Spa Village at the Resort can help you to shake the aches from your limbs. With a treatment menu that draws on the culture of the local orang asli tribes as much as it does on the produce of the local market gardens, you'll quite possibly come out smelling of the region's locally grown strawberries. Meanwhile, if it's strawberries you're hankering for, look no further than the Jim Thompson Tea Room with its Tiffin Lunches and its famous afternoon teas.

To round off the day, guests take part in a Cameron Highlands Resort ritual: fire-lighting. By the glow of the fire, and with the setting sun in the background, it's the perfect opportunity for pre-dinner cocktails or a game of billiards, or simply a cue to turn in early. After all, there's another balconied breakfast to get up early for.

For bookings and more information, call +603-2783 1000, email [travelcentre@ytlhotels.com.my](mailto:travelcentre@ytlhotels.com.my) or log on to [www.cameronhighlandsresort.com](http://www.cameronhighlandsresort.com)



# True Romance

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HIGH-FASHION MEETS ELEGANT HERITAGE AT THE  
MAJESTIC MALACCA... YOU CAN'T HELP BUT FALL IN LOVE  
PHOTOGRAPHY CHUAN LOOI STYLING WEECHEE



Cotton blazer, pants & tie Club Monaco



Leather shoes Fabi



Silk draped dress & bootie **Gucci**;  
(On him) Plaid suit & tiled polo shirt **Gucci**



Iridescent car coat & silk muslin poet blouse  
**Valentino Roma**; 'Lea' satin bag **Mulberry**;  
(On him) Cotton blazer **Club Monaco**





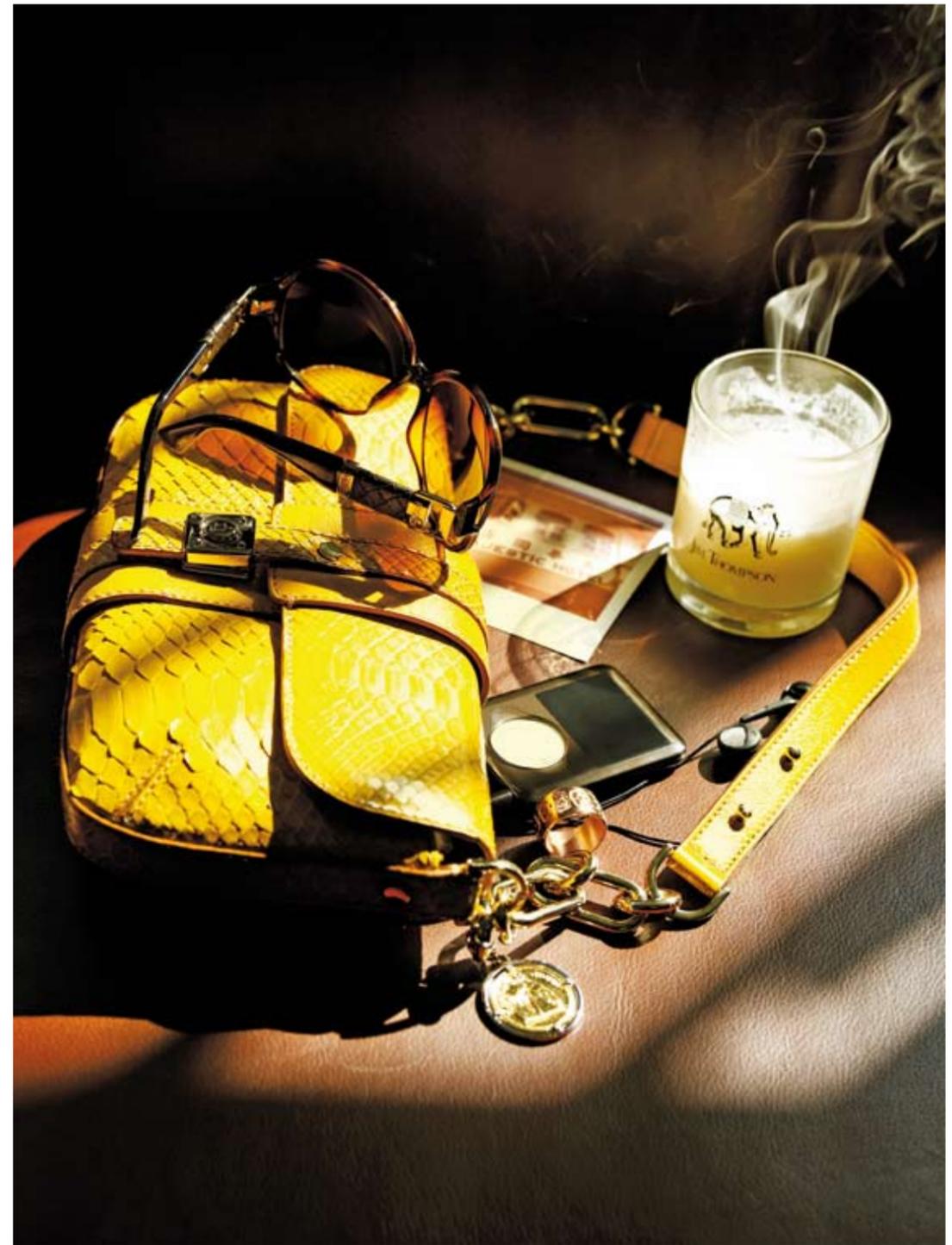
Cashmere striped sweater & cotton drill hot pants **DKNY**; (On him) Khaki blazer, plaid bermuda & cashmere scarf **Club Monaco**



Printed silk crepe dress **Valentino Roma**; Fan **Loewe**



Ankle bootie **Gucci**



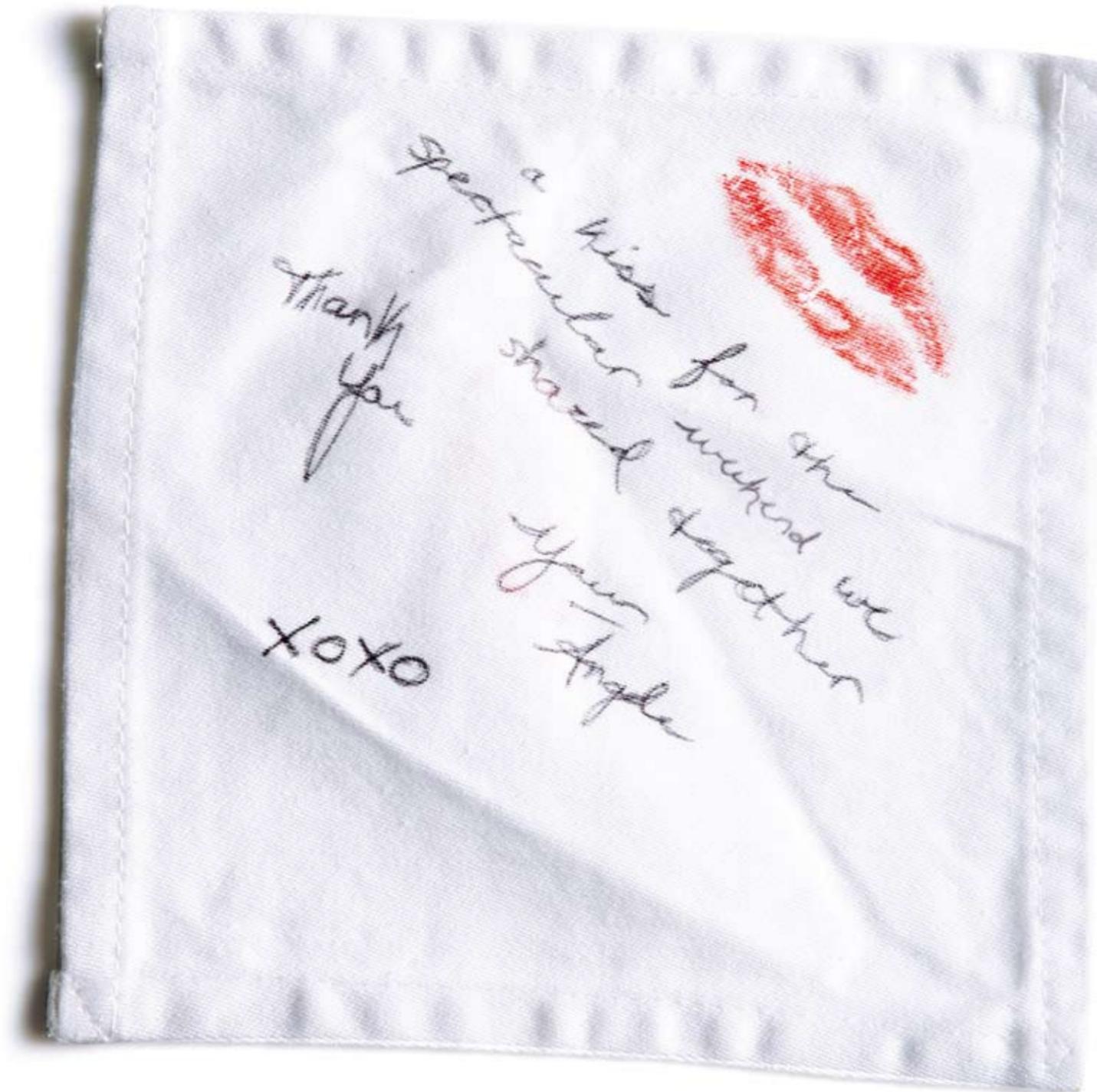
'Jeanne' python bag **Lanvin**; Sunglasses **Fendi**;  
Rose gold ring **Fabi**; 'Thai Silk' bougie candle  
**Jim Thompson**



Printed silk blouse, sarouel & gold tie sandals **Loewe**



Gingham crushed top **Gucci**; Strass 'node' earrings **Lanvin**; Straw hat **Stylist's own**



HAIR **JESSE CHONG** MAKEUP **JACK CHOONG** MODELS **JULIANA & RAFAEL** AT **ANDREWS MODELS**  
SHOT ENTIRELY ON LOCATION AT **THE MAJESTIC MALACCA, MALAYSIA** ALL CLOTHES (EXCEPT CLUB MONACO) AVAILABLE AT **STARHILL GALLERY, KL**

# IN FOR A RIDE

THE BICYCLE COASTS INTO THE FASHION SPOTLIGHT. FOUR-WHEELS IS SO LAST SEASON

BY KATZE

Luxury fashion may not yet be at the stage where it outfits cars as blithely as individuals, but it is certainly getting there.

One might even be tempted to call the recent trend in luxury bicycles an encouraging half way point. Symbols of youth, virility, and insouciance, a Lolita-like nymphet on the cusp of awareness - the bicycle is as blissfully unaware of its captivating charms as the person who rides it.

In the old days, the vision conjured up by bikers was of knobbly, sunburnt knees encased in lurid coloured spandex; hardly a vision for the fashion conscious to aspire to. Having grown beyond mere utility and performance concerns, biking today is no longer seen as a mere form of transport but a statement of individuality and culture.

Parisians in particular have very quickly hit on the versatility of the bike in conjuring a range of moods that range from

romantic dolce vita to gritty street Goth. Nostalgic Londoners frock up as Victorians and ride vintage bikes during the New Years' Day Parade, whereas nonchalant Amsterdammers, believing that their bikes should be as well-dressed as themselves, turn these wheeled wonders into moving canvasses of artistic expression. Their Copenhagen sisters up north are so enamoured of their two-wheeled vehicles that they started the bike advocacy movement known as Social Documentary in High Heels. And across the great ocean divide, photographer Bill Cunningham captured eccentric New Yorkers balancing their Balenciaga bags in the bike basket on their way to Bergdorf or Saks for a spot of shopping.

While designers like Stella McCartney and Gucci lead the fashion pack with lightweight organic cotton and techno

fabrics, far-sighted artisans have laboured to bring the humble bicycle back, as witnessed in the success of the Bikes in Film Festivals which started in New York in 2001, and ultra-visionary hotels such as the Murano Urban Resort in Paris, which adorns its entrance with a pair of Elektra bikes instead of the usual potted plants.

Heading the green movement is design guru Quasar Khanh and his recyclable bamboo bicycles that Kate Moss is purported to be a fan of, and Donna Karan, whose bright tangerine bicycles has besieged the streets of New York to remind people that as far as Mother Nature is concerned, two wheels are definitely better than four.

And now leading fashion houses have been unveiling their versions of this two-wheeled wonder, with Gucci's 8-8-2008 Limited Edition bicycle, launched in January 2008 with

its bold red double GG leather details, and Pinel & Pinel, the Parisian luxury goods manufacturer who created the 'luxcycle' - available in leather finishes and in 51 colours which can be folded into a custom monogrammed suitcase. Chanel's 2008 Spring/Summer Coco City Bike features a black lambskin saddle - quilted of course, eight speed gearing, and thoughtfully incorporates chain guards. Hand-finished and tastefully appointed with double C logos, its classic lines so besotted Courtney Cox that she bought one for best friend Jennifer Aniston.

Emporio Armani created the Sportbike in collaboration with Bianchi, and like Henry Ford, maintains that it comes in any colour you like, so long as that colour is black. Demonchaux asserts that it makes 'fashion bikes for fashion people' by tailoring each bike to the individual person. Meanwhile, the world's most expensive bicycle, the diamond encrusted Trek, was sold for US\$75 000 at a Lance Armstrong gala.

Extending the theme, jewelled pant clips from Chanel have become the latest de rigueur accessories for several seasons now. While for the Youtube & Flicker-hungry generation, there is the Gorillapod; a flexible camera tripod that fits over the handlebars.

Combining exercise, leisure and an ethical facet, the bicycle is now delightfully and compellingly back in fashion. After all, it is a supesize century, and the style meisters did say that accessories were going to get bigger. ■



Quilty pleasure: Chanel's Coco City Bike



Pretty in Red: Gucci's 8-8-2008 Limited Edition bicycle



Victorian secret at London's New Year Day parade

# HIDE AND SLEEK

WE'RE IN A RIGHT LEATHER OVER THIS SEASON'S LATEST OFFERINGS

BY JENNIFER CHOO

## PUMP IT UP

For the woman who's unafraid of heights, Lanvin's patent calfskin and satin mary-jane has a fearsome 4.9" heel. With a chunky strap and bright hot pink platforms, the conical heels edge this pump out of the ordinary. Echoing Jeanne Lanvin's visionary attitude, the Decolette Heels display a modernity that also features the detailed lines of the 1930s. *Lanvin, Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2148 6268*



**SKIN TRADE** Creative Director Hakan Rosenius' sophomore ready-to-wear collection for Asprey Spring/Summer '08 harks back to the lifestyle of the moneyed enclaves of Capri, Palm Beach and Porto Fino in the 50s, 60s and 70s. Paying homage to iconic clothes horses such as Talitha Getty and CZ Guest, the accompanying accessories are appropriately decadent with a collection in similar shades of dusty pastels conceived in luxurious skins. The oversized unstructured Portobello bag in a sumptuous python is a reinvention of a 70s classic while the vintage frame bag in pastel shagreens is a new interpretation of a vintage Asprey evening bag. Jackie O would have approved. *Asprey, Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2148 8000*

## THINGS DONE BY CALF

Not content with having conquered the watch market, Omega are now into leather goods. Made from supple Italian calfskin leather, the newest addition to its portfolio comes in black, brown and a striking orange - colours inspired by its Planet Ocean range. Comprising wallets, a messenger bag, an appointment book, watch-storage boxes and a cube-shaped watch winder, every detail has been considered, from the use of the "double-edge folding" technique which ensures a uniform thickness in each handmade piece to the innovative design feature of a convenient slot in the wallets which is now an Omega-registered design. *Omega, Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2144 0035*

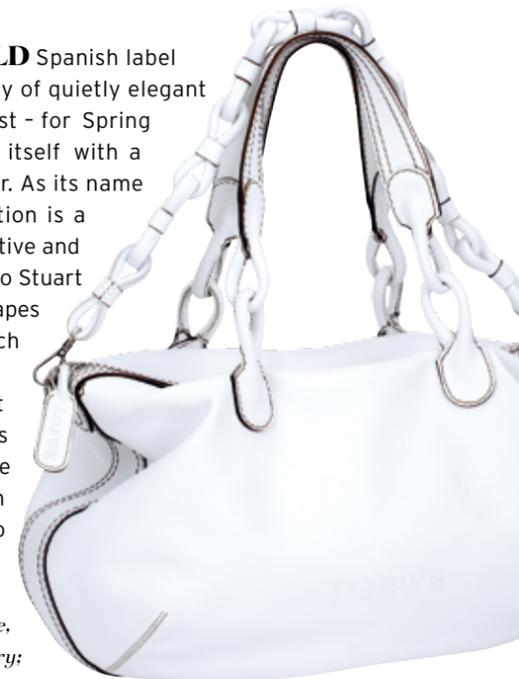


**LUSH LIFE** Although Cashmere Mafia has yet to reach our shores, it is already being touted as the new Sex & the City. One would imagine then that the series' star Lucy Liu sporting Valentino's Couture Bag will ensure its status as the next It-bag, especially since Charlotte Casiraghi AND Jennifer Hudson have also been seen with it. It wouldn't be an understatement to call it a collectible; not only because of its staggering price tag but its exquisite workmanship. Echoing the runway ready-to-wear fashion, the bag presents couture details at its finest - featuring signature ruching and weaving techniques. In precious croc skin and specially treated nappa leather, and in metallic silver, gold, pink, white and black. *Valentino, Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery, KL; +603-2143 2382*

**ATTITUDE DUDE** Indulge your inner rebel with Mulberry's rock 'n' roll-inspired Warren collection which features satchels with three different sizes of chunky pockets - from simple zipped to high fashion multi-pocketed. 'Davy' veers towards the refined with simple, wearable shapes crafted from grainy hand-rolled leather for a textured finished, complete with herringbone lining. Best teamed with a sharp, slim cut suit, this is a confident look for the ultimate city boy. Another key look is the 'Justin' where navy and blue hit this season's nautical trend on the head. The oversized messenger in navy or white heavy leather is finished with Mulberry's signature triple-twist lock in shiny silver or if your tastes run towards the more exotic and flamboyant, the hand held 'Justin' holdall is available in white ostrich. *Mulberry, Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery, KL; +603-2144 8001*



**LOEWE AND BEHOLD** Spanish label Loewe might have a history of quietly elegant collections, but their latest - for Spring Summer '08 - announced itself with a splash of irresistible colour. As its name implies, the Fiesta collection is a celebration of all things festive and playful. Accessories maestro Stuart Vevers favours rounded shapes with no metallic parts which make for a refreshingly light handbag. And don't let the ultra-saturated colours fool you; Loewe's exquisite craftsmanship is evident in every piece. Kate Moss also totes the Fiesta bag over her naked body in their current ad campaign. *Loewe, Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery, +603-2142 3523*



## FINERY HERE



Having been drawn to beauty from a young age, artist, designer and businessman Yeslam always knew it was his destiny to add loveliness to the world. Since fragrances have always occupied an important place during his childhood in Saudi Arabia and his student years in Lebanon, it was fitting that Yeslam's debut in the luxury goods business in 2005 was with his fragrances: Yeslam For Him and For Her.

This early success was cemented by the opening of five Yeslam boutiques where the designer diversified his repertoire to fine leather goods and luxurious accessories such as sunglasses, cufflinks and silk scarves. What sets the Yeslam aesthetic apart is his ability to distill the age-old refinement of the East and combine it with modern, European, state-of-the-art expertise.

Yeslam has enhanced this universe by inaugurating a workshop dedicated to luxury watch making, where two expert watchmakers bring the designer's creations to fruition in accordance with the purest watch making traditions. The result is the Haute Horlogerie collection where Yeslam once again demonstrates the perfect fusion of Oriental styling with the great traditions of the Geneva watch masters.

*The Yeslam boutique opens in Starhill Gallery on May 9, 2008*

# RUNWAY SUCCESS

'TIS THE SEASON FOR US SWELTERING IN THE TROPICS TO REJOICE AS HEMLINES GET SHORTER AND MATERIALS BECOME MORE LIGHTWEIGHT BY JENNIFER CHOO

## DKNY: METRO RETRO



With a theme like New York Art & Design, it is clear that **DKNY's** Spring-Summer 2008 is for men not boys. This is evident in the strong tailoring (which comes in a choice of suits or city shorts) and shades of grey in suitably industrial sounding names like stone, cement, and newsprint. Also getting in on the act are the silk ties featuring graphic blocking which combines an orange hue incongruously called "Popsicle" with black or grey for a constructivist effect.

KEY ACCESSORY: Pristine white trainers in techno fabrics which are anything but Jerry Seinfeld.



**DONNA KARAN** does flawless urban chic so well that when DKNY women's ready-to-wear features a 70s vibe, you can be sure it's with a contemporary twist. Long and lean is the order of the day and one can easily imagine a modern Bianca Jagger in the impeccably tailored white 3-piece pantsuit. Fluid jersey in striking colour-block jersey gowns and sash-belted silk dresses are sexy slinky options while the collection's icon is unquestionably the jumpsuit now updated in wool or silk.

KEY ACCESSORY: The T-Bar platform or sleek envelope clutch will feed your inner Disco Diva.



## FERRAGAMO: DESIGN OF A DECADE

Graeme Black exits **SALVATORE FERRAGAMO** with a graceful collection crafted for the international woman following the sun as it moves around the world. Accustomed to luxury yet decidedly free-spirited, Ferragamo offers this unique woman equally distinctive options of high-waisted and wide-legged trousers, jersey dresses and caftans in the colours of the sea and sky. For days that melt into the evening, floor-grazing sheer shirt dresses are a seductive option.

KEY ACCESSORY: Only a bag as exotic as ultra-soft crocodile folded into origami shapes will do justice to this woman of mystery.



KEY ACCESSORY: This evening wear lace-up in naturally aged leather easily makes the transition to daywear when it comes in optic white.



Although **SALVATORE FERRAGAMO** is celebrated for their exuberant colours, designer Massimiliano Giornetti steered this season's collection well into the monochromic. Beginning from the first outfit - an immaculate combination comprising a white three-piece suit, a white tie, and white patent shoes - this minimal palette was maintained throughout, deepening into silver, grey and black. Deluxe and desirable, this venerable Italian design house defines the look of elegant deshabillé.



Reminiscent of Rousseau's primeval jungle, **KENZO's** Spring-Summer catwalk was overrun with plants and coloured ribbons, video screens displaying wild animals and birds with extraordinary feathers. Models clothed in violent and striking colours, elaborated with foliage and embellished with sequins, glided down the podium like exotic birds in flight. The collection was anchored by voluminous dresses and concluded with black ensembles in body conscious silhouettes.

KEY ACCESSORY: Studded belts in marbled finish or vivid hues are perfect for the urban jungle.



## KENZO: CALL OF THE WILD

Showing in what looked like some fantastical greenhouse, this season's menswear was certainly holiday ready. Instead of a traditional catwalk, the garlanded models slouched around under the hot lights looking like they had just gotten off a plane to paradise. Relaxed silhouettes in cotton and linens came in hues of whites, browns, blues and beiges; although no collection would be complete without **KENZO's** famed prints - which stole the show.

KEY ACCESSORY: Preen yourself in the boardroom with a natty peacock motif tie or at play with a subtle print hat.



## REVOLUTIONARY REVOLUTIONS

Romain Jerome reinvents the interpretation of time through its 'Day & Night' timepiece. Devoid of the oh-so-passé concept of hour, minute and second hand, this revolutionary creation divides the temporal world into two opposing sections: day and night. This is signified by two Tourbillions working in sequence. The rusty look of its dial is also unique, made from original steel reclaimed from the wreck of the Titanic fused with new steel. *Khronos, Starhill Gallery; +603-2141 9021*

## SPRINGTIME SPARKLE

Just in time for spring, Van Cleef & Arpels' latest ad campaign recaptures the unique spirit of this world-renowned French jeweller. Fronted by stunning top Canadian model Lisa Cant, the campaign is a lovely combination of mysterious ingénue, glorious landscapes and jewels alight to create a dreamlike springtime aura, all captured by famed Japanese photographer Kaz Arahama. Very much like the sometimes fantastical but always sophisticated Van Cleef & Arpels designs, favoured by youthful, stylish and carefree ladies across the globe. *Van Cleef & Arpels, Starhill Gallery; +603-2142 8669*



style | retail

# INDIVIDUALISTIC CREATIONS

UNIQUE PRODUCTS AND IDEAS THAT SAY A LOT ABOUT WHO YOU ARE BY ELLFIAN ABDUL RAHIM



**RAT-A-TAT-TAT** Rats are usually associated with a number of distasteful things, not high-end style. Yet with the recent commencement of the Year of the Rat, the rodent forms the basis of Dunhill's Year of the Rat Collection. This idiosyncratic collection of sterling silver rats are inventive additions to Dunhill's luxurious range of gifts. From a detailed key fob to attractive and striking cufflinks to a mobile phone tag, this is inspiration that will be welcomed by the most discerning of gentlemen. And like the Rat individual himself, each item in the collection is crafted with impeccable taste, a sense of humour and an obsession for detail. *Dunhill, Starhill Gallery; +603-2141 9340*

**THE ROAD HOME** Cosmopolitan Jalan Bukit Bintang in Kuala Lumpur city centre has been honoured with the latest Audemars Piguet creation. The Royal Oak Offshore Jalan Bukit Bintang Chronograph Limited Edition timepiece is regarded as one of the brand's most prestigious creations and pays homage to the road in which the KL boutique is located. The watch itself weighs 250g and is 14mm high with a 46mm diameter case and decorated with black PVD screws on the bezel. The icing on the cake is the phrase 'Jalan Bukit Bintang' engraved on the back case. Each of the 100 pieces available worldwide comes with two exchangeable leather straps in royal yellow and black. *Audemars Piguet, Starhill Gallery; +603-2143 1322*





# BACK TO BASICS

A NEW WELLNESS CENTRE COMBINES EASTERN PHILOSOPHY WITH WESTERN METHODOLOGY BY KATZE

The age-old saw goes “health is wealth”; and it has always been true that opulence and living the high life mean precious little if you lack the vitality to enjoy it. This goes a long way in explaining the presence of an Integrated Wellness Center (IWC) on one of the floors of Kuala Lumpur’s luxury shopping centre Starhill Gallery. Money and well-being are necessary bedfellows if you want to make the most out of your life.

IWC integrates its modern surroundings with a specialisation in the area of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). The Centre provides accurate, concise and comprehensive information about Chinese medicine healthcare options. More than that, it then adapts these practices with the complementary parts of Western medicine. Today, this wellness centre has developed a holistic healthcare system blending the art of ancient Chinese medicinal traditions with the technology and methods of the West.

TCM asserts that processes of the human body are interrelated and in constant interaction with the environment. Their practitioners believe that observing these signs of disharmony aid in the understanding, treatment and prevention of diseases. Based on the ‘Five Elements Theory’ - which describes the cycles of creation and destruction and its interactions - IWC’s in-house physicians and specialist

consultations can address any prevailing health issues, or unearth hidden ones, based on the operative that prevention is better than cure.

Three thousand square feet and a small army of specialists are dedicated to services and products comprising men’s and women’s wellness, acupuncture, acupressure, sports injury and paediatrics. A wide area of specialities means that the discerning may drop by for specific as well as general complaints, or better still, simply to further protect current good health.

Bespoke herbal medication is available upon consultation with the resident Chief herbalist, flown in by IWC to draw upon the wisdom of 30 years in the field. It is no large jump of logic to discern that the benefits of raw, natural herbs with virtually no side effects will trump that of chemicals and synthesised, mass-produced medicines.

Given such values, those amongst us who appreciate the dedication to preserving and honouring the traditional healing wisdom of Chinese culture can’t help but laud its timely opening. ■

*IWC at Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery, Jln Bukit Bintang, KL; +603-2142 0860*



**SUNNY DISPOSITION** With our equatorial climate requiring a strict skin care regimen, the shrewd ones know that not all sunblocks are created equal. In total accord is MTM’s newly launched dual-purpose sunscreen - the Solar Shield Aqua Fit SPF 25 PA - a satin soft, lightweight texture which efficiently works on moisturising as it protects the skin from the sun’s rays. Approved by the International Medical Association, its ingredients include the fortifying ginseng root, and marjoram and thyme extracts which are anti-oxidant, anti-melanin and encourage DNA damage prevention. The zinc oxide formulation works via a reflective mirror approach - a physical barrier which scatters and reflects any harmful, broad spectrum ultra-violet rays that would otherwise penetrate the skin. *MTM Skincare Center, Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603-2144 8861*



**MANE CONCERN** London-trained, celebrity hairstylist Alan Chan is a man who really gets involved with your hair, so much so that the Etec Salon director and chief stylist will grill you on your overall health even before touching a strand on your head. This all-encompassing attention to detail stems from Alan’s firm belief in grounding his clients in a proper knowledge of hair science and is based on his 22 years of experience in the business. It’s no wonder then that local celebrities the likes of Gigi Lai, Mallika Sherawat and current Miss Malaysia Deborah Henry, are firm fans of the salon. *Etec Salon, Starhill Gallery; +603-2145 1218*



**CARE-AWAY CAVIAR** In the language of luxury, there are few foods more definitive of indulgence than caviar, a precious essence that delivers antioxidants and protein-rich nourishment to the skin. It is to this end that the award-winning Spa Village in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Kuala Lumpur offers its decadent Re-hydrating Caviar Facial, utilising European beauty treasures by Kerstin Florian. Formulated with extracts of Sevruga Caviar, the Bupleurum Chinensis herb, and coenzyme A, this ultimate anti-ageing skin treatment promises immediate results and radiant luminosity. For those with targeted areas, the caviar eyes and lip treatment is recommended, but for the truly discriminating patron, only an upgrade to the Ultimate Caviar Facial will do, as it includes a post-treatment matrix sheet, formed from collagen, and couperose ampoules, a serum for continued use over the following few days to prolong the facial’s effects; so this isn’t just about instant gratification. *Spa Village KL; +603-2142 8000*

**WAY TO GLOW** Whether you have a day to spare or just an hour, indulging in a facial or treatment can be the ultimate way to pamper yourself. And with time being the precious commodity it is today, the motto that ‘it’s all in the experience’ which Essential’s Urban Retreat adheres to, makes for very palatable logic. This deliciously private hideaway features two separate lounges, private spa rooms, separately zoned-in temperature and sound controls, en-suite showers, and a beauty hub - enough nooks and crannies for anybody in search of a place to become cocooned in a warm, restful womb of regeneration, as you escape the bustling cityscape beyond. *Essentials Urban Retreat, Starhill Gallery; +603-2148 3288*



CAVIAR PHOTO CORBIS



# MADE TO ODOUR

THE 'ESSENTIAL' GUIDE TO THE SEASON'S BEST NEW FRAGRANCES BY JENNIFER CHOO

*\*All available at Escential, Starhill Gallery*

**CORSET FOR LIFE** Jean Paul Gaultier, the man who gave us Madonna's conical bustier, now revisits another icon: his famous Classique bottle. The latest incarnation of this hour-glass figure is "tattooed" with exquisite lace, to suit the fluctuating winds of fashion. Rather appropriately, the scent of Classique was conceived just like lace, with a motif of Rose, Orchid and Vanilla repeated over and over again into infinity for an intense lingering fragrance.



**TONGUE IN CHIC** Guerlain has pulled out all the stops with Insolence. Not only was it created by famed "nose" Maurice Roucel (Hermes' 24 Faubourg and DKNY's Be Delicious), the stunning bottle was designed by sculptor Serge Mansau and the icon for the fragrance is no less than two-time Oscar winner Hilary Swank. An unconventional fragrance of exuberant violet notes paired with red berries, it has hints of orange blossom and rose with sensual iris and tonka bean resins for a luxurious finish. Following L'Instant, Insolence is the next instalment of the newly heralded Guerlain generation of perfumes which reinvents its classic image.

## LIVING THE HIGH LIFE

Although Natalia Vodianova has sadly ceased to be the face of Calvin Klein, it seems fitting that she bows out in the wake of her campaign for Calvin Klein Euphoria. After all the fragrance is a distillation of sexiness and fantasy, the same qualities which Natalia wholly embodies. And what does seduction smell like? A contrast between exotic fruits like Pomegranate, Persimmon and seductive florals like Black Orchid and Champaca Flower, for a rich, creamy, seductive signature.



**VERA GOOD** Although most women are familiar with Vera Wang's exquisite bridal couture, the designer renowned for her taste and refinement is poised to teach menfolk a thing or two about class. Vera Wang For Men is a masculine, seductive, aromatic oriental designed to elicit desire, emotion and passion. Beginning with an unexpected burst of freshness created by green mandarin leaf and crisp yuzu zest, it is then layered with the enveloping embrace of nutmeg, leather and anise, and finished with a smooth blend of sandalwood and warm tobacco. A distinguished fragrance created expressly for today's cosmopolitan man.

# HOLISTIC HEALING

GENERIC SPA TREATMENTS BEGONE! AT ALL OF THE WORLD-RENOWNED SPA VILLAGES, FIVE DOTTED AROUND THE MALAYSIAN PENINSULA, AND ONE ON THE MAGICAL INDONESIAN ISLAND OF BALI, A UNIQUE SELLING POINT IS THAT EACH DRAWS INSPIRATION FROM HEALING TRADITIONS AND LOCAL INGREDIENTS OF THE REGION IT LIES IN. YTL LIFE GETS READY FOR LOTS OF LUXURIOUS PAMPERING AS IT SAMPLES THE SIGNATURE INDIGENOUS THERAPIES OF EACH ESTABLISHMENT

PHOTO CHOEN LEE



# ROYAL TREATMENT

BY LENA NG

WHERE: Spa Village Kuala Lumpur  
WHAT: Tun Teja Treatment, a traditional Malay royal treatment suitable for both the sexes, improving valour and virility in men and enhancing beauty and fertility in women. Named after the much-loved Malay princess, Tun Teja.  
TEL: +603-2142 8000;  
www.spavillage.com/kualalumpur/

The bustle of Bukit Bintang is only a car horn away, as I stand amidst the lush greenery of the city's best urban retreat, located within The Ritz-Carlton Hotel. This haven of tranquillity surrounded by landscaped pools is the Spa Village Kuala Lumpur, a celebrated city oasis where time-honoured rituals can be experienced in a modern setting.

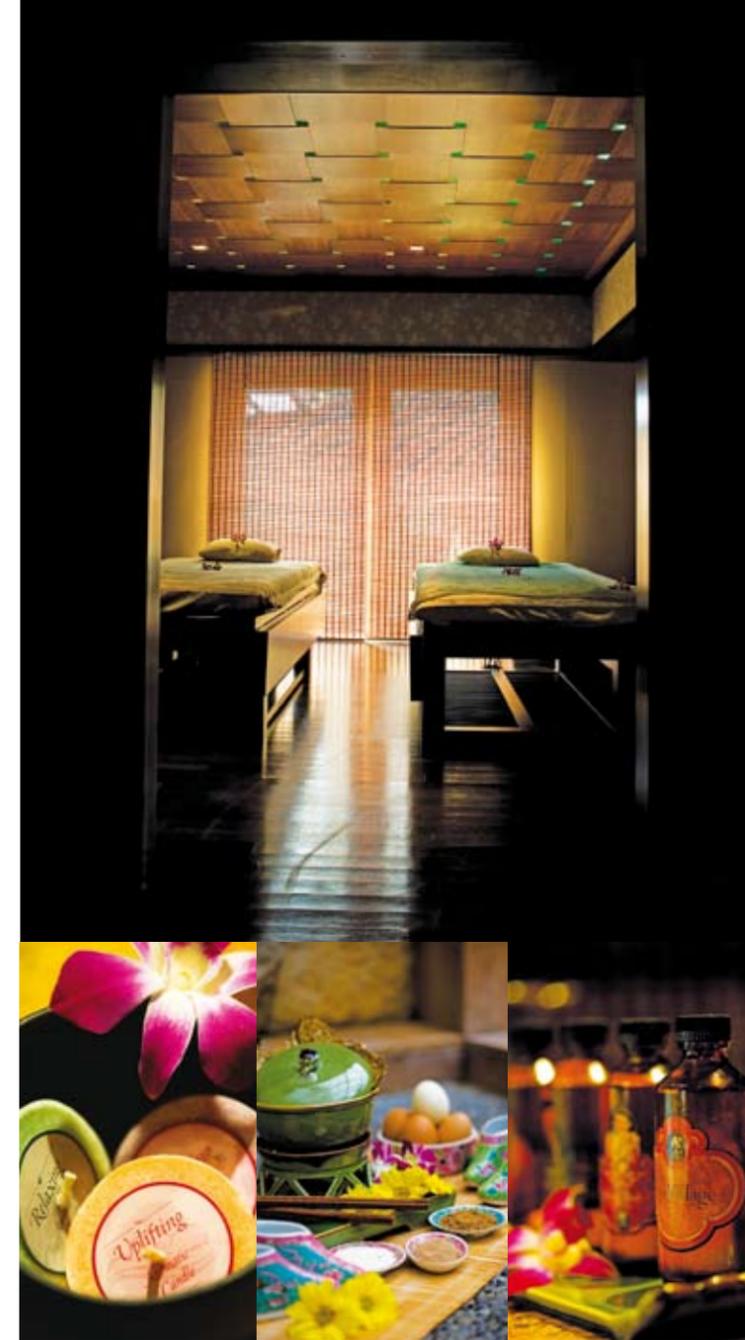
While the spa menu offers beauty and body treatments from around the region, including Balinese and Thai massage, what I want most to experience is something unique to our local culture. Thanks to a heritage of beauty treatments passed down by generations of Malaysian women, it's only fitting that the most luxurious therapy here takes its name from a Malay princess of historical legend.

The Tun Teja treatment consists of six steps and begins with 'Urutan Kebayan' (Ladies' Traditional Princess Massage), a massage using natural oils of ylang-ylang, clove and ginger. Traditional Malay 'urut' (massage) techniques are known to be quite firm, but this combination of long kneading strokes with acupressure works to improve circulation. It's not long before I loosen up as the therapist's soothing movements begin to ease my muscular tensions from top to toe.

The ritual then continues using a rice scrub to soften and smooth the skin, with natural aromatherapy in scented ingredients of sandalwood and patchouli acting to relax my mind and body even further. By the time this 'Lulur Cendana Cangi' (Sandalwood Body Scrub) is complete, I'm ready for the therapist to gently slip me into the floral bath waiting outside in the private landscaped courtyard.

Floral baths are common in most Malaysian cultures, where fragrant flowers, lime and scented oils are added to ceremonial baths. You could of course choose to include your partner with the Hang Tuah treatment package. But I'm happy enough to enjoy alone the luxurious decadence of sipping on herbal tea while reclining in a huge bathtub filled with milk, jasmine, rose petals and herbal extracts: the 'Siram Panca Cangi' (Royal Herbal Bath) and 'Santapan Junjung Puteri' (Herbal Tea) portions of the treatment.

As the Traditional Royal Malay experience concludes with application of natural oils ('Alin Alin Puteri') and a final herbal steam to flush toxins from the body, it's only the cleansing heat of the steam that keeps me from drifting off to sleep. The 'Wap Cindai Berahi' (Scented Body Steaming) also has natural extracts that leave me glowing and revitalised, before getting ready to face those honking cars in the outside world once again.



At the end of this amazing three-hour experience, the most rewarding part is the sense of relaxation and time spent on yourself. Sophie Bengé, author of the best-selling 'Tropical Spa', says "every woman can improve her body by upping the respect that she pays to it. This is achieved by taking time for herself - a vital part of life that most of us ignore."

Ultimate pampering may once have been reserved for the privileged few, but in this modern age, those of us who most deserve it can now enjoy, not only a special, but royal treatment too. ■

## ALSO TRY...

Reflecting the city's diversity and clash between the old and new, the Spa Village Kuala Lumpur also offers the signature Peranakan treatment, where Qi-Gong massage techniques are a part of the therapy along with traditional beauty ingredients such as mulberry leaf and rice. But for those keen on a truly modern scientific twist, caviar facials by Kerstin Florian are the ultimate in luxurious beauty care to soothe and hydrate skin.

ALL PHOTOS LEON

# HEAVENLY HAVEN

BY CHUA SIEW CHING

WHERE: Spa Village Pangkor Laut  
WHAT: Ayurvedic, an oil-therapy which hails from India. Purifies the body via toxin elimination and helps achieve inner well-being.  
TEL: +605-699 1100;  
www.spavillage.com/pangkorlaut/

When 19th century English explorer William Lawson said, "What was paradise? But a garden, an orchard of trees and herbs. Full of pleasure, and nothing there but delights," he must have envisioned what would have been the Spa Village Pangkor Laut today.

Spread over four acres on a bay at the private Pangkor Laut island, this world-famous spa has won numerous awards time and time again. And with its open courtyards, lotus ponds, herb garden and a reflexology path all set within gorgeous grounds, it isn't hard to see why so many have come for the promise of paradise and so few have wanted to leave.

This was my exact sentiment as I sat sipping cooling ginger tea on a gazebo in this heaven on earth. Restfulness is easy to come by amidst the lush greenery, the stunning blues of the sea and the vastness of the clear blue sky.

This promise of respite at the Spa Village Pangkor Laut is not a myth. An upscale oasis, it is a resplendent combination of age-old and modern spa treatments. All about true Malaysian healing, the treatment programmes available here target both physical and spiritual well-being.

I am trying the recommended Ayurvedic treatment, a one-of-a-kind treatment customised especially for Spa Village Pangkor Laut. Prior to my session, the spa's Ayurvedic Specialist - who hails from India - does a thorough consultation to understand my body's needs better. By asking a series of questions, he is able to recommend the proper medicated oils and ingredients for my session.

Ayurvedic treatments known as Abhyanga and Siro Lepam are recommended, and they begin with the application of prescribed oil on the head followed by a traditional Indian oil massage and herbal paste for the scalp and hair.

Every treatment begins with Spa Village Pangkor Laut's legendary Bath House Ritual, which consists of experiencing various Asian bathing traditions. It starts off with a soothing footbath followed by an invigorating Chinese Foot Pounding with a light bamboo hammer. Then the Malay Bath House for the traditional 'circulating' bath where water cascades over me from a series of raised urns and envelops me with a sense of calm. Next is a Japanese-style cleaning with a 'goshi-goshi' cloth followed by a dip in the heated Rotenburu pool. Finally, I succumb to the signature Shanghai Scrub before I proceed for my actual treatment. I'm almost too relaxed as it is.

My Ayurvedic therapist - an extremely petite lady from Kerala with more than 10 years experience - leads me to a broad wooden slab with gutters all along its sides. This is my massage table and, as I later learn, it was first pre-soaked with essential oils and was specially imported from India for this very purpose.

You know how they say looks can be deceiving? Well, my rather petite therapist is somehow capable of immense strength as she begins to massage my body with long sweeping strokes. The sensation of the liberal use of slippery oils (hence the gutters all along the table) and the strong herbal scent might take some getting used to at first, but as Indian classical music wafts gently in the background and the determined manipulation of my body continues, I am soon drifting, my body loosening up with every stroke.

Just as I am in a near complete trance (and I have lost track of time here), the massage is over and the therapist then proceeds to give my body a thorough scrub before coating my hair with a herbal paste. The treatment finally ends with a shower in a private room and as I walk out, I truly feel completely renewed and restored.

Like many of Spa Village Pangkor Laut's programmes, the Ayurvedic treatment can be conducted as a continuous course for 7, 14, 21 and 28 days. To achieve the best results, you are advised to take heed of the diet and other restrictions recommended by the specialist. At the same time, taking part in the morning Yoga classes will maximise the benefits of the treatment.

Now I know what William Lawson meant by "Full of pleasure, and nothing there but delights". ■



## ALSO TRY...

### THE CAMPUR-CAMPUR BODY TREATMENT

Blending a variety of Malay and Thai massage techniques, this treatment uses touch, tone and aromatherapy for a sensational experience. Aside from a massage by a skilled therapist, a traditional steam pouch filled with herbs is also used to press alongside the body to loosen up knots in your muscles. Relax as the scent of lemongrass and pandan leaves fill the air.

MAIN PHOTO: YTL HOTELS. ALL OTHER PHOTOS: CHOEN LEE

WHERE: Spa Village  
Cameron Highlands  
WHAT: Tok Batin Mystical Tradition  
treatment, which includes the Mandian  
Batin (Hydrotherapy Batin Bath), Urutan  
Batin (Massage), Batin Tangas Wap (Batin  
Steam Bath), Lulur Batin Scrub and  
Cameron Brew  
TEL: +605-491 1100;  
www.spavillage.com/  
cameronhighland/

# ALTITUDE SWEETNESS

BY MATT ARMITAGE



When your backdrop is lush rainforest and rolling tea plantations in the lee of some of Malaysia's highest peaks, tranquillity is easy to come by. Cool breezes and mist falls combine to give Cameron Highlands an ethereal quality, especially when the sun burns through, turning the mist to rising steam. It is no wonder, then, that an air of quiet stillness and contemplation surrounds the Spa Village Cameron Highlands.

At an altitude of 1,500m there's no need for air-conditioning, and as a result you can taste the air with its occasional scents of tea, strawberries and légumes. And while you may come out smelling good enough to eat, the use of locally grown produce in the spa treatments is no gimmick.

The area is home to some of Malaysia's oldest orang asli (aboriginal) tribes, including the Semai, whose traditions and remedies are reflected in the treatments at Spa Village Cameron Highlands (though there is also a full range of Asian and European sourced therapies available).

Having chosen the Tok Batin Mystical Tradition treatment, a Semai inspired mixture of massage, steam bath and body scrub designed to help me get in touch with my inner warrior, I prepare for my mystical journey by lounging about in one of the spa's comfortably appointed day rooms, listening to the soothing sounds of a 30-foot long ornamental fountain that serves as the spa's external focal point.

As I ease myself into the tea-infused warm water of the spa's signature ritual Tea Bath, replete with a variety of therapeutic leaves and herbs, I'm served with a tray of what at first looks like a snack. But instead of tucking in I'm instructed to rub the raw sugar and lime wedges into my elbows and knees and to place the tea bags on my eyes. Though the glass of herbal lime juice, I'm told, is actually for drinking.

The spa is equipped with six treatment rooms, six bath houses and two outdoor cabanas, and with the emphasis on romance, most are equipped for couples to be spoiled simultaneously. As such the Tok Batin treatment has a corresponding configuration for women and is recommended for newlyweds. Which might explain why the masseuse assures me that my Warrior Massage should restore my vitality: following traditional Malay 'urut' (massage) practices, the 75-minute massage uses accu-pressure points and some liberal use of the masseuse's elbows to improve circulation and soothe tired muscles.

Being cowardly, I opt for a relatively gentle level of pressure. As with all the massage therapies at Spa Village Cameron Highlands, the therapists here will advise an optimum level but the ultimate decision is yours. The oils are infused with a melange of local herbs and spices, and when a scented mask is placed on my eyes I'm out in an instant; the next thing I know I'm being asked to sit up and move across to the steam bath where the next part of my ritual begins.

Comprising of a signature blend of Malay herbs and pandan leaves brewed in an attached rice cooker, the 15-minute steam session leaves my skin glowing in preparation for the Lulur Batin Scrub. Using a blend of rice, turmeric and black tea leaves, I'm slowly scrubbed with the warm mixture before being wrapped and left for a few minutes to calm down and relax.

After a few minutes the therapist returns and brings me back to consciousness with a gentle head and face massage, and then it's over to the shower. As the leaves begin to wash away I feel a little like a tea bag, and even later, the aroma of tea and herbs remain as I return to the reception area for more tea, and those lovely delicate fragrances float in on the breeze once more. ■

## ALSO TRY...

### FRESH STRAWBERRY ESCAPEDE

Cameron Highlands Resort is justly proud of its homemade strawberry jam, but as the Fresh Strawberry Escapade shows, they're more than a filling. Prized through the ages for their ability to relieve symptoms of depression, as well as the purifying effect they exert on the liver and kidneys, the highlight of this treatment is the edible Strawberry Body Polish, a mixture of yoghurt, oatmeal and strawberries that leaves your body tingling and smelling like afternoon tea.

ALL PHOTOS JIMMY KHOO

# BALINESE BLISS

BY JENNIFER CHOO



WHERE: *Spa Village Resort  
Tembok Bali*  
WHAT: *Penganten Melukat, consisting  
of massage, body scrub, hot wrap and flower  
bath traditionally performed on couples to  
prepare them for their wedding day*  
TEL: *+603-2783 1000*  
*www.spavillage.com/tembokbali/*

I have a confession to make: I do not enjoy being man - or woman - handled. I mind getting massages, flee from facials and recoil from reflexology. Psychoanalysts may say this shunning of human contact is the mark of a control freak; I prefer to think that I'm just not comfortable with the prospect of a stranger pummeling and kneading me every which way.

Yet I find myself one day at YTL Hotel's bijou Tembok Bali Spa Village Resort (never mind the whys and wherefores) getting ready to experience the resort's signature treatment, The Penganten Melukat. And why not? After all, the 'Spa Village' is a highly-reputable name in the world spa industry so I figure that here is where I would be in the best of hands.

The Penganten Melukat has a rather romantic background story. In Balinese villages, three days before the wedding day, the bride and groom are traditionally confined to their families' homes. During that time, they go through the ritual of Melukat (Body Cleansing) which is said to purify and cleanse body, mind and spirit and is administered by their respective mothers.

Here in Tembok, my spa experience kicks off with an auspicious start at the Segara Giri pavilion where I am treated to a foot massage, the signature Tembok Bali pre-massage treatment. Still slightly skeptical at this point, I find the novelty of placing my feet in black sand with hot volcanic stones on the side simultaneously invigorating and soothing. A towel is placed over the pit to achieve a sauna effect thus improving blood circulation, removing toxins and strengthening the feet.

After sizzling for a good 20 minutes, I am led to a little grove where, among mature frangipani trees, I lounge on luxuriously appointed half moon chairs while sipping special ylang-ylang essence water and nibbling on fresh fruit. It is all very restful and gets me into a pliable state of mind to await the next step.

Just before I drift off to sleep buoyed by the sound of the



waves, my spa therapist, Yan, leads me to the treatment room which is comfortably womb-like. 'Mewangsul' (Traditional Balinese Massage) is the first part of the treatment and after Yan considerably ascertained the kind of pressure I preferred (gentle, of course), I am slathered with fragrant natural oils.

Here, herbal-infused floral beauty oil is used for women while the men's oil consists of spicy wood notes made from a closely guarded family recipe and is said to promote vigour. Comprising of acupressure, rolling motions, long strokes and percussion, the massage-phobe within me is beguiled and finally surrenders when I fall asleep for a substantial part of the massage, something which has certainly never happened before.

My slumber is interrupted when Yan starts on the second part of the treatment, Meodak (Boreh Body Scrub) in which she applies a heat-inducing body scrub of galangal, ginger, rice and clove. It is an oddly purifying sensation

to be polished and scoured of all the dead skin and grime which builds up from city living. This thorough exfoliation leaves my skin primed for the next step, Empehan, where fresh milk is applied to soothe and moisturise.

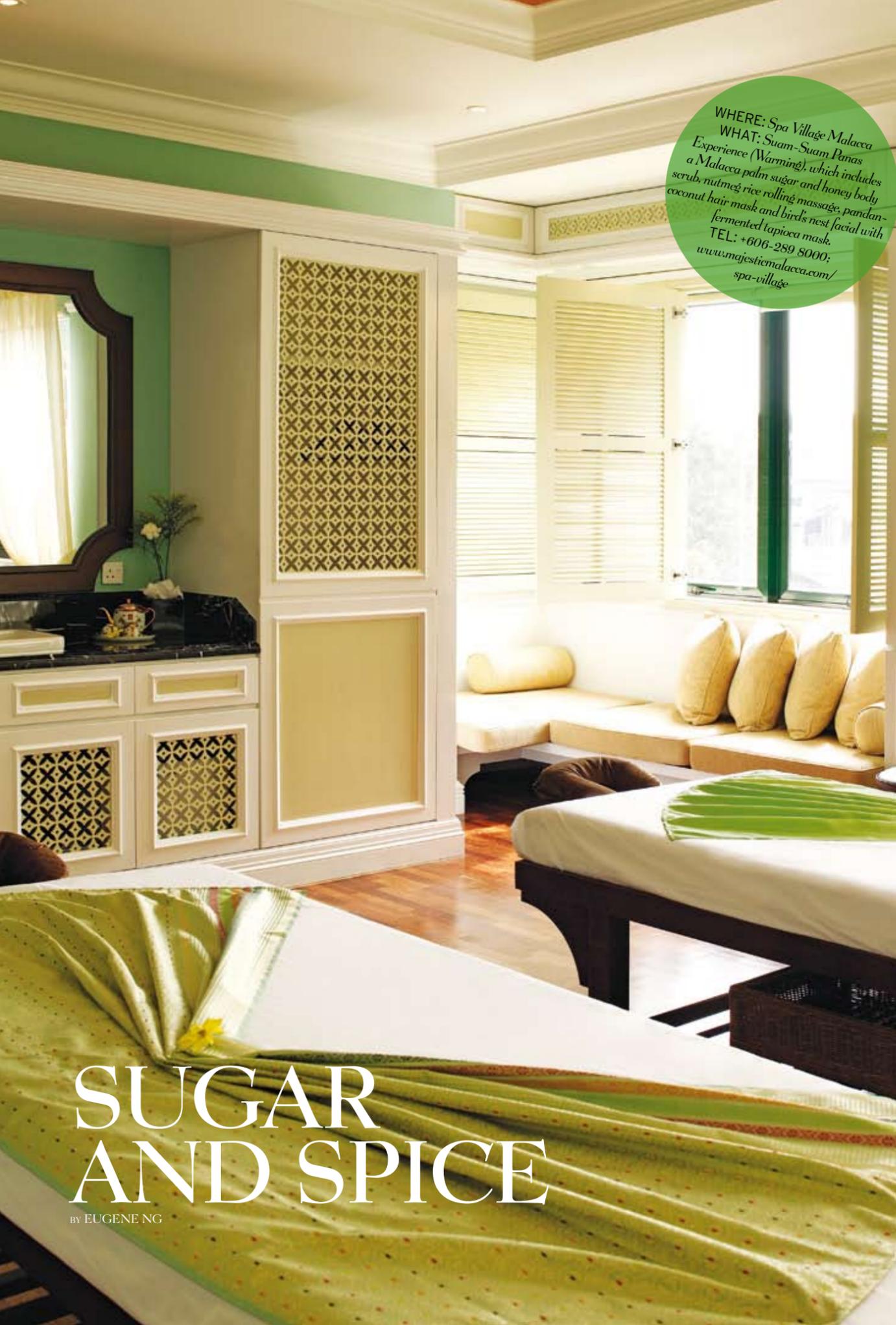
The ritual ends with Mersiram Sekar (Floral Bath). Now, while I may always have had reservations about massages and body treatments, one thing I have always loved is a good bath. Even more so when it is specially drawn and covered with a fragrant rainbow of tropical flower petals. I must admit I took my time luxuriating in the warm sweet-smelling water, finding peace in the solitude.

Feeling rejuvenated in mind, body and spirit, I toast my newly supple skin with an appetizing glass of chilled jamu kunyit masam (a home brew of tamarind and palm sugar). Sitting on the private terrace, contemplating the tranquillity of the resort, I suspect that Bali's famed magic and this wonderful spa treatment had somehow weaved a spell on me so that even my hyper-kinetic neuroses have managed to find stillness for a moment. ■

## ALSO TRY...

Since Balinese heritage is an exotic blend of Chinese, Indian, Indonesian and European influences, it is only fitting that treatments at the resort pay homage to these roots. This is evident in Campur-Campur, which combines the techniques of Malay and Thai massage with Balinese touch, tone and aromatherapy. Warm pouches of lemongrass and pandan leaves are pressed all over the body to induce relaxation, so much so that it is not unusual to fall asleep during this treatment.

ALL PHOTOS: YTL HOTELS



WHERE: Spa Village Malacca  
 WHAT: Suam-Suam Panas Experience (Warming), which includes a Malacca palm sugar and honey body scrub, nutmeg rice rolling massage, pandan-coconut hair-mask and bird's nest facial with fermented tapioca mask.  
 TEL: +606-289 8000;  
 www.majestimalacca.com/spa-village

# SUGAR AND SPICE

BY EUGENE NG

It seems rather appropriate that I am watching the famous Malaysian icon P. Ramlee singing and dancing on the television screen on the ceiling as I am lying face up and having a hair care ritual (which includes washing, combing and a scalp massage) performed on me. After all, I am at the Spa Village Malacca, located in the new Majestic Malacca, the very first 'Classic' property belonging to YTL Hotels - the luxury resort specialist and world-renowned creator of sublime spa experiences - and the whole P. Ramlee thing just seems to fit.

At the Spa Village Malacca, all treatments begin with this hair ritual, a nod to the region's Peranakan heritage and inspired by the culture's elaborate 12-day wedding ceremony. I don't have much hair on my head, but I enjoy the scalp massage very much as it readies me for the three-hour session I am about to undergo.

I have decided to try out the establishment's signature 'Suam-Suam Panas Experience'. Even though the pre-treatment questionnaire determines I am of warm body type, and thus should instead opt for the 'Shiok Shiok Sejuk Experience (see sidebar), but the idea of being scrubbed down with gula melaka (or palm sugar, a Malaccan culinary staple made from the concentrated sap of coconut flowers) is hard to resist. As they say, when in Rome... so when in Malacca, 'Malaccan sugar' seems the way to go.

My experience begins with the next part of the treatment where I find myself being gently slathered all over with a mixture of honey and gula melaka. Gula melaka, apparently, isn't only delicious to eat, but also helps replenish vitamins and minerals in the skin, aids in healing skin tissue and is exceptionally good for dry skin.

"Mmmm, I smell delicious," I joke to my gentle, soft-spoken therapist. She returns a smile and continues to carefully work the slightly abrasive concoction all over my body, even sitting me up to do my back. As I lie back down, I realise just how sticky I am. I mean, I've been in sticky situations before but never this sticky.

This body scrubbing goes on for quite a while (around 45 minutes) and I find myself drifting off as I gradually submit myself to the wills and skills of Jasephine. But even as my mind floats about in a semi-conscious state, I remember thinking, in some deep twisted recess of my mind that any moment now another therapist would walk in the door with a giant plate of glutinous rice, roll me around in it, and turn me into some sort of Nyonya kueh.

But I run out of time to write the next chapter of my Roald Dahl-inspired dessert story in my head for I am woken up and directed to the shower where I am told to wash the mixture off my body. I'm just glad I didn't stumble and fall against a wall... I might still be stuck there now.

I return to the massage table, un-sticky now, and ready for my nutmeg-rice rolling massage. The smell of nutmeg ointment conjures memories of my grandmother and my childhood when I used to attempt to give her back massages using the oil. Nutmeg oil is particularly effective to reduce aches and wind from the muscles and I *have* been working hard recently.

As Jasephine begins the massage, I slowly find myself drifting off again. The massage goes on for at least an hour or so and I am lulled into a deep sense of relaxation. In fact, I can barely remember the hair mask and facial portion of my treatment and I jump up with a start when Jasephine gently wakes me up and informs me that my very first three-hour spa experience is over. "Has it really been three hours?" I ask incredulously. She nods coyly, a small smile taking over her face and she tells me to relax by the bay window seat as she goes to get me a glass of Melaka fruit tea, another Malacca Spa Village speciality.

As she leads me out of the therapy room, I tell her that I really enjoyed this three-hour long spa experience and admit that there were moments where I didn't even really know where I was. "Of course," she laughs gently, "you were actually snoring."

Under normal circumstances, I might have been embarrassed, but I float downstairs and walk out into the evening sun, feeling at peace with the world and feeling alive in Malacca. ■



MAIN & GULA MELAKA PHOTOS: CHUAN LOOI INTERIOR PHOTO: ALVIN LIEW

## ALSO TRY...

### SHIOK-SHIOK SEJUK EXPERIENCE (COOLING)

The counterpoint to the Suam-Suam Panas Experience, this treatment is for those with a tendency to suffer from 'heatiness' and comprises a Yoghurt-Guava Leaves Body Scrub, Egg Rolling Body Therapy, Limau Kasturi-Yoghurt Hair Mask and Bird's Nest Facial with Starfruit Mask.

# FLOWER POWER

BY HELEN OON

WHERE: Spa Village  
Tanjong Jara  
WHAT: Asam Roselle Treatment,  
using the red Roselle flower which has long  
been used in traditional medicine and  
is known for its anti-aging, diuretic  
and inflammatory properties amongst  
other benefits.  
TEL: +609-845 1100;  
www.spavillage.com/  
tanjongjara/



I am led to a stone bench to undergo the ritualistic Mandi Bunga (or Malay Floral Bath) to be purified and blessed before the treatment begins. From a large petal-laden jar of water, my therapist scoops up the scented liquid in a container and gently pours it over my head, at the same time wishing me good luck and health as part of the ritual. Unaccustomed to bathing in cold water, I find myself invigorated and cleansed at the impact of the water. After a changing into a dry sarong, we proceed to the glass-clad treatment room that allows natural light in yet is secluded from prying eyes outside.

I have booked in for the spa's latest Asam Roselle Treatment. The Roselle (*Hibiscus Sabdariffa* L) was introduced to Malaysia from India more than three centuries ago and the species has thrived in the warm tropical climate ever since. The dark red flowers - rich in vitamins, fruit acids, calcium, iron and potassium - have long been active ingredients in traditional medicine and local delicacies. It makes a delicious drink that tastes not unlike blackcurrant juice. It benefits the kidney system, lowers blood sugar levels and has diuretic and anti-inflammatory properties and aids in detoxifying and cleansing the body. Its natural collagen reputedly assists in vitamin absorption thus contributing to anti-aging and the revitalisation of the skin.

Elegant timber chalets styled after ancient Malay palaces nestle against an endless stretch of golden sand caressed by the South China Sea. The tranquillity is punctuated only by the whisper of the wind rustling through the casuarinas in symphony with the soothing songs of the ocean.

This is the stuff of ancient legacy, the art of Malay healing tradition at its best: inspiring purity of spirit and health. It is called 'Sucimurni', the philosophy of Tanjong Jara Resort in Terengganu on the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia.

The Spa Village, tucked away in a sequestered corner of the resort, is a cluster of walled-up miniature villas used as treatment rooms for traditional Malay spa therapies. Each villa is set within its own compact garden of herbs and flowers with a large outdoor bath used for ritualistic flower baths post-treatment. Butterflies flutter softly in the sun while yellow birds sing their hearts out among the over-arching tree branches shading the Spa Village. A perfect setting for a session of pampering that I owe to myself after being frazzled by the tedious 15 hours' journey from London to the resort.

Sprawled face down, I surrender my body to the expert hands of the therapist, a tiny girl with fingers of steel and the strength of an ox. Having ascertained my preference of medium pressure, she begins with long kneading strokes homing in on the muscles and joints to gently ease away all aches. She applies the scented blend of Roselle, ginger, nutmeg, galangal and karoteno oil, packed full of vitamins A, C and E, to rejuvenate the body while simultaneously nourishing the skin.

Next, I feel a cool cream being applied, a blend of Roselle, rice and coconut oil designed to exfoliate, soften and tone the skin. The delightfully silky texture makes me tingle. The treatment lasts a mere 100 minutes, which flies by, but how I wish it would go on and on. Alas, all good things must come to an end.

I float off the spa bed and walk on air to the relaxation area where I am served a refreshing Roselle tea, its maroon tint apparently evident of its high concentration of antioxidants. As I sip my tea in total bliss, my jetlag evaporating as I slowly come back down to earth, I raise my cup and toast to paradise found. Well, as close to it as it gets. ■

## ALSO TRY...

### TUAMPASIR HEATED SAND THERAPY (100 MINUTES)

A therapeutic treatment using heated sand, dry roasted in a hot frying pan, infused with fenugreek and black seeds to cure a variety of ailments. The heated sand is packaged into a cotton pouch, which is then used as a pressure massage. The treatment is greatly beneficial for muscular pain, varicose veins and superficial vascular disorders in addition to revitalising blood circulation and recharging energy levels.

ALL PHOTOS ALVIN LIEW

# NATURAL BEAUTY

BEHOLD SOME OF MOTHER NATURE'S MOST PRECIOUS GIFTS

PHOTOGRAPHY CHOEN LEE STYLING JENNIFER CHOO ART DIRECTION PENNY CHEW  
ASSISTANTS SHUIH WEI, JOHNNY MCGEORGE, & SAM YEN

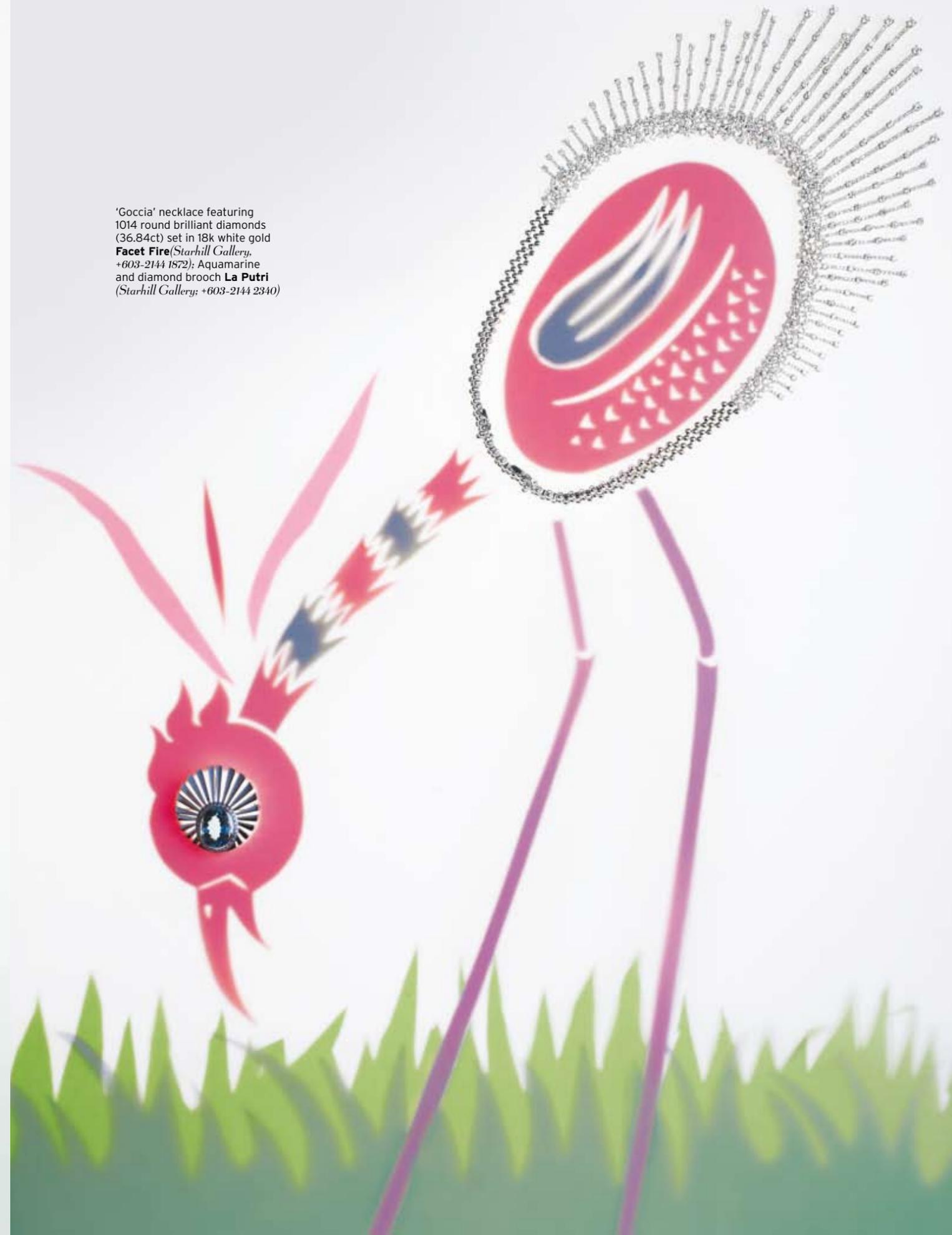


'Ice Cube' watch with satin straps **Chopard** (Starhill Gallery; +603-2148 3050/3189); Anais pendant earrings in white gold (as antennae) and Cinna 'Pampilles' pendant earrings in white gold with turquoise **Boucheron** (Starhill Gallery; +603-2143 2669)

'Sweety' chalcedony ring (6.84ct) surrounded by 45 diamonds (0.16ct) and 84 black sapphire (1.34ct) and set in white gold (7.27g) **Korloff** (Starhill Gallery, +603-2141 2881); 'Cluster' yellow diamond bracelet set in 18k white gold **Mondial** (Starhill Gallery; +603-2144 2667)



'Goccia' necklace featuring 1014 round brilliant diamonds (36.84ct) set in 18k white gold **Facet Fire** (Starhill Gallery, +603-2144 1872); Aquamarine and diamond brooch **La Putri** (Starhill Gallery; +603-2144 2340)



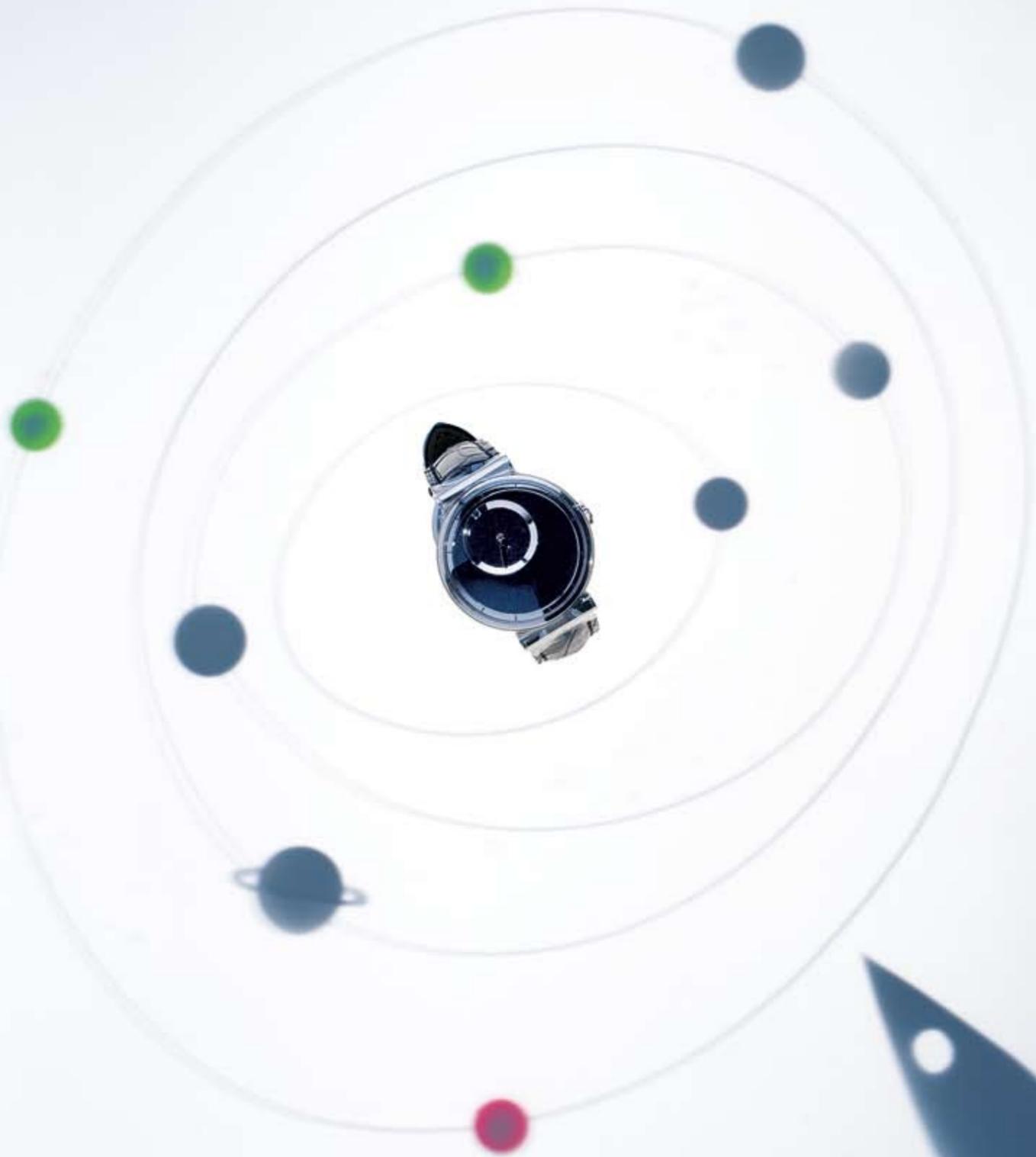
A satellite with two large solar panel arrays is shown in space. A chronograph watch with a black dial and a dark leather strap is positioned in the center. The background is a light blue gradient with several black starburst shapes and a large, dark, curved horizon line at the bottom.

# TIME & SPACE

## WHERE WORLDS COLLIDE

PHOTOGRAPHY CHOEN LEE STYLING JENNIFER CHOO ART DIRECTION PENNY CHEW  
ASSISTANTS SHUIH WEI, JOHNNY MCGEORGE & SAM YEN

**SATELLITE OF LOVE**  
Omega Seamaster Planet Ocean Co-Axial Chronograph Red Gold Collection: self-winding chronograph, 45.5mm diameter with semi-matte black dial, polished and brushed 18ct red gold casebody, unidirectional rotating 18ct red gold bezel with black aluminium ring and water resistant up to 600m. *Omega, Starhill Gallery; +603-2144 0035*



**BLU IS THE COLOUR**  
blu Planet: 36mm diameter with aventurine dial, stainless steel case, domed steel, Swiss-made mechanical automatic winding and water resistant up to 3 ATM. *blu boutique, Starhill Gallery; +603-2148 4328*



#### HOME ON THE RANGE

Bvlgari Assioma AA48C14SLDCH: innovative quadrangular case, brass ardoise dial with satiné soleil effect, diamond treated applied brass rhodium plated luminescent hands, indexes and numerals '12' and '6', 48mm polished stainless steel curved case and water resistant up to 30m. *Bulgari, Starhill Gallery, +603-2143 2669*



#### ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER

Jaquet Droz Les Douze Villes (Hommage à la Chaux-de-Fonds): self-winding mechanical movement, double barrel, 22ct white gold oscillating weight with slate grey and 'guilloché' opaline silver centre in 18ct white gold case and water resistant up to 30m. *Jaquet Droz, Starhill Gallery, +603-2143 1322*



# ACTUARIAL REALITY

**TIRED OF YOUR LIFE? THEN ENTER SECOND LIFE, WHERE VIRTUAL REALITY IS NOT JUST A LEISURELY ESCAPE INTO A WHOLE NEW WORLD, BUT HAS BECOME A BOOMING BUSINESS BIG BRANDS ARE BURSTING TO BUY INTO**

BY MATT ARMITAGE

Since the mid-1990s, virtual reality (VR) has been touted as the next big technological breakthrough, an assumption that TV and movies have been force-feeding us ever since. Star Trek had its holo-decks for a quick holiday from the alienation of life in deep space, while The Matrix revolved around the concept of an enslaved human population living 'real' lives in a mental cyberspace.

But forget the holo-specs and contact suits that frequently pop up at technology fairs. The Hollywood-inspired vision of our future will likely remain something of a curio for the foreseeable future (but has probably been mapped out by Nintendo, judging by their enjoyably immersive Wii console). We already have a fully functioning virtual reality and people are making a lot of money from it.

Established at the tail end of the first Internet bubble in the late 1990s, at a time when broadband speeds were unable to keep pace with developers' imaginations, a site called Doobedoo briefly became a global phenomenon. Predating MySpace

and Facebook and the term 'social networking' by almost a decade, Doobedoo was a straightforward meeting place for people from across the world, consisting of instant messaging linked to a cartoon-like avatar.

In VR terms it was pretty basic, but its instant messaging capabilities were years ahead of the curve, and though the site never managed to turn its traffic into a profitable trail, its influence still echoes in everything from MSN Messenger to AOL's IM functionality. More importantly, current online worlds like the popular Second Life have adopted the avatar-led social interactivity of Doobedoo and placed it into the kind of 3D online framework familiar to players of Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPG).

From World of Warcraft to Everquest, MMORPGs have a massive following and while character points and virtual objects can be traded for real world cash on Ebay, they have a simple revenue model: you pay a subscription fee to the company that operates the game. Second Life operator

PHOTO CORREIS

Linden Lab has a different take, styling itself as a virtual realtor, and renting out server space to real world tenants.

A basic Second Life user account is free but occupants can rent their own virtual islands from Linden for a monthly fee, using the supplied 3D tools to create anything that takes their fancy. As creating homes and furniture takes some design and coding skill, an economy has sprung up to supply users with goods, ranging from clothing for your avatar to appliances for your home.

Rather than the gameplay of MMORPGs, Second Life and its competitors - There, Active Worlds, Habbo Hotel - are social and leisure based. And big global brands are now wanting a piece of the pie.

Thanks to a system for converting US dollars to and from in-world currency the Linden Dollar (L\$), users can hang out at coffee shops, malls, gigs, galleries and spend their virtual money on anything from the latest fashions from American Apparel to the latest shoes from Adidas.

And while it's exposure rather than revenue that most brands are looking for, there is a healthy in-world economy running at around US\$8m per month. For most operators it's little more than pocket money but some, like Second Life property developer Anshe Chung, have turned it into a real world business with a multi-million dollar turnover and more than 30 employees.

But the big money is in providing Second Life services from the outside. US start-ups Mediatronica and Electric Sheep provide programming and multimedia services to brands wishing to establish a Second Life presence, and as Mediatronica CTO Greg Deocampo asserts, the company does not accept Linden Dollars.

For corporations like IBM, which has the largest presence in Second Life, the environment has become a testing ground for its next generation business practices, allowing the company to hold conferences, meetings and workshops that allow participants to interact without incurring the cost or inconvenience of leaving their desks.

And universities from Singapore's Nanyang Polytechnic to MIT are establishing virtual campuses for remote access to lectures and teaching facilities. Imagine that!

Not that there aren't potential specks on the horizon. The FBI is said to be concerned at the possible misuse of Second Life and other virtual worlds by criminals and terrorists seeking to launder money, and there are ongoing issues concerning legal jurisdiction over in-world activities, but those issues aside, virtual reality is here to stay. ■





**COOL BANANAS** Mobile phones say something very definite about us as individuals: busy professionals clutch pocket PCs and smartphones, tethered to their ability to bring organisation to a chaotic schedule. So-called fashion phones are less serious, indicating the user has either opted out of or is not yet ready to join the rat race. In between the two there are dozens of permutations containing combinations of camera, camcorder, music player and web browser. As well as making phone calls.

So, what of the humble landline? Traditionally home phones have been ugly, functional items for which we try to find a place that's accessible and unobtrusive. And while the functionality of mobile phones has seen them develop into mini-computers in the space of a decade, our desks and sideboards are still dominated by a machine whose biggest evolution in 100 years has been to go wireless.

Until the BeoCom 2, that is. Bang & Olufsen's typically modernist reinvention of the genre blurs the line between ear trumpet and sculpture. Not a word usually associated

## ON REVIEW: B&O BEOCOM 2

with the genre, the BeoCom 2 is crafted from a single piece of aluminium, its cylindrical shape ergonomically contoured to both the hand and the head. Yes, it slightly resembles a banana, but a banana you can see being used as the centrepiece of a particularly minimalist living room.

Its wireless DECT circuitry is boosted by Bang & Olufsen's trademark sonic wizardry, leaving incoming voices crisp and natural sounding and transmitting your voice with perfect clarity. A natural complement to B&O's range of home theatre and sound systems, the BeoCom 2's killer app is that you can use it to adjust the volume of any adjacent B&O AV gear and stop the kids from drowning out your calls with Spongebob.

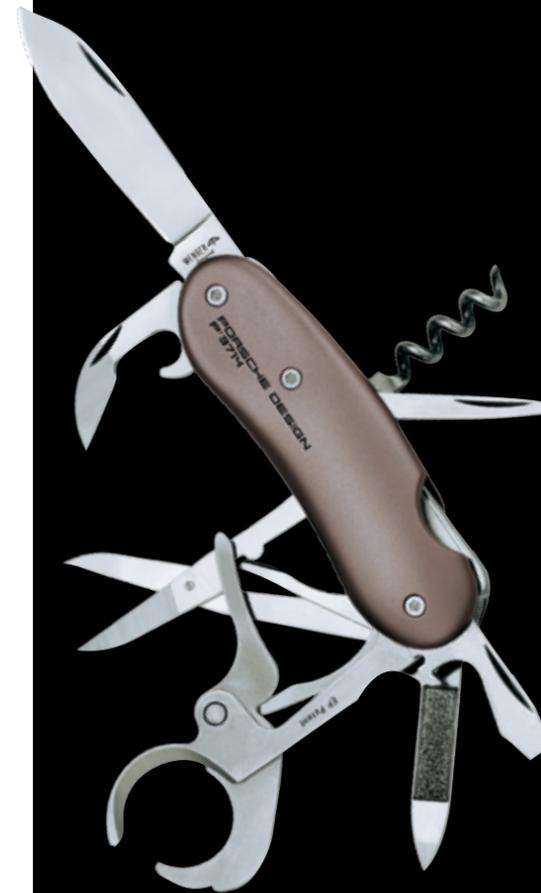
Compliance with PSTPN and ISDN telephone systems means it's also compatible with the Internet Telephony protocols now common in many office-based systems and with up to eight handsets supported by a single base station, the phone also serves as an intercom system. Though quite why you'd let anyone else have one is beyond us; we'd keep it to ourselves. *B&O, Starhill Gallery, KL; www.bang-olufsen.com*



**TOUCH ME AGAIN** Apple has once again reinvented its iPod touch as a PDA. While wowed by its web-browsing abilities, we were a little let down by the lack of a mail app and its limited PIM functionality, especially as Apple was something of a trailblazer in the area with the not-so-successful Newton's in the 1990s. Not any more. The latest models all come with Mac Mail and Notes as well as revamped Contacts and Calendar apps and some handy widgets that access Google Maps and track your stocks. And with the flagship model boasting a 32GB Flash Memory, the touch has just become king of the PIMs. *Apple products are available at Machines, Lot 10, Jln Bukit Bintang, KL; www.apple.com*



**EXCEPTIONAL VERTU** The thing about Nokia's bespoke Vertu range is that there's no possible argument for needing one. They exist simply for those who want ridiculously refined and stylish objects. The 3G Ascent Ti is no exception, and if anything is rather subdued compared to its bejewelled catalogue mates. Hewn from titanium, with sapphire glass protecting against scratches on the screen, camera lens and flash, the 3G Ascent Ti also has an 'ear pillow' (the bit where the speaker is) for more listening comfort, and is made from space rocket grade ceramics, not to mention its hand-tooled leather reverse. With 4GB of onboard memory and world phone voice and data functionality, it's a rugged and desirable business phone. The real clincher though is the phone's data protection system. Wherever you are in the world, the Vertu Fortress system will wirelessly back-up your entire calendar and contact info to a secure storage facility in an ex-military underground bunker in the UK. *Vertu at Swiss Union Fine Watch, Starhill Gallery, KL; www.vertu.com*



**POCKET ENVY** As a kid, bigger was always better; and back then, he who had anything more than a four-blade Swiss Army Knife was king of the class. As an adult you realise that engineering and function are more important, especially given that you'll rarely need that awl or tool for loosening stones from a horse's hooves. With the sleek, minimal form that is the hallmark of Porsche's famed Design Studios, the P'3714 Pocket Knife features a locking screwdriver that won't snap back on your fingers, scissors with 'micro-teeth', corkscrew and tin opener housed in a sleek ruthenium casing. And marking the fact that you're really grown-up? Its most used tool will probably end up being the integrated cigar cutter. *Porsche Design, Starhill Gallery, KL; www.porsche-design.com*

# A PHARE TO REMEMBER

INNOVATIVE AND DYNAMIC, THE PHARE TOWER WILL NOT ONLY CHANGE THE PARIS SKYLINE IN 2012, IT WILL ALSO BE A NEW TAKE ON THE PRACTICE OF MODERN STRUCTURES RESPONDING TO THEIR GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT BY ABDUL AZIZ DRAIM

Fluid yet arrestingly strong, the Phare Tower stretches to the sky like an architectural beacon that signals the vibrant progress of the redevelopment of the La Défense business district just outside of Paris. Scheduled for completion in 2012, the 68-storey office tower measures 300m in height and covers 175,000 gross square metres of floor space.

Selected from a pool of 10 international architects, Santa Monica-based Morphosis delivered a winning design that is informed by a commitment to sustainability and urban connectivity. The project's programme, design and engineering are integrated into an innovative vision for a 21st century tower that sees a sinuous and sensuous form emerging confidently from its site.

Phare Tower follows a scheme that synthesises La Défense's disparate programmatic, physical and infrastructural elements through a series of adroitly scaled spaces to bring coherency, vibrancy and a sense of place to the area. With every intention not to create an autonomous and isolated building, the designers developed a hybrid structure where circulation is meant to flow smoothly from the grade transit hub below, through the CNIT (Center of New Industries and Technologies) and into public spaces. Glass-enclosed

escalators transport visitors from the CNIT connector up to Phare Tower's impressive 60m high lobby, itself a public plaza in the air.

As smart as it is beautiful, the building is also designed to produce a sustainable architectural performance. Both its form and orientation respond effectively to the path of the sun. While the flat, clear-glazed north façade maximises on the interior exposures to year-round natural daylight, the southern exterior, with its curvilinear, double-skin surface, minimises heat gain and glare. Functioning at all times, this double-skin capitalises on energy efficiency to bring increased daylight and natural ventilation into the workspace, creating an environment of great comfort and quality.

Additionally, a wind farm located at the topmost level of Phare Tower works to power the building's natural ventilation system through the use of clean, alternative energy. This system cools the building for a whole six months without having to rely on external or supplemental energy sources. A dynamic structure, Phare Tower is optimistic and sublime, responding to the needs of its geography and environment with a highly innovative take on structure and performance. ■ [www.morphosis.net](http://www.morphosis.net)

RENDERINGS AND LINE DRAWING UNIBAIL-MORPHOSIS



**FUN BEGINS AT FIFTY** Not too long ago, traditional draughtsmen would rely on Anglepoise® lamps to help shine some light on their work. But since the dawn of computer software, the pen and paper and the use of lamps, have somewhat become redundant. Which is why the brand has launched Anglepoise® play, a range of fun Anglepoise® products designed especially for a younger crowd. Its latest offering is the Anglepoise® Fifty™, a quirky little design by Anthony Dickens. Fifty pays homage to the original 1932 Anglepoise®, now frozen at a fifty-degree angle and made to look like a playful archaeological relic. Playful enough even to keep you from getting bent out of shape about work. [www.anglepoise.com](http://www.anglepoise.com)

**NOBODY AT HOME** If you were to drape a cloth over a chair, and somehow freeze that cloth then take the chair away from underneath it, you would get the Nobody chair. Designed by Danish firm Komplot for HAY, the Nobody chair references the "shadow" of a chair. It is produced in one single process, the thermo-pressing of the polymer fibre used (PET felt mat) without the need for a frame. No additives the likes of glue or resin, not even screws or other reinforcements were used in the design. The chair is very light and stackable, its material is 100% recyclable and its design is already the recipient of several "Best of" awards. Not bad for a nobody. [www.komplot.dk](http://www.komplot.dk) or [www.hay.dk](http://www.hay.dk)



**KIDS' PLAY** Yves Behar's XO Laptop for non-profit organisations, One Laptop Per Child (OLPC), is putting other laptops to shame. Designed as an educational tool specifically for school-aged children in developing countries, the XO OLPC is robust, high touch and expressive. Protected from dust by the Nigerian green bumper surrounding it, the XO is opened by releasing the dual latches on its side, latches that also function as antennas and covers for the laptop's USB ports. Revolutionary in design, unlike other laptops the motherboard for the XO is placed behind the screen, not underneath the keyboard. The screen is attached to a 180-degree swivel, allowing the XO to function in three different modes: laptop, e-book or gaming mode. Plus, the laptop is roughly the size of a textbook and no heavier than a lunchbox. All this and more at only US\$100 with no compromise on technology, software or even style. Apple, eat your heart out. [www.fuseproject.com](http://www.fuseproject.com)

# A LIFE IN WINES

TAN SRI DATO' (DR.) FRANCIS YEOH DESCRIBES THE RELATIONSHIP HE HAS CULTIVATED WITH THE CHATEAU MOUTON-ROTHSCHILD OVER THE YEARS AND HOW DRINKING AND COLLECTING FINE WINES HAS BECOME A PASSION

BY NIUH JI AUN TEXT EDITED BY YUNG RO HAN PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEON



Wine has a habit of intertwining itself with human lives and stories. It has an unavoidable cultural presence: ranging from the Passover to the Eucharist; from Ancient Greece, where libations of wine were poured onto graves as a sign of mourning; to America, where there is a tradition of buying a case of wine from a baby's birth year and then giving it to them on their 21st birthday.

A similar practice is to be found in olden day China - where parents used to keep jars of rice wine underground upon the birth of their child, usually a male heir. The wine was to be drunk on the day of their child's wedding and ensured that no matter how poor they were, they would at least have a good wine to drink at the wedding.

Tan Sri Dato' (Dr.) Francis Yeoh, the man who heads the billion-dollar enterprise that is YTL Corporation, jests that he too would like to keep up with this tradition by celebrating his children's weddings with great vintages from his own wine collection. But he fears that "because the wines are so precious and expensive, [my children] will be telling the same story and passing it on to their own children... so no one will actually ever get to drink it!"

This would be a shame, especially if the Tan Sri's private collection is anywhere

near as impressive as his hoard of Mouton-Rothschild in the cellar of Shook! - a fine dining establishment at the Starhill Gallery. This restaurant features a stylish and modern open concept with its four open kitchens whipping up a choice of the finest Japanese, Chinese, Italian and Western cuisines.

The Mouton-Rothschild collection at Shook! is a vertical collection - which, for the uninitiated, means a collection of consecutive vintages from a single estate in both large format (i.e. 1.5l Magnums) and normal size (0.75l) bottles. The Shook! collection ranges from 1945-2002 and was bought in its entirety at an auction. Apparently the wine cost more than it did to set up the restaurant itself.

The story of the Tan Sri's relationship with the Mouton-Rothschild is as good an example as you will find of the way wine can become intertwined with the narrative of a person's life. When he first started off in the construction industry, the Tan Sri drank a range of wines and with little attention to quality.

Sri because this was the year that he got married to the late Puan Sri Rosaline Yeoh. "You see, when you have a vintage marriage, God blesses you with vintage wine."

Since then, the Tan Sri has devoted much of his wine-collecting energy on the Mouton-Rothschild. According to him, "buying good wine today is like buying art". And this is especially appropriate for the Mouton-Rothschild, given the close relationship that this chateau has with art. The labels on their wine bottles feature specially commissioned paintings by artists, including some of the greatest of the 20th century: Salvador Dalí, Marc Chagall, Wassily Kandinsky, Andy Warhol, Pablo Picasso, and many others. Even Prince Charles has been roped in to paint one of their labels (the 2004 vintage).

For the Tan Sri, collecting is about much more than just buying and drinking. He goes for a more holistic approach. Consequently, he immerses himself in the art of wine-making and he takes tours of distinguished vineyards to learn about

## APPARENTLY, THE MOUTON-ROTHSCHILD COLLECTION AT SHOOK! COST MORE THAN IT DID TO SET UP THE RESTAURANT ITSELF

"Back then, I thought all wines were the same and the reason was you would look at the menu from right to left; first you look at the price, and then you look at the wine," he laughs. "In any case, those wines were all house pouring brands anyway. You only remembered the price (of the wine), and it was cheap, and it didn't taste that great."

Thus when he first encountered the 1982 Chateau Mouton-Rothschild, it was a revelation. Here was a wine that really made him understand the meaning of the word 'vintage'. The year 1982, of course, was already significant to the Tan

the finer points of viticulture and oenology.

His advice to budding wine collectors? "Have fun doing it. Immerse yourself in the whole process and buy the best you can afford. After all, life's too short to drink bad wine."

Presumably, though, it's also best not to force your children to drink those wines on their weddings. They've got their own children to think about, after all. ■

*Shook! is located at Starhill Gallery; +603-2719 8535/6*

### ALSO TRY...



There are many iconic world producers of red wines; but the five first growths (premier grand cru) of Bordeaux - Chateau Haut-Brion, Chateau Mouton-Rothschild, Chateau Lafite Rothschild, Chateau Latour and Chateau Margaux - are consistently the most sought after by wine connoisseurs.

Chateau Mouton-Rothschild is the exception among the first growths in that it was not originally classified as a first growth in 1855 when the classification began but was elevated to first growth status in 1973 by Jacques Chirac, France's then Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, after determined lobbying by Mouton-Rothschild's then owner, Baron Philippe de Rothschild.

Chateau Mouton Rothschild is currently owned by Baroness Philippine de Rothschild and has over 200 acres under cultivation. Its First Wine, or Grand Vin, is typically 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc, 8% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot but this composition may vary slightly depending on vintage. A few of the vintages considered 'great' for Chateau Mouton-Rothschild are 1945, 1953, 1959, 1982, 1986 and 2000.

# COME DINE WITH ME

BESPOKE AUTOMOBILES, BESPOKE TAILORING, BESPOKE BEAUTY TREATMENTS. NOW, YTL HOTELS BRINGS THE CONCEPT OF BESPOKE DINING INTO ITS WORLD OF LUXURY BY LENA NG ALL PHOTOS YTL HOTELS



The rolling tea hills of Cameron Highlands provide a dramatic backdrop for a spot of afternoon tea

Modern luxury buyers who are increasingly interested in the finer things in life want not just an experience, but a personal experience. The ultimate luxury item or experience may be high in prestige, but it also has to be unique and special. Take the example of designer handbags, which have gone from the iconic interlocking C's of Chanel to the limited edition Fendi bags toted around by celebrity It Girls like Kiera Knightley and Kate Moss. The ultimate bag without a doubt has to be the Hermès Birkin bag which remains tantalisingly out of reach for those unwilling to spend over US\$10,000 and three-years on a waiting list.

Travel trends are another good indicator of how personalisation is as much a part of modern luxury as exclusivity. Beyond just a five-star hotel room, private estates - such as those on the island of Pangkor Laut - are increasingly in demand for those who need their well-earned rest and relaxation. Some of these villas are like a self-enclosed vacation world that stretch to three or four bedrooms, complete with a swimming pool and private massage pavilions.

Luxury travel also means customising the whole experience, which is why in Malaysia private dining has really become a feature of such vacations. Destination dining by the beach, whether as a barbecue or a romantic dinner, is available at both Pangkor Laut and Tanjung Jara Resorts. By offering a unique setting as well as a diverse

Think of the word luxury, and most people would agree that this is a powerful image on its own. For some, it may be the ultimate designer handbag or a sleek convertible. For others, it might be a palace for a home or exotic holidays.

Status is no longer just conveyed with branding, as modern luxury trends are constantly evolving around the world. Think back to the 80s, when logos could be found on every conceivable trendy item - cars, jeans, underwear and bags. The definition of luxury has changed as even more people than ever before have acquired access to the world of high-end indulgences.

menu selection, the experience is made distinctive for each guest. At Cameron Highlands Resort, having a personalised meal in a setting of your choice has the added attraction of dining under the stars with views of the rolling tea hills.

But for those looking for the ultimate and most unique dining experience, Private Dining by Kevin Cape at the Ritz-Carlton Residences is the ultimate gourmet treat in a relaxed and comfortable setting. This is one of the most exclusive dining options you can find in Kuala Lumpur, home to an endless choice of different cuisines. The Ritz-Carlton Residences are part of a worldwide network of high-end urban homes and



Romance is in the cool air of Cameron Highlands Resort with yet another luxury dining location



Romantic and private beach dining experiences can be found at Pangkor Laut Resort (pictured here) and Tanjung Jara Resort

are located next to the award-winning Ritz-Carlton Hotel in downtown KL. For enhanced privacy, the elegantly furnished two- and three-bedroom units come with separate entrances, unobtrusive housekeeping services and dining in each suite.

With the involvement of Kevin Cape, YTL's Corporate Executive Chef, whose signature touch has been given to luxury experiences as diverse as the Eastern & Orient Express and the famous Connaught Hotel in London, private dining is being taken to a whole new level of luxury. But what is it that makes this experience so luxurious?

"It's the personal contact I have with the guests," says Cape, who first customises a menu after consulting with the guests, then personally cooks the meal for them. "So really, it is the guests themselves who decide exactly what they desire."

With luxury private dining at the Ritz Carlton Residences, a meal is not only a gathering but also a way of life, where individuals can experience the best cuisine in a private and refined setting. "I insist on the freshest ingredients. There is absolutely no substitute and no cutting corners. It makes a world of difference in flavour, texture and taste when you use only fresh ingredients," adds the man who is also responsible for the exciting +dining experiences behind Starhill Gallery's Feast Village.

Not only does Cape tailor every meal to make it unique to the event, but dietary considerations are also carefully followed. "In this part of the world, a lot of people have dietary

restrictions for religious reasons, but there's also a lot more awareness of health issues.

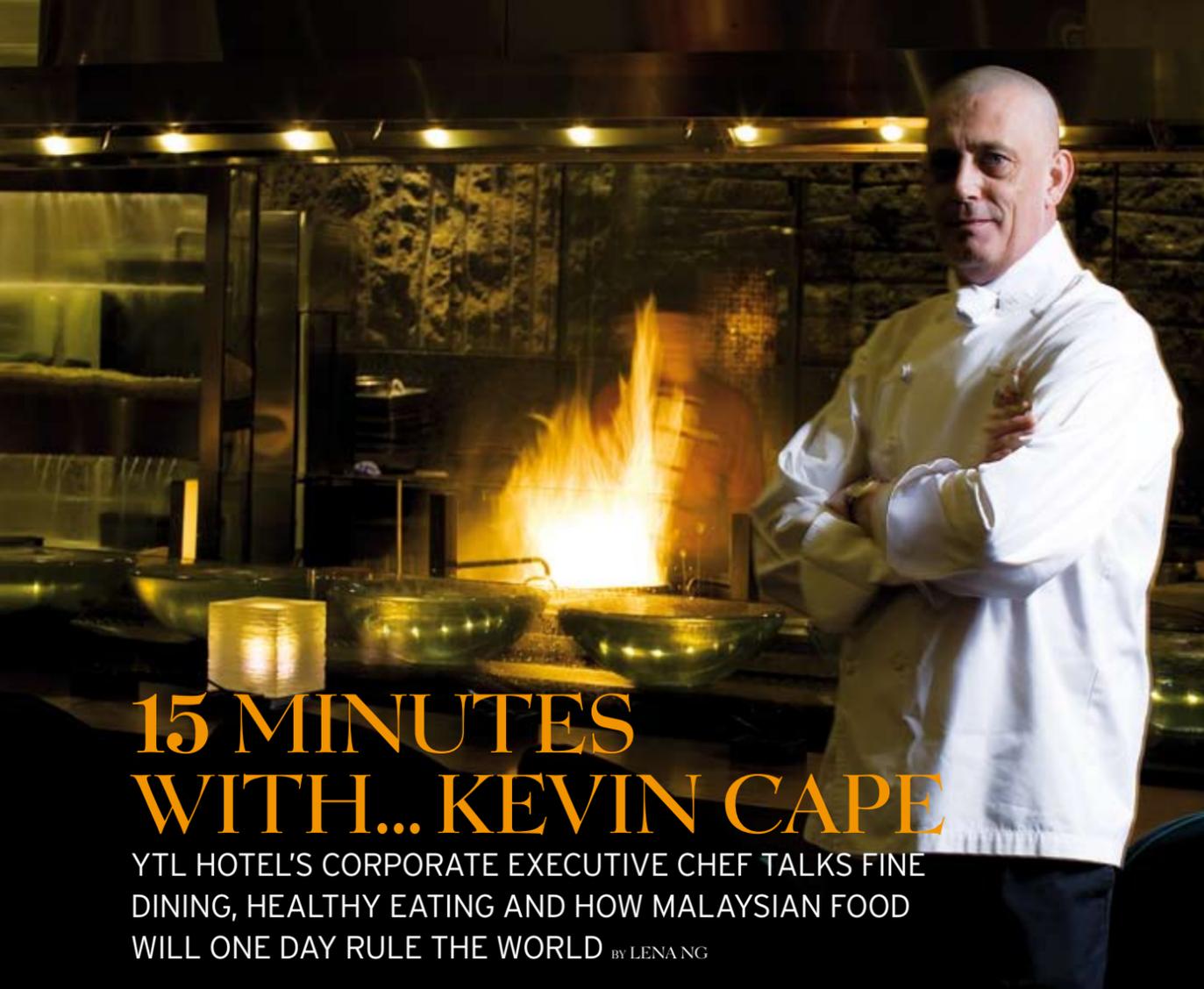
While Cape goes on to describe one guest who took the opportunity to join him in the kitchen, no doubt picking up some top kitchen secrets, he also notes that the intimacy of dining in your own suite allows for "quality time" for yourself.

"Let's say there has to be a confidential business discussion. You want to do it over a great meal. Maybe you need some privacy, or maybe restaurants are too noisy. With private dining, you have this great environment to relax and the service is entirely flexible to give you that privacy."

If many of the truly affluent around us can claim a surfeit of material possessions, fewer can boast a comparable surplus of the most valuable commodity of all - personal time and space. Just as the concept of modern luxury has changed beyond mere status symbols, the Private Dining Experience extends far beyond the traditional dinner or meal. It means giving people what they value most, whether it is a luxury experience or some quality time for themselves.

In a world of stress, multitasking, and multiple responsibilities, the ability to find a place of tranquility with the finest foods and discreet service has now also assumed a luxurious, almost decadent dimension. ■

For enquiries on YTL Hotels' private dining experiences at its different resorts and hotels, call +603-2783 1000



## 15 MINUTES WITH... KEVIN CAPE

YTL HOTEL'S CORPORATE EXECUTIVE CHEF TALKS FINE DINING, HEALTHY EATING AND HOW MALAYSIAN FOOD WILL ONE DAY RULE THE WORLD BY LENA NG

With over 35 years of culinary experience, Kevin Cape is a man who comes up with great food ideas on the spot. He was the first British Executive Sous Chef at the famed Connaught Hotel and long-time Executive Chef on the Eastern & Orient Express between Singapore and Bangkok. Kevin has worked in some of the best places around the world, and here in KL as YTL's Corporate Executive Chef, the energetic Brit is always keen to talk about his love of food.

**WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN FOOD FROM THIS PART OF THE WORLD?** I was very much classically trained, so I spent a long time doing French cooking. But I have always had an interest in Asia and I love creating interesting combinations. I take Asian food and put a little twist on it - looking for fresh, interesting new ways of doing things.

**SO HOW DO YOU PERIODICALLY MIX THINGS UP WITH FOOD TRENDS?** Not periodically, all the time! I don't believe in letting things stagnate. I think you just have to be constantly aware of what's going on. Take the whole trend in fresh food, for example. I always use the best of fresh ingredients. And more and more people are becoming increasingly aware of what they are eating.

**HOW DOES HEALTHY FOOD TIE IN WITH FINE DINING?** The global food trend toward healthy food is wonderful. It means eating closer to nature; using the freshest ingredients and the most natural preparation methods. Fine dining and healthy food are absolutely synonymous today.

**WHAT ABOUT VEGETARIANS?** Well, I actually tell my staff to really look at vegetables as major ingredients. Like a tomato, which can be very nicely cooked. Slow roast it for 10 hours, put it in some filo and bake it. It comes out pure and lovely. I actually like vegetarian food in Asia where there is a great heritage of vegetarian cuisine. In certain parts of the world, vegetarian food is considered boring, but I believe that with a little imagination one can create true delights without having to use meat.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE LOCAL FOOD SCENE HERE?** The local food scene is absolutely vibrant. Malaysian cuisine is so wonderfully diverse and offers so many opportunities. I believe that Malaysian food is a secret waiting to be discovered by the world. Just as Thai cuisine has. And I believe that our YTL restaurants will be a driving force in bringing this secret to an international audience. ■

PHOTO LEON

# STEALING BEAUTY

IS THERE REALLY SUCH A THING AS ORIGINALITY? OR IS ALL ART MERELY THE SUM OF WHAT CAME BEFORE? BY YUNG RO HAN



Westlife: Paragon of plagiarism

'Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal' said TS Eliot, author of that most celebrated of literary Frankensteins: *The Waste Land*. This poem was all about the stitching together of scraps of old stuff: a quotation from *The Divine Comedy* here, a chant from *The Upanishads* there. There were traces of original content, but they were only flitting. For the most part, Eliot simply paraded his lack of newness.

The paradox is that for much of the last 100 years *The Waste Land* (1922) has been touted as being one of the most original pieces of work ever produced. The poem's very originality, you see, resided in its questioning of whether originality was even possible: whether anything could ever be 'new'.

Eliot was not the first, nor was he the last, to grapple with this sense of belatedness. Ever since the Romantics at the turn of the 19th century, literary artists have been admitting to the paralyzing fear that all the best stories have already been told and that all the best phrases have already been used. All that was left to do was to make inferior copies.

But should originality really be rated as an artistic merit in its own right? The first thing to consider is that pure unadulterated originality would be nothing but gibberish: you would not be able to understand something if it had no connection with previous experience. Secondly, human beings tend to find considerable aesthetic pleasure in repetition: just look at the five-year-old who demands to hear the same bedtime story every night. Examples are even more rife in

PHOTO CORBIS

music: how many will have realised that the main contributing factor to the catchiness of Sean Kingston's recent hit 'Beautiful Girls' is that it shares the same bass line as Ben E. King's 'Stand By Me' (1966)?



As it is, it can be hard to think of a time when recycling wasn't the main mode of literary production. At the fountainhead of Western Literature, we find Homer who was less an individual genius, and more a master collator. Shakespeare was an inveterate pilferer and Chaucer shamelessly translated popular French tales without attributing them. In more recent years, James Joyce transposed Homer's *Odyssey* to 1920s Dublin in his *Ulysses*; while Angela Carter teased out the inherent sensuality of fairytales like *Red Riding Hood* in her *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979).

Not that all these examples of recycling should be taken as license for plagiarism. For instance, there is a big difference between, on the one hand, Jimi Hendrix's intense reworking of Bob Dylan's *All Along The Watchtower* and, on the other, Westlife's carbon copy of Michael Bubl 's *Home* (itself, hardly a work of stunning individuality). No one is impressed by a Natasha Hudson, supposed model-turned-poet, who stole directly from Roger McGough; but a whole world fell prostrate before a JK Rowling who served up a mish-mash of Celtic and Classical myths in her *Harry Potter* books. It's all about whether you can get away with stealing. ■

# AUTEUR WORLDLY

THE INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER MAKING DIFFICULT, MORALLY COMPLEX, OFFBEAT MOVIES IS FINALLY ENJOYING A RENAISSANCE AMONG MORE MAINSTREAM AUDIENCES BY MATT ARMITAGE

The 1970s is regarded as something of a golden age for filmmaking. Talented writers and directors like Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola and Peter Bogdanovich challenged a studio system hooked on blockbusters and cheesy exploitation flicks and built up a body of work that included movies like *Apocalypse Now*, *The Conversation*, *Taxi Driver* and *The Last Picture Show*, all intelligent, well-scripted and well-crafted movies that tackled difficult or offbeat subjects but still appealed to mainstream audiences.

However, when Michael Cimono's *Heaven's Gate* essentially bankrupted venerated studio United Artists in 1980, the auteur was effectively brushed aside, replaced by superstar producers like Jerry Bruckheimer and Don Simpson, and the 1980s became known as the decade of so-called high

concept movies like *Top Gun* or franchises like *Die Hard* whose premises could be summed up in a single line.

And that legacy has largely dominated the cinema experience ever since. Look at last year's big earners: some of 2007's highest grossing films included a picture inspired by a toy (*Transformers*), an amusement park ride (*Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*), not to mention a raft of video-game titles like *Tomb Raider*, *Resident Evil* and *Hitman* making the switch from console to celluloid.

But there are signs that the high concept is grinding to a halt. Partly due to the risk factor of investing hundreds of millions of dollars on special effects at a time when cinema audience figures are tailing off, and partly due to the waning of public interest for these vapid studio vehicles.

If anything, 2007 gave strong signs that indie directors have finally crossed over to the mainstream. Despite the trend of major stars taking on roles in indie flicks a few years ago, the films themselves rarely crossed over from the film fest ghetto with their attendant cult viewing figures.

Now, multiplex billboards read like those very festivals. In recent months we've had Jason Reitman's (*Thank You For Smoking*) sleeper-hit *Juno* and David Fincher's (*Fight Club*, *Se7en*) lengthy exploration of the Zodiac serial killer myth, *Zodiac*, all performing strongly in a mainstream market.

But it's the film titles themselves that are the biggest indications of a change in public tastes. It's unthinkable that even two years ago a major studio would have released *The Assassination of Jesse James By The Coward Robert Ford*, especially when the film's writer-director Andrew Dominik had only one other film to his name, the low-budget Australian production *Chopper* (2000).

Now, cinemas are full of them. No *Country For Old Men* by Fargo directors Joel and Ethan Coen, and Paul Thomas Anderson's (*Boogie Nights*) *There Will Be Blood*, to name but two. But more than the SAG, BAFTA and Oscar award nominations these films are picking up, the viewing public is showing its support for these dark, morally complex movies while the high concept blockbusters play in the next hall to empty seats.

Which still doesn't quite explain why so many of us rushed out to see *Die Hard 4.0* (a.k.a. *Live Free or Die Hard*) in its first week of release. ■



## FINEST TARTAN

While Hollywood may be experiencing something of a renaissance in auteur filmmaking, the last two decades have seen a thriving market in foreign-language, art and indie movies emerge. Liberated from the financially catastrophic art house circuit by the emergence of DVD and on-demand cable transmissions, it has extended the life of small productions and allowed word of mouth to turn them into the kind of cult or sleeper hits that allow a movie to recoup its costs or even turn a small profit.

Leading the pack is Tartan Video, a UK based distributor that specialises in European and Asian cinema. As well as reissuing classics like Ingmar Bergman's philosophical tale of a knight who plays chess against the Grim Reaper, *The Seventh Seal*, and ensuring they remain part of the popular consciousness for future generations, the company is certainly partially responsible for current levels of interest in Asian directors through its Asia Extreme offshoot, including South Korea's Chan-wook Park (*Oldboy*, *Lady Vengeance*), Hong Kong's Wong Kar-Wai and John Woo, whose *Hard Boiled* franchise enabled actor Chow Yun Fatt to become an international star.

In recent years it has also released some of the most celebrated and sometimes controversial independents movies including Sundance winner *The Woodsman* and Brad Anderson's *The Machinist*, featuring an emaciated Christian

Bale. Not to mention Paul Verhoeven's exploration of Second World War Holland, *Black Book*. [www.tartanvideo.com](http://www.tartanvideo.com)

### TARTAN TITLES TO LOOK OUT FOR:

*I'm A Cyborg* (a.k.a. *Sainogujiman Kwenchana*) Affecting and whimsical comedy from South Korea about the unfolding love affair between two patients at a mental hospital. Starring Asian superstar singer Rain and winner of awards at the 2007 Berlin International Film Festival

### *Paranoid Park*

Gus Van Sant's 2007 Cannes winning *Paranoid Park* carries on the director's obsession with the lives of troubled teens. Tense and unforgiving, the movie tells the story of Alex and the circumstances that lead to him killing a security guard. Shot in a gritty, non-sequential narrative style.

### *The Phantom Carriage* (a.k.a. *Körkarlen*)

Victor Sjöström's 1922 silent film is notable for being one of the first pictures filmed in colour, as well as being hailed as a forerunner of today's horror genre. This updated edition is issued with a brand new score from US underground ambient rockers Sunn O.

## FESTIVAL SEASON

### WORLD CINEMATIC EVENTS NOT TO BE MISSED



#### Bucharest International Film Festival (April 14-20)

Now in its fourth year, the festival reflects the growing influence of Romanian cinema on movements in Europe. Concentrating on new European films and directors, the festival is quickly establishing itself as one of European cinema's landmark occasions. [www.b-estfilmfest.com](http://www.b-estfilmfest.com)

#### Roger Ebert's Overlooked Film Festival (April 23-27)

Now in its 10th year in the not so-exotic Champaign, Illinois, leading US film critic Roger Ebert founded this five day spectacular as an attempt to bring some much needed attention to movies and genres that fall outside the Hollywood machine. [www.ebertfest.com](http://www.ebertfest.com)

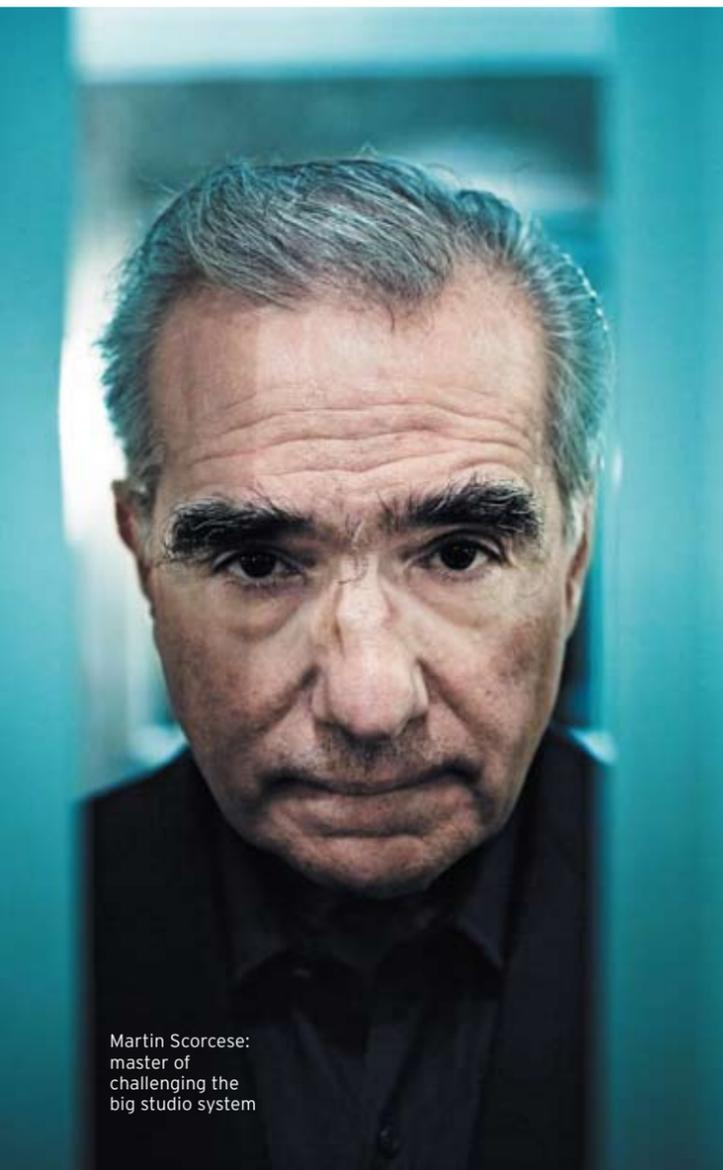


#### Barcelona Asian Film Festival (April 27 - May 6)

Barcelona, with its bustling street culture, is an ideal location for an Asian film festival that places as much emphasis on animé and shorts as on the work of new and celebrated Asian filmmakers. [www.baff-bcn.org](http://www.baff-bcn.org)

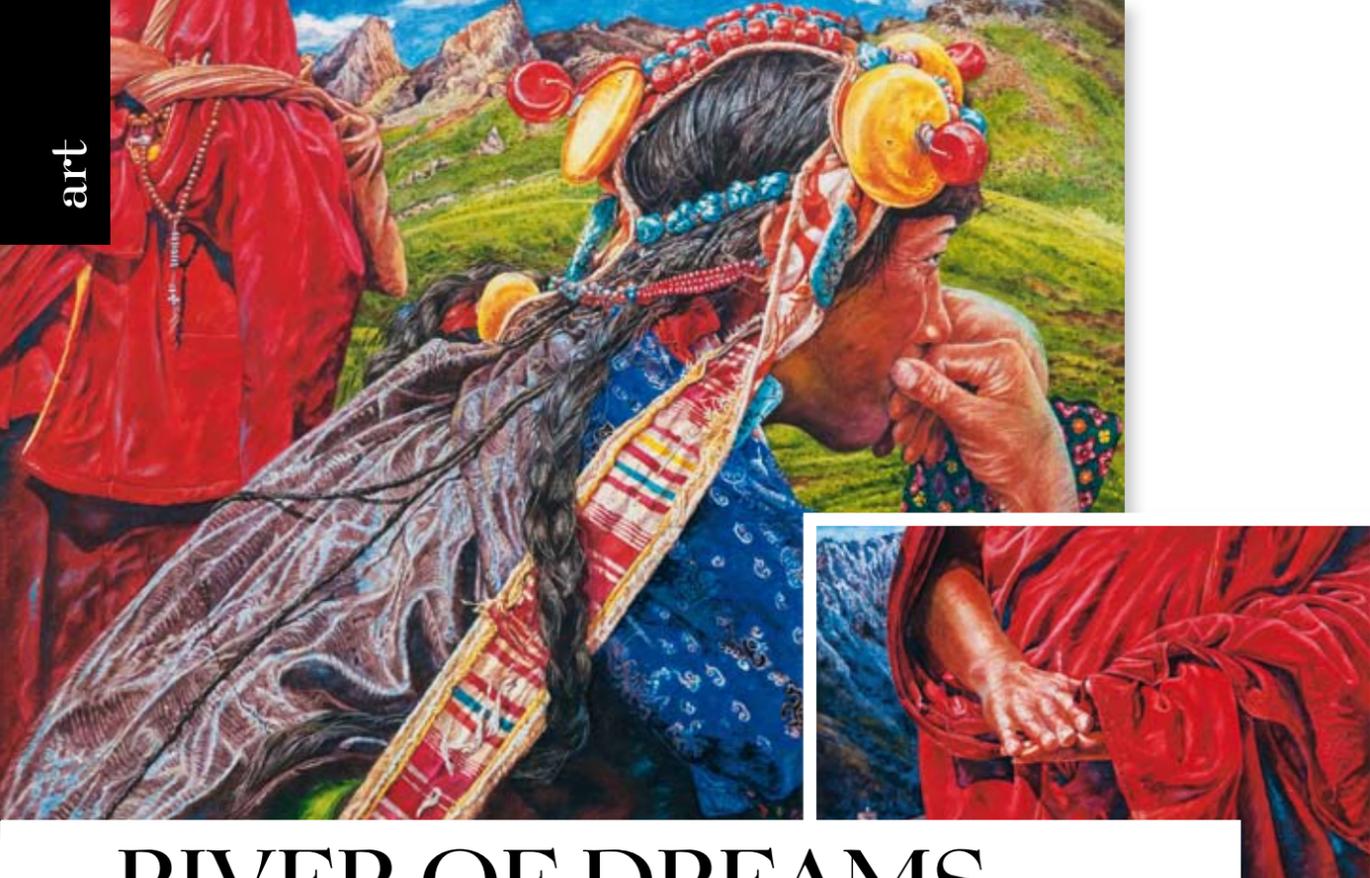
#### Cannes International Film Festival (May 14-25)

The biggest date on the movie calendar, France's Cannes IFF is an explosion of big stars, directors and the year's top movies. As famous for its parties, fashion and paparazzi, the festival is unparalleled in its ability to make or break new films. [www.festival-cannes.org](http://www.festival-cannes.org)



Martin Scorsese: master of challenging the big studio system

PHOTO: CORREIS



## RIVER OF DREAMS

A NEW WATERCOLOUR EXHIBITION EXPLORES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS AND THE MIGHTY MEKONG RIVER BY SAM YEN



Follow a river, and you'll find the ocean. Follow a river, and you'll also find an ocean of history - a silent chronicle of human civilisations as they ebb and flow. It is hard to imagine Paris without the Seine, New York without

the Hudson or London without the Thames.

Running from the lofty Tibetan plateaus through seven countries, before giving way to the fertile Mekong Delta, the Mekong River houses some 18 million people on its banks. Derived from the local Tai language for 'the mother of all rivers', a further 90 million people rely on the river, either through its 1,200 endemic species of fish or its irrigation of vast tracts of rice fields.

Malaysian artist Chan Fee Ming, born in Dungun, Terengganu, has a special relationship with the Mekong. The self-taught artist first met the great river in the early 80s, as part of a sojourn to north-east Thailand, where he immediately fell in love with the rich traditions of the Thai and Lao tribes of the area. His interest piqued by the fascinating old kingdoms of yore and the rustic cultures that have developed along the river's banks, Chan began a decade-long journey to chart

the Mekong's course, moving from the more familiar tropical downstream to the river's origins in the rugged highlands of Yunnan and snowy Tibet, all while capturing the scenes he saw in his trademark watercolour style.

Less quaint landscapes and more personal portraits of a traditional lifestyle under threat, Chan's painted observations of the people spawned by the Mekong forms the subject of his 'Mekong: Exploring the Source' exhibition - his second showcase dedicated to the region. Moving from the lowlands of Vietnam to the Guangxi highlands, Chan sees each of his paintings as short stories, Polaroids that capture moments of everyday life that would otherwise go unnoticed.

Chan is also currently working on producing two pieces for the upcoming Beijing Art Fair in April, as well as tackling a subject closer to heart - the 'lost' kingdom of Langkasuka in Terengganu and Kelantan. However, the Mekong remains a subject that the painter finds himself returning to over and over again, captivated by the poignant relationship between Mekong and man; a relationship that he hopes will spark some appreciation, even if only just a little, from those viewing the paintings. ■

March 6 to April 5 2008, at the Valentine Willie Fine Art Gallery, 1st Floor, 17, Jalan Telawi 3, Bangsar Baru, KL; +603-2284-2348, email [info@vwfa.net](mailto:info@vwfa.net) or visit [www.vwfa.net](http://www.vwfa.net)



### FOR NATURE'S SAKE

Continuing a tradition that began in 2003 with the 'Games People Play' exhibition, the 6th annual Art for Nature exhibition in May is scheduled to pose questions on the subject of the delicate balance between ecological conservation and economic growth. Sponsored by Hijjas Kasturi Associates, with proceeds going

towards supporting WWF Malaysia's nature conservation efforts, the 'Shifting Boundaries' exhibition will feature the talents of artists such as Abdul Multhalib Musa, Ahmad Shukri Mohamed, Bayu Utomo, Chang Yoong Chia and Chong Siew Ying. May 18 to June 1, 2008, at the Rimbun Dahan Gallery, Kilometer 27, Jalan Kuang, Kuang, Selangor; +603-6038 3690, [angela@rimbundahan.org](mailto:angela@rimbundahan.org) or [www.rimbundahan.org](http://www.rimbundahan.org)

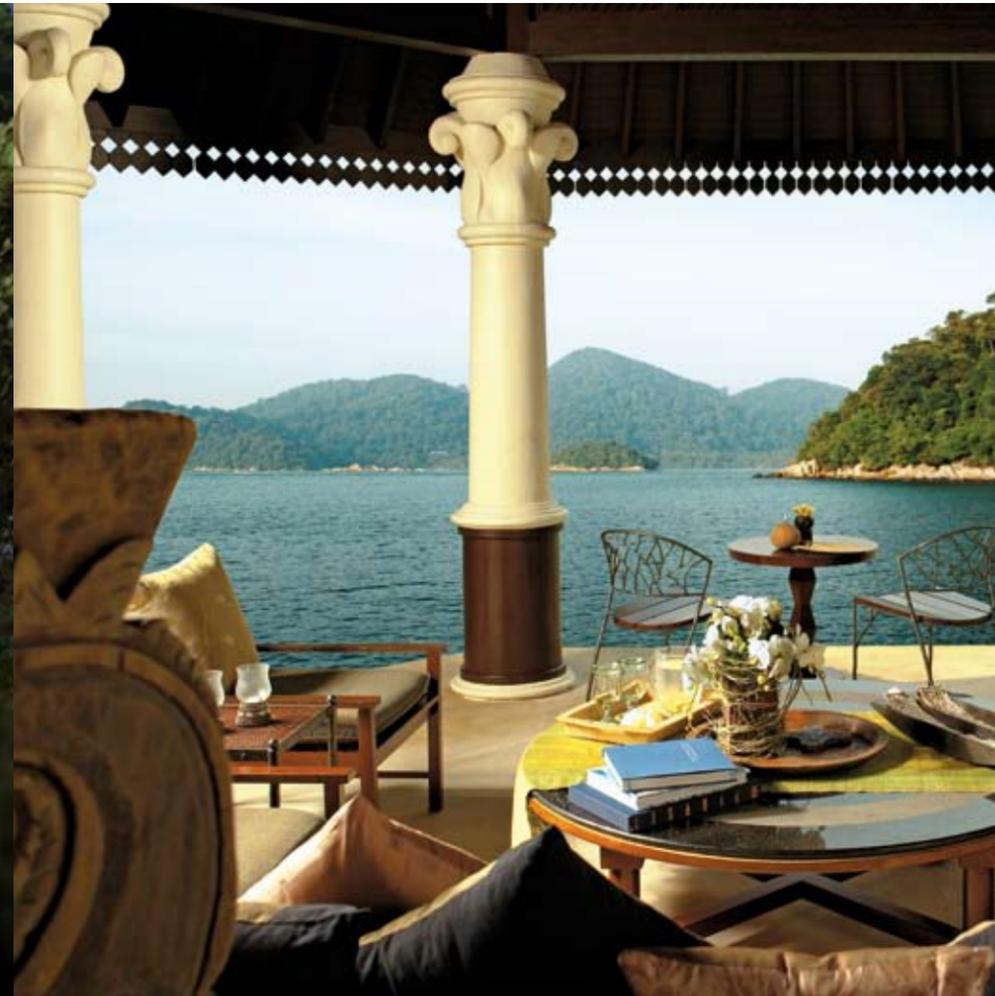


**BODY TO SOUL** Ludwig Wittgenstein, the Austrian philosopher, once commented that "the human body is possibly the best picture of the human soul". Peer at exquisite renderings of the human figure by some of Malaysia's leading artists, including Ahmad Shukri Mohamed, Hamidi Hadi, Hamir Soib, Jolly Koh, Ching Kong Yee, Kim Ng, Chong Choon Woon, Marvin Chan and Zulkiffli Yusoff; and you might be allowed a glimpse into the tragically complicated human psyche at the third instalment of the 'Mind, Body and Soul' exhibition, or 'MBS III'. Activities relating to the practice of life-drawing will also take place over the course of the exhibition. April 7 to 25, 2008, at the Wei-Ling Gallery, No. 8, Jalan Scott, Brickfields, KL; +603-2260 1106/7, [weiling@weiling-gallery.com](mailto:weiling@weiling-gallery.com) or [www.weiling-gallery.com](http://www.weiling-gallery.com)



**ICH BIN IN BERLIN** Throw 10 international photographer guests of the German Foreign Office and the Goethe Institute in Berlin for 10 days and creative juices will flow copiously, resulting in this spontaneously planned exhibition. Entitled 'Out of Berlin... passthephoto', this "photographic chain mail from around the world" brings together scenes of Berlin, from the languid to the serene and the poignant, as seen through the eyes of 50 photographers, including Beat Presser (Switzerland), Mandy Lee Jandrall (South Africa), Gilbert Hage (Lebanon) and Malaysia's own Alex Moh, who acted as the curator and organiser of the exhibition. March 17 to April 27, 2008, at The Annexe@Central Market, Jalan Hang Kasturi, KL; +603-2142 2011, [passthepicture@gmail.com](mailto:passthepicture@gmail.com) or [www.centralmarket-kl.com.my](http://www.centralmarket-kl.com.my)

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



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

**Intimate Experiences**

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

**Emerald Bay**

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

**Rainforest Revelations**

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

**Privileged Tranquillity**

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

**Integrated into the Environment**

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

**Sterling Service**

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



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



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



**The World's Most Innovative Spa**

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

**Diving off a secluded Island**

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

**A Unique Cooking School**

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

**The Spa Village**

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

**High on Golf**

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

**Taking Tea**

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



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



**Following the Path**

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

**Meditate upon the Stars**

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

**Cuisine Designed to Rejuvenate**

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

**The Peranakan Spa**

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

**Dining Sensations**

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

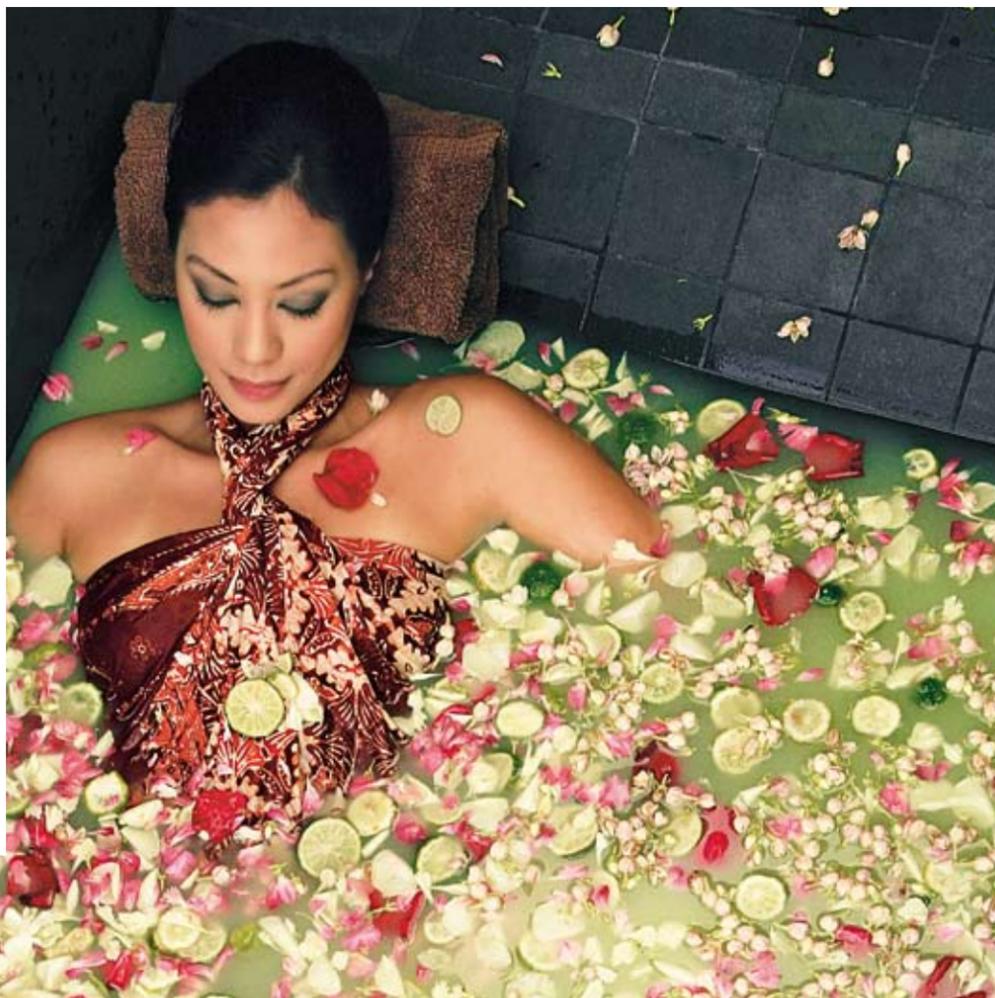
**A Haven of History**

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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



### Starhill Gallery

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

### Feast Village

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

### The Ritz-Carlton Residences

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

### The Carlton Conference Centre

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



# INDIAN ODDITIES

OUR FAVOURITE LADY GETS HER WINTER JOLLIES  
FROM AN INDIAN SUMMER

BY LADY CRISTAL CHAMPERS

Spring has sprung. The peach blossom trees are rhapsodies of champagne pink blooms. The advent of spring signals new beginnings and the air is charged with energy. At a recent polo match, the air is also thick with insincere cries of "Oh darling, is that new?" and "ooh where did you winter this year?" zeroing in on uplifted bosoms and faces so tight with botox that everyone - including the gentlemen - look perpetually surprised. Lady Prunella's newly enhanced pair was premiered with such prominence that it could have sheltered the whole polo team should the heavens open.

To escape the wretched winter (it is de rigueur for us upper classes to spend the holidays in warmer climes), Lady Prunella and I have decided to embark on an adventure of a lifetime in India to retrace our colonial ancestry and their grand journeys. Rumour has it that my great aunt Victoria had a bit of a rumpy-pumpy with a maharaja, and when her son was born, he was just a tad too tan and too good looking, for her own husband made a wart-hog look like Errol Flynn.

We travel in style on board the luxurious Deccan Odyssey train ensconced in a presidential suite, and are waited on hand-and-foot by a delicious-looking cabin steward. I intend to adopt him - a one up on Madonna - though adopting a 21-year-old might prove tricky. We hire several 'coolies' (as the porters at the railway station are still called) to cart our several LV bags onto the train. After all, one has to wear suitable attire for each occasion and there are several occasions to be attired for - breakfast, excursions, afternoon tea and dinner.

Leaving the train for the real world each day is a reality check and Lady Prunella ends up wanting to adopt all the street children she set eyes upon. Just as I am thinking she is as compassionate as Mother Teresa, she turns round and says, "They would make such great help (subtext 'slaves') at my homes and farms; I'm sure they would be delighted to come and work for me."

India is all heat and dust and most unkind to heavy make-up and highly lacquered coiffures. But after three glorious weeks, we still leave with a heavy heart and fond memories, especially of Pru's tricky encounter with a camel. As an accomplished horsewoman, she had assumed

she could easily master a camel ride. Alas, the camel only understood Hindi and a command in upper class English - stern as it was - cut no ice. Her ladyship is left clinging onto the beast's flea-ridden neck as it hot-foots it into the sunset. Thankfully, a knight in shining armour shows up... well, more a turbaned toothless camel herder... but she was grateful to get off the camel which spat at her for good measure. I could have sworn it was the reincarnation of her first husband. It was the bad breath that gave it away.

But enough! I must now go investigate the loophole of 'adopting' my fit and dishy Indian cabin steward who would make such great arm candy at polo matches and cocktail parties. Am I thinking that aloud? Oops! Oh Lady Changers, you are naughty. ■



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