

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

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**THE NEW
NYONYA**
GORGEOUS TRADITIONAL
KEBAYAS AT THE
MAJESTIC MALACCA

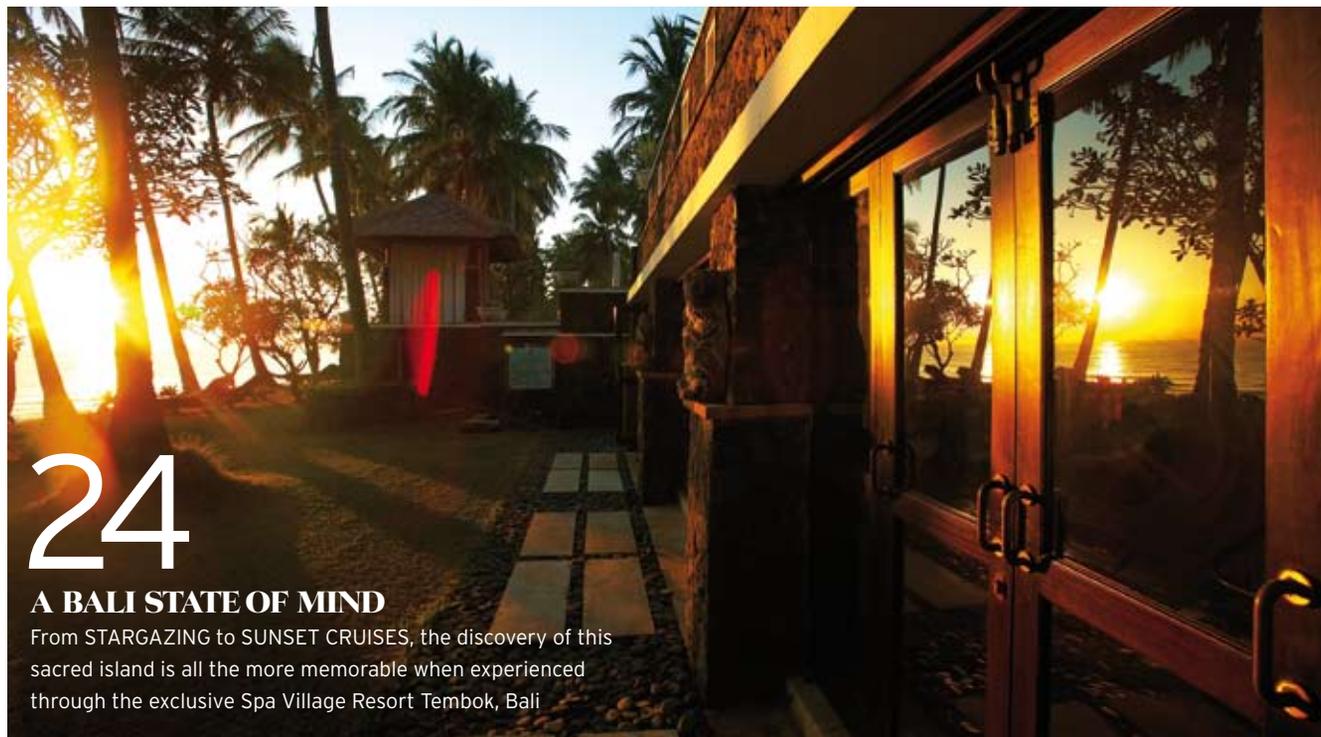
YULE LOVE IT
EXPERIENCE AN
AUTHENTIC X'MAS
AT CAMERON
HIGHLANDS RESORT

GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS!
TANJONG JARA RESORT
INTRODUCES A GREAT GIRLIE ESCAPE

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

STARHILL
GALLERY
A Gallery of Rich Experiences

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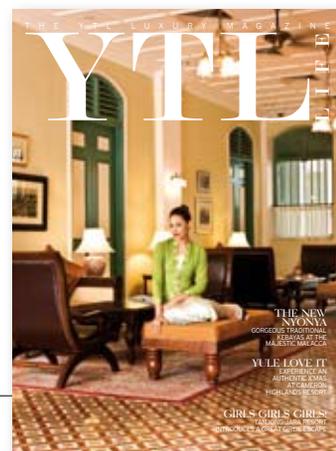
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Shot entirely on location at **The Majestic Malacca**
Model wears Kebaya with special thanks to Margaret Khoo for loan of her private collection; Camisole with lace details, **Monica Quen Batik pareo, Jendela KL**

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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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The holiday season is an ideal time to catch up with family and to spend time with the people whom you might have neglected or missed during the course of the year.

YTL encourages Godly values, hence the family unit is held in high regard. In this issue, we explore how you can have the

most authentic “white Christmas” here in Malaysia at Cameron Highlands Resort. Of course there will be no snow, but snuggling by a fireplace on a chilly night after a traditional turkey dinner is definitely a great way to spend the Yuletide with the family. Our celebrated Fisherman’s Cove restaurant at Pangkor Laut Resort is also offering a Christmas menu and we speak to Uncle Lim, the chef of the Chinese restaurant on the island, who is the longest-serving staff of the Resort. In fact, he has been with us for so many years, he has truly become one of the family!

My daughter, Ruth, also talks about how she is taking our corporation to newer, greener heights. And as the

world becomes more environmentally conscious, I am proud to be involved in this exciting challenge.

This year, Asia’s most prestigious annual luxury watch and jewellery showcase at Starhill Gallery, A Journey Through Time III, also pays homage to nature with the theme ‘Time and The Environment’. Adding glitz and glamour to the event will be nightly world-class performances with the highlight showcase by award-winning mezzo-soprano Katherine Jenkins. And this year, we are also honoured that CNBC Luxury Channel will be filming two 30-minutes episodes on the event.

I must also mention our current most exciting project, the transformation of Lot 10 from a 1990s KL icon into what will become the new face of Bukit Bintang. Themed “Forest in the City”, it will add a new world-class lifestyle dimension to shopping and entertainment in the city.

On a final note, YTL Hotels would like to welcome back into our fold, James McBride, our new President. His return and his expertise will elevate YTL Hotels onto the global platform through the exploration of strategic growth opportunities.



The new and green ‘Forest in the City’ of Lot 10 will transform the face of Bukit Bintang



TIME TO GO GREEN Asia's most prestigious luxury watch and jewellery fair, A Journey Through Time III, returns once again this December but this year, it's not just all about bling and mechanical precision. This third edition of an ever-growing success story will not just pay homage to the year's best horological creations but will also carry behind it a Green theme, an issue that has carried considerable weight in many of the activities of YTL Corporation over the past few years.

Held once again at KL's most vital luxury watch stop, Starhill Gallery, this year's fair is entitled "Time & the Environment" and will see one of the region's most respected watch collectors Dr. Bernard Cheong host an eponymous talk with collectors and environmentalists on how luxury acquisitions and the environment correlate. Other speakers include YTL Corporation Bhd. Group Managing Director Tan Sri Dato' (Dr.) Francis Yeoh and his daughter, Ruth Yeoh, who is the Director of Investments and a champion of environmental causes.

Other event highlights include debut watches from Richard Mille, Jaeger-LeCoultre, DeWitt, Bedat & Co. and Romain Jerome, while Mouawad will showcase its RM15million white and yellow gold necklace and its US\$30 million dress The Nightingale. Making their grand entrance into the Starhill Gallery fold will be Valentino, Sergio Rossi, Kenzo and Carrera y Carrera. On one of the nights, Valentino will also be showcasing their Spring/Summer 10 couture collection in a runway show. Fabulous and not to be missed!

The event will also feature nightly world-class performances. On this year's roster are Stephen Rahman-Hughes and Tiara Jacquelina, Hong Kong's singer/actor/celebrity chef Maria Cordero, acclaimed violinist Dennis Lau as well as Malaysian powerhouses Datuk Siti Nurhaliza and Ning Baizura with the grand finale a guaranteed spell-binding performance by award-winning mezzo-soprano, Katherine Jenkins.

A Journey Through Time III is presented by Starhill Gallery in collaboration with Tourism Malaysia and will run from 3-13 December, 2009. *For those interested to participate in the Time and Environment forum; www.ajourneythroughtime.com.my email ajtt@starhillgallery.com or call +603-2782 3882*

Stephen Rahman-Hughes & Tiara Jacquelina



Siti Nurhaliza

Bernard Cheong & Wife

Katherine Jenkins

Ning Baizura



REEF AND LEARN Tanjung Jara Resort, IWC Schaffhausen and Reef Check Malaysia recently joined forces for an Eco Drive at Pulau Tenggol, Terengganu. Held from 9-11 October 2009, the campaign included both an underwater and land clean-up and featured participation from members of the public out to do their bit for the environment. Pulau Tenggol is considered one of the best dive locations in the area offering 20 vivid dive sites while enjoying the protection of the Terengganu Marine Park. The project is a continuing effort on the part of Tanjung Jara Resort and Reef Check. It also coincides with luxury watch brand IWC's partnership in support of the non-profit Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF) to conserve threatened species of the Galapagos Islands, the unique archipelago in the Pacific Ocean on which Darwin based many of his observations.

A SENSATIONAL FEAST

STARHILL GALLERY'S ANNUAL MIDSUMMER NIGHTS' FEAST RETURNED IN 2009 WITH TANTALISING FLAVOURS THAT SENT PALATES INTO A FINE FRENZY BY MELISA ANN SELLVADURAI



FOR 10 DAYS IN JULY 2009, Starhill Gallery was awash with excitement as Kuala Lumpur's culinary fraternity and food lovers enjoyed a celebration of food and wine during the annual Midsummer Nights' Feast.

Themed "July Around The World", this year's food festival once again featured the freshest flavours of fine dining cuisine specially prepared by culinary maestros from all around the globe conducting Master Chef classes and preparing an array of sumptuous dishes. With representation from Lebanon, Thailand, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, China, India and the Mediterranean, it was truly a melting pot of different cuisines to be savoured. Exciting new menus and promotions were offered at Feast Village's numerous restaurants including Enak, Sentidos Tapas, Fisherman's Cove, Gonbei, Jake's Charbroil Steaks, Jogoya, Eddy's Cafe and Restaurant, KoRyo-Won, Li Yen, Luk Yu Tea House, MyThai, Pak Loh Chiu Chow Restaurant and Shanghai.

The 10-day gastronomic journey (July 3-12) kick started with a special collaborative menu created by celebrated

Australian chef, Stephen Mercer and YTL Group Executive Corporate Chef Kevin Cape. Touted as "contemporary cuisine infused with a cosmopolitan blend of tantalising flavours", the exquisite menu featured Slow Confit of Salmon Trout, Prawns fried in Potato Waistcoats, Peking Duck Consommé, and Roasted Fillet of Beef with Ox Cheek. The meal rounded up with a healthy serving of Pear in Puff Pastry, Pistachio Creme Brûlée and Fruits Sabayon.

Spotted at Shook! enjoying the scrumptious dinner were guests of Tan Sri Dato' (Dr) Yeoh Tiong Lay and Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh - Datuk Bandar Kuala Lumpur, Dato' Ahmad Fuad, Malaysian Angkasawan Dato' Dr. Sheikh Muzaffar, Datuk Sri Khalid Mohamad Jiwa and wife Dato' Siti Nurhaliza, Khairy Jamaluddin, and His Excellency Alessandro Busacca, the Ambassador of Italy to Malaysia.

Adding glamour to the evening was a fashion show by local jewellery designers themed, 'A Feast of Bedazzling Luxury'. Alya & Co. showcased their dazzling one-off South Sea Pearls and highlighting pieces from their latest collection were Betelgeuse, La Putri and Chin Jewellery.



Each night saw a different feast and a different theme at Shook! and making an appearance was Chef Massimo Martina from Italy, who prepared the best of Italian cuisine showcasing his culinary art with a modern approach and creative presentation at the Massimo Martina Night. Chef Wong Wing Yuek from Shanghai, brought Traditional Shanghaiese cuisine of the 19th Century back to life during Paramount, The Great Shanghai while Chef Leung Kwai Hong from Hong Kong, delivered a typically traditional Cantonese cuisine at Nostalgia of Fragrant Harbour.

In celebration of a 1,200-year old summer festival, a menu based on the foundations of authentic Japanese cooking methods was created by Chef Ito from Japan at the Tanabata Night. Another highlight was the divinely delicious LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health & Sustainability) menu featuring healthy organic ingredients, fruits and vegetables prepared by award-winning author and chef, Mohana Gill from Malaysia. Chef Mohana has previously written the award winning Vegemania! which was named 'Best Vegetarian Book In The World' and Fruitastic! which was awarded the prestigious 'Gourmand World Cookbook Awards' prize for

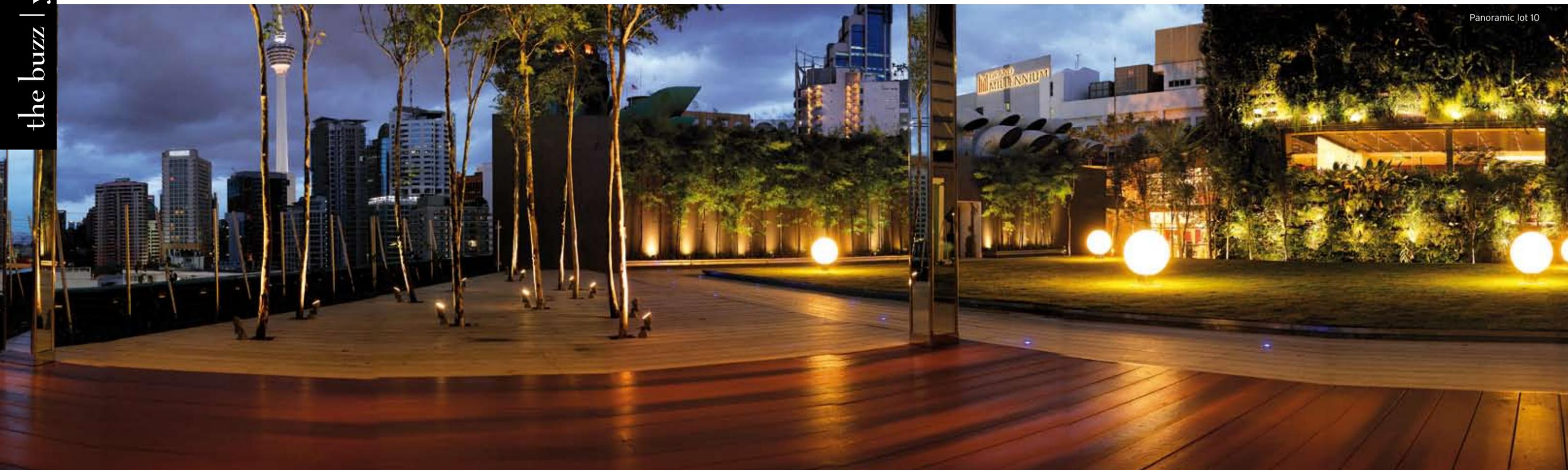
the categories, "Best Single Subject Cookbook" and "Best Health and Nutrition".

Also a highlight at the Festival was Starhill Gallery's Feast Village Junior. For the second year running, Feast Village hosted a fun-filled morning of exciting games and activities for children to learn about food and nutrition while introducing them to wholesome food that is fun and which makes meal times exciting. The Feast Village Junior Programme targeted children aged 4 - 12 with the purpose of educating them about the importance of a healthy and balanced diet. The programme introduces the Eat Healthy Plate, which is adopted from the Food Standards Agency UK, and can be used to educate children about the five food groups and to guide them on the correct proportion of foods to be consumed.

The children took a tour of Feast Village restaurants and sampled some of the food they offer. It was an enjoyable experience as the children learned to make pizza while chefs from Enak KL taught the kids to make Onde Onde - a famous local dessert. The kids also got the chance to decorate their own cupcakes. ■

A NEW LOT 10 IN LIFE

The rebirth of a KL icon injects fresh green life into the Golden Triangle and brings new meaning to the phrase “urban jungle” BY EUGENE NG



Panoramic lot 10

WHEN LOT 10 FIRST OPENED ITS DOORS IN THE 1990s, its prime location in the city centre - on the corner of Jalan Bukit Bintang and Jalan Sultan Ismail - ensured its status as the shopping centre *du jour* of that era. Two decades later and things have changed. Kuala Lumpur has had a facelift, a new towering skyline and a proliferation of new malls, arcades and shopping centres to rival any metropolitan city around the world.

Reflecting this need for progress and change, the iconic Lot 10 has recently undergone a massive transformation from basement up as it once again jostles for pride of place in the glamorous Golden Triangle.

This rebirth, if you will, has been planned to revolve around the lifestyle needs of what is termed as “Greenagers” by Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh CBE, the managing director of YTL Corporation, referring to the new breed of modern, intelligent, young urbanites who are tech-savvy, health-conscious and with a little bit of that I’m-concerned-about-

the-environment edge about them.

Central to Lot 10’s new plans then is the newly-transformed Level 8 rooftop, which was once a carpark but is now the dramatic and inspiring Forest in The City. A green refuge from the bustle of the city down below, manicured gardens and dramatic overhanging flora make for quite a sight to behold. Prime to benefit most from this sanctuary must be the members of the Rooftop Fitness Club, who can take in the beauty of this spot while performing their daily treadmill runs, weights, Taibo or Pilates.

Nestled in another corner of this veritable haven is the new home of The Actors Studio, touted as a “Theatre in the Forest” to align itself with the overall theme of the place and to rival the too numerous to mention cinemas around the city. This new theatre will boast over 8,000 square feet of space, a conceptual minimalist Zen-like interior, a 250-seater stage and the country’s only Hanamichi T-shirt stage inspired by the Japanese Kabuki tradition.

More entertainment comes in the form of Teeq Brasserie, a stylish modern eatery offering a fine selection of Japanese, Western, Asian and Thai cuisines and breathtaking panoramic views of the city skyline by night. The final main addition to this rooftop is Rootz, an extravagant, Russian Baroque-inspired dance club. This opulent club will offer the largest selection of champagne in the city and will feature the hottest DJs, local and foreign, at its decks. The club has a capacity of 400 people with 2 VIP rooms and a main VIP area that can seat up to 100 guests, perfect for those stylish landmark birthday parties.

Down below and the retail face of Lot 10 is also undergoing rejuvenation. Amongst the exclusive brands arriving on our shores will be Nicky Hilton’s Chick and William Rast, pop star Justin Timberlake’s very own fashion line. Cool Britannia will come in the form of Debenhams, which will bring into their store names like Matthew Williamson, Ben de Lisi, Jasper Conran, Red Herring, Maine and Manataray. And look out for the National Geographic store opening soon!

For food enthusiasts, the Lot 10 Hutong is a must-visit. Designed based on the infamous cramped, narrow living quarters of Beijing centuries-old ‘hutongs’, the Lot 10 Hutong will instead house 27 restaurants and kiosks offering fare from some of KL’s oldest hawkers. Hawker stalls that have survived the second and third generations have been brought together under one roof. So now, evergreen favourites like Ho Wing Kee wanton mee, Kong Thye Singapore noodles, Kum Leen Kei Hokkien mee and Mo Sang Kor ‘bak kut teh’ can be savoured in an energetic modern environment that truly marries both the old and new of KL city.

This evolution of Lot 10 would not be complete without a technological edge and in a collaboration between YTL e-Solutions and Samsung Electronics, plans are afoot to set up Lot 10 as the first in the country to offer converged mobile internet services through the platform of a new WiMax Centre, and thus propelling Lot 10 well into the 21st Century.

And with that, the phoenix once again rises from the ashes. ■

COMING FULL CIRCLE

YTL HOTELS' NEW PRESIDENT, JAMES MCBRIDE, REFLECTS ON HIS HOME COMING BACK TO ASIA AND SHARES WHAT HE HAS BEEN UP TO IN THE LAST 10 YEARS SINCE LEAVING AS GENERAL MANAGER OF THE RITZ-CARLTON, KUALA LUMPUR

BY WINNIE YONG PORTRAITS BY ALVIN LIEW ART DIRECTION PENNY CHEW & NG GEOK MEI



THERE IS A UNIVERSAL TRUTH is the oft-quoted statement: "Generalisation is the death of art; God resides in the details." This is perhaps true not only for art, but in just about every aspect of our lives whether in business, leisure or even the good food that we wish to eat. The details are the small things which complete the big picture.

James McBride is a man who firmly believes in this idea and it is through being big on the little things that he has made his mark in the global hospitality industry. "The difference between good and exceptional is in the details," says McBride. "You have to drive the details."

And drive the details of his career path he did, and with scorching results. Beginning his career with YTL Hotels in 1998 as General Manager of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, other career highs so far have seen him helm the landmark Grosvenor House in London (also as General Manager) before becoming the Regional Vice President of Rosewood Hotels and Resorts at The Carlyle in New York City, both of which added a high glamour quotient to the equation as he rubbed shoulders with some of the world's biggest political, sports and entertainment personalities.

But like many things in life, McBride has now come full circle and in 2009, he has returned 'home' to where it all started as the new President of YTL Hotels. "I can't explain it," he muses to YTL Life as we catch up with him recently, "but deep down, I've always known even as I left 10 years ago, that I'd return to YTL Hotels one day. During the interim 10 years away from YTL Hotels, I did on occasion meet up with Tan Sri (Dr) Dato' Francis Yeoh and Dato' Mark Yeoh, and we discussed the possibility of doing something together in the future. In life, we always say we'll do something in the future but 99 percent of the time, nothing happens. In this case, something did."

on earth. There were lots of snipers and secret agents everywhere. Even his bed had to be moved to the centre of the room to protect him from the possibility of being hit by enemy snipers.

YOU WERE LATER APPROACHED WITH THE OFFER TO BE GENERAL MANAGER OF THE PRESTIGIOUS GROSVENOR HOUSE IN LONDON.

Yes, I was offered the opportunity to helm Grosvenor House, a historic luxury hotel where all the most important social events in England took place. A frequent host to celebrities, business leaders, royalty and because it was near the US embassy, government dignitaries, Grosvenor House



With Tom Cruise and his family during their stay at The Carlyle

With Roger Federer and the Roland Garros 09 trophy, taken out of the venue for the first time in history to show his dad who was ill at the time.

With HRH Prince Harry of Wales

What comes next is, of course, McBride putting his 10 years experience to good use as he powers YTL Hotels into the next decade and further cements its position as a global luxury brand to be reckoned with. McBride shares with us his vision for YTL Hotels' future but not before he regales us with tales of celebrities and a little boy stalking tennis champion Roger Federer.

SO TELL US MORE ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN UP TO SINCE YOU LEFT YTL HOTELS 10 YEARS AGO? From Kuala Lumpur, I moved on to being the General Manager of The Ritz-Carlton in Washington DC. It was truly exciting to be in the most powerful city in the world, watching the most important events unfold on the political stage before your very eyes. Anything that was written in the Washington Post, I saw happening in my own backyard. And to be helming The Ritz-Carlton at that time made it doubly exceptional because I had the opportunity to serve the world leaders, CEOs of Fortune 500 companies and A-list Hollywood stars who came through our doors. We had the privilege of hosting Yasser Arafat during the Peace negotiations. It was a politically fascinating time for me as Arafat was the most protected person

was truly a landmark of London. I was excited at the prospect of living and working in London. While I loved Washington, I consider London my spiritual home. I grew up in South Africa, an ex-colony, so I feel right at home in London. We enjoy the same brand of humour, the same passion for rugby and cricket. We had big plans to close down Grosvenor House for a major refurbishment. Unfortunately, due to a backlash from 9/11 at the time, our vision didn't come to pass. Grosvenor House was going into receivership when I received a call from non-executive Chairman of Rosewood Hotels and Resorts, Philip Maritz, who offered me the position of Regional Vice President. Though my heart was still very much in Grosvenor House, the prospect of working for one of the world's leading operators of ultra-luxury hotels and resorts proved to be an offer I couldn't resist. I moved into the sixteenth floor of The Carlyle in New York City in 2003.

THE CARLYLE IS A LUXURY HOTEL THAT'S ALMOST LEGENDARY IN TERMS OF ITS RICH HISTORY, HIGH-PROFILE GUESTS AND LANDMARK STATUS. HOW WOULD YOU SUM UP YOUR TIME THERE IN ONE WORD? If my experience at The Carlyle could be summed up into

one word, it would be 'unforgettable'. The hotel has such deep roots in history and some of the most incredible guests and residents you will ever meet. The Carlyle's mystique surged in the 1960s with President John F. Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe when they used to come to the hotel for their trysts through the secret tunnel to escape media attention. The other celebrity who came to The Carlyle through the tunnel was Michael Jackson. He arrived last October with his three children - each one darkly veiled. Hosting the most high-profile guests in the world, The Carlyle stops at nothing to ensure the highest level of privacy. Interestingly though, 98 percent of our superstar guests don't

the movie and knowing that I was South African, invited me to breakfast to get some insights on the South African accent and culture, and to talk about playing Mandela in the movie. I shared with him my brief meeting with Nelson Mandela in Washington DC and how I was most struck by his handshake - he shakes your hand firmly and holds onto it the whole time you're talking. He's the most charismatic man you'll ever meet.

I left the table for a minute and returned to find Roger Federer having breakfast at the same time. I introduced them and invited Roger to join us. When he did, I couldn't help but think how wild it was

that I was here having breakfast with an Academy Award-winning actor and a tennis player considered by many to be the best of all time. A funny incident was when the gym at The Carlyle was in the midst of refurbishment. Tony Blair was staying with us and wanted to use the gym. He went downstairs, introduced himself to the construction workers and asked if he could use it. With great excitement, the workers let him through, not because they knew who he was, but because they thought he was related to Linda Blair, the Hollywood actress!

IT MUST HAVE BEEN HARD TO LEAVE SUCH AN AMAZING PLACE. I left The Carlyle with a heavy heart. It's an odd combination - it's your life and yet, it's not your life. While it was amazing to meet all those incredible people and be a part of their time at The Carlyle, it's not your world; you're just on the periphery of theirs. The moment you think this is your life, you're mistaken. Through all the glitz and glamour, I am fundamentally a service provider. That's my core role and it's something I never forget. For instance, during his stay at The Carlyle last year, Roger Federer ordered food from St Ambrose, a restaurant two blocks away. His order got mixed up and delayed. I rushed over to the restaurant in my suit, sorted out the matter with the people at the restaurant, got the meal, ran back to the hotel, swiped a pair of utensils on the way up and served it to Roger myself. It didn't matter what level I was at. When something needed to be done, it had to

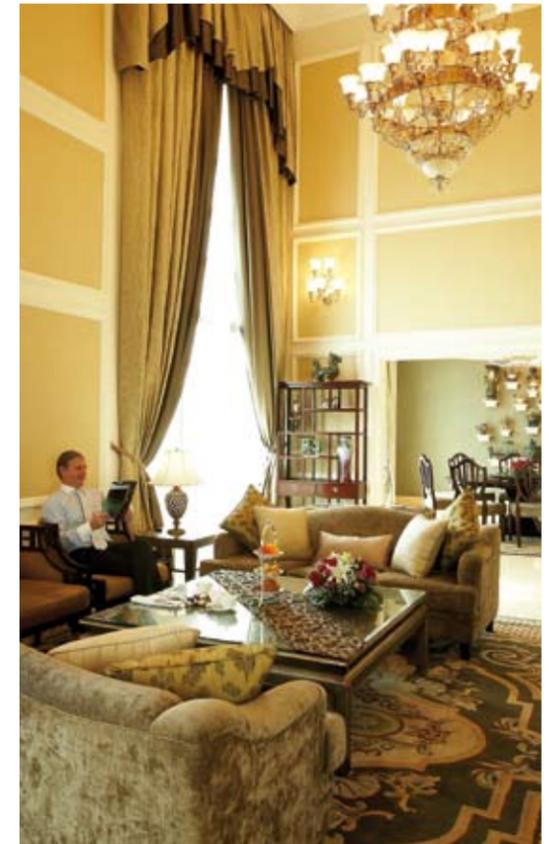
actually use the tunnel. They treat The Carlyle like their own home, sauntering in and out casually, in full assurance that their safety and privacy will be safeguarded at all times.

STAYING AT THE CARLYLE, YOU MUST'VE RUBBED SHOULDERS WITH SOME VERY FAMOUS PERSONALITIES. WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR MORE MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES? Living on the 16th floor of The Carlyle meant that I had some of the most amazing neighbours come and go through the years. Jack Nicholson, George Clooney, Clint Eastwood, Salma Hayek and Roger Federer were some of the guests on my floor. I can tell you my son Sterling's most memorable Carlyle moments: listening intently at the door every day so he could accidentally 'bump' into Roger Federer when he returned to the hotel at the end of the day! As for me, I'd have to say that one of my favourite Carlyle moments was the time I was with President Nicolas Sarkozy and his wife Carla Bruni in the lobby waiting for the elevator. The elevator door opens and out walks Paul McCartney. It immediately crossed my mind to introduce them but Paul beat me to the punch by inviting them to his show at Citi Field. The short conversation that followed was indeed an unforgettable experience. Another person I will never forget meeting is Morgan Freeman, who was starring as Nelson Mandela in *Invictus*, a movie about the 1995 Rugby World Cup in South Africa. He was staying at The Carlyle during the filming of

be done. That has been - and will always be - my approach in the service industry.

SO HOW HAS YOUR HOMECOMING BEEN SO FAR? It has been a wonderful homecoming for me. I'm excited about this opportunity to create and grow new hotels, and doing it all in a part of the world that I love. I love Southeast Asia and it's delightful to be in Singapore.

SO WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM YTL HOTELS IN THE NEAR FUTURE? We're in a strong cash position to acquire some great assets and extend YTL Hotels' footprint outside Asia Pacific and establish a presence in the major capitals of the world. A natural extension would be London as well as New York, Los Angeles and Chicago in the US. I feel very fortunate - it's very exciting to be here doing what I'm doing. I remember my time as General Manager of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur back in 1998. The economy was in bad shape and so, we had to be extra creative and extra bold. We did some off the wall things that were crazy but still very effective. Back then, I was young, fired up and would try anything because. I wanted to succeed and would do anything it took. Ten years on, I'm older and the situation we're in today is certainly different but that same spirit, energy and determination to succeed is still burning inside. ■



6 THINGS ABOUT JAMES MCBRIDE AT A GLANCE

ON YOUTH

One of the things that influenced me most was my mother's great sense of style. She instilled that in me through the years and taught me the importance of paying attention to detail. We used to have parties with ambassadors and prominent guests, and I'd get to practise how to pour wine properly. I spent two years in the army for National Service. It was a good time to grow up, mature and obtain clarity of mind. I lived with all kinds of people there - those who'd never worn shoes or used utensils in their lives. There, I learned to use humour as a tool and adapt very quickly to my environment. Yes, it was a great time and built great character. I still think one year would've been enough though!

ON HOME

Returning home every year to the South African bush to visit my parents in Singitha and Urumalewan is always a profound experience. Hearing the lions roar at night, the hyenas barking, sitting next to the fire,

the moon high above you ... never fails to remind me of the time I was five years old and listening to the crackling sounds of the old radio, reporting that Armstrong had just landed on the moon.

ON WORK & LIFE

It's all about details, passion and innovation. What you focus on in life will be successful. People will always perform better if they know someone is watching - that's human nature. Having fun is important. I like to laugh (mostly at myself), and I like to make people laugh. You can refer to me as a gweilo, no problem. We can't take life too seriously now, can we?

ON LUXURY

Too often, luxury is symbolised only by the physical but it's when the physical and emotional experiences come together that you have ultimate luxury. The emotional experience can only be realised through people. It's seeing the same faces when you go back to the hotel, knowing that you'll be safe, pampered

and every one of your needs anticipated and met.

ON RELAXING

Being based in Singapore right now, my way to get away from it all for a while is to go for a run in the Botanical Gardens. Or I'll just shut the door for a little peace and quiet. I'll soon be moving into this new place where you wake up every morning to birds singing. How often do you get to hear this? It's one of the small pleasures in life. It's so spiritual and a great way to start the day.

ON RUNNING

I love running and getting lost in a new city. Once, in Marrakesh, I had to go for a run with a black taxi nipping at my heels for safety reasons. It was the fastest 5 miles I ever ran in my life! When running in a new city, sometimes I get lost and have to take a cab back to the hotel but I love it. It's a great way to discover new sights, see new faces and experience new smells and sounds.



A BALI STATE OF MIND

FROM STARGAZING TO SUNSET CRUISES, THE
DISCOVERY OF THIS SACRED ISLAND IS ALL
THE MORE MEMORABLE WHEN EXPERIENCED
THROUGH THE EXCLUSIVE SPA VILLAGE
RESORT TEMBOK, BALI

BY WINNIE YONG

PHOTOGRAPHY MARCUS WONG

T

here are destinations and there are destinations, the latter being wildly popular places that top every travel list - from the scruffy backpacker's to the honeymooner's to the frazzled corporate suit's the moment his once-energetic run in the rat race turns into a painful hobble. And heading this list of wildly popular places is none other than Bali.

I have a confession to make: I have never been to Bali. Sure, it's a rite of passage for anyone suffering from a chronic case of wanderlust, particularly those with a fixation on swaying palm trees and sandy beaches but it has always been, to me, to be a case of taking the path too well-trodden. An obvious choice, if you will. And being someone who fancies herself as one who consciously steers clear of the obvious, I have stubbornly delayed my maiden trip to the island... until now.

Arriving on the island, I felt a little like the early 20th century tourists who'd come here for the first time, except that I carried an iPod, shuffled around in flip-flops and was armed with a trusty Canon camera fully charged to capture everything my senses will experience and hopefully, even the ones they may miss. I was also about to experience Bali from the vantage point of the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali.

Situated between Tembok village and Tejakula in the north-eastern part of the island around 2.5 hours away from the airport, the exclusive Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, was the key to my discovering the island via a path less trodden. Its location on the decidedly un-touristy volcanic coast with sparkling beaches as black as coal meant that I could get to know the island without having to wade my way through a battalion of sunblock-slathered sun revellers, bargain-crazed shoppers or Margarita-drenched party makers.

In the Spa Village, privacy is something taken very seriously - a fact that was evident right from the start. Marked only by a discreet white signage hardly visible from the main road, the entrance to the property is quiet and unassuming. We made a sharp turn into a shady tree-lined road so narrow that a small van is the biggest vehicle that can get through.

I was greeted in true Balinese style, with a black sand foot scrub and a neck and shoulder massage (to work out the kinks developed from the trip from

the airport). The staff's genuine smiles and warm welcome made it feel like a homecoming. Well, if this were home, it was certainly stunning enough to suppress (if not totally squelch) any nomadic tendencies you might be nursing. What I especially loved about the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali was its graceful air of authenticity. The property's central feature is the infinity pool and a sundeck decorated with beach chairs, shady umbrellas and cream-coloured gazebos. And the pièce de résistance? The strip of beach blanketed with miles of powdery black sand.

I was shown to what would be my home for the next three days: the Baruna Villa. One of the two exclusive villas on the property, the Baruna is equipped with a private gazebo, a plunge pool and a spectacular ocean view. The massive sliding double doors open up to reveal an airy, spacious sanctuary that's anchored by a king-sized bed, appealing enough to ensnare anyone into a euphoric state of narcolepsy. It was then that I knew: I had died and gone to Bali heaven.

DAY 1 THE SUNRISE I would love to be able to say that I was gently nudged from my slumber by the sound of waves crashing against the shore but the real reason was more banal - it was the Resort's wake-up call and the cheery voice at the other end of the line. I scrambled out of bed to catch the sunrise. It was spectacular - an event in itself. Having witnessed the sun's grand entrance, I ambled back to bed. With the sliding doors kept wide open, I lay in bed with my feet silhouetted against the sea view. A sigh of rapture. "Have a good day," the voice of the wake-up call had chirped just minutes ago. A pleasant though unnecessary statement because bad days simply didn't seem to exist here at the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali.

TULAMBEN SHIPWRECK We arrived at Tulamben, a small fishing village whose main claim to fame is the massive underwater resident that has been here since its arrival in 1942. Just a short 30 metres away from the shore lay the famous USS Liberty shipwreck. A skin dive down 5 metres and you can practically touch the stern of the 120-metre long ship where schools of jackfish congregate. It was a sight to behold, this massive coral-encrusted vessel just laying there on the sandy seabed for scuba divers to scrutinise. The biggest challenge in Tulamben, however, would have to be the act of balancing your way - diving gear and all - from the beach out to sea to begin your shore dive. The beach is covered with smooth egg-shaped grey and black volcanic stones, some bigger than your fist, and it can be quite a feat to manoeuvre your way

A spectacular sunrise along the black sand beach of the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali



The luxurious grounds of the Resort



Stargazing by night has become a signature experience at the Resort

The unique Kecak performance at the Resort



out. Best months for diving enthusiasts to come here? October and November.

KECAK PERFORMANCE Later that evening back at the Spa Village, we were treated to a kecak performance. I've read about the kecak dance but nothing prepares you for the real thing. No stage; no props, nothing but a stake of fire in the centre of the lawn. The scene took on a shadowy, primitive feel that came alive when fifty bare-chested men in sarongs emerged - swaying bodies, hands raised in the air, eyes wide and transfixed, and making a synchronous 'chak-achak-achak' sound at a breakneck pace. It was spellbinding.

Inspired by the clicking sounds of the gecko, kecak is apparently the only dance created solely for visitors to Bali. Based on the Hindu epic, Ramayana, it tells the story of Prince Rama and the heroic rescue of his wife from the clutches of King of Lanka. The chorus of 'chak-ing' men, their energy, fieriness and the drama they invoked kept me mesmerised until the end of the hour.

DAY 2 PLUNGE INTO BLISS I thought it fitting to greet my second day with a little dip in my private plunge pool overlooking the sea. Nothing like fresh, cold water to shake up the senses and prepare you for a hearty breakfast.

SPA TREATMENTS After breakfast, I was scheduled to experience for myself the famous Spa Village face and hair treatments, each one created using fresh (mostly edible) ingredients. The absence of chemicals and artificial preservatives is reassuring and especially welcome at a time when the promise of beauty can be conveniently purchased in a tube at any beauty salon. Today's spa sessions provide a much-needed respite from the chemical-laden urban brand of wellness and beauty to which I'd been subjected for far too long.

I started off with the Mesipat facial, a traditional Balinese beautification ritual which involves sandalwood and tamarind leaves. My face was gently exfoliated with grains of rice, finger root, turmeric and tamarind leaves and massaged with mini floral pouches.

The Mesipat facial was followed by the Mekramas hair treatment where my scalp was massaged with a moisturising combination of coconut oil and crushed candlenut. After the massage, a mixture of hibiscus leaves and aloe vera was applied onto my hair.

Once the intensive, rich mixture had sufficiently coated every single strand, my hair was swiftly twisted into a heavy coil (with deft that can only be managed by the most experienced and well-practised of spa experts) on top of my head and secured in a banana leaf 'cap'. The mixture was left to work its magic uninterrupted for 15 minutes before I was allowed a good rinse.

SUNSET CRUISE The day was about to end, the sun was about to set and we were going to witness it onboard the jukung, a traditional Balinese fishing boat. I was ushered down to the beach and helped into the front of the jukung and was handed a chilled glass of red wine. The engine sputtered to life and we set off into the blue yonder.

As the Spa Village receded into the background, I was soon surrounded by nothing but the deep blue sea. The currents occasionally pushed us around as the boatman expertly manoeuvred



An arresting view of the sunset is the perfect way to end the day

our way forward.

Off in the distance towered the highest peak in all of Bali, Mount Agung. The still-active volcano last erupted in 1963, destroying everything in its path and killing thousands. It was a tragedy of such magnitude that it took the island months to recover. The cratered mountain belches smoke and ash every now and then - a constant reminder of its dominion over the island and all who lived on it.

The jukung came to a gradual halt when we got in clear view of the setting sun - a bright red circle hovering in mid-air, suspended between thin fluffy clouds all awash in shades of blue, purple and orange. Here, we stopped for a few minutes, watching the bright red circle slowly sink into the horizon until there was nothing but a tiny red speck. The speck peeked out for a few moments before it totally vanished, leaving the sky empty and the clouds without a companion.

STARGAZING Watching the sun set was one thing, but nothing can equal seeing a night sky filled with stars. Situated in what's reputed to be the area with the clearest skies in all of Bali, the Spa Village is the ideal spot for some serious stargazing.

The stargazing session took place in the infinity pool: I lay down on a raft, sounds of a cascading waterfall and rhythmic bell chimes piped into my ears. My raft moved languidly around the pool, leaving me

to drink in the mass of inky blackness, speckled with millions of golden stars. It was a perfect 20 minutes.

DAY 3 LUXURY INFINITY I wasn't about to let my last day at the Spa Village slip by without a few productive hours lounging around on the sundeck and paying homage to the gorgeous infinity pool. Flipping leisurely through my dog-eared copy of Art Of Travel, a travelling companion of the literal kind, I was struck by the writer's statement that pictures (especially those of the picture-perfect postcard variety) were abbreviations of reality, drawing out and thrusting under our noses only that which was good and beautiful. And because pictures weren't the most accurate representations of reality, we often wound up disappointed. While I concurred with the writer, I had to say that the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali may well be the first place to put this to the test.

Unlike being dunked in a foreign place and having to brace myself for an assault of the senses, the Bali I experienced up north couched in the exclusive privacy and warm hospitality of the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali was one that crept up on me gradually with light-footed steps and won me over without my even realising it. As far as first introductions go, I couldn't have possibly asked for a more unforgettable one.

I think a new travel list is now in order. ■



CHRISTMAS IN THE CAMERONS

YOU DON'T NECESSARILY HAVE
TO CELEBRATE A TROPICAL
YULETIDE WHILE IN MALAYSIA.
AT THE CAMERON HIGHLANDS
RESORT, THE VISION OF A
CHILLY CHRISTMAS SPENT BY
THE FIREPLACE COMES ALIVE

BY MATT ARMITAGE

AH YES, CHRISTMAS IN MALAYSIA: Santa in Bermudas and safari shirt, his sleigh reflected in the glassy azure sea water, as he flies above immaculate white sandy beaches and gently swaying palm trees. It's an image that has become the dream for huge numbers of travellers looking for a Christmas getaway from home. And while it's certainly true - look no further than YTL Hotels' own Pangkor Laut Resort if you want the ultimate sun, sea and Santa experience - it doesn't tell the whole story.

If you're sitting in your living room looking out at cold grey skies in November you might not be feeling it but there's something to be said for the storybook Christmas of open fires, the scent of wood smoke in the air, woolly jumpers and bracing afternoon walks. It's how I spent most of my Christmases before coming to South East Asia: overeating followed by a lethargic struggle into anoraks and wellingtons for an afternoon walk through the local forestry reserve.

So I was all gung-ho for my first Malaysian Holiday Season, going away to spend a couple of days by the beach and celebrating the day

with friends over a barbecue. But after a couple of years the novelty began to wear off and I began to plot ways to get back home to Europe. Of course, I rarely managed to book time off work, in time to book the plane tickets, and turkey dinners and brussels sprouts in the blazing heat have become the norm.

Until last year when I spent a perfect Christmas weekend at Cameron Highlands Resort in the heart of the legendary Cameron Highlands hill station in the thick jungle that borders the states of Pahang and Perak. At a height of 1500m and with daytime temperatures that rarely exceed 25°C and plunge

Empire's major cash crops. Since then, at around twice the size of Singapore, these highlands have developed from a remote hill station into a collection of townships and villages that has become a centre for hydroponic and organic agriculture in the country, growing everything from strawberries to exotic salad items to tulips and roses.

Not to mention its growing reputation as a climate controlled getaway for Malaysia's colonial class in the days before air-conditioning. As a result the region is dotted with colonial-era bungalows, lending the place a distinctly European charm in the middle of an Asian landscape, aided by the fir and pine

CAMERONS IS DOTTED WITH COLONIAL-ERA BUNGALOWS LENDING THE PLACE A EUROPEAN CHARM AIDED BY THE FIR AND PINE TREES PLANTED TO MAKE IT SEEM MORE LIKE 'HOME'

significantly at night, the Cameron Highlands plateau was only 'discovered' during an 1885 mapping operation by British surveyor William Cameron.

With its temperate climate, the area was deemed suitable for growing tea, then one of the British

trees the colonists planted to make it seem more like 'home'.

It's a transition that's both surprising and magical: the palm trees and asphalt highways of Ipoh recede as you begin your journey upwards and when, an

hour or so later, you round the bend into Kuala Terla, the sheer drops taper off and you're greeted by rolling fields of vegetables, fringed with neatly trimmed tea plantations and beyond that lush jungle. Add a dash of frosting to the trees and you have, somewhat surprisingly perhaps, the perfect Christmas card picture.

It's an environment that Cameron Highlands Resort - with its rolling terraced frontage and clean long lines - perfectly reflects. Each of its 48 rooms and eight suites enjoys sweeping views over

the Cameron Highlands Golf & Country Club below. And to ensure that you remain in character throughout your stay the colonial theme even extends to its architecture and cosy fireplaces inside. There's also a timeless quality to the simple elegance of the bedrooms and suites. Ours had varnished rustic hardwood floors that sounded slightly underfoot, and the gorgeous timber-framed four-poster beds, lamps and soft furnishings practically scream Merchant Ivory. Against the wall an uncluttered writing desk harked back to a time when letter writing was a social requirement while the black and white tile and marble finishes of the bathroom appear strictly circa 1920s.

Which is not to say that the rooms are marooned in the past: LCD TVs and rain effect showers bring them up to date but without disrupting their period charm. Hang a stocking from the bedpost and fill it with tangerines and nuts, as we did, and there's no better place to wake up on Christmas morning. Especially when there's a breakfast spread waiting for you on the room's unashamed highlight: the terrace overlooking the golf course and distant hills.

So, as we enjoyed freshly brewed coffee with pancakes smothered in mascarpone, fresh pastries and homemade strawberry jam, we took in the sight of the mist swirling over the golf course, enveloping us in a fine wet haze while we stayed warm and dry inside the thick white robes provided by the Resort.

With time to kill before lunch and an afternoon of seemingly endless eating ahead, our thoughts naturally turned to the spa. The pure mountain air and bucolic setting of the Resort makes it an ideal location for one of YTL Hotel's award-winning Spa Village treatment centres. Hidden away amid the lush vegetation of the Resort's gardens, the tranquillity of Spa Village Cameron Highlands is



interrupted only by the gentle spray of water in the fountain outside.

If it sounds romantic, it is. With only six treatment rooms, six bathhouses and two outdoor cabanas, the emphasis is very much on a personalised service, rather than the more machine-like efficiency of spas at larger resorts. The Spa Village brand honours the healing culture of the region in which it is built. The result is treatments that are based on local customs, and use fresh ingredients sourced from the community.

And in Cameron Highlands, that means

food. Our Yuletide treat started with the spa's signature ritual, the Tea Bath. Each bathhouse is equipped with twin tubs, and as we eased ourselves into the warm water of our respective tubs: me in an infusion of leaves and mint, and my partner basking in a glow of strawberries. An assistant then brought in a tray of what looked like snacks, but turned out to be part of the ritual: raw sugar and lime wedges to rub into our skin, and tea bags to place over our eyes.

You can mix-and-match your treatments if you prefer, but we decided to continue with our bath time themes. My Cameron's Mint experience included a mint and thyme based body scrub, followed by a muscle relief body massage that used plenty of oil and some liberal use of the masseuse's elbows to improve my circulation and soothe my flagging muscles. While my partner's Fresh Strawberry Escapade body polish and aroma massage left her smelling like a jar of newly bottled jam, sweet and fruity at the same time.

And it's not just for effect: strawberries are reputed to help fight depression, infections and fevers, as well as helping to cleanse the kidneys, liver and blood. And among mint's many properties are its abilities to boost your circulation and enhance the



PHOTO COMBIS



SEARCHING FOR JIM

It's not just the mist and mountains that lend Cameron Highlands an air of mystery. The Resort's Jim Thompson Tea Room is named after a prominent American industrialist who vanished after taking a walk in the Highlands on Easter Sunday, March 26th, 1967. A prolific smoker, he left his cigarettes and lighter on the verandah of his friends' bungalow, suggesting he only intended to be away for a few minutes.

James Henry Thompson, the so-called King of Thai Silk, was a society architect from a prominent Delaware family who gave up the good life to become an enlisted soldier, a spy, an adventurer, a celebrity industrialist, art collector and social activist. After spending the Second World War stationed in South-East Asia as an intelligence officer in the OSS, the forerunner of the CIA, Thompson decided to settle in Thailand, and briefly became a hotelier before falling out with his partners.

Instead he indulged his interest in Thai silks, founding the Thai Silk Company in 1948 and helping to revitalise and modernise an industry that had been moribund for decades. Dubbed the King of Thai Silk by media titles like Time, Newsweek and Life, Thompson never actually owned more than a small percentage of the Thai Silk Company, preferring instead to distribute the shares amongst the weavers themselves, eventually making many of them millionaires.

A leading socialite and inveterate networker, Thompson's home in Bangkok became the venue for a never-ending round of parties for Bangkok's elite as well as visiting foreign stars and dignitaries. By the 1960s such was Thompson's renown that nations as varied as Syria and Singapore were vying for his talents to enhance their own native industries. So, it was against this backdrop of an ever-busier schedule that the just-turned 61-year-old Thompson took one of his periodic vacations at the home of his friend Dr Ling in Malaysia's Cameron Highlands in 1967. And as he never returned from the trip, the rest is, as they say, history.

The rumours surrounding his strange disappearance have proliferated: he was abducted by communists, whisked away by the CIA and given a new identity in the US, eaten by tigers, accidentally killed in an animal trap dug by jungle-dwelling hunters, fell victim to a robbery or kidnap-for-money that went wrong or simply wandered off to die like a mortally wounded elephant. His search party included US Army generals and clairvoyants.

Whatever the strange truth of his disappearance, it all adds to the mystique of Cameron Highlands. For interested hikers, the Resort can arrange walks along the popular Jim Thompson Trail, the route that the industrialist is reputed to have vanished from.

Jim Thompson The Unsolved Mystery by William Warren is available under the Archipelago Press imprint.

immune system. However, it wasn't so much the benefits that were on our mind at the end of the morning as lunch, with the smell of so much food rising from our skin.

In a region renowned for its farm fresh produce Christmas dinner at Cameron Highlands Resort was always going to be special. But rather than reprise what we ate last year, I thought I'd tantalise you with what's on offer this year in The Dining Room. You can start with a lemongrass gazpacho accompanied by a salad of Australian mud crab and chilled white asparagus and then sample a surprising twist on a classic Malaysian dish, the lobster laksa cappuccino with wasabi mousse.

Of course, the highlight of the traditional Christmas dinner is the turkey. This year, the freshly sliced and roasted bird will be accompanied by golden roast potatoes, buttered brussel sprouts, stuffing and bread sauce, all topped off with a special recipe, homemade cranberry sauce. Or, if you're tired of turkey, there's also a slow braised rack of Dutch veal and the lightly grilled Dover sole to delight your palette. Rest assured the quality of the food at the Resort is impeccable.

After our long and elaborate meal we had the option of staggering straight into English Afternoon Tea in the Jim Thompson Tea Room and diving into its rather inviting looking scones, but in the end we opted for the outdoors option, a good job as the Resort had arranged for a guide for us. Like most mountainous places, the weather changes pretty quickly in Cameron Highlands, and though the sun had blazed most of the morning, the afternoon had settled into a pattern of clouded skies and light drizzle.

Which was precisely the weather we wanted for a brisk stroll through the mossy forest to the top up Mount Brinchang, the highest peak in the Highlands. There are more than 30 trails around Cameron Highlands, but we'd read about the moss that carpets the trail up Brinchang - thanks to its unique, moist environment - and wanted to experience it for ourselves.

It certainly brought back the magic of my own childhood Christmas walks. At this height it wasn't so much mist that we were walking through as clouds themselves, passing around us and their moisture clung to us, keeping us cool as we made our way up

a path carpeted with moss.

And then, as we walked back down from the top along the decidedly easier access road, the scenery did another one of its spectacular transformations. The cloud and moist, dark greens of the inside of the forest suddenly gave way to sunshine and the bright, trimmed rows of tea plantations and a vista that stretched for miles. Winter to summer at the turn of a bend.

Returning to the Resort before sunset we had time to finish off the last of the English Afternoon Tea scones before being invited to do the honours in the daily fire-lighting ceremony. If there's one thing that really says Christmas it's a wood fire, so we happily accepted the lit tapers and set the logs in the grate afire.

After that it was time to settle into the deep leather armchairs and disappear into one of several glasses of something warm and strong from the Highlands Bar with nothing more strenuous than the flickering of the flames, the tinkling of the piano, the twinkling of the fairy lights strung up in the trees outside the window and a slow game of snooker to bring this faerie Christmas Day to a close. ■

THE GREAT MERDEKA SAIL

PANGKOR LAUT RESORT IS FAST BECOMING A MAJOR HOTSPOT FOR LUXURY YACHT ENTHUSIASTS AS THIS YEAR'S PANGKOR LAUT MERDEKA CUP SHOWS. JUST SAVE THE CANAPÈS AND CHAMPAGNE FOR LATER

BY BELLE NG PHOTOGRAPHS BY ESMOND GOH

AS A SELF-CONFESSED ADRENALINE JUNKIE, it was certainly difficult to turn down an invitation to be part of the crew that would man the 36-foot Impian sport sailing yacht that would compete in the Pangkor Laut Merdeka Cup during the weekend of Malaysia's 52nd independence day celebration.

What made the invite even more irresistible was the chance to stay at YTL Hotels' renowned and exclusive Pangkor Laut Resort, the starting point of the race. I had once spent six months as a chef on a luxurious 120-foot super yacht and we had made regular trips with our guests to Pangkor Laut Resort and the nearby Nine Islands. Having since relocated to concrete jungle, I was eager to rediscover life at sea.

However, I would soon learn that the world of sports sailing is entirely different from that of luxury motor yachting. There are no delicate canapès to nibble on, no crystal flutes of champagne to imbibe joyfully from. Instead, cold beers and squished sarnies were pretty much the order of the weekend. After all, there's work to be done when you are part of a boat crew, and it is only after the race ends that any real indulging begins.

A sailing race is not always just about high speeds. It is your crew and your craft out there depending on only the sea and the wind to carry you. The wind and the currents play a big part in whether

you merely cruise or zip along. Oftentimes the wind will tease you, it will drop and leave you to contemplate the ocean, the sky, the clouds, your own unique fingerprint... anything. Other times the wind will gust, the current will guide you in the right direction and the sails will billow and whip. At this point your crew members will leap into fluid action manning 'lines' and 'sheets'. Names of knots will be thrown around and the boat will sharply tilt port or starboard side depending on the wind and direction that you are 'tacking'.

You will hang on for dear life. In fact it may even be requested that all of the crew hang off one side of the yacht to keep it on course, at which point your toes may graze the water but don't let anyone catch you trailing your feet in the water lest you get yelled at for slowing the boat down.

And perhaps at this point you might ponder the beginnings of sailing. Perhaps you might even think, "Why are we even out here?"

Thousands of years ago, man built primitive boats of wood powered by muscle and paddle, traversing the ocean for provisions and possibilities other than what was known. Physics came into play and they developed early sails to harness wind energy and improve navigation.

Civilizations blossomed and the different seafaring





nations from the Phoenicians, Egyptians and the Vikings, to the Chinese, Dutch, Arabs and Spanish, honed their navigation skills and added specific characteristics to the basic sailboat, developing sophisticated vessels enabling them to travel farther afield, guided by astronomy and oceanography. First they explored and expanded empires, later they sailed for warfare and trade.

Sailing for pleasure only came about in the 16th-17th century, when the Dutch presented the British royal family with a light and easy to navigate "Jaght". Yachting, then an aristocratic recreation, was born and gradually spread from Britain to the Americas.

While still considered an activity for the affluent, whether leisure or sport sailing, the Malaysian scene is burgeoning and on a good day, an outing on the high seas can include a young professional from a large accounting firm, a CEO from an international conglomerate, a student, an expatriate in the defence industry and a special effects technician working in film production, a motley crew to say the least. This is the spirit actively fed by the likes of the Royal Selangor Yacht Club, organiser of the Merdeka race.

Beginning with a challenging overnight race from Port Klang to Pangkor Island, then continuing with

the day race around Pangkor Laut (for the Pangkor Laut Merdeka Cup) and ending with a sumptuous sunset barbecue and prize-giving session at Pangkor Laut Resort's stunning Emerald Bay, the annual Merdeka Regatta is the perfect way for sailors to combine sport and a luxury getaway over the national day weekend.

Many sailors also see the race as a warm-up to the Raja Muda Regatta, touted as Asia's most tactical regatta and attracting intrepid sailors from across the world. Celebrating its 20th year in November, the Raja Muda Regatta will see more than 50 local and international boats taking part in the three-day challenge.

Both races use Pangkor Laut Resort as a stopover point, partially because it would be hard to whizz past a private island paradise after a long day's sailing and not be tempted to stop to partake in one of the Resort's fine restaurants or a pampering session at its renowned Spa Village.

As the trophy is presented to Anthony Hastings of Baby Tonga, there is already talk of the team's eye being on the finishing line for the Raja Muda Regatta. The 20th anniversary celebrations are slated to be impressive and bring in even more participants.

Faces are flushed from the sun and bellies are satiated from the good food and as I sit amongst these old and new friends and take in the genuine

camaraderie, I am content, and I see exactly what Tan Swee Im, lawyer, avid sailor and committee member of RSYC's Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta Organising Committee means when she says, "The people who make the crew of your yacht are your best buddies at least for the sail, and often for the rest of your life. You share confined spaces, put your life in their hands, and such situations often bring out the best and worst of people and it is here you that you truly learn about friendship".

Someone tells another joke, and we all laugh, as the scent of roasting lamb on a spit wafts my way. As my glass is refilled, I hear the waves break on the shore. I could get used to this. ■



ANCHORS AWAY AT PANGKOR LAUT RESORT



Pangkor Laut Resort is located on a privately owned island in the Straits of Malacca, three miles off the West Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. This luxury resort is set amidst pristine rainforest fringed by sandy beaches while its award-winning Spa Village is set amongst fragrant gardens. The resort is a strategically placed stopover point for sports sailors and luxury super-yacht owners in the region. The Resort marina is equipped with five floating pontoons that can moor up to 20 boats depending on size, while across the way, the newly constructed marina on Pulau Mentaog berths up to 50 more. Guests wishing to take up sailing can take a private lesson on the Resort's Impian, or for a more relaxing sail, charter the 65-ft YTL Lady on a private champagne and lobster cruise.

More on the Royal Selangor Yacht Club...

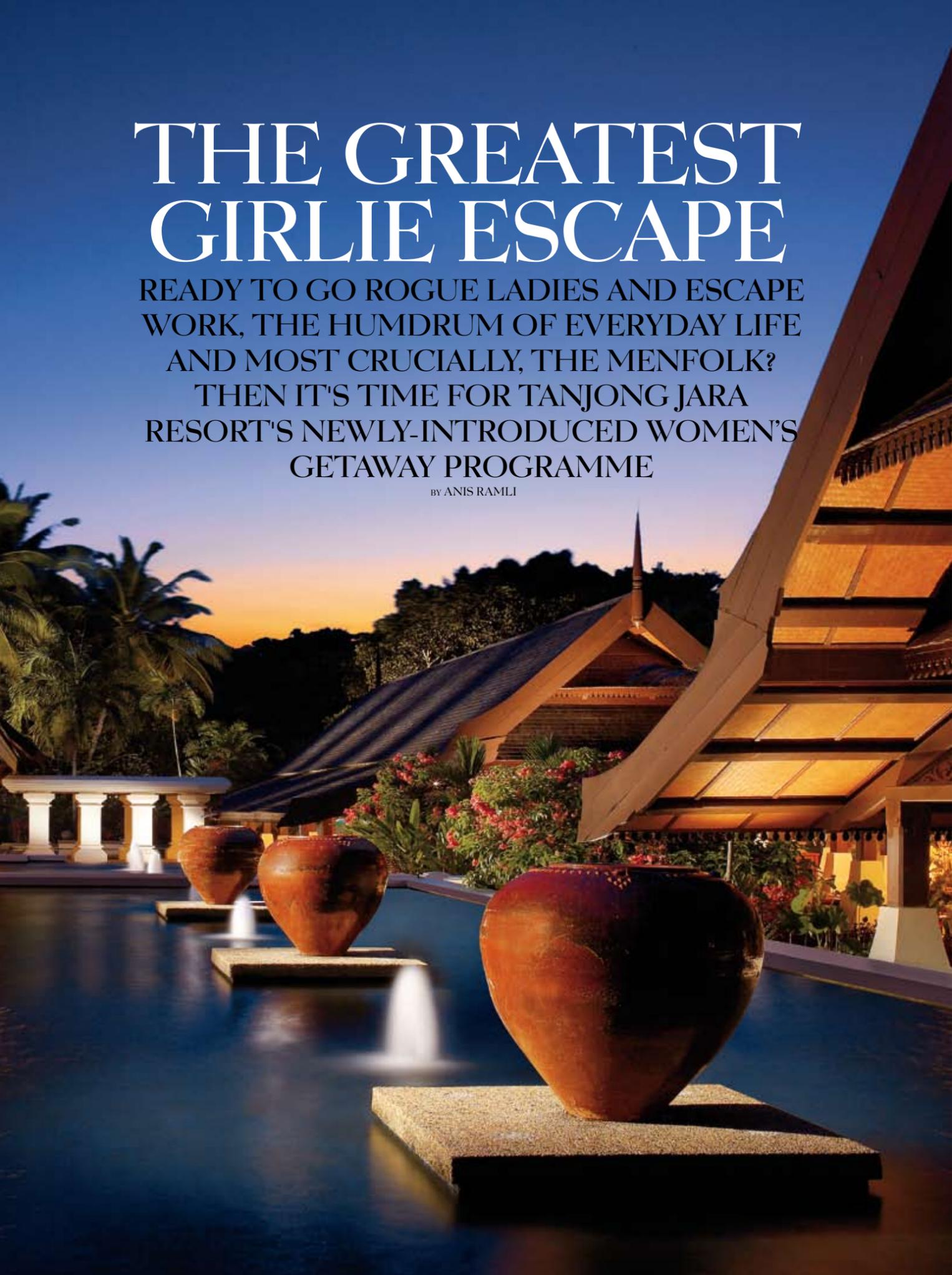
The Royal Selangor Yacht Club (RSYC) was established in the late 1960s by a group of boating and sailing enthusiasts. The club evolved and expanded over the years to eventually be granted a warrant by the Sultan of Selangor, who remains the club's patron. With over 1000 local and international members, the RSYC is the largest and most active yacht club in the country and strives to promote sailing

through international regattas such as the Raja Muda Regatta and smaller regattas such as the Everything That Floats Regatta. There is also the RSYC Sailing Academy for adults interested in gaining formal crew or skipper qualifications.

THE GREATEST GIRLIE ESCAPE

READY TO GO ROGUE LADIES AND ESCAPE WORK, THE HUMDRUM OF EVERYDAY LIFE AND MOST CRUCIALLY, THE MENFOLK? THEN IT'S TIME FOR TANJONG JARA RESORT'S NEWLY-INTRODUCED WOMEN'S GETAWAY PROGRAMME

BY ANIS RAMLI



GIRLS, FOR THE BEST VACATION YOU'VE EVER HAD - leave the menfolk at home. As the world responds to the increasing trend of the all-girl-getaway, there's no short list of women-only escapades. From shopping and spa to culinary adventures, women are finding that same-sex sojourns are blissfully liberating.

Not quite Thelma and Louise yet neither are they designed for the women of Wisteria Lane, an all-woman holiday appeals to the female traveller simply because on these vacations, you get to focus on you. Whether you're travelling solo or joining other women on an all-girl getaway, the breadth of choice is staggering. There are packages for pampering, self-discovery, healing, adventure, and more. Matched with sublime locales and luxurious abodes, it's hard to imagine ever going back to a typical, tried-and-tested vacation.

And, with the new Women's Getaway Programme at Tanjong Jara Resort, you can be sure to experience all facets of a female-focused retreat that lets you shop, spa, sightsee, and take up a new skill in just one holiday.

At the heart of this five-day programme at Tanjong Jara Resort is the art of Malay healing and beauty discovery. And the Resort presents the perfect setting for this journey. Located in Terengganu, the east coast state known as the cradle of Malay civilisation in Malaysia, the Resort has long prided itself in bringing together the authentic ancient healing traditions of the Malays. The Spa Village Tanjong Jara pays homage to therapies that reflect time-honoured Malay beauty, healing and rejuvenation traditions sourced from one of the world's oldest and most diverse tropical rainforests.

The Getaway introduces guests to the Malay arts

of traditional healing through a series of bespoke lectures, spa programmes, beauty workshops and leisure activities. Throughout their stay, guests will have access to the spa's Malay healing expert and resident healer. Therapies and spa treatments, while both pampering and relaxing, are designed to specifically focus on women's health and beauty needs; encompassing the natural evolution of the female body as it changes with age, climate and environmental stresses.

Guests will delight at discovering the various traditional healthcare therapies - using ingredients that comprise of local herbs, roots, flowers and spices. In beauty workshops, guests will learn firsthand ways to prepare their own scrubs at home and the art of drawing their own herbal baths. They will learn how ginger, a staple in Asian cooking, can also be a health tonic and an excellent post-partum healing remedy for the abdomen. There is also a hands-on class on the art of traditional Malay massage, a healing skill whose secrets were previously closely guarded and privy only to the Malay families that practice it.



Traditional Malay treatments await at Tanjong Jara Resort

Serenity and natural beauty reign at the Spa Village Tanjong Jara



The concept of SuciMurni is prevalent at Tanjong Jara Resort

As the ultimate women's getaway, the five-day retreat has everything. In between programmes, guests enjoy the Resort's distinctive five-star hospitality. They also get to experience the scenic coastal town of Dungun near where the Resort is located. A magnet for artists, writers, spiritual healers and nature lovers, Dungun's back roads, laidback lifestyle, bucolic fishing villages and all-over rustic charm makes it the perfect setting for anyone needing to rediscover their edge as well as those seeking serenity and solace.



Roselle Scrub Ingredients

Part of the programme's leisure pursuits is a bicycle ride to one of the villages. There is also a visit to the local market, where apart from identifying local herbs and spices, guests can enjoy a bit of marketing before retreating to the Resort to partake in a culinary class. Even here, guests are able to discover the healthy cuisine of the Malays, with its focus on anti-oxidant herbs and medicinal properties. The hands-on cooking class will expose guests - even kitchen novices - to the simple art of preparing local dishes both delicious and nutritious. Apart from this host of activities, guests also have the opportunity to rejuvenate the mind and spirit. Each day, begins with a series of Suci Murni exercises that begin their day. Known as 'senaman asak badan', the various poses with poetic-sounding monikers, comprise of specific postures that help with muscle firmness and overall wellbeing.

bargaining skills. From cottage industries that churn out wonderfully crafted fashion accessories made of dried palm fronds to glorious handwoven songket (a brocade-like fabric made of cotton or silk with silver or gold threads) at the local market, there will be plenty to keep guests busy and happy.

The only question that now remains is deciding which of your gal pals get to go with you. ■

And what is a retreat without the bliss of shopping. A tour to the surrounding villages and the city presents ample opportunity for guests to flex their

For more information on Tanjong Jara Resort's Women's Getaway Programme, call the YTL Travel Centre on +603-2783 1000



Choose from an extensive range of massage and spa therapies



Tanjong Jara Resort's gorgeous stretch of beach

ACHIEVING GREENER HEIGHTS

YTL CORPORATION'S MANAGING DIRECTOR'S FIRST DAUGHTER, RUTH YEOH, SPEAKS TO YTL LIFE ON THE MULTINATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POWERHOUSE AND WHY ITS GREEN INITIATIVES AREN'T MERELY PHILANTHROPIC ACTS BUT URGENT SOLUTIONS TO AN IMMINENT CRISIS

BY OOI YING NEE PORTRAITS BY JOHNNY MCGEORGE



THERE ARE NO AIRS ABOUT YTL GROUP'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEIR-APPARENT, Ruth Yeoh. The minute she walks in the room – or rather in this case, the orchid-adorned cabana of The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur's Spa Village – she smiles and breaks all the many pre-conceived notions one might have of the infrastructure conglomerate's first daughter.

At first glance the credentials are incongruous with the 26-year-old's demure disposition. This only enforces the notion that Yeoh defies all conventions. Although her surname was more closely associated with power stations and land development until several years ago, Yeoh is a true-blue greenie. And it is no coincidence that the organic and sustainable architecture graduate joined the Group four years ago, just as it was gaining respect as one of the forerunners of the corporate environmental responsibility movement.

Yeoh is at the helm of the group's environmental division, where she pioneered its environmental education initiative "Climate Change Week" and writes about her organisation's environmental activities through its annual, award-winning sustainability reports. Demonstrating how

corporation and environmentalism can grow hand-in-hand, Yeoh also co-edited the 2007 book on climate change entitled *Cut Carbon, Grow Profits: Business Strategies for Managing Climate Change and Sustainability*.

Here, she discusses passionately how corporate environmentalism should be a business convention, rather than a best practice and how and why it has now become her lifelong commitment.

WOULD YOU CALL YOURSELF AN ENVIRONMENTALIST? I don't like to be classified as an environmentalist, because I think everyone is one. If you look at the recent Earth Hour for example, look at how many millions switched off their lights. People all over the world participated in this world-wide phenomenon. We're all environmentalists, whether we like it or not because it's about survival. You're not just doing a favour for Earth, but for yourself too. A lot of people ask me if I am an environmental activist, but I tell them I'm more of an active environmentalist.

“WE'RE ALL ENVIRONMENTALISTS, WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, BECAUSE IT'S ABOUT SURVIVAL”

Personally, I think that you don't have to make a lot of noise to make a point. Just do your part quietly and people will quickly learn through the example you set, first for yourself and for those whom you love and care about.

YOU HAVE A BACKGROUND IN ARCHITECTURE WITH A CONCENTRATION IN ORGANIC ARCHITECTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN. DOES THAT KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATE AT WORK? Oh, definitely. One of our arms is land and development and building homes for the community. There's a lot of thought that goes into it. It's not just about building something functional but building something beautiful as well. I like integrating the two, and now there's the environmental arm – so you have three things to think about. These days, homeowners – who are our stake-holders – are becoming increasingly sophisticated. You can own a home, but do you know what goes into your home? People will ask if you use solar heating or organic materials like bamboo. A lot of thought goes into this. I am very pleased that I've got this level of education to actually know my materials and products, and what goes into building these homes. Also, architecture taught me a

lot of discipline. Because it's not only about design, it's technical. You've got to understand construction, for example. After a degree in architecture, I went on to do my masters in business and that has helped so much. I had interest in doing sustainable business and I wrote a dissertation on that. These courses complement each other very well.

WHAT DRIVES YTL'S GREEN AGENDA? WHY IS YTL PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY? When you talk about carbon neutrality – which is my ultimate target for the group – it's cleaning up your own home first. When I first started working four years ago, the most logical thing was to look at what we're doing in terms of how much carbon our businesses were emitting. I didn't have to look far, because our senior engineers have been doing it for decades now – innovating, becoming cleaner and greener every year. Our power station in Indonesia, for example, is very careful about not emitting CO₂ above the government limit and that limit goes lower and lower each year because they

set a target. We like to make people realise that they need to be environmentally conscious for very good reasons. Malaysia must be preserved. We're not exclusive. We are very much like the rest of the world – the Amazon for example. It's declining because of the deforestation that is taking place. We're not an exception. And beyond that, if I am going to raise my own family, of course I am going to think about the environment. I want my children to see natural beauty – the things that I see in this world and recognise today before it's gone tomorrow.

HOW DOES YTL STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN PLANET AND PROFITS? Well, first of all, I co-wrote a book about that called *Cut Carbon, Grow Profits*. It's to do with business strategies to curb climate change. It's absolutely possible to do business the right way. How you do it, how much time and effort you invest in it and how committed you are... it all counts. Also, everyone has been talking about the financial crisis and last we checked we're losing around US\$1 to US\$1.5 trillion if not more. But did you know that natural capital, in terms of the amount of services that the natural environment contributes, is actually losing out on a bigger scale at about US\$2



because my father refuses to chop them down.

YTL-SV Carbon – the carbon credits consultancy in which you helm – is making great strides in helping companies go clean and green. Are your potential clients already green converts? Or do you have to advocate the advantages of environmental responsibility? Our clients understand YTL is taking the lead on protecting the environment and they respect that. That branding and credibility, makes them trust in what we do. We manage to put our house in order in terms of carbon neutrality. Our clients respect that with YTL-backing, I think we can help them form their own credibility. But having said that, many of our clients are very sophisticated. They understand, for example, that in the palm oil industry, you need to manage waste properly. For example, what do you do with palm oil kernels? We consult and advise them to manage the wastage properly and in turn generate carbon credits from that through the clean development mechanism. I always invite them to our Climate Change Week campaign. They are well aware of what we're doing not just on a company level, but also on a national level.

to US\$5 trillion every year? That's a startling fact. Scientists claim that we only have 10 years to avert this disaster. The trouble with climate change, is that people don't feel or see the impact and effects of it as much as say, war. Why I do what I do, is not only because I love it, but because there's an urgency to

What happened at Climate Change Week this time around? In June this year, YTL sponsored the premiere screening of *Strange Days on Planet Earth: Oceans*, an award-winning six-episode documentary on Astro's National Geographic Channel. Climate Change Week is an on-going initiative by YTL to

“THE TROUBLE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE IS THAT PEOPLE DON'T FEEL OR SEE THE IMPACT AND EFFECTS OF IT AS MUCH AS SAY, WAR”

do it. We have to think beyond our shareholders and consider our stake-holders – our colleagues, their family and the wider community. We have a definite business case for the environment. My father is very ethical, he's very environmentally conscious, he's a big greenie at heart and he taught me from a young age – how to do business the right way. He's taken me on business trips and conservation trips. Business can be done responsibly, if only a lot of thought goes into it. When he built Pangkor Laut Resort – and this is my favourite story – only a quarter of the island was developed. The remaining three-quarters actually consist of rainforest that's millions of years old, and it remains faithfully protected. They've built around the island and not over it. If you're at the restaurant, trees are sticking out of the ground

educate as well as motivate Malaysians to act on the issue of global warming. It is a highly successful campaign for us and has been running for three years now.

Is it a coincidence that you joined the company about the same age your father joined the business? My father actually started way earlier on the construction site. Even when he was 12 and 13, he had to negotiate with suppliers! Those were tough times. That's why [my family members] have so much character and strength now. They inspire me to go further and taught me a lot about resilience too. They've built up the company from scratch, and what I'm doing is just building on what they've put in solidly.



Earth Hour celebrations at Starhill Gallery

Do you see yourself as the face of the next generation in YTL? I am just an individual in the world who's trying to change not only herself but also influence those around me without too much force. It's true love that I do what I do [in environmental conservation] and it has to start with the people around you. There's no point resisting something that's happening in the world like climate change. It's a frightening reality. ■

MORE ON YTL'S GREEN ACTIVITIES & INITIATIVES

- YTL recently donated US\$500,000 in support of forest protection and coral conservation in South East Asia, primarily Indonesia. The company also donated US\$100,000 each to WWF-Malaysia and Rare Conservation – two internationally established non-governmental organisations dedicated to environmental protection and wildlife conservation.
- The company won the Best Social Reporting in an Annual Report title at the ACCA Malaysia Environmental and Social Reporting Awards 2006.
- The first Climate Change Week was organised by YTL in 2007 to raise public awareness and educate on the issues of global warming and the earth's critical environmental condition.
- In a bid to promote sustainable development and energy efficient homes, YTL masterminded The Bird Island Green Homes competition. Eight of the world's top names in architecture and environmental engineering were invited to design six eco-friendly homes on Bird Island—an exclusive piece of land at the 35-acre Sentul Park.



THE NEW NYONYA

*Exquisite traditional kebayas
with a contemporary twist
reflect the modern heritage aura
of The Majestic Malacca*

PHOTOGRAPHY CHRISTOPHER A.
STYLING TUKI NOU

HAIR & MAKE-UP CELINE, MONICA LEE FACE ART ACADEMY
MODEL ALEX R., TALENT CAFE

SHOT ENTIRELY ON LOCATION AT THE MAJESTIC MALACCA
ALL KEBAYAS FEATURED WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO MARGARET KHOO CHOON IM
FOR LOAN OF HER PRIVATE COLLECTION



White camisole with lace bust
(worn throughout), **Monica Quen**
Silk sarong, **Jendela KL.**



Light green pareo, **Jendela KL**



Sarong with graphic prints, **Jendela KL**



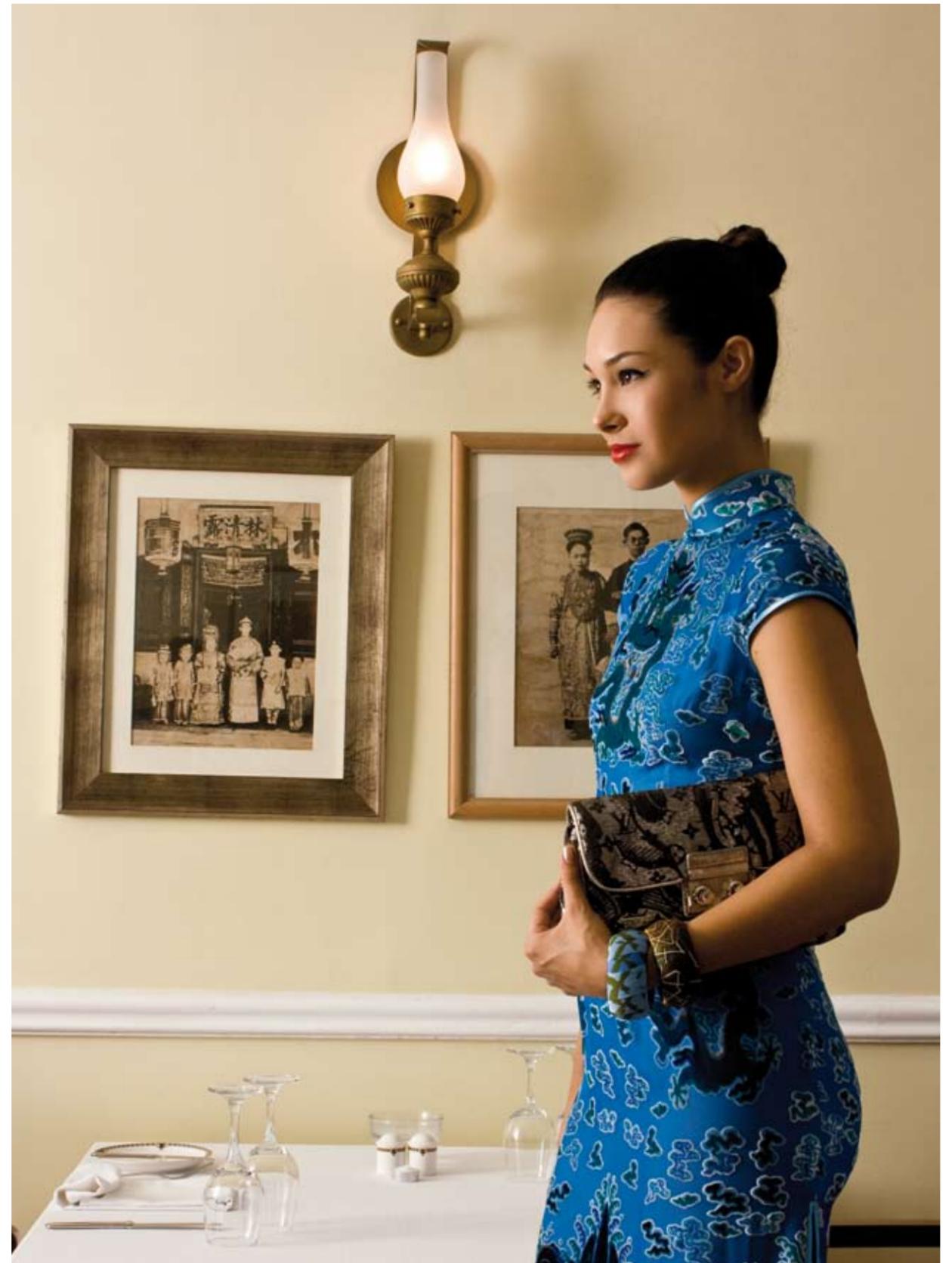
Satin pumps with black lace, **Louis Vuitton**



Monogram Eclipse Alma bag, **Louis Vuitton**
Silk sarong, **Jendela KL**



Button-down batik print dress, **Jendela KL**
Necklace, **Monica Quen**
Wide bracelet, **Louis Vuitton**



Turquoise cheongsam with dragon motifs, **Monica Quen**
Monogram Brocade Clutch, **Louis Vuitton** Fabric bangles, **Jendela KL**



Silk pareo, **Jendela KL**



Embroidered cheongsam with sequins, **Monica Quen**
Assorted bangles, **Jendela KL**

RUNWAY SUCCESS

BE INSPIRED BY AN ECLECTIC MIX OF FASHION'S FAVOURITES BY CHOO AI LING

THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT

BOTTEGA VENETA WOMEN'S RESORT 2010 - Maestro of understatement, Tomas Maier amped up the usually muted Bottega Veneta palette with an unabashed injection of colour for its Cruise 2010 collection. Bright pink, green, and turquoise cheerfully coloured the luxe collection which struck the perfect pitch between relaxed and tailored. Immensely wearable, Maier's slouchy jackets, shirtdresses and shifts would not look out of place at work or on a smart holiday. For evening, flowing goddess gowns are an effortless look. Bottega Veneta's signature intrecciato bag were given the rainbow treatment, one such limited edition came in striking New York taxi yellow and black.



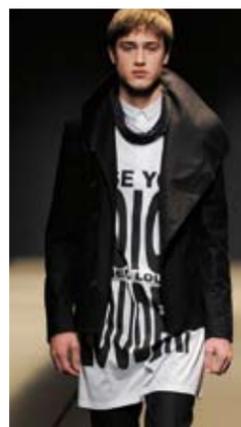
DAY TRIPPER

GUCCI WOMEN'S RESORT 2010 - This year's Gucci girl on holiday is stylish in a no-nonsense, almost severe palette of white, black and cobalt blue. Frida Giannini sent out a very practical collection of classic pieces which could easily become staples in any wardrobe even if you were not off to an exotic locale. Giannini cited the Italian playground of the Amalfi coast as her inspiration although the references were more in spirit - a mosaic print and embroidery were the only literal interpretations. Sensibility aside, this being Gucci, the collection was still imbued with generous lashings of sexiness - hemlines revealed acres of tanned legs while swim suits recalled those beloved Bond babes.



NEW WAVE

DIOR MEN FALL 2009 - Music always seems to play a key role when it comes to men's collections and Kris Van Assche's Fall 09 Dior Homme collection paid homage to the 80s but in an extremely tasteful way. The monochrome palette looked like it could have come out of Robert Smith's (or Dave Gahan's) wardrobe. Blousony tops screamed Duran Duran while oversize tees with large-lettered messages recalled Katharine Hamnett's originals (a style that was famously appropriated by Frankie Goes to Hollywood for the "Frankie Say Relax" T-shirt). The skinny Dior Homme silhouette only veered in the voluminous, airy M.C. Hammer pants whose proportions look questionable even now.



BACK TO THE FUTURE

DIOR FALL COUTURE 2009 - Eschewing the usual couture spectacle of lavish locations and extravagant sets, John Galliano's collection was shown the way it was traditionally presented in the 50s, within the the dove grey salons of the Christian Dior headquarters in the Avenue Montaigne. This lovely intimate setting was the perfect way to appreciate a collection which recalled the classic wasp-waisted silhouette of Dior's New Look albeit updated in bright hues. Galliano's plucky punchy palette of orange, lime, raspberry, and yellow were contrasted with the delicate nude tones of fifties under-things in a pragmatically nuanced collection which whispered investment pieces rather than transitional fashion.





TURNING THE OTHER CHIC

PRE FALL LOUIS VUITTON WOMEN - Classic was the word to best sum up Louis Vuitton's Pre-Fall collection whose understated elegance did not have a trace of the vivid neon street style of the recent Stephen Sprouse tribute collection. Inspired by a book on Paris during World War II, models in Veronica Lake waves strutted out in lovely print day dresses and bustier-topped party looks. Accessories of wood and papier-mâché had an almost home-made feel about them while beaded socks alluded to hosiery shortages of the era. It wasn't all nostalgic looks: sporty features like drawstring-waists and ski pants added a contemporary aspect.



STEPPE-ING OUT

KENZO WOMEN FALL 2009 - Antonio Marras' response to the global financial crisis was an escape to the romance of Mother Russia. Marras' vision of Russia was not one of oligarchs and new money but the folksy appeal of the Steppes with some revolutionary overtones: lush gilded dresses were contrasted with ensembles which could pass off as rather stylish military fatigues. Sweeping, epic and dramatic, the Kenzo lady is not shy about embellishment and swathes herself in layers with aplomb. Marras' source materials of all those "lonely dachas," as he put it were mined intelligently for a collection of exquisite motifs and richness of texture.



GALLIC GOTHIC

GIVENCHY COUTURE 2009 - Casting off any couture stuffiness, the very young and very hip Riccardo Tisci is infusing Givenchy, an establishment Parisian house, with energy and a unique point of view. Drawing on Givenchy's reputation for impeccable tailoring, Tisci added graphic strength to the collection which he described as Gothic Ballerina. Slim, long-line jackets - part military, part equestrian - were coupled with flouncy tutu-esque skirts for a modernized dance-skirt silhouette. For whimsical evenings, Tisci's now signature feathered dresses will enchant and beguile with ease.



SURVIVAL REVIVAL

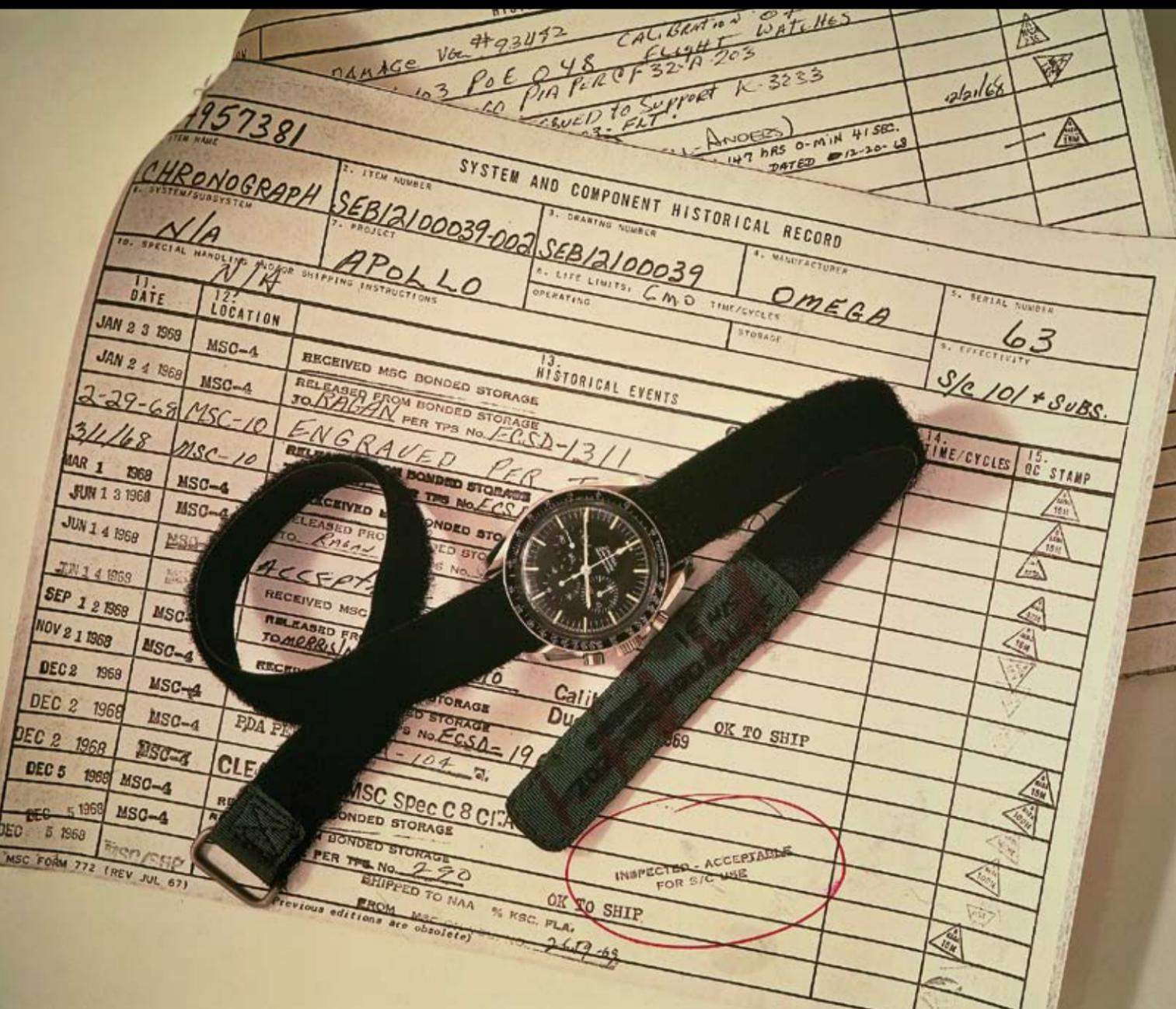
FENDI WOMEN FALL 2009 - For Fall, Karl Lagerfeld and Silvia Venturini's Fendi models stalked the runway in sober armour which had a touch of dégradé about them. Looking at times like a severely chic Mad Max cast, beautiful details and odd textures defined this collection. Raw threads and semi-destroyed materials added an element of roughness to the luxurious cashmere and chiffon. Far from being grunge, the strong silhouette with a subtle undercurrent of glamour elevated what could have gone terribly awry unless in the hands of a maestro such as Lagerfeld. Furs, a Fendi trademark, were treated to extraordinary technical feats such as merging sable and fox, or making white gold cling to mink.



OMEGA THE ALPHA

THE WORLD FAMOUS WATCH BRAND, OMEGA, NEVER SET OUT TO REACH THE STARS, BUT IN 1962, THE OMEGA SPEEDMASTER WON A CLANDESTINE RACE THAT WOULD TAKE IT TO THE MOON AND FOREVER INTO LUNAR FOLKLORE

BY SAM YEN



THE IMAGE IS THAT OF JOHN F. KENNEDY IN HIS PRIME, wavy haired and sharply dressed, in mid-speech at Rice University, Texas in September 1962. In a short presidency distinguished by timeless quotes - 'Ich bin ein Berliner', 'Ask not what your country can do for you...' - one more was added that Wednesday: "We choose to go the moon... not because it is easy but because it is hard."

With those words, the 35th President of the United States of America shifted the country's space programme into overdrive. Having been beaten by Russia in the space race to launch the first satellite (Sputnik 1 in 1957) and send the first human into space (Yuri Gagarin in 1961), the US was determined to best its Cold War rival by reaching the moon first. On July 20 1969, it did; the Apollo 11 mission reached the surface on the moon, allowing astronaut Neil Armstrong the opportunity to utter yet another timeless quote.

Armstrong's left foot touched moon ground at exactly 2.56am (GMT), a time recorded on Buzz Aldrin's Omega Speedmaster Professional Chronograph, the only watch to have been worn on the moon and the subject of another, lesser known space race. In the early 1960s, when the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was busy prepping the Apollo missions, it sent two engineers incognito to Houston's finest watch shops to identify potential watches that could be worn in space, bypassing the traditional but time-consuming bid-and-manufacture selection. They returned with six potentials.

The Omega Speedmaster was one of the six and subsequently, one of only three to survive NASA's rigorous initial testing phase. Further testing singled out the Speedmaster as the only watch to meet all requirements (including exposure to extreme temperature, heat, acceleration and pressure) satisfactorily. In a discreet memo dated March 1, 1965, the Omega Speedmaster was named the official watch for use in all NASA space missions.

NASA cheekily kept the pronouncement to itself, at least initially. Omega SA, the company behind the Speedmaster, was oblivious until a keen-eyed staffer spotted the Speedmaster on the wrist of astronaut Ed White during his Gemini 4 spacewalk in June 1965. The cat was out of the bag. It was a PR goldmine and Omega went on to trumpet the achievement. That NASA's verdict was reached in a neutral environment was icing on the cake and testament to the skill poured into the manufacture of Omega watches. The Speedmaster has since entered chronograph folklore as the 'moon watch' with Omega providing a timely reminder in 2009, running ads marking the 40th anniversary of the moon landings featuring that aforementioned 1962 image of JFK in mid-speech.

Of course, Omega's grand lineage of achievements does not begin with the "moon watch". Prior to 1965, the Speedmaster was merely a normal, consumer watch, albeit excellently designed, selected from a collection of peers by NASA. Omega did not set out to reach the stars when it designed the Speedmaster; it merely attempted to create the best watch it could. Meeting all of NASA's stringent requirements was an unexpected side effect.

Omega's is a tradition that stretches back to 1848, when watchmaker Louis Brandt set up shop in La-Chaux-de-Fonds, a Swiss city steeped in watchmaking tradition near the border with France. Handed down to his sons, who led the company to fame, Brandt's outfit introduced the 19-line Omega chronograph calibre in 1894, from which the company now derives its name, a product of its pioneering spirit.

Financial difficulties post-World War II led to the union of Omega and Tissot, followed by mergers in the SSIH watch conglomerate in 1930 and later, the Swatch group in 1983, but against this century-long backdrop of shareholder evolution, the Omega brand has stamped out its path in history. Its association with NASA's celestial achievements is not by chance but by design. Or more specifically, its chronograph design. NASA is merely one gem in a string of landmark Omega pearls.

More than 30 years before its NASA stamp of approval, Omega had already stepped on the world stage when the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics adopted Omega chronographs for event timekeeping, which streamlined accuracy, eliminated confusion and served as the precursor to modern world records. Omega itself, fittingly, had invented the world's first stopwatch, in 1889. And though official Olympics timekeeping duties have been passed around since, Omega's contributions to the Olympic movement during its tenures have been nothing less than groundbreaking.





In 1948, Omega's photofinish camera was introduced at the 14th Olympiad in London, which proved crucial in breaking sprinting deadheats in the decades to come. Automatic swimming pool touchpads made their debut in Mexico City 1968, eliminating the archaic practice of stopwatch-bearing judges at pool ends, while false start detectors have levelled the playing field for all athletes since Los Angeles 1972. Usain Bolt's iconic record shattering sprints and Michael Phelps' eight gold medal bounty at Beijing 2008 were also all recorded on Omega.

Amelia Earhart reportedly insisted on using Omega chronographs when she became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic in 1934. In 1968, Ralph Plaisted's Speedmaster assisted its owner in marking the exact position of the geographic north pole. And to come full circle, the Speedmaster was crucially used to manually time the engine boost that returned the ill-fated Apollo 13 mission to safety.

Omega wears these achievements proudly and is certainly unreserved about keeping itself in the public consciousness. As one of the first watch companies to embrace the cult of the celebrity, Omega has a stable of luminaries bearing its watches in glossy print ads and billboards. The double-jointed Phelps is an Omega Ambassador, bearing its aquatic Seamaster line. George Clooney and Nicole Kidman provide Hollywood glamour, Sergio Garcia and Michael Schumacher shore up its sports credentials, Zhang Ziyi and Abhishek Bachchan represent burgeoning Asia and Omega's long-standing relationship with James Bond lends the brand a stoic, cool and steely gleam.

The glitz and pizzazz can often approach blinding levels, prevalent as they are, but there is plenty of substance to back the style. At its core, Omega's five watch lines (Constellation, Deville, Seamaster, Specialities and Speedmaster) are simply watches that are brilliant at what they do: keeping time. And from there, stories and lore that are historic, impressive and trailblazing have been spun. Making an exceptional watch is not easy. In fact, it is very, very hard. Omega has chosen to create the best watches it can since 1848 and its achievements since stand proudly on their own, to the moon and back. ■



TIMELESS TOUCH

A DEEP COMMITMENT TO BEAUTY AND INNOVATION
MAKE BEDAT & C° NUMBER AMONG THE BEST IN
HAUTE HOROLOGY BY CHOO ALING



WHILE TIME KEEPING DEVICES are infinitely mechanical and their ultimate goal is precision, clocks and watches measure that most ephemeral of concepts: time. Hours, minutes, seconds - quantifying it could be a manifestation of the human need to reduce the fleeting to an understandable numerical value. The haute horological industry has elevated this desire to a higher plane - not only are the timepieces stunning to look at, they boast exquisite complications measuring time to its most exact end. Swiss watchmaker BEDAT & C° takes those very arithmetical motifs used to measure time to convey the essence of what the brand stands for - differentiation, timelessness, elegance and sophistication - by naming all collections by numbers.

Since the names of the watch collections were an integral part of this approach, all BEDAT & C° collections carry numbers to reinforce the values of differentiation and timelessness. Each

number corresponds to a philosophy or a specific aesthetic appearance. Often, the names of timepieces are inconsistent with the timepiece itself or with the brand. To avoid this, the naming principle gives the watch lines a definite form of cohesion and ultimately differentiation. These numbers additionally create a number of other advantages in that they are easy to memorise, universal and pronounceable in all languages.

Moreover, the symbolism of numbers is a powerful force - like the figure eight, which is the BEDAT & C° logo. Not only is it the symbol of infinity which is often represented by an hourglass, this is an appropriate icon for a company devoted to the art of timekeeping. On a more poetic note, the numbers of the collections do not follow on from each other and are not associated with any particular chronological order subtly underlying the quality of timelessness. Therefore the

N°1 collection was created well after N°3 and N°7 and it is impossible to say whether a watch is more recent than another, not only because of their style, but also because of their name.

These values were put into place over a decade ago by Christian Bédât who founded BEDAT & C° with his mother Simone Bédât in 1997. Simone's pedigree stretches back to 20 years when she joined forces with Raymond Weil to create the Raymond Weil brand. Her son Christian had also worked with Raymond Weil and served in various capacities, culminating in a post as Art Director.

When the duo established a company, their vision of watches was one where authenticity and subtlety are a genuine luxury. Upholding a watchmaking concept inspired by the highly decorative Art Deco tradition while expressing an emphatically modern spirit, it is a delicate balance of the most elaborate design delivering the purest lines. Technical expertise is inherent in every BEDAT & C° watch, in fact the

into Gucci Group Watches. BEDAT & C° is now 100% owned by the Gucci Group. The launches of N°1 and N°8 followed suit, the more angular N°1 represents the beginning and self-affirmation through action and matter while N°8 collection encompasses the "round in a cushion"-shaped cases.

Although 2006 saw the departure of the founders, 2007 ushered in a celebratory year for BEDAT & C° on its 10th birthday and new beginnings with the arrival of a CEO, William Devine. Another milestone for the company was the launch of the exclusive Bedat & C° Confidential 24/24 concierge service in partnership with Quintessentially, the leader in this field. In doing so, the Swiss watchmaker goes beyond only conceiving exquisite models, these pieces acknowledged for their refined designs and pure styling are now combined with a unique exclusive service.

2008 was an important watershed for BEDAT & C°, especially since the number 8 is not only the symbol of good fortune, it



sophistication of each piece demands it. As such, each watch is a concentrated blend of Swiss horological mastery, a quality known throughout the world and an integral part of the BEDAT & C° philosophy.

These values were the crux of N°3 and N°7, the company's first collections at the Basel Show in 1997. In fact Ref. 304 and Ref. 314 were an immediate success and are still the best-selling models to this day. Those two numbers were not accidental; the number three was chosen because it symbolises perfection and totality while the number seven eternal life in Ancient Egypt, standing for a complete cycle.

After this triumphant collection, BEDAT & C° timepieces were sold not only in Switzerland but the United States as well. The Gucci Group took notice and started the new millennium by acquiring 85% of the company and incorporated the company

is also the brand emblem. The N°2 collection was launched this year, standing for union, for the meeting of two connected elements and most specifically in philosophy, for two complementary principles. This year marked another first, the launch of the e-boutique make BEDAT & C° the first Swiss luxury watch company to open its official online boutique.

This bold stride into the future ensures that these fine timepieces are not only available in five continents, they are available in the realm of cyberspace. One need not fret about the quality of each watch especially since they carry the A.O.S.C.® certificate: Appellation d'Origine Suisse Certifiée (Certified Swiss Label of Origin). This hallmark guarantees the Swiss quality of both the skills and the components used in each stage of its production, an uncompromising excellence which is assured wherever you purchase your BEDAT & C° watch. ■

IN BLOOM

THE NEW KENZO STORE IN STARHILL GALLERY IS AN ODE TO THE FASHION BRAND'S AFFINITY WITH BEAUTY AND BLURRING OF BOUNDARIES BY CHOO AI LING



KENZO TAKADA took the fashion world by storm with his fabulous frocks which fused East and West back in the 70s. And when his Jungle Jap store debuted in Place des Victoires, Paris, it was an explosion of colour and culture - the beginning of a sartorial journey between the Oriental and Occidental. This address was the headquarters of a distinctive style which embraced hues, art and effortlessly criss-crossed tradition and modernity.

Fast forward to 2006, Kenzo's new artistic director, Antonio Marras makes the leap from cloth to concrete and realises his new vision for the revolutionary brand through a new concept for the original boutique. This renewing breeze gently blew across

continents to settle down in Starhill Gallery recently, bringing a whole new dimension to newly opened Kenzo store.

The Parisian store draws deeply from the heritage of the historic building it is housed in and is spread over two floors where craftsmen and restoration experts have worked their magic to bring Marras' vision to life. While the Starhill store does not have that particular advantage, it echoes what Marras began in Paris, most notably the delicate floral base reliefs which adorn the wall. These large imaginary flowers like the moldings of Parisian interiors represent the fusion of the sensibilities of Art Nouveau - which revered all things botanical - and floral motifs

from Japanese prints, a symbol of luck in the land of the rising sun. These voluptuous corollas symbolise the coalesce of cultures and encounters with the opposite ends of the globe - the aesthetic of Kenzo from the beginning and refined for the 21st century by Marras.

Elegantly monochromatic from the dark timber flooring and cream walls, this simple colour scheme was deliberately designed to allow the swarms of colour of each collection to fully express themselves. Replicating how the clothes are displayed in Paris, this store also features adjustable brass hanger suspensions which can be varied the set-up of the

clothing to suit the day. Piles of glass boxes placed on tables house handbags, shoes and stoles while other accessories are presented in a large bookcase or on tray-shelves that stretch off in perspective before customers' eyes. It is these details which give away the fact that this is actually a store not a gracious apartment although the sense of hospitality is particularly vivid in the changing rooms which sport cushy armchairs and benches made from random layers of mattresses covered in a plethora of dove grey and silver fabrics. Indeed, within the walls of this beautifully appointed boutique, Marras has captured its spirit and encapsulates the evolution of a singular fashion house. ■

LITTLE PLEASURES

DIMINUTIVE IN SIZE BUT NOT IN CRAFTSMANSHIP AND ENJOYMENT

COMPILED BY CHOO AI LING



RING OF HOPE As part of its 125th anniversary celebration - Italian jewellers par excellence - Bulgari, prove that it's not just their gems which sparkle but their goodwill as well. Bulgari is taking part in the "Rewrite the Future" campaign of Save the Children, the largest independent international organisation for the defence and championing of children's rights. The objective is to raise €10 million by the end of 2009, of which Bulgari has already donated €1 million. As part of this initiative, Bulgari has specially created a silver ring featuring the Save the Children logo engraved inside. This meaningful ornament is

also a tribute to the silversmith origins of Sotirio Bulgari, the company's founder. The ring is on sale in all Bulgari stores until the 31st of December 2009 throughout the world at the price of RM1250. *Bulağri, Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603-2143 4669*



LOVES ME KNOT

The very masculine image of Richard Mille shows a softer side with a long awaited addition to the ladies' collection: the RM019 Celtic Knot Tourbillon wristwatch. As its name belies, a diamond studded Celtic Knot traverses and weaves itself over and through various parts of the movement. The choice of this mystical symbol was apt since it suggests there are neither beginnings nor endings in life, and brought into the domain of technical haute horology, it takes on a new relationship with the timelessness of time itself. To add another layer of magic, the baseplate of the watch has been created of black onyx, a gemstone which is considered a stone of protection against negative thoughts, as well being the stone of equilibrium and inspiration. *Richard Mille, Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603-2142 0669*



HAPPY HOUR

Design pioneer Rado delivers a timepiece of superlative grace with the Sintra Jubile matt. An explicitly functional watch, it stands out through an exceptional interplay of contrasts conveyed through the juxtaposition of the tension and fluidity of lines. Curved contours allowing perfect integration with the barrel-shaped case and bracelet seamlessly abet the illusion of continuity and suppleness on the wrist. Variations of light are reflected by the brilliance of the edge-to-edge, metallised sapphire crystal which emphasises the matt appearance of the ceramic. However the Sintra Jubile Matt is more than just a decorative adornment, it is also graphically timed to the last minute. *Rado, Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603-2144 3668*



G IS FOR GLAMOUR

The iconic Gucci G has represented a certain sexy style since it was first introduced in the late 60s and been replicated but never duplicated endlessly. The latest incarnation is in an elegant timepiece designed by Gucci's Creative Director, Frida Giannini, in blingy stainless steel or edgy black. Its bezel forms a G in a subtle yet distinctive way, perfectly matching the design of the smooth bracelet while the watch face is completed by either a brown sun-brushed or white mother of pearl dial. For a touch of sophistication, the medium and small cases are also available with diamonds adorning the bezel or dial.



GRAND ROMANCE For 150 years, the House of Boucheron has set the stage for passion with bold creations inspired by incandescent love. One of its most ardent fans was the last Tsarina of Russia, Alexandra Feodorovna who received a diadem of pearls and diamonds as an engagement token and adored it so fiercely that it became a lifelong adornment. Drawing on this heritage, the House of Boucheron designs rings that tell a romantic story of emotions. Glittering diamonds enhance the grace of daring and feminine shapes or echo clever creations sculpted in gold or platinum. Precious wedding bands and solitaires harmonise their tones and celebrate the ardent bonds that unite fiancés in a pleasing melody of lines and colors. *Boucheron, Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603-2143 2669*



MILE STONES For the landmark moment leading up to what could be the most important day of your life, only the best will do. Van Cleef and Arpels has accompanied fiancés, some of them legendary, since the wedding of Alfred Van Cleef and Estelle Arpels in 1896 and pays homage to its Bridal collection of engagement rings, by offering new creations with symbolic names: Romance, Prélude, Opéra, Tête à Tête Estelle and Promesse. These six models set in a platinum mount, with 6 possible carat weights and 6 combinations of diamond colour and clarity offer glamorously creative versions of the traditional engagement ring and echo a number of motifs characteristic of the House, including the flower, ribbon and round bead setting. *Van Cleef and Arpels, Indulge Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603-2142 8669*

PRIVATE LIMITED

After influencing the proud watch market for centuries as the producer of intricate movements, Armand Nicolet introduces a limited edition timepiece which reveals one of the purest understated appearances the horological world has ever seen. Following the huge success of the L06 and L07, the new L08 features a wonderful manual wind mechanical movement called AN0711. It is derived from a 1957 caliber UT600, and was then modified with new more evolved technological characteristics. The L08 collection has a limited production of 500 pieces in relation to the quantity of original components from 1957 restored in the factory. *Armand Nicolet boutique, Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603-2144 4328*



WATCH THIS SPACE DeWitt adds another feather in its cap with the Repetition Minutes Tourbillon GMT Antipode as haute horology marks another milestone in the advance of this Swiss watchmaker's reputation for exceptional achievements. Remarkable for its exceptional trio of complications - the Tourbillon, minute repeater and GMT - animated by a single fully integrated mechanical movement, the Antipode timepiece presents its virtuoso functions on a two-faced case with a sophisticated and distinctive axle-based rotation system. The result of years of technological development, its commanding form takes on a powerful masculine appeal and the case of the watch is sculptured in combination of polished white gold and titanium. *Dewitt, Adorn Floor, Starhill Gallery; +603 - 2141 0776*

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE FOUND OUR CABINETS CLUTTERED WITH HALF-USED PRODUCTS and untouched, unopened bottles we bought in the name of beauty? Perhaps it was a purchase made on a whim, or perhaps we found the products falling short of all the miracles promised on the packaging. With thousands of beauty products launched every year, it's no wonder that finding a good product that delivers is almost like hunting for that proverbial needle in the haystack.

Still, others in the know have smartened up. Cult products so coveted they stand the test of time and resurface again and again to prove their worthiness. Often, these hail from heirloom recipes that have transcended generations.

BEAUTY CONFIDENTIAL

SNOBBERY OR TRUE BEAUTY? FOR SOME WOMEN, SECOND BEST JUST DOESN'T CUT IT AS THEY HUNT FOR BEAUTY'S BEST WORKING, MOST LOVED, TIME TESTED PRODUCTS THAT ARE MORE THAN JUST SWEET TREATS

ALL STORIES BY ANIS RAMLI

Consider Santa Maria Novella. This centuries-old apothecary is still being run by monks in a church in Florence just as when it first started in 1612. And their products are justly seen to be the very definition of Italian healing arts.

The monks continue to make many of the same products today, including perfumes commissioned by Catherine de Medici, like Ambra or Acqua di Colonia, body oils and facial creams. The most popular of the products remain the Pasta di Mandorle, or Almond Paste. Reputed to be the first product ever made by the Dominican Monks, this cream has amazing skin rehydration properties, perfect for any rough spots on the body, including the hands, feet and elbows.

For die hard beauty fans who long for a traditional bar soap that holds its shape (and scent) right to the very end, only one brand steps up: Claus Porto. That's because each soap is milled seven times ensuring they don't split or crack, with a consistent fragrance that lasts three times longer than normal soaps. The soaps are still moulded and pressed by hand just as they were when the company was founded in 1887. Whether it's the Banho Citron Verbena with its distinctive citrus and woody scent (a favourite of Oprah's) or the Lelite Sicilian orange and amber's edgy fragrance, Claus Porto's bar soaps add chic and glamour to the bath.

Sometimes a product's cult status has as much to do with its origins as its history. Eau d'Italie may not have a long, storied past, but it has become a beauty novelty with fragrances that evoke the romance of the Amalfi Coast. This niche perfume line was the brainchild of Alvarez Murena and Marina Sersale, owners of the Hotel Le Sirenuse in Positano, Italy. What began as a signature scent for the hotel soon turned into a coveted collectible among those in the know. While there are today a collection of six unisex fragrances, the 'original' Eau d'Italie created in 2004 remains its top seller, with its seductive scent of Bergamot and incense. Another, the Magnolia Romana with its unmistakable scent of magnolias and crushed lemon leaves, is also fast gaining a following, and was created by Bertrand Duchaufour, L'Artisan Parfumeur's in-house nose.

Perhaps no mention of fragrance would be complete without the inclusion of Diptyque. The French brand once referred to as 'olfactory orgasm' is best known for its scented candles but has recently extended its line to include eau de toilettes, shower gels and body creams. With scents inspired by Mediterranean cities, a bottle of say, their body wash, can take you around Florence to Alexandria or Cordoba. What makes the Art of Body Care range even more luscious is they contain no synthetic additives - perfect for the ethical beauty stalwarts of today. ■

PHOTO CORBIS



NEAT TRICKS Getting fabulous peepers are easy with Kanebo Coffret D'Or eye palette. Colours pre mix-and-matched for you include complementary tones (cutting down the guessing game time) formulated in high shine pearl and micronised pearls. Sparkling colours come to life adding depth and shine where you want them most. *Kanebo International Salon, S21-25, Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery, KL: +603-2144 1218*



RADICAL RESCUE

Deep lines, wrinkles, dark spots and droopiness may be a thing of the past with this over-the-top serum. Delivering an ultra-high 1% concentration of pure retinol (10 times the industry average) in a continuous time-release formula, the Ossential Radical Night Repair works not only on the surface, but goes deep within the skin. Ossential is also said

to give skin a big brightening boost, thanks to a complex blend of vitamins and natural extracts that are bound to make it radiant and firm. A miracle? That's open to interpretation. *Essentials Urban Retreat, S32 - 37, Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery, KL: +603-2148 3288*



FLAWLESS FLORALS

Same alphabet, different aroma. F for Fascinating Night continues Salvatore Ferragamo's F series collection of fragrance. The new scent is a fragrance perfect for nights out and special occasions. It opens with aromas of mandarin sorbet and pink pepper, building a floral heart of jasmine and rose, which create a finish of patchouli, amber and white musk. The fragrance

is constructed as floral-woody-chypre and it was created by Olivier Polge of IFF. Available as 50 EDP.

TRADITIONAL TOUCH

Starting with a Balinese floral footbath and foot mask peppered with jamu spices, this session of Balinese Reflexology ends with a 45 minutes head, neck and shoulder massage and another 45 minutes of foot reflexology. The force and pressure used in the treatment allows the body's toxins to be flushed out, leaving you instantly rejuvenated. *Asianel Foot Reflexology Spa, S17, Pamper Floor, Starhill Gallery, KL: +603-2142 1397*



THE POWER OF TOUCH

The art of massage, believed to have originated in the East as a way to unblock our chi, has evolved into a variety of techniques, each with a multitude of health benefits. At Spa Village, you can experience a range of these tantalising and therapeutic treatments

BY BOEY PING PING PHOTOS BY YTL HOTELS



ENOLA'S FOUR HANDED LOMI-LOMI

ORIGINS: Traditional Hawaiian healers believed that mental tension and spiritual disharmony triggered by blocked energy within the body was what made people ill. To restore the health of their people, the healers created the Lomi-Lomi massage which caresses the body using strong hula-like movements to disperse energy blockages. Enola's Four Handed Lomi-Lomi was created specially for Spa Village by their Hawaiian trainer who was tasked with learning this traditional form of healing.

SPA STYLE: Two therapists, four hands. Enjoy the perfect synchronisation of two therapists working hand-in-hand as

they "dance" across the entire body, stroking it in melodic rhythm. Palms, thumbs, knuckles and forearms move harmoniously in long, broad massage strokes to knead your troubles and pains away.

REMEDY: Don't be fooled by this specially choreographed rhythmic massage designed to release toxins and enhance the immune system. As blood circulation improves and the lymphatic system is stimulated, nutrients get transported to the muscles and you'll find yourself recovering from injuries faster. The massage has emotional benefits too. It releases you from fear, anxiety and any negative thoughts.



HOT STONE

ORIGINS: Throughout the ages, various cultures have used stones such as river rocks and lava stones in therapeutic treatments because they are excellent at retaining heat to warm the body, relax the muscles and soothe the soul.

SPA STYLE: Smooth, river rocks are heated to a comfortable temperature and swept all over the body in flowing strokes following Swedish massage techniques to promote deep relaxation. As the hot stones lightly stroke the body, mere seconds at a time, their warmth is instantly transferred to the muscles to melt away all tension and stress. Placed on strategic

energy points on the body, the rocks infuse the skin with nurturing warmth to stimulate blood circulation.

REMEDY: If you're suffering from lower back pain, the heat emanating from the smooth, warm stones will alleviate your discomfort immediately. As your tense muscles start to loosen, you'll feel less anxious and be swept over by a deep feeling of relaxation. Despite its seemingly temporary effects, this massage has long been renowned to have deep-seated benefits that increase the body's immunity against illnesses and diseases.

PHOTO CORBIS



BALINESE

ORIGINS: Indian, Chinese and European influences form the foundation of Balinese tradition. As such, Balinese massage combines references to many different cultures. At the Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali, this traditional massage has been adapted and inspired by knowledge passed down from a traditional healer from the Tembok village.

SPA STYLE: Tired, overworked bodies are instantly rejuvenated by this invigorating massage which varies from rolling motions to long strokes and acupressure points. Fingers, palms, knuckles and fists are put to full use to relieve

tense muscles and tight, congested areas of the body. Even the hands and feet are not neglected as firm pressure is used on the points in their reflex zones to spark the nerve endings and increase blood flow.

REMEDY: Not only will your body be rejuvenated by this energising massage but even your face will glow from the increase in blood circulation. Be prepared to be restored both mentally and physically after this invigorating treatment. In no time at all, you'll be rid of stress and feel in tune with your mind, body and spirit.

MALAY

ORIGINS: The art of traditional Malay massage has been passed on from generation to generation and is a prevalent form of treatment widely used in the Malay community. Performed minus the use of chemicals or drugs, this traditional massage makes use of herbal concoctions and oils to rid people of illness and discomfort in the most natural, safe and effective way.

SPA STYLE: Warm oils concocted from local ingredients such as turmeric, cinnamon, garlic, onion and citronella helps the therapist's hands glide smoothly over the body

as he uses slow, kneading strokes to pacify overworked muscles. The oils seem to trigger a healing process as gentle, yet firm pressure is applied to various points of the body to activate the body's nerve endings and stimulate blood flow.

REMEDY: Aches in the joints and muscles are relieved by this deep tissue massage which focuses on important veins and arteries to reduce blockages and improve the flow of lymph fluid. As the medicated herbal oil helps to dispel wind and reduce stiffness in the muscles and joints, the body begins to experience a sense of peace.



TUI-NA AN MO

ORIGINS: Tui-na massage goes beyond relaxing tense, aching muscles. One of the major differences between Chinese massage and other techniques of massage is the emphasis on specific acupressure points and flow of the subtle channels that influence the organs on a deeper level to treat ailments and infections.

SPA STYLE: Designed to redirect the flow of chi in the body and open up blocked meridians, this traditional massage uses eight fundamental techniques in Chinese massage - 'tui' (pushing), 'na' (grasping), 'an' (pressing), 'mo' (rubbing), 'gun' (rolling), 'qian' (pulling), 'da' (beating) and 'dou' (shaking). The massage is vigorous as the therapist uses his hands, arms and elbows to

stimulate the acupressure points and treat the soft tissues. The main technique involves pushing with the palms and pinching with the thumbs to release excess wind and cold from the body.

REMEDY: This ancient Chinese system of massage is very popular among men, golfers and those who suffer from lower back pain and inflexible joints. By removing blockages and restoring a harmonised flow of energy within the body, chi is allowed to travel freely through the meridians. Those suffering from respiratory and digestive problems will also benefit greatly from this massage which helps to cure the common cold and ease the digestive tract.

A ROUND OF APP LAUDS

APPLE'S APPS HAVE OPENED UP THE MOBILE COMPUTING WORLD INTO NEW REALMS - WEIRD, WONDERFUL, PRACTICAL AND EVERYTHING ELSE IN BETWEEN

BY MATT ARMITAGE



WHEN A SHINY NEW GADGET LANDS ON YOUR DESK, the last thing you think is that it might have rendered a piece of art obsolete. But that's what the humble cell phone has done. The Hitchcock movie *Dial M for Murder* (from a play by Frederick Knott) relies on the concept that a woman is lured to her death by the ringing phone in her living room. Set in 1950s Britain, it was inconceivable that anyone would have telephone extensions in different rooms, let alone free roaming units that lets you answer calls in the car or at the supermarket.

Attempt to stage the play today, after years of mobile phone ubiquity, and it's quite likely that a young audience simply wouldn't understand. You'd have to add a car chase and some terrorists to make it even mildly plausible.

The thing is, a mere 20 years ago, a mobile phone weighed two kilos and had little in common with the lightweight strip of metal and plastic nestling in your pocket as you read this. Back then mobiles made calls. Today, they take print quality photos, play

music and video, handle the Internet, email and instant messaging and make video calls and send multimedia messages. They're not quite the wrist computers of science fiction fantasy as yet but they're not far off.

Where there have been limitations it's been with the software - generally, no matter how smart the phone, you were saddled with whatever software they came with. That changed a little with Symbian, Palm and WinPhone devices where third-party developers sold programmes and games that generally cost as much as software for a full-size PC but generally the mobile world has been a closed shop when it came to add-ons.

But the iPhone has changed all that. A lot has been said about Apple's miraculous all-purpose gadget - some of it true and some of it hyperbole - but what is true is that coupled with the company's iTunes software and its online Apps store, Apple has opened up the mobile computing realm.

Without going into too much technicality, iPhone applications are basically Web-widgets based on the AJAX computing platform,

which makes them relatively easy and cheap for developers - professional and amateur - to build programmes for. As a result, there are now more than 75,000 iPhone Apps, most retailing for under USD10.

But it's really all about what they can do. Apps range from the weird and wonderful - like virtual light sabers - to useful productivity software. And when you add in the location based capabilities of the latest model, the 3Gs with its inbuilt GPS and compass, you have turn-based maps in the palm of your hand. Even Hitchcock could not have imagined that all this would have possible some day.

Has it been a success? Well, with so many apps and such low prices most developers haven't been able to give up the day job but Apple is certainly not unhappy. And there is, of course, that very lucrative idea of 'potential' to count on.

And, as the saying goes, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, as RIM's recently launched App World for its Blackberry devices and Nokia's Ovi apps store for its Symbian devices show. ■

YTL LIFE'S TOP 5 IPHONE APPS



THINGS
Things is a very simple and easy to use task manager that has been speeding up our desktop since its launch late last year. Whether you're a devotee of the Getting Things Done system or not, the iPhone version of this software is a breeze for jotting down tasks, simple notes and thoughts and syncing them to your computer later on. <http://culturedcode.com>

organising your thoughts but Evernote excels at storing info from all over the place. You can clip Web pages, photos, take voice notes, write your own notes, make lists, in fact pretty much anything you can think of. Best of all your info is backed up online and can be synced directly to your computer so that your information is accessible pretty much anywhere. www.evernote.com



TOMTOM
Long the world leader in sat-nav, TomTom have finally gotten around to bringing turn-by-turn foot and car navigation to your handset with this iPhone app. It does all the usual

sat-nav stuff of getting you from A to B, but most importantly it does so in an easy and uncluttered way that won't have you reaching for the road map out of programming frustration. <http://iphone.tomtom.com>



TWEETIE
You may not have joined the Twitter revolution as yet, but if you have then Tweetie is the easiest way to handle your micro-blogs on the iPhone. You can browse and post tweets, upload pictures and juggle multiple accounts.

And with the iPhone's GPS-integration you can let your followers know where you are, and if you're free for coffee. www.atebits.com



TAPTAP REVENGE
The iPhone supports all kinds of graphics intensive games but our favourite is still the resolutely lo-fi Guitar Hero inspired Tap Tap Revenge. Dance your fingers across the screen and help to tap out the riffs to tracks from Lady Gaga, Coldplay and Nine Inch Nails. <http://tapulous.com>

PHOTO CORBIS



THERE'S NO HAIR ON THIS SAMSON Pocket cams like the Flip Mino have been offering a one size fits all solution for your video needs for a while now. What they lack in features and definition they make up for in portability, stability (they typically record onto SD cards) and ease of use. While they've become a favourite with YouTubers, lack of attention to sound quality sometimes lets them down. Samson's Q3 changes all that. A specialist in sound and audio products, the company has built a video recorder around one of its stereo microphones. The result is CD-quality sound coupled with 640 x 480 video resolution, ideal for recording presentations, seminars, or your kids' concerts. www.samsontech.com

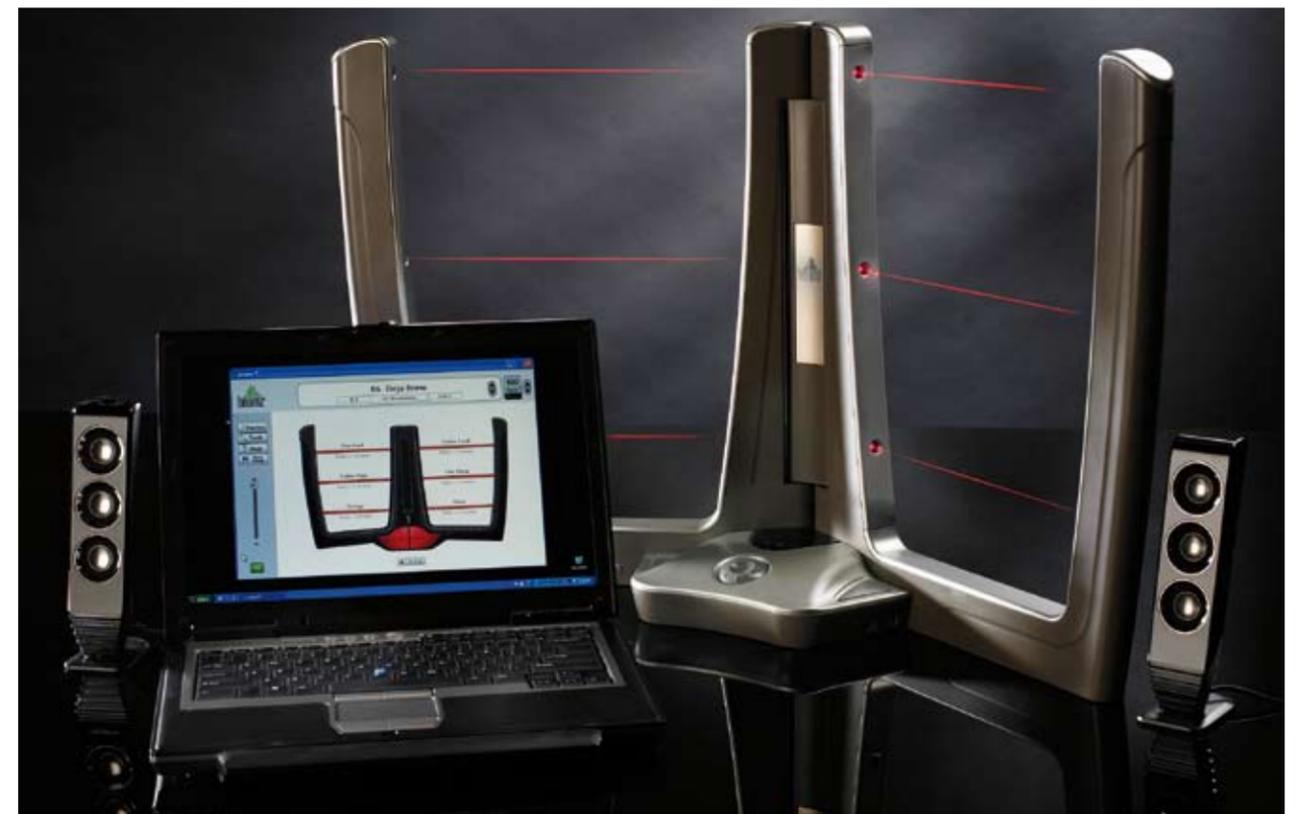


GEE, IT'S A CANON There's really no beating Leica's M8 for high class, top quality snaps but when you're lounging by the pool or playing with the kids in the park you'll probably be looking for a point and shoot camera that will take a bit of rough and tumble without breaking the bank. When it comes to image quality, there's really none better than Canon's latest PowerShot G11. Bucking the trend for ever more pixels, the G11 has actually dropped back to 10MP, concentrating on image quality and low-light performance. This model also features a flip out screen, and it has scene modes for every occasion but it's in manual mode that you'll get the most out of this unassuming pocket rocket. www.canon.com



VIVRE LA CONSTELLATION!

Sometimes a phone is for more than making calls. And so it is with Vertu's range of limited edition bejewelled and hand-tooled handsets. The Constellation Vivre range has been designed by Malaysian actress Datuk Michelle Yeoh with inspired flourishes from the flora and fauna of her tropical homeland. These exclusive hand engraved mobiles come in finishes like Vivre Pink and Vivre Fuschia, but there is also a black leather model finished in rose gold for fans of her more rugged performances in action movies like Tomorrow Never Dies and Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. www.vertu.com



BEAMZ ME UP We've always loved things that don't have any real purpose but exist anyway. And that seems to be what Beams is. Apparently it's educational but we think that's just a cover so that kids-in-dads-clothing can bring one home without fear. Rig it up to your computer with the supplied software and wave your hands through the laser beams to create music and play any one of more than 100 instruments. It could be a Theremin for the digital age or just a way to make those snooping neighbours think you're mad. <http://thebeamz.com>



LUGGAGE WITH A SUPERCAR FINISH There's nothing technical about luggage you might say. Not so, when it's as precision engineered as the latest collection from Porsche Design Studio. Because, let's face it, there's nothing worse than buying yourself the latest supercar and finding that your luggage won't fit. No such problems with Porsche's latest AluFrame luggage trolleys that have been engineered with the new Porsche Panamera in mind, and exactly match the car's choice of paint finishes. www.porsche-design.com

SMALL WONDERS

WHEN IT COMES TO A COMFORTABLE HOME, BIG IS NOT NECESSARILY BETTER

BY ABDUL AZIZ DRAIM PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF SOMMARNÖJEN



WHEN MODERN ARCHITECTURE gets increasingly dictated by the celebration of avant-garde monoliths and exaggerated futurism, we tend to overlook the fundamentals of residential living. Comfort is still defined by an abundant of space, which is sadly a commodity that only the truly affluent can enjoy.

But does space really equate luxury? A home, at its core, is four walls and one roof. When done right, that basic formula for a home can offer a wealth of comfort to its owner, regardless of restricted floor area.

Swedish company Sommarnöjen proves this point. Recognising the demand from a public desperate for homes that are not only architecturally pleasing but also easy to obtain, the company has developed a series of homes that are small in size but big on quality and comfort.

And how small is small? Try 15 square meters. "It's a size that does not need building permit in Sweden and Norway," says Tomas Tjajkovski, co-founder of Sommarnöjen. "Though all models are that size, we can also customise the homes to accommodate other formats, such as 12, 20, 25, 30 or 30 square meters."

The ideal solution for the modest homeowner or for those looking to purchase a second home, the Sommarnöjen project benefits from the recruitment of three prominent contemporary Swedish architects to develop 8 different home designs. The firms involved are Tham & Videgård Hansson (voted best Swedish architects

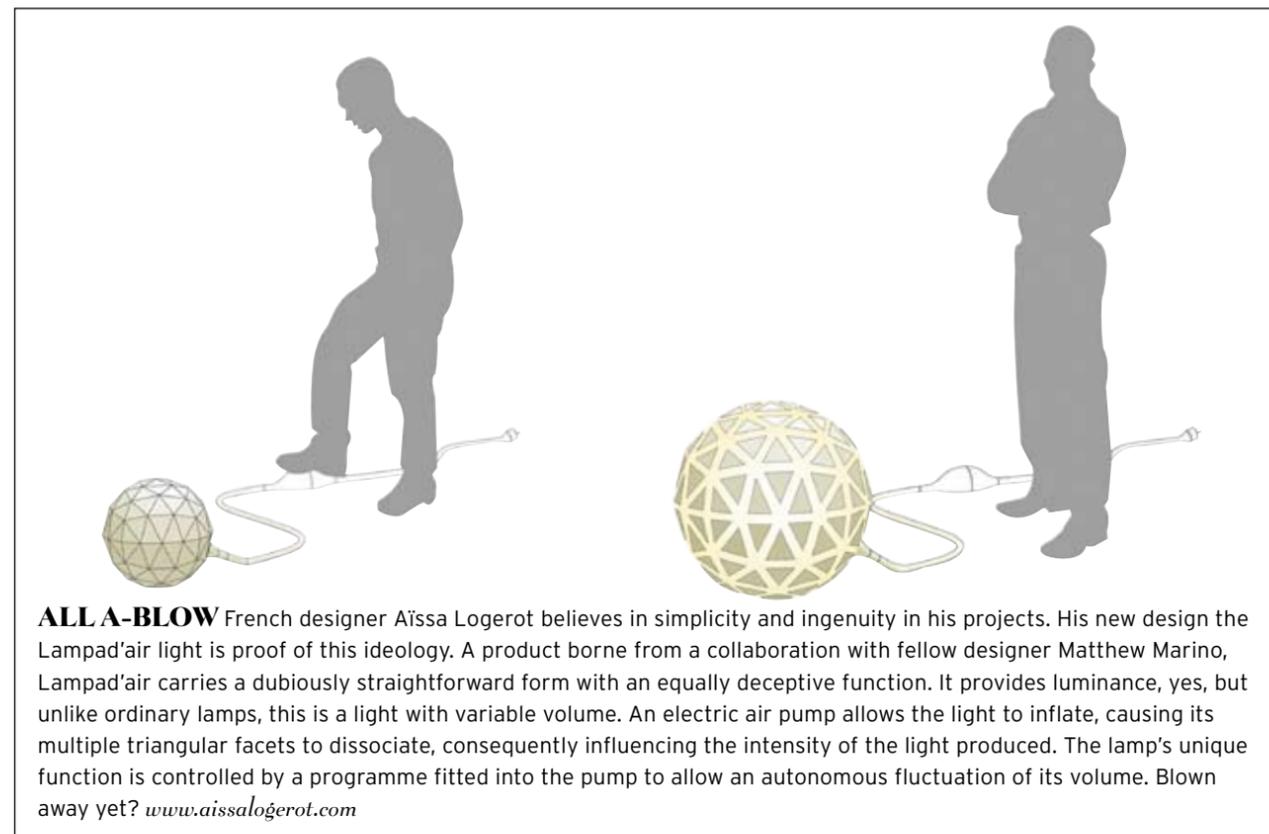
2008); Thomas Sandell, Sandellsandberg (famous industrial and furniture designer) and Kjellander+Sjöberg (urban planners and public building architects).

Naturally, designs find inspiration in Scandinavian architecture itself, expressing clean lines shaped by light and natural materials to produce new age modernity to ensure a greater definition of comfort. Tomas adds, "All our houses are built primarily of Scandinavian wood - the frames, floors, walls, and in some models even the roofs."

Although the models come in various interior styles - Classic, Modern and Exclusive - these compact homes can be customised to meet formats, functions, equipment, as well as exterior and interior styles to your personal preference. "It's a platform that can be adapted for various functions. We custom-build kitchens, bathrooms, saunas and private offices," explains Tomas. Each Sommarnöjen unit is furnished and fitted with products by high quality Swedish producers - beds from Dux, carpets from Kasthall, furniture from G.A.D, lamps from Flux, tiles from Höganäs, white goods from Electrolux and saunas from Tylö.

Beautifully built with premium grade fittings, the Sommarnöjen house brings home one truth: extra space is not a luxury. Great design is. ■

www.sommarnojen.se



ALL A-BLOW French designer Aïssa Logerot believes in simplicity and ingenuity in his projects. His new design the Lampad'air light is proof of this ideology. A product borne from a collaboration with fellow designer Matthew Marino, Lampad'air carries a dubiously straightforward form with an equally deceptive function. It provides luminance, yes, but unlike ordinary lamps, this is a light with variable volume. An electric air pump allows the light to inflate, causing its multiple triangular facets to dissociate, consequently influencing the intensity of the light produced. The lamp's unique function is controlled by a programme fitted into the pump to allow an autonomous fluctuation of its volume. Blown away yet? www.aissalogerot.com



THE ART OF THE MATTER This is the closest bathrooms will ever get to art: the PuraVida bathroom suite, a poetic lifestyle solution comprising of tap fittings, ceramics, bathtubs and furniture pieces interwoven to eloquently speak a language of beauty and continuity. The result of a collaboration between leading bathroom suppliers Duravit and Phoenix Design (with the aid of Hansgrohe), PuraVida is a collection designed to reject the notion of trends in favour of embracing a modern take on luxury. Expressing emotional strength through elegant, sinuous lines emphasised by a futuristic nuance, this is not just another bathroom experience; it's an emotional response. www.duravit.com



PERFECT PROPORTIONS Though your very own personal theatre hall will provide the best experience to enjoy DVD nights, those without extra space to spare in their home can invest in the new Cinema 21:9 by Philips (for a mere RM19,999). As the world's very first cinema proportion LCD TV, the Cinema 21:9 boasts an impressive 56" Full-HD screen, powered by superb picture quality courtesy of Philips' revolutionary 2009 Perfect Pixel HD processing engine (500 million pixels per second processing power and 2,250 trillion vivid colours) with immersive three-sided Ambilight Spectra technology. What that equates to is a cinematic experience that lets you watch movies how directors intend you to. www.philips.com

CHRISTMAS AT THE COVE

THE EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW OF THE CHRISTMAS MENU OF FISHERMAN'S COVE ON PANGKOR LAUT RESORT HAS US SINGING AN EARLY 'FA-LA-LA-LA-LA, LA-LA-LA-LA' BY BELLE NG PHOTOGRAPHS BY ESMOND GOH

THE SUN IS JUST SETTING, casting an amber glow over the calm water as we arrive at Fisherman's Cove and take our seats on the wooden terrace over the sea. We are greeted with kir royales while the restaurant's Executive Chef, Chef Wai, explains that the Christmas menu was designed with celebration, comfort and creativity in mind.

Choice ingredients are paired with Christmas staples, and traditional recipes have been consulted for inspiration. This passionate description serves as a positive prelude to the coming meal.

We begin with the amuse bouche, a succulent sliver of seared duck breast set atop a tart, lightly spiced apple compote. The meat is tender and juicy, its faint gaminess nicely countered by the compote.

The Confit of Tom Turkey Breast with Caramelised Chestnuts arrives next. My dining companion is sceptical, wondering if turkey breast might turn out dry but the confit method does the trick and the meat is succulent and moist. Each mouthful offers slight hints of fennel and truffle oil, nicely countered by the accompanying orange and pear reduction. Crisp young spears of asparagus complete the plate.

By this point the sun has gone down and the restaurant has filled with sun-kissed diners. The acoustic trio has begun to serenade us and the chefs in the open kitchen move together in a deft, graceful dance as they produce plate after steaming plate that travel from kitchen to diner.

Two of those plates carry our next course, the Pan-Seared Diver Scallops and Slow Cooked Avocado. The scallops

are plump and opaque, perfectly cooked, their sweetness somehow intensified by the silky avocado puree that they sit upon. A sauce of sea urchin roe lends the dish a smoky, savoury character, while a scattering of wild rocket leaves rounds off the delicious creation.

We cleanse our palates with Kaffir Lime and Sour Plum granita, and its refreshing sour-sweetness sets the stage for my main course, the Cinnamon and Honey Glazed Scottish Salmon.

The thick, boneless slab of fish is cooked to perfection with a nicely seared crust and pink centre. I cannot seem to get enough of the black Perigord truffle risotto that cushions the fillet. It is delectable, with the risotto done al dente. Each mouthful is perfumed with dark slivers of truffle.

My companion has chosen the Parmigiano-Reggiano and Rosemary Crusted Eye of Short Loin as her main course. Just looking at the rosy fleshed, golden-crusting meat makes the mouth water and when I sample a piece of it I am entranced by its lusciousness. Napped with an exotic madras curry emulsion and some lightly stewed fruit, this unconventional pairing works well. The delicious ring of creamy Kipler potato mash that surrounds the meat could possibly be the best mashed potatoes that either of us have ever had.

Chef Wai strikes a delicate and commendable balance in his play with sweet and savoury within each course, showcasing his prowess and attention to detail. In fact, Chef Wai has received numerous accolades and is one of the most senior and talented chefs in the kitchens of YTL Hotels as he has certainly proven today.

Bringing the meal to a close, his version of the classic French dessert, the Ile Flottante is gorgeous. Dusted with dark chocolate shavings, the poached meringue is flecked with vanilla bean and is balanced upon an assortment of ripe cherries, strawberries and blueberries. This 'island' is then surrounded with a pool of praline sauce. Each mouthful of the meringue is delicate and fluffy, redolent of vanilla bean, and with the accompanying fruit, it becomes an exquisite ending.

As we linger over espresso macchiatos, taking in the ambience of the restaurant, the soft sea breeze and the stars flickering in the inky night sky, we decide that Fisherman's Cove would be the perfect place to celebrate the festive season with loved ones. More than a reason to get away from the bustle of city, it offers an intimate setting to reconnect over a delightful meal. ■

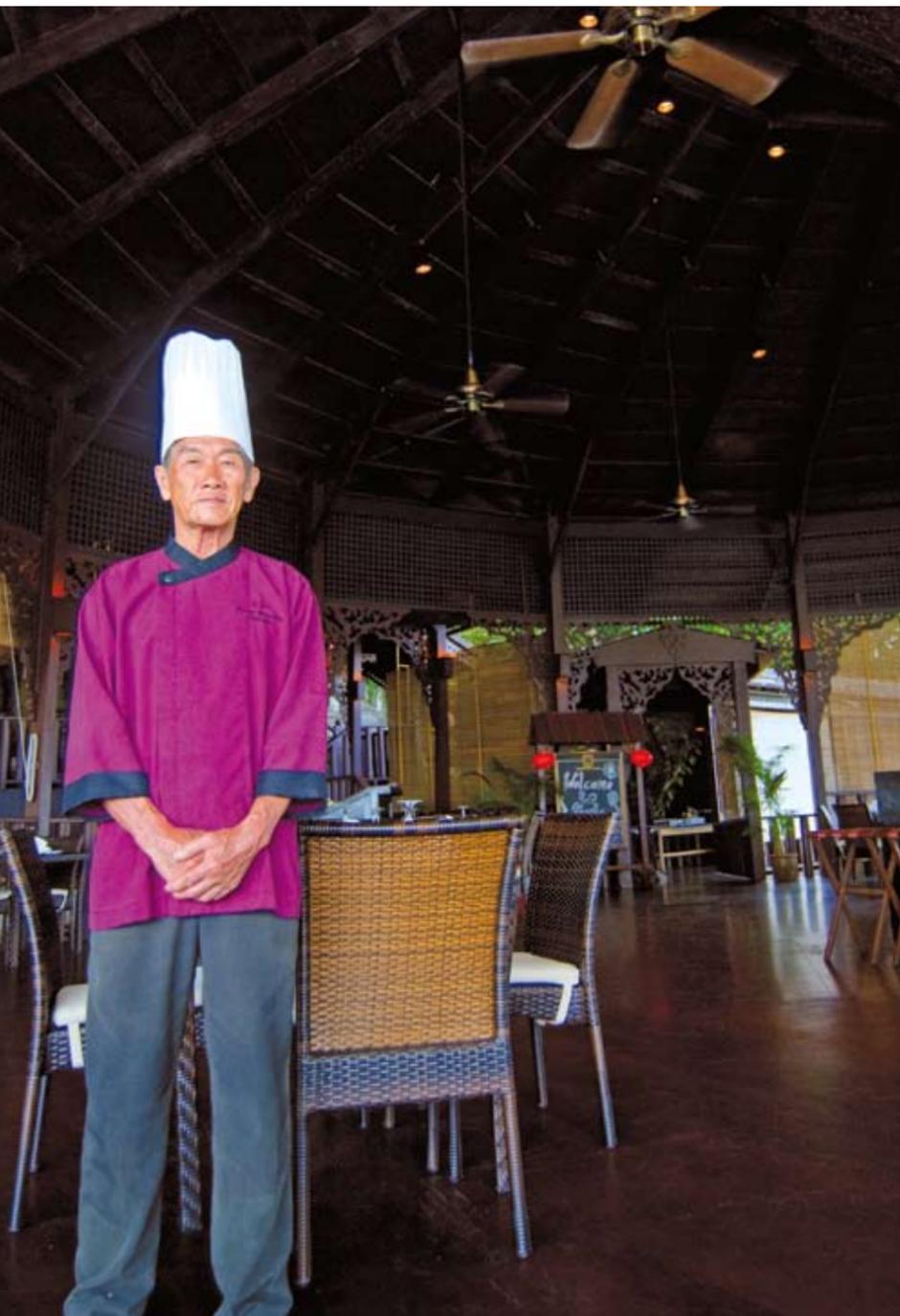
Fisherman's Cove, Pangkor Laut Resort is offering a range of special Christmas and New Year menus. For more information, contact the YTL Travel Centre at +603-2783 1000. Note: Chef Wai used to helm the celebrated Fisherman's Cove at Feast Village, Starhill Gallery, but has since returned to the flagship outlet at the exclusive one-island Pangkor Laut Resort.



THE CHEF WHO CAME AND NEVER LEFT

BESIDES GORGEOUS NATURE, STUNNING SEAS, STERLING SERVICE AND SCRUMPTIOUS SPA TREATMENTS, THE OTHER THING THAT IS A CONSTANT AT PANGKOR LAUT RESORT IS UNCLE LIM, THE OLDEST STAFF MEMBER ON THE ISLAND AND THE CHOPPER-WIELDING CHEF BEHIND THE CELEBRATED UNCLE LIM'S RESTAURANT

BY BELLE NG PHOTOGRAPHS BY ESMOND GOH



There's something about Uncle Lim's Kitchen that compels one to relax. The open-air restaurant boasts a panoramic view of the Straits of Malacca, red lanterns dancing gently in the breeze and huge rocks jutting out of the floor in the restaurant. Despite this magnificent setting, there is a warm and hospitable air which makes you feel that you have entered someone's home. Those boulders have to be seen to be believed and it illustrates just how the five-star Pangkor Laut Resort (which the restaurant calls home) is indeed "built in harmony with the environment". Sit down in this soothing ambience and it almost feels as if you are assured of a good Chinese meal ahead.

The man at the helm of his eponymous restaurant is none other than Uncle Lim. Immediately engaging and exuberant in his passion to feed, Uncle Lim has been at Pangkor Laut Resort since the Resort's inception and is easily the oldest and most respected member of staff on the island.

Born in Penang in 1935, Lim Fang Tat began working in the food and beverage industry in his teens, managing bars and restaurants for the British during the occupation. He later moved into hospitality, owning and running his own hotel, and it was then that his expertise was sought in the conception of the Resort on Pangkor Laut in the 1980s.

As the Resort began to expand he expressed an interest in developing

Uncle Lim's Kitchen, which remains a much-loved institution on Pangkor Laut Resort till this day. As a matter of fact, even the man himself is now somewhat of an institution on the island.

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU LOVE ABOUT WORKING AT PANGKOR LAUT THAT HAS KEPT YOU HERE FOR SO LONG? I've been here for about 24 years and I'm in no hurry to leave. I really like the atmosphere that we work in, the proximity to nature and being so close to Pangkor Island where I can go and peruse the markets and speak to the local fishermen for the freshest produce each day. It is this peaceful existence that inspires me.

HOW DID YOUR INTEREST IN FOOD DEVELOP? I began working in the food and beverage industry at a very young age when I found I had a natural affinity for food. I would go to a restaurant and discover a delicious dish, then go home and recreate it. Lots of trial and error, and instinctive experimentation eventually led to my portfolio of recipes, many of which I still use at Uncle Lim's Kitchen. Every one of our sauces is made from scratch from my secret recipes.

TELL ME ABOUT THE FOOD THAT YOU SERVE AT YOUR RESTAURANT, WHAT MAKES IT SPECIAL? We are well known for our Hock Chew and Nyonya specialities but we try and accommodate requests outside this sphere as well. For many years we had no menu at Uncle Lim's Kitchen, but we decided to finally have one printed to give guests an indication, but not limitation, of what we serve. I still like to go out and talk to each guest then create something personalised though. I think when you learn someone's preferences then concoct a dish from the best produce,

that makes the experience even more special, so then each dish is a signature dish!

HOW HAS PANGKOR LAUT RESORT CHANGED IN THE YEARS THAT YOU'VE BEEN WITH THE COMPANY? Oh it has grown in leaps and bounds! When I first got here there was nothing, it started as a small resort of less than 15 rooms and then it was expanded, rooms, restaurants, facilities added on, refurbishments done. Next thing I knew we were winning world-class awards and celebrities were visiting. I can only see it growing from strength to strength at this point.

WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL MEAL? Simple dishes I think, when prepared well, with the freshest ingredients are hard to beat. My parents moved to Malaya from the Chinese island of Hainan, and I've visited Hainan many times to rediscover my roots. I've found that I love the food there. Seafood is dominant and dishes such as Wenchang chicken with stir-fried vegetables and rice are my favourites, uncomplicated yet delicious. Maybe one day, if I retire from here, I will move to Hainan and open another restaurant. ■



SEAFOOD SENSATION



The Chinese autumn is apparently quite a sight to behold: clear blue skies and beautifully bracing weather. But any self-respecting gourmand would also know that it is the best season to enjoy fresh water hairy crab, a prized delicacy in Chinese cuisine. During the autumn season, it is thought that the crabs are at their most succulent.

Traditionally available during the ninth to eleventh month of the Chinese Lunar calendar, the best way to enjoy these specialty crabs in KL is at the award-winning Shanghai restaurant at JW Marriott Hotel Kuala Lumpur. Led by Chef Wong Wing Yeuk, his

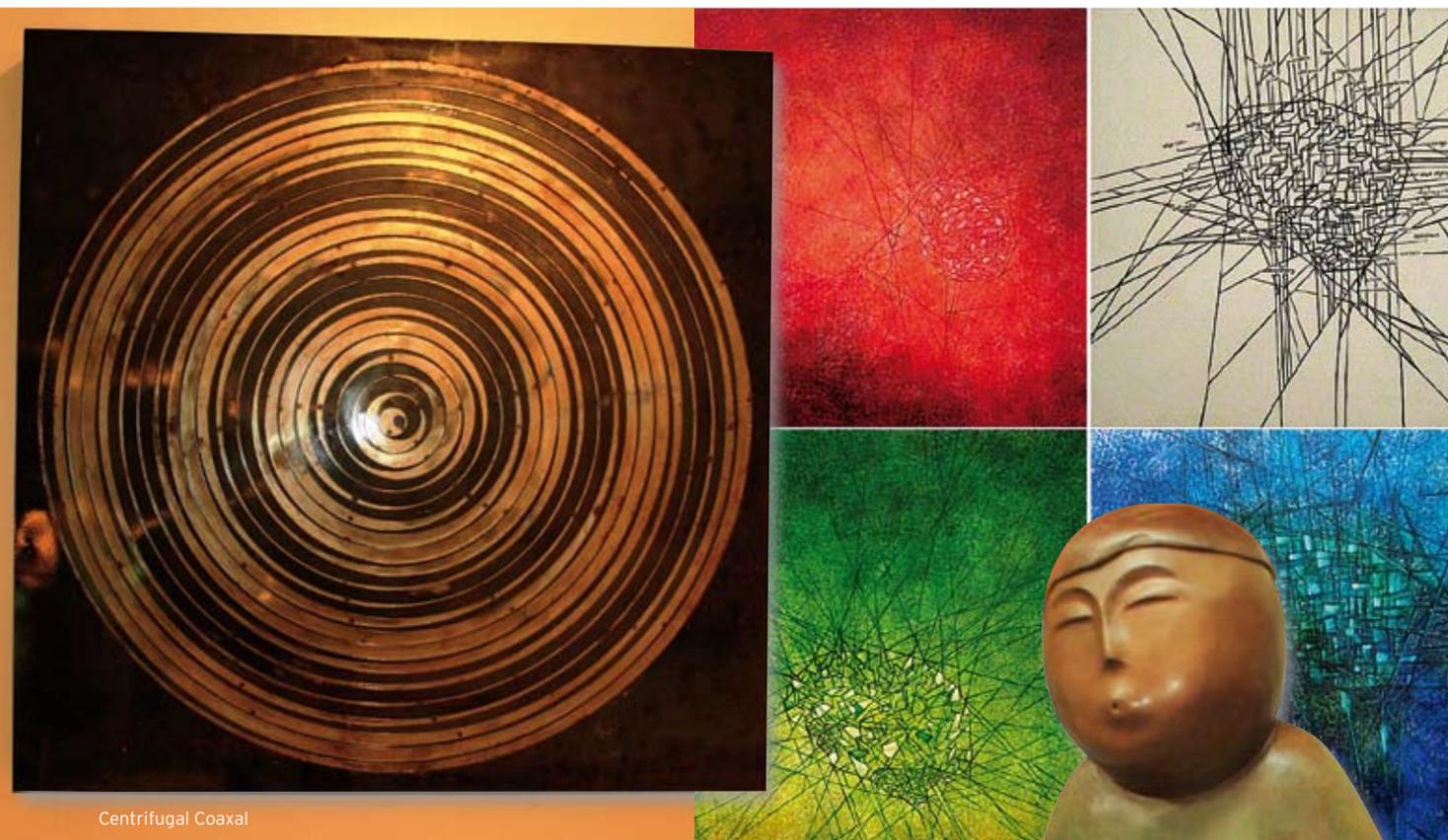
culinary team have created a wide variety of ways to enjoy hairy crabs whipped up Shanghai style of course. Chef Wong is a Shanghai native and this restaurant is the only place in KL city where you can enjoy authentic and exquisite Shanghaiese cuisine in a hotel ambience.

Shanghai is located on the First Floor of the JW Marriott Hotel Kuala Lumpur and is open noon-2.30pm and 6.30pm-10.30pm (Mon-Sat); from 10.30am-2.30pm (Sun and public holidays). The Shanghai Hairy Crab Experience ends Nov 2009. Call +603-2719 8288 for reservations.

ART ATTACK!

Sculptures and installation art take centre stage this October 2009 at the annual Starhill Gallery Arts Festival

Phillip Wong's 'Human Mind'



Line Series by Philip Wong

Centrifugal Coaxal

MEET 'BOY'. AND SAY HELLO TO "ROOSTER" AND "SWANS". Stare agape at "The Brain" or marvel at it all as you sit sipping coffee at the "Table". Actually, you may not have your coffee at this particular "Table", which is actually one of the many stunning exhibits that will be on display this October at part of the annual Starhill Gallery Arts Festival.

In 2009, one of the KL's premier luxury shopping destinations has chosen the focus on sculptures and installation art by Malaysian artists as the focus of the festival, which is a collaboration with the National Art Gallery. Themed "Passions", the festival will feature works by Eng Tay ("Boy"), Azahari Khalip ("Heart Series"), Phillip Wong ("The Brain") and Yusof Ghani ("Swans" and "Table"), who for the second year running will curate the month-long exhibition.

The works mentioned above will be displayed all around the inside of Starhill Gallery but new to this year's event will be outdoor exhibitions by artists Shafee Ramli ("Wood Steps") and Nur Hafiza Ali ("Leaf Series"), an effort by Starhill to further its cause of bringing the art experience to all Malaysians. The Starhill Gallery Arts Festival is fast becoming a mainstay on the Malaysian art calendar.

One of the major highlights for this year with the public display and viewing of the famous "Michelangelo, La Dotta Mano" (The Learned Hand), very likely the most beautiful book in the world but definitely the most expensive. The book was presented as a gift to Tan Sri Dr Francis Yeoh CBE by the Fondazione Marilena-Ferrari, Italy in appreciation of his worldwide contribution as a true patron of the arts.

With a cover that features an exact replica of Michelangelo's "Madonna of the Steps" carved from marble of the same Polvaccio quarries which Michelangelo himself used in his work, the handmade folios are created according to centuries-old tradition, while the book's measurements comply with the Fibonacci Sequence and the Golden Ratio that is used throughout the ages in architecture, sculpture and painting to represent the universal law of harmony. And for the first time, members of the public will get a chance to have a close up look at each of these exquisite folios as the festival will host scheduled viewing sessions where the book will be flipped page by page by an attending, errr, page-flipper (every hour of each day starting at 10.30am with the last session at 7.30pm).

The final element will take place at Starhill Gallery's resident

home of galleries and art shops, Muse Floor, which forms the nucleus of inspiration and imagination for the festival. Amongst the participating outlets are Art Seni, showcasing Phillip Wong's "Line Series", bronze works by Chin Wan Kee and wood hangings by Azahari Khalip. The Gallery @ Star Hill chips in with "Biring I and II" by Yusof Ghani, "Swirl" by Abdul Multhalib Musa, "Heron & Fish" by Suhaimi Fadzir, "Sea Series" by Mohd Asli plus creations of National Art Laureate Dato' Syed Ahmad Jamal, Raja Shariman, Mat Anuar, Ramlan Abdullah and Anthony Lau. Heng Artland presents a repertoire of paintings by French artists entitled "Romance & Beauty 2" featuring Alain Bonnefoit, Jean-Marie Zacchi, Maryvonne Le Diest, Claude Fauchere, Bernard Koawalczuk, Frederic Menguy and Zhu Qingtang while EDI. A Art will bring Koi fish interpretations to life through oil and mixed media on canvas.

Audience participation is further encouraged with interactive workshops and talks. "Sculpture" by Yusof Ghani will offer insight into the art of sculpting while Phillip Wong tackles the subject matter of art and its audience head-on with "How Art Relates to People". Those interested in bronze and wood as art mediums should not miss the talks by Chin Wan Kee and Azahari Khalip respectively. Finally, Fiona Kwok will attempt

to instill appreciation of art as created by Nature with "Conservation of Coral Reefs in Malaysian Waters" which will run in conjunction with House of Suzie Wong's "Treasures of the Deep" exhibition, featuring coral jewellery by Datin Nazlee Samad, underwater photography by Rizal Adnan and porcelain of junk wrecks by Karen Goh among others. ■

The Starhill Gallery Arts Festival 2009, "Passions", a celebration of sculptures and installation art will be held at Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, KL, from 1-31 October, 2009. For enquiries, call the Starhill Concierge at +603-2782 3855.

Boy by Eng Tay

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



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/

Intimate Experiences

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

Emerald Bay

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

Rainforest Revelations

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

Privileged Tranquillity

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

Integrated into the Environment

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

Sterling Service

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



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



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

The Spa Village

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

High on Golf

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

Taking Tea

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

The World's Most Innovative Spa

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

Diving off a secluded Island

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

The Heart of Malay Culture

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



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



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



Following the Path

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

Meditate upon the Stars

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

Cuisine Designed to Rejuvenate

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

The Peranakan Spa

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

Dining Sensations

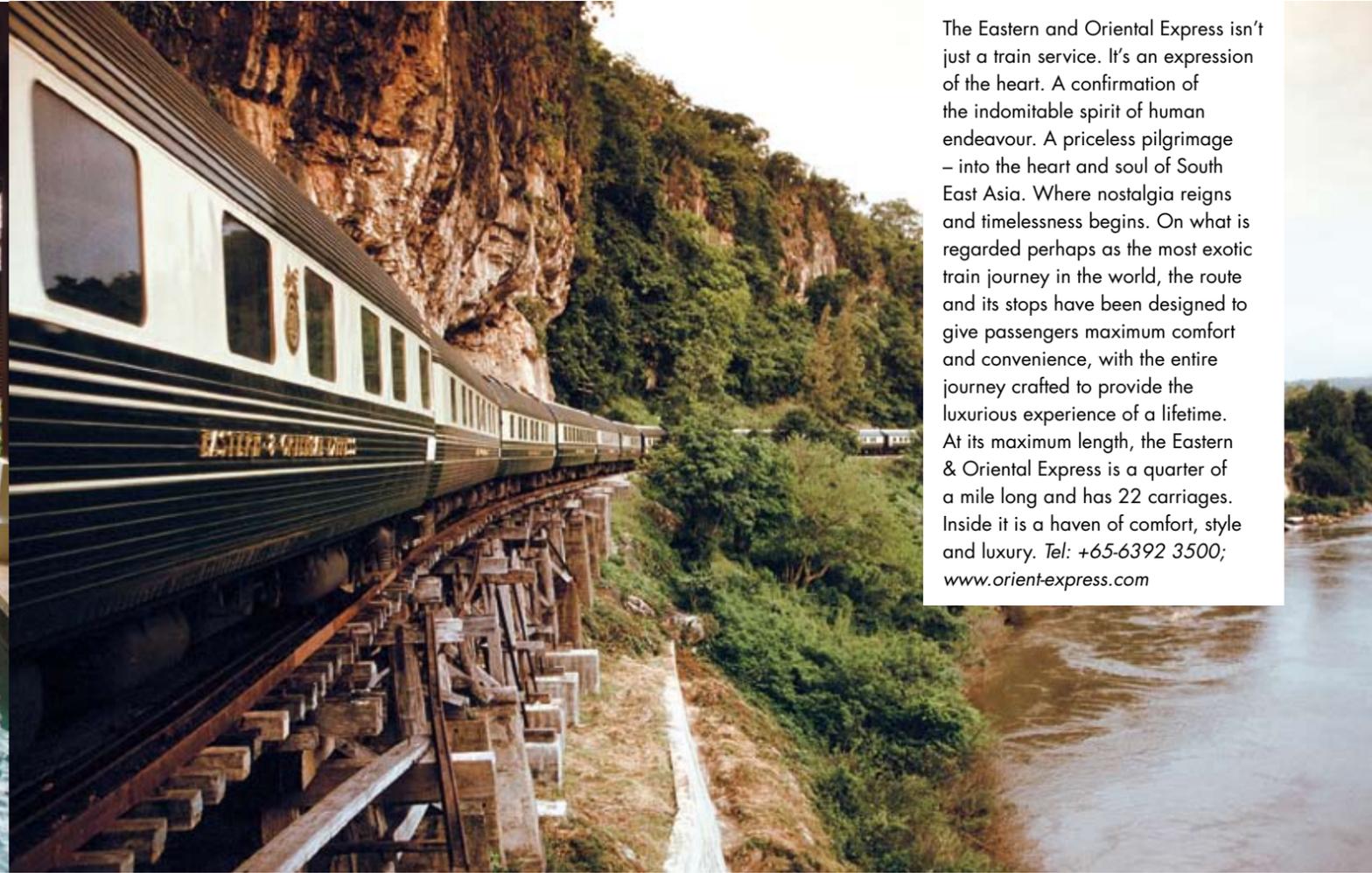
Malaysia is a country that is world renowned for the diversity and depth of its culinary options. And nowhere in the country is this more evident than the multicultural mix that is Malacca – the unique merging of cultures in this historic city has resulted in a novel marriage of cuisines, both Chinese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

A Haven of History

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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



Thai-Style

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

The Rarest Luxury

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

Island Activities

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

Ye Olde England

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

Culinary Excellence

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

Sterling Service

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



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



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



Starhill Gallery

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

Feast Village

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

The Residences at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur

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

The Carlton Conference Centre

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



THE TAMING OF MOSES

OUR RESIDENT LADY OBSERVES THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF A YOUNG CUBAN STALLION BY LADY CRISTAL CHAMPERS

THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS WERE GLORIOUSLY DIVINE in my 9-bedroom villa in Barbados along one of the finest beaches on the island. It is rumoured to be a stone's throw from Simon Cowell's pad but aristocrats do not mingle with showbiz. It's just vulgar and common, darlings, all that new money. Indeed some of the owners of the villas in that millionaire's enclave are lottery winners with all that brass but no class. It has really lowered the tone of the neighbourhood with orange-looking ladies in their fake tans and mega bling jewellery. They drink crass cocktails with mini-umbrellas and fruits on sticks and down champagne in wine glasses. Philistines! But my dear friend Estelle who is permanently marinated in champagne and vodka, was letting the side down by openly sunbathing topless. Although now married to an Arab billionaire, she hails from a working class background and old habits die hard I'm afraid.

Barbados was followed by a luxury cruise on Estelle's fabulous yacht in the Mediterranean and Lady Pru, newly divorced, is parading her latest young arm candy Moses on our annual summer frolic. Poor boy is completely overwhelmed by all this glitz and glamour. Moses is blessed with the dashing looks of Adonis but the social manners of a goatherd. Lady Pru is determined to transform him from streetwise to the manor-born and she has hired a team of etiquette gurus to school him in the ways of the lords. Plucked out of obscurity by a modelling agency a year ago from the streets of Havana among the hoi polloi, he was propelled into the dizzy world of high fashion but the hoity-toity world of the aristocrats and high society is totally alien to him. It is culture shock of the highest order.

When Moses was introduced to the country pursuit of clay pigeon shooting, he instead managed to bring down two of Lady Pru's prized white doves, much to her horror. Salmon fishing, the sport of the noble, is not a sport for the impatient and with hot Latin blood coursing through his veins, he preferred to spear the fish as he would have done in his native land. His fellow gentleman anglers nearly choked on the whisky from their hip flasks at this savagery.

Fine wine, gourmet food and table manners are de rigueur in blue-blood society and Moses was being trained by the finest sommelier and chef from Lady Pru's estate. Unfortunately, at the wine tasting, Moses gulped down every glass he sampled instead of spitting it out (as you

do). Completely sozzled out of his brain he then tried to kiss the head housekeeper Miss Danvers and forced her to do the salsa. A prim and proper spinster of strict up-bringing and who has served aristocrats all her working life, Miss Danvers is the embodiment of good breeding and immaculate behaviour. To be man-handled by a hot young Cuban with close body contact in risqué salsa moves did not amuse her... at least outwardly... but I think she secretly enjoyed it as she certainly took her time in extracting herself from the boy.

But the final straw for Lady Pru was when a Russian oligarch came to purchase one of her horses and mistook Moses for Lady Pru's son and insisted on match-making him with his own daughter, much to Lady Pru's consternation. She has now hot-footed to Los Angeles to have a facelift/nip/tuck with the top plastic surgeon in Hollywood to rejuvenate her looks and has issued Moses with her own 'ten commandments' to transform him from a lad to a lord. ■



ILLUSTRATION EDWARD MAK

S U C I M U R N I

Every breath is pure refreshment, a relaxation of the soul, a journey of revival.

In Malay we call this Sucimurni. In Malaysia it is Tanjong Jara.



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