

YTL *life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine

Deep Blue Allure

10 great reasons to visit Pangkor Laut Resort

Muse Hôtel de Luxe

Sizzling and sunny in St Tropez

Niseko

Adventure for all seasons

All Shook Up!

Shanghai's newest hotspot



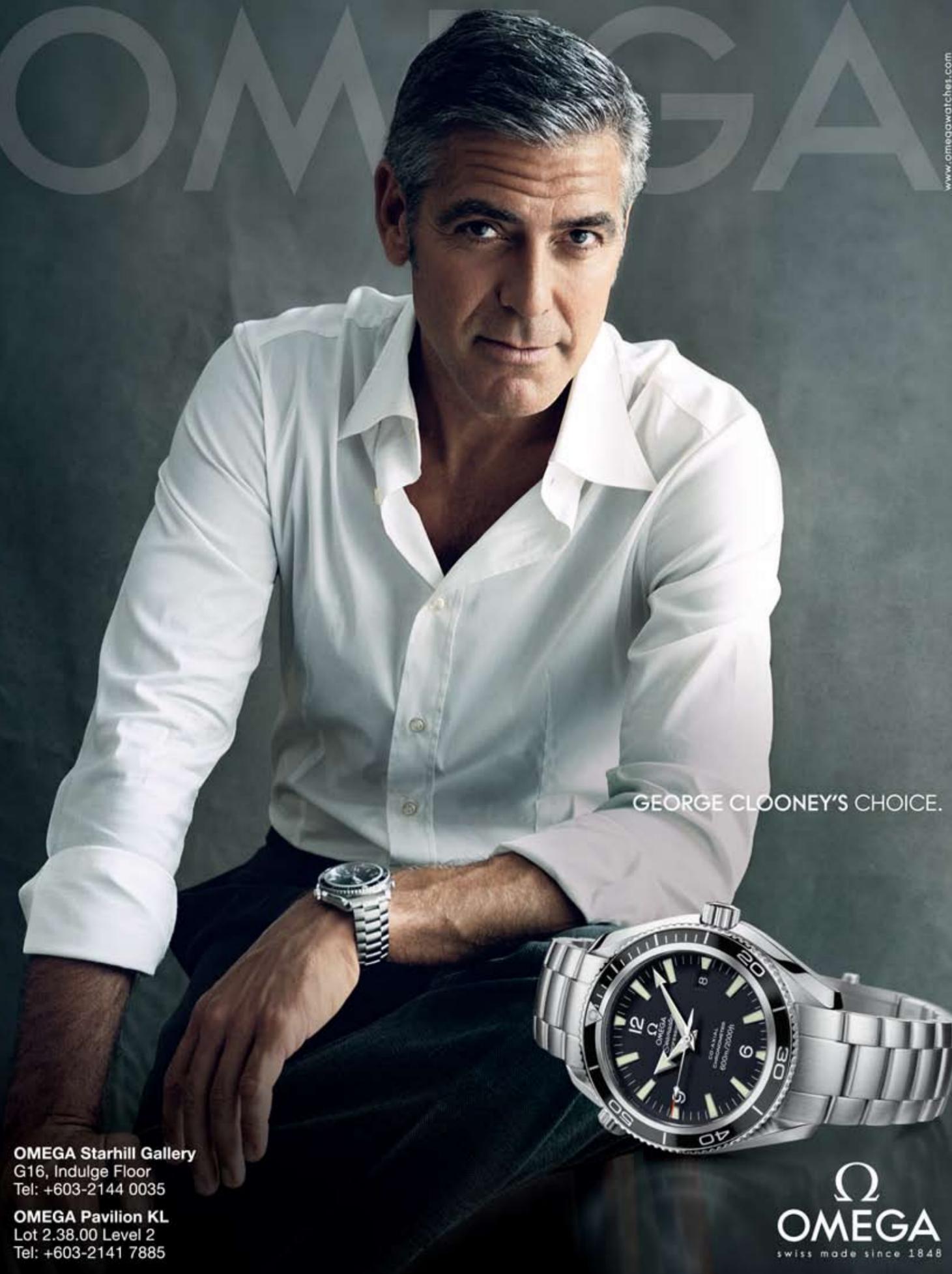
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The snowiest resort in the world emerges as the ultimate year-round destination

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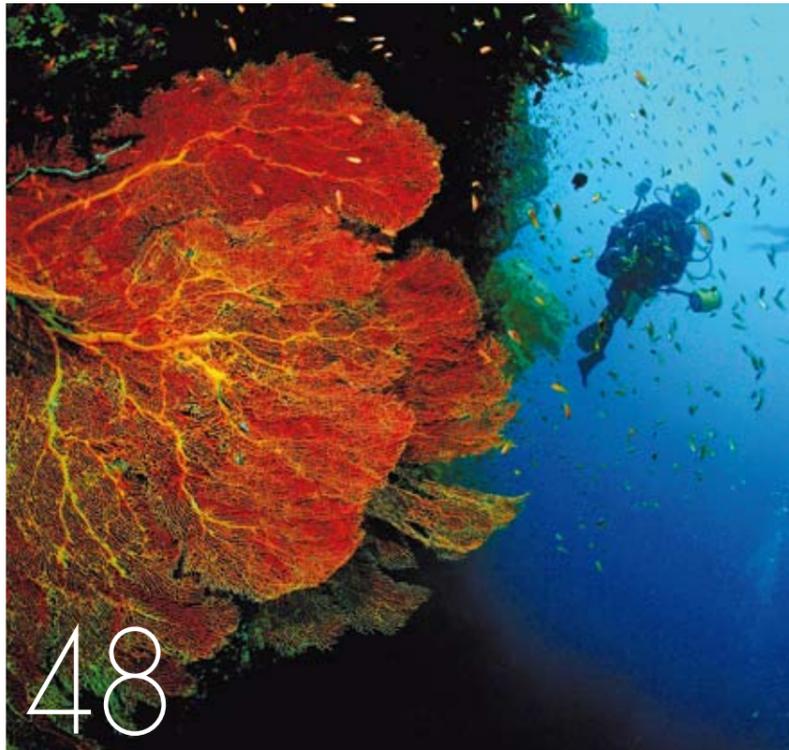


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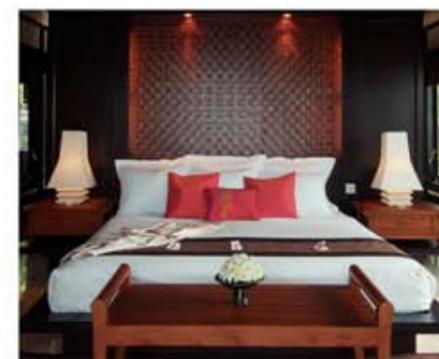
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At the new Spa Village Resort Tembok Bali, we use the finest ingredients on the island – including Bali itself.

The new Spa Village Resort Tembok Bali embodies the very essence of this mythical isle. Inspired by the award-winning Spa Village Pangkor Laut, it shares the same ethos of embracing the local culture, honouring ancient healing arts and infusing each encounter with the surreal beauty of its surroundings.

Nestled along northeast Bali's exotic coast of black sand, Spa Village Resort Tembok Bali is a secluded 31-room enclave that embodies the gentle spirituality of this magical isle. Here, every visit and healing programme is touched by the beauty and magic of Bali itself.



Our signature Discovery Paths focus on Balance, Creativity, Vigour and the Spa Village Academy. Our Lifestyle Cuisine is crafted to complete each unique experience. Spa Village Resort Tembok Bali - a YTL Luxury Spa Resort. To book your encounter, call +603 2783 1000 or visit www.spavillage.com



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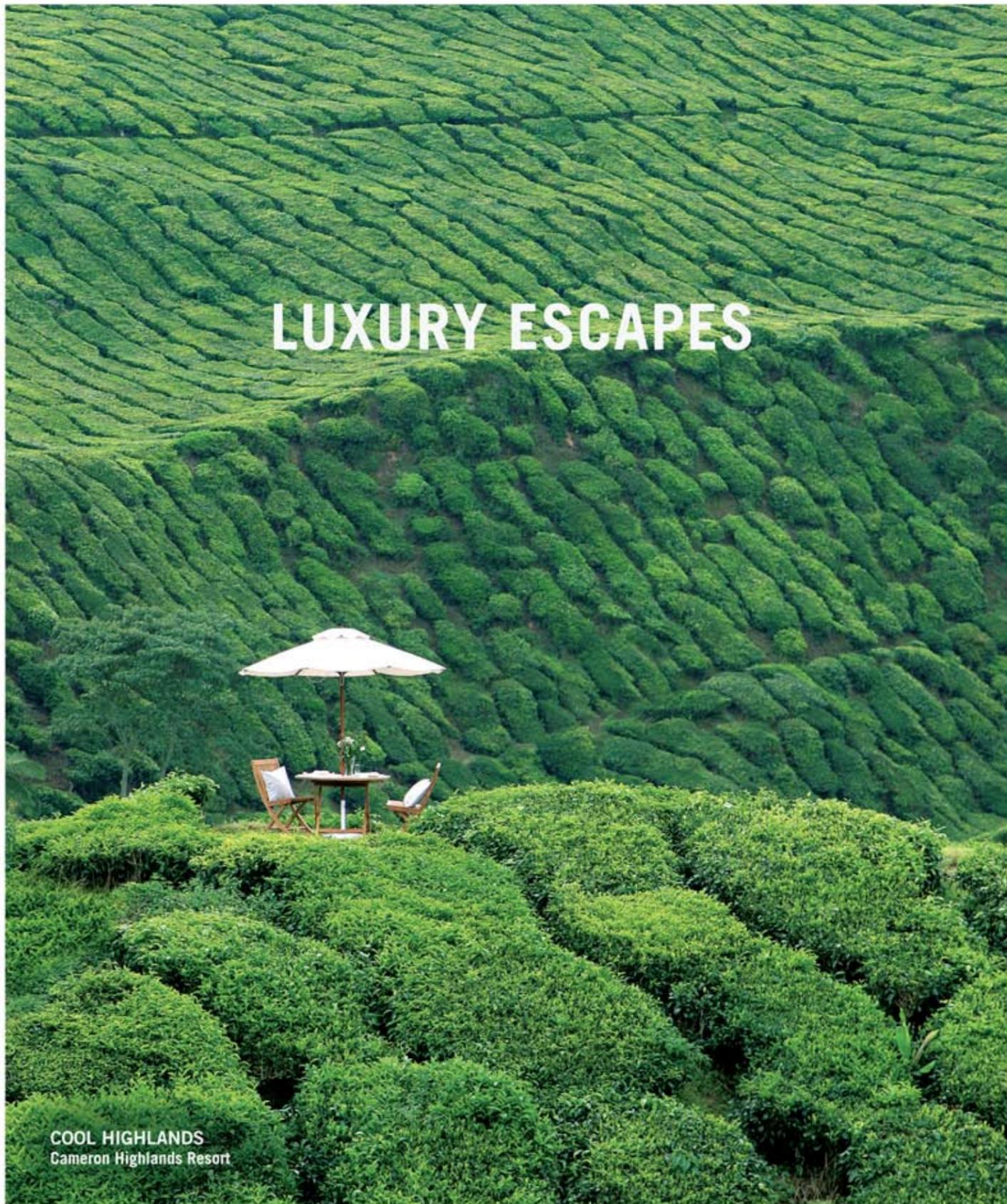
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TREASURED PLACES, TREASURED MOMENTS.

YTL *life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine

Published By

YTL Hotels
11th Floor, Yeoh Tiong Lay Plaza, 55,
Jalan Bukit Bintang,
55100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Produced By

Blu Inc Media Sdn Bhd
(Company No. 7408-K)
Lot 7, Jalan Bersatu 13/4, Section 13,
46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia
Tel: +603 7952 7000
Fax: +603 7960 0151
E-mail: ytlife@bluinc.com.my

Colour Separation By

Digiscan Services Sdn Bhd
No. 26, Jalan 4/62A, Bandar Manjalara,
52220 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Printed By

Percetakan Zanders Sdn Bhd
No.16, Jalan BK 1/11, Bandar Kinrara,
47180 Puchong, Selangor, Malaysia

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It is my pleasure to welcome you to the pages of the new look YTL *life*. In line with the company's vision to create unique and memorable experiences, this issue of YTL *life* extends beyond the hotels and resorts that have made YTL renowned, to embrace a wider world of travel, food, music, fashion, celebrity and the environment which we call home.

With a renewed focus on highlighting some of the world's greatest destinations and cultures, YTL's *life* magazine is just one of several enhancements, with the latest properties reflecting a growing desire to capture the authentic spirit of the destination and to respect its environment.

From the Editor....

With this new look we have created what we firmly believe is an *avant-garde* lifestyle magazine. And what better location than YTL's latest addition, Muse Hôtel de Luxe, in the immortal St Tropez for our inaugural issue. Muse is not just another luxury hotel. Muse is different; a rare, preserved gem in the heart of an ecological garden, where a few elegant suites lie hidden, where the ultimate Tropezian experience comes to life and where the smallest details weave into simply perfect moments. In fact Muse fits perfectly with YTL's heady mix of fabulous resorts in truly irresistible locations.

YTL *life* celebrates the fresh vibrant cuisine, relaxed ambience and *joie de vivre* of the French Riviera – the home of Matisse, Cézanne and many more celebrated artists and their muses. We explore the baffling lives and loves of these artists, and others who are all united by their endearing love of the South of France. No visit to the South of France would be complete without experiencing Grasse, the perfume capital of the world. We explore the heady world of fragrance – at once sexy, sophisticated, complex and always imbued with the mystery that has for centuries attracted us to scent.

YTL *life* visits another recent addition to its growing family, the Niseko Village, a picturesque village in rural southwest Hokkaido, Japan to uncover the eclectic menu of summer adventures that come to life once the last snows have melted and the skiers have moved on.

Elle Macpherson graces our pages from the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Kuala Lumpur and shows why she possesses much more than just 'the Body' as she shares her secrets to health, beauty, style, success and what it takes to be Britain's Next Top Model. And in the first of our new back page 'My Life' insiders, actress Anna Friel reveals the tastes, people, places and memorable moments that make her world so special.

We hope you get as much pleasure and inspiration from reading YTL *life* as we have in bringing it all together....

Salut!

Kate O'Brien
Kate O'Brien
Editor-at-Large



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Essence of Muse

Sleek, stylish and intimate, Muse Hôtel de Luxe evokes timeless French glamour with a very modern twist.

Text by **Kate O'Brien**

It all began with Brigitte Bardot: once St Tropez became her favourite beach haunt after the memorable *And God Created Woman*, the chic seaside town vaulted into the glamour stratosphere. Now Muse Hotel adds yet another tantalizing excuse to visit this extraordinary paradise.

An exceptional location and high-end design combine to make Muse the newest, chicest and hottest property in town. Situated on the Ramatuelle 'route de plages' road and nestled within an alluring landscape of terraced gardens, the elegant retreat comprises 15 luxurious suites (10 with pools), overlooking the magnificent landscaped gardens. The dreamscape is also just minutes from St Tropez Place de Lices, arguably the most stylish epicenter in the world.

Muse marks the first of YTL Hotels' global expansion outside of Asia and is dedicated exclusively to true lovers of luxury, comfort, sophistication, quality and the very essence of French glamour. Behind its fabulous exterior, this überchic property is led by General Manager, Celia Gumbau.



YTL Hotels is the hospitality arm of YTL Corporation Berhad. The Company owns and manages a prestigious award-winning collection of unique resorts, hotels and spas including the multi-award winning Pangkor Laut Resort in Malaysia. With their recent global expansion in St. Tropez, Shanghai, Niseko and Borneo, YTL brings a natural essence of culture, character and tradition to each destination embracing a range of truly luxurious experiences.



Each of the 15 impressive suites is designed as a private residence, complete with a secluded garden. Ten suites also enjoy private swimming pools



The Provence Cézanne painted and Camus wrote of with such passion remains resplendent to this day with tall cypress trees, shimmering meadows, quaint meandering villages, vineyards, remote valleys, fresh food markets and fields of lavender. The spirits of these artists and the world that inspired them and many others, are at the core of Muse, making it a haven of inspiration, intimacy and celebration.

With this in mind it was only natural that creating Muse would be a magnificent collaboration of some of the world's most notable talents: the renowned landscape architect Sophie Agata Ambroise; Alexis Mabille – the darling of the Paris fashion scene; Clément Bruno, the king of truffles; and the highly talented Chef Nicolas Le Toumelin. It is a result of the inspiration and nurturing of these dedicated artists that the ultimate Muse experience came to life.

Ambroise's previous project was the enchanting gardens of the Bulgari Hotel in Milan. With Muse she set upon an environmental and almost poetic adventure completely in tune with the environment, with luxury living in harmony with nature. "At first, imagining Muse meant dreaming of a space finding its rightful place in the tropezian landscape. I never conceived Muse as an enclosed garden. The surrounding land has a history and meaning with its footpaths braided with Bormes stones, its olive groves and a beautiful pine forest crowning the gently sloping land", says Ambrose. "Water is as necessary and precious to the land as blood is to the human body. I envisioned guests circulating harmoniously at Muse, so in designing the gardens I retraced the course of the original water torrent, from the pine forest to the sea to maintain this melodious flow."

By meticulously managing the water resources, Ambroise has created a sustainable masterpiece of 160 different plant species, some of which are fast disappearing from the French landscape. Biodiversity is maintained, with a rich palette of Mediterranean colours in intriguing shades of white, purple and grey to excite the eyes and maintain a sense of peace and harmony throughout.

Muse Suites

Each of the 15 impressive suites, designed as a private residence has a landscaped garden. Ten suites also enjoy swimming pools, allowing guests to enjoy precious private time in seclusion. Warm, creamy off-white and beige tones, subdued lighting and in-suite massage tables set the perfect ambiance for the most restful therapies. The spacious suites can also be transformed into party areas for guests to entertain friends and

indulge in the fine wines from the in-suite private wine cabinet while relaxing by their private pool.

Each suite is named after the muses to whom the hotel is dedicated, such as 'Edith' (Piaf) 'Catherine' (Deneuve) and 'Lauren' (Bacall). While each is undeniably individual in their décor and ambience, all share cool French stone floors, mamorino wall finishes and stylish cool finishings. Exclusive retro-chic furniture made-to-order and carved by the Henryot Company, is reminiscent of the elegant exuberance of the Art Deco period, but softened with fine, sensuous materials like linen, cotton and silk fabrics, all by Pierre Frey.

The luxurious bed linen, robes and towels are custom-designed by Christof Stranos using the softest, most luxurious Egyptian cotton, with subtle shades of ivory, cream and white which blend seamlessly with



Image from Alex Schneideman



Image from Hevea

the understated surrounds. The very latest in Wii, playstation and audio-visual equipment with an endless supply of DVDs and music is on hand to entertain even the most discerning experts. Each guest receives their personal iPad on arrival, complete with an eclectic selection of music, games and Muse contact numbers – all at the touch of a very chic button.

“M”

The Muse restaurant, simply named “M”, celebrates all things French with the very best of fresh, local mouth-watering cuisine. With the talented Nicolas le Toumelin at the helm, (formerly of One O One at the Sheraton, Knightsbridge and the Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai) an eclectic blend of ocean flavours and vibrant seasonal produce is assured. Add to this Chef Clement Bruno’s tantalizing menu of truffle delights and the result is the freshest of food, perfectly cooked and presented with the most exacting attention to detail (see page 103).

Muse Spa

The spa could not find a better home than Muse. In fact, its very concept was the basis for Sophie Agata Ambroise’s environmental project: a wholly ecological terrace garden with its own water supply leading to a perfectly integrated spa. Under the guardianship of Karine Rousselle’s wealth of hands-on spa

experience, the philosophy is simple - nothing but the power of touch and natural essences to create the most heavenly health and beauty rituals. So much so that the only visible signs of our high-tech world are the iPod and Bang & Olufsen speakers for guests to choose their preferred music.

True to this mission, the divine Amala range of skincare essentials is the product of choice. Completely natural, the range is created from organic wild-crafted ingredients blissfully free from any harsh chemicals to deliver clean, radiant skin every time. The striking ethical packaging alone is reason enough to use the products. Each facial is customized to guest’s skin concerns and includes the best hydrating and nourishing therapies for dry, windswept or ageing skins.

Hevea is another range of natural nourishing body oils that is used in Muse massage therapies and body rituals. The signature ‘*Bougie de Massage*’ experience is a clear winner. Using a special reduced melting point candle, the warm oil from the candle is gently poured over the body and massaged with long deep penetrating strokes to instantly relieve tension and invigorate all over. All treatments can be carried out in the intimacy of suites so guests will not be disturbed once the treatment completes.

Left: Hevea body oils are used in Muse Hôtel de Luxe’s massage therapies and body rituals
Top: Sophie Agata Ambroise, responsible for the design of Muse’s eco-friendly landscape
Next page: Myriad views of the hotel



Muse Fashion

Having worked with famed fashion houses Ungaro, Nina Ricci and Christian Dior, designer Alexis Mabille's unconventional but supremely elegant style proved a natural fit for Muse. "To create uniforms in a 'couture' state-of-mind seemed so innovative I could not resist," said Mabille who designed a Croisière collection of light, fresh and somewhat avant-garde uniforms for the hotel. The collection is a flawless fusion of elegance and comfort, beauty and function, modernity and tradition, with perfectly cut fabrics that wrap and move with the body, making them extremely comfortable yet undeniably chic. Bardot would surely approve.

La Piscine

It was in St Tropez, just minutes from Muse that Jacques Deray shot his cult film *La Piscine* (The Swimming Pool) in 1969 during which the most glamorous couple of the times, Alain Delon and Romy Schneider,

found true love. With such a rich romantic prelude, the 100 sq meters of ultramarine water nestled in the heart of the Muse gardens, is a not-to-be-missed experience. Light and refined cabanas veiled with diaphanous hangings are dotted around the pool providing a touch of intimacy and space to indulge in a heavenly massage, a manicure or to simply relax alone or with friends.

The stylish poolside bar has wonderful views over the gardens and surrounds and serves up comprehensive range of drinks from detox juices and smoothies and non-alcoholic cocktails to signature cocktails, wines and, of course, champagne. This is France, after all. Deliciously creative canapés add the pièce de résistance.

Butlers are on hand, forever discreet and always available to ensure the perfect guest experience – be it sun-cream, a favourite hard-to-find magazine, some refreshing

skewered fresh fruits, house-made sorbets or adventurous cocktails. Other novel Muse touches include Bentley shuttles to nearby beaches, private helicopter on demand to local airports or other preferred destination and access to the most exclusive restaurants and beach clubs acquired by the hotel's exceptionally well connected concierge team.

And so the legend lives on as St Tropez continues to exert its inimitable magnetism on all who visit – from stars and celebrities to renowned yachtsmen, fashionistas, gourmands and the simply curious. Muse Hotel epitomizes the spirit of the South, a unique mix of luxury, conviviality, intimacy and celebration and the ideal starting point for exploring the magic that is the South of France.

Scents of Muse

What do designer clothing, sunglasses, celebrity stylists, *haute epicerie*, spas and

resorts have in common? Customised scents, according to Parfum Cosmetic World renowned for their exquisite candles and other fragranced products created for high-profile clients such as l'Hôtel de Paris in Monaco, Fekkai, Vuarnet and most recently Muse Hôtel de Luxe. Last year alone 200,000 candles were made in this highly efficient factory outside Grasse, the perfume capital of France.

While candle-making seems relatively simple – basically blending base oils with wax – there is far more to the process than meets the eye says Angélique Klein of Parfum Cosmetic World. "A quality candle should not smoke, it should burn in its entirety (a small 75gm candle should burn for up to 20 hours) and the aroma should permeate the area," she says. And this, according to the expert, is the very reason that quality candles can cost up to 100 Euro each. What's more, the choice of wick is key too as some more delicate ingredients

may require a metal element in the wick to burn effectively. In simple terms, you get what you pay for. "To make the most from your candle," adds Klein, "let it burn for no more than two hours. Then cut the wick back before relighting."

The four scents created exclusively for Muse are; *Mer*, reminiscent of a breezy day yachting on the Med with the wind in your hair and the taste of the sea brushing your face; the deliciously sugary aromas emanating from *Gourmande*, comprising the sweet oils of vanilla and orange blossom with a zest of sugar; the cleansing notes of eucalyptus, lavender, geranium and tea tree in *Spa au Naturel*; and the dry herbaceous *Jardin d'Été*, with notes of pine, thyme and myrtle amongst other woody ingredients. Whether guests are enjoying the water, the spa and gardens, the hotel's delicious dining options or simply being with their Muse, these aromas assure warm, cossetting and glorious moments. ■

From its glamorous swimming pool to bespoke candles, Muse exudes sleek sophistication

The latest events, attractions and experiences at YTL Hotels.



01

Summer Feasts

For the third consecutive year, Starhill Gallery Midsummer Nights' Feast takes place from 2 – 9 July 2010. An annual "Starhill Gallery experience", the event brings together the art of good food and wine, paired with music and entertainment, to engage both the senses and intellect. Featuring world class dining experiences by YTL Corporate Executive Chef Kevin Cape as well as an all-star cast of renowned celebrity chefs including John Burton-Race, Stephen Mercer and Massimo Martina, this amazing culinary journey will tempt the palates of gourmands both in Kuala Lumpur and around the region. www.starhillgallery.com

02

Women Only

Tanjong Jara Resort's new 'Women's Getaway Programme' introduces a traditional Malay healing-themed stay for women. Activities revolve around a series of bespoke lectures, soothing spa programmes, informative beauty workshops and leisure activities. The exclusive itinerary also reveals ancient health and beauty secrets. Unique natural ingredients found in indigenous herbs and plants are used by resident Malay healers to deliver an unforgettable health and beauty experience with long-lasting benefits. Available from 8 – 12 November, priced at USD\$1,900++ and USD\$3,300++ for single and double occupancy respectively.

03

Jim Thompson Mystery Trail

Cameron Highlands Resort pays tribute to legendary Thai silk king Jim Thompson whose mysterious disappearance in 1967 remains unsolved. The American architect, revered for reinvigorating Thailand's modern silk industry, had a keen eye for beauty and a deep love of nature, 2 key elements that form the foundation of the 'Jim Thompson Mystery Trail', a trek led by the resort's resident botanist. Departing daily at 10am and 3pm (to coincide with the hour of Thompson's last known walk), it lasts two hours introducing guests to a range of fascinating indigenous plants such as wild orchids, vibrant rhododendrons, pitcher and exotic lipstick plants.



04

Say "I do"

Experience the romance of an exclusive destination wedding with YTL Weddings, now available in 4 stunning settings: Pangkor Laut Resort, Tanjong Jara Resort, Cameron Highlands Resort, and Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali. "We are very excited about our new micro-website that introduces four inspirational wedding themes at different locations, each with its own unique style that draws from the location," says Sarah Cairns, YTL Hotels Executive Vice President for Marketing and Communications. "We understand the needs of every bride to be special, so each and every wedding is individually crafted, making the experience completely yours."

05

At the Heart of Art

Discover your inner artist with Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali's Guest Artist in Residence Programme. Local and international artists provide expert guidance on a range of creative activities including painting, woodcarving, basket weaving, yoga, *Qi Gong* and lifestyle card reading. Performing arts such as drama, music and dance nurture creative expression and discovery through the beauty and colours of the Balinese arts. In this ongoing programme, artistic masters of their trades take up a month-long residency at the resort and provide their expertise in the daytime either in the art studio or the resort's stunning gardens, depending on the art form.

06

Hot Spring Heaven

Japan's most northerly island Hokkaido is renowned for its wide variety of volcanic hot springs set in stunning mountain and forest locations. Devotees of the mineral-rich waters head for the Hilton Niseko Village resort's iconic outdoor onsen to enjoy its uninterrupted views of Mt. Yotei. A Koi pond immediately adjacent to the traditional hot spring bath adds a serene touch to this ancient form of relaxation. The naturally heated thermal waters are reportedly therapeutic for skin and muscle aches.

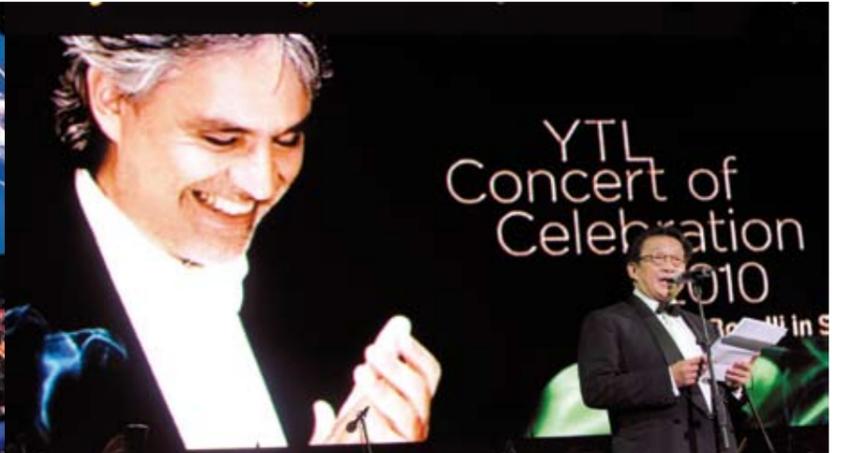
For more information on YTL Hotels' events and promotions, log on to www.ytlhotels.com



Classic Command

Legendary tenor Andrea Bocelli delivers a stirring performance at YTL Concert of Celebration 2010.

Text by **Mark Lean**



The lush Singapore Botanic Gardens proved the perfect al fresco venue for YTL's recent Concert of Celebration 2010, an evening of spectacular music under the stars with acclaimed Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli as the main attraction. In honour of YTL Concert of Celebration at the Botanic Gardens, Vanda YTL and Vanda Andrea Bocelli became the latest additions to a splendid showcase of VIP orchids, which are traditionally named after distinguished statesmen, dignitaries and celebrities. This is in celebration of YTL's flourishing friendship with Singapore and Bocelli being one of the most exciting voices in contemporary opera.



Accompanied by special guest performers Slovenian soprano Sabina Cvilak, world-renowned flautist Andrea Griminelli, the popular Australian chanteuse Delta Goodrem, and the Singapore Philharmonic Orchestra and Philharmonic Chamber Choir (conducted by Eugene Kohn), Bocelli worked his vocal mastery on the 12,000-strong audience and guest-of-honour, Singapore's President, S.R. Nathan.

Given Bocelli's rare performance in the island republic, it was no surprise that tickets, obtained





through an online balloting system, were overwhelmingly oversubscribed. The Italian star performed an inspiring selection of songs from Puccini in addition to the evening's crowd pleaser, "Brindisi" from La Traviata. Bocelli opened the second set with a glorious tribute to mothers, with the song "Mamma". His contemporary renditions of songs such as "Con Te Partiro" and the duet with Goodrem, "Can't Help Falling in Love", were particularly well received, as was his triumphant finale, a pitch-perfect rendition of "Nessun Dorma", from the opera Turandot. The tenor became blind at the age of 12 and was only discovered as an international star as late as 1992 when his unique talent was recognised by the late Luciano Pavarotti.

To cap off a perfect evening, YTL hosted an exclusive post-concert dinner where singers Stephen



Rahman Hughes, Wayne Perrey and Oliver Tompsett performed "Can You Feel The Love Tonight". Bocelli was clearly pleased to have lead the concert saying: "I love my friend (Tan Sri) Francis Yeoh very much and so I'm doing this for him. I can feel the love of Francis for me and the love of the people of Singapore, and it was a pleasure to sing for them ... Francis is a genius!"

YTL has staged free concerts for the public since 1994 in support of the arts. The series of concerts, staged in various international cities, has featured some of the world's most prominent artists, including Russell Watson, Jose Carreras, Placido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti.

life style //

Starstruck

The glitter of perfectly-cut diamonds is artfully showcased against a variety of precious metals, luxurious leathers and unique finishes.

Photography **Soon Lau/Show Up Pictures Studio** Styling & Coordination **Sarah Saw**
All watches and jewellery available at **Starhill Gallery, Kuala Lumpur**



Clockwise from top:

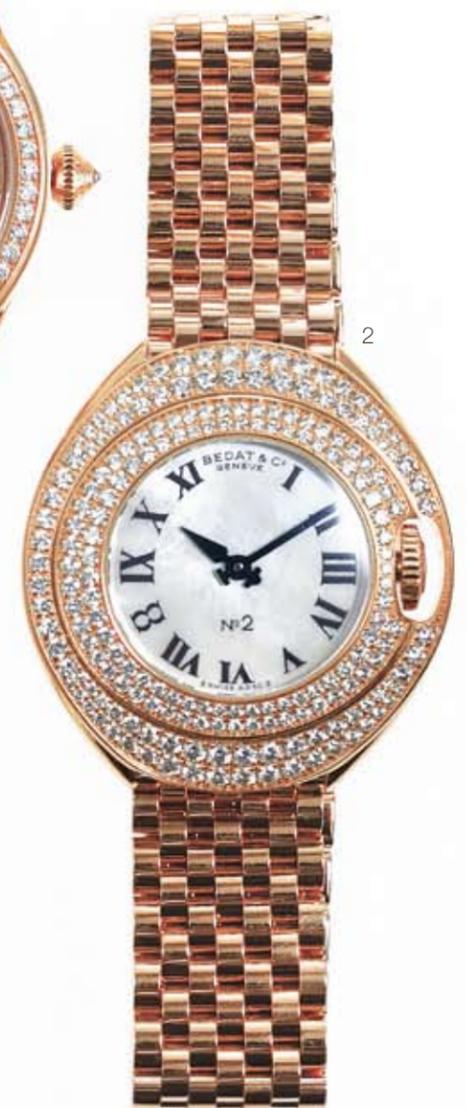
1. Carrera y Carrera Gardenia yellow gold ring with crystal centrepiece, RM18,700. 2. Bedat & Co. No. 2 bracelet watch with rose gold case, diamond bezel and mother-of-pearl dial, RM126,200. 3. Jaeger Le-Coultre Master Twinkling Marqueterie pink gold watch with satin strap, RM169,000



Luxurious Gold

Clockwise from top:

1. 18-carat rose gold chain and pendant with diamonds from the Omega Griffes Collection, RM5,850 and RM5,200. 2. Rado Sintra Gold Jubile bracelet watch with diamonds, RM11,310. 3. Omega Constellation pink gold watch with white dial, diamond index and bezel, and leather strap, RM68,300



Ivory Tales

Clockwise from top:

1. Armand Nicolet watch with TL7 complication stainless steel, diamond bezel and white leather strap, RM68,640. 2. Jaeger Le-Coultre Reverso Squadra Lady Duetto pink gold watch with diamonds and white leather strap, RM128,000. 3. Korloff square dial ladies' watch with diamonds and white satin strap, RM14,600



Opposite page

(clockwise from top):

1. Lady Korloff white gold ring with diamonds, RM27,700. 2. Roger Dubuis watch with square dial, rose gold bezel and white leather strap, RM118,000. 3. Bedat & Co. No.2 watch with stainless steel case, diamond bezel, mother-of-pearl dial and white leather strap, RM65,400. 4. White gold diamond link rings from the Omega Griffes Collection, RM7,800 and RM17,250. 5. Lady Korloff pendant with white gold and diamonds, RM43,700



The Darkest Hour

Clockwise from top:

1. Carrera y Carrera Gardenia white gold ring with onyx, RM14,400.
2. Rado Sintra Skeleton automatic black bracelet watch, RM23,680.
3. Omega Seamaster Co-Axial Planet Ocean watch with diamond bezel and black leather strap, RM58,650.
4. Carrera y Carrera Gardenia white gold earrings with onyx, RM16,500.
5. Davidoff Lady Quartz watch in rose gold with black dial, diamonds and satin strap, RM35,500.



Clockwise from top:

1. Van Cleef & Arpels A Day in Paris ring in pure gold and diamonds with black lacquered finishing, RM20,100.
2. Corum Admiral's Cup Chronograph 40 Diamonds watch with diamond bezel and black rubber strap, RM42,700.
3. Richard Mille white gold watch with diamond bezel and black leather strap, RM313,000.
4. Armand Nicolet S05 Titanium D.L.C. Black Treatment Chronograph watch with complete calendar and black leather strap, RM24,288.
5. Van Cleef & Arpels Vintage Alhambra yellow gold long chain necklace with Onyx 20 motives, RM36,850.





A Very French Love Affair

There is something about France – possibly the pure air, the charmed countryside, the *avant-garde* society, the way of life – that was the catalyst for love and inspiration amongst some of the greatest artists of the Western world, and their

Text by Ed Peters

It was, of course, Salvador Domingo Felipe Jacinto Dalí i Domènech – surrealist artist, filmmaker, photographer, sculptor and consummate show-off – who declared: “Every morning upon awakening, I experience a supreme pleasure: that of being Salvador Dalí.”

Lesser mortals can experience a similar thrill – that of waking up in the South of France, where the light of dawn is endowed with an exceptional clarity that has inspired artists through the ages. And beyond the confines of their studios, painters, photographers – indeed, artists of all stripes – have found the sunny ambience of their surrounds as conducive to love as to work, though the two were often practically indistinguishable.

The French artist Paul Cézanne is often credited with providing the bridge between the Impressionism of the late 1900s and Cubism, which took the art world by storm in the early 20th century. Both Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso avowed that Cézanne “is the father of us all”. Equally significant, it was a move to the South of France, specifically to the family manor house at Jas de Bouffan, that brought Cezanne out of a dark period that had been characterised by painting subjects such as rape and murder.

Cliché though it is, Cézanne truly blossomed under the southern skies, financially stable thanks to his late father’s legacy and having married his long-time mistress, Marie-Hortense Fiquet, who was also the mother of his only son. The

relationship was not to last, but the years spent in Provence marked Cezanne’s most productive period when he painted a range of still-lifes and landscapes, employing his trademark planes of colour and small brushstrokes to build up complex fields of vision. His chief legacy was his exploration of geometric simplification and optical phenomena, which eventually led to the development of Modern Art. But it is possible that none of this would have happened had he not moved to Provence with his inamorata.

Just as Cézanne fled Paris for sunnier climes, so too did his student, Matisse, who set up on the Riviera at Cimiez outside Nice in 1917 and spent much of the rest of his life there. Matisse had come to painting by chance some two decades earlier, while convalescing from appendicitis, and promptly classified it “a kind of paradise”. Once established in the South of France, Matisse flourished. One of his former models, the Russian Lydia Delektorskaya, nursed him when he fell into ill health, while another – who had since become a Dominican nun – collaborated with him in designing the interior, windows and decorations of the *Chapelle du Rosaire* in the small town of Vence. And it was in the South of France that Matisse embarked on his series of blue nudes, cut-outs that he dubbed “painting with scissors”, which more than anything else, showcased his ability to combine an eye for colour and geometry.

The magic of Matisse who made his name in the South of France

There's probably no single answer to the question of why artists have such complicated love lives, and all the more so in France. Perhaps it's something subliminal – waving that brush tipped with paint about the place; or maybe it's having a legitimate excuse for getting the opposite sex to take all their clothes off in the course of a day's work; or possibly they just have better chat-up lines. Try and come up with a better suggestion for romance than Picasso's heroic dictum that "love is the greatest refreshment in life."

Rarely has a man followed his own advice more assiduously, nor helped himself to a reviving tonic more frequently. Born in Spain, Picasso first visited Paris – then the capital of European arts – in 1900, and France was to become a second home for the rest of his tempestuous life. He managed to father (at least) four children with three different women, laughed in the face of marital fidelity, and skipped from one woman to another with the facility and insouciance of a child playing hopscotch.

Once two rival mistresses, Marie-Therese Walter and Dora Maar (herself a photographer and painter) met accidentally in Picasso's studio while he was working on his Cubist masterpiece *Guernica*, which depicted a Nazi air raid during the Spanish Civil War. Picasso remarked later that he had been unperturbed by the situation and that when they had insisted that he choose

Enter the world of Picasso and his muse Dora Maar

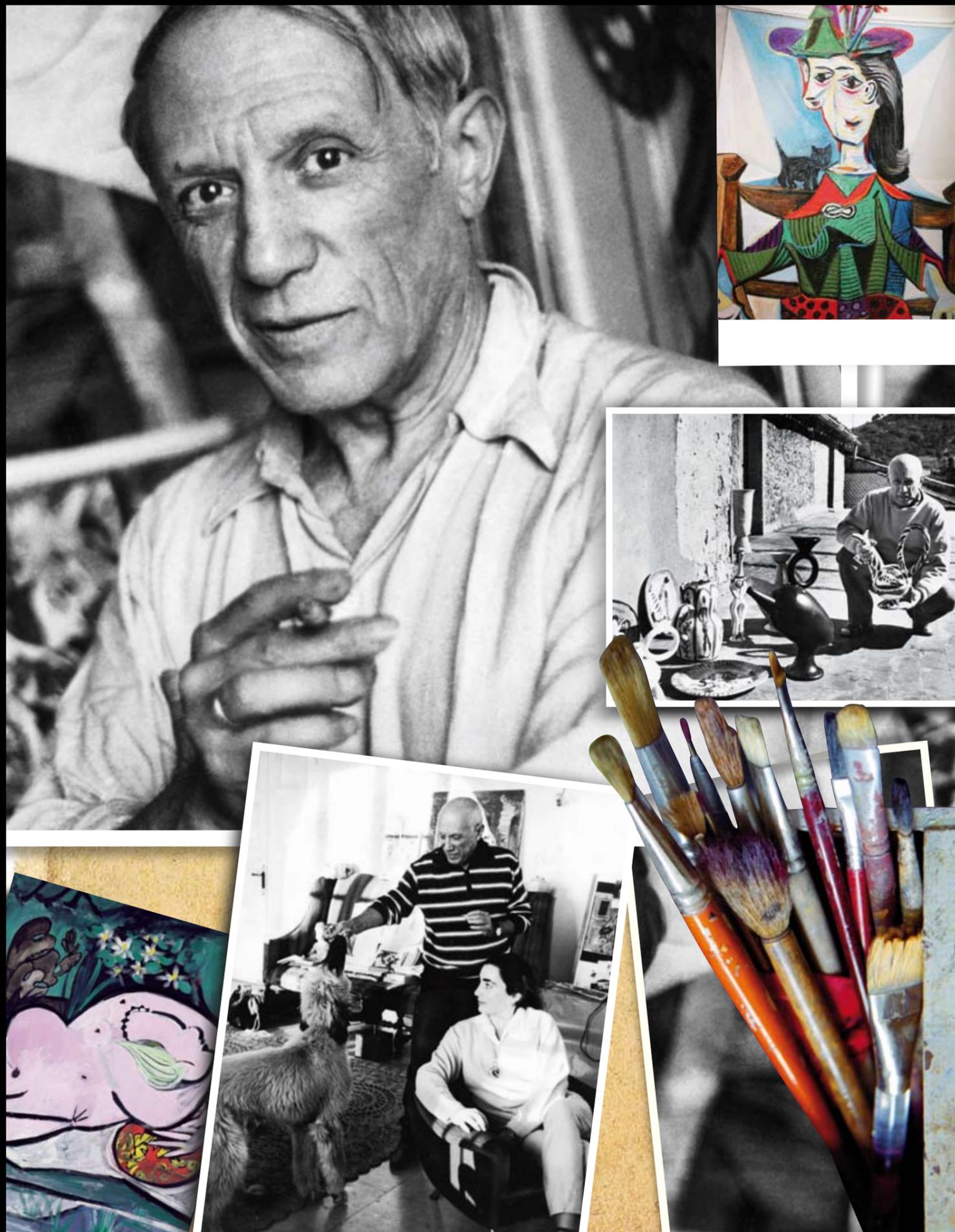


between them, he told them they would have to fight it out between themselves. The two women promptly began to wrestle. That Picasso described this "as one of his choicest memories" says more about the man than many of his paintings.

Picasso may have been a prolific lover, but he matched his efforts in that direction with an output that totalled more than 1,800 paintings, 1,200 sculptures, 2,800 ceramics, 12,000 drawings, and myriad prints, tapestries and rugs. His final words "drink to me, drink to my health, you know I can't drink anymore" – uttered to friends at a dinner party at his home outside Cannes – were enshrined in song by Paul McCartney, and provided a fitting tribute to someone who had transmogrified the world of art, and broken a few hearts in the process.

His legacy lives on, not least in the stunning sums his works still command, rating them among the most valuable in the world. His 1932 painting of Marie-Therese – *Nude, Green Leaves and Bust* – was auctioned for US\$106.5 million in New York in May 2010. A few weeks later his *Le Pigeon aux Petits-Pois* was one of five masterpieces lifted from the *Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris*, demonstrating that if nothing else, France's love affair with Picasso is as strong as ever.

Posterity has dealt less kindly with Dora Maar, sometime lover of Picasso – who left her a house in Provence in his will – but was an important artist in her own





right. Of Croatian Jewish descent, Dora was born in France and in the inter-war period developed her skills as a commercial photographer while making a name for herself in the *avant-garde* art and photography circles in Paris.

She had a genius for granting the most ordinary subjects – a beggar or poverty-stricken children – with a haunting dignity, and shone at devising Surrealist collages with distinctive clarity and emotional directness. But it was after she became Picasso's lover that she achieved her real fame, specifically with photographs of *Guernica* as it was being painted, together with portraits of the artist himself. Sadly for Maar, she is still best remembered as the subject of Picasso's *Dora Maar au Chat*, which, incidentally, sold for US\$95 million at auction in 2006.

Maar met Picasso in 1936 on the terrace of the celebrated *Cafe les Deux Magots* in Paris, when they were introduced by the poet Paul Eluard – one half of yet another pair of Gallic and artistic lovers. To add to the web of intrigue, his first wife, Gala, left him for Salvador Dali. Eluard, already an established poet and leading light of the Surrealist movement, found salvation and solace in the form of Maria Benz, who had been nicknamed "Nusch" by her father.

The phrase "chequered history" barely describes Nusch's life pre-1930 and her meeting with Eluard. Born in Germany, she had come to France as a small-time actress and show girl, variously performing as an acrobat and hypnotist's assistant. Within four years she and Eluard, who was bewitched by her delicately sensual charm, and transported by her ethereal grace, had married, but more importantly she was modelling for him as well as for Picasso. She worked with Eluard on photomontages, and was

the subject of a collection of his poetry, *Facile*, which was illustrated with nude photographs of her by Man Ray.

Tragically, Nusch died young of a brain haemorrhage in the street in Paris, but remains one of the prime muses of the Surrealist movement.

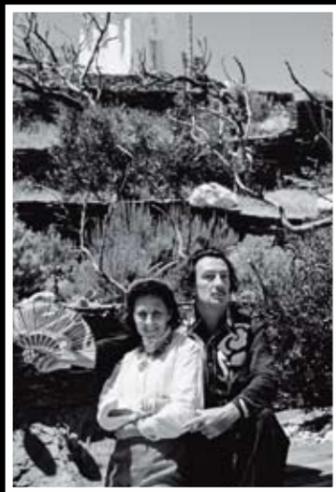
Visitors seeking out one of the more distinctive graves in the main cemetery in Montparnasse in Paris will be confronted with the epitaph "Unconcerned, but not indifferent". Here lies Man Ray, or Emmanuel Radnitzky, an American photographer with a heart that was solidly French and a mind that embraced the world. He is buried with his wife, Juliet Browner, but in the heady days of the 1930s, Ray's name was more closely linked with that of Lee Miller, a fellow American who had travelled to Paris specifically to become his apprentice.

Ray's first reaction was to state he didn't want an apprentice. However, Miller soon persuaded him, progressing rapidly from photographic assistant to lover to muse. Miller had soon mastered his art, to the extent that many photographs credited to Ray were actually taken by her, and together they reinvigorated the photographic technique of solarisation, turning light areas on a negative dark, and dark areas light. Such a device could have been tailor-made for Surrealists, and the pair remained leading lights of the movement for many years.

Ray experimented with other art forms, including directing a number of short *avant-garde* films, before dying in Paris in 1976 at the age of 86. It could be said that a more fitting epitaph was provided by his niece and protégé, the artist and photographer Naomi Savage, who said: "With him you could try anything – there was nothing you were told not to do, except spill the chemicals. With



Clockwise: Dora Maar; Paul Eluard and Maria Benz; Lee Miller; and Man Ray



Man Ray, you were free to do what your imagination conjured, and that kind of encouragement was wonderful."

But perhaps one of the most startling relationships between artist and muse existed between a young fashion model called Amanda Lear and Salvador "How Marvellous to Wake Up and Be Me" Dalí. In the mid-1960s Le Castel was one of the hottest nightspots in Paris, and it was to its raucous, Stygian depths that the 20-something French model Lear repaired one winter's evening with her then boyfriend Tara Browne and Rolling Stones guitarist Brian Jones. Here she was introduced to Dalí. The age gap was around four decades, the attraction -both lustful and a meeting of the minds - instantaneous, and the resulting affair was to last more than 15 years and fascinate and horrify society in equal measure.

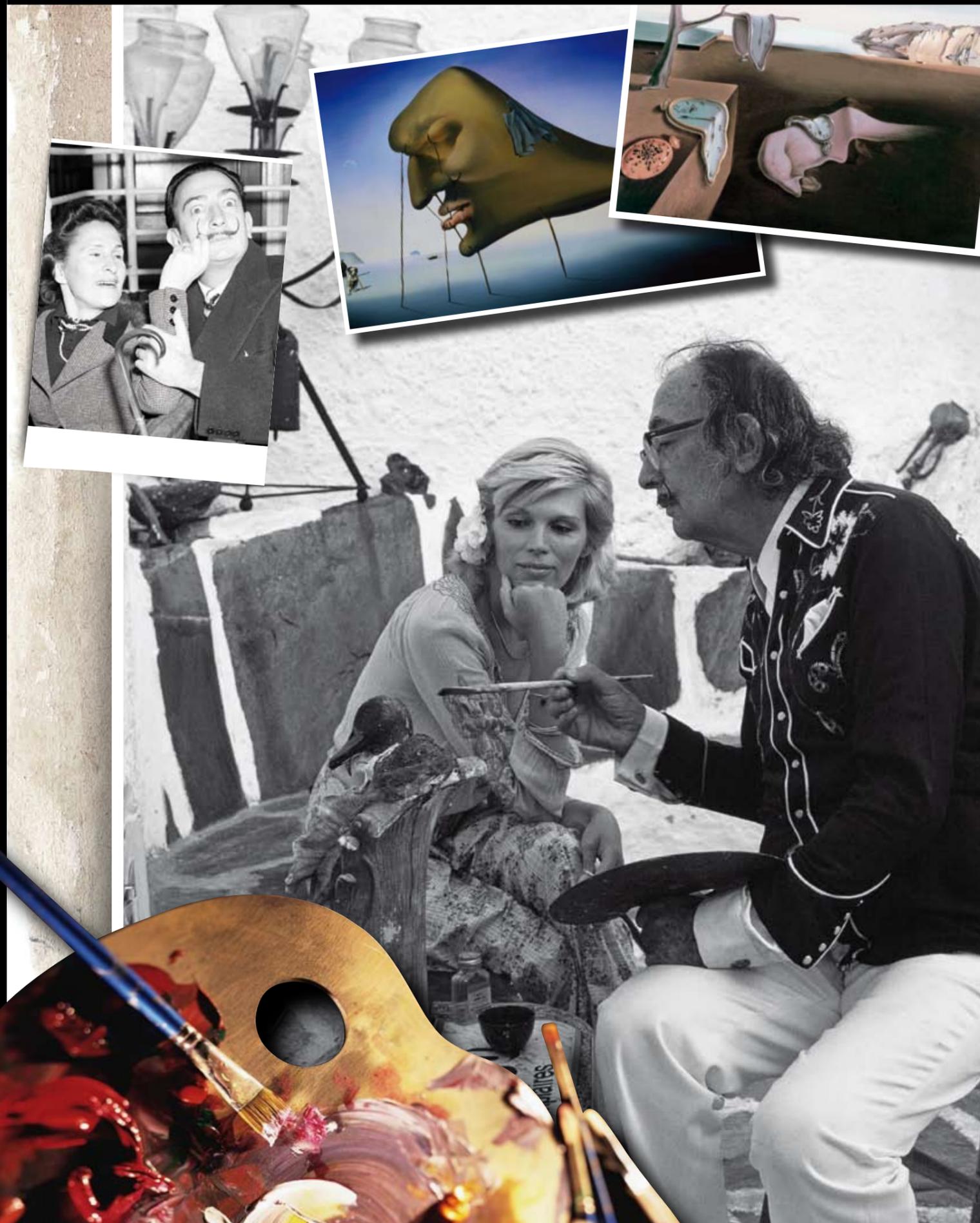
Dalí took on the role of mentor to Lear, and she accompanied him on trips across Europe and to New York, as well as spending every summer at his house in Catalonia. That Dalí's wife, Gala, was also in attendance speaks volumes about the provenance of the relationship. All three seem to have benefited: Dalí, from having a pliant pupil as well as a much younger lover; Lear from the intellectual and social opportunities that her association with the art world's veteran *enfant terrible* automatically granted; and Gala, as Dalí's more mischievous energies were now absorbed by someone who she felt could never be a true rival.

Lear wrote extensively about what she described as her "spiritual marriage" with Dalí. With him, she explored the great museums of Europe, Parisian salons and restaurants, the wilder aspects of New York society as well as his homeland, and in particular the Catalan culture. In return, she led Dalí on a merry dance among the

younger generation of the counterculture in art, fashion, photography and music that was then making London - in the parlance of the day - "swing". In her memoir, *My Life with Dalí*, Lear wrote: "I knew nothing when I first met him. He taught me to see things through his eyes. Dalí was my teacher. He let me use his brushes, his paint and his canvas, so that I could play around while he was painting for hours and hours in the same studio. Surrealism was a good school for me. Listening to Dalí talk was better than going to any art school."

The affair had an interesting - and unique - denouement. Lear had pursued other romantic attachments during her association with Dalí, and in 1979 she married the somewhat dissolute French aristocrat Alain-Philippe Malagnac d'Argens de Villele, three weeks after meeting him in a discotheque. Both Dalí and his wife were horrified, an unusual state of mind for either of them, and attempted, in vain, to persuade Lear to have the marriage annulled. But the pupil had outgrown her mentor, and Lear and her upper-class husband enjoyed professionally successful lives and careers together until his death in 2000. Dalí and his muse met just once more before he died, the final act in a fabled romance that had been drawn out over two decades.

The lives and loves of French artists, and artists who have fallen in love with France, or come to France and fallen in love, are many-layered and sometimes almost baffling in their complexity. Yet despite their disparate existences and talents, they are unified by having found their muse in France. As even that rather gloomy mega-moustachioed German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche had to admit: "As an artist, a man has no home in Europe save in Paris." ☒



Salvador Dalí; his wife, Gala; and his muse, Amanda Lear



On the Wild Side

In a remote area of India's Rajasthan, a small community of women has willingly paid the ultimate sacrifice in their effort to save wildlife.

Text and photography **Subhash Sharma/TCS**



As an injured baby deer writhes in pain, it is gently lifted by an old Bishnoi woman who comforts it, stroking it maternally and feeding it by hand with a milk bottle. The hungry deer gulps mouthfuls, and soon starts wagging its tail in excitement, to the cheers of everyone gathered around.

This is the village of Jajiwai Dhora, near Jodhpur in Rajasthan where local villagers had brought the deer to the Bishnoi Ashram and Temple complex. Here, injured animals are treated, nursed back to health, and released again into the wild thanks to the efforts of local women who voluntarily arrive each day to tend to the injured creatures. They bring milk bottles, feed and dress the wounded, and clean the sheds.

Swami Vishudanand, Ashram administrator and priest, is full of praise for the selfless dedication of the women. "There was a similar incident about a year back," he says. "Another baby deer, now named Pooja ('prayer') was born here when its injured mother was rushed here by the locals. They had rescued her from the wild dogs that were mauling her. It was soon found that she was pregnant, but after delivering the baby she did not survive, and since then Pooja has been cared for by the local Bishnoi women.

"Over time Pooja has become so attached to the Ashram that every now and then it returns from the wild and can be seen lingering in the compound as if it was its home," he adds.

The Bishnoi women are renowned for their compassion for the local wildlife

Bishnoi women are known for their love for the environment and nature in the Indian state of Rajasthan, and in neighbouring states. The Bishnoi sect was founded by Guru Jambheshwar (born 1451) after a drought in the region. According to legend, Jambhaji (as he was known) had a strong bond with nature, and the prolonged dry spell encouraged him to seek protection for all animals and plants. He had a vision the drought had been caused by people's interference with nature.

Over time Jambhaji formulated 29 principles of morality and conduct, which stipulated that no trees were to be felled and no animals could be hunted, as both were considered sacred. The Bishnoi name ('bish' - twenty - and 'noi' - nine) refers directly to the rules he laid out. Foremost among them is the protection of nature, but followers must have compassion for all living things, adhere to a strict vegetarian diet, give up all intoxicants, and swear by the joint tenets of ahimsa (non-violence) and satya (truth). Though they worship Hindu gods, they have adopted the practice of burying their dead, and they are unable to fell trees to collect wood for funeral pyres.

The Bishnoi are zealous protectors of the trees and wildlife, and have even been known to die for the cause, as well as kill hunters and poachers. A popular saying in Rajasthan goes: "If you are a hunter, the worst thing that can happen to you is to be caught by a Bishnoi."

Thanks to their stance, today wild animals like deer, Chinkara, blue bulls and black bucks graze peacefully in the fields around Bishnoi villages in the middle of the arid Thar Desert. Despite the fact Rajasthan faces severe water shortages throughout the year, these villages are like green oases.

Ironically however, the abundance of wildlife is precisely what attracts many hunters and poachers. Historically, the Bishnoi community seems constantly at war with the Bhil community, because the latter are a poor landless tribe who depend on hunting to make a living. This conflict of interests has led to many bloody battles over the years, and there are many popular tales of valour and sacrifice in which the Bishnoi have laid down their lives to protect animal and trees. Stories about their relentless dedication are widely circulated.

Gangaram Bishnoi was one such brave Bishnoi. He was killed in a fight in 2007, while attempting to save a black buck from

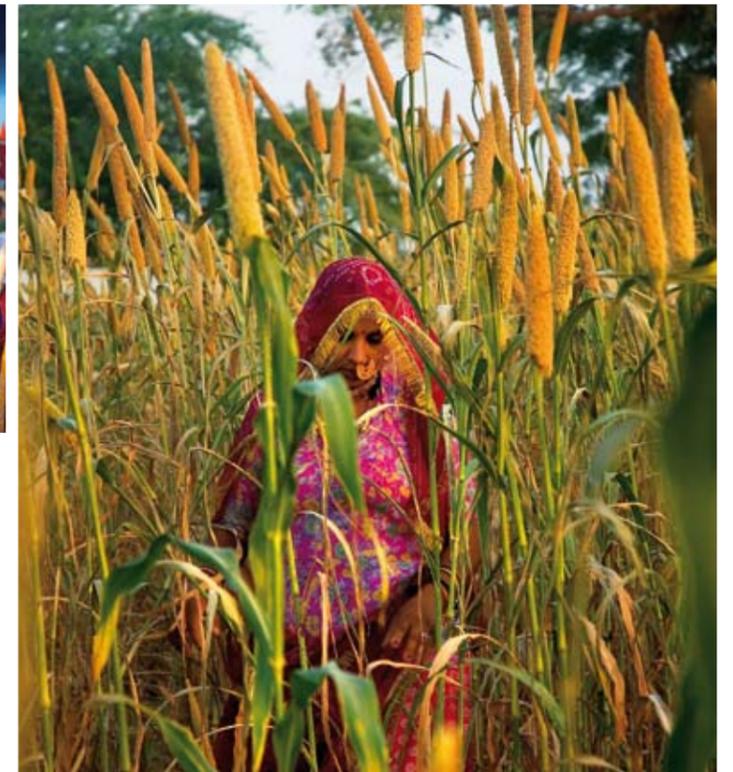


poachers. Undeterred, his mother and widow remain a picture of strength and resolve. Wiping a tear off her cheek with the edge of her sari, his mother says: "If I had more sons I would still encourage them to fight the cause of nature, even at the cost of their own lives. This is our religion, our mission, and is what a Bishnoi is born for."

Scores of women like her derive their strength from the legend of Amritadevi, who laid down her life to stop trees from being cut. Sir Santhe roonkh rahe, toh bhi sasto jaan - if one tree is saved, even at the cost of one's head, it is worth it. So said Amrita Devi as she offered up her head to be chopped off in order to protect a Khejadi tree from being cut down. One after another, 363 Bishnoi followed suit, in what became known as the Khejarli massacre of 1730.

Devi had been at home with her three daughters when she heard soldiers had arrived in her village. The soldiers, from the army of Maharaja Abhay Singh, ruler of Jodhpur, had come to fell trees to burn lime for the construction of the Maharaja's new palace. Devi protested as cutting trees was an insult to her religion. She said she would rather give her life than see the tree die. And the soldiers obliged. They used the axes they'd brought to cut the trees to sever her head.

News of this soon spread. Bishnoi from the entire region gathered to decide on the best course of action. It was decided that for every green tree to be cut, one Bishnoi volunteer would sacrifice their life. Soon there was pandemonium, and the soldiers were forced to return to Jodhpur to relay the news to the Maharaja. Realising his folly and honouring the Bishnoi's courage, the Maharaja apologised, and issued a royal decree, engraved on copper plate, henceforth prohibiting the cutting of green trees and hunting of animals on Bishnoi land.



The Bishnoi are zealous protectors of trees and wildlife, and have been known to die for the cause, as well as kill hunters and poachers



A day in the life of Dolaram Beniwal who single-handedly saved many animals from being hunted

At half past eight in the evening, Dolaram Beniwal is at home having dinner with his wife and two children when a ruckus sets the whole neighbourhood into action. Vehicle lights have been seen in the jungle, and that probably means there are hunters on the prowl around their village. As soon as he hears the rumour, Dolaram reaches for this torch, his wife helps him wash his hands, and in the blink of an eye he disappears into the darkness looking for the hunters. Twenty minutes later he returns and says it was ordinary tourists who had lost their way. The family breathes a sigh of relief, and everybody settles down for dinner again. It is this constant vigilance that has helped keep the hunters at bay.

"If we don't protect nature, who will?" Dolaram asks matter-of-factly, as his wife nods in agreement. She has been a staunch supporter of her husband in his cause for protecting wildlife. She makes all efforts to teach her two children the importance of conserving nature and the environment, as preached by Guru Jambheshwar.

Over the years Dolaram Beniwal has single-handedly and successfully saved many animals from being hunted, and caught many hunters which he turns over to the forest department for legal action. Recognising his service to the community and the environment, he has been decorated many times and awarded certificates and medals by the government.

His is not an isolated case. In Rajasthan scores of Bishnoi wage a war against the poachers. It's a deadly game and many, like Gangaram Bishnoi, are less lucky than Dolaram. And every time the Bishnoi women have stood up to the challenge, either with encouragement or with the resolve to support their family if a man is killed in action.

Bishnoi women also work hand-in-hand with the men in the fields. Traditionally the Bishnoi are farmers who till the land. As opposed to other communities in Rajasthan, where women mostly stay indoors, Bishnoi women help out with sowing, tending the crops and harvesting.

Even Mahatma Gandhi is said to have been deeply influenced by this philosophy of protecting nature. The Bishnoi have proved that even a human life is a small price to pay to protect the wildlife and the forests around them. It is for this environmental awareness and commitment that they stand apart from so many other communities, not only in India, but throughout the entire world. ■

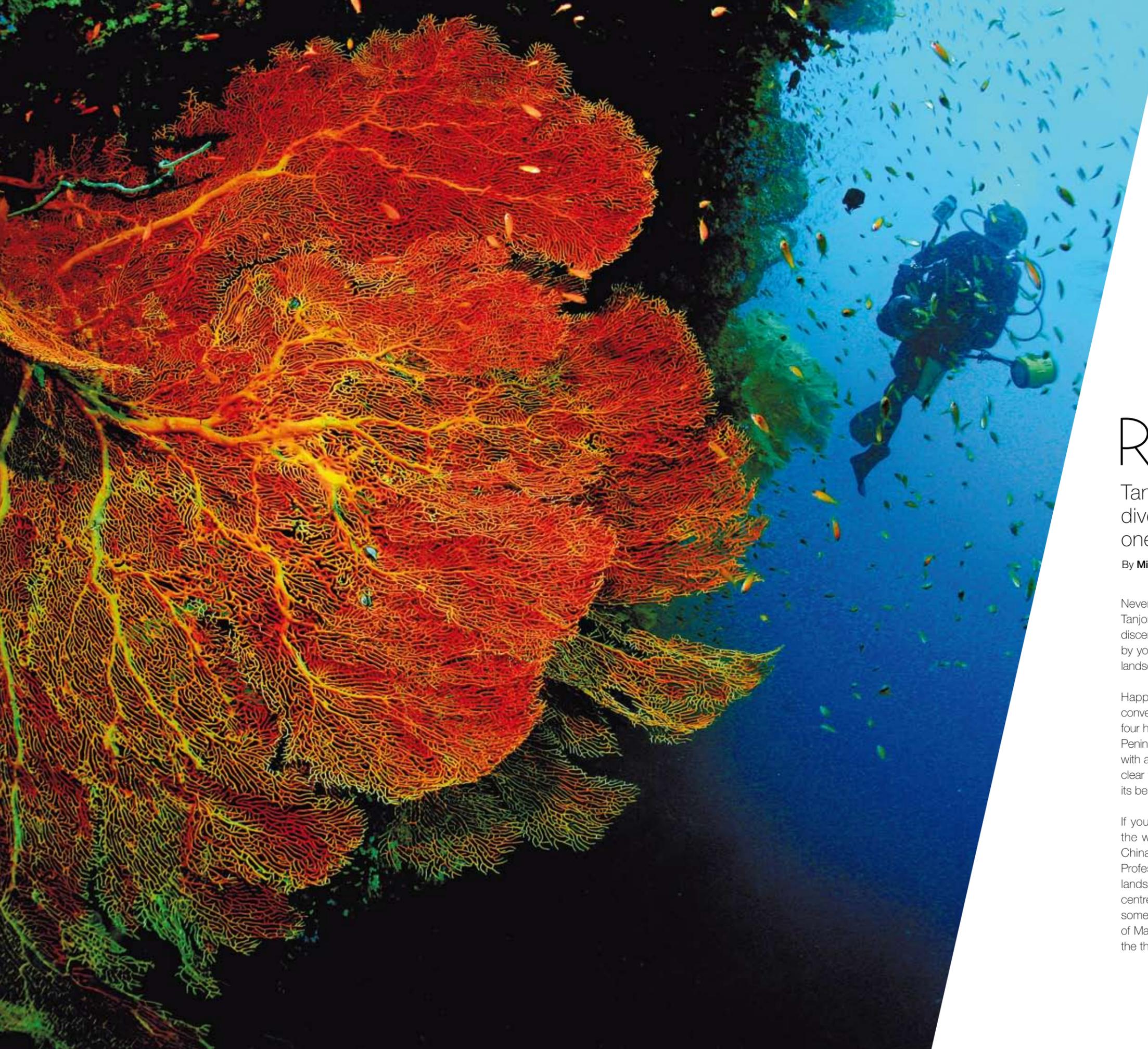


YTL'S COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

As the fragile ecosystems supporting the world's coral reefs face growing pressure from pollution, many islands have taken proactive steps to restore and protect their delicate natural habitats.

Widely considered one of Asia's best kept secrets and the aquatic destination of choice among the world's most experienced divers, Tenggol, a stunning island off the coast of Terengganu on Malaysia's east coast and a short motorboat ride from Tanjong Jara Resort, happily remains a flourishing marine paradise thanks to the dedication of the resort and luxury watch brand IWC Schaffhausen. Both organisations have a proven track record and deep commitment to ensuring the environment in and around Tenggol remains pristine. Ongoing efforts that involve the community include underwater clean-up by removing fishing nets, used tyres, cans, batteries and plastic from the coral reefs while non-divers comb the beach on Pulau Tenggol and collect waste from the sands. This year, the annual clean-up takes place from 1 - 3 October.





Reef Encounter

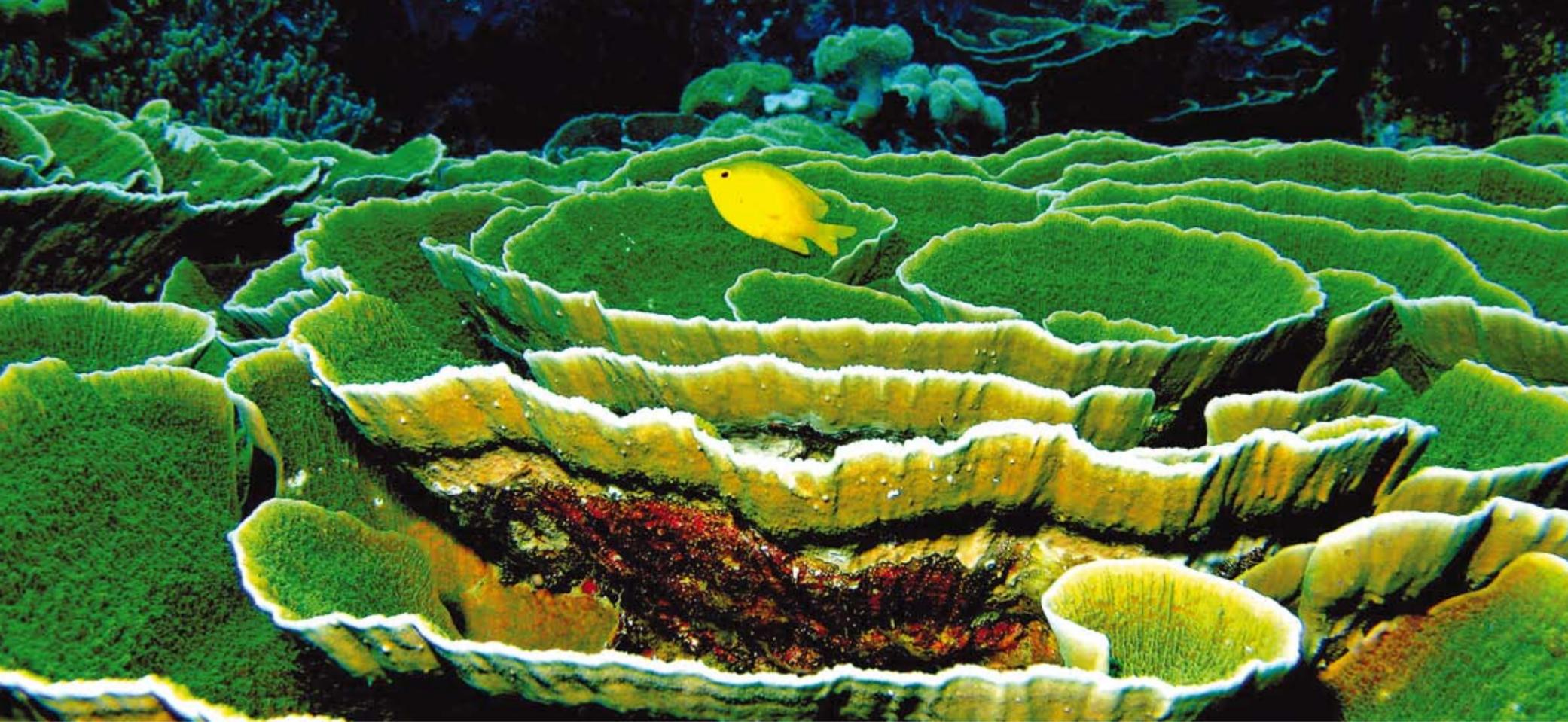
Tanjong Jara Resort offers the discerning scuba diver the ultimate 'lost in paradise' experience in one of Asia's best kept dive secrets

By **Michael D'Oliveiro** Photography by **Aaron Kwok**

Never has there been a better excuse to escape to a tropical haven: Terengganu's Tanjong Jara Resort, the perfect gateway to nearby Tenggol Island, now offers the discerning scuba diver the best of both worlds: a private diving experience accompanied by your own personal dive master in one of the world's most breathtaking underwater landscapes.

Happily this tropical haven is perfectly placed for quick access making it equally convenient for a short get-away or indulgent longer stay. Just an hour's flight or leisurely four hour's drive from Kuala Lumpur, the luxury resort tucked away on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia embodies the relaxed, authentic charm of traditional Malay interiors with all the stylish creature comforts today's sophisticated traveller expects. Add crystal clear waters and an abundance of stunning coral reefs and you have diving heaven at its best.

If you can bear to leave your room – all elegantly decorated as befits royalty with the warm tones of local timber and rich textiles matched by views of the South China cobalt blue waters – the PADI-registered diving school (PADI stands for the Professional Association of Diving Instructors) awaits a short stroll away across exotic landscaped gardens. Equipped with the very latest diving equipment for rental, the centre offers a rapid speedboat service that departs for Tenggol Island each morning, some 60 minutes away, with no more than eight people per trip. There you'll find some of Malaysia's best dive sites and astonishing aquatic life amid pristine corals – without the throng of a crowd.



Paradise Found: 5 of the Best Dive Sites

Tanjung Api is renowned among experienced divers for its strong and smooth currents matched by steep slopes and sheer underwater walls adorned with splashes of brightly coloured soft and hard corals. At the base, vibrant purple sea-fans sway in the powerful currents while trevallies, turtles and jacks can be spotted too.

Another excitement-packed option is **Tokong Timur**, a rocky outcrop complete with lighthouse. Although currents are not usual here, the nutrient-rich waters that schooling fish love attracts a stunning array of marine life such as barracudas, batfish, large manta rays and turtles. Thanks to excellent visibility, the spectacular variety of corals and natural rocky shelter, divers are also guaranteed to see a myriad of other small reef fish.

Batu Tokong Kamudi completes the 'Great Wall' trilogy with soft tree corals and stony corals. Sea anemones and nudibranchs garnish this bed of delights amidst swirling schools of reef fish such as fusiliers, tunas and jacks. Turtle sightings are not uncommon.

Even the most enthusiastic divers need to rest between dips in the tropical waters. Unwrap a delicious picnic lunch from Tenggol Island's main beach restaurant, slip into a hammock and indulge in some well-earned relaxation before your next encounter with the deep. With 24 hour's notice the resort's chefs will even recreate your favourite à la carte dish for your marine excursions.

In keeping with safe diving discipline, the second dive of the day is usually shallower than the first. Here again, guests are spoilt for choice with their dive master's extensive local knowledge. Exploring **Nyireh Point** at a leisurely pace, with its proliferation of alluring corals and colourful reef fish, is a firm favourite. The very large bumphead parrotfish

can be sighted here, along with the lovable pufferfish. In high season, divers may even experience whale sharks. Up to 18 metres in length, these gentle giants are often seen languidly gliding near the surface around Tenggol. In 2009, several beauties spent almost two months basking in the shallower parts of the surrounding waters, much to the delight of snap-happy divers who indulged in this most rare of sightings in South East Asia's waters.

Alternatively, complete the day's diving at **Coral Garden** which lies to the east of the island. Living up to its name, the site is littered with an impressive array of soft and hard corals including Christmas Tree worms, sponges and sea anemones which lie along a gently sloping topography. The reef is home to all kinds of fish: occasionally even blue-spotted stingrays are spotted darting from under one ledge to another. With dives completed, anchor the boat at one of the nearby coves for a refreshing tropical afternoon tea by the beach.

As any experienced diver knows, a good instructor is essential to the dive experience. Tanjung Jara Resort's level of professional diving service is legendary and draws on the considerable in-depth knowledge of the resort's long-term resident instructor and dive masters. Importantly, this level of hospitality extends to the friendly boat crew who are always ready to assist divers with equipment, towels at the ready and a steady stream of very welcome beverages. The dive centre also offers a convenient full 'concierge' service of returning and checking equipment – all of which magically re-appears the next day, ready for another adventure.

If you're travelling with a partner who doesn't dive, or you prefer a day to relax, snorkelling also offers an excellent underwater experience. The west coast of tiny Nyireh Island is the place to go, especially the shallow part of an area called Amazing Grace with its

A stunning array of marine life such as barracudas, batfish, large manta rays and turtles are not uncommon

excellent coral cover and numerous reef fish at an easy-to-reach shallow depth. A nearby shark nursery may provide a bonus sighting, if the baby predators aren't too shy.

Beyond the Beach

Each dive trip usually yields two dives - one in the morning and another in the afternoon. The boat returns at about 4pm allowing ample opportunity to enjoy the resort's portfolio of exclusive on-shore activities that include jungle trekking, river cruises, cycling or nature discussions led by a resident naturalist.

But nothing beats a traditional spa session for relaxing after an energetic day at sea. True to its theme, the award-winning Spa Village Tanjong Jara offers an experience that lightens the mind, body and soul using Sucimurni, a unique local philosophy that underpins natural herbal-based treatments that have been passed down through generations. The 3-hour 'his and hers' Traditional Malay Experience, a six-step luxury treatment, is guaranteed to nourish and reinvigorate all over. Guests are also presented with a beautiful Batik Sarong as a personal memento of their experience.

On Saturday evenings, the resort's landscaped grounds are transformed into a temporary kampung or village with demonstrations of traditional games that guests are encouraged to join and delectable snacks sampled from traditional stalls.

For light dining, Nelayan is highly recommended with its simple but delicious local cuisine served as you soak up the soothing views and sea breeze. Here, seafood is the choice du jour with the catch, quite literally, brought in daily by the resort's own fishermen. Dine indoors or reserve the popular al fresco dinner while entertained by a troupe of musicians with a beguiling repertoire of traditional Malay music. Elsewhere, Di Atas Sungei restaurant (meaning 'atop the river') offers authentic Malaysian cuisine in a more formal setting, while Teratai Terrace offers more of the renowned Tanjong Jara's attention to detail complete with charming views of the free-form pool on one side and the South China Sea on the other.

In-house cooking classes with the resident chef are a popular choice for gourmands who wish to recreate the delicious local cuisine at home. Simply make an appointment and in no time, you will be learning the secrets of traditional east coast dishes.

At night, turtle-nesting walks are the perfect activity for guests of all ages. Remember, turtles select their nesting spots carefully and must be respected at all times. On a moonless night excursions to see the eerie glow of fireflies that light up trees along one of the local rivers is a unique experience of the local ecosystem at its most fascinating. Tanjong Jara is one of only two locales in Malaysia to offer such an experience.

For those looking to relax, nothing is more blissful than a hot shower or a soak in your own private tub sprinkled with soothing bath salts. The Anjung Suite comes with an outdoor bath set in its own private garden – the ideal way to unwind after a long day communing with the underwater world and sampling the resort's numerous attractions.

And the best part? It all starts over again the next day, and the next. Even with just a few days to spare, the most harried of guests will discover a whole new way to enjoy this memorable getaway while indulging their passion for diving. ■

*Sea, sun and sand complete
the ultimate getaway*

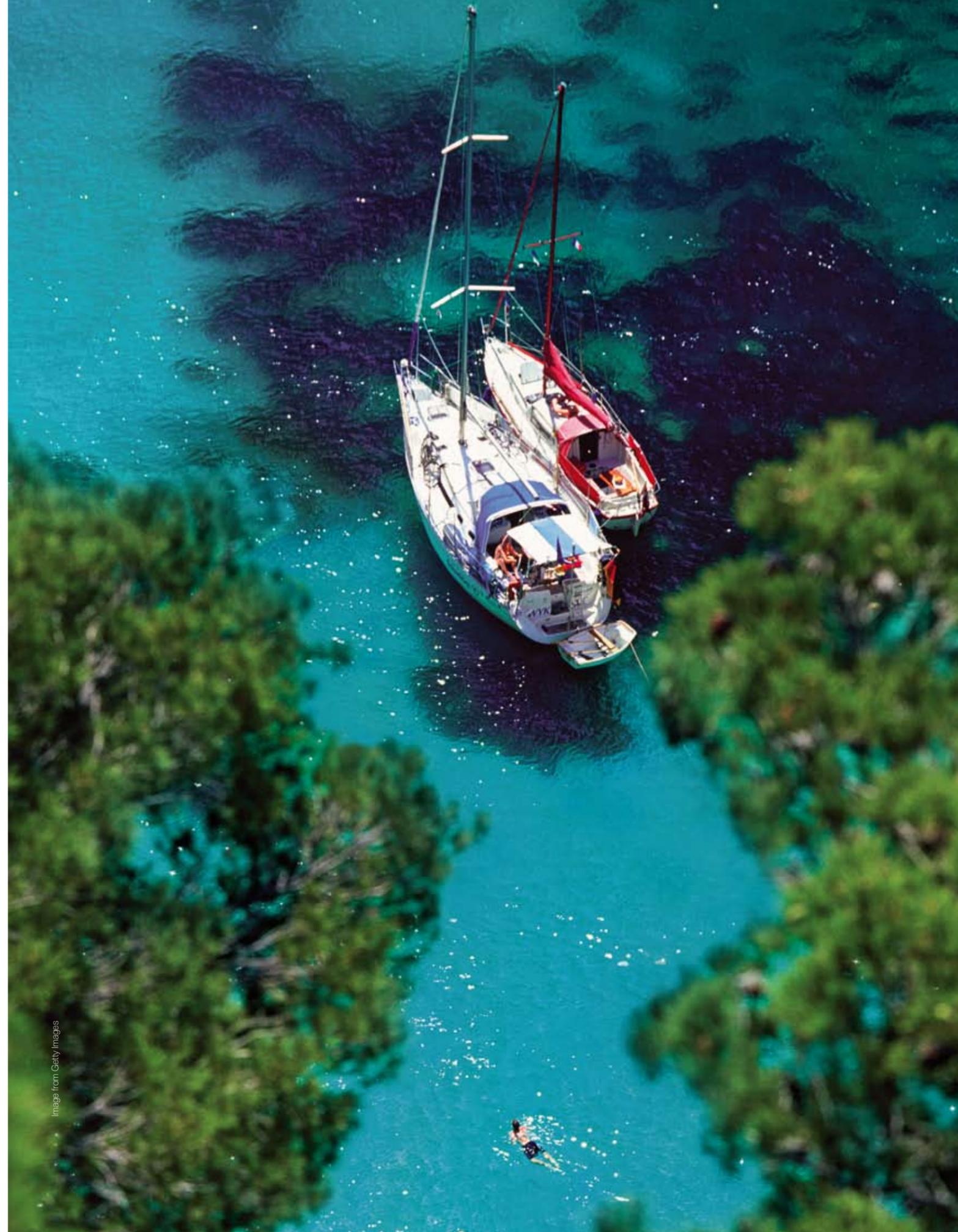


Image from Getty Images



YTL Hotels Goes to Japan

Niseko, sister city to glamorous St. Moritz, emerges as the ultimate year-round destination.

Text by **Catherine Shaw** Images by **Hilton Niseko Village and Catherine Shaw**

Just twenty years ago Niseko was a picturesque but largely unknown village in rural southwest Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island. To the local Japanese, predominantly dairy and vegetable farmers, the stunning mountains and long winters were more of a challenge than celebration. Then the Australians arrived...attracted by alluring tales of deep pristine powdery snow, an undiscovered mountainous landscape with high octane snow potential and a friendly local community highly amused by the foreigner's obsession for throwing themselves down mountain slopes.

Niseko has come a long way since then, luckily without losing its original charm. Many of the Australians, like Ross Findlay who first visited in 1990, stayed to open small businesses kick-starting a resort

boom that has provided a lifeline to the rural community. Findlay recalls Niseko as having little more than a few basic guest houses and anonymous-looking Japanese business hotels. Eating out was limited to a couple of izakaya and the only activity on offer was the decidedly inactive art of soaking in a traditional Japanese hot spring onsen. The tantalizing attraction was the deep powdery snow – lots of it - on some of the best untouched runs in the country.

"Niseko offered far superior terrain than other ski resorts near Sapporo and there was also a fun group of local skiers," Findlay says. "Whereas at other Japanese ski areas everyone would go home at the end of the day, Niseko has always been a place where there is a group of young skiers to work, ski and play."

A New Wave

More recently Niseko has seen a new wave of upgrading that has analysts predicting the town will soon enjoy wider recognition as a "Japanese-style" Vail or Aspen. A clutch of stylish new or renovated hotels and condominiums, a series of elegant restaurants, hip cafes and new activities from luxury spas to outdoor sports and cultural pursuits has transformed the once sleepy village into Asia's most desirable year-round alpine travel destination.

The newly-elected and ebullient mayor, Kenya Katayama, says he is particularly keen to encourage new development in a responsible way protecting the natural attributes and charm of the area while bringing much needed investment to the agricultural economy. "It's a challenge because the area has become very popular

Niseko's picturesque beauty is fast-making it a "Japanese-style" Vail or Aspen



1. A golfer's paradise. 2. Mountain biking provides thrills for adventure-seekers. 3. Fly and lure fishing enthusiasts find home-from-home in Niseko. 4. A scenic view of the golfing green. 5. PURE adventure center has a wide range of outdoor activities for all ages

but protecting the views of our mountains is very important," he says.

Despite Niseko's transformation, the local population remains predominately focused on farming. At local farm shops displays of fresh vegetables bear photographs and the name of proud farmers. With good reason: the excellent produce rivals the famed Niseko snow. The region is justifiably famous for its delicious carrots, asparagus and potatoes. A visit to Milk Kobo for their cream puffs, milky ice cream and creamy cheesecakes is already a must on any gourmand's travel itinerary. Proximity to such farming activities offers a unique opportunity for visitors seeking a closer experience of nature – happily combined with warm Japanese hospitality.

Let It Snow

But back to skiing and that perfect snow, courtesy of cold winds from Siberia that sweep over the sea of Japan gathering moisture and creating snowfalls when it hits the solid mass of Niseko's mountains. The ski season runs from December through to mid-April with the very best

powder (between 20 and 30cm of snow every day) usually between Christmas and the first week of March. There is plenty to keep the novice, intermediate or professional skier entertained with an extraordinary landscape of varying slopes, modern lifts and the most reliable snowfalls in the world. While European ski resorts wait anxiously for intermittent snow falls, Niseko is blessed with snow delivered with Japanese-like precision on a daily basis.

"I've skied all over the world but have never seen snow of this quality", says Hilton Niseko Village Executive Sous Chef Rob Shipman who arrived at the iconic hotel in 2008 and is equally delighted by the skiing as by the quality of produce available. "It's ideal for beginners as you don't get bruised when you fall. It's so powdery it's actually difficult to make a snowball from it."

With a recent makeover from Yukio Hashimoto Design Studio, the 506-room Hilton Niseko Village is one of the most popular choices of accommodation in

the area with a multi-lingual staff and sophisticated modern interiors. In winter the hotel is one of the few in the area with ski-in and gondola-out facilities and a wide portfolio of family-friendly facilities such as the Niseko Village Snow School, Niseko Kids™, a custom designed all-day childrens programme, a luxurious spa, five restaurants and adventure activities for young guests. There are also two 18-hole championship golf courses nearby (one designed by Arnold Palmer), a 23-court tennis complex, an equestrian centre and a unique nature-based activity area called 'PURE' complete with tree-trekking and beginner's golf (called SNAG)

The Flame, a sophisticated bar and lounge featuring a unique hanging fire place is the go-to après-ski spot for locals and visitors alike. The rooms, famed for their panoramic unobstructed views, are decorated with an elegant neutral palette with natural wood finishes. Interesting Japanese additions like the sleek black ceramic tea pot and matching cups and yukata robes bring a welcome local touch. English, Chinese, and Korean language television channels are available as

is a full Video On Demand program.

Redefining Alpine Luxury

Meanwhile all eyes are on Niseko's latest luxury offering. Slated for completion in time for this year's ski season, the 200-room Green Leaf Hotel with its unbeatable on-piste location at the base of Mt. Annupuri and a short walk from Hilton Niseko, is the first part of a multi-million yen improvement plan guaranteed to redefine alpine luxury. The interiors, by New York's award-winning Champalimaud, bring a super-chic contemporary mountain lodge style. Think wood burning fireplaces mixed with a youthful residential aesthetic and contemporary technology, overlaid upon more familiar notions of Japanese services and amenities.

The sleek new rooms include eight stunning corner suites with coveted views of the ski mountain and of the iconic Mt. Yotei (the Mt. Fuji of Japan's north). A large number of the rooms are inter-connecting making them ideal for families. Catering to the experienced traveler's taste for authenticity and experience the hotel features all de

rigueur modern finishes and gadgetry, a modern ski services center (with step into piste facilities), Spa services and a traditional outdoor rotenburo onsen with a secluded forest setting and unbeatable views of Mt. Yotei. All-day dining in the relaxed luxury of a distinctive new modern dining-room is another key attraction.

The Great Outdoors

Outdoors, skiers enjoy an efficient lift system, an abundance of tree runs and low altitude (meaning the altitude problems at other higher altitude North American or European resorts simply do not exist). For beginners there are beautifully groomed slopes at the base of the mountain. The longest run is about 5.6 km, annual snowfall ranges between 12 and 16 meters and experts rate the slopes in the area as approximately 30% beginner, 40% intermediate and 30% advanced.

There are 38 lifts including 3 express gondolas: all within one of the snowiest resorts in the world with the deserved reputation as the finest off-piste dry powder snow in the world. Niseko Village also



boasts Japan's finest ski school offering expert instruction in several languages for every skill from novice to advanced. There is also an avalanche awareness course for those keen to experience Japan's most advanced terrain, the newly opened Mizuno-no-Sawa basin beneath the Niseko Gondola. This area has been off limits since the resort opened but through advanced avalanche control techniques is now available to advanced skiers through a customized guided programme. Fans of the destination point to Niseko's ungroomed powder bowls as a key feature of the area, but skiers and boarders of all abilities will enjoy every moment of this snowy paradise.

Just Add Hot Water

Thanks to its volcanic geology Niseko is also blessed with many hot springs ranging from simple stone baths to vast luxurious pools. The sulphur-rich waters of the Hilton Niseko Village's traditional indoor and outdoor onsens offer exceptional views towards Mount Yotei. The outdoor bath overflows into a large 'eternity' pond that is home to sleek carp creating a Zen-like atmosphere while the sulphur-rich waters are said to be excellent for joint pain. A soak in the tranquil hot spring waters promises a blissful reprieve for ski-weary muscles and a unique experience

Niseko sets the scene for action-packed outdoor activities

of Japan's favorite past-time.

Off-piste Attractions

In the summer, Niseko Village Pure Action, a huge outdoor nature and adventure park ideal for children and adults, is at the heart of off-piste activities. Bounce onto an inflated landing pad, trampoline or joust with your opponents on an elevated cylinder. Tree trekking, suitable even for the very young (suitably attired in safety harnesses), gives a different view of the world as participants walk along hanging bridges and ropes and fly through the air on a zip line. Alternatively there is horse riding, hand-gliding, paragliding, abseiling, motor-cross, paint ball, and rock climbing. Less active pursuits such as hot air ballooning offer an effort-free way to enjoy Niseko's natural charms.

Meanwhile, Niseko pioneer Ross Findlay, now managing director of the popular Niseko Adventure Centre (NAC), has introduced a range of activities and excursions for the adventurous including indoor rock climbing, river rafting, mountain biking and trekking.

As Mayor Katayama says, "It won't be long before the secret is out. Niseko really is the best place to visit at any time of the year." ■

GETTING THERE

The nearest airport to Niseko is the New Chitose Airport with direct flights between most major domestic and international airports. The flight from Tokyo (Haneda) is around 90 minutes. Niseko is about 2 hours by car and 3.5 hours by train from New Chitose Airport.

A SUMMER RETREAT

Thanks to its northerly location, Hokkaido happily avoids the fate of the rest of Japan's soaring summer temperatures, stifling humidity and prolonged rainy season. Instead, Hokkaido's summer reveals blissful sunny skies, low humidity and cool evenings. Day-time temperatures rarely rise above 27 degrees Celsius.

The first sport to emerge as the winter ski season ends is white river rafting. The Shiribetsu River swells dramatically with fast-melting snow guaranteeing thrilling rides through its pure icy waters. There are courses for different levels of expertise, including beginners, but the adventurous will be happy to know the river offers Grade 4 and 5 rafting experiences (Grade 6 is extreme whitewater). Other water sports for all ages include kayaking and canoeing.

Fishing also begins in earnest during the summer months. Shiribetsu River's Rainbow trout, Red-spotted masu salmon and Japanese char draw fly and lure fishing enthusiasts from all over Asia.



Niseko's stunning alpine landscape is an enticing antidote to urban living

CULTURE

There are plenty of interesting cultural activities on offer. Experience traditional Niseko sake, sweets, the tea ceremony, Japanese taiko drums and learn how to cook Japanese food. Indoor classes include cooking classes (ice cream and jam), pottery and silver and hemp accessory classes. Alternatively join renowned local glass artist Tsuneko Kitajima to design and make your own glassware pattern at Glass Gallery Doumu as a memento of your visit.

OBON

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

USEFUL LINKS

Niseko Adventure Center:

www.nac-web.com

Niseko Town Official Website:

www.town.niseko.hokkaido.jp

Niseko Village Resort:

www.niseko-village.com

Hilton Niseko Village:

www.niseko-village.com

Green Leaf Hotel:

www.greenleafn.com

www.nisekotourism.com

For further information about travel to and in Japan visit the Japan National Tourist organization's website at www.jnto.go.jp

HOKKAIDO

It's almost unfair to other tourist destinations



Hokkaido's sake (rice wine)



Milk Kobo's delicious ice-cream is made from fresh Hokkaido milk

in Japan's archipelago; Hokkaido, the country's largest island, has it all with stunning natural beauty, four distinct seasons, exceptionally clean air, pristine waters, beaches, mountains, forests, lakes and rivers. Niseko itself lies in a gently sloping basin with Mount Yotei in a national park to the east and Mount Niseko-Annupuri to the north. Local residents (around 4,654 at the last official count), happily admit the pace of life is slow....very slow, but that's how they like it.

Mount Yotei, the most prominent mountain, is a dormant 1,898m volcano, often referred to as Hokkaido's Mount Fuji thanks to its distinctive triangular shape. This and the other spectacular mountains around Niseko sport hundreds of natural trails ideal for snow-related activities, not to mention summer-time walkers, hikers and cyclists. Mountain biking tracks vary from cruising to technical downhill courses through some of the most spectacular scenery in Japan.

A QUICK GUIDE TO ONSEN ETIQUETTE

Following traditional hot spring bathing etiquette is important: disrobe (no swim suits are allowed in Japanese onsens), sit on the stool and wash in the shower with the body soap and shampoo provided. Once all the soapy residue is completely rinsed away, step carefully into the steaming, mineral-rich waters. Place your towel on your head or on the side of the bath to avoid getting it in the bathwater, a major faux pas in Japan. Relax and enjoy the therapeutic experience.



Image from Corbis

Challenge the Senses

As synonymous with the South of France as the great French works of art, the world's finest perfumes have been used to seduce, adorn, enhance and heal since the earliest of times.

Text by **Kate O' Brien**

A rare flower with an exquisite perfume, a freshly picked fruit, an exotic spice from the other side of the world, these living scents are inimitable, ephemeral and in the sybaritic world of perfumery, once a sample is chosen, its odor is captured forever in the world's finest perfumes.

Egyptian priests were the first perfumers developing incense, aromatic oils and scented unguents for use in their temples. While they endeavored to restrict this to the exclusive worship of the deities (with the rising smoke from the incense symbolizing the ascent to the heavens of the supplications of the faithful), it wasn't long before royalty, nobility (and any others who could afford it) were indulging in the vanity of self-adornment with extravagant fragrance rituals.

It could well be argued that perfume is an indispensable aspect of history as its use through the centuries was often associated with great historical events. Today, Chanel No 5, arguably the most iconic fragrance of all time, continues to seduce almost 90 years after its launch in 1921. Created by master perfumer Ernest Beaux, legend has it that he presented Coco Chanel with 10 fragrances to choose from. She chose perfume number 5. So celebrated is the fragrance that its authorised biography 'Story of Chanel No. 5, A Timeless Number' was recently released.

Like the best sommelier, fragrance creators or 'Noses' have traditionally been held in the highest esteem throughout the perfume world. These great artists have the final say as to whether or not a



ENFLEURAGE: THE FINE ART OF OIL EXTRACTION

The technique of *enfleurage* is the oldest and most delicate extraction process known and was once routinely used to extract the oils from fragile flowers. Today, however, it has been almost completely abandoned for more modern technical procedures. *Enfleurage* can be applied only to flowers (like orange blossom, jasmine and tuberose amongst others) which continue to manufacture and release essential oils for many hours after they have been picked, otherwise the amount of oil collected would be negligible. The flowers are hand-picked at dawn before their petals open and deposited in a single layer on a pane of glass called a "chassis" that is covered with a thick layer of highly purified animal fat. After up to 48 hours (more for tuberose), the spent petals are carefully removed. This process is repeated several times until the fat is fully saturated with the floral oils and the *enfleurage pomade* has developed a magnificently intense fragrance. The pomade is then sufficiently warmed to melt and repeatedly extracted with alcohol. Finally, after gentle distillation the alcohol separates, leaving a residue of absolute, known simply as *enfleurage*.

While this laborious procedure is rarely used today, there are signs of a renewed emphasis on natural essences with a select group of today's perfumers working with preserved samples and original records to reinvent many of the very beautiful perfumes of the past.



fragrance is ultimately accepted. It is not enough for the perfumer to be able to distinguish blindfolded between the fragrance of a rose and a tulip, their sense of smell must be so acute that they detect in a mixture of 100 or more ingredients the precise amount of various substances used. They must be able to recognize abundant raw materials and blend them artistically and harmoniously, all in a day's work.

These experts can decipher whether the oil of ylang-ylang comes from Madagascar or Manila highlighting the subtle difference between oils of the same species cultivated in different countries. Lavender oil, for example, can have a top note that is floral, balsamic, sharp, sweet, green or nut-like. A fine Nose will easily differentiate between these important nuances.

While today's mass-produced celebrity-endorsed fragrances are often blended from a standard formula in a short time, a truly great perfume often takes years to accomplish. When a great Nose has a picture in mind that he wishes to translate into scent, he can spend many months dipping long slender blotters, called mouillettes into a myriad of bottles, vials and jars, each filled with precious essential oils and other ingredients. Sniffing these strips, his nose determines what should be added to complete the perfect fragrance. And just as a painter spreads paint over his canvas before stepping back to view it critically, so does the perfume artist, adding perhaps a minute quantity of jasmine to give smoothness or a slightly heavier note to add character.

Many of the raw ingredients used in perfumery are extracted directly from nature (termed natural raw materials) like citrus peel, for instance, and the petals, stems and roots of certain flowers, herbs and spices. In addition to the oils from these natural

materials, the perfume creator has several hundred synthetic substances both nature-identical and artificial at his disposal, allowing the creation of a variety of characters that the use of natural products alone could not possibly bring, and without which most modern fragrances could never have been realised. Indeed it was the addition of aldehydes that added a certain *je ne sais quoi* to Chanel No.5's natural rose and jasmine ingredients.

Many of these synthetic materials draw their inspiration from nature. Like musk, for instance - once exclusive to the glands of a particular family of deer that was being hunted to extinction - scientists can now replicate exactly the molecules that make the natural essence of this popular fixative.

Like the very best artists, the perfumer's palette must be kept in scrupulous order, for even the minutest quantity of a highly concentrated raw material can forever change a formula if a trace was present through even the slightest carelessness.

Lavender: From Purple Haze to Sensual Oil

Lavender is a native of the western Mediterranean and the eastern coast of Spain, France, Switzerland, northern Italy and Africa. The plant's cultivation dates back to 1371 in Burgundy. Written records of the medicinal uses of lavender date back to the writings of Dioscorides in 60AD. And this is not merely anecdotal, as many of the plant's purported medicinal uses have, upon modern scientific research, proven to be legitimate. Lavender oil has antibiotic activity that effectively kills many common bacteria and was used extensively during the two world wars to prevent infection and relieve pain. During the 1920s, French scientist René Gatefossé, (who coined the term 'aromatherapy') discovered lavender's healing properties when

he severely burned his arm in a laboratory accident.

While many of the medicinal properties of lavender involve the use of lavender oil or dried lavender flowers, the stems or 'straw' that remains after the flower is stripped have been used for centuries (when burned like incense) to deodorise and disinfect sick rooms.

Lavender has stood the test of time and remains one of today's most respected essential oils with the French town of Grasse playing a decisive role in its long history. It is here that the fourth generation family owned fragrance house, Mane, is one of the leading producers of lavender oil from freshly cut plants (amongst many other flowers, plants and herbs) that are used to create the most intensely perfumed and refined essential oils and fragrances.

Lavender oil is created by steam distillation of the freshly cut lavender flowering tops and stalks. Here, the traditional *enfleurage* practice has been replaced by a less time consuming and more yield productive steam distillation technique using volatile solvents (like ethanol, methanol or carbon dioxide) to extract the fragrant parts of the plant. When a solvent comes in contact with plant material, it absorbs the odoriferous substances. These solvents are heated before being eliminated through evaporation. What is left is a waxy substance called a 'concrete'. Through a further ethanol extraction stage the residual plant matter and waxes are removed from the concrete. Then, after a final evaporation, all that remains is the delightfully aromatic extract or 'absolute.' ■

Some information and photographs are courtesy of Mane, route de Grasse, Le Bar Sur Loup, France (<http://www.mane.com>)



Frédéric Malle: The Perfume Publisher



Every year at least 600 new perfumes are launched. Few survive more than a few months and fewer still become much loved classics. In this cutthroat world of perfumery only the real stars have hope. Frédéric Malle is one.

This comes as no real surprise when one considers Malle was born into an intensely creative family, His grandfather, Serge Heftler, founded Parfums Christian Dior, his mother was the creative director of Christina Dior perfumes and his uncle was renowned film director Louis Malle. Malle himself grew up immersed in perfume working at Roure Bertrand Dupont where many modern classics like Opium and Obsession were created.

However, rather than replicating this trend, Malle embarked on an ingenious approach asking some of the worlds greatest perfumers to create a scent from their hearts. 'Perfumes without compromise' is his slogan: a unique, yet simple concept. In 2000, *Editions de Parfums*, was born. A range of exclusive, creative and undeniably beautiful fragrances composed by the world's greatest "noses" and sold under their creators' names – Jean-Claude Ellena, Dominique Ropion, Edmond Roudnitska, Michel Roudnitska and Ralf Schwieger, to mention a few. Each perfume is distinctly labelled with its own name and that of the 'nose' behind it. '*Editions de Parfums*' is directly translated from the French as 'Perfume Publishing House' and this was exactly the arrangement Malle had in mind: 9 Perfumers, 9 different styles and 18 Compositions.

Malle is modest. He doesn't consider himself a nose (as these creators are known as in the trade), and prefers rather to be viewed a perfume publisher with his noses as the authors. This stands in stark contrast to the norm in today's highly commercial world of perfumery where the nose gets little credit and creation becomes more a marketing exercise from the perfume house, rather than a creative force behind the fragrance. In an era in which most companies attach more importance to brand names and marketing campaigns, Malle has refreshingly insisted that what matters most is the perfume itself. And his perfumes speak for themselves - arousing intense passion and pleasure and in essence becoming part of the wearer – like the best classic fragrances.

For Malle a classic is 'a fragrance that has enough personality to embody a person's character.' Another important feature is that they are made to become one with the wearer by mingling with their skin. "Classics never die," he says. "They have a very specific personality, which is not connected to time. They are

“Classics never die. They have a very specific personality, which is not connected to time. They are beautiful works of art that people can connect with whatever the time, like they connect to a Picasso.”

beautiful works of art that people can connect with whatever the time, like they connect to a Picasso. I am proud to say that most of the fragrances that we launched 10 years ago are still amongst our bestsellers. It is probably because we have a purely artistic approach to fragrances. Working with the best noses and giving them total freedom is almost a guarantee to have a timeless fragrance. I imagine that Chanel 5 was made with that sort of spirit.”

Ten years on, Editions de Parfums is now a byword for meticulously created, exquisite olfactory experiences and Malle is one of the most respected creators in the business. Mention his name in sophisticated circles where perfume is truly understood and a certain air of reverence permeates.

Malle lives in New York with his wife and four children. His sublime scents are sold in small selective boutiques around the world, through his website (www.editionsdeparfums.com) and in a few exclusive stores that offer personalised consultations with highly trained sales staff who initiate an honest, straightforward exchange with customers. Each of the perfumers' creations is presented in the same refined, cylindrical bottle with each bottle priced according to its content.

By simply including the name of the creator on the perfume bottle Malle has changed the face of the perfume industry, reminding us all that truly fine perfumes are created by people with real passion. ■

The Evolution of Elle Macpherson

From gracing magazine covers as an *ingénue* to helming a bestselling lingerie brand, Elle Macpherson has shown she possesses much more than just 'the Body'. In Malaysia for Britain's Next Top Model, Macpherson – who serves as the show's executive producer and host – shares her secrets to health, beauty, style, success and what it takes to be the next Top Model.

Text by **Kenneth Tan** Photography by **Chuan Looi** Styling **Wee Chee**
Shot on location at the **Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Kuala Lumpur**

“Style is more important to me than fashion. Style is about wearing what works for you, and not trying to copy other people. Style is also simple and timeless and in many ways has a sense of humour that helps express the kind of person you are. Often, people don’t talk about my clothes; they talk about who I am.”

Britain's Next Top Model, Cycle Six, is hot on the lips of everyone. The place? The Residences at The Ritz-Carlton in Kuala Lumpur. The function rooms of this swanky hotel, have been transformed into an oriental pavilion and catwalk, where the dreaded elimination process also takes place. And today, another girl must go.

Macpherson speaks passionately of the show's profound impact on the girls, which she has, on some level, also managed to affect. “I don't believe in judging people on the way they look, so I was a little bit worried in the beginning that the show would be about if the girl is pretty or not, because that's not what I'm about,” she says. “Most importantly, it's mentoring the girls. Finding young girls and then inspiring them along their journey. So, I just feel this whole project, as long as I'm executively



producing it and not just hosting it, allows me to use all the skills I've developed over 30 years in the business.”

Macpherson's strongest skill would no doubt be the ability to juggle her different business interests with devoting time to family. With two children (which she raises on her own, having gone without a nanny for the past five years), she has still managed to open 300 doors of her lingerie line, Elle Macpherson Intimates, in 11 countries around Europe in the past two months, which is quite phenomenal considering the parlous state of the global economy. She smiles, almost nonchalantly, when asked about her amazing multitasking abilities, saying: “I believe one doesn't have to be either a mother or a career woman. I'm a mother and a career woman. My children see me as a working mother, but



THE RITZ-CARLTON
KUALA LUMPUR



they also see me as a very present, loving and guiding parent.

This wisdom also helps her embrace all that life has to offer: "Obviously, I'm 46 now, I have two children, I work a lot and I don't look the same as when I was 20," she adds matter-of-factly. "I've had to change my mindset and try to not look like I'm 20 – I think that's the biggest thing, to not hang on to this ideal of 20, but understanding that I'm 46, I have two children, I travel, I'm interested in many things, I make the best of what I have, but I don't long for who I used to be."

Macpherson exudes this authenticity of wanting to see the positive in life and of being honest with her self – in her own words, "staying connected to my heart." Her February foray down the catwalk for Marc Jacob's Louis Vuitton collection in Paris was an example of the self-honesty she relies upon. "I just felt that I was asked to walk for the woman I am and not the girl I used to be."

And, just like the catwalk, Macpherson has shown her strengths again with Britain's Next Top Model. "Britain's Next Top Model is very important for me. It's taken a lot of time out of my year, and energy, but, hopefully, the outcome will be something new and interesting for the public to watch."

Already, she's taken the novel approach of choosing Malaysia to film the cycle's last five episodes. "Some of the production people were here and we just decided that the people were so beautiful, so

"Beauty comes from within; it's who you are and not what you look like."

helpful. Malaysian Tourism was great and (Dato) Jimmy Choo (who's also a friend) was great. The YTL Hotels have been fantastic. You have all these different cultures living together. And we felt it was exotic, interesting, varied and a place we really wanted to show the girls."

The private island of Pangkor Laut is familiar territory for Macpherson. "It was so beautiful and the service was something I've never seen before. The villas on the sea and the mountains were just incredible," she says. It's easy to get drawn into her stream of consciousness because she speaks so vividly, using her delicate facial expressions to emphasise a point and flashing a captivating smile on a fond recall. "I saw plenty of wildlife; peacocks, otters, lizards, monkeys, and I woke up to birds every morning. The water was soft and warm and so were the people. I loved the spa, the Japanese baths and the whole atmosphere is just so spiritual."

Regardless of the location, though, the aspiring models under Macpherson's tutelage will receive a great deal of honest wisdom about managing their futures. She advises them all to finish school. For someone who once was a key part of the brightest constellation of supermodels ever in history, she has not lost sight of life's fundamentals. Her down-to-earth sensibilities coupled with immeasurable charisma and that legendary body are an irresistible part of her appeal. ■

Summer must-haves



The sunny skies and glistening waters of idyllic Tanjung Jara Resort call for summer's breeziest statement pieces in a palette of tropical hues.

Photography **Soon Lau** Styling **Victor Goh**
Hair & makeup **Sheng Saw** Model **Irena/Andrews Models**
Shot on location at **Tanjung Jara Resort**



Cool Crisp Linen

As the mercury starts to rise, shimmy suntanned limbs into this airy linen jumpsuit with billowy sleeves in oh so cool beige, summer's most versatile shade. This perfect transitional piece is a staple of any fashionista's holiday wardrobe. Linen jumpsuit, Fendi. Aviator sunglasses, Fendi. Hat, stylist's own.



Colonial Appeal

This classic belted white shirtdress with its feminine, voluminous skirt comes with a decidedly on-trend pop of hot green at the collar. The season's most sought-after dress is the perfect way to achieve that put-together look with minimal fuss. Cotton shirtdress and shoes, Bottega Veneta. Hat, stylist's own.



Colour Play

A tangy lemon-bright top adds a playful statement to understated elegance. Note the hand-knotted details just above the belt, transforming city sophisticate styling into a chic holiday classic. Knit top and tulip skirt, Khoon Hooi. Platforms, Bottega Veneta.



Breezy Elegance

Be the belle of the island in this elegant hand-draped wisp of a dress that's so light, it almost whispers against your skin. The wearable shape takes you from day to evening with stylish ease. Silk dress, Khoon Hooi

Short Story

Summer's smouldering off-the-shoulder cotton top gives the stylish excuse to show off toned and tanned limbs. Pair with a bright picture hat and wide belt and you'll be paparazzi-ready. One-shoulder top, tailored shorts and sandals, Bottega Veneta.



Going For Bold

Ditch the fussy details for this simple, eye-popping dress – perfect for the serious statement-maker. The sophisticated, minimalistic shift in a curve-hugging jersey reflects the exotic shade of wild orchid. Jersey dress, Khoon Hooi.



Batik Fusion

This flowing floor-length kaftan was painstakingly printed by hand on the softest, most delicate of silks. The result is artistic and glamorous style and a light-as-a-whisper experience. Long batik kaftan, Jendela KL. Accessories, stylist's own.

Hot Glamour

Bedazzle and bewitch with this vibrant tangerine dress that is just perfect for the fashionable nomad. The voluminous batwing sleeves and classically elegant draping offer a modern take on the luxurious silk robes worn by '30s-era Hollywood stars. Move over Jean Harlow. Silk dress, Khoon Hooi. Sandals, Jendela KL.





Best of BaselWorld 2010

Even the most cautious of exhibitors at the world's premier watch and jewellery exhibition held in the ancient city of Basel, celebrated a return to better times with markets showing every indication of a sustained upturn in demand.

Text by **Kenneth Tan**

The news of an upsurge in Swiss watch exports of 2.7 per cent from January this year reinvigorated the watch and jewellery industry who had come to display their wares inside the six giant halls that cover an exhibition area of 160,000 sqm.

With more than 2,000 booths representing 45 countries, an insider's guide to the best finds is invaluable: here is what our expert found captured the attention of the exhibition's 100,000 visitors: Luxury jeweler Carrera y Carrera returned to its Spanish roots at BaselWorld with its new collection, Palacios del Sur (Palaces of the South). Tapping its exotic culture and southern Spain's rich Moorish architectural heritage, this inspirational range features gold and precious stones in strong, distinctive pieces that will undoubtedly appeal to discerning watch aficionados. In its haute joaillerie range, the Bamboo pieces combine white gold and diamonds with elegant simplicity. A menagerie of bracelets, necklaces and rings sculpted into animal forms completes a memorable 2010 collection that cleverly combines daring and classic chic elements.

Meanwhile artisanal style has always been at the very heart of the Zino Davidoff legacy and this year's collection proved no exception. The male-oriented Very Zino range features automatic chronographs with dials of gunmetal, or silver and black. A red-gold version is also available. The ladies' range features 72 diamonds on the watch face with the option of a mother-of-pearl or black dial and satin strap. Other

items on exhibit included Very Zino leather goods including a stylish messenger bag and ornate writing instruments that make the perfect gift for him or her.

The increasing appetite for watches from the Chinese market has seen Omega, the top performing brand from the Swatch Group, enjoy much success in recent years. This year's release is sure to whet the appetites of the Chinese nouveau riche thanks to a celebrity-led advertising campaign featuring Chinese actress Zhang Ziyi. Other international stars, such as George Clooney and Nicole Kidman, have also helped lead the charge of Omega's superior movements. For the time conscious, the precision of Omega's Co-Axial calibre, in particular the improved 8601/8611 model, are housed in the new Seamaster Aqua Terra Annual Calendar for men and the Aqua Terra for women. Space enthusiasts have long prized the remarkable history of the Speedmaster, used on US space missions since 1965. They will almost certainly be looking to pick up the 35th anniversary edition of this classic watch that was worn by both the commanders of the joint Apollo-Soyuz rendezvous mission. The Constellation series offers a choice of black or white supernova dials for women while the Constellation Double Eagle Co-Axial 4-Counters display complex subdials that show seconds, seven-day, 12-hour and 30-minute counters.

As always, the Rolex booth attracted a high-powered clientele eagerly anticipating



the latest style innovation from this classic brand. This year, the 40mm Oyster Perpetual Submariner Date sports a facelift with a new rotatable bezel and a scratchproof black Cerachrom insert. The watch's Chromalight also provides effective illumination of the dial, perfect for telling the time in murky ocean depths.

Looking to the "roof of the world", the 2010 Oyster Perpetual recalls the first conquest of Mt Everest by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay, both of whom were equipped with a Rolex Oyster on their successful summit. The case of 904L steel with anti-corrosion properties protects a self-winding mechanical movement. The 31mm Datejust Lady comes in yellow, white and Everose Rolesor. Sticklers for details

will also notice the intricate floral motifs on the dial.

Handcrafted mobile phones have long been Vertu's tour de force, with the company creatively sculpting blocks of aluminium and a myriad of exotic materials to produce sensational objets d'art. The Constellation Ayxta, the only fold phone in its range, proved to be this year's showcase with durable keys in midnight blue and plum, identically matching the leather of the phone's elegant casing. Other striking combinations include silver and blue ceramic, stainless steel, aluminium and 18K yellow gold. Each Signature phone is assembled by a single craftsman and features a titanium carbide coating that is almost impossible to scratch. ■

New favourites: Omega's Constellation series offers a choice of black or white supernova dials for women

Davidoff's Lady Quartz watch from the Very Zino collection, with its red gold finishing and 72 diamonds on its watch case, is a study in elegance



Watching Fashion

A passion for nostalgia translates into enduring style.

Florence on Her Mind

Several decades ago, when Carla Fendi spent her honeymoon in Florence she marked the occasion with a uniquely crafted doctor bag. Today, Fendi recaptures the memories and nostalgia of that trip with the Firenze, an elegant handbag created by the city's Selleria craftsmen renowned for their inimitable *fatto a mano* (made by hand) techniques. Available at the Fendi Boutique, Starhill Gallery.



Pretty Baubles

"My years at Louis Vuitton were a turning point in my life. Marc Jacobs gave me the opportunity to express my creativity through jewels and accessories. I have always had a profound admiration and attraction for the house of Dior, whose history, creativity and modernity are symbols of elegance." – Camille Miceli, Artistic Director of Costume Jewellery, Christian Dior and creator of the Diorose, Devore Dior, Mise en Dior, Diorchester, and Chri Chri collections of costume jewellery.



Striking Poses

If a picture speaks a thousand words, then it's fair to assume that with the lens of acclaimed photographer Annie Leibovitz, it might speak many thousand more. For the first time in her three-year collaboration with Louis Vuitton's Core Values advertising campaign featuring iconic personalities, Leibovitz appears in a self-portrait with her long-time friend, the legendary dancer and choreographer Mikhail Baryshnikov. The fascinating image captures the superstar in a decidedly relaxed and intimate setting in Leibovitz's New York studio. Subtle lighting highlights Leibovitz, reclining with camera in hand and a Louis Vuitton Neverfull holdall brimming with books by her side, as she shares a private moment with Baryshnikov who is standing on a box in a simple black t-shirt and trousers, a spotlight falling on his muscular feet.



Hop to It

In Boucheron's Frog Ronde Seconde Folle watch collection, the amphibian's journey from leaf-sitter to prince is immortalised in an extraordinary timepiece framed by a white gold dial, a surface filled with blue chalcidony, and a grey gold water lily, set with diamonds, sapphires and tsavorites (a semi-precious stone from the garnet family). They seamlessly combine in this fairytale watch complete with Girard-Perregaux self-winding mechanical movement. Surely a winning combination for watch aficionados who enjoy a whimsical touch in their haute horology.



The laws of economics are logical – when price goes up, supply increases and demand goes down. The exception it seems is luxury goods, where demand spikes when prices rise, and ironically, the higher the price, the more the demand. Not all luxury goods are created equal, however, and when a label reports double-digit growth in the wake of the worst recession of this generation, it says a lot about the brand. This remarkable label is Louis Vuitton, or LV to those in the know. The secret of its success lies in its 150-year provenance, which has weathered changing economies, world wars and recessions.

So, how did a 14-year-old odd jobber spark a global brand, producing some of the world's most prized luggage, handbags and accessories? Poetically, the story begins with a journey: in the nineteenth century the teenage Louis Vuitton apparently walked from his hometown of Jura to Paris in search of greener pastures.

The trek took two years and covered 400km as Vuitton took odd jobs along the way to survive. On reaching Paris in 1835, he became an apprentice *layetier-emballeur*, a maker and packer of trunks, to prominent households. Vuitton quickly distinguished himself and was soon appointed by Napoleon III of France as *layetier* to his wife, Empress Eugénie de Montijo. This royal endorsement exposed him to the demands of the wealthy traveller and he started to design his own luggage.

In 1854, he opened Louis Vuitton Malletier on 4 Rue Neuve des Capucines (the present day Rue des Capucines). And in 1858, Vuitton captured the hearts of customers with his groundbreaking trunks, with flat lids and a poplar wood structure covered in high-quality grey Trianon canvas. They were lightweight and airtight, and, unlike the round-topped trunks of that era, could be neatly stacked.

The model totes the Noé bag in monogram canvas while she waits on the station platform reserved for the Mistral – a luxury train transporting passengers from Paris to the Riviera

Traveller's Tale

More than a century and a half on, Louis Vuitton maintains its cachet, continuing to woo a new generation of luxury consumers.

By Jennifer Choo Photos courtesy of Louis Vuitton



From left to right:
 1. The luxurious Louis Vuitton Monogram Canvas wardrobe. 2. An advertisement from the thirties. 3. Sixties icon Twiggy with the era's bag du jour, the Papillon. 4. Jane Fonda (with Roger Vadim), checking in the popular Speedy bag at the Orly airport in Paris. 5. Supermodel Eva Herzigova in a Louis Vuitton Fall/Winter 2002 advertising campaign carrying the classic Papillon. 6. The Alma bag, designed in 1934, is known for its unique shape. This version is in Damier canvas.

The Trianon soon became synonymous with gracious travel. Feeding the enthusiasm for faraway places and new modes of transportation, Louis Vuitton began to etch its place in history, meeting the needs of explorers, voyagers and vacationers.

During this time, two highly recognisable symbols of LV debuted: 1888 saw the first-ever LV Damier Canvas, whose quiet elegance remains remarkably modern today, and in 1896, the Monogram, with its quatrefoil, flower and LV initials, was introduced. This often imitated emblem remains LV's most recognisable signature. Both were designed by Vuitton's son, Georges, who took over the management of the company in 1880.

Georges also created the company's signature five-tumbler lock. The locks could not be picked, and each had its own number and enabled the owner to open an entire collection of luggage with a single key. To this day, all the suitcases and trunks produced by the company use this technology.

The Golden Age

At the 1900 Paris World Fair, Georges was given the honour of setting up the Travel Items and Leather Goods section. A year later, the Steamer Bag was introduced. Originally conceived as a laundry bag to be kept inside LV trunks, this ancestor of the LV handbag became something of a cult favourite and was one of the company's most sought-after items.

Where Louis honed the craft that established the Louis Vuitton

reputation, Georges harboured international ambitions with plans to expand into the United States. With this in mind, he chaired the jury for the 1904 St Louis World Fair, where he showcased many new products, including the Excelsior trunk, the Idéale trunk and bags designed for carrying specific items, including perfume, makeup, hats and shoes.

By 1914, LV was not only synonymous with fine luggage, it was also well on its way to becoming a household name around the world. As World War One consumed Europe, Louis Vuitton opened its flagship store on the Champs Elysees, the largest travel items store in the world at the time. By then, there were LV stores in London, New York, Washington D.C., Bombay, Alexandria, Buenos Aires and Paris.

When Georges passed away in 1931, he bequeathed to his son, Gaston-Louis, an international icon with a dedicated following of celebrities including Charles Lindbergh, Marthe Chenal (the soprano and "most beautiful woman in Paris") and Prince Borghese.

When LV celebrated its centenary, Gaston-Louis was confronted with an increasingly mobile society. As air travel became commonplace, the demand was for more practical and lighter luggage, and the previously overlooked soft canvas bags became a staple. Gaston-Louis continued his father's legacy of innovation and, in 1959, perfected a new method that allowed linen and soft canvas to be coated. This technique, still used

today, imparts strength and impermeability, while allowing the fabric to maintain its suppleness and beauty.

By 1978, LV's influence had reached the Far East and stores were opened in Tokyo and Osaka. The company rapidly continued its international expansion in Seoul, Beijing, London, New York, Marrakech, Moscow and New Delhi. LV's influence was so entrenched that in 1985, the company dared to break from the traditional monogram with a new range called the Epi line - exquisitely textured leather in vibrant colours that change from year to year, with the LV logo discreetly embossed.

Louis Vuitton Incorporated

In an extraordinarily strategic move in 1987, Louis Vuitton merged with Moët-Hennessy, the famous champagne producer, to create one of the world's largest luxury goods conglomerates. Bolstered by the merging of the two companies, Louis Vuitton intensified its international expansion, opening more than 200 stores worldwide and extending its range of products. This merger reflected well on the bottom line as profits leapt almost 50 per cent in the first year alone.

Almost a decade later, in a bid to refresh its image, LVMH appointed fashion maverick Marc Jacobs to create the company's first prêt-a-porter collection. Jacobs is responsible for giving this classic brand an attitude and imbuing it with an irresistible youthfulness. Jacobs introduced several new lines of bags, including the Cuir Sauvage - a precious leather line imprinted

with a diminutive damier motif honouring the nobility of natural fur - and the unabashedly high-gloss, instantly-recognisable Monogram Vernis and Monogram Glace ranges. In 2001, Louis Vuitton kicked off the new millennium with its first jewellery line.

Duets

Collaborating with an intriguing line-up of artists in recent years, LV has produced some highly coveted collectibles. In the first successful duet, Jacobs and Stephen Sprouse collaborated to produce limited-edition Graffiti bags. These iconic LV bags were daubed with the unmistakable Sprouse tagging and described as a tribute to both the artist's pop art sensibilities and the brand's illustrious heritage. Jacobs later designed a collection to commemorate the untimely death of this street art maestro in 2004.

Another memorable partnership was with Japanese artist Takashi Murakami, where the pair played mischievously with the Monogram canvas. Cherries bloomed on the familiar material and the traditional brown and gold was reinterpreted in sweet candy colours. This kitschy collection was an instant sensation and was snapped up not only by loyal fans, but also a much younger demographic.

Recently, Jacobs chose to work with another artist, Richard Prince, renowned for appropriating popular culture (such as the advertisement photographs of the Marlboro Man) into his paintings. This collection featured splashy, colourful handbags, some of which included the LV logo silk-screened on canvas along with vaudeville-style jokes. On others, cartoons created

1. A model shows off the Alma bag in monogram graffiti canvas (a collaboration between LV and artist Stephen Sprouse) at the Spring/Summer 2001 fashion show. 2. The Speedy bag in Monogram Multicolore Franges – a collaboration between Takashi Murakami and Louis Vuitton. 3. Alma Voyage bag in Monogram canvas. 4. Models with bags in the Monogram Multicolore range.



by Prince were hand-embroidered on bold, colourful bags. His influence reached the runway too, where models trooped down the spring/summer 08 show dressed as nurses, echoing Prince's "Nurse" paintings.

A Good Sport

Dedication to luxury and excellence is a Louis Vuitton hallmark. In keeping with this, the brand has a history of involvement in some of the world's most prestigious sporting events. In 1983, the Louis Vuitton Cup challenger series was created as a pre-qualifier for the world's most famous sailing race, the America's Cup.

While only two yachts compete in the America's Cup, several take part in the LV Cup, which has been a rite of passage for yachtsmen looking to challenge the defending champion of the America's Cup. Louis Vuitton's ties to the world of yachting go back much further, of course. In addition to countless trunks created for ocean voyages during the 1930s, Gaston-Louis Vuitton developed a unique model boat division, and in 1935, for example, LV was selling scale models of Cornelius Vanderbilt's famous steam yacht, the North Star.

In 1988, Louis Vuitton presented the Automobiles Classiques Concours d'Élégance in the Park of Bagatelle in Paris. This annual competition for elegant cars has run for more than two decades. In the same year, Louis Vuitton organised the first international grand vintage car rally in China. This event resuscitated vintage car races on a grand scale with an exhilarating rally from Dalian to Beijing.

For the 2010 Football World Cup, the solid 18-carat gold trophy will be cradled in a custom-made Louis Vuitton trunk before it is presented to the winning team in South Africa. The special case will be handmade by one of its craftsmen from the Asnières

workshop. LV's new World Cup advertising campaign also features soccer legends including Zidane, Maradona and Pele.

The Fame Game

From its royal patronage beginnings during the 19th century, the rich and famous have made Louis Vuitton the go-to place for their luggage needs. Coco Chanel carried an Alma bag exclusively designed by Gaston-Louis Vuitton. Style icon Audrey Hepburn carried a Speedy in Charade, which was resized on her request to a dainty 25cm length.

Advertising campaigns have also featured a pantheon of superstars, including models and actresses such as Kate Moss, Gisele Bündchen, Uma Thurman, Scarlett Johansen, Jennifer Lopez and, most recently, Madonna. A testament to LV's immense clout, the luxury label managed to get less likely celebrities, such as former USSR leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Steffi Graf, Andre Agassi, Sofia Coppola and Francis Ford Coppola, to star in campaigns.

Popular culture, more specifically music, has often referenced Louis Vuitton as a status symbol. Mariah Carey, Usher, Oxford Comma and Kanye West, to name but a few, have paid homage to the brand in their songs. In a touch of role reversal, LV collaborated with rapper and record producer Kanye West on a line of shoes for men in 2009.

Super Future

Over 150 years have passed and Louis Vuitton remains a global force boasting a range encompassing trunks, luggage, handbags, clothing and jewellery. It maintains a perfect balance between luxury and cutting-edge design. Louis Vuitton has dominated the world of luxury during the 20th century; needless to say, this winning streak will continue well into the future. ■



KIWI POLISH

For the second successive year, Team New Zealand has won an America's Cup-class regatta on home waters. Making the most of its home ground advantage, the Emirates Team New Zealand won the Louis Vuitton Trophy Auckland regatta in March this year. The team was cheered on by legions of local fans during every leg of the challenging five-mile race on the Hauraki Gulf, just off Auckland. Its closest opponent was Italy's Mascalzone Latino Audi team representing Club Nauticodi Roma, which is the Challenger of Record for the 34th America's Cup.

Although the final was scheduled to be a "best of five" race series, it was cut to three at the start because of light winds. Despite this, Team NZ started and finished strongly, with a half boat-length lead halfway up the course. On its way to the finals, Emirates survived a heart-stopping last-minute penalty turn in its race against Azzurra. In a flashback to the glory days of the America's Cups of 2000 and 2003, crowds thronged the quayside in the Viaduct Basin and spectators crowded every vantage point on the moored boats and surrounding balconies.

(From left to right) CKIn2U Heat for Her, Burberry Summer for Men Limited Edition, Prada Infusion de Tubéreuse EDP, Marc Jacobs Splash Summer 2010 Collection – Biscotti, Chloe Eau de Fleurs – Neroli, Eternity Summer for Men by Calvin Klein



Summer's Hottest Scents

Eau so good: hit the high notes with this summer's refreshingly delicious fragrances.

The most exciting of the latest arrivals is the refreshingly uncomplicated **Biscotti from Marc Jacob's Splash Summer 2010 Collection**. Inspired by Italy's favourite biscuit, this utterly modern fragrance hits the spot with sparkling top notes of bergamot, freesia and orange flower, combined with a hint of pistachio blossom and creamy vanilla to add rich tones and harmony .

Part of a trio of enigmatic fragrances, **Chloe Eau de Fleurs Neroli** is an eclectic cocktail of clary sage, tonka bean, white musk and amber, working in unison with notes of mandarin, orange, rosemary, neroli, peony, and cedar. The juice looks like liquid gold in a chic minimalistic bottle – a feat of cubist artistry that is sure to become a cult item in its own right.

Burberry's limited edition Summer For Men is a modern take on traditional cologne with refreshingly crisp and clean top notes of yuzu leaves, mandarin and mint. A heady mix of juniper berries, thyme and woody notes add warmth, depth and undeniably, a touch of summery sex appeal.

With fruity notes of apricot, guava and raspberry and accents of creamy magnolia and jasmine, **CK In2U Heat for Her** is the perfect modern fragrance for hot summer nights. Presented in a chic brightly-coloured bottle, the invigorating cocktail of scents is an instant summer classic.

From the artistically-inspired bottle to the surprisingly complex fragrance, **Prada's Infusion de Tubéreuse EDP** is a sparkling celebration of womanhood. The Indian tuberose top notes renders this superbly-crafted fragrance florally classic at first whiff. Then, the citrus notes of blood orange and the crisp scent of petitgrain bigarade (a citrusy essential oil) introduce a fresh, invigorating and lasting element .

Eternity Summer for Men by Calvin Klein is a fresh and finely balanced combination of kumquat, pineapple, bergamot and cardamom, with bamboo, cedar leaf, teak wood and Guaiac wood. This complex composition may sound overly exotic, but tempered with Klein's predilection for freshness and sporty scents, it is surprisingly wearable and just ever so slightly delicious.



Beauty on Demand

Gear up for a sensational summer with the following scents, skincare products and pampering therapies.

Groovy Baby

MAC's In the Groove colour collection is an instant hit with its flattering vibrant hues and opulent textures. Inspired by the ethnic batik fashions of the 70s and the 80's modern tie-dye styles, the collection whispers of exotic locales infused with Boho charm and runway chic. The collection comprises 9 new Mineralize Eye Shadows, 6 Cremesheen Lipsticks, 6 Cremesheen Glass, 4 Mineralize Skinfinish Powders, and our personal favourite, 5 new Mineralize Blush Duos, all of which are welcome additions to any make-up palette.

beautiful life //



Image from Getty Images



Caviar@ YTL

The ultimate skin therapy for dull, ageing skin is now available at Spa Village Kuala Lumpur and it is undoubtedly good enough to eat. Overflowing with protein-rich caviar and powerful antioxidants, the Ultimate Caviar Facial by cult Swedish brand Kerstin Florian is the perfect therapy for stressed city skins as it firms, tones, refines and deeply nourishes with immediate effect. During this luxurious and deeply-penetrating facial, caviar works in tandem with specialised AcuLift Massage techniques to visibly renew the skin and smooth fine lines. Then, an innovative Marine Biomatrix Sheet that nourishes and moisturises from deep within is applied to dramatically calm skin, leaving it radiantly gorgeous. This highly-effective anti-ageing therapy is also perfect for hands, feet and décolleté.

The Ultimate Caviar Facial is available at YTL Spa Village Kuala Lumpur (Tel: (603) 2782 9090 or Email: spavillagekl@ythotels.com.my). Also by Kerstin Florian, the Rehydrating Caviar Facial and Caviar Eye & Lip Care therapies are available at YTL Spa Village Kuala Lumpur and the Starhill Spa at JW Marriott.



Shine On!

Inspired by the irresistible colours of John Galliano's runway shows, the Dior Addict Ultra Gloss range of Shine On! products creates instant glowing radiance. The must-have star performer, Addicted to Dior, together with the designer's limited edition products for lips, eyes and complexion are fuelled with vibrant and tangy hues, perfectly timed for a sun-kissed summer look.



The Light Years

Summer is here and so too are lazy beach afternoons. While those in the know would never leave home without sun block, sadly preventative measures like this do not erase skin damage from a previously less-enlightened time. Specially patented formulations such as DIORSNOW D-NA REVERSE and DIORSNOW Transparency Enhancing Complex (T.E.C)™ repair damaged skin cells at night, work hard to reduce skin pigmentation, and reveal a new luminosity the very next morning.



The stunning Tanjong Jara Resort with its wealth of traditional healing modalities



Traditionally Malay

Lyrical in its beauty, profound in its age-old wisdom, the natural art of Malay healing and relaxation is enjoying a renaissance.

Text by Kate O'Brien Images from YTL Hotels

Malaysia is home to a myriad of ethnic groups that live cohesively in this lush tropical land. The indigenous Malays, Chinese, Indians and Arabs imparted a diverse richness of healing cultures that is now being capitalised on in spas worldwide, with age-old Ayurvedic beauty regimens working in synergy with reflexology, acupuncture, Malay baths, scrubs and medicinal potions.

Central to this cornucopia of healing is traditional Malay medicine, the roots of which combine the wisdom and practices of early

Orang Asli (or 'original people') with those of the culturally more-advanced Malay voyagers who first began to settle in the region from as early as 1000BC. Being an essential part of the ancient Spice Route meant that traders from India, China and the Arab world added their indigenous medical philosophies to this multi-cultural melting pot. Combine this cultural diversity with the rich bounty of the world's most biologically-diverse tropical forests, and the result is a truly unique and diverse system of therapeutic herbalism that deeply nurtures mind, body and spirit.

As with other ancient Eastern healing philosophies, traditional Malay medicine believes that balance within the universe and the body is the foundation of health and wellbeing. This balance is achieved specifically through strategically realigning the four elements of Wind, Water, Fire and Earth within the body, using herbal medicines (*ramuan*) and targeted therapies formulated using the best of nature's tropical ingredients. Maintenance of good health and prevention of illness are emphasised in day-to-day life, with native healers (also called *bomoh* or *pawang*) advocating a diet packed with an essential balance of foods, herbs and the best of nature's healing goodness from the tropical verdant forests.

In many cases, traditional remedies were closely guarded secrets held by these healers who, depending on their skills, were medicine men, surgeons, bonesetters or exorcists – in other words, a heady mix of the medical and the spiritual. Certain recipes were kept within families and handed down through generations, with most of them being put to great use both in the home and local community. Replicating these age-old therapies as authentically as possible in the modern spa environment is the best way of paying homage to these mystic masseurs and medicine men and honouring their profound knowledge.

Following is a taste of traditional Malay therapies....

Tungku Batu or heated stone therapy has long been practiced by the native Malay and *Orang Asli* cultures to increase strength and vitality in addition to other wide-ranging benefits. River or clay stones are first wrapped with selected spices and herbs including fenugreek, black seed and leaves such as betel and morinda leaves. These are then tied together into a pouch using a cotton cloth. Medicated ointment is applied onto the affected areas of the body before the hot pouch is applied as part of a deep-pressure massage to completely loosen muscles, alleviate pain, reduce inflammation and deeply relax the body. The technique



Ancient Malay spa rituals deliver extraordinarily powerful healing remedies



is still widely practiced by women in confinement after childbirth as it helps improve the circulation of blood and the functioning of the uterus, while also helping to restore a firmer figure after birth. The technique is also used to enhance agility in men.

Rendam-Rendam (or Sitz Bath) has been used by Malay women for generations to keep their genital organs and vaginal muscles firm and healthy especially as the body ages. The natural antiseptic properties of piper betel and black seed combine to relieve and soothe irritation, infection and heavy discharge as the body is immersed in a specially prepared herbal bath. This medicinal bath is highly recommended for piles and genital discomfort and also helps to strengthen the uterus after childbirth and menstruation.

Tuam Pasir (Heated Sea Sand Therapy) is a time-tested healing massage that gives immediate relief from joint pain and inflammation and is excellent therapy for mothers in confinement. A mixture of sand, fenugreek and black seeds are heated in a pan to make a medicated paste that is wrapped in a cotton cloth and made into

a pouch. This hot herbal pouch is then massaged deeply over the affected areas of the body to relieve discomfort and leave the body feeling refreshed and energized.

Mandi: A variety of Malay Baths (or Mandi), often taken as a prelude or finale to another treatment, are widely offered in Malaysian spas. An eclectic mix of fruits, roots, leaves and flowers are added to the soothing waters to relax and heal the body. For example, in the *Mandi Bunga* or floral bath, exotic flowers like roses, jasmine, *cempaka*, *kenanga* and medicinal-aromatic woods such as sandalwood and *gaharu* combine to cleanse, scent and thoroughly refresh.

Ikal-Ikal or Malay scalp therapy uses specially-brewed herbal oil prepared from coconut oil, citronella and clove that is first applied to the hair. Then, a paste, comprising henna, betel leaves and hibiscus, renowned for treating hair loss, scalp irritation and migraine, is generously applied and tenderly massaged into the scalp to soothe, nourish and revive both the scalp and hair. ❖



SPA VILLAGE TANJONG JARA

Indelibly anchored in its milieu with about 90 percent of its staff coming from nearby villages, the Spa Village Tanjong Jara on Malaysia's east coast is a rich tapestry of Malay culture and heritage. Inspired by the Malay concept of *sucimurni* that roughly translates as wellness through purity of mind, body and spirit, Spa Village fuses the rich bounty from surrounding forests with age-old therapeutic recipes to deliver some extraordinarily powerful healing remedies to all who visit.

As befits its location, the focus rests primarily on restorative Malay rituals that have been used in the countryside for centuries. From freshly prepared staples like Kaffir lime leaf, galangal and fenugreek and indigenous flowers, to a native quinone-producing bark that is used to counteract malaria, Asia's forests reveal their secrets in a host of therapeutic steams, scrubs, baths, massages, tonics and beautifying masks.

Dandan Puteri Tujuh or Princess treatment epitomizes traditional Malay body rituals. After the soothing essences of the mandatory *Mandi Bunga* or floral bath, the body gently succumbs to the healing powers of the traditional Malay deep tissue massage or *Urutan Gamelan* guaranteed to loosen and warm the muscles in preparation for the *Ikal Mayang* or Malay hair treatment ritual. Originally practised by royal princesses, a nourishing blend of coconut oil, rice paddy stalks and pandanus leaves is deeply massaged into the head to ease the mind and leave the hair feeling smooth, strong and radiant. Then the *Boros Puteri* (face and body scrub) uses a healing blend of herbs such as turmeric and galangal to completely cleanse the skin, promoting the growth of fresh cells and leaving a healthy radiant glow. Finally, a fragrant floral milk bath (or *Bersiram*) and scented body steam (*Ukup Wangi*) of jasmine and rose water combine to leave the entire body feeling fresh, fragrant and radiant.

Ramuan describes a carefully-selected blend of medicinal plants and plant parts that is taken regularly to promote health, beauty and balance in daily life. The overall aim is the optimisation of mind, body and spirit: whether the overall aim is fitness, beauty, rejuvenation, longevity, relaxation, stress reduction or a combination of all, a variety of plant parts, including roots, rhizomes, barks, stems, fruits, flowers and seeds is consumed as both medicine and food to optimise general wellbeing and health.

For example, *ubat periuk* is a daily detoxifying and anti-aging herbal drink, comprising senna leaves, betel leaves, galangal, ginger, *temu lawak*, *pegaga*, *cekur* and *lempoyang*. Purging excess heat and waste, it deeply cleanses internally for a radiant all-over glow.

The Legacy Lives On

Spa Village Tanjong Jara's award-winning resident healer, Yahaya Mamat, or Pak Yahya (being a term of respect for an older wiser man) as he is more affectionately known, is no newcomer to healing. Born in a small village in Terengganu, Malaysia, into a family where traditional healing arts were practiced daily, he learned his unique massage skills from his grandmother at the tender age of 13. By the time he was 20, the people in his village were turning to him for his powerful healing touch.

Pak Yahya is a big, jovial man with a very soft heart. He specialises in traditional Malay massage and his expertise is legendary. The perfect mix of the innate sense of touch and years of practice, Pak Yahya is able to identify blocked veins, tightness in the muscles and broken or twisted joints both by touch and instinct.

With his large, wide hands and physical strength, his long, kneading strokes using thumb and palm pressure (combined with elbow, feet and arms where appropriate) deeply massage the tissues, improving blood flow through the veins, relieving tension and invigorating the body. A deeply-penetrating head and scalp massage completes a typical session. As well as being a healer and midwife for the surrounding villages, Pak Yahya is a fisherman and a grandfather of nine with an enviable knowledge of indigenous remedies, herbs and plants.

This gentle man is traditional Malay massage at its very best and, as he readily admits, experience is indeed the best teacher. While no doubt hundreds more will continue to benefit greatly from his healing hands, we can rest assured that his legacy will live on in his youngest daughter, 19-year-old Yaslina Yahya, who is earnestly perfecting the age-old techniques just as her father did all those years ago.



Healing Heritage

In the first of a new YTL Life Healing Heritage series, YTL trainer and consultant on Malay traditional therapies, Sairani Mohd Saad captures the essence of ancient Malay healing from her childhood memories to the present. Sairani lives in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

Most healers will attest that their initiation into healing was sparked as they assisted their grandparents in gathering fresh herbs from the garden and grinding them into various unctuous remedies. Mine was somewhat different. One grandmother lectured me on the Quranic verses while the other taught me more about the benefits of cow dung for her bougainvilleas. Despite this, some of my fondest childhood memories revolve around the breathtakingly colourful Malay garden resplendent with *kenanga* (ylang-ylang), *mawar* (roses), *melur* (jasmine), *cempaka* (magnolia) and an herbal apothecary overflowing with amazingly therapeutic natural remedies.

As a child I cried almost every night from severe pain in both legs. Coupled with serious childhood eczema and scalp problems, my mother resorted to the village *Makcik Urut* or massage ladies who with deeply penetrating strokes using thumbs and palms, manipulated my *urat* (bundles

of arteries) to completely relieve tension throughout my muscles and stimulate blood flow through my small fragile body. I later discovered that the massage oils used (most of which are routinely used today) are powerful healers themselves being used to relieve a range of problems from head and muscle aches to blurred vision, persistent cough, insect bites, dry skin and fever.

Although Malay massage was all I knew throughout my teenage years, this changed dramatically when I was 20 as my future mother-in-law had inherited the wisdom of her grandmother concerning age-old pre-wedding Malay beauty regimes – knowledge that been passed through her family for many generations (over 1400 years to be more specific).

Bridal grooming or Andaman Pengantin as it was called, traditionally starts 44 days before the wedding ceremony.

However it has been shortened to up to 7 days to keep pace with the modern world. Seven days before my wedding, an entourage of ladies arrived at my home. From the hair on my head to the tips of my toes I was exfoliated, scrubbed, deeply nourished and pampered until glowing with a heavenly range of oils, creams and floral baths. What intrigued me most about this bridal grooming (or *Dandan Putri Tujuh* at Spa Village Tanjong Jara) however was that the very same flowers that had captivated my mind as a small girl were once again reappearing in my life.

As a new wife my mother-in-law came to the rescue yet again, teaching me important health lessons that remain with me today when, approaching menopause, I am experiencing few of the problems that affect many women my age, including endometriosis, fibroids and cysts, amongst others.

Within 12 months of marriage I became a mother (the eldest of my 5 children is now 22). Having gained 18 kgs throughout my pregnancy, my mother-in-law guided me through the traditional Malay post-natal regime – a torturous programme that is best appreciated years later when, as an older woman, you are still looking and feeling vibrantly healthy inside and out. My saviour throughout all of this was *Tungku Batu* as the heat from the river or clay stones relaxed me completely, relieving tension while also helping to break down stubborn fat, shrink my enlarged uterus and basically trim my body all over. Although this regime was hard going at times, the results spoke for themselves as within three months I had regained my pre-pregnancy figure and strength (womb intact).

These treatments and many more traditional healing rituals are available at YTL Spa Village.





Tastes of Muse

Taste, scents and textures are at the core of Muse cuisine as chefs Nicolas Le Toumelin and Clément Bruno explore new horizons while remaining true to the very best of French cuisine.

Text by **Kate O'Brien** Images from **Getty Images and Corbis**

In a country where buying, preparing and enjoying food is synonymous with life itself, Mediterranean cuisine has emerged as the clear winner. As far back as the late 1900s, Impressionist artists traded their now celebrated works for food in some of today's most sought-after restaurants dotted throughout the South of France. Such a rich artistic heritage explains the buzz around the new Muse restaurant, simply named "M", celebrating all things French with the very best of fresh, local and absolutely delicious food.

As with all things Muse, "M" sets the imagination flying and breaks new grounds. *Terre et Mer* (land and sea) is at the core of its philosophy – the perfect marriage between truffles from deep within the earth and the freshest produce from the salt-scented Mediterranean coast – and the result is new, different and lighter than much of what is currently on offer in the region.





Chef Nicolas Le Toumelin



Image from Alex Schmeideman

The Chef's Muse

Born in 1978 in Perros Guirec, a tiny fishing village in Brittany, Nicolas Le Toumelin has always been passionate about food. At the age of 10 he whiled away his afternoons chopping vegetables for his neighbour who was a native chef; by 15 he was cooking seafood in a local restaurant. Three years later, Le Toumelin was in London seconded to restaurant ONE-O-ONE in the Sheraton Park Tower in Knightsbridge, working with world-renowned chef Pascal Proyart. "Everything in the restaurant exuded freshness, quality and simplicity," he said of his 6 year tenure at ONE-O-ONE, during which time the restaurant was awarded London's best seafood restaurant four years in a row.

Seeking inspiration from other corners of the world, Le Toumelin accepted the position of head chef of the Mediterranean-inspired restaurant (one of 40) at the Madinat Jumeirah resort in Dubai. "I quickly realized that my cooking style would be something unique and special for Dubai. My focus remained the same: quality, freshness of product and simplicity of preparation." It was during this time that Le Toumelin really mastered the use of spices in cooking giving his dishes an exotic twist.

A chance meeting with Adrian Jossa

(Muse Co-founder) in Dubai brought chef Nicolas home to Muse. "Muse encompasses the very essence of French hospitality – chic, luxe and simplicity – and so is the perfect fit for my belief in fresh, seasonal foods cooked to perfection," he said. "Being the executive chef of such an amazing concept couldn't have come at a better time for me. Working with chef Clément Bruno, undoubtedly the world's best truffle chef, I am learning a novel way of cooking with truffles. Chef Bruno has the best and most secret sources and, as you can imagine, the quality is simply superb. His signature dishes like *truffle feuilleté*, baked potato with truffle cream are the perfect complement to my distinctive cooking style."

The dedicated chef's inspiration for "M" is to work with the finest local produce and cook it in the simplest way possible to truly maximize flavor, often tracking down the best (sometimes the smallest) producers in Provence for his herbs, olive oil, cheeses and honey amongst other foods. A wide selection of these (like lavender, acacia and forest honey etc.) will be on offer at "M."

Le Toumelin's muse? Undoubtedly an adventurous mermaid with a mane of long flowing hair, the colour of the beaches of Brittany and the inky eyes of a Mediterranean woman.

With the talented Nicolas le Toumelin at the helm, a highly eclectic mix of ocean flavours and vibrant fresh produce is assured: think fresh native fish prepared with the lightest, most fragrant herbs and seasonal vegetables; typically Mediterranean red-mullet tarts adorned with aubergine caviar and a touch of pesto, royal king crab thermidor-style, sea bass flambéed with thyme; lobsters surreptitiously appearing in one-of-a kind, luxury club sandwiches; Corabinerio prawns from Andalusia in Southern Spain (simply because they are the best); duck breast – typically French and always delicious; classic dancing prawns with a St Tropez twist; snail caviar – very French and very beautiful; and the freshest lightest Gazpacho imaginable. Add to this Chef Bruno's perfectly balanced menu of truffle delights featuring signature dishes like truffle feuilleté and baked potato with truffle cream. This is real food, served up straight from the sea, the earth or the market to the plate. But "M" isn't only about food. It's a complete experience. Clichéd as it sounds, it is simply the freshest of food, perfectly cooked and

presented with the most exacting attention to detail - and the warmest of smiles.

The Muse Market

Muse is located just a few minutes from St Tropez's celebrated Place des Lices, home to the mouth-watering scents, tastes and aromas of the twice-weekly Provençal market. A place to relish the glorious hues of freshly cut flowers, to feel the ripeness of the local sun-drenched fruits and admire the sweet, full vibrant tomatoes, asparagus, peppers, garlic, spring onions, not to mention taste the most delicious Forgasse breads overflowing with olive oil, tomato, basil, rosemary and garlic.

A highlight of every Muse stay is a morning market adventure with chef Nicolas. Rich discussions and memorable moments are assured with the fishermen, market gardeners, spice merchants, bee-keepers from the Garrigues, and the cheese makers and wine growers from the surrounding hills who together produce some of France's finest produce.

Back in the kitchen, the amicable guide

morphs into an exacting chef, as he leads guests in creating the finest dishes from the morning's offerings. Chic picnics and cooking displays are part of his usual working day to ensure the fine art of cooking is indelibly sown into every guest's stay at Muse.

Throughout the day, freshly squeezed juices are on hand as a reviving antidote to the tropezian heat. As the sun begins to set, culinary adventures continue poolside with the sommelier's signature cocktails, rosé or champagne accompanied with chef's delicious kemia. Although these seasonal nibbles (think the freshest mini finger sandwiches, piquillo of prawns, egg albufera or mouclade of mussels) are very much part of the sundowner experience in St Tropez, at Muse they have a suitably exotic flair.

Naturally, the very best wines are stored in Muse cellars. Sommelier Roxane Gosse has unearthed some hidden gems from local wine producers from the finest rosé and classics to the grandest grand crus chosen specifically to guarantee the most memorable of moments at Muse.

"M" CUISINE

LE PETIT DÉJEUNER: FRESHLY PRESSED JUICES, CHEESES, COLD CUTS, SALADS, EGGS COOKED TO ORDER, HONEY SELECTION, FORGASSE AND BREADS, CROISSANTS AND PAIN AU CHOCOLAT FROM THE BEST BAKERS IN TOWN.

LE DÉJEUNER: A POOLSIDE AFFAIR WITH EMPHASIS ON FRESH LIGHT CUISINE FEATURING A LARGE SELECTION OF SEASONAL SALADS; CLUB SANDWICHES FROM THE CLASSIC TO THE ADVENTUROUS LOBSTER AND TRUFFLE; ANDALUSIA GAZPACHO AND IBERICO HAM; SUMPTUOUS SEAFOOD PLATTERS FEATURING BLUE LOBSTER, ROCK LOBSTER AND GIANT TIGER PRAWNS AND ST TROPEZ FAVOURITE DANCING PRAWNS

LE DÎNER: SEA BASS BAKED IN CRUST OF SALT OR FLAMBÉ WITH THYME; PAELLA OF KING PRAWNS WITH CAPPUCCINO OF CHORIZO; PAN ROASTED COD WITH BLACK RISOTTO NERO; FILLET OF BRILL CREPINETTE WITH LIGHT ANCHOVY AND BASILIC; DUCK BREAST WITH MOREL; ANGUS ABERDEEN FILLET WITH RED WINE REDUCTION AND, OF COURSE, CHEF BRUNO'S BEST TRUFFLES.

“The most learned men have been questioned as to the nature of this tuber, and after two thousand years of argument and discussion their answer is the same as it was on the first day: we do not know. The truffles themselves have been interrogated, and have answered simply: eat us and praise the Lord.”

Alexandre Dumas (1802-1870)



Chef Clement Bruno and his exotic creations



Images from Muse Hotel de Luxe

Muse Truffle King

Clement Bruno is widely considered one of the best chefs in the world. His signature restaurant, Chez Bruno in Lorgues (about 50kms from Muse) is home to the most coveted tables in the South of France – not to mention a celebrity clientele including Leonardo Di Caprio and Robert de Niro and the world’s most discerning truffle aficionados. Simply known as Bruno, this large colourful chef brings his widely adored style to Muse with an irresistible menu of earthy aromatic delicacies.

While all of Bruno’s creative dishes revolve around the freshest of seasonal ingredients from local suppliers, what captivates most is his creative genius with this wildly expensive subterranean fungus. For many years the truffle has been the object of more lore and mystery than any other single foodstuff in the world. It is the centerpiece of most of Bruno’s dishes (Chez Bruno uses more than 1,000 kilograms of truffles annually). Whereas other restaurateurs use truffles in minute quantities, to Bruno whole truffles are the main ingredient. Indeed, sometimes it is difficult to see the other ingredients under the mound of exquisitely pungent truffle slices with the flavors and textures melding together in perfect harmony with the other components of the dish.

At Muse, Bruno will work exclusively alongside Nicolas Le Toumelin to showcase the region’s finest cuisine and the perfect marriage between *terre et mer*.

Bruno embarks on this Muse adventure with his legendary passion for the finest ingredients and cuisine. His menu is a true gastronomic adventure that revolves around the four truffle seasons. From his classic truffle potato and truffle feuilleté (whole truffle wrapped in smoked ham and pastry) to beef fillet rossini and milk lamb options, “M” is every truffle lover’s utopia.

“The concept of this one-of-a-kind hotel excited me because of its Tropezian roots,” says Bruno. “The very name of St Tropez radiates worldwide. I remember the lovely way a friend of mine put it: ‘St Tropez cemetery is so beautiful that even the sea comes dying at its feet.’ A new restaurant is a new adventure and I’ve always thought St Tropez did not offer enough great tables to meet its high-caliber clients’ rightful demands. I’m therefore inventing a new and original menu for Muse, associating truffles with the sea. Naturally my muse has black eyes and the salted scent of the Mediterranean.”





YTL in South Africa

YTL Hotels' first media event, the Glossy Media Dinner, was held at the Tintswalo Atlantic in Cape Town, South Africa on Saturday, 22 May. The event, attended by top South African journalists and travel writers, showcased the YTL collection of luxury resorts, across Malaysia and on the Indonesian island of Bali, including YTL's branded Spa Village. Guests were treated to a gorgeous and unique spread of Malaysian cuisine specially prepared by executive chefs Wai Look Chow and Johann Ong, both from the award-winning Pangkor Laut Resort in Malaysia. A casual, yet chic cocktail party was also held Tintswalo in Johannesburg for local travel agents.

YTL's Roving Ambassador, Andrew Shapland, explains how this trip came about: "Having travelled the world extensively I am privileged to have seen so many beautiful destinations, yet I often wonder why Malaysia captured my inner sense and why I accepted a gracious invitation to tell the story of YTL Hotels in the USA and South Africa. James McBride, President of YTL Hotels, introduced me to their world and I left my home near Table Mountain, Cape Town, on January evening to visit Kuala Lumpur.

From the moment I discovered Tanjong Jara Resort on the secluded shores of the South China Sea, I knew that Malaysia was going to mean a lot to me – it touched my inner sense and I discovered a real sense of harmony from within. From the magnificent Spa Village to the welcoming service and beautiful views, a little taste of paradise was unveiled. Pangkor Laut Resort was next. From the very beginning I was completely taken aback: my own private island in the Straits of Malacca with one of the most pristine beaches on earth and an amazing jungle-like interior – so stunning. The signature dish here is lemony dancing prawns, so delicious I had to meet Chef Wai and invite him to South Africa to share his fine cuisine. Both he, Chef Hooi and Sarah Cairns then brought YTL's story to our country. South African Airways flew our Malaysian team to Cape Town and from there to Johannesburg.

Now I understand the YTL catch line, 'Treasured places, treasured moments. The sights, sounds and magic of YTL Hotels.' ✎

Bottom left: Chef Wai Look Chow and Chef Johann Ong; Bottom right: Sarah Cairns, Executive Vice President Marketing Communications, YTL Hotels, with guests

life cuisine //



Consuming Passions

Cuisine that tempts from couture chocolate to classic Sunday Roast.

Couture Chocolate

The art of chocolate connoisseurship blends seamlessly with the world of couture in Giorgio Armani's latest confectionary range. The Armani/Dolce pralines come in seductively unusual blends such as dark chocolate with green tea, and milk chocolate with lime and rum, presented in Armani's signature packaging. As the maestro once said about his famous clothing, but equally relevant here, "It's all about good taste." Now available at Carlton Gourmet in The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur.



Life's Simple Pleasures

Fresh Niseko asparagus has all the richness and colour of summer, says Hilton Niseko Village Executive Sous Chef Rob Shipman. "It's so fresh and sweet-tasting it would be a sin to mask it with any strong flavours!" Instead, he recommends wrapping 12 asparagus spears, two teaspoons each of butter, olive oil and white wine, with a little salt and pepper, in a snug tin foil parcel. Steam on a BBQ for five minutes each side. Serve as an entrée with a crisp white wine. Feeds four.

Top Tips: The Perfect Sunday Roast

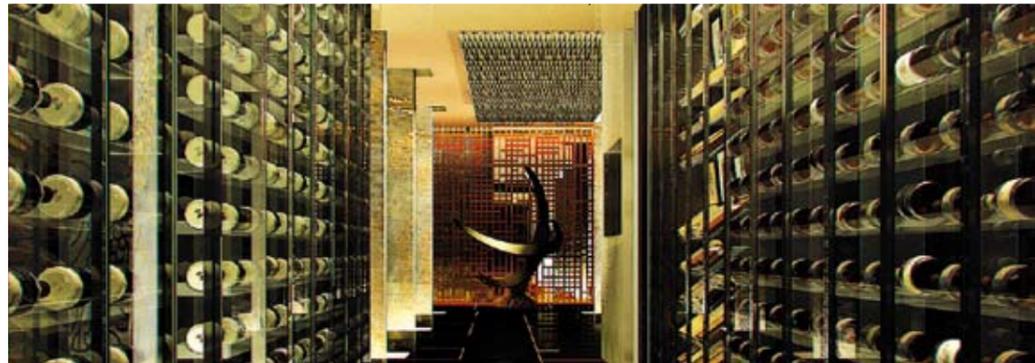
Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur Executive Sous Chef, Mohd Firdaus reveals his top tips on how to roast meat perfectly, every time.

1. Chilling meat at around 5°C for 2 to 4 days before roasting locks in moisture and keeps it tender, a process called 'ageing'.
2. Add more fat to leaner cuts of meat to help infuse deeper flavours during cooking.
3. Garlic, thyme and rosemary are aromatic flavours that infuse well with beef marinades. Massage herbs gently into the meat and allow at least 24 hours(chilled at 5 degrees), for the delicious flavours to permeate.
4. Cooking temperature should initially be quite high to seal in the juices. To cook a 4kg roast, start at 200°C for 20 min, and then reduce heat to 70°C for 3 hrs to achieve a better texture through slow cooking.
5. Once cooked, rest the roasted meat for at least 20 minutes before carving to lock in the flavoursome juices and aromas.





Shook!, the Swatch Art Peace Hotel's exclusive bars and restaurant sets the scene for a glamorous gourmet dining



Time to Shine

Shanghai's Grand Dame celebrates her rebirth.

Text by Edward Soon

If wine is like art, there is no better home for the world's finest wines than at Shanghai's most famous icon – the soon-to-be-open Swatch Art Peace Hotel. Located in prime position at the intersection of Nanjing Road and the Bund, the historic hotel has been transformed under the creative leadership of the Swatch Group into a dynamic and design-savvy retail environment and hotel intended for invited artists who will live, work and exhibit their creations there. The Hotel Residence also extends its hospitality to guests who can book one of the three exquisitely themed suites or four artfully designed rooms.

But there is more as the hotel's exclusive bar and dining scene – provocatively named 'Shook!' (a successful YTL-owned F&B brand originating from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) – and operated by YTL Hotels, is set to become a magnet for Shanghai's chic and savvy residents with a series of versatile spaces catering to different moods

and weathers. Three bars, a showcase kitchen and private dining rooms offer gourmet dining and one of the best wine lists in town.

Take the intimate 'Time Bar', for example, with its sophisticated and cosmopolitan blend of Shanghai cool and European club, offering a neat line in unusual cocktails like the 'Shanghai Secret', and fresh juices and smoothies with an optional "hydro-protein supplement". Think timeless Shanghai style with a very modern twist.

Feeling like some air? Then head up to the rooftop lounge cum bar, 'Rootz on the Bund'. Designed to impress, the lounge boasts an exclusive atmosphere and highly attentive staff. The panoramic view of Shanghai city and the waterfront is breathtaking. Guest DJs will spin the latest tunes while you sip on champagne, stir your martini and contemplate the good life.

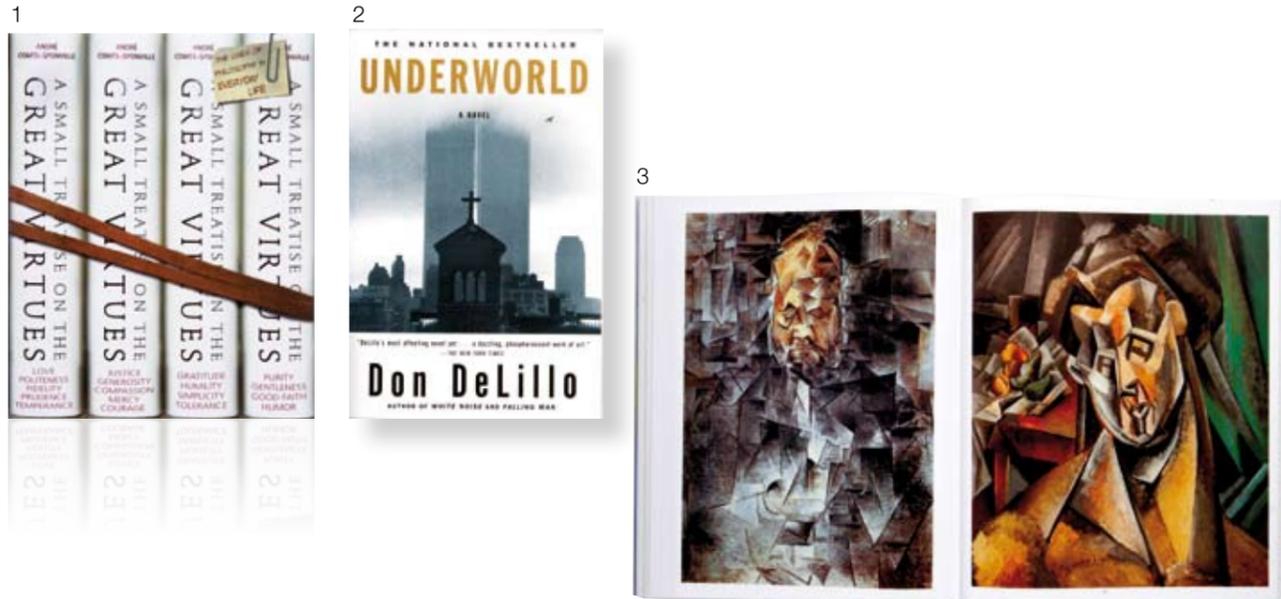
Meanwhile, the chic rooftop lounge seduces guests with stunning panoramic views of the world's most dynamic city and its dramatic waterfront: there are few places that combine such spectacular views with intimacy and old fashioned glamour. Enjoy an aperitif and music selections before slipping downstairs to the show kitchen to feast on creative Chinese, Japanese and South East Asian cuisines.

And best of all, the wines. Lining both walls of the entrance hallway leading to the restaurant are exquisitely designed wine cellars showcasing some of the finest wine collections in the world. You will find yourself in a pleasurable dilemma as you look through the stellar selection of champagne. It will be difficult to decide between celebrated labels such as Armand de Brignac, which is rated number one champagne in the world; Krug Clos de Mesnil, which is favored by critics, collectors and connoisseurs alike; Louis

Roederer Cristal and Dom Pérignon's Oenothèque Rosé.

The centerpiece of the wine cellar is made up of two rare vertical collections of Bordeaux's elite estates – Chateau Cheval Blanc and Chateau d'Yquem. The enigmatic Chateau Cheval Blanc is a profound and poetic interpretation of its unique terroir in Saint Emilion, often irresistibly charming to many with its "cashmere tannins" as described by Mr. Pierre Lurton, the estate's Managing Director. Chateau d'Yquem too, stands out as a vision of mystique and eternal grace, well known as the 'liquid gold' of Bordeaux and a first growth of the Sauternes appellation.

Each collection features one bottle of each vintage from 1945 to 2008; each a treasured series containing hard-to-find old vintages that are much sought after by fine wine collectors all over the world. ■



Read & Listen

YTL's music man Gavin Aldred shares his top picks for summer – and all year round.



Gavin Aldred is the musical genius behind the signature theme song playing on the YTL Hotel website. His globetrotting career as a retailer and management consultant has seen him living in the South of France, Kuwait, and Australia. Currently commuting between London and Los Angeles, Aldred spends much of his time in the air, often citing the hum of Rolls Royce jet engines as a source of his creativity.

My Favourite Books

1. A Small Treatise on the Great Virtues, by Andre Comte-Sponville – The author is a professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris, which for many will not bode well for enjoyable reading! However, this book has become my bible, in my mostly vain attempts to lead a better life. Packed with knowledge and wisdom from greatest minds through the ages, plus Comte-Sponville's acerbic wit and challenging thinking, this is the book I constantly re-read anywhere and everywhere. He takes 18 virtues, such as justice, charity, love, and generosity, and examines their meaning – not just as virtues in themselves – but also how they relate to other ways of thinking and behaving. For example, generosity linked with mercy becomes leniency; linked with gentleness the result is kindness. Constantly surprising and beautifully written (especially as this is a translation from the French original), this is the most inspirational book I have ever read.

2. Underworld by Don deLillo – Along with Philip Roth, Don deLillo is the best writer of the English language alive today. It's not easy to describe this book. It's definitely about America, spanning the time of the Cuban missile crisis to the early 1990s. It's about how we suppress things such as thoughts, ideas, and emotions, only for them to rear up from our own personal underworlds - like deLillo imagines buried nuclear waste might one day arise from the earth. It is "non-linear" in that the story is constantly jumping between topics and it is definitely too long! However, what I enjoy most is the wonderfully elegant writing and the amazing powers of description. Like a pool with only a deep end – you can jump in anywhere for an instant frisson.

3. Anything on Picasso – I simply love the man and his work. I also prefer looking at pictures to reading words. His ability to master a style and then abandon it for something more challenging, combined with his tremendous work rate (at times almost one masterpiece a day) is a constant inspiration. He said, "Action is the foundation key of all progress". This is so true. I tried to be a painter myself once and know first-hand how difficult it is to work in oils. It remains a mystery to me how he could produce such breathtaking images so quickly using such a difficult medium. Like a penitent at the Vatican, whenever I'm in Paris, I always visit the Musee Picasso to see his handiwork close up. He also said "When we love a woman we don't start measuring her limbs". Perhaps I should stop trying to measure and just love.



My Favourite Music

1. U2 - All That You Can't Leave Behind – My favourite band. Constantly developing and constantly inspirational, this album marked a real turning point for U2. Already rock legends, they didn't rest on their laurels and with this album set about (in their own words) "to reapply for the job of the best band in the world". It worked. The album debuted at number one in 22 countries, with the opening track, "Beautiful Day", becoming a global anthem. The album and subsequent singles earned them yet another fistful of Grammys (they have won more than any other band to date). I particularly love the track "Kite", most especially the lines, "Who's to say where the wind will take you, who's to know what it is will break you, I don't know which way the wind will blow". Life, eh?

2. J. S. Bach - The Goldberg Variations played by Glenn Gould – This 1981 piano version is simply sublime. Originally written for harpsichord (the sound of which I loathe) in 1741, it is an aria plus 30 variations. Count Kaiserling, the former Russian ambassador to Saxony, commissioned this piece to be played by an underling, a Mr Goldberg, for the insomniac Count when he was ill or couldn't sleep (which was often). It is fiendishly difficult in parts, with Bach himself coaching Goldberg on how to play it.

3. The Beatles - The White Album – I can cite almost every Beatles album. They inspire me to write better songs, yet at the same time almost make me want to give up completely as I will probably never write anything as good. The first album I ever bought was Sgt Pepper in 1967, when I was 11. The Beatles – The White Album was released a year later and is creative genius at play. It is a simply breathtaking range of musical styles and arrangements across 30 tracks from pumping rock, e.g. "Back in the USSR" (with McCartney on drums), lyrical ballads like "Blackbird", to avant-garde with "Revolution No .9". Eric Clapton plays lead on "While My Guitar Gently Weeps". In many ways this album marked the start of the end for the band. Yoko was involved and the band was not getting on. But if this album is the result, creative conflict may not be such a bad thing after all!





Objets of Desire

Modern designs set the scene for sleek sophistication.

Design Winners

It was the kind of product positioning that most established furniture designers would kill for. At the recent Bottega Veneta 2010 Design Competition, the Italian fashion house unveiled the results of a challenge presented to students of architecture at the University of Tokyo - to design a furniture piece that served a purpose for someone seated while reflecting the luxury company's tradition of handcraftsmanship. The stunning results, infused with traditional Japanese aesthetics and an unmistakable modern craftsman's touch, were created by winners Fujimoto, Suzuki and Takada - and have already appeared on the hot list of collectors world-wide.



Lines of Beauty

When French product designer Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance and Ligne Roset first collaborated on a luxury hotel project in Marrakech, they discovered a common passion for Moroccan design. The happy result of their endeavours is the striking Ottoman range, widely described as the 'zenitude' in comfort and well being. The designer's playful vision and formidable expertise in quilting and colour proved a perfect fit to the luxury furniture brand's modern, progressive and quirky personality. Sporting a blend of decidedly organic and oriental design characteristics, the pouffe, transformed into a sumptuous contemporary sofa, would look equally perfect in an abode of the staunchest minimalist.



Luxury on Demand

Our love affair with technology continues with a new, rather compelling reason to covet a Vertu phone: the Vertu Concierge - a wish-granting genie service accessible at the push of one sleek button. As well as offering assistance and advice through the day and night, the exceptionally well-trained staff are on-hand to arrange dinner reservations, concert tickets and even dinner with Queen Elizabeth (forward thinking Vertu staff recently arranged for tickets to a charity dinner where Her Majesty was present). A host of other useful features on the latest Vertu Signature make this a truly addictive blend of style and impeccable service.

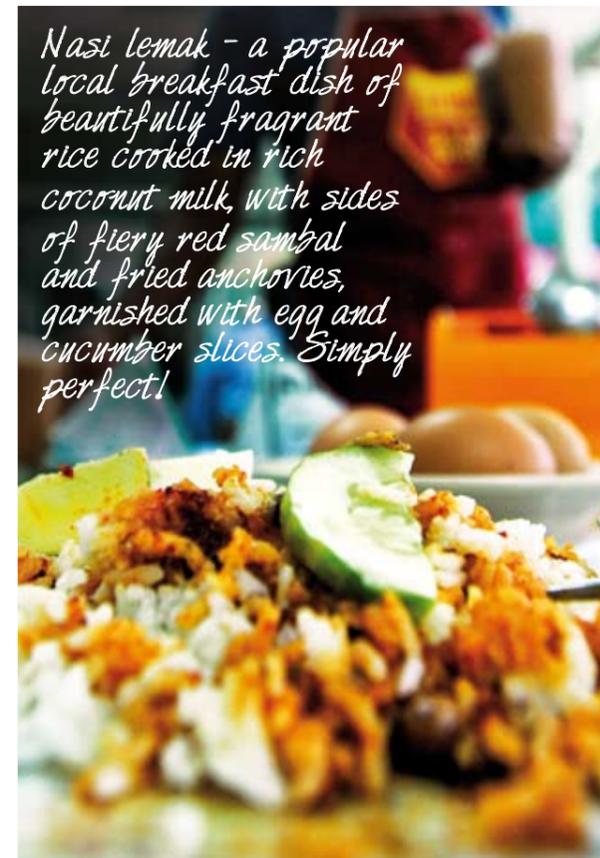
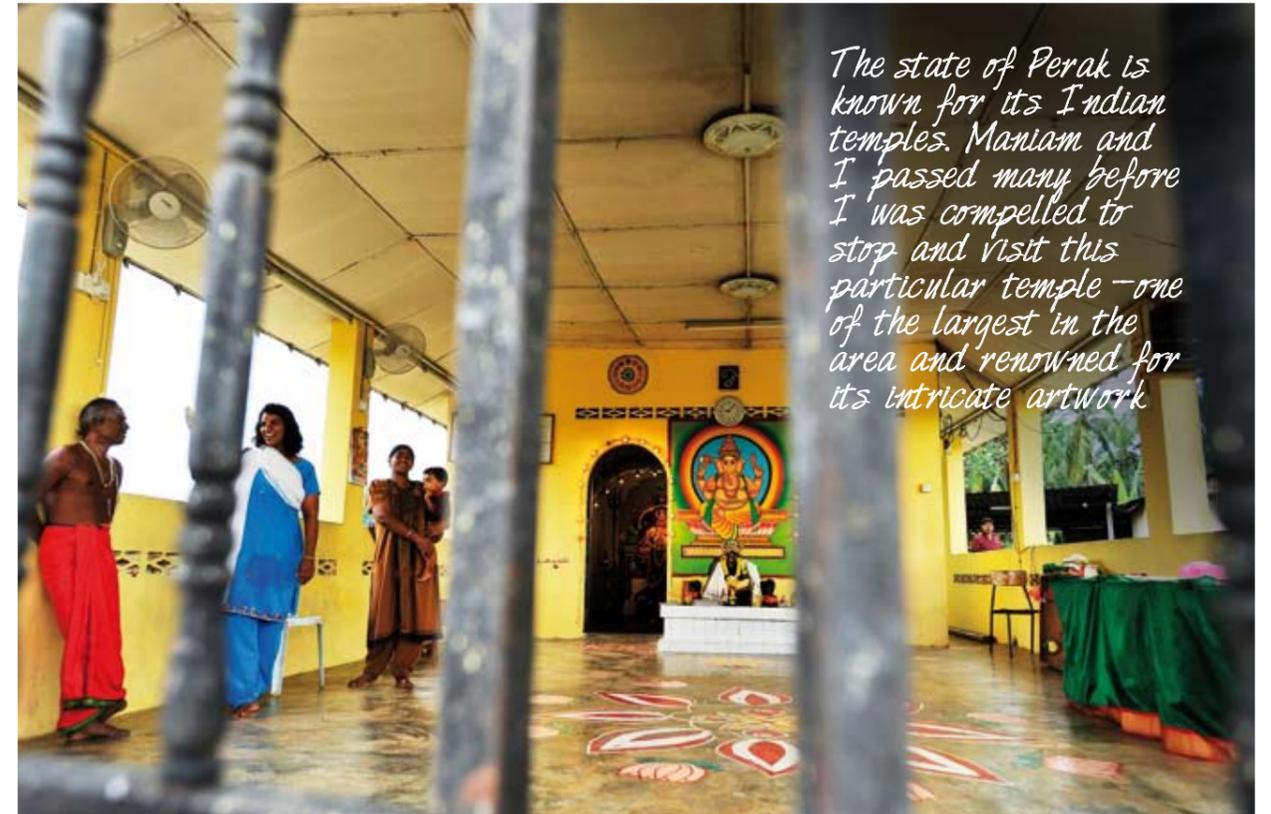
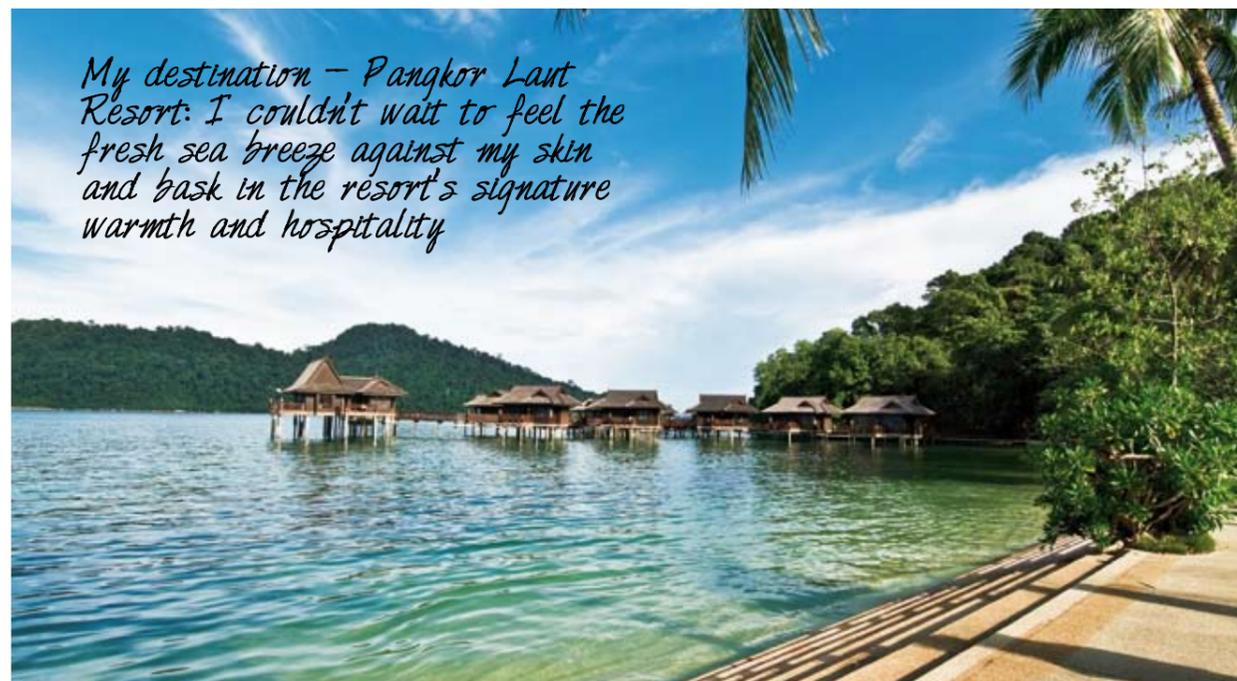
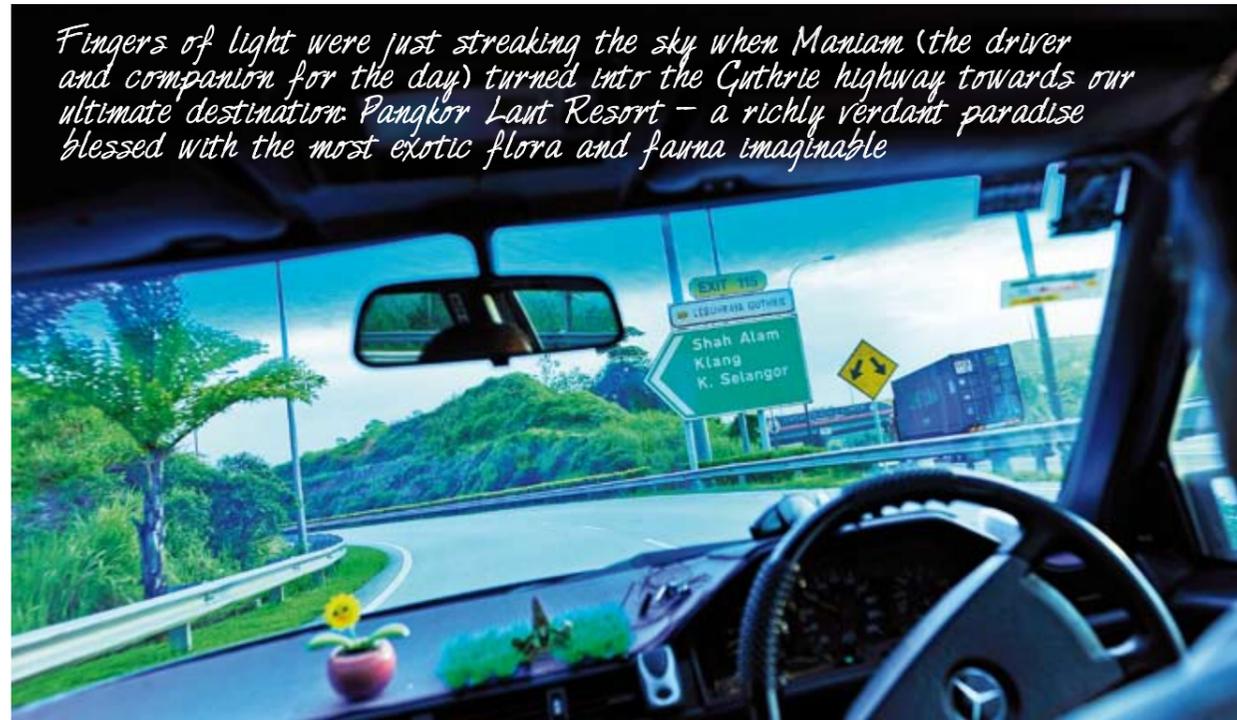


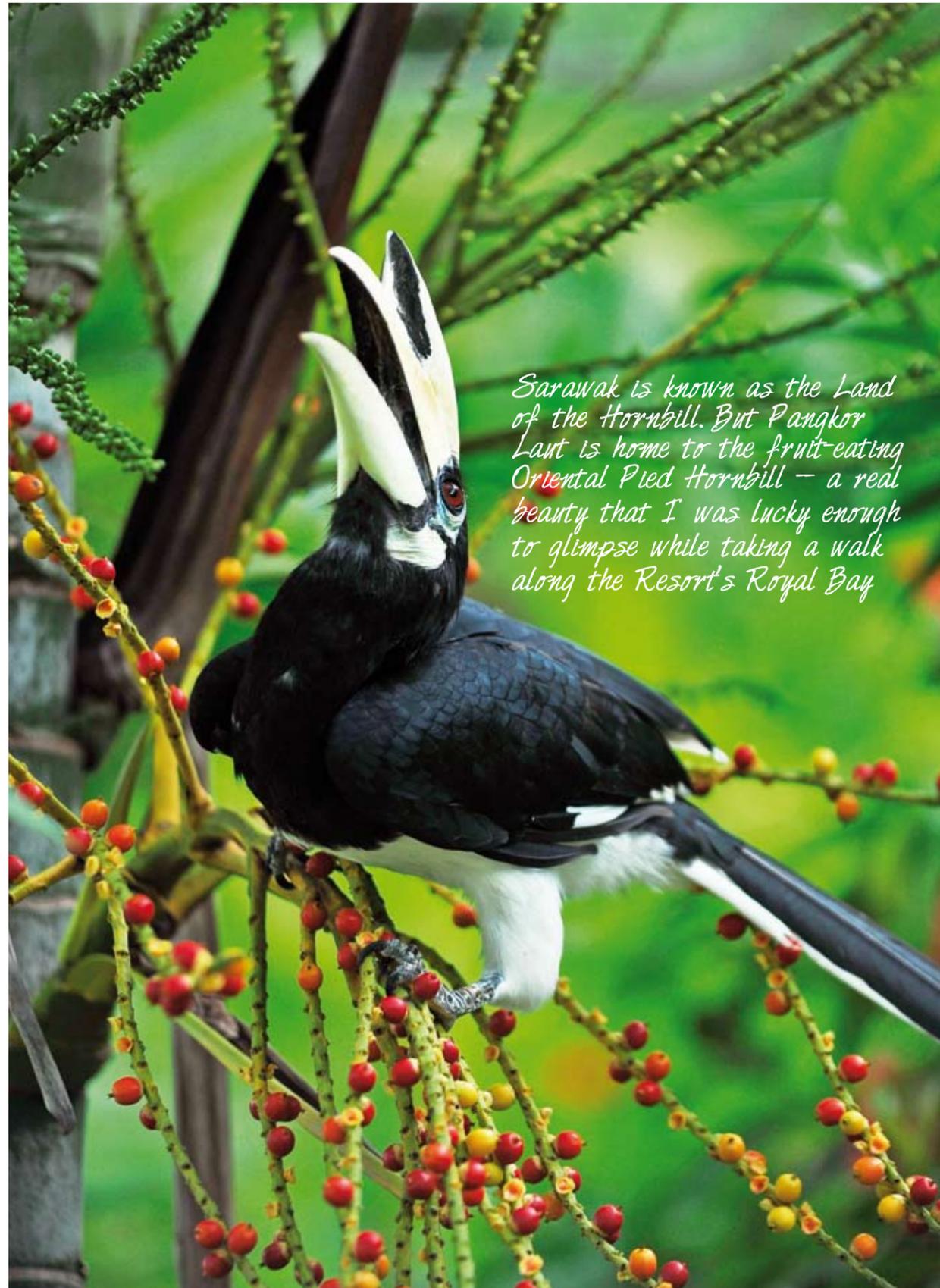
World's Best Dressed iPad

While the world waited impatiently for 2010's hottest tech product, the Apple iPad, luxury fashion industry leader Louis Vuitton launched its equally sleek must-have: the LV iPad case. Apple's perfect partner-in-style comes in signature Monogram and Damier Graphite designs combining functionality, desirability and undeniable tech-chic appeal complete with a water- and scratch-resistant surface.

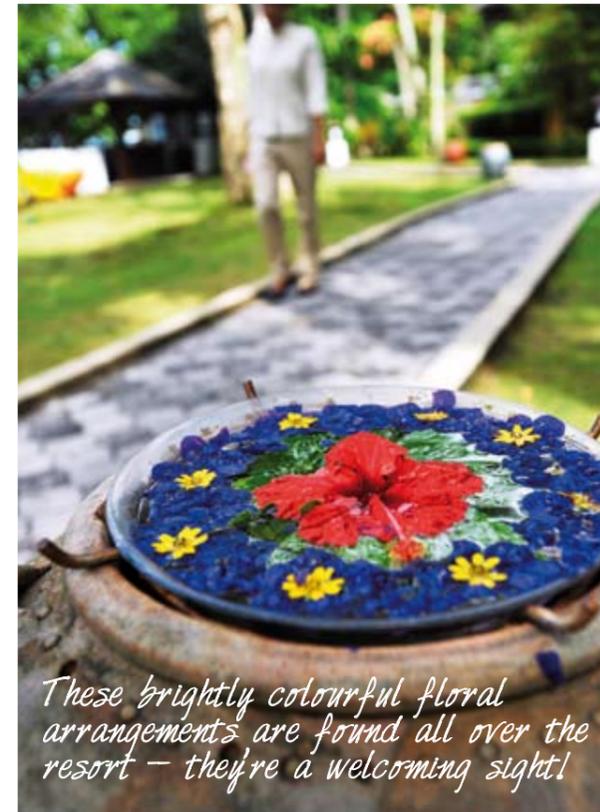
NATURE'S BOUNTY

Renowned Malaysian photographer Nikt Wong embarks on an adventure-filled journey discovering the allure of Pangkor Laut Resort's pristine beauty.

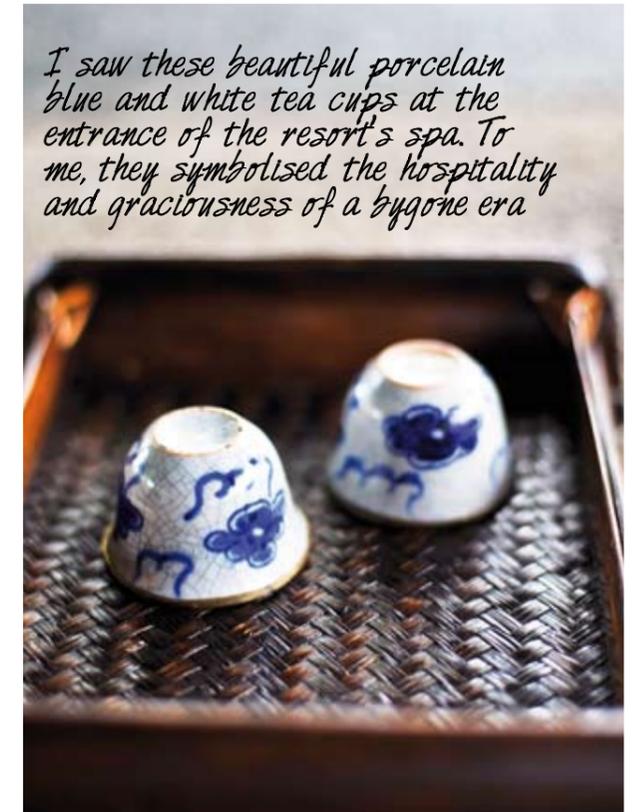




Sarawak is known as the Land of the Hornbill. But Pangkor Laut is home to the fruit-eating Oriental Pied Hornbill – a real beauty that I was lucky enough to glimpse while taking a walk along the Resort's Royal Bay



These brightly colourful floral arrangements are found all over the resort – they're a welcoming sight!

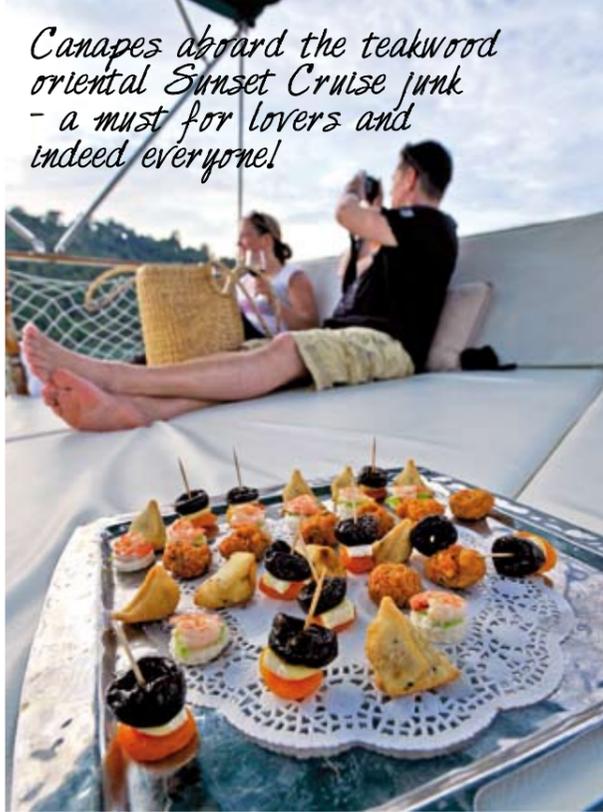


I saw these beautiful porcelain blue and white tea cups at the entrance of the resort's spa. To me, they symbolised the hospitality and graciousness of a bygone era

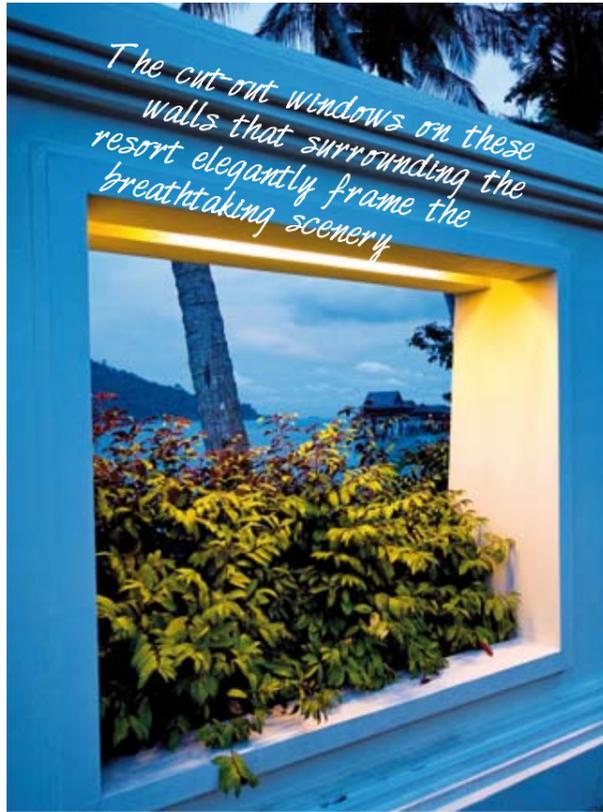


I was walking along the beautiful Spa Villas when this view of Coral Bay captivated me...

*Canapes aboard the teakwood
oriental Sunset Cruise junk
- a must for lovers and
indeed everyone!*



*The cut-out windows on these
walls that surround the
resort elegantly frame the
breathtaking scenery*



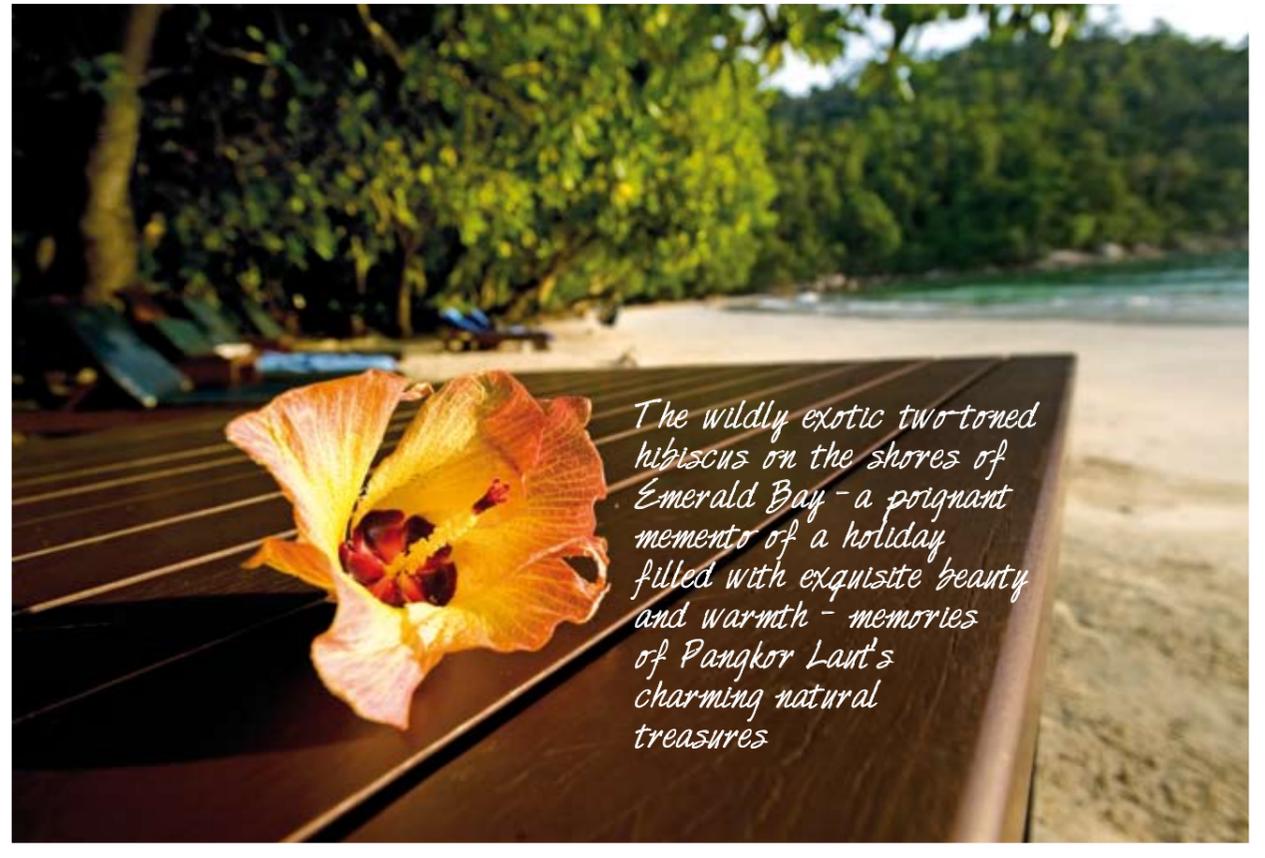
*This mesmerizing sunset of violet and pink peppered with shades of gold
proved to me that Pangkor Laut Resort truly is paradise on earth*



*Inspired by traditional Malay architectural design, the resort's brightly lit
Sea Villas are built on stilts silhouetted against the velvety dusk sky*



*The wildly exotic two-toned
hibiscus on the shores of
Emerald Bay - a poignant
memento of a holiday
filled with exquisite beauty
and warmth - memories
of Pangkor Laut's
charming natural
treasures*



Quiet, luxurious, discreet – just three worthwhile reasons to visit YTL hotels.



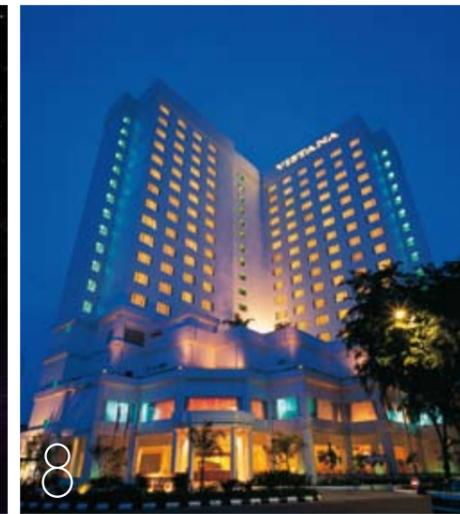
1. **Muse Hôtel de Luxe** Savour the sun-drenched Provencal scenery in this boutique hotel nestled minutes from St Tropez, France. It features the authentic rusticity of a traditional mill made of stone, with just 15 suites, all with their own private gardens; ten have pools. Muse captures the very essence of the French countryside in a truly intimate setting.



2. **Tanjong Jara Resort** Located on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia, Tanjong Jara is an oasis of luxury and well being steeped in age-old Malay traditions. Fronted by an emerald sea and shaded by tall palms rustling in the breeze, this is the perfect place to unwind, relax and simply be at one with the unspoilt surrounds.



3. **Pangkor Laut Resort** is a privately owned island located three miles off the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia in the Straits of Malacca. This little slice of paradise has been two million years in the making, and nestling in the shade of forest giants is Pangkor Laut, one of the world's premier resorts. The experience is sublime – secluded bays curled around pristine beaches, sultry evening skies woven with colour and a deep sense of serenity reserved exclusively for guests.



8. **Vistana Kuala Lumpur** is a 364-room hotel strategically located within the hub of Malaysia's capital city. Convenience is key here, with ready access to bustling Kuala Lumpur, from the Ampang Rail Line and KL Monorail to the hop-on, hop-off site-seeing tour buses.

9. **The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur**
A stay at the exclusive Ritz-Carlton is the perfect opportunity to experience a modern city in which ancient rivers converge and the sights, sounds and flavours of Malaysia are omnipresent. Home to the magnificent Petronas Twin Towers, Kuala Lumpur is rich in culture and tradition. At The Ritz-Carlton, guests can soothe both body and mind with expertly delivered spa treatments, indulge in award-winning cuisine and avail of the magic of this vibrant city.

4. **The Majestic Malacca** is an integral part of this historical city's colourful past. The original mansion, dating back to the 1920s, remains at the heart of the hotel, with a new building (mirroring the original architecture) housing 54 spacious rooms and suites. The design seamlessly integrates old with new, to ensure an experience that is authentic yet comfortable and luxurious.

5. **The Chedi, Phuket** Surrounded by the azure waters of the Andaman Sea and lush wooded hills, The Chedi Phuket offers its guests a choice of 108 thatched cottages under a canopy of coconut palms. Its landscaped slopes gently descend to meet a private stretch of sandy beach. The appeal of the spacious 89 one-bedroom and 19 two-bedroom cottages is further enhanced by private verandahs, secluded sun decks, and handcrafted teak floors.

6. **Cameron Highlands Resort** Set amid rolling hills and tea plantations,

this tranquil hideaway promises all the splendour, romance and nostalgia of its grand colonial heritage. Tall French doors, timber-beamed ceilings and plantation shutters are just a few of the added design touches. This is the ideal place to enjoy a refreshing round of golf, a pink-cheeked ramble along jungle trails, or a leisurely walk through tea plantations and strawberry farms.

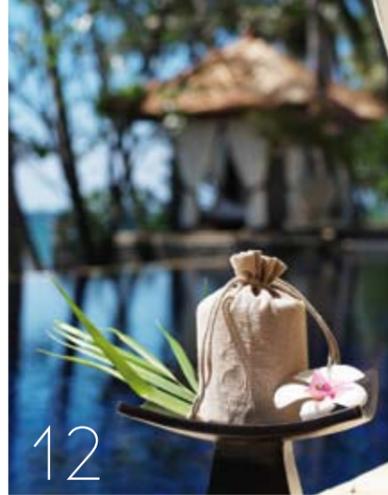
7. **Niseko Village** Set at the foot of the Niseko Annupuri Mountain, Japan's premier ski resort on Hokkaido Island, Niseko Village is the perfect base from which to enjoy a range of year round outdoor activities. Ski in possibly the world's best powder slopes during winter, or golf, cycle, walk and enjoy the breathtaking Japanese scenery during the summer months. After a day of activity, relax with a soak in the natural hot spring bath, or unwind with a massage in the hotel's spa before enjoying perfectly prepared traditional teppanyaki in the stylish Japanese restaurant, Ren.



10. A quarter of a mile in length, the **Eastern & Oriental Express** luxury train recaptures the golden age of rail travel through one of the world's most beautiful and exotic regions. Gourmet cuisine, personal service and luxuriously appointed cabins combine in delightful harmony as the train gently rolls through tropical forests close to the Equator.



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

12. **Spa Village Resort Tembok, Bali** Spa Village Resort Tembok Bali is a haven of peace and calm, combining the naturally therapeutic value of its beautiful location with an ancient and rich cultural heritage. Reflecting its innate spirituality, the environment is soft and serene as people go about their day in a caring manner that brings calm to the harried, and peace to the stressed. At Spa Village Resort Tembok Bali it is possible to recapture one's sense of self.

13. **Spa Village Malacca** The Spa Village Malacca is the world's only spa to base its

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

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

15. **Spa Village Pangkor Laut** The Spa Village at Pangkor Laut Resort is a unique ultra-exclusive retreat that extols the healing cultures of Malaysia's diverse history of people and cultures and vast abundance of exotic natural resources. The abundance of Malay, Chinese, Indian



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and Thai practices makes this the ideal tranquil setting for complete rejuvenation of body and soul.

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

17. **Bray House, England.** A 17th century manor turned boutique hotel located in Berkshire, England is the undisputed jewel among YTL Hotels featuring a masterful mix of eclectic artistic decor and modern comfort. It is a private residence offering a glamorous escape, bespoke service and accommodation with the intimate comforts of home. Restaurant

reservations and excursions to nearby Windsor, river cruises, golf, horse-riding and other pursuits can be arranged.

18. **JW Marriot Kuala Lumpur** This 29-storey, 561-room hotel is ideally located for the modern traveller in the heart of Kuala Lumpur's exciting "Golden Triangle", the city's prime business and shopping district, and adjoining to the prestigious Starhill Gallery. It is also strategically located on "Bintang Walk", the lively and vibrant shopping strip where luxury shopping centres house a highly sophisticated mix of brands, restaurants and entertainment outlets.

19. **Villa Tassana, Phuket** Set amidst a tropical forest on a craggy cliff overlooking the beautiful emerald green Andaman Sea, Villa Tassana offers the epitome of modern sophistication married with signature Thai hospitality, and gives a whole new meaning to getting away from it all.

20. **Swatch Art Peace Hotel Residences** Under the leadership of The Swatch Group, the Swatch Art Peace Hotel hosts a unique community of international and Chinese artists. Located on the Bund, this urban oasis features 18 workshop-apartments, where invited artists live and work and 7 guest suites that comprise the Swatch Art Peace Hotel Residence. Residence guests enjoy the creative buzz of life among artists, the award-winning 'Shook!' restaurant and shopping at exclusive Breguet, OMEGA, Blancpain and Swatch boutiques. Opening Summer 2010.

Clear Favourites

In an exclusive interview, British actress Anna Friel shares the people, faces, tastes and experiences that make her world.

An indulgence I would never forgo is... tea with sugar and full fat milk, dark chocolate, cheese and wine, and beautiful holidays.

My favourite room is... my bedroom in Windsor. The walls are filled with pre-Raphaelite paintings and I have a beautiful bed with hearts carved into it; it's one of my favourite pieces of furniture. My windows overlook a long walk. There's nothing better than waking up on a spring morning and looking out over the Great Park. But I do love waking up to the sound of water lapping around the stilts at the Sea Villas at Pangkor Laut in Malaysia. If there was a way of joining the two together, I would be in my element.

The book(s) on my bedside table are... speak with Distinction, (a great book on accents) by Edith Skinner .Eat, Pray, Love by Elizabeth Gilbert . The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo by Stieg Larsson. The Late Hector Kipling, written by my partner David Thewlis, which I am reading again and some scripts

In my fridge you will always find... pretty healthy things, to be honest, like chicken, eggs, greens, the odd Coke (for when I just need it), my daughter Gracie's school snacks and usually some sort of stew or soup, which I make in bulk so I don't go for the naughty stuff.

My playlist includes... Oasis, Kasabian, Bonnie Prince Billy, Jay Z, Kanye West, lots of classical, Desi Friel (my dad), Lady GaGa, Abba, Marina and the Diamonds.

My most memorable spa treatment is... the week of Ayurvedic treatments I enjoyed at Pangkor Laut. when oil was continually dripped on my head whilst I was being massaged. I hadn't been sleeping well after a long run in the theatre, so my hours were all over the place. Gracie and I went to Pangkor Laut for a true break. The spa was like none I had ever visited. The treatments were designed to fix my sleeping patterns. I slept like I used to as a child. I would go back again just for that

The most memorable place I have to been recently... Pangkor Laut was my first holiday in three years. It was totally private, quiet and new. Gracie and I were treated like princesses by the most delightful staff I have ever come across. The food was exceptional, the surroundings idyllic, and the Olympic-sized infinity pool encouraged me to swim one kilometre a day. I have been spoiled for life.

What makes me smile? People who are funny and warm; my baby girl, Gracie; getting a great job; eating good cheese and drinking a wonderful bottle of wine; and of course my family.

A lasting memory from my childhood is the trips to Ireland where my family live; wonderful music and the beautiful countryside where we spent our holidays.

