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January 2016

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L I V I N G

Editor's Letter

Another new year is here. What's it going to bring? What changes can we make personally? And how will this complex world of ours move forward?

There's something that I would like to see change and, although it's a small thing, it's something that I believe will improve all our lives. Communication. It's not something I can say I'm great at, but I do know how it negatively impacts all areas of life when we don't work on it.

You see a family at a restaurant – a fairly expensive one – and they're all sitting round staring at the small electronic devices in their hands. No one is talking to each other or even focusing on their food.

A friend just called me, after laying down the law with her husband and children, because they're either on the phone, tablet, laptop or watching TV. They never remember what she's just said, and gaze up at her blankly.

At the cinema or concert, screens light up in front of you or next to you, no one is in the moment, they're recording it to show their friends or to save it to look back on. And it's a moment lost forever.

We can all relate to these scenarios, so it's time for a New Year's resolution to make a stand! Technology is here to stay but we can fit it into our lives and let it help us rather than let it take over. Why not ban it from the table or at certain times of the day?

Although this message might seem a bit depressing, I think if we don't acknowledge the issue now, then depression may be the order of our lives.

On a brighter note, though, may 2016 bring you all that you wish for and more – more lovely family time, more fun, more love and, of course, more *Expat Living*!



Rebecca

REBECCA BISSET
Editor-in-Chief

STAY UPDATED ONLINE @
www.expatliving.sg

NEWS

Keeping you up to date with the latest news and promotions around town, plus heaps of online-only content. *Tip:* For fabulous EL travel deals, go to expatliving.sg/travel.

EVENTS CALENDAR

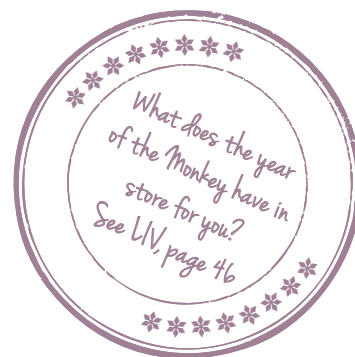
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UPFRONT

New choices and things to do, buy and try

Flying High

Asia's largest and one of the most important aerospace and defence exhibitions in the world, the **Singapore Airshow** will be open to the public on 20 and 21 February. Look out for flying displays and an enormous static aircraft display area where kids can experience the world of flight. Almost 100,000 visitors attended the sell-out public days in 2014. Tickets are \$22 for adults and \$9 for children (aged three to 12 years), including a shuttle transfer from Singapore Expo. Changi Exhibition Centre. Tickets from Sistic. singaporeairshow.com ▼



MONKEYING AROUND

With 2016 now upon us, it's also the time to welcome the **Year of The Monkey**, and undoubtedly one of the most atmospheric spots to do that is Chinatown. From 16 January to 8 March, the streets will be lit up and decorated, with special mechanical monkeys hanging from trees. Get into the monkey spirit at the countdown party on 7 February, or check out the official light-up ceremony (with an acrobatic performance) on 16 January, from 6pm to 10pm. chinatownfestivals.sg

ISRAEL PHILHARMONIC

By popular demand, flamboyant conductor Maestro Zubin Mehta returns to Singapore to lead the 110-member **Israel Philharmonic Orchestra** in a classical programme including French, German and Russian masterpieces. The evening is also a celebration of Maestro Mehta's 80th birthday and the 80th season of the orchestra. 7 January, 7.30pm to 9.30pm, Esplanade Concert Hall. Tickets from Sistic. facebook.com/zubinmehtainsg ▼



DEMPSEY TRAILS

It's no secret that **Dempsey Hill** is steeped in history, from its beginnings as a nutmeg plantation, to army barracks and now a cool food and lifestyle destination. The Loewen Road area is the latest to receive a makeover, with outlets that include a spa, a pet hotel and various enrichment and fitness facilities. One fun way to get your bearings at this new spot is on a heritage walking trail, four of which have been devised. Foodies can take the Epicurean Trail, outdoorsy types should enjoy the Nature Trail, and there are two variations of the City Dwellers' Trail, one of which is designed for families. dempseyhill.com ▲

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CHARITY SPOTLIGHT

KIND HEARTS

Supporting small local charities through fundraising is an important goal of the not-for-profit **Netherlands Charity Association (NCA)**. Founded in 1968 by a group of Dutch women, it's since become a charity group for all nationalities, supporting the likes of the H.O.M.E. sewing studio with sewing supplies, and Breadline, which helps poor families struggling to make ends meet and gives students access to education so as to break the poverty cycle. NCA aims for its contributions to make a big difference in the work of the charities they support. nca.org.sg ▼



WATER FOR ALL

It's good to know that there are plenty of internationally minded kids in Singapore who commit to causes they care deeply about. One such girl is 10-year-old Tahlia Henshall, who was struck by just how many people around the world don't have reliable and convenient access to clean, safe water. With the support of her family she has committed herself to raise \$15,000 in 12 months through **World Vision**, in order to build a well for a village in Africa. Her fundraising efforts include book swaps, a five-kilometre run, forgoing birthday and Christmas presents and even a sponsored "silence". To find out more and to help Tahlia, visit myvision.worldvision.org.sg/campaign/tahlias-buy-a-well-campaign. ►

Tahlia (pictured, right) with friend Emily Cameron after running five kilometres



INJURED FOOTBALLER

Owen Williams was a rising rugby union star starting his international career with Welsh team the Cardiff Blues. He broke his neck playing at the Singapore 10s rugby tournament last year and is now paralysed. A group of Singapore organisations, including The St David's Welsh Society of Singapore, The Fry Group and Eiger Events, along with a number of former international players, are collaborating to host a fundraising week early this year to raise funds for Owen. Events will include a dinner, a touch rugby tournament, coaching clinics and the St David's Ball. Anyone interested in donating or sponsorship should contact Linda Gordon on **8109 7264** or linda@eigerperformance.com. ▲

HELPING THROUGH HAWKER FOOD

Hawker food is a mainstay of Singapore life, yet many residents worry that cooking skills are being lost as a new generation looks to alternative careers. One big-hearted social entrepreneur saw a way to offer skills training and jobs to the disabled and disadvantaged, while keeping the hawker tradition alive. Over 300 graduates have been trained in cookery skills and gained valuable work experience at **Dignity Kitchen**, which receives no government funding. Social outreach programmes also offer the elderly a free bus ride and lunch at the kitchen. Experience a meal for yourself at Block 267 Serangoon Avenue 3, #02-02.

dignitykitchen.sg

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CALENDAR

JANUARY 2016

SHOPPING & FAIRS

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(FROM 2 JAN)

A weekend bazaar set on the bridge connecting the main island to Sentosa, full of people selling interesting wares. Open from 4pm to 11.30pm on Saturdays and 2pm to 9.30pm on Sundays, rain or shine! **Sentosa Boardwalk.**

tgifbazaars.com | enquiry@tgifbazaars.com

BLOGSHOP & CO

(25-31 JAN)

Don't miss this pop-up fashion bazaar at retail landmark Tampines 1, featuring selected labels. 10am to 10pm.

8828 1989 | market@blogshopandco.com

DOTCOM EXPO

(29-31 JAN)

This event showcases products that reflect how technological innovations have brought tremendous change to the world, while aiming to add a human touch to the online shopping experience.

Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre. dotcomexpo.sg

SPORTS & FITNESS

MILEAGE NEW YEAR RUN 2016

(1 JAN)

Anyone brave enough to run on New Year's Day? To encourage family participation and runners of all ages, this year the Mileage organisers are introducing a new category: the Family Fun Run. Here's the difference: prizes for this category will not be awarded to the fastest family, but to families via a lucky draw so that all participants have an equal chance to win. **Punggol Park.**

mileage.sg/events

RUN FOR HOPE 2016

(31 JAN)

Run For Hope (RFH) is organised annually by Four Seasons Hotel Singapore, Regent Singapore and the National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) to raise much-needed awareness and support for cancer research. Enter the 3.5K or the 10K: they're both non-competitive. **The Promontory @ Marina Bay. runforhope.sg**

PARK RUN

(ALL YEAR)

Each Saturday, a group of avid runners meet at the B1 Car Park at East Coast Park, to test themselves over a 5K run that starts at 7.30pm. It's free, it's timed and it's open to all, whatever your pace.

parkrun.com.au/eastcoastpark



Park Run

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THE ISRAEL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, CONDUCTED BY MAESTRO ZUBIN MEHTA
(7 JAN)

Maestro Zubin Mehta, widely regarded as one of the greatest conductors of our time, will lead the acclaimed Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in a classical programme of masterpieces from French, German and Russian composers. **Esplanade Concert Hall. sistic.com.sg**

WALK THE MOON
(19 JAN)

American pop-rock band Walk The Moon performs its debut show in Singapore at Fort Canning Park, presented by LAMC Productions. Tickets from Sistic. **lamcproductions.com**

KIDSFEST 2016
(20 JAN – 14 FEB)

Mark your calendar for KidsFest, as ABA Productions once again presents its theatrical adventure for children in Singapore. Now in its fifth season, the festival will this year see the debut of four new shows: *Little Red*

Riding Hood, *Snow Child*, *I Believe in Unicorns and Aliens*, *Love Underpants* – plus, back by popular demand, *The Gruffalo* and *Room on the Broom*. **SOTA Drama Theatre. kidsfest.com.sg**

ST JEROME'S LANEWAY FESTIVAL 2016
(30 JAN)

Now in its sixth year in Singapore, this trendy music festival returns with a huge line-up of international and Asian indie rock and pop acts, and plenty of F&B refreshment tents. **The Meadow, Gardens by the Bay. lanewayfestival.com**



FAMILY

KIDS' HOLIDAY CODING CAMPS
(UNTIL 8 JAN)

First Code Academy believes in shaping young children to be creators by encouraging creativity, problem solving and an urge to push boundaries. **The Hub, 128 Prinsep Street. hellosg@firstcodeacademy.com**

DRAMA HOLIDAY WORKSHOPS
(UNTIL 16 JAN)

ACT 3 Drama Academy, recognised for its highly educational yet entertaining programmes for children, presents its year-end workshops. **ONE-TWO-SIX Cairnhill Arts Centre. act3int@act3international.com.sg**

MATTHEW & THE MANDARINS
(4 JAN)

What better way to start 2016 than with a show by local country music legends? In this special upsized edition of the Coffee Morning &

Afternoon Tea series, Matthew sings memorable hits by Merle Haggard, Willie Nelson and more.

Esplanade. esplanade.com/festivals-and-series

OMM PROM: PHANTASIA
(17 JAN)

Singapore Symphony Orchestra concertmaster Igor Yuzefovich and principal cellist Ng Pei-Sian perform Andrew Lloyd Webber's greatest tunes. Set against the evocative backdrop of *The Phantom of the Opera*, the story of Christine and the Phantom unfolds through the soaring lyricism of the violin and cello.

Esplanade. esplanade.com

OCEAN WILD WITH BRIAN SKERRY
(24 JAN)

National Geographic Live Presents: Ocean Wild with Brian Skerry. See how the images of one of National Geographic's most seasoned explorers illuminate the vast, hidden world beneath the waves. Brian's mission is to enlighten and inspire people to care about the beauty, bounty and health of the oceans. **Esplanade. esplanade.com/events/2016/**



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ART

SINGAPORE ART WEEK
(16-24 JAN)

A nine-day visual art celebration held across a variety of venues in Singapore, offering a myriad of quality art experiences for everyone. artweek.sg

ART STAGE SINGAPORE 2016
(21-24 JAN)

Art Stage Singapore, the leading contemporary art event of Southeast Asia, brings together galleries from across Asia to feature established and emerging contemporary artists from the region and beyond. **Marina Bay Sands Expo & Convention Centre.** artstagesingapore.com

COOPOW COMICS & MANGA DESIGN COMPETITION
(UNTIL 8 JAN)

Organised by the Singapore National Co-operative Federation, Coopow is a competition that promotes co-operation and is designed to unleash the creativity and imagination of the public. Participants will have to choose

one of five co-op stories to illustrate and present in a visual format. **sncl.org.sg/events/coopow**

YEO WORKSHOP
(UNTIL 31 JAN)

A project space that produces a series of exhibitions representing artists' projects, and hosts gallery-based programmes such as talks and symposiums, Yeo Workshop aims to promote the work of contemporary local and international artists. **1 Lock Road, #01-01. yeoworkshop.com**

SINGAPORE CONTEMPORARY ART SHOW
(22-24 JAN)

Following its success in Hong Kong, this show is now making its debut in Singapore. All visitors are welcome to sign up for the complimentary tour programme with qualified guides, children's tours and a Kids' Studio.

Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre. singaporecontemporary.com

HOME

EXPAT KITCHEN COOKERY COURSES
(THROUGHOUT JAN & FEB)

Kick off 2016 with a course at this favourite cookery school. Choose from a range of hosted options like 7 Snack Attack Solutions or Low Fat Family Meals, both one-day courses, or opt for the week-long basic or intermediate courses – there's even a Teens' Cooking class. expat-kitchen.com

BOOK AHEAD FOR THE BALLS!

- 23 January: The popular Australian Chamber of Commerce Ball is back! This year it's at Swissôtel The Stamford. austcham.org.sg
- 27 February: Book your tickets now for the St David's Day Ball. stdavidsociety.org
- 27 February: Get your glam on for the American Association's 83rd George Washington Ball. aasingapore.com
- March (date TBC): Leaping leprechauns, it's the St Patricks Society Singapore Ball; we'll be green with envy (get it?) if you can snare a ticket. stpatssingapore.com
- 16 April: Support the Canadian Association Maple Leaf Ball. canadians.org.sg
- 7 May: It's back again; book your tickets now for the Australia and New Zealand Association Ball. anza.org.sg

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Based on a love story that transcends culture and time – *Anna and the King of Siam*, the 1944 novel by Margaret Landon – this musical classic tells the story of Anna, the widowed British schoolteacher brought to Siam to tutor the King's many children.

The Theatre @ MediaCorp. sistic.com.sg

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metasprintseries.com

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LETTERS

Readers' thoughts and comments



Best Letter

We want to hear from you! Send us your thoughts on the magazine, or on any subject under the sun. To encourage her to keep her fabulous New Year resolutions, **Theresa Sandilands** wins a bottle of champagne!

Resolute Reader

This is our fourth year as expats, and once again we could not afford to get home to Melbourne for Christmas. It's especially heart-breaking when you have little ones, not so much because they suffer – they're too busy ripping presents open and overdosing on cake! – but more because I feel guilty that I'm depriving our parents of them at this special time.

So, if we're still here next year, we've resolved to invite at least one set of grandparents to visit, even send them tickets if necessary! (Much easier and cheaper than transporting our unwieldy family to the far side of the next continent.)

And while I'm at it, here are a few more resolutions for the new year:

1. Phone or Skype my parents every week.
2. Put more money aside each month, not only for long-term savings but also to be able to spend some time with extended family members.
3. Consciously choose low-cost outings to museums, parks like the Botanic Gardens, and nature spots like Sungei Buloh, instead of expensive shows and activities.
4. To avoid pricey restaurants, learn to cook gourmet French meals at home.
5. Make use of Groupon offers for the occasional facial or massage treat.

Well, that's the plan, anyway!

Theresa Sandilands



A Pet Is Forever

Do you think you're the kind of person who would get rid of a pet just because it has become inconvenient, for example because you're moving to a flat that's going to be too small? Ask yourself that question seriously before you get a puppy or a kitten, either for yourself or as a gift – especially for a child. The statistics for Christmas present dogs that are subsequently abandoned are numbing, so don't add to them! Remember, a pet is not a toy: it is a living, breathing, feeling creature that deserves loving care and a happy life.

Desiree Arbuthnot



Festive Season Star

I thought I should pass on the compliments of my parents and my sister-in-law's family, all of whom descended on us – err, came to visit – for two weeks over the holidays. My mother and my sister-in-law were extremely impressed by the quality of the articles and the photos in *Expat Living*, and they also said that it gave them a lot of insight into living here. They especially loved the Wine & Dine section, and couldn't wait to try the bars and restaurants reviewed there. So, thanks once again for a great job, and all the best to the EL team for 2016!

Pieter and Angela Kemp

Ed: It's feedback like this that encourages us to keep delivering the goods. Thanks, Pieter and Angela, and remind your family that they can visit our website expatliving.sg at any time.



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SCENE AROUND TOWN

Recent events, openings & parties



British Polo Day

Held at the Singapore Polo Club for the fourth time, the Asian leg of British Polo Day's Global Series 2015 was a celebration of the best of British craft and heritage. It was sponsored by Land Rover and supported by around 30 leading brands such as Brompton bicycles, Champagne Taittinger, Harrods and Royal Salute whiskey, represented by the charming 13th Duke of Argyll, Torquil Campbell. Shangri-La Hotel Singapore catered an excellent lunch.



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Design Awards Night

Award-winning international design studio Design Intervention held its first Young Designer of the Year Awards in its newly renovated Loewen Gardens showroom. Sherry Goh from Ngee Ann Polytechnic was named the winner, with Lu Yilin from NAFA announced as runner-up. Sherry was awarded \$2,000 along with her trophy, in front of visiting press, property developers and other design and property industry representatives.



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Historical Home Tour

During the American Women's Association's recent Home Tour, close to 200 members and guests had the pleasure of visiting five homes across the island. The annual event showcases some stunning residences in Singapore; pictures were taken by Littleones Photography.



Bigger Butcher's Space

Huber's Butchery has moved to bigger and better premises in Dempsey, and to celebrate they held a grand opening over an entire weekend. Guests were invited to explore the larger indoor butchery and grocer's, complete with outdoor children's playground. Entertainment included cooking demonstrations, a lion dance and plenty of activities to keep the little ones occupied.



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Christmas Celebrations

We saw in the festive season with a stunning Christmas drinks party at the new *Expat Living* offices. Working with fantastic partners Fabulation, Pop Up Wine, Gastrogig and Vivid Snaps, the evening was a wonderful mix of live music, freshly cooked pizzas, bubbles and photo-booth fun.



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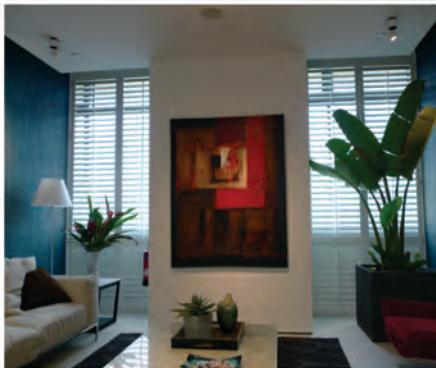


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WHAT'S NEW

Hot shops and what to buy right now

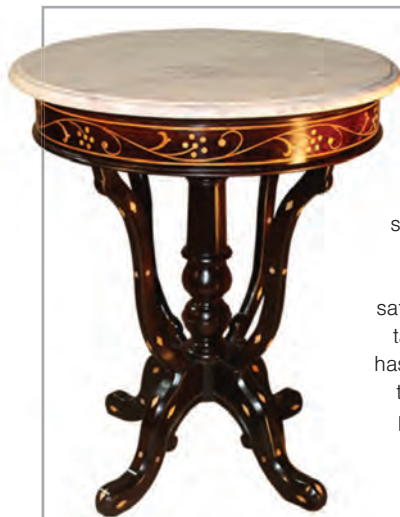
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COOL CLEAN COLLECTION

Whitewoods has even more designs now in its oak wood collection. These include the oak mosaic rack (pictured), a simple piece showcasing the beauty of the natural wood. To view this and other designs, go to **9 Penang Road, #02-22/23 Park Mall**. whitewoodsliving.com ▲



NEW YEAR SALE

To celebrate the start of a new year, **Treasures of the Raj (TOTR)** is offering discounts of between 20 and 40 percent on selected collectibles and furniture.

Then there is its newly arrived collection of one-off antiques in satinwood, ebony and mahogany to take a look at. What's more, TOTR has a buy-back policy that promises to refund 100 percent of the price paid at the end of three years. Go to **#02-03 Tanglin Shopping Centre**, or click on totr.pw.

Award Winners!

Allied Pickfords has been awarded silver in the Best Relocation Company category at the prestigious Vendor of the Year Awards hosted by *Human Resources Magazine*. Established over 400 years ago (yes, 400!), the company now handles over 50,000 moving services every year, with over 600 locations in more than 40 countries. To find out more about how they can help, go to alliedpickfords.com.sg or call 6862 4700. ►

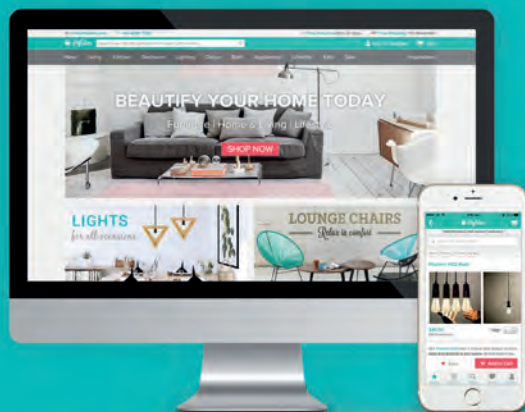




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The Height

Style really doesn't have to come at a high price, as LAURA ROBINSON will testify. Her family of five lives in a two-storey four-bedroom house in Braddell Heights, which is not only close to her husband's work and their children's school (one and the same), but also eminently affordable.

Who lives here:

Laura Robinson, husband Nick Jolly, and children Felix (7), Maggie (5) and Florence (1).

Where they're from:

Australia.

Time spent in Singapore:

Three years.

Size of home: Two storeys, four bedrooms, 2,600 sq. ft

Rent or own: Rent

Renovations: They knocked down one wall, put up two, renovated the kitchen, and added new light fittings and taps.

Personal style: Laura loves Scandinavian design – a monochromatic, classic and simple look. She's keen on keeping original features to retain character, and isn't interested in stock-standard project-style homes.

Style of home: Classic Singapore with a modern feel, which more or less reflects Laura's personal style



Of Style

*By Amy Brook-Partridge;
photography by Kym Bernabe*



bumped into Laura at the opening event for the new Cluny Court retail space, The Fishwives, a gourmet food emporium. We had that classic “I’ve seen you before” moment you so often have in Singapore, before finally remembering we met at bootcamp quite some time ago.

Since then, Laura has had her third child, Florence, who’s just turned one, and she’s joined forces with New Zealand expat Annie Kefford to form interior architecture and design firm Kefford & Robinson; The Fishwives is their first project together.

As we caught up on each other’s news, she told me that she and her family had recently moved from their condo in Bishan into a house in the Braddell Heights area. Husband Nick is a history teacher and works as the Higher School Certificate (HSC) Curriculum

Coordinator at the Australian International School (AIS), a mere five-minute bicycle ride from the house. With their two eldest children attending the school, a move into the vicinity made perfect sense. “It has great road links, the MRT station is close, there’s a good little park and restaurants across the road and, importantly, it’s affordable; if you’re here to save money there are some really good properties in this area as long as you can look beyond the surface.”

When Nick and Laura first viewed the house there was so much stuff inside that they could barely walk through the door. “It was hard for Nick to see beyond this, but you have to have that vision. Even the landlord can’t believe the transformation, still coming by occasionally to take a look at what we’ve done to the property. We’re lucky to have such a great landlord.”



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Top: It may not be to everyone's liking, but the terrazzo flooring, divided with brass, is a striking feature in the living room.

Left: The dining table was in the house when the family arrived; Laura painted it with Annie Sloane chalk paint and gave it a wax coating.

The air vents that are common in many older Singapore homes caused problems during the haze, but are the kind of classic feature Laura loves.

Far left: The two chairs came from IKEA, the blue couch from the Salvation Army, and the trunk coffee table from Junkie's Corner. "We'll probably take the chest with us when we leave Singapore, because it's a bit of fun, but for the most part we'll leave the furniture behind."



Laura and Nick agreed to the \$3,600 rent, with the proviso that the landlord contributed to some specific renovations within the house. They knew they were up for another \$550 per month for pool rental, but the all-in amount of \$4,150 was still less than the rental for their condo apartment – and now they have twice the space and their own lawn to run around on.

“The previous tenants had not cared well for the property, and as this was the house the landlord had grown up in, he was keen for it to be restored.” Working with a budget of \$5,000, they knocked out the kitchen, installed the IKEA cabinets, added the black granite worktop purchased from a supplier of Laura’s, and bought new lighting and taps. “We don’t have overhead cupboards; everything is hanging and on display, giving it an eclectic look and making it more of a cook’s kitchen.”

They knocked down a wall in the utility area and added another one to enclose the sink, and created a small office space downstairs. Outside, they installed black-and-white blinds. “I bought two sets of natural chick blinds and spent two weeks

painting them, but when I went to hang one set it fell apart as the paint had rotted the string. I was not happy!”

Work-life Balance

Laura and Nick had always wanted to live overseas, initially considering Hong Kong before the job at AIS came up. They felt it was the perfect opportunity, particularly as they love to travel and Singapore is an ideal springboard to so many other destinations.


After getting the family settled over those first few months, Laura then found a job with Australian-based interior design firm Geyer, where she was a senior designer for 18 months, working on large workplace projects for companies such as Capitaland and American Express.

She then went on maternity leave – pregnant with Florence – taking a year out before returning to work. She is still a consultant for Geyer on workplace projects, but for retail, residential and hospitality design she now works with Annie Kefford, as Kefford & Robinson. She joined forces



with Annie (who she coincidentally worked with in London 12 years ago), a fellow AIS mum, in June, working initially on the Fishwives project; they're now designing the AIS café and have some small office spaces in the pipeline too.

In between working, Nick, Laura and the family are ticking off their top destinations to visit, one by one. "Sri Lanka is amazing, a huge eye-opener; there's so much to explore with its beaches and culture – it's like India without the intensity," says Laura. They also love Thailand and Bali, and recommend Nusa Lembongan for those who don't fancy the longer trip to Lombok. "It's a 40-minute boat ride, very chilled out and beautiful." They also have plans to go to the Philippines next Easter and then hope to visit Europe later in the year.

Saying goodbye, Laura mentions she will try to come along to another bootcamp soon. With everything else she has on her plate right now, however, I won't be holding her to it! 

Laura's "cook's kitchen", which she renovated, including installing the IKEA cabinets and adding the black granite worktop.



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("I can't go past this area without having a bit of a shop and some great coffee – it's a shame rents have risen and pushed some of the smaller retailers out")

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6225 8545 | 40handscoffee.com

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("for amazing cakes and tarts")
1D Yong Siak Street
8363 7614 | plainvanillabakery.com

Books Actually

9 Yong Siak Street
6222 9195 | booksactually.com

Woods in the Books

3 Yong Siak Street
6222 9980 | woodsinthebooks.sg

Yoga Movement

("for some seriously good hot yoga")
11 Yong Siak Street
8223 3540 | yogamovement.com

Restaurants & Bars

Kilo

("love the atmosphere and wish I could get my hand on a space like this to design")
66 Kampong Bugis
6467 3987 | kilokitchen.com

Chop Suey

10 Dempsey Road
9224 6611 | pscafe.com

PS Café Dempsey

("for food, yes, but the fit-out is gorgeous too")
28B Harding Road
9070 8782 | pscafe.com

Esquina

("amazing food, though the portion sizes are getting a bit lean")
16 Jiak Chuan Road
6222 1616 | esquina.com.sg

Potato Head rooftop bar

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36 Keong Saik Road
6327 1939 | pttheadfolk.com

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#10-04 Tan Boon Liat Building
6226 4663 | pomelo.com.sg

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KEEP IT CLEAN! SIMPLE STYLE FOR THE BEDROOM

By Amy Brook-Partridge

With the hectic life we lead, it's vital to have a calming place to keep you grounded – a sanctuary to escape to. The bedroom can be the perfect haven, so here are some ideas to create a cleaner, calmer environment.



If you have to use your bedroom for a little screen time, consider this uncomplicated oak-frame PC console, \$995.



FRESH FRAMEWORK

Often the bedroom can be left behind in a home makeover in favour of the more “public” areas of the home, and yet this space obviously impacts directly on the quality and quantity of sleep that we get, so it should be a priority.

Start with the framework, and look at using clean, contemporary designs for your furniture. Sleek styles such as these from **Whitewoods Living** create a fresh feel, while retaining the appeal of wood and nature. “We believe in design that is casual and relaxed, yet modern and fit for city life. Our collections are pure in essence and entice the senses, and we are inspired by the palette of finishes from nature,” explains J Yong, director of Whitewoods Living.

Whitewoods Living
9 Penang Road
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6336 9003 | whitewoodsliving.com

Keep it pure and simple with this oak Azur nightstand, \$430, and this oak Azur bedframe (above), \$2,500 for king-size.



Oak double-sideboard with two doors, \$1,850.



Add a little warmth and character with this retro 1960s-style chest of three drawers, \$1,295, or the oak Origami nightstand (far left), \$415.

As the name implies, the Sofzsleep Trilogy mattress consists of three individual latex cores with varying firmness ratings. The mattress features an extra-firm base core with two additional layered toppers in soft and medium density; firmness can be adjusted by changing the order in which the layers are arranged. Prices start from \$1,799 (size: 190 by 90 by 24cm).



The Chiro mattress has an extra-firm base latex core with a plush micro-perforated topper, giving strong back support. Prices start from \$1,499 (size: 190 by 90 by 25cm).



Delight is a firm, quilted, extra comfortable 18cm mattress. Its soft latex topper creates a plush feel; this mattress is a popular choice among parents who wish to provide optimal back support as well as comfort for their children. Prices start from \$1,199 (size: 190 by 90 by 18cm).

MATTRESS MATTERS

If you don't fancy lying down for hours each night on a material that could contain harmful toxic chemicals, the general consensus is to steer clear of polyurethane foam. Instead, it's worth considering a mattress with an inner core of latex, which is derived from a natural milky sap and has millions of interconnected open cells that allow air to flow through for healthy and safe breathability.

Rina Chang, head of regional sales at **Sofzsleep**, whose mattresses are 100 percent latex, says: "It's important to note that many spring mattresses contain hundreds of fine metal springs, which are unfortunately excellent conductors of harmful magnetic fields. It's not too far-fetched to suggest that sleeping on a spring mattress is like sleeping on a field of tiny antennas." Metal-free mattresses are a safe choice against electromagnetic radiation, which can cause restlessness, lower immune systems and make concentration more difficult, according to Olle Johansson, a professor from the Department of Neuroscience at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm.

What's more, the natural antibiotic properties of latex mean it's less habitable for dust mites and microbes. Rina adds: "Our special bamboo fibre covers mean you can be assured of a super-soft, highly durable anti-bacterial and hypoallergenic product."

Sofzsleep
6100 4569 | sofzsleep.com



Starlight mattresses come with an easily removable cover that is washable, extra-plush and quilted for comfort. Prices start from \$890 (size: 190 by 90 by 14cm).



At Treasures of the Raj, WE DO NOT SELL you a piece of furniture or a collectible antique.



Solid Rosewood Table with Ivory Inlay.

Circa 1890's sourced from one of the Royal Palaces in Gujarat, India

New Year Sale

We are pleased to announce our New Year Sale which will run from 1st January to 31st January, during which we will be offering discounts ranging from 20 to 40 percent on selected collectibles and furniture pieces

We would like to believe that we share with you, a piece of our heritage, and a slice of history.

A slice of history, handcrafted by master craftsmen, over a century ago, and lovingly restored with painstaking effort that is made to preserve and protect each piece's unique personality, character and history through active conservation of its surface and patina.

Given both our belief and commitment, towards our process and end product, we would like to put our money where our mouth is.

We therefore undertake to buyback the pieces of furniture sold to you at the end of 3 years, at 100% of the price paid by you.

Sounds too good to be true?

Come and share a cup of coffee or a glass of wine with us, at our flagship outlet at **02-30 Tanglin Shopping Centre, Singapore.**



Treasures of the Raj, is a veritable treasure trove all things Raj, spanning the British, Portuguese, Dutch and French colonial period in the Indian subcontinent.

TREASURES OF THE RAJ

#02-30 Tanglin Shopping Centre, Singapore 247909 Tel: +65 9173 5041 Email: harriet_dias@hotmail.com / hd@totr.pw
Opening Hours: Monday to Saturday 11am to 6pm Sunday (by appointment)

WWW.TOTR.PW

Natural fibres and neutral colours create a soothing environment.

100 percent eider duck down pillows and duvets, from US\$3,263.

NATURAL BEDDING

Ideally, the fabric that sits next to our skin all night should be chemical-free and natural to encourage healthy sleep. **Ploh's** range of bedding is all-natural, from the mature white goose down and feather pillows, duvets and featherbeds from its Luxury Collection, to rare hand-harvested eider duck down in its Limited Edition.

"Our focus is on making the sleep experience truly enjoyable and an integral part of a life lived fully," says Charlotte Loh, co-founder and COO of Ploh. "We find that goose down and feature bedding encased in quality cotton with silk ticking along with fine Egyptian cotton offers just that." Ploh also aims to soothe the senses with

the tactile quality of the fibres in its Egyptian cotton. "Apart from thread count, expert milling, weaving and finishing also play a role in turning out fabrics that offer an exquisite tactile experience," says Charlotte. "Thread count of course has its place when it comes to selection, but it must be considered together with all the other factors: products with the same thread count can differ greatly in quality. We produce our bed linens with only the best fabrics."

And what about colour? Ploh's preference is for clean, crisp white rather than seasonal colours and trendy patterns – the aim being to appeal to individuals who opt for more discreet personal havens.



Timeless Finish linens in white and brunnera embroidery, from US\$85 for a travel pillow case.



The Voyage cashmere travel blanket comes in six colours, US\$1,752 per blanket.

Ploh
1 Fullerton Road
#02-01 One Fullerton
6832 5602 | ploh.com



Linen and room spray, \$28.95.



Bedside diffuser, \$45, for use with essential oils.

Lavender has a balancing effect on the central nervous system, notes Cherylynnne, while neroli is a good remedy for insomnia, useful for headaches and may instil a sense of peace due to its calming effect. Luxury soy wax candles, \$49.95.




SLEEPY SCENTS

Fragrances can play an important part in signalling to your mind that it's time to relax, wind down and prepare for sleep. Essential oils are renowned for their ability to benefit mind and body, and certain oils or blends are specifically designed to aid sleep.

"Diffusing or massaging in an essential oil before bedtime will help to relax both body and mind, and pillow mist sprays that are created specifically to aid sleep can also be helpful," says **To Be Calm's** Cherylynnne Clews. Lavender and chamomile are known for their calming, sedative qualities, or you may want to use a different fragrance that you personally relate to. "It could be a fragrance that reminds you of a particular place that you love, which, when you reflect on it, transports you there and helps calm you."

Cherylynnne also points out that different fragrances or essential oil blends can help with particular types of stress. So, mental stress or exhaustion – from pressure at work or upcoming exams, for example – will respond better to essential oils such as geranium, bergamot or patchouli, whereas sandalwood, rose and cardamom are beneficial for emotional stress such as grief.

"Finding what works for you and appreciating that at times different fragrances can meet different needs will assist you in creating the optimal calming environment in the bedroom." 

To Be Calm (various locations)
Capitol Piazza 13 Stamford Road | 9139 1784 | tobecalmgroup.com

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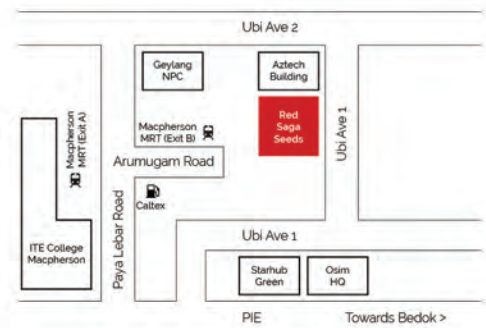
Sundays: Viewings by appointment



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Reasons to Rent

Are you weighing up the pros and cons of renting furniture in Singapore? **WTP – The Furniture Company’s** managing director **MIMI SOMJEE** has some advice for those looking at leasing.

Moving to a new country comes hand in hand with a plethora of uncertainties. Common concerns include not knowing how long the job posting will continue for, trying to decide where to live, and choosing whether or not to bring your own furniture with you. Once you’ve found a place to rent, next comes the question of furnishing it; if renting is an option, here are five points worth considering.





#1 Plug and play

Rental furniture delivery can be made in advance, meaning you can move in immediately. "WTP even provides loan furniture prior to the 'actual' lease furniture, and at no extra cost," says Mimi. With these loan pieces to start with, there's no need to rush into decisions to find the right pieces for the home; you can discover these at your leisure in the store or online.

#2 Ship away the hassle

Leasing takes away the worries of shipping furniture, the bothersome paperwork accompanying it, the unwanted storage costs, the chance that your furniture may not fit into your new living space, the risk of damage in transit, disposal costs and more. Moreover, by minimising the initial capital outlay it frees up money for other settling-in expenses.

#3 Personally packaged

Style, budget, number of pieces and length of lease are all variables in a furniture leasing agreement. Flexibility is therefore a key advantage, and WTP offers a range of leasing packages, from one month to 36 months, at different price points. You can choose to rent from the WTP range, or from its budget series at "The Outlet", housed in the same showroom; furniture can even be customised to personal tastes. Leasing also allows for the replacement of furniture when a contract is renewed – if, for example, new trends call for décor changes.

#4 Stress-free maintenance

Leasing comes with service and repair of all the items under lease; there is round-the-clock maintenance, and items are under warranty during the lease period. A separate and sometimes overlooked advantage is that furniture lease payments are tax-deductible.

#5 Relaxed departure

The leasing contract can expire along with the tenancy agreement, so you're never burdened with an early termination of the tenancy agreement, or in the case of having to relocate prematurely or change jobs. You can leave Singapore without worrying about the disposal of furniture, as it will be collected before you depart. There's even the option to keep the furniture under the lease buyback scheme after the lease expires. ³¹



WTP The Furniture Company is at
3 Kung Chong Road.
6235 2760 | wtpstyle.com

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DINEⁱⁿ Style

For indoors, outdoors or both? Glass top or recycled teak? High-backed chairs or upholstery? Choosing dining furniture can be a minefield. Here our expat readers explain the decision-making process behind purchasing their beloved dining pieces.

Photography
by Ken Tan



Rachel Kim, Korean

I'm director of a restaurant called Chateau Privileged Club; we had moved premises and wanted some statement furniture in line with our design approach, so as to create an outstanding ambience and dining experience for our customers.

We got to know EDD+ through word of mouth, and were excited to see that their collection was versatile and would complement our creative design concept. The entire shopping experience with EDD+ was enjoyable, eye-opening and stress-free. They were sincere and creative in providing ideas and advice, as well as professional in managing the entire order and delivery; in all, a very trustworthy seller.

We had wanted to buy just dining and coffee tables, but the collection was so attractive we couldn't resist. We ended up purchasing the tables along with dining chairs, consoles, stools, sofa, mirrors, display stands, sculptures, wall panels and rugs! The furniture is both functional and aesthetically beautiful – many customers compliment us on it. The statement pieces have natural textures and forms that make them unique, which is in line with our design concept and business model.

We're all extremely happy with the new furniture, and we would definitely recommend EDD+ to our friends and associates. Their products are adaptable to any concept, and you will always look forward to finding new ideas there. The staff at EDD+ are also a great bunch to work with.

EDD+ Furniture Gallery
994 Bendemeer Road, #01-07 B Central
6291 0990 | eddesign.com.sg

Michelle and Jolie Jones, British

When we discovered we were expecting a daughter, it was important to us to establish a new dining routine, as opposed to eating out or having casual dinners in front of the television. My husband and I are not foodies, so for us our dining table is less about what's on the plate itself and more about the family dining experience, and our little family reconnecting at the end of the day over food.

We've been going to Taylor B on Sundays since we moved in together, regardless of whether we're looking for furniture or not! When I met my husband I was very much into darker teak, but he loves Balinese influences, including whitewashed styles and reclaimed and driftwood pieces, which Taylor B has a lot of. The store is huge and has a regular fresh influx of products, so we see something different every time.

We chose a simple, almost rustic whitewashed French-style table with matching chairs. I wanted upholstered



chairs to add texture and for comfort. We've recently moved into a black-and-white colonial home, and we like the contrast of the contemporary, natural tone of the table against the much older black-and-white features of the house itself. We chose a table that was elegant and large enough to host our friends, but also fitting for a young family. That was important; this table is definitely durable, and we needed to be able to have our daughter join us at the table without us worrying about spills!

We're more than happy with our dining table, and we have already made a few trips back to Taylor B, as well as its lighting outlet at Haw Par Villa. Our house has big rooms, and we have bought quite a few lamps to give a softer, more intimate energy to the space.

Taylor B Fine Design
43 Keppel Road, levels 1, 2 & 4
9420 4000 | taylorbdesign.com



Nurulhuda Md Latif and Md Inshari Ibrahim, Singaporean

Our previous dining set was too small for our large family; it also had a glass top that smudged and legs that squeaked. We were looking for a larger table with a wooden surface, one that could easily be cleaned, and with low-backed chairs.

We live in Geylang, and so were aware of Star Living's outlet in Paya Lebar, where we had been several times before to scout for household furniture. We chose the Manchester dining set by Mondi. It has a walnut table-top and solid rubberwood legs in a black stain that completes the whole look and concept in our house. We also chose the chairs in a red wine hue with cushioned seats.

It's now been a year since we got this dining set. We love it, and our guests who have dined at it have given us positive feedback too. Some dining chairs can be uncomfortable, but not these ones. In fact, we spend more time at the dining table now than before, which goes to show how comfortable it is.

Choosing the right dining set was an important decision for my family; it had to be easy to maintain and practical. Star Living offers quality furniture with a modern look and at affordable prices. We've recommended them to our relatives and friends, and they too have been extremely happy with their purchases.

Star Living
52 Sungei Kadut Avenue
6365 8832 | starliving.com.sg



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Angel Salti, Singaporean

“Having just moved back here from the UK, we had given away our old table as we wanted a bigger one to suit our new dining room. Ethnicraft came highly recommended to my husband and me, and we were very impressed the moment we walked into the showroom in Eunos.

We loved the simple yet classic appearance of their teak furniture. We were also very pleased that it was so reasonably priced. We'd been finding it hard in Singapore to shop for good furniture without paying an arm and a leg! We ended up buying a dining table, television console, coffee table and shelving unit from the store on that visit.

Subsequently, I went to their website a few more times and shopped online for two study tables, a bookshelf, two side cabinets and a few smaller items, all teak. That should really show how much I adore their furniture!

They also had all of our items beautifully varnished and sent to us in a very efficient manner. I would definitely recommend them to anyone who is looking for really good quality teak or oak furniture.

Ethnicraft Online
72 Eunos Ave 7, #05-05
9272 1545 | ethnicraft-online.com.sg

Jason Duff, British

“I had just arrived in Singapore on assignment in August 2015, working for IBM as a sales executive in Asia. I found an apartment to rent in the Bukit Timah area and wanted to lease a range of furniture including a dining table that was comfortable for parties as well as

family meals – something everyone would feel happy sitting around.

Esther Ng from Landplus Group was responsible for my apartment rental and overall settling into Singapore, and she introduced me to designers Felicia and Philip from Gallery 278's rental arm, Esco Leasing. Felicia took on my ideas and designed my house

accordingly, with great furniture that suited not only the apartment but also my tastes. I immediately felt comfortable with Felicia and her team's choices and colour coordination of the apartment.

For the dining table, I wanted a lightly smoked glass top with a light-coloured wooden base that would work to show the marble floor. I didn't want something bulky, but it had to blend with the room as well as bring a fresh wooden focus to the centre of the table.

I did take a huge risk! Due to commitments back in London, my wife and daughters could not come out to choose the apartment or the furniture, so I used their ideas online as well as engaging with Felicia to choose furniture that would suit the whole family. My wife Margaret and our youngest daughter Anastasia arrived four weeks ago, and they love the place and the furniture.”



Gallery 278
278 River Valley Road
6737 2322 | gallery278.com

Yvonne McNulty, Australian

“We sold our apartment on the East Coast in January 2015 and bought a new apartment in Sentosa Cove. Our old outdoor dining seating was wicker and dark brown and didn't suit our new décor, plus it was wearing out from the harsh sun. We decided to replace it with something more modern, in cool tones. The biggest requirement was that it had to withstand ocean-front living and last up to ten years. We are localised and have another ten-year plan to be here, so we wanted a table that would go the distance.

Following our online research, we shortlisted a number of stores, one of which was Teak & Mahogany. We visited them first, followed by 11 other stores, and ended up back where we started to buy the items we had seen on the first day!

Our experience at the store was outstanding, and owners Kristian and Suzan completely understood our needs. All their fabrics are Sunbrella, meaning they're totally weather- and



rain-proof. It's a little bit more expensive, but really worth it. We were so impressed with the quality and the customer service that we also bought outdoor sofa chairs, side tables and cushions, and we plan to go back soon to get Sunbrella beanbags for our kids' balcony.

Our outdoor dining table is stainless steel with tempered acid-treated grey glass, eight chairs with stainless steel frames, teak arms and black Batyline mesh seating. We have dinner on our

balcony every night and haven't used our indoor dining table in six months!

We are now 'gold members' at the store, which means we get ten percent off any purchase. When I need anything for outdoor living, Teak & Mahogany is the first and only place I go.”

Teak & Mahogany
100E Pasir Panjang Road
#07-02/03/04 Century Warehouse
6273 8116 | teakandmahogany.com



Chiara Ghinolfi, Italian

“We moved to Singapore from Hong Kong in August last year and brought our furniture over. Our previous table has been perfect in Hong Kong as it was weatherproof, but here we wanted something for our patio – something that wasn’t going to be out in the rain.

We had passed by Mountain Teak and found that the pieces were nice, simple and of good quality. The shop assistant was able to clearly understand our needs, without being pushy. We purchased a table, two benches and two chairs, which we chose because they suit our patio perfectly and give an indoor feel even if they are located outdoors.

We are very happy with our dining set. I really didn’t like the previous table in that space as it was more suitable for a garden or terrace area; it felt like having the most beautiful area to enjoy but without the right tools. This one is just perfect.

Benches are awesome as you can squeeze in a few more people if needed, which is very important for us as we frequently have guests. What I really love about the table is that it’s both elegant and sturdy; with three kids, it’s very important to have something that looks nice and that you don’t need to worry about too much. My family loves it!”

Mountain Teak Furniture Gallery
315 Outram Road #07-02 Tan Boon Liat Building
6224 7176 | mountainteak.com

Sarah Finley, British

“My husband and my three stepchildren have been living in our small black-and-white house since the triplets were six months old (they’re now 12). Our lease was recently renewed, so we decided to do some long overdue work on the property, and built an enormous adjoining attap. This has now become our main living area, and we needed furniture to fill it. We were looking for a dining table that would suit the outdoor nature of the attap: large and sturdy enough for everyday living, especially with three energetic triplets and a zoo of animals (three dogs and four cats!).

Our neighbour recommended Woody Antique House. When we visited the store, the sales assistant was incredibly helpful and not at all pushy. We bought a large dining table made from recycled Indonesian teak with two matching benches and two chairs. The eye-catching table, which seats ten, is in a pale, distressed teak and has two matching benches. The two tall-



back dining chairs, made from woven hessian rope, serve as end chairs and complement the setting.

We eat all our meals at the new dining table now, and the kids have even learnt how to be careful when they are eating as the wood is untreated. The team at Woody lacquered a section on the underside of the table so that if we decide to have the table lacquered against stains in the future, we’ll know how the wood will turn out.

We were very impressed by the service provided at Woody. They gave us a smaller bench on loan as they were only able to provide one large bench to match our table and needed to have the second one made. They also sanded down the legs of our dining chairs to match the look of the table.”

Woody Antique House
#01-05 Block 13 Dempsey Road
6471 1770 | woodyantique.com



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Dining Room Designs

Mealtimes are a chance to recharge, relax, laugh and reconnect with family and friends, so why not do this in a fittingly stylish setting? Here are our ideas for dining room furniture that should help make dinnertime a good time.

LIGHT BITES

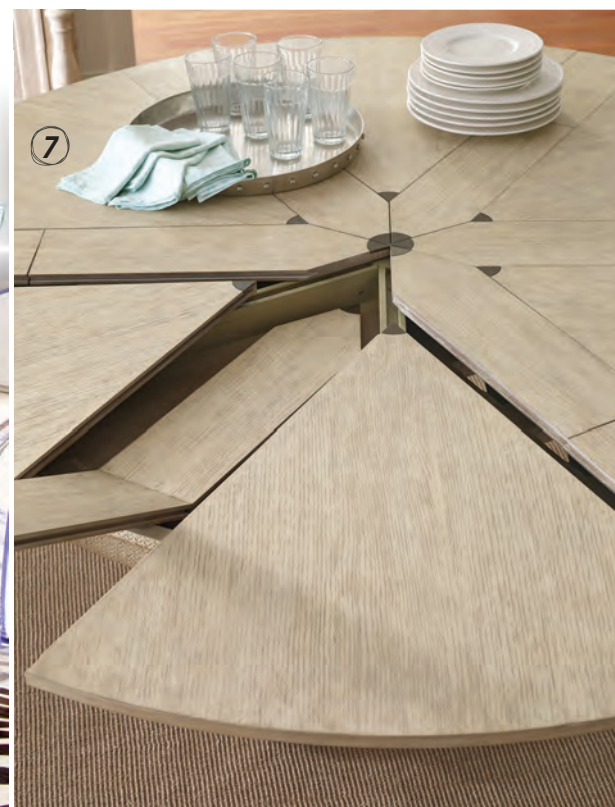
Lights and whites create an open and airy feel to a dining setting, perfect for this sunny climate.

- 1** Colonial teak table and Madeline chairs from the Affaire range by Sika-Design, **Dreamweave Concepts**, 9 Raffles Boulevard, #01-34, 6333 1669, dreamweaveconcepts.com
- 2** Artistico table by Bontempi Casa, **Lifestorey**, 1 Kim Seng Promenade, #02-15 Great World City, 6732 7362, lifestorey.com





1 Bykato table, **Danish Design**, 100E Pasir Panjang Road, #06-03 Century Warehouse, 6270 8483, danishdesignco.com.sg **2** Denmark table in teak and stainless steel, **Teak & Mahogany**, 100E Pasir Panjang Road, #07-03/04 Century Warehouse, 6273 8116, teakandmahogany.com **3** Dining Reflections mirrored table, **Finn Avenue**, 8B Admiralty Street, #02-21 8B@Admiralty, 6753 3466, finnavenue.com **4** Hart dining table in raw satin finish, **Gallery 278**, 278 River Valley Road, 6737 2322, gallery278.com **5** Grasshopper outdoor dining table, **Mountain Teak Furniture Gallery**, 315 Outram Road, #07-02 Tan Boon Liat Building, 6224 7176, mountainteak.com **6** Dining room interior and furniture, designed and custom-made by **E&A Interiors**, 46 Kim Yam Road, #04-24, 6702 4850, eandainteriors.com **7** Port Royal expandable dining table by Schnadig in solid hardwood and oak veneer in Sunwash finish, **Taylor B. Fine Design**, 43 Keppel Road, Levels 1, 2 & 3, 27 West Coast Highway, 9420 4000, taylorbdesign.com





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Mountain Teak Furniture Gallery

W www.mountainteak.com
E sales@mountainteak.com
T +65 6224 7176
A #07-02, 315 Outram Rd (Tan Boon Liat)

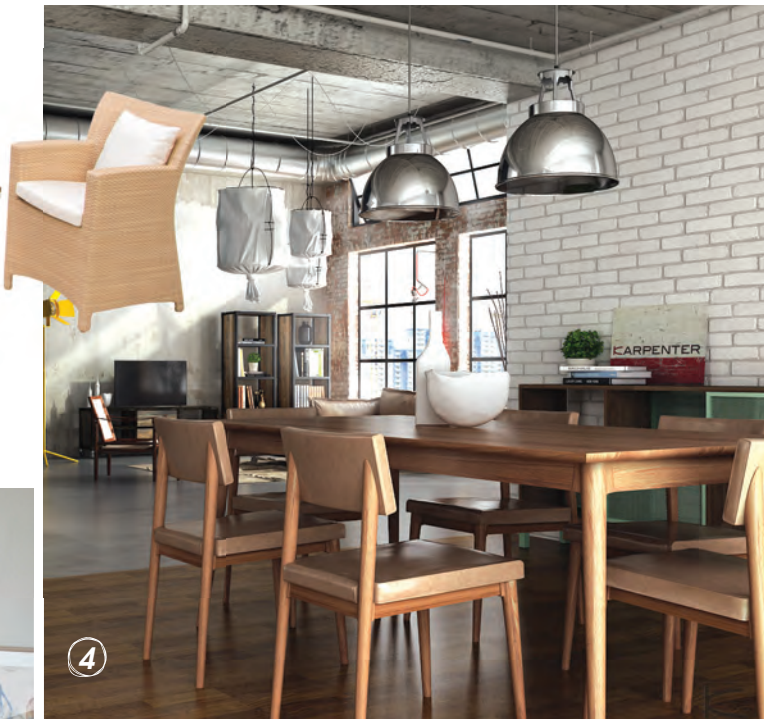


Mountain Living

E sales@mountainteak.com
T +65 6219 9716
A 200 Turf Club Rd, #02-K92
 (Pasarbella @ The Grandstand)

TIMBER IS SERVED

Wood is such a wonderfully versatile material – no wonder it's still one of the most popular choices for a dining setting.



1 Ellipse dining table by Moni Lifestyle, **Star Living** at Labrador, 1 Pasir Panjang Road, 6273 2522, starliving.com.sg **2** Teak Slice extendable dining table, **Ethnicraft Online**, 72 Eunus Avenue 7, #05-05, 9272 1545, ethnicraft-online.com.sg **3** Rubix table in new fibre colour Sand, with Maximus chairs, **OHMM**, 30 Merchant Road, #03-09 Riverside Point, 6836 2747, ohmm.sg **4** Twist rectangular dining table by Karpenter, **Mountain Teak Furniture Gallery**, 315 Outram Road, #07-02 Tan Boon Liat Building, 6224 7176, mountainteak.com **5** Rectangular table from the Naver Collection, **Danish Design**, 100E Pasir Panjang Road, #06-03 Century Warehouse, 6270 8483, danishdesignco.com.sg



6 Lucas dining table and Melody rattan chairs both from Sika-Design Originals range, **Dreamweave Concepts**, 9 Raffles Boulevard, #01-34, 6333 1669, dreamweaveconcepts.com **7** Hades dining table in solid suar wood, **Star Furniture**, 52 Sungei Kadut Avenue, 6365 8832, starliving.com.sg **8** Recycled teak table bench, **Woody Antique House**, #01-05 Block 13 Dempsey Road, 6471 1770, woodyantique.com **9** Aero dining table, available in customised colours and finishes, **Gallery 278**, 278 River Valley Road, 6737 2322, gallery278.com **10** Lovina dining table in whitewash or natural, **Originals**, 896 Dunearn Road, #02-03 Sime Darby Centre, 6471 9918, originals.com.sg **11** Round suar wood dining table, **EDD+**, 996 Bendemeer Road, #01-07 8 Central, 6291 0990, eddplus.com



1



2



3

ORNATE ORDERS

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4



5



6



7



1 Reproduction Ming-style dining table in chicken-wing wood, with eight chairs, **Just Anthony**, 379 Upper Paya Lebar Road, 6283 4782, justanthony.com 2 Round dining table with bone inlay, **Hacienda Blue**, 9061 9446, Watten Heights, haciendablue.com 3 Dining interior and furniture, designed and custom-made by **E&A Interiors**, 46 Kim Yam Road, #04-24, 6702 4850, eandainteriors.com 4 Antique solid rosewood with ivory inlay, **Treasures of the Raj**, 19 Tanglin Road, #02-30 Tanglin Shopping Centre, 9173 5041, totr.pw 5 Solid ebony table with art deco lines, **Treasures of the Raj** 6 19th-century British colonial extendable dining table with matching chairs, **The Past Perfect Collection**, 896 Dunearn Road, #02-01D Sime Darby Centre, 6737 3078, pastperfect.sg 7 Glass-topped vintage Chinese table, **Red Saga Seeds**, 21 Ubi Road 1, #01-01, 6744 8682, redsagaseeds.com

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COLOUR CRAVINGS

From bright pops of colour to more subtle tones, here are some colourful ideas to complement your current dining décor.

1 Bornholm table in recycled teak, painted in a distressed finish in vintage white or blue, **Teak & Mahogany**, 100E Pasir Panjang Road, #07-03/04 Century Warehouse, 6273 8116, teakandmahogany.com **2** Kuta dining table in buffed recycled boat wood, **Teak & Mahogany** **3** Spoon table by Kartell, **Lifestorey**, 1 Kim Seng Promenade, #02-15 Great World City, 6732 7362, lifestorey.com **4** Oak Apron dining table, **Ethnicraft Online**, 72 Eunos Ave 7, #05-05, 9272 1545, ethnicraft-online.com.sg **5** Indian dining table from reclaimed teak, **Originals**, 896 Dunearn Road, #02-03 Sime Darby Centre, 6471 9918, originals.com.sg



TAKE A SEAT

From high-backed to upholstered chairs, seating in the dining room can make or break a meal.

6 Black Hues Balloon Chair in French beech wood and Italian leather, **Finn Avenue**, 8B Admiralty Street, #02-21 8B@Admiralty, 8699 3466, finnavenue.com **7** Chinese antique yoke-back arm chairs from Shanxi Province, **China Collection**, 20 Malcolm Road, 6235 1905, chinacollection.com.sg **8** Horseshoe-back chair in antique elm wood, early 19th century, **China Collection** **9** Custom-made Executive Chair in velvet and wild silk, **In Situ**, 238 River Valley Road, 6733 7307, insitu-sg.com **10** Vintage seat with leather cushion, **Red Saga Seeds**, 21 Ubi Road 1, #01-01, 6744 8682, redsagaseeds.com **11** Tribute to the Panton chair in carbon fibre, **HC Lifestyle**, 21 Tampines Street 92, #01-00, 6227 2000, hclifestyle.com **12** Vincent Sheppard chair, **Originals**, 896 Dunearn Road, #02-03 Sime Darby Centre, 6471 9918, originals.com.sg **13** Urbino dining chair, **House of AnLi**, 163 Tanglin Road, #03-13 Tanglin Mall, 6235 3851, houseofanli.com **14** King Louis XVI armchair in French beech wood and Italian cowhide, **Finn Avenue**, 8B Admiralty Street, #02-21 8B@Admiralty, 6753 3466, finnavenue.com **15** Universo Positivo Alfred chair, **Ethnicraft Online**, 72 Eunos Avenue 7, #05-05, 9272 1545, ethnicraft-online.com.sg **16** Chinese stool in oak wood, over 70 years old, **FairPrice Antique**, 315 Outram Road, #01-10 Tan Boon Liat Building, 6270 2544, fairpriceantique.com **17** Teak stools with dipped legs in yellow or mint, **Make Room**, 315 Outram Road, #10-01 Tan Boon Liat Building, 9113 1274, make-room.net



10



9



8



11



12



13



14

15



16



17





THE TRIMMINGS

You can't have a stylish dining room without the trimmings, including trendy tableware, glasses and cabinets.



1 Mouth-blown glass vases, **Villeroy & Boch**, 6384 7309, 15 Stamford Road, #01-74/75 Capitol Piazza, villeroy-boch.com.sg **2** Recycled wood cabinet in turquoise, **Artful House**, 315 Outram Road, #08-04 Tan Boon Liat Building, 8112 6127, artful-house.com **3** Crystal glass goblets, champagne flutes and decanters, **Villeroy & Boch** **4** Linen napkins and tablecloths, **Maissone**, 20 Eng Hoon Street, Tiong Bahru, 6669 9681, maissone.com





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- 11 organic stool \$148
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- 13 square goat skin stool \$238
- 14 round goat skin stool \$238

- 15 solid wood dining table \$1999
- 16 dining chair \$188
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- 18 banana planter lamp \$288
- 19 zebra stone lamp \$188
- 20 teak lamination stool lamp \$258
- 21 dining chair \$258
- 22 dining chair \$258
- 23 dining chair \$228
- 24 stool \$99
- 25 big hippo \$128
- 26 wavy stool \$148
- 27 goatskin pillow \$49

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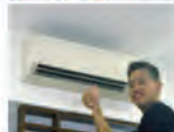
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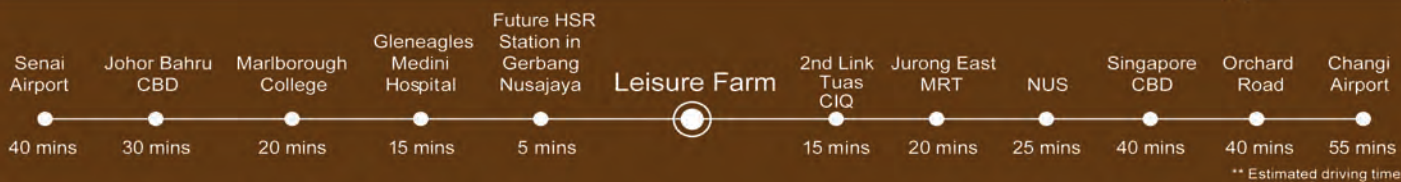
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MARKETUPDATE



Deborah Law
Executive Director, Expat Realtor

Happy New Year and welcome to 2016! The forecast for Singapore is that this is the year for buyers to step in. Cash-rich buyers, unrestrained by the TDSR (Total Debt Service Ratio), can take advantage of distressed luxury market sales of 20 to 30 percent. Others, including tenants, can also step in at a time when prices are expected to be at their lowest level in a long while.

One major contributing factor is the developer units coming on the market; another is the fact that buyers can take advantage of the increased CPF contributions that can be linked to mortgages. These might actually work out cheaper than paying rent.

It's a time for landlords to contemplate selling, as rentals decline in the face of the above-mentioned factors, together with higher mortgages and higher property tax. However, the buying fever of the past is not on the cards just yet, as the government continues its policy to bring the price-to-income ratio down to a safe level.

HOT PROPERTIES

EASY ENTERTAINING

\$13,800 RENT

SIZE: 7,000 sq. ft land;
4,500 sq. ft built
BEDROOMS: 5
TYPE: Detached
DISTRICT: 5



A charming, two-storey detached house with a swimming pool and ample outdoor spaces for relaxing, entertaining and dining, this property has four bedrooms and three bathrooms on the second level and a fifth bedroom on the first level. Located near a children's park and with easy access to the PIE motorway and Sixth Avenue, it's available from this month.

MODERN COMMUTE

\$5,000 RENT

SIZE: 1,216 sq. ft
BEDROOMS: 2
TYPE: Condominium
DISTRICT: 11



This spacious two-bedroom apartment with study and balcony is located just a short walk from Newton MRT station, Newton Food Centre and the shops at United Square and Novena Square. It's in a beautifully built, quality condo that would suit any professional's lifestyle.

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PENTHOUSE PIZZAZZ

\$5,200 RENT

SIZE: 2,144 sq. ft

BEDROOMS: 3

TYPE: Condo

DISTRICT: 5

This two-storey penthouse apartment in a low-rise development has a good-sized balcony and its own spa pool. It has good connections to the Science Park, NUS and various international schools (including the Japanese and Canadian), is close to West Coast Park and Kent Ridge, and is an easy 15- to 20-minute drive from the CBD. Comes with a full array of white goods, including dishwasher.



This spacious low-rise unit looks on to greenery and has views of the swimming pool. It's conveniently located near public transport, just a four-minute walk from Lorong Chuan MRT station, a ten-minute walk from the Australian International School, and has easy driving access to the CTE motorway and into the CBD. Chuan Park offers full facilities including tennis courts, a convenience store and a great Thai restaurant. The rooms are large, well-proportioned and square-shaped, with high ceilings and plenty of light. There are two good-sized bedrooms and one smaller study or maid's room, plus one large storage room off the living area and another upstairs. Available February.



SPACIOUS STYLE

\$3,500 RENT

SIZE: 1,496 sq. ft

BEDROOMS: 2 plus study

TYPE: Apartment

DISTRICT: 19



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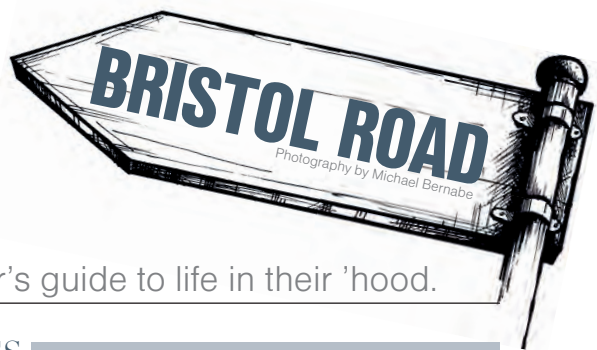
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STREET TALK

An insider's guide to life in their 'hood.



THE SPECIFICS



NAME: AMANDA DALE

FROM: Los Angeles, US

OCCUPATION: Cycling Instructor
and Master Trainer at Aquaspin

What street do you live on?
Bristol Road.

Exact words you tell a taxi driver to get home?
"Uncle, across from KK Women's and Children's Hospital, please."

What's the name of your neighbourhood?
The Cambridge Estates (very posh).

Closest MRT station?
We are smack dab between the Little India and Farrer Park stations.

How long have you lived here?
We moved in six months ago and plan to stay as long as we can!

Why here?
We love the quiet, civilised feeling of being in an older part of town – but we also like having the lively, active scene right across the park in Little India. Novena is also a 10-minute walk in the opposite direction, so we have the best of all things: peaceful, practical and party-going.



THE SCENE

When you walk out of your place, the first thing you see is:

The Farrer Park Aquatic Centre, making us feel guilty about not swimming laps every day.

The closest store to your front door is:

A little NTUC FairPrice in the HDB flats down the street.

Your street would make the perfect backdrop for a remake of:

TV show *The Jeffersons*. All these older walk-ups make you feel like you're really "movin' on up...to a deluxe apartment in the sky".

Your neighbours are great, but you wouldn't mind a little less:

Smoking in the stairwell. You know who you are.

The unofficial uniform of your street is:

A *taqiyah* (Muslim headwear for men) and long linen trousers – we have a mosque just a few houses down, and men come all day to pray.

If a celebrity moves in next door, it will most likely be:

Chris Pratt, if I had my druthers! But it would probably be someone trying to stay out of the spotlight and go "low pro" to train for a role, like Johnny Depp or Joaquin Phoenix. You know, hipsters.

When you're in need of a dose of culture, you:

Take the seven-minute walk to Mustafa Centre. It's like a microcosm of all the wonderful, chaotic and odd things about Singapore all contained in one (giant) building.

If you're missing home, you:

Order a Domino's pepperoni pizza. They deliver here in less than 30 minutes.

A mandatory stop for out-of-town guests is:

L'Etoile Café on Owen Road for the biggest and tastiest helping of beef rendang this side of Indonesia.

You'd swap houses in a second with:

One of our traditional area's many homes with authentic, detailed Chinese architecture – all very beautiful and unique.

A common myth about your neighbourhood is:

That we don't exist! Seriously, without the KK Women and Children's Hospital as a major landmark, about 90 percent of the cab drivers would have no idea that Bristol Road is a real place.

If you're ever woken up at night, it's almost always due to:

The barking of three very, very large dogs (two golden retrievers and an Irish wolfhound) that live two houses down.

A massive late-night rager on your street is likely to be:

Any Sunday night. Hampshire Road is closed from 2pm until midnight, and busloads of workers come here to spend (and party!) their day off.



THE SUPERLATIVES

Your favourite neighbourhood joints are:

LK Maju on Jalan Besar – for the best mutton *murtabak* in Singapore (sorry Zam Zam). **Druggists on Tyrwhitt Road** – my favourite craft beer spot in all of Singapore. **Pacific Dry Cleaners on Cambridge Road** – they do a great job and are so friendly. **Heart Springs Spa in City Square Mall** – their 90-minute facials are super-luxurious.

You won't find better local food than at:

Pek Kio, for the best local breakfast (soft-boiled eggs, *kaya* toast and *kopi*) in town – ask any cab driver and they'll tell you the same. For local meat, **Joe's Butcher** in Tekka Market is fresh, cheap and reliable – and their rosemary lamb sausage is the best I've ever tasted.

The strangest thing you've ever seen on your street is:

Several multicoloured strings of Christmas lights that our lovely across-the-street neighbour keeps hung up in his front yard all year long. I guess he's just... festive?

We love a good bargain. The best deals in your neighbourhood are:

The \$1 black kohl eyeliner pencils sold in tear-off packs at any convenience store in Little India. Up and down Serangoon Road are little stalls selling sunglasses for \$1.99 – great throwaways in fun, trendy styles. And my personal fave is Bugis Street – the only place to go for fancy dress costumes, cute clothes, and the old standby deal: 10 pairs of earrings for \$10.

The guiltiest pleasure in your area is:

The *roti prata* joint on the corner of Rangoon Road and Starlight Road; it has the most amazing selection – everything from banana to chocolate to cheese to mushroom. You could gorge yourself on 10 distinctly different kinds of *prata*! Not that we have, or anything...

One thing you'd never change is:

The fact that most of the buildings here are multi-storey walk-ups – very few lifts. We get our exercise here on Bristol Road!

But one thing you wouldn't mind seeing go is:

The stray cats that wander the streets all day. I wonder, how do they get fed?

The city gives you \$5 million to soup up your street. You use it to:

Upgrade our shaky front gate, feed and house all the aforementioned cats, demolish the grungy old building just across the street to improve our balcony view, and finally finish the "interim park" on the corner of Bristol Road and Dorset Road that they've been working on developing for nearly a year now.

Why should your neighbourhood be featured in a guidebook?

People think the Little India neighbourhood is loud and chaotic; in fact, where we live is the most peaceful part of Singapore I've been to yet. Our street is centrally located to all the great food and shopping, yet still cosy, and it feels genuinely Singaporean. 🇸🇬



Whether they're newcomers or "old hands", we'd love our readers to get to know your neighbourhood. Help us by sending an email to contribute@expatliving.sg with "Street Talk" in the subject line. Include your name and street, and we'll be in touch.

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Life & Family

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WHAT'S NEW

Latest updates for parents & children



TAKE OFF

A study by NASA found that 10 minutes jumping on a trampoline is a better cardiovascular workout than 33 minutes of running. If you're looking to burn calories fast – and give energetic children something to do – an easy solution is a visit to **Katapult**, Singapore's newest trampoline park. From now until 30 June, get 15 percent off all jumps (usual price: \$15 per hour off-peak, \$19 per hour peak); valid for walk-in bookings only. All you have to do is like the Katapult Facebook page (facebook.com/katapultsingapore) and show it to counter staff to receive the discount. 81 Lorong Chencharu, #01-11 ORTO. **6754 5188 | katapult.com.sg** ▲

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PIROUETTE PARADISE

If you've ever dreamed of wearing ballet shoes and pulling off a pirouette, it's not too late to try.

L'Académie de Danse, founded in 2007, offers classes in classical ballet for children and adults. The founders and teachers are all passionate about dance, and their enthusiasm

shows through. Start with playful Baby Ballerina classes for three-year olds, a fun introduction to dance. Older children can choose from two sections: classes for those wishing to become professional ballet dancers, or dancers who wish to pursue ballet and jazz on an amateur level; both offer the same high standards of teaching. Claymore Hill 8, #01-03/04. **8223 4907** lacademiededansesingapore@gmail.com ▲

PARENTING OVERSEAS

Children of parents who live overseas have to adjust to new circumstances, and that can result in challenging changes in behaviour. Michael Hawton, teacher, author, psychologist and one of Australia's foremost parenting experts, has developed parenting programmes to help parents manage children's and teenagers' difficult behaviour. Over 110,000 parents have trained in his methods since 2006. His company, **Parentshop**, is looking for parent educators to learn to teach and help other parents. Interested? Check out more details at parentshop.com.au/seasia.





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 **invisalign®** (For Children and Adults)



Luxe Gifts

Pushed for time? If you can't physically make it to the stores and the thought of trawling websites turns you off, there is a third way to buy a present for a special person. **Gifts Less Ordinary** is a new online marketplace delivering unique, original and memorable gifts, sourced from across the globe. Many of the products haven't been seen in Asia before, such as the enamel bangles by coveted brand Halcyon Days, known for its expertise in the craft of enamelling. For inspiration, check out giftslessordinary.com. Delivery is included. ▲



CITY TOURING

Who thought kids and city sightseeing were incompatible? Don't confine your family to the city touring bus; strike out and explore with **Topo Togo**, a new guidebook and app especially created for families. The app is a pop-up book narrated by a tour guide and uses technology to engage kids in their surroundings. We look forward to checking out the first Singapore guide and the cool, secret places it uncovers. Available at shops, attractions and bookstores, in English, Mandarin, French and Japanese. Recommended for explorers aged six to 12. \$18.90. topotogo.com



HOUSE CALLS

Living without a car is manageable, until it's time to take your pet for a visit to the vet. If you'd rather not go through the hassle of arranging transport, or you have more than one pet, it can be a whole lot easier to ask the vet to come to you. House calls are just one of the benefits offered by newly opened **The Visiting Vets Clinic**. Services at their well-equipped clinic include internal medicine, preventative health, surgery, diagnostic imaging and wellness exams. 9 Taman Serasi, #01-09 Botanic Gardens View. 6475 3405 | thevisitingvets.com.sg ▲



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ENVIRONMENT FOCUS



FREE CONSERVATION EDUCATION

New modules have been added to the **United for Wildlife** online short course, which offers free conservation education to everyone. Young people interested in wildlife and the environment will find this especially engaging as they move through the four modules, understand more about conservation issues and find out how to help, whether by volunteering, living more sustainably, or embarking on a career in this field. It's the work of a partnership between seven global conservation organisations including WWF, Fauna & Flora International and the Royal Foundation. learn.unitedforwildlife.org ▲



EYE OF THE TIGER

It's thought that as few as 3,200 tigers survive in the wild today. While there are plenty of organisations, including Panthera's Tigers Forever programme, that are committed to increasing numbers, the sophisticated means they're required to use are expensive: for example, PoacherCam technology to prevent poaching, informant networks to apprehend poachers, and outfitting teams to enforce protection zones in six countries across Asia. A new tiger-inspired approach of fundraising aims to encourage anyone who sells tiger-related products or uses tiger images to give back through **Tiger Royalty**, an artistic rights fee that supports tiger conservation programmes. tigerroyalty.org ▲

WHERE TO RECYCLE E-WASTE

Globally, electronic waste is one of the fastest growing waste challenges; here, almost 60,000kg was collected at **National University of Singapore (NUS)** in the past year alone. It's important to recycle e-waste properly though, because those unusable or outdated electrical and electronic items can pollute the environment. Recycling rather than incinerating takes care of heavy metals and toxic chemicals safely. Find recycling bins to clear out your waste at the NUS Bukit Timah Campus and seven locations on the Kent Ridge Campus. nus.edu.sg/oes ▼



LOVING THE SUN

This month, **Apple** becomes the first company to power its Singapore electricity needs exclusively with renewable energy, including its 2,500-strong corporate campus and new retail store. Apple is working under an agreement with local company **Sunseap Group** who will supply the energy from solar power systems located on 800 rooftops across the island. It's a step towards meeting the company's goal to power its global facilities with 100 percent renewable energy. With so many rooftops in Singapore, solar energy is receiving a push from government and corporate as a clean energy source. sunseap.com ▼





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students
per class

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Year of the Monkey
with fun, frivolity and
lashings of red.



Fully lined linen
clothing for
children aged
two to 12 years
V'Solo, #02-19
6651 2854 |
vsolo.com.au



Cushions from \$20
Groovy Gifts, #02-03
6875 0430 |
groovygifts.com.sg

Create a festive mood with fresh Chinese
New Year flower arrangements and plants
Girl O' Girl Flowers, #01-01B
6465 0064 | girlgirl.sg



Tank dresses in cotton and silk for
comfort-lovers who also crave style
A. Browns & Co, #02-12
brownsco.com/stores



Vani-T Bronzing
Glaze, \$48
Promotion! Spend
\$88 or more on tanning
products and receive a \$20
gift voucher

The Big Blow, #02-21
6465 4836 | thebigblow.com



Leather scrunchy bags in a variety
of colours, from \$140
Paperbag Princess, #02-27
9117 4970 | facebook.com/PbP.
paperbagprincess



Head to Cluny Court on Saturday, 20 February at 11am and catch the Chinese New Year lion dance troupe performance at the mall entrance.

Find Cluny Court at 501 Bukit Timah Road.
facebook.com/ClunyCourt

Endine padded
bra, \$105
Change Lingerie,
#02-08
9321 1344
facebook.com/
ChangeSingapore

Santana pyramid
bag, \$130
Lilla Lane, #02-
35
9122 8920 |
lillalane.com

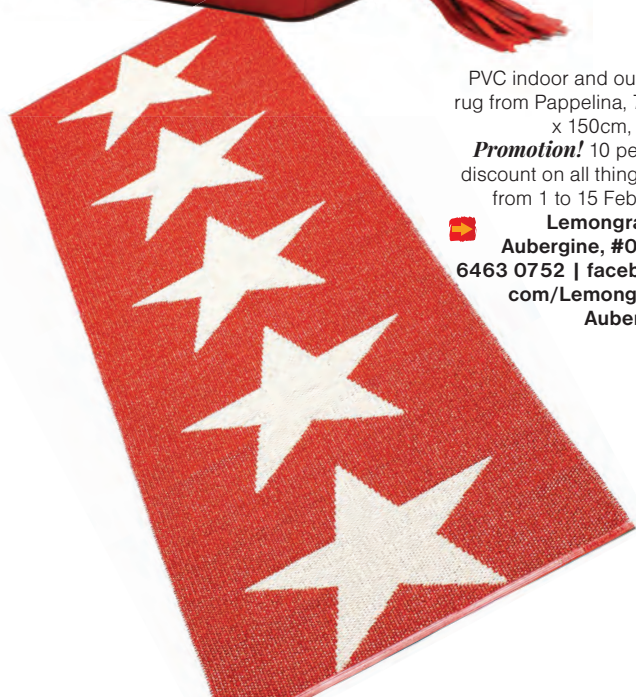


Slouchy pleated top with side-seam nursing access for discreet breastfeeding, \$65.90; weekend linen pants, \$79.90; printed onesie, \$29.90
Mothers En Vogue, #02-18
6463 1322 | mev-global.com

PVC indoor and outdoor
rug from Pappelina, 70cm
x 150cm, \$270

Promotion! 10 percent
discount on all things red
from 1 to 15 February

**Lemongrass &
Aubergine, #02-26**
6463 0752 | facebook.
com/Lemongrass.
Aubergine



Mahogany Coca-Cola surfboard, \$99
Ana Barr Art and Home, #02-28
8463 1424 | anabarr.com



Handmade party shoes perfect for
New Year festivities

The Tui Collection, #02-16
6463 0013 | facebook.com/
thetui-collection2e





Need Home Help?

Having a live-in domestic helper is not for everyone, but opting for a casual cleaner can be hazardous; they are often working illegally and if you're caught employing one, you could be slapped with a hefty fine of \$5,000 or more. So what do you do if you need part-time help at home?

Helpling is an online platform through which you can book a part-time cleaner for \$20 per hour (for a minimum of two hours). Bookings and payment are all done online or via your mobile app (available for iOS and Android); there are no agency fees, no hidden costs and no illegals, and all cleaners are interviewed and their skills vetted.

We spoke to FLEUR LLOAN, marketing manager of Helpling, to find out what kind of people have been using their services:

"Helpling is very good for busy parents who don't want a live-in helper, and also for newly arrived families who might be waiting for the arrival of their full-time helper. In this situation, Helpling is a convenient transitional option.

"We also help many young expat professionals who are looking for flexibility, some of whom have a short-term contract and don't want to be locked into a long contract with a maid agency.

"Last but not least, sometimes you'll face an unexpected event like friends or parents coming to Singapore, and you don't have time to clean your home. The problem can be resolved in three minutes using the Helpling platform."

Helpling's happy customers Chloe Kurzmann and her husband Jeremy, have been living in Singapore for two years.

"I started using Helpling in March 2015, just after the company launched here in February. I chose them for the flexibility of their service. My husband and I don't need a full-time maid, and Helpling is the easiest way to book a weekly cleaner without paying agency fees. It's so simple to book on their website or mobile app – in a few minutes you can book and pay your cleaner. Lastly, the cleaners are legal workers (Singaporeans only), and they're covered in case of accident.

I use Helpling for basic cleaning: bedrooms, bathrooms, living room and kitchen (exterior windows, ironing, oven and fridge are optional but quite useful). I have a weekly package and I always ask for the same cleaner – she's a very nice auntie!

If there's any issue, it's simple to call the customer care line. A call to Helpling is also enough to request the same cleaner, which is what I did. Since making this request, Shireen has been my "official" cleaner. I have peace of mind and don't hesitate to leave her alone, because I believe that Helpling provides only trustworthy cleaners."

3157 2014 | helpling.com.sg

Researcher

MAX, AGE 6

Max is different. He sees every challenge as a window of opportunity, and the unfamiliar an invitation to be unravelled. We love that. A child's inquisitive spirit needs to be nurtured and encouraged, so our specialists work with Max on the things that truly excite him. Always supporting, never instructing.

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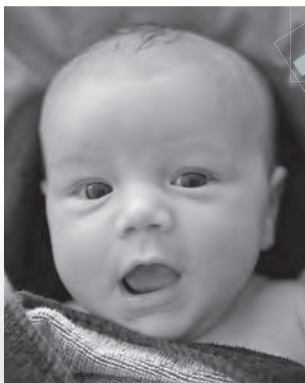
NOTICEBOARD

Births, engagements and weddings, plus items for sale

FAMILY NEWS



Josephine and Derek Donaldson are delighted to introduce their first child, **Peter Matthew**, born 29 October.



Jonah Bradley Adams arrived on 27 September to proud parents Tia and Brad, and joining older brother Julian.



Cassandra Humphreys and Michael Sweeney happily announce the arrival of son **Jack** on 26 August.

JUST HAD A BABY? NEWLY MARRIED? RECENTLY ENGAGED?

Moved back to Singapore and want to let people know you're back in town? Whatever your announcement, we will get the message out. Email us at editorial@expatliving.sg.



CONGRATULATIONS

All readers whose babies are featured on this page will receive a 30-minute photography session with award-winning Littleones Photography, plus a complimentary acrylic block (8x6 inches), total value worth \$475 (littleonesphotography.com).



ANIMAL ADOPTION



Chase's copper-coloured coat and white chest are a real feature. He's a calm dog who loves his treats and gets along well with other dogs. He was bailed from AVA by Exclusively Mongrels and is now available for adoption. To meet Chase, email xmon2012@gmail.com.



Porthos is a paper-trained four-month-old boy who was rescued from a jungle by Causes for Animals. He is loving, affectionate, gentle and wonderful with other pets and children. He has a great energy level and doesn't chew obsessively like some other puppies. To meet Porthos, email adoption@causesforanimals.com.

Gucci was a cute and chubby puppy of three months when he was first rescued with his brother Prada. Being friendly, he warms up fairly quickly to people; he's food motivated, loves treats and loves to play. To meet Gucci, email info@asdsingapore.com.



Being the youngest at Uncle Khoe's kennels, **Lucky** is a fun-loving dog who absolutely love treats and toys and cuddles from the volunteers. He was seen being thrown into the sea, and this silly happy-go-lucky boy just happily swam back. To meet Lucky, email uncle.khoe.k9@gmail.com.



Adoptadog.sg

Started in March 2013, Adoptadog.sg is a non-profit, non-affiliated website that collates dogs for adoption from various welfare groups and re-homers into one place, for potential adopters to view them easily and express interest in adopting. The dogs are shown in random order, which means they all have an equal chance at finding homes. Through the blog, happy tales about adopted dogs are shared to encourage more adoptions.

In addition, you'll find useful information such as general adoption procedure, benefits of sterilisation, and the importance of microchipping to promote responsible pet ownership. Using adoptadog.sg, dog owners can also conveniently search for veterinary clinics that are currently open and find addresses of pet cafés and dog runs in Singapore.

Adopting a dog is a commitment, and the team at Adoptadog.sg hopes that current and future adopters can take care of their dog for life. Email enquiries to adoptadogsg7@gmail.com.



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Organic Blankie
Bunny, \$45,
Tickitey-Boo



Feroza Designs Baby
Dohar summer blanket,
\$95, **Ni-Night**

Baby & Mummy Essentials

For such a tiny bundle, a baby requires quite a collection of equipment and accessories! Here's a quick overview of some useful items for when you welcome your precious package home.

Cambrass cot
and drawer, \$519,
Motherswork



GroVia Kiwi Pie cloth
nappy, \$44.90, **Baby
Slings and Carriers**

Organic Cotton Onesies
(pack of three), \$49.90,
Mothers En Vogue



Baby Bjorn Carrier
One, \$305,
Motherswork



Bamboo Wrap
nursing cover, \$49.90,
Mothers En Vogue



Bébé Au Lait
nursing cover,
\$49.90, **Baby
Slings and Carriers**





Sangha Waterfall Wrap, \$59.90, **Mothers En Vogue**



Non-toxic latex cot mattress, from \$259, **Sofzsleep**

Donut pillow (suitable for 0-24 months), \$35.90, **Sofzsleep**



Britax Boulevard (G4.1) convertible car seat, \$659, **Motherswork**



Emibaby soft cotton nappy-bag, \$139.90, **Baby Slings and Carriers**



Swaddles, \$85 for a set of four, **Ni-Night**



Bugaboo Bee 3 stroller, \$1,199, **Motherswork**



Hooded swaddling blanket, \$20, **Tickitey-Boo**



Baby Bjorn Bouncer Balance Soft, \$299 **Motherswork**

Directory

Motherswork

motherswork.com.sg

Mothers En Vogue

* #02-18 Cluny Court, 501 Bukit Timah Road
* #B2-44 City Square Mall, 180 Kitchener Road
Buy online at mevglobal.com

Baby Slings & Carriers

39 Jalan Pemimpin
#06-01 Tai Lee Building
babyslinsandcarriers.com

Tickitey-Boo

tickitey-boo.com

Sofzsleep

sofzsleep.net

Ni-Night

7 Joo Chiat Place
ni-night.com

Play Centre Paradise

16 fun places where kids can burn off energy

EL Mums
Recommend

Amazonia

Jungle-themed play park **Amazonia** is filled with fun things, the most popular attraction being its long, fast slippery dip, which promises a thrilling ride. There's also a separate toddler area where the under-twos can play in peace away from the older kids. Extra-fun activities include glow-in-the-dark golf and space ball. A visit to Amazonia is \$22 for one- to three-year-olds, and \$33 for kids up to 12; birthday parties are catered for too. #03-08 Great World City mall, 1 Kim Seng Promenade. **6235 4522 | amazoniafun.com**

EL Mums
Recommend

Cool de Sac

Located at Suntec City mall (3 Temasek Boulevard, #02-379/80), Cool de Sac's main attraction is the "blocks wall", which features Lego blocks of all shapes and sizes to build with. Numerous craft and dress-up activities are also included in the price. Adults, meanwhile, can check out Bistro Coola – a pleasant reprieve while your kids are busy exploring. Cost for unlimited play: \$21.40 for kids three and older on weekdays, and \$27.80 on the weekends. **6337 0205 | cooldesac.com.sg**

Explorer Kid

Explorer Kid has two locations; E!hub (1 Pasir Ris Close) and AMK Hub (53 Ang Mo Kio Ave 3, #04-02). Both are great for kids of any age; the spaces are well padded and have plenty of structures and toys for young ones, while the climbing wall is ideal for older kids who are looking for a challenge. Themed birthday parties are available too. Entry is \$20 for unlimited play Monday through Thursday, and \$30 on Fridays and weekends. Join as a member (\$18) to enjoy reduced entry prices. **explorerkid.com**



EL Mums
Recommend

Fidgets

The Fidgets outlet at The Grandstand is a great play centre that also offers a range

of paid activities, including baking and makeover classes. The space is split up into different areas for different ages, entertaining kids up to 10. Fidgets specialises in children's parties – you have a choice of seven different packages. Entrance fee is the same all week: for unlimited play it's \$10 for kids two years and younger, \$22 for kids from two to 10. 200 Turf Club Road, #03-10.

6466 7611 | fidgets.com.sg

Fun N Laughter

If you want to shop for children's and mothers' items and entertain your kid at the same time, then head to Fun N Laughter. This play centre focuses on active play, and besides the usual equipment it has interactive projector games and mini-trampolines. There's also a monthly activity programme, with paid craft sessions. Find it at City Square Mall (180 Kitchener Road, #B2-32). Cost: \$18 unlimited play Monday through Friday, and \$23 for two hours on the weekend.

6509 9766 | funnlaughter.com.sg

EL Mums
Recommend

Go Go Bambini

Besides having some great indoor equipment and toys, Go Go Bambini has an outdoor play area. As a birthday party location, it offers several affordable packages, all including food and drinks for the kids. Admission is \$28 for children aged two years and up, for unlimited play on weekdays; the same price applies for a two-hour playtime on the weekends. Becoming a member (\$58) is worth the money, as the perks quickly add up. Block 8 Dempsey Road, #01-15.

6474 4176 | gogobambini.com



EL Mums
Recommend

Ho2T

Ho2T is a play centre that focuses on participation in creative and fun activities through teamwork. The space is not too big, so it's more suited for really little ones – the over-tuos might get bored quickly. Membership is \$154 for nine visits for under-tuos, either for three-hour sessions during the week, or two-hour sessions on the weekend; one-off sessions are available too. Ho2T is located at #03-09/12 Katong V, 30 East Coast Road.

6635 4702 | ho2t.com.sg



Katapult

This isn't your typical play centre; it's a trampoline park. Perfect for energetic kids aged three and above, the park combines trampolines, airbags, dodge ball, dunking and much more. Check out KidJump every week from Tuesdays to Friday, 9am till 12 noon, exclusively for kids under seven years. Cost: \$28 for two hours of jump-time during non-peak periods (Monday through Thursday, and Friday before 5pm), and \$35 during peak periods. Note that jumpers have to wear Katapult's grip socks, priced at \$2 a pair. 81 Lorong Chenchari, #01-11 ORTO.

6754 5188 | katapult.com.sg



**EL Mums
Recommend**

Kiddy Fun

Children aged six and younger will love this interactive soft playground, which

has Disney tunes on constant replay. Located at Turf City (200 Turf Club Road, #04-04/05), Kiddy Fun is great for both parents and children. There are moving rides and wooden building blocks for the kids, and free Wi-Fi, couches and cheap snacks for the parents. Besides a fun day out, Kiddy Fun also offers themed birthday parties including decorations. Admission is \$18 for children from 18 months old, for unlimited play any time of the week. **6463 7028 | kiddyfun.com.sg**

**EL Mums
Recommend**

Kidz Amaze

Highly energetic kids will fit right in here, thanks to multiple climbing structures, ball pits and foam-ball canons. There are two branches; the newest at SAFRA Toa Payoh (293 Toa Payoh Lorong 6), which has an excellent Infant & Toddler Play Zone, and one at SAFRA Jurong, which features one of the highest spiral slides in Asia (333 Boon Lay Way). Prices are reasonable: \$12.70 during the week, \$18 on weekends. For family outings, Kidz Amaze also offers a family package for two adults and two children for \$38.80. **6686 4321**

Paragon Junior

Shopping and young kids don't usually go well together, but Paragon shopping mall is the exception with its popular Paragon Junior play centre. Located on the fifth floor, the indoor playground is surrounded by stores for babies and children, perfect for some mummy shopping either side of the entertainment. This place is sure to keep kids happy; even better, it's free. 290 Orchard Road. **6738 5535**



Polliwogs

Decked out in cartoon characters, Polliwogs will keep children entertained with ball pits, bouncy castles, climbing structures and the infamous ball cannons. The biggest and newest branch is at Suntec City (3 Temasek Boulevard, Tower 4, #02-724), and the other is at VivoCity (1 HarbourFront Walk, #03-12). On weekdays, entry is for unlimited play (\$20), while on the weekends you'll pay \$25 for a two-hour slot. Busy parents who want to drop their kids off in order to run errands pay a charge of \$15 per hour.

6887 4860 | thepolliwogs.com



Royce Kids Gym

**EL Mums
Recommend**

This place is a toy paradise, with a massive range of fun playthings to choose from.

There are cupboards upon cupboards filled with high-quality toys, to keep both boys and girls entertained for hours. In addition, Royce Kids Gym has a swing area and a quiet library section. Royce is designed for children aged six months to seven years, and aims to develop fine and gross motor skills through play. It also runs free daily activity sessions. Cost: \$26 for a one-hour trial (so becoming an annual member for \$55 will pay off). Liang Court, 177 River Valley Road, #02-20/21. **6720 1111**



SingKids PlaySystem

SingKids is a global play brand, with equipment designed and manufactured in Japan. The spaces are well padded, and some favourite attractions are the carousel, the see-through water slide and the balloon pit. Both branches – Changi Airport Terminal 3 (#B2-14) and VivoCity (#01-171) – open late, so this place works well as an afterschool treat. Entry is \$18 for two hours in off-peak periods (Monday through Thursday) and \$18 an hour in peak periods. A member's package is \$140, for unlimited play during off-peak periods. **6832 8002 | singkids.com.sg**

The Petite Park

As the name suggests, The Petite Park is for little ones (under-sevens). The centre focuses on active and imaginative play; look out for ball pits, bouncy castles, wooden toys and multiple slides. The price is \$18 on weekdays for unlimited play, and \$18 on the weekend for two hours; value passes are also available. Locations: Changi City Point (5 Changi Business Park Central 1, #02-15/16) and City Square Mall (180 Kitchener Road, #B2-51/51). **6636 1568 | petitepark.com.sg**

**EL Mums
Recommend**

Tickle Tickle

For younger kids who love pretend play, **Tickle Tickle** is perfect. There is a large choice of toys, and slides and ball pits for active little ones. The Hougang Sports Hall location (93 Hougang Avenue 4, #01-04) has a Candyland theme, while the one at Delta Sports Hall (900 Tiong Bahru Road, #01-01) is a cartoon village. Prices are reasonable for unlimited play (\$14 on weekdays, \$16 on weekends), while for true fans there's a two-month unlimited membership package available for \$128. **6472 4770 | tickletickle.sg**



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Mastering Mandarin

Mandarin is the most widely spoken language on the planet (by a long margin), followed by Spanish and English. In addition to its one billion native speakers, more than 500 million people currently speak Mandarin as a second language, according to a report published by the British Council – and thousands of children in Singapore spend hours every week attempting to join their ranks. To discover some of the ways they're achieving their goal, we spoke with three language experts: HUALI XIONG, Head of Chinese at the **Canadian International School**; JOHN RIDLEY, Director of Learning at **Tanglin Trust School**; and SHARON SOLOMON, Founder and CEO of **The Winstedt School**.

By Katie Roberts

What are the benefits of learning a second language?

John Ridley: Learning any second language at a young age will give a child a significant advantage in learning other languages later in life. Apart from the very practical benefit of being able to communicate with others in their own tongue, there are several studies that indicate beneficial effects of language learning on general brain development. Also, it has long been acknowledged that being exposed to a second language will broaden the mind, giving people access to a rich literature as well as gaining a deeper understanding of the culture.

Is there a recommended optimal age to start learning?

Huali Xiong: The younger, the better. From my experience, children who start learning when they are young are more likely to develop native, or near native, pronunciation as well as more confidence in communicating with people.



John: The infant brain is hard-wired to learn language through recognising and mimicking sounds from parents and others around. We certainly encourage our families who speak two or more languages at home to continue to do this once their child begins school.

Why is learning Mandarin so difficult?

Sharon Solomon: The English language is equally complex! That said, as Chinese is visually more complex than English, the characters may be somewhat intimidating. There are only 26 letters in the English language, but around 620 stroke patterns that make up the different Chinese characters. The amount of visual information contained in just one Chinese character is far greater than in an English word.

In addition, the visual-spatial configuration of Chinese is in complete contrast to English, which is linear. Each character is pivotal and is different to

other characters because of the number of strokes and the spatial configuration. In English, the length of a word is a visual cue, but in Chinese it's a visual feast (or nightmare – depending on who's reading). Visual-orthographic skills appear to be more important when learning Chinese characters than words written in an alphabetic system. However, studies seem to show that the ability to apply strategic knowledge of processing one language to another language seems to occur irrespective of the two different writing systems.

John: As well as the challenge of learning characters, the importance of tone in spoken Mandarin presents challenges too.

Huali: The way a word is pronounced is unrelated to the written form. Chinese grammar, however, is not so complicated, because there is no verb conjugation and tenses are simple.

How can parents reinforce what is being taught at school?

Huali: It's generally agreed that the best support parents can offer is through supporting their children with their own mother tongue language skills, rather than their "new" language. Asking children to teach you what they learnt at school is also a great way of helping them with their learning.

John: Home-learning tasks are provided to build on the lessons in school and are very important in language learning for consolidation. Only a very small percentage of our students have parents who speak Mandarin; to help the others, teachers can post video and audio clips on the school portal that they can use to practise new words and phrases. It's a great opportunity: the youngsters can teach their parents if they practise together.



TEACHING APPROACHES

The Tanglin approach focuses on a balanced rather than bilingual curriculum; why is that?

John: The most obvious challenge with a bilingual programme is the amount of time allocated to classes, which naturally comes at the expense of other areas of the curriculum. We pride ourselves on balance in our curriculum and feel that the immersion required to achieve true bilingualism would jeopardise that balance; any more time spent on Mandarin than what our students currently receive would need to be at the expense of something else. The quality rather than the quantity of teaching is what really makes the difference in how well children learn Mandarin. Our focus is on laying firm foundations for future language learning and engendering a love of language.



Tell us about the research behind the Chinese-English bilingual programme offered at the Canadian International School.

Huali: Children who speak more than one language not only have a competitive edge in tomorrow's job market, but they're also likely to become better learners. Constantly switching between two languages leads to improved cognitive processes such as problem-solving, mental flexibility, focused attention and task-switching. We also expect bilingual children to score better on standardised tests than their monolingual peers, particularly in the categories of mathematics, reading and vocabulary.



What is The Winstedt School's approach to language instruction for children with learning challenges?

Sharon: Early detection of poor reading-related skills in one's native tongue may help in identifying at-risk readers who may have difficulties in acquiring another language, and Winstedt is mindful of this when students take on an additional language.

We've designed Mandarin programmes that take into account the cognitive skills of each student, given the tailored approach we provide to learning. Students are exposed to Chinese culture and customs. For example, Chinese brush painting is part of the language of instruction, which adds to successful learning and teaching.

If you take the dyslexic learner for example, nothing about language is automatic for him or her. Our learners need to be able to see the individual steps, the many different perspectives and possibilities in order to explain the nuances and specifics of a subject. Every good teacher and student knows this.



Why is it important to learn Chinese culture and written characters alongside the spoken word?

Huali: When learning about the richness of Chinese culture, children also develop an understanding of its customs, traditions and behaviours. This understanding leads to more effective communication. The Chinese characters used in writing Mandarin are known as *hanzi*, and they are important for developing writing and reading skills. Our primary focus is on *hanzi* recognition and the development of strong reading comprehension skills. Once these have been mastered, students will progress to learning how to write *hanzi*.

Can you offer any tips to keep kids engaged and motivated?

John: Learning Mandarin is no different from any other learning context. Children need to be motivated and feel safe and supported, but they also need to be challenged appropriately, so that they know they are making progress. This requires skilled teachers who are prepared to get to know their pupils as individual learners. Frequent exposure to language materials, together with study and revision in small but regular amounts, will greatly help this process.

Huali: We use a range of approaches including storytelling, role-play, flashcard games, songs, drawing, movement and presentations. Parents can encourage perseverance by giving their children lots of praise, especially when they are trying hard – not just when they've accomplished something.

Can you offer some advice on how to engage a tutor?

Sharon: Children are often passive observers of the conversation of others, and in some cultures and socioeconomic groups they tend to be indirect participants in conversations, encouraged to speak only when spoken to. A number of studies have found that children learn through observation, or gradual participation, in adult tasks rather than involvement in child-centred activities. It's common knowledge that any language learnt needs to be used constantly – and not just in the classroom – in order to be “fossilised”. Any form of reinforcement in a subject can only help, so look for a good tutor who makes the language easy and fun to learn.

Huali: It's important to make sure your child's tutor uses fun and engaging age-appropriate activities. They should speak only in Chinese and focus on writing skills after developing a good grasp of the oral language.

Three methods of Mandarin learning

Canadian International School

Students can choose to take daily Chinese language acquisition classes (five times a week) from Junior Kindergarten through to Grade 10. They can then continue in Grades 11 and 12 (International Baccalaureate) at either a standard or higher level. A Chinese immersion programme is offered in Pre-Kindergarten, and a Chinese-English bilingual programme from Junior Kindergarten through to Grade 5 (from August 2016). Intensive mother tongue classes are also available at the after-school language programme. cis.edu.sg/globallanguages

Tanglin Trust School

All children from Nursery to Year 6 learn specialist Mandarin, while in Years 7 and 8 the vast majority of students study two languages, chosen from Mandarin, French and Spanish. At the end of Year 8, they choose one language to continue in Year 11 and many choose to continue their language learning into the sixth form. Native and near-native speakers of Mandarin are offered additional enrichment classes with the option of studying Mandarin at a higher level in the Senior School. tts.edu.sg

The Winstedt School

Mandarin is part of the curriculum, whilst Mandarin Club is held after school for those wanting additional exposure to the language. Given the nature of Winstedt students, the aim is to make language learning easier for those who struggle. Students are taught in small groups. The teacher follows a highly structured multi-sensory approach. For many, learning a language is not a passive exercise, and it does require a fair amount of physical and mental energy. The language teacher is expected to nurture a love for and an interest in the subject.

winstedt.edu.sg

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expatliving.sg.



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Portable CAREERS

KATIE ROBERTS catches up with two serial expats who explain how they've managed to adapt and develop their careers while crisscrossing the globe.



Jacinta Noonan and Jo Parfitt

Whether they're on the corporate path, freelancing, or not working at all, at the back of many expatriates' minds is the notion that they will at some point move to another country. For some, especially those in jobs they enjoy, this can be a daunting prospect, given the effort it's taken to establish themselves in one place. Indeed, transplanting yourself and your career to a new country requires perseverance: there are cultural nuances to understand, employment laws to navigate and often a language barrier to overcome.

Another way to view it is as an opportunity for reinvention: a chance to hold true to your passion while adapting to new circumstances. What's not exciting about that prospect? Here we profile two women who have relished the challenge.

JO PARFITT

An expat since 1987, Jo has written 31 books in that time, established a publishing company, and created what she calls a portable career to which she devotes about four hours a day from her base in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She has crisscrossed the globe, living in Dubai, Oman, Norway, Brunei and the Netherlands as her husband's job has changed, and raised two children along the way.

"I've always found a way to work: from writing a French cookbook called *French Tarts* and being published after boldly plucking up the courage to speak to a fellow passenger on a train who turned out to be a publisher, I've always looked for opportunities, and pushed the boundaries," she says. "In Dubai in the 1990s I even ran classes teaching people how to use desktop publishing programs."

The foundation of each career reinvention for Jo – what she calls her "red thread" – has been writing. Now, her real job is running Summertime

Publishing, and expanding on the success of her book, *Career In Your Suitcase*. Written by Jo and Colleen Reichrath-Smith, and first published in 1998, the book is currently in its fourth edition and has spawned a series of workshops encouraging expats to turn their passions into their careers. Jo has teamed up with Jacinta (she met both women in the Netherlands) to present the workshops based on *Career In Your Suitcase*.

"My favourite analogy is the tilting hat," says Jo. "Wear the same hat wherever you go, but be flexible, adapt to local needs, adjust to new opportunities." To illustrate, Jo describes the writers' circles she has launched in every country she has moved to. "It's simple to do, especially now with social media, and a great way to meet like-minded people, find commonalities and forge a new network in a new country. I've now found 26 writers in KL simply by setting up a Facebook page."

JACINTA NOONAN

Trained as a primary school teacher, Jacinta says that her career has changed as different opportunities have presented themselves in different countries. "When I left Australia and realised I couldn't teach in the UK, I instead went to the Netherlands and found a job in the corporate sector, in logistics. While it was a well-paid job, I knew it wasn't my passion." It took a leap of faith to move on, yet through some new opportunities she found a role delivering management training programmes focused on people development.

"That's my 'red thread': communication and people," she says. Since our interview in Singapore, Jacinta has relocated to Europe where she continues her work as a personal coach and trainer with a passion for helping women in transition. "We first need to acknowledge that careers are generally not linear. There are highs and lows, periods when you go around in circles and others where you tread

water. There's no straight line to success, nor is it easy to find and follow your passion. You need courage and self-belief, and to be true to yourself."

While the good news is that these two women are living proof that portable careers are possible, the flip side is that it takes hard work and lots of energy. Jo, Colleen and Jacinta are currently rolling out "The Career In Your Suitcase Way", a programme comprising workshops, a workbook, support groups and coaching. The aim is to help people find meaning in life, and reinvent themselves. Along the way they are recruiting potential facilitators who will go on to create careers in suitcases of their own, by running the programme in their own locations.

Jo says the following six steps can help you on your own portable career journey.


1 Know yourself: Be consciously aware of your backstory. Can you describe yourself in one sentence, in a mission statement that hones your story and defines your vision? This will be at the confluence of what you love, what you're good at, what the world needs and what you can be paid for. Your career will fall in around this. Use it intelligently as a filter for opportunities.

2 Plug in: Explore your passions, values, interests and purpose. Where do you find your energy? This will sustain and keep you going as long as you engage with it.

3 Navigate an uncharted path: Use your personal North Star to guide and keep you on course, as you navigate your way off the beaten track.

4 Recognise opportunity: Look for open doors. Notice unexpected and unplanned things along the way that fit your criteria; also allow room for serendipity to play a role in your journey. A chance meeting and the courage to make an introduction could be a tiny step towards a big future.

5 Connect: Link in with others along the way, support them, learn from them and apply that information. Use your local and global networks, give and receive, network and stay active to be remembered.

6 Adapt: Adjust to new information and opportunities as everything continues in motion around you. Say yes to opportunities. 

CAREER SUPPORT AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Athena Network | theathenanetwork.com.sg

Career In Your Suitcase | careerinyoursuitcase.com

Career Resource Centre for Expatriates | aasingapore.com/about-crce

PrimeTime | primetime.org.sg

Singapore Business Women & Professional Women Association | sbpwa.org.sg

Woolf Works | woolfworks.sg

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Close to the Edge

Can you recognise addiction?

For many, the December festive season involves a lot of alcohol wrapped up in fun and good times with family and friends. But when the New Year dawns, is it time to take a critical look with a clear head, and ask if the lifestyle is getting out of hand? With this in mind, we spoke to DR SURESH JOSEPH, Head Counsellor at **The Cabin**, about addiction.

By Katie Roberts

“My personal observation is that some aspects of the expat lifestyle really lend themselves to pushing the envelope,” says Suresh, a Singaporean who knows the expat life well, having spent over 20 years living in the UK for his schooling, university and later career. “Many people have access to higher disposable incomes, and they may feel they are in a bubble, with a perception that what they do here will get left here. So they drink more and party harder, because there is something about expat life that makes this easier and somehow more acceptable.”

The physical distance from family and friends, and a disconnection from familiar social and cultural norms can, over time, lead to behaviour that would be taboo in one's home country. And it works both ways. “For spouses away on work trips there is the drinking, which is an accepted way of doing business in Asia, while for the accompanying spouses at home, the availability of

domestic help means they have a lot of time for socialising. You ally that with a drinking culture, and it's very easy to slip into substance abuse,” says Suresh.

Not only alcohol

The most common addiction amongst the expat clients that Suresh sees in Singapore is alcohol, followed, in order, by sex, the internet, drugs and gambling. In some cases Suresh sees two addictive processes in one individual. “The most common combination is alcohol and sex, and the two augment each other,” he says. In other people there is what is known as a dual diagnosis, which is the presence of a second, undetected

health issue – for example, anxiety, depression, psychosis or bipolar.

High levels of sex addiction in the male expat community could in part be explained by increased accessibility. “Men can visit places like Orchard Towers, and have mistresses; I wouldn't say that expat society is necessarily accepting of this, but there does seem to be a certain resignation that this is what expat men in Asia do, and that is perhaps part of the reason they develop a fascination.”

Suresh notes that there are female sex addicts, though the numbers are much lower, and their behavior doesn't usually become dangerous – it's mainly





restricted to viewing pornography, excessive masturbation and voyeurism, for example. “Dangerous sexual behaviour in women tends to be connected to their alcohol consumption. They are much more likely to make poor decisions when drunk than they otherwise would. They make sexual choices they might later regret, but seldom have I seen them cross into full sex addiction.”

Gaming gone wrong

The numbers are still small, but addiction to gaming is growing, typically among males in their late teens to early 20s. Parents see the signs: they fail grades and miss school, and show signs of mood disorders and aggression. Some may also have substance abuse issues, for example with marijuana.

Suresh says that the problem with gaming for up to 14 hours a day is that it excludes everything else. The young (mostly) men become locked into a virtual, first-person gaming environment, where their alter ego develops a personality, and even clothing preferences, and takes over. “I had one client say, ‘Why would I want to be myself? I can be so much cooler online!’” says Suresh. “When parents try to intervene and disengage children from their devices, they can go into a type of withdrawal and suffer cravings.” It can turn nasty too; Suresh tells of one boy who threw his father down the stairs, resulting in a broken ankle from the fall.

Denial and alarm bells

“As human beings we all utilise denial – it’s a cognitive device that we use as a means of coping with a reality that we might otherwise find intolerable,” says Suresh. In the case of addicts, denial enables them to rationalise and legitimise a set of behaviours that is completely at odds with their morals and principals; that they would otherwise adjudge to be completely unacceptable; that they would never ordinarily countenance in themselves or others; and then continue doing it. Those with alcohol addiction find clever ways to hide their drinking, and create a perception that there isn’t a problem. For example, they may say to themselves, “I don’t have a problem with alcohol; I have a problem with my wife (or boss, kids, parents, siblings, colleagues). If she would just get off my case then there wouldn’t be a problem.”

What is addiction?

Addiction is a disorder that causes malfunction of the brain’s reward circuits, resulting in people reinforcing their blunted reward feelings with substances or processes that will increase pleasurable feelings. Once this happens, it creates a knock-on effect for someone with a genetic susceptibility to the disorder, or chemical cascades to other parts of the brain affecting things like judgement and impulse control. This is why “addicts” or alcoholics cannot control their using. The American Society of Addiction Medicine refers to addiction as a chronic condition, which means that symptoms will return if it isn’t treated. The US National Institute of Drug Abuse says up to 60 percent of addiction sufferers have probably inherited the disorder genetically, while others may have damaged their reward system by overusing it.

Suresh explains that the maximum recommended units of alcohol consumption in one week is 21 for men and 14 for women, which is roughly standard for most government health advisories worldwide. "If you drink substantially more than that, you need to ask yourself why," he says.

People can also ask themselves questions that follow the CAGE acronym. Have you had thoughts about cutting down? Do you feel annoyed or angry when people say you drink too much? Do you feel guilty about what your drinking is doing to those around you? Do you require an eye-opener to get out of bed in the morning?

Signs to look for

Where is the line when it comes to alcohol dependence? How can loved ones spot an addiction in someone who seemingly experiences few of the stereotypical consequences? The following are some typical indicators that suggest someone is a high-functioning addict.

- 1 Considering substance use as a reward for their hard work.
- 2 Using substances to cope with daily stress.
- 3 Frequently referencing the next drink or high.
- 4 Leading a double life – keeping up appearances but struggling internally with cravings and failed attempts to cut back.
- 5 Often drinking more than planned.
- 6 Denying the consequences of substance abuse, and using their ability to achieve success and power as further denial that they don't have a drinking problem.



Seeking help

While there are numerous counselling and treatment options in Singapore – many specialising in helping expatriates – finding the appropriate one, where you can establish a positive, trusting relationship, is up to the individual. The treatment recommendation, whether it's for outpatient or residential referral, will depend on the severity of the addiction, and the presence of any underlying health conditions. Most treatments include individual and group therapy sessions.

Suresh is Head Counsellor at The Cabin's recently opened outpatient facility. It's an extension of the residential facility in Chiang Mai, Thailand, where the care is likened to the well-known US rehab facilities that we hear about when celebrities are in trouble. A minimum stay is 28 days, in resort-like surroundings, with 24-hour support. Clients go for the integrative counselling that includes cognitive behavioural therapy, twelve-step facilitation and mindfulness, all of which have worldwide support as effective techniques for addiction. Those who don't require this intensive treatment, or high-functioning clients who can't get time off work, can receive intensive treatment in Singapore, without a residential stay.



A new way

Suresh says successful treatment outcomes depend on the following important factors: the motivation of the individual, strong family support, a commitment to stay in treatment for the long haul and a solid alliance between client and counsellor. "There is absolutely no reason why an individual should not recover if these conditions are met." He strongly emphasises that recovery involves learning healthy methods of managing emotion and stress, and navigating life without the addictive substance.

"Essentially, recovery is about finding a new way to live." **AI**

Resources

The Cabin | thecabinsingapore.com.sg
 Alcoholics Anonymous Singapore | singaporeaa.org
 DrinkAware UK | drinkaware.co.uk
 National Council on Problem Gambling | ncpg.org.sg
 Narcotics Anonymous | nasingapore.org



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The Dream Comes to Life

NEWS FLASH

The Trustees of the Sir Manasseh Meyer Synagogue and School Trust have brought the dreams of Sir Manasseh Meyer and Albert Einstein to life. They have approved the construction of Singapore's first Jewish International School based on Jewish ethics and values. The current school serves over 170 students representing various nationalities and religions. The new campus is designed to make Sir Manasseh Meyer International School's cutting edge, **research-based** programs available to 500 students. The school's excellent student-to-teacher ratio will be maintained even after expansion.



Albert Einstein Visits Singapore to meet Sir Manasseh Meyer



Sir Manasseh Meyer (seated, front row, 4th from left) entertaining Albert Einstein (seated, front row, 3rd from left) at his home, Belle Vue, in Singapore

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

Albert Einstein's 1922 visit to Sir Manasseh Meyer was focused on Einstein's belief that there must be educational institutions built that would educate future leaders who were broadly educated in understanding the interdisciplinary links between all subjects. Einstein's search for a united theory of physics reflected his view that our knowledge was tied together. His belief that

"God doesn't play dice with the universe" meant there was a basic connectedness with all knowledge.

Sir Manasseh Meyer was taken by Einstein's views. He was a man who was widely traveled and provided the finest possible education for his children. Inspired by Einstein's belief in the importance of providing an **interdisciplinary education**, he took that idea and added the critical component of

linking it to a strong, ethical and moral education, steeped in the values of Judaism. Values such as Tikkun Olam which means responsibility to heal the world. He established the Sir Manasseh Meyer Synagogue and School Trust to support his vision.

Under the leadership of the current Trustees, Sir Manasseh Meyer's dream has come to life. The Trustees have commissioned the building of a **state-of-the-art**

school for 500 students in Sembawang to serve both the Jewish community as well as the entire International community.

Today, over 170 students are receiving the education Einstein and Sir Manasseh Meyer dreamt about. Tomorrow, 500 students will be able to live the dream at Sir Manasseh Meyer International School.

CONTINUED PAGE 13

Cutting Edge Campus Opens in Sembawang

BREAKING NEWS

The Sir Manasseh Meyer International School is opening its state-of-the-art campus in Sembawang in 2016. The school design will employ the latest wireless technology. There are ultramodern biology, chemistry and physics laboratories, fully equipped art and music centers, a 10-lane swimming pool, full sports

hall and a magnificent 450-seat auditorium/theater complex.

The Early Childhood Center is designed especially to serve our youngest students and is based on Einstein's belief that **"Imagination is more important than knowledge for knowledge is limited..."**. As a result it is equipped with the latest materials designed to arouse imagination and inspire creativity.

CONTINUED PAGE 8



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to 05 July 2015

FAMILY LAW EXPLAINED

Three legal experts explain the facts around adoption, divorce, splitting assets and child custody.

Divorce and the Division of Assets

Aishah Winter, Consilium Law Corporation

You practise family law; what are some of the questions you're commonly asked?

Enquiries by new clients are often in respect to filing for a divorce in Singapore, and their rights and obligations around maintenance and the division of assets.

What does the law in Singapore say about the division of assets?

Marital assets are assets that are acquired during the marriage. Usually, assets that are acquired prior to the marriage do not form part of the pool of marital assets, unless these assets were ordinarily used by the family, or substantially improved by both parties or by the other party.

Division of assets is the separation of assets between the parties. The proportion of division is based on factors such as the financial and non-financial contributions of the parties to the family during the marriage.

Tell us about changes to the division of assets law.

Based on a 2015 High Court case, the court takes into consideration the financial and non-financial contributions of the parties. This includes, but is not limited to, the initial deposit for the matrimonial property, the mortgage repayments for the matrimonial property,

payments for groceries and utilities, and payments for the tuition and living expenses of the children.

Non-financial contributions include, but are not limited to, the cooking and washing for the family, ferrying the children to and from school and after-school activities, and caring for the parties' elderly parents.

The court will look at all relevant facts, and decide on a ratio for financial contributions, and another ratio for non-financial contributions. From these two ratios, the court will then determine a single overall ratio to be used for the division of the matrimonial assets. What made this recent case different was the refinement of the ratio, and also the greater emphasis on non-financial contributions, usually by the wife.

Do you have an example you can share?

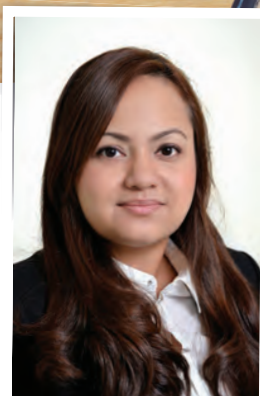
In one case, although the husband had paid for a substantial part of the acquisition of the matrimonial home, the court granted the wife a large part of the proceeds from the sale of the home. The husband was an absentee father who left the family to fend for itself without any financial support, although he was still residing with the family in the home at times.

The wife had to work to pay for all of the living expenses and for the mortgage repayments, and also cared for the school-going children for most of the marriage. So, while the husband had contributed to a certain percentage for the matrimonial home, the court gave him

less than what he had contributed because of his behaviour as an absentee father.

It's important to understand that the division of assets is not simply a numbers game.

The process will involve respect for and consideration of both parties' contributions to the marriage, whether in the financial or domestic spheres, as both roles are equally important to the health of the marital relationship.



Before meeting a lawyer you should:

- Have all relevant information and documents on the family's assets and finances; this will enable your lawyer to assess the facts of the case and provide a preliminary assessment of the possible outcome of the divorce and the division of assets.
- Know what you would like to achieve, meaning your objectives, and be prepared to discuss these with your lawyers.

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Divorce and Children

Gloria James,
Gloria James-Civetta & Co

Very briefly, what are the basics of divorce law in Singapore?

The process consists of two stages: in the first, proceedings involve the divorce of husband and wife; the second stage addresses ancillary matters including maintenance for the wife and children, division of matrimonial assets and the custody, care, control of and access to children.

What are the laws around relocation?

A parent may not relocate to another country without the consent of the other parent. An application has to be filed in the Family Justice Courts of Singapore. The relocating parent needs to keep in mind that whatever steps or action they take, they must ask the very important question, "Is this in the best interest of my children?" The children's welfare is of paramount concern.

Could you suggest a case study that illustrates how children are considered?

An Australian man and an English woman married in Hong Kong 12 years ago. They went on to live in a few countries before coming to reside in Singapore five years ago. They have three young children aged between seven and 11 who attend an international school; the father is the sole breadwinner, the mother a homemaker. The mother no longer wishes to be married; instead, she seeks to relocate to the UK and she wants to take the children with her. She files for divorce in the family court in Singapore.



Typically, when divorce papers are filed in court by a parent, the papers have to be personally served on the other parent, who would then have eight days to enter an appearance to indicate if contesting or not. If that parent intends to file a counter-claim or defence, a further 14 days will be granted.

Thereafter, a case conference is fixed before a date for mediation is given. This is because parents with children under 21, after proceedings have commenced, are required to attend the Child Focused Resolution Centre (CFRC) for mandatory mediation and counselling.

Experienced counsellors and judge-mediators facilitate both parties' discussions on children's issues pertaining to custody care and control, access, relocation and maintenance, with a view to an amicable global settlement. If that is reached, a final divorce is granted three months thereafter. Should parties not be able to resolve their differences at the CFRC, a Child Representative may be appointed to represent the child's interests in the litigation process.



Six Tips for a Painless Divorce

- #1 Keep calm
- #2 Be mentally prepared
- #3 Do not involve your children
- #4 Do your homework and know what you want
- #5 Always seek legal advice on the next steps
- #6 Consider building a friendly relationship with your ex-spouse for the sake of the children

The Hague Convention

Singapore is a signatory to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, an international treaty that protects children who have been removed out of a jurisdiction, or have been retained by one parent resulting in the breach of the other parent's rights of custody. The Convention provides a procedure for the prompt return of the child to the country of habitual residence in order for the courts in that country to resolve the child's issues.



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Adoption and the law

Jenny Lai, Jenny Lai & Co

Very briefly, what is the adoption process in Singapore?

Adoption applications are decided by the Family Justice Courts of Singapore. However, before the court is involved, prospective parents should follow the process specified by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF). This commences with attendance at a compulsory pre-adoption briefing, an assessment for suitability, endorsement by the country of citizenship (in the case of expats), identification of a child, and obtaining all the necessary identification documents. (You can find lots of information on this at msf.gov.sg/adoption.)

When is it necessary to engage a lawyer in the adoption process?

After the MSF assessment, it's time to approach a lawyer to get the legal work started. The process from the application to the final order being granted takes about six to 12 months, depending on the complexity of the legal issues.

What is the role of MSF?

MSF conducts a home study after the court has granted the in-principle approval. When the MSF study report is ready, we can ask the court for a final hearing date. After the hearing, and if an adoption order is made, the Immigration Authority will prepare a new birth certificate stating the adoptive parents' names.

Can you explain some case studies to describe your work in practice?


In one instance, during the MSF home study the child was discovered to suffer from fatty liver. MSF wanted the adoptive parents to return the child and abort the case. The child had been with the adoptive parents for a few months by then, and they had developed a strong bond with the child, so they asked me to intervene. I proposed showing to MSF that they had



the means to finance the medical bills for the child, and the case went ahead. The Adoption Order was granted.

My client in another case was a single elderly lady, and the court was concerned about her age and her means to raise the child. This was a very interesting case of a Malaysian boy adopted by a Singaporean woman in Malaysia. The Singapore Immigration Department did not recognise the adoption order granted by the Malaysian courts. The boy had been with her for six years when my client came to me to start a fresh adoption application in Singapore. I helped her to assure the courts that there were support systems in place in the event that she should pass on.

Anything else to keep in mind?

In cases where the child is from a previous marriage, extra considerations have to be given. The Singapore courts' view is that divorce does not sever parental ties. In these cases, I have to go the extra mile to help clients to overcome this hurdle through proof of abandonment or estrangement. 



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British Polo Day Singapore 2015,
photo by Keoma Zec

ON THE STAGE

Here's what's happening on the Singapore stage this month

GLOBAL MUSIC MANIA

St Jerome's Laneway Festival Singapore returns to The Meadow at Gardens By the Bay for the sixth year on 30 January, featuring a mix of pop, electronica and R&B acts from Singapore, as well as from the US, the UK, Australia, Canada and Hong Kong. This year's line-up features the likes of Battles, Beach House, Big Scary, Cashew Chemists, Cheats, CHVRCHES, DIIV, East India Youth, Flume, GDJYB, Grimes, Hermitude, Hudson Mohawke, Intrigant, METZ, Purity Ring, Riot In Magenta, Shamir, The Internet, Thundercat, Tobias Jesso Jr and Violent Soho. singapore.lanewayfestival.com



CELEBRATORY SYMPHONIES

Acclaimed classical music conductor **Maestro Zubin Mehta**, along with the 110-member Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, will perform at the Esplanade Concert Hall on 7 January, in celebration of both his 80th birthday and the 80th season of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. The programme will feature masterpieces with French, Russian and German origins, including Beethoven's "Leonore Overture No. 3", Ravel's "La Valse" and Tchaikovsky's "Symphony No. 6 Pathétique". Tickets from Sistic. facebook.com/zubinmehtainsg

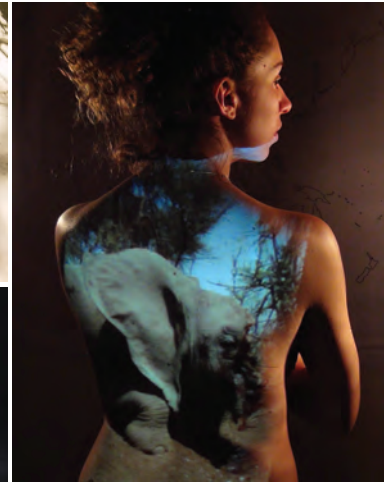


SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT

This month, popular magic show **The Illusionists – Live from Broadway** mesmerises audiences here with the talents of seven illusionists performing magic tricks, death-defying stunts and astonishing acts that you've got to see to believe. 15 to 24 January at MasterCard Theatres at Marina Bay Sands. Tickets from Sistic. baseentertainmentasia.com

ANIMAL ACTION

Returning for its 12th edition, the M1 Fringe Festival will feature 19 arts events from 12 countries, all centred on the theme of Art and the Animal, explored through a variety of media, art forms and languages. Highlights include *Human Bestiary*, a play that looks at the history of animal extinction and the problems created by humankind through an edgy stage documentary presented with video projections, beat-boxing and a live DJ set, and *The Chronicles of One and Zero: Kancil*, a performance using traditional Malay poetry, body projection mapping and animated sequences to explore how industrialisation destroys habitats. Another highlight is *Amia*, a visual art and sound installation performed by the ghosts of 50,000 bees, emphasising the population losses of bees both globally and in urbanised Singapore. 13 to 24 January at venues including Esplanade Theatres on the Bay, National Museum of Singapore, ION Orchard, Centre 42, The Substation, Objectifs and Gillman Barracks. Tickets from Sistic. singaporefringe.com



KIDS' STORIES COME TO LIFE

Starting this month, **KidsFest** returns for its fifth year with a line-up of stage productions adapted from six well-loved children's books. Up first are *The Gruffalo* – always a popular festival mainstay – and *Room on a Broom* in January, followed by *Snow Child*, *I Believe in Unicorns*, *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Aliens Love Underpants* in February. With song, dance and audience interaction, these shows are for the entire family to enjoy. Plus, on selected show dates, kids have the opportunity to meet and greet the actors and participate in other festival activities including a photo wall, a photo booth and free face-painting. 20 January to 14 February at SOTA Drama Theatre. Tickets from Sistic. kidsfest.com.sg



Next Month

Comedy fans can catch American funny-man **Kevin Hart** – most recently seen in the movie *Get Hard* with Will Ferrell – perform live in Singapore when he brings his *What Now? Tour* to the Suntec Convention Centre Hall on 2 February. Tickets from Sistic. lushington.com



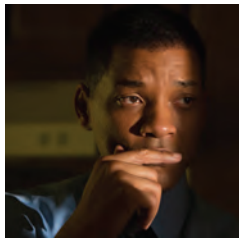
ON THE SCREEN

Here's our pick of this month's happenings on the big screen and the small screen.

BIG SCREEN

CONCUSSION

Will Smith stars in this sports drama-thriller based on the true story of American immigrant Dr Bennet Omalu, the brilliant forensic neuropathologist who made the first discovery of CTE, a football-related brain trauma, in a pro player and fought for the truth to be known. Omalu's emotional quest puts him at dangerous odds with one of the most powerful – and beloved – institutions in the world. The film also stars Alec Baldwin, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Stephen Moyer and Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje. Opens 14 January at Golden Village cinemas.



THE HATEFUL EIGHT



This Quentin Tarantino western, set in post-Civil War Wyoming in the US, centres on eight strangers – including bounty hunter John Ruth (Kurt Russell) and his fugitive Daisy Domergue (Jennifer Jason Leigh), infamous bounty hunter Major Marquis Warren (Samuel L. Jackson) and

southern renegade Chris Mannix (Walton Goggins) – who, while travelling to Red Rock, seek refuge in a stagecoach stopover during a blizzard. But, as the storm overtakes the mountainside stopover, it becomes clear to the travellers that they may not make it to Red Rock after all. The film also stars Tim Roth, Bruce Dern, Michael Madsen and Demián Bichir. Opens 21 January at Golden Village cinemas.

FRANNY

This drama follows a rich philanthropist, Franny (Richard Gere), who meddles in the lives of his deceased friends' daughter (Dakota Fanning) and her new husband (Theo James) in a bid to relive his past. Opens 14 January at Cathay Cineplexes.



SMALL SCREEN

THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING



Based on the memoir *Travelling to Infinity: My Life with Stephen* by Jane Hawking, this five-time Academy Award-nominated film tells the moving story of renowned astrophysicist Stephen Hawking (played by Oscar winner Eddie Redmayne), who was diagnosed with the life-threatening illness ALS, a form of motor neuron disease, at the age of 21. Accompanied by his university sweetheart Jane (Felicity Jones), Stephen defies the medical odds and embarks on his remarkable scientific research. Premieres 23 January at 9pm on HBO (StarHub TV Channel 601).

MAN VS CHILD: CHEF SHOWDOWN

If you're a fan of culinary competition shows, this one's for you. In Lifetime's new series, great chefs are put to the test against the talented food stars of tomorrow. In each episode, a team of five young cooking prodigies challenges an executive-level, adult chef in the kitchen. Premieres 26 January at 7pm on Lifetime (StarHub TV Channel 514).

AWARD SHOWS GALORE

Awards Season has officially begun, so get ready for a full month of non-stop celebrities, gowns and glam

– all telecast live on RTL CBS Entertainment HD (StarHub TV Channel 509; SingTel TV Channel 318). The action starts with the **People's Choice Awards**, hosted by Glee's Jane Lynch, on 7 January at 9am – with an encore showing at 9pm – followed by the **Critic's Choice Awards** on 15 January at 9am, with a repeat presentation at 9pm. Then, you can watch the **73rd Golden Globe Awards**, hosted by British comedian Ricky Gervais (*pictured*), on 11 January at 9am – with a replay at 9.55pm – and catch the **Screen Actor's Guild Awards** on 31 January at 9am, with another airing at 9pm.





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ON THE WALL

What's on in Singapore's art scene this month

FIVE MINUTES WITH BELINDA FOX

This month, Singapore-based, Australian artist BELINDA FOX – known for her prints, watercolours, sculptures and ceramic art – presents **Balancing the World** at Chan Hampe Galleries. Here, she gives us a sneak peek at the show, which features both independent and collaborative new works.

What can we expect from *Balancing the World*?

My Singapore show features new paintings and also some ambitious ceramic sculptures made in collaboration with Singaporean artist Jason Lim. And for the first time I will also be creating site-specific wall drawings that will embellish the wall space at Chan Hampe Galleries.

What was your inspiration for this project?

Lately, I've set myself a theme to work toward for all shows in the year. For 2016, I've used "Balancing the World" for both my Sydney show and my Singapore show, with inspiration coming from my own travels throughout Vietnam, Myanmar and Singapore. Also, human frailty and a concern for the environment are always key factors in my work.



TREASURES OF TIME

From now until 29 May, history buffs can explore all kinds of artefacts – including a mummy and gold jewellery from Mesopotamian graves – at the **Treasures of the World** exhibition, which comes straight from the British Museum in London. Featuring relics from Africa, Oceania, the Middle East, Europe, Asia and the Americas, the extensive collection encompasses over two million years of culture and history. National Museum of Singapore, 93 Stamford Road. nationalmuseum.sg



How does this collection differ from your previous works?

In some ways this show picks up from where my Sydney show left off last September, but one big difference is a new idea I'm introducing: the wall drawing. This map-type drawing meanders throughout the wall space, behind paintings and around corners; it's like a thread that ties the work together, and I hope it will really activate the space as a full room installation.

How did the collaboration with Jason come about?

I knew Jason's work from visiting the Jalan Bahar Clay Studios (also known as the Dragon Kiln) and I really liked how he uses clay sculpturally. So, I contacted him to see if he would be interested in working with me, and was very excited that he said yes! It's been a most productive and thought-provoking collaboration. We're such different people, with totally different ways of working, but somehow it has really worked! Collaborating is a special thing, and I'm so proud of the work we've made.

What do you hope viewers will take away from this exhibition?

I hope the paintings, ceramics and wall drawings all connect up to create an immersive experience for viewers – like they have walked into my world. I also hope people find a sense of beauty and tranquillity that, on a second glance beyond the aesthetics, is a quiet but meaningful reflection on the complexities we face in the world at present.

Belinda also launches her book, *Back to the Start*, this month – available for sale at Supermama (8 Queen Street).

See *Balancing the World* from 15 January to 14 February at Chan Hampe Galleries, 328 North Bridge Road, #01-21 Raffles Hotel Arcade. chanhampegalleries.com



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Total Art Takeover!

This month, the local art scene takes centre stage with **Singapore Art Week 2016**, a nine-day festival from 16 to 24 January celebrating contemporary and traditional visual arts, with around 80 events across more than 70 venues. From art fairs, exhibitions and installations to gallery openings, walking tours and discussions, there's something for every kind of art lover. Here's a roundup of some of the festival's key happenings.

ART WALK LITTLE INDIA

This multidisciplinary art festival set in the cultural Little India quarter allows visitors to walk through its lanes and alleyways to discover an eclectic mix of works and sensory experiences, including outdoor video installations, mural paintings, vibrant street art and musical performances by students and alumni from LASALLE College of the Arts and other established arts groups in Singapore. See it from 19 to 23 January. For more information, visit lasalle.edu.sg.



ALIWAL URBAN ART FESTIVAL

Celebrating art inspired by international street culture – from graffiti to graphic art, rock to afro-beat, skateboarding to breakdancing – the third edition of this festival will be headlined by a street art exhibition, *Cannot Be Bo(a)rded*. It features 16 artists from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia using the skateboard to create artworks that challenge existing social connotations of youth rebellion characterised by skateboard culture. Other event highlights include free music performances by Singaporean bands, DJs, rappers and live graffiti art, all taking place in the culturally rich Kampong Glam neighbourhood. 16 January, from 6pm to 11pm. For details, visit aliwalartscentre.sg.

SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

In addition to its ongoing contemporary art exhibitions, SAM has a line-up of events including art talks, guided museum and curator tours, interpretive performances, an afternoon tea with an exhibition co-curator and live music sessions in the courtyards, plus a new exhibition called *The Alchemist*, which runs from 16 to 31 January. Also, visitors can check out the Art Week local artisanal market on 24 January from 10am to 7pm. Singapore Art Museum, 71 Bras Basah Road; SAM at 8Q, Queen Street. For more details, visit singaporeartmuseum.sg.

ANDY WARHOL – SOCIAL CIRCUS

From 16 to 29 January, get an up-close look at 30 rare Andy Warhol Polaroids, which were pulled out of Warhol's Polaroid camera between 1958 and 1987 before being dispersed across the globe by various collectors. The images, which inspired the large-scale portraits for which Warhol is known, feature some of the world's most famous actors, artists and fashion designers from the 70s and 80s including Bianca Jagger, Diana Vreeland, Candy Spelling, Andre Leon Talley, Tina Chow, Martha Graham and Warhol himself. See it from 11am to 7pm daily at Block 47 Malan Road, #01-26, Gillman Barracks.

Also at Gillman Barracks

Check out **Art After Dark at Gillman Barracks**, a late-night open house event on 22 January that gives art lovers the opportunity to explore new exhibits after-hours at the 12 galleries, plus NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore and other visual arts organisations that make up the former military camp turned contemporary arts enclave. 7pm until late; 9 Lock Road. gillmanbarracks.com



ART STAGE SINGAPORE

This annual art fair, which celebrates Asian and international contemporary art, returns for its sixth edition from 21 to 24 January at Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre, presenting a varied selection of works by established and emerging artists representing over 143 galleries from 32 countries across the globe. New to this year's fair is the Southeast Asia Forum, titled *Seismograph: Sensing the City – Art in the Urban Age*, which includes an exhibition and talk series, and focuses on the theme of urbanisation. artstagesingapore.com



ART IN MOTION

Art enthusiasts love this annual programme because it gives them the opportunity to take part in various events in Singapore's vibrant arts clusters – including Gillman Barracks, Old Hill Street Police Station, Raffles Hotel Arcade and Tanjong Pagar Distripark – and, this year, from 19 to 24 January, you can experience the depth and diversity of the visual arts scene through 18 galleries' thought-provoking exhibitions and panel discussions. For more information, visit agas.org.sg.

NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE

Starting from 22 January, art lovers can pop by the new National Gallery Singapore to see internationally acclaimed Singaporean artist Tang Da Wu's **Earth Work, 1980/2015**, which features both original and recreated works from the artist's 1980 exhibition, including drawings made from earth, a rock installation and an earth "map". Museum-goers can also catch **A Fact Has No Appearance**, which explores the impact of new ideas on Southeast Asian modern art during the 1970s, with artworks from Singaporean, Malaysian and Filipino artists. Both exhibitions run through April 2016. 1 St Andrew's Road. nationalgallery.sg

For a full list of Singapore Art Week events, visit artweek.sg.

New Year, New Art Show

New York, Miami, Basel, London and Hong Kong all have one, and with Singapore's very own Art Week now in its fourth year, we're firmly establishing ourselves on the world map as a serious arts hub. This year, a new contemporary art show is opening its doors during the event. **Singapore Contemporary's** show director, DOUWE CRAMER, tells us more.



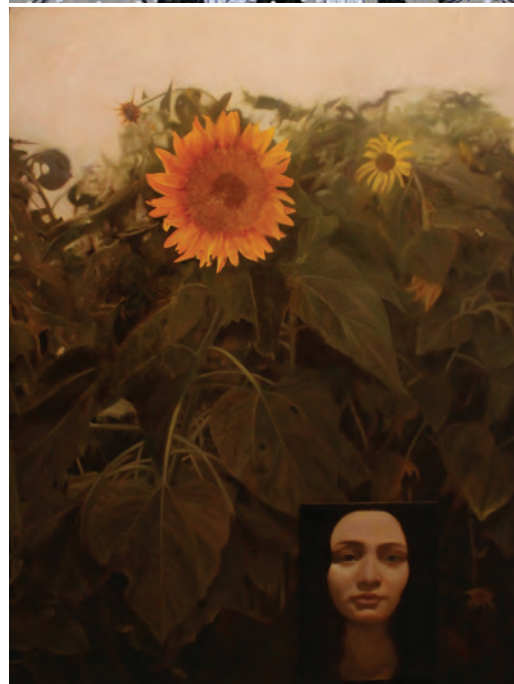
How did the new art show come about and why do you think it's important?

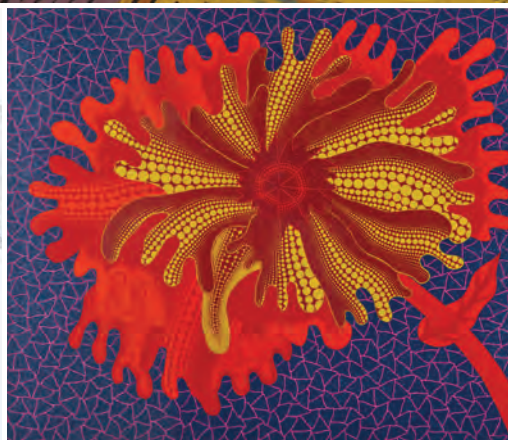
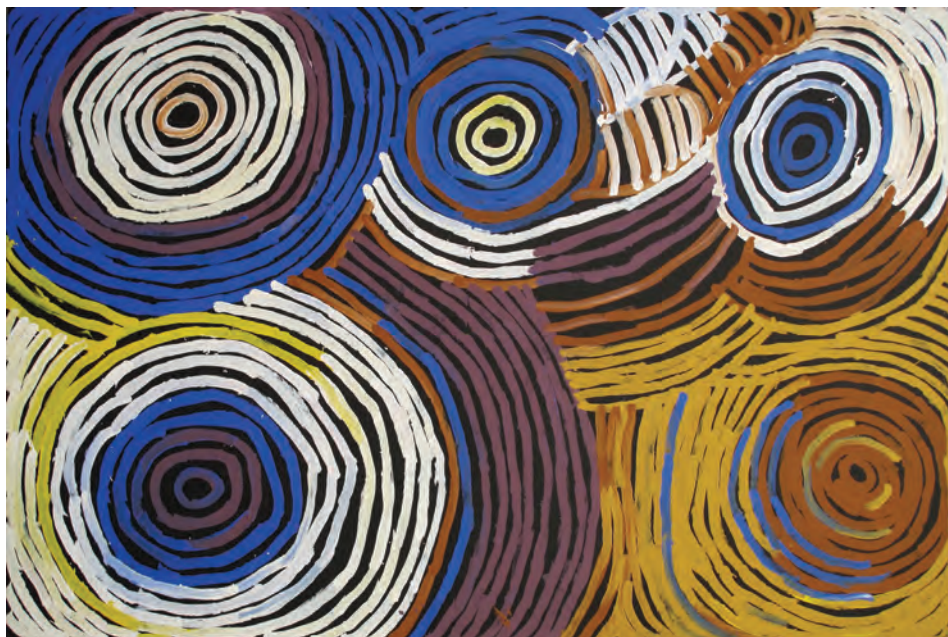
My company is behind the popular Asia Contemporary Art Show in Hong Kong, which is about to hold its eighth edition in the spring. While planning for this show, we were given the opportunity to put on a show in Singapore and, despite only having a few months to get it organised, we decided to go for it. Hong Kong is a very good art market, but at some point you want to grow, and I believe Singapore has already established itself as a great arts hub for Southeast Asia.

Our aim is to engage those who have an interest in art but who may not have grown up with it, or who may not always go to galleries. At an art fair there's a lot of choice and they can be confident they will get a great piece of art at a good price.


How do you aim to get new people collecting art?

I know from experience, and from talking with friends who are interested in art but haven't really collected before, that understanding the story behind a piece of artwork helps a person to enjoy it more. So, during the whole run of the show, we will have a group of 16 artists helping visitors to understand their art. Many people like to know the inspiration behind the pieces they buy, and they like to relay this story to their friends. In a developing a market, this is important. Most people don't buy art as an investment, but they like to understand it and watch the artist's work increase in value.





Is Singapore Contemporary open for everyone?

All are welcome and we know some people will be there just to appreciate art, while others will be looking to buy. There will be around 70 exhibitors, so the event is a comfortable size, and you'll be able to walk around and enjoy some nice food and a drink. There will also be lots of events for adults, teens and younger children. 

Some highlights of the show

China Encounters: More than 400 Chinese contemporary artworks will be on display, from emerging artists to successful names.

Artist Dialogues: The chance to meet 16 talented artists and learn what inspires their art. Among them will be photographer and body-paint artist Emma Hack from Australia, Japanese exponent of contemporary wood-block works, Kan-Zan-Loc, and British ink-pen artist, Jeff Murray.

Indonesian Pavilion: A collection of more than 200 paintings and sculptures by leading Indonesian artists.

VIP Lounge: A special presentation of the works of Ronald Ventura, perhaps the most successful Filipino contemporary artist.

Other attractions include an art tour programme, meet-the-artist sessions, live painting demonstrations and events for children.

Singapore Art Week (artweek.sg) runs from 16 to 24 January. Singapore Contemporary is open to the public from 22 to 24 January (21 January by invitation only), with works ranging from S\$10,000 to \$100,000 and above. Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre. Tickets from Sistic. asiacontemporaryart.com

ON THE PAGE

If you're looking for a good read this month, here are our thoughts on a selection of recent releases.

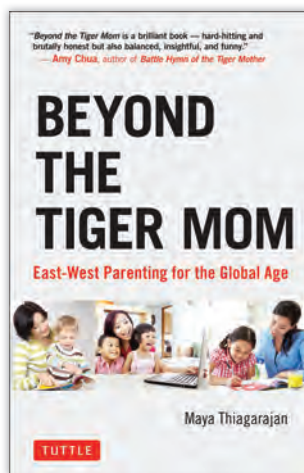
BEYOND THE TIGER MOM – EAST-WEST PARENTING FOR THE GLOBAL AGE

Maya Thiagarajan
Tuttle | 218 pages

This book's thesis, explains its author, is that Western and Eastern parenting philosophies have vastly different strengths and weaknesses; therefore, parents on either side of the world can learn from each other – and, to raise successful children in a global world, perhaps they need to learn from each other and blend the best of both worlds.

India-born-and-raised Maya Thiagarajan, a teacher at an international school here, is herself the daughter of an American mother and a South Indian father. She spent 15 years studying and teaching at top American schools before moving here and taking up a teaching post at an international school, which her two own children currently attend.

With this rich personal background as the basis for multi-pronged research that includes numerous interviews with parents, the author addresses burning questions such as just what makes Asian kids so good at maths (clue: it starts with parental and social



NOT BORN IN SINGAPORE – FIFTY PERSONALITIES WHO SHAPED THE NATION

Tng Ying Hui
Epigram Books | 288 pages

Did you know that SIA's kebaya-clad Singapore Girl – “Singapore Girl, you're a great way to fly” – was invented by UK adman Ian Bates, who first came here in 1969? After a series of equally brilliant campaigns for the likes of the Singapore Tourism Board, UOB and Tiger Balm, in 1998 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Singapore Advertising Hall of Fame.

Various Western and Asian personalities feature in this compilation, representing a fair mix of fields of endeavour, from the economy to science and medicine, education and society, the arts and sport. Apart from Bates, the list includes, to name just a few:

- Nobel Prize-winner Sydney Brenner, who was instrumental in the development of biomedical research in Singapore;
- Polish architect Kristin Olzewski, who was imprisoned in Auschwitz before coming to Singapore to work on the first Concept Plan (1971) that envisaged the development of Changi Airport, HDB townships and an expressway network;
- US-born Prof. John Norman Miksic, whose archaeological findings brought to light that the Singapore narrative actually started 500 years before the arrival of Sir Stamford Raffles; and
- Ireland-born educator Brother Joseph McNally, founder of what is now known as LASALLE College of the Arts.

Tying in with the 2015 jubilee year, naturally, this well-timed publication starts with an endorsement by popular Ambassador-at-Large Tommy Koh:

“The current anti-immigrant and anti-foreigner sentiment in Singapore is irrational and anti-historical. The truth is that from 1819 until the present, many foreign friends have made enormous contributions, in many fields of endeavour, to Singapore. This book vindicates that view”. Enough said.

Verne Maree



attitudes, but that's not all), also providing practical tips for parents on how to build a maths-rich home. The very next chapter is an insightful look at the differences between America's “reading culture” and the phonics-based Asian approaches to teaching English reading and writing; again, she includes advice for parents on how to build a language-rich home.

Whether it's talking about memorisation, critical thinking skills or how to find balance, here is a well-written, soundly argued book that should be of enormous interest to educators and parents alike.

Verne Maree

BOOK NEWS: REVAMPED PASIR RIS LIBRARY

Designed to inspire and nurture young bibliophiles, the brand new Pasir Ris Library has innovative features to meet varying reading and learning needs:

- A **Teens' Mezzanine**, designed in collaboration with members of NLB's new youth volunteer group to be a space where teens can engage and connect
 - Interactive new elements such as **Book Trailers** to facilitate digital peer recommendations
 - In the Children's Section, the first full front-facing **Early Literacy Collection** and a **Magnetic Wall** that encourages children's imagination and desire to create their own stories.
- Sounds good, doesn't it?

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

To tell us what books are piled up on your bedside table, or what you've recently downloaded to your Kindle, dash off an email to verne.maree@expatliving.sg. It won't take long!



Ben Pulham

Kiwi
journeyfitnesscompany.com

WHAT THE FAT? BY PROF. GRANT SCHOFIELD, DR CARYN ZINN AND CRAIG RODGER

Genre?

Non-fiction, Health.

How did you get hold of it?

I picked it up when I was back in New Zealand, on the recommendation of a friend.

What do you think of it?

It's an easy-to-read book that will change your approach to healthy eating.

Would you recommend it?

Definitely.



Jennifer Gargiulo

Italian-American
diaryofanexpatinsingapore.blogspot.sg

THE IMMORTAL LIFE OF HENRIETTA LACKS, BY REBECCA SKLOOT

Genre?

Non-fiction.

How did you get hold of it?

From the library at my kids' school, UWC East, where librarian Katie Day keeps an enticing selection of books on display. I never fail to leave with a bagful!

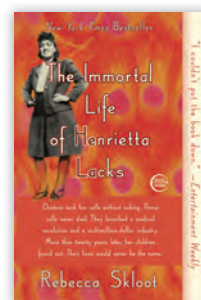
What do you think of it?

Absolutely fascinating. The author, Rebecca Skloot, has a scientific background and skilfully interweaves biology, ethics and historical details surrounding this true account of cells being removed from African-American Henrietta Lacks, a patient at Johns Hopkins in 1951, without her knowledge or permission, and then reproduced ad infinitum in the name of research.

The cells, which were given the name HeLa (the first two letters of her first and last name) and used by scientists all over the world, are still being used today and have contributed to many medical discoveries since the 1950s. Skloot locates (not without much strife) Henrietta's family and examines the ethical issues surrounding the case. She spends the next ten years uncovering its many deep-seated complexities and ultimately presents us with a compassionate and enthralling exploration of cells, poverty and racial undertones.

Would you recommend it?

Yes, it's an easy read, a great read, and clever too. It's being made into a film (pretty cool for this author's first novel!) and I wanted to read it before I watched it.



SPOTLIGHT ON THE AUTHOR

Andrew Hallam



Until recently an English teacher at the Singapore American School, **ANDREW HALLAM** has also published two hugely revelatory books on personal finances. **Verne Maree** managed to catch him just before he headed off to Europe for an early “retirement” that promises to be full of adventure.

Where do you come from, and what brought you to Singapore?

I was born in England, but I grew up in Canada. I was teaching at a Canadian high school in 2002 when my school principal left his position for a job as a deputy principal at Singapore American School. I still remember the email he sent me a year later: “This place is great! There’s a high school English position available. Apply for it!” That was the beginning.

What prompted you to start saving, and why?

I was inspired by a really smart guy, a mechanic who didn’t go to college. “If you can learn how to invest,” he said, “you don’t have to do a job you hate just because it might pay you more.” He was 47 years old, had two children, and he was a self-made millionaire. Talk about inspirational!

When we met, I was working a part-time job at the same garage where he worked. I was 19 years old, and he convinced me to start investing right away. I knew that teaching wouldn’t pay a massive salary. But I wanted to be a teacher, and everything worked out just as Russ (the mechanic) said it would.

Looking back, I loved my job, but my wife and I prefer spending time together. Smart investing bought us that time, and we were able to retire young.

How did you grow your knowledge about finance and investments?

Besides working at the garage, I had a part-time job working for a former Oxford University professor of Economics. For five years, I worked for him every Saturday – washing his car, mowing his lawn. He used to give me a spattering of money lessons during my 11am tea break! He gave me an armful of books to read. “If you read these,” he said, “you’ll know more about investments than most financial advisors.” I just kept reading and reading and reading. By the time I was 35, I had read more than 400 books on investing and personal finance.

What are some of the worst mistakes that people – particularly but not only expats – tend to make in their approach to money and savings?

The biggest mistake is not saving enough. Speculation is the second biggest mistake. People often think that they (or somebody they hire) can determine the best times to buy and the best times to sell. As a result (without knowing it in advance!) they often buy high and sell low. That’s a costly mistake. The industry encourages speculation, which drives commissions, sells products, brings in viewers to market-based television, and so on.

Effective investing is simpler than that. Diversify. Keep your costs low. Don't speculate. And rebalance your portfolio once a year – back to its original allocation and not based on some soothsayer's forecast. Studies show that most financial forecasts are wrong.

Tell us the basis for your first book, *Millionaire Teacher*. Why do you think it's been so successful?

Back in 2003, I noticed that the teachers at Singapore American School needed some help. So I went down to Borders bookstore and bought 80 of the most clearly written investment books I could find: 12 different book titles. I sent out an email to the whole school: "Come and grab a free investment book from my class."

Halfway through the morning, all books were gone. But as simple as they were, I found that the average teacher didn't understand them. Each book had the same, clear message. Each book was among the simplest that I could find.

I told Ian McGugan, my editor at *MoneySense* magazine: "Hey, the average person doesn't learn this stuff in school. So even these simply written books that I gave out were over the teachers' heads." That's when he challenged me to write a better book – one filled with humour, and that didn't make assumptions about what the readers already knew. I started the book at ground zero.

A syndicated columnist (for 84 newspapers) in the US was thrilled by the book. After he reviewed it, *Millionaire Teacher* shot to #1 on Amazon for its genre. For a very brief time, it chased *Fifty Shades of Grey*!

As a super-fit runner, you were first over the line at the 2009 JP Morgan Corporate Challenge before falling gravely ill. What happened, and how long did it take you to recover?

I didn't know it at the time, but I had cancer when I won that race. I didn't have any symptoms, but a routine check, a few months later, found that I had bone cancer. I had chunks of three ribs removed, some of my spinal process taken, and some of my lung lining sliced. The surgery was in November, just six months after I'd won that race.

Two years after winning the race, I came back to finish third in the 2011 edition of the race. It was a great confirmation – and a genuine thrill because I was 41 years old. That's pretty long in the tooth to be finishing top three!

How did you go about writing *The Global Expatriate's Guide to Investing*? Who can benefit from reading it, and why?

As American expats, most of us won't receive full Social Security benefits. Non-Americans are in the same boat; they may not receive full benefits from their home country's social programmes if they spend a lot of time not paying into those programmes.

Because of this, expatriate investments really need to hum. They need to be efficient. We can't afford to make silly mistakes. *The Global Expatriate's Guide To Investing* shows everyone (regardless of nationality) how and where to invest. It has specific chapters for almost every nationality. It also shows the (rare) types of advisors that we can actually trust: those who invest based on evidence-based, peer-reviewed studies; those who don't earn commissions; those who invest with index funds or ETFs, instead of their far less efficient cousin – the actively managed mutual fund.

If there's one message you'd like to share with our readers, what is it?

The less money that we spend on expensive, materialistic things, the more money we can invest. By investing, we can end up buying the most important thing of all: time with the people we love – if we can reduce the amount of time that we actually spend working. Nothing else compares to that.

What are you looking forward to right now?

We'll be heading to Portugal in February. Then, in late March, my wife Pele and I plan to ride our tandem bicycle across Europe. We're looking forward to that! 🚲



Above: Two of Andrew's titles.

SCENE AROUND TOWN

Recent events, openings & parties



Posh Picnic

In November, 1,500 guests gathered for the fourth Singaporean edition of Le Dîner en Blanc, this time at the Old Kallang Airport. Dressed all in white, guests were given the secret location at the very last minute (the annual event's trademark), before convening for a chic picnic with special themed menus and a performance by Singaporean multicultural act, Flame of the Forest. The event commenced with a moment of silence to honour the lives lost during the recent tragedy in Paris.



Fascinators and Fundraising

This year's Tiffany's Melbourne Cup was a huge success, raising over \$30,000 for Hagar, a charity that helps victims of human trafficking and other human rights abuses. Hosted by Tiffany Maughan of fashion boutique Shopping at Tiffany's, the luncheon, which took place at the InterContinental Singapore, included a live telecast of the races, an auction, a fashion competition and, of course, plenty of bubbles.





City Series

Award-winning American photographer Peter Steinhauer opened his solo exhibition, *Structure*, at REDSEA Gallery in November, showcasing his urban Hong Kong architecture series, *Cocoons*, as well as *Number Blocks*, which captures the brightly coloured numbered HDB blocks found in Singapore.



An Evening of Film and Food

The Man Who Knew Infinity actor Dev Patel and film director Matthew Brown hit the red carpet at Marina Bay Sands following a screening of the movie, which was shown as part of the 26th Singapore International Film Festival. The two also attended the VIP reception at Marina Bay Sands' newly opened Spago by Wolfgang Puck, where guests were served a special whisky-based "Infinity Cocktail" that was specially invented for the occasion.

A Paws-atively Good Time

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) capped off the year with a "Brazilian Extravaganza"-themed gala dinner at the Shangri-La Hotel, with a silent auction, samba dancers and a live band, plus inline skating stunts. The Ambassador of Brazil, His Excellency Luis Fernando de Andrade Serra, was there to lend his support.





Panto Party

The Emperor's New Clothes, Wild Rice's annual holiday pantomime and the finale to the theatre company's 15th anniversary imagiNATION season, opened with a bang at its gala premiere. Directed by Pam Oei, the production showcased the talents of both theatre veterans and fresh faces, from Lim Kay Siu, Siti Khalijah, Benjamin Kheng and Sezairi to the precocious First Stage Kids.



The Year Ahead

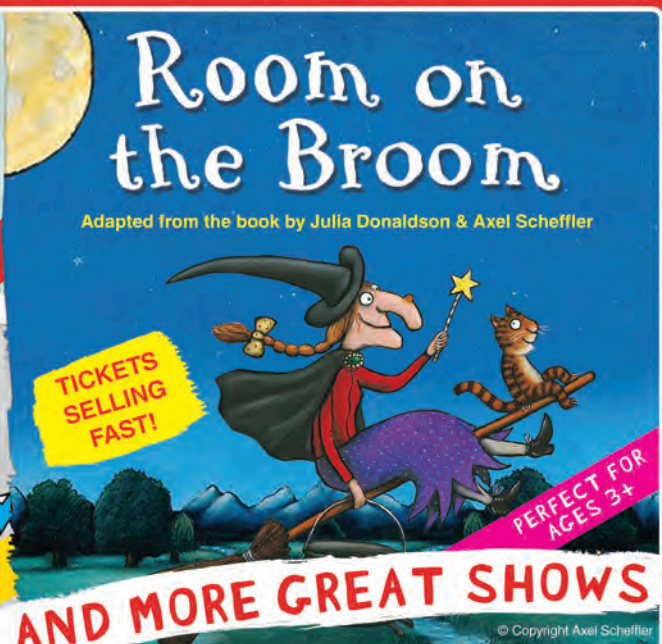
The book launch for *Your Fortune in 2016* was held at the Singapore Recreation Club, with international feng shui master Clarice Georgia Victoria Chan giving guests a sneak peek at what's in store for the Year of the Monkey.



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CÉCILE SPIRIT

Cécile Spirit is a French-Vietnamese contemporary artist. She now lives in Singapore where she is building her reputation as well as her repertoire of art. Cécile primarily uses drawing, painting and mixed media as medium, ranging from glue paint, wire, to stickers and many more.

Her work is characterized by vibrant colors, contrasting shapes and bold compositions.



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Wine & Dine

WHAT'S NEW

The latest trends in food and wine

KIWI SNACK ATTACK

If you're a fan of New Zealand treats like Choc Thins, Hokey Pokey Squiggles and Chit Chats, you're in luck – these products and more from Kiwi snack-food brand **Griffin's Foods** have made their way to Singapore. You can now pick up Huntley and Palmers crackers, Nice and Natural muesli bars, as well as Chocolate Fingers, Krispies, Cookie Bear Hundreds and Thousands and other sweet snacks at supermarkets such as Cold Storage, FairPrice Finest, FairPrice, Giant and Sheng Siong. griffins.co.nz ▼



Back-alley BARBECUE

Hidden in the corridor behind Boomarang in Robertson Quay is newly opened, no-frills **Decker Barbecue**, serving up a small menu of Texas-style smokehouse specialties and beers – a collaboration between restaurateur Min Chan (Club Street Social) and American expat Elliott Decker, who owns Smokehouse BBQ Restaurant in Bali. Tuck into meat dishes like pulled pork (\$9 per 100 grams) and beef brisket (\$16 per 100 grams), and classic American sides such as mac and cheese (\$9), kale salad (\$9) and brisket beans (\$9); picnic tables and fairy lights give it a casual-cool backyard picnic vibe. 60 Robertson Quay, #01-17 The Quayside. facebook.com/deckerbarbecue ▲

GLUTEN-FREE GOODIES

Husband and wife team Wendy and Sebastian Chia have opened up **Ryan's Grocery** in Bukit Timah, with over 1,000 products, 99 percent of which are gluten-free. Spurred by their young son Ryan being intolerant to gluten, dairy, nuts and many other food ingredients, they offer a huge selection of gluten-free products as well as a full-service butchery with a wide variety of organic and free-range meat. Exclusive products available include a range of truffle oils, butters, salsas and delicious truffle mustard from Great Southern Truffles. The store is spread across 1,500 square feet and offers free delivery for orders over \$100 (which can also be made online). 29 Binjai Park. ryansgrocery.com





NEW BITES

- **Vatos Urban Tacos** has opened its first outlet outside of Seoul, at 36 Beach Road. Expect “Ko-Mex” favourites like Kimchi Carnitas Fries (\$16) and Korean Pork Belly Tacos (two for \$10; three for \$14), plus eight other types of tacos (spicy chicken, carne asada and baja fish, to name a few), burrito bowls (\$17-23) and burritos (\$12-14), and fun sides like Bacon and Blue Cheese Guacamole (\$15).
- Beloved Indonesian restaurant chain **Bebek Tepi Sawah** has opened at Chijmes, serving Balinese favourites including its signature deep-fried crispy duck, alongside seafood and chicken dishes. 30 Victoria Street, #02-01 B/C Chijmes. *Look for our review in the next issue of EL.*
- Located in a heritage shophouse at 53 Craig Road is new eatery **Kite**, serving up small plates of “modern comfort food with Asian flavours” – including wagyu beef cheek (\$18), sweet Japanese shrimp (\$10), sweetbreads with curry sauce (\$12) and sweets like s’mores (\$12) and panna cotta with pink peppercorn, strawberries, coriander and coconut (\$10); they’ve also got fun cocktails like the Suspicious Slinger (\$25) – a new take on the Singapore Sling – among others.
- Perched on the 40th-floor rooftop of the CapitaGreen building in the CBD is recently opened restaurant **Artemis Grill**, which offers sustainable Mediterranean fare and breath-taking city views. 138 Market Street. *Look for our review in the next issue of EL.*

TUESDAY TIPPLES

If you’re looking for a new happy hour hotspot, head over to Marina Bay Sands for **Social Hour** every Tuesday from 6pm to 9pm to enjoy 50 percent off selected signature cocktails at celebrity chef restaurants and bars – including Mozza, Bread Street Kitchen and Spago, among others. Then, from 9pm until closing, get 25 percent off bottles at the newest MBS rooftop bar, Flight Bar and Lounge, plus 50 percent off the signature French 57 cocktail. All you need to do is pick up your Bar Hop card at any celebrity chef bar to get a stamp with each purchase of a signature cocktail; collect any five stamps and redeem a free drink – and stand a chance to win a VIP rooftop party at Flight. For more details, visit marinabaysands.com/nightlife.



French 57

STAR STATUS

This year, the **Michelin Guide** – regarded as the international benchmark for fine dining, with famously coveted Michelin stars given as ratings – will finally hit our island, sealing Singapore’s status as a true culinary destination; in fact, it will be the first edition of the guide to be launched in Southeast Asia. Restaurant selections are made by Michelin’s anonymous inspectors who grade each restaurant on five criteria: product quality, preparation and flavours, the chef’s personality revealed through his or her cuisine, value for money and consistency over time across the menu (ambience and service aren’t factored into the ratings). Inspectors are taste-testing around town as you’re reading this, so look out for the guide’s launch later this year.

A WORLD OF WINE, AT YOUR DOORSTEP

If you enjoy trying wines from all over the world, you'll definitely want to check out **Through the Grapevine**, a handy online shop boasting a selection of wines from both well-known and lesser-known regions of New Zealand, Australia, Spain, Portugal, Italy, France and South Africa. And, with bottles from \$29, it's easy to explore all kinds of wines from different territories. Orders placed by 2pm are delivered island-wide the following day, or, for an additional \$25, can be delivered within three hours of ordering – chilled and ready to serve in a reusable ice box with ice! Enter the code "TTGWELC" for 10 percent off your first order. ttgwines.com ►



Attention Please

A seven-metre-high video screen projects colourful, psychedelic patterns at the entrance to new hotel The South Beach, the first of many surprises in the Philippe Starke-designed interior. Past reception and down the stairs to the hotel's **All Day Hotel Dining (ADHD)** restaurant, the clashing contrast in textures, furniture styles and mismatched chandeliers continues, but somehow, it all works. Here, Executive Chef Martin Bräcker has created the ultimate hotel restaurant menu featuring local delights, global favourites to please all, and some special highlights that demonstrate his culinary skill and personality. For starters, **salmon three ways** (\$32) is exactly as the name describes, the highlight being the rarely served *balik* cut. From the sharing menu is the outstanding **truffled oxtail** (\$16), crunchy breaded boneless oxtail served with a jus and wasabi sauce. Veal isn't common on menus in Singapore, so save up for the **herb-coated tenderloin** (\$42), cooked to tender perfection and served with a yummy Camembert and potato gratin on the side. For dessert, the artistic **Berry Fields** (\$18) is a rich combination of dome-shaped red berry and cherry marscapone, a yoghurt mousse and other surprises in a gorgeous arrangement. This is an experience to savour – and keep an eye out for Audrey Hepburn while you're there. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. 30 Beach Road. thesouthbeach.com ▲

FLAVOURFUL FUSION

Quirky **Fu Lin Bar and Kitchen** on hip Telok Ayer Street has undergone a revamp, still serving its famous *yong tau foo* by day, but now offering Asian-Spanish tapas by night. Created by Chef Warren Poh of Catalunya fame, the new menu features flavourful food in generous portions, such as **grain-fed US beef** (\$21) served with alfalfa sprouts, onion jam and a red wine *jus* (\$21), and **Ibérico steak** (\$23) with cucumber salad, toasted sesame and fleur de sel. Try the **Asian-infused crab risotto** (\$21) containing spanner crab, salted egg cream, tobiko and leek, and be sure to brave the **Dali's pork feet** (\$12) – slow-cooked then fried, and served with a teriyaki glaze. They also have a selection of specialty sakes and fun cocktails like the \$18 **Young Tau Foo** (yes, a drink version!) made with pressed bean-curd and Snow Leopard vodka. 127 Telok Ayer Street. facebook.com/fulinbarandkitchen



AT THE BAR

We scour the bar scene to bring you the new and noteworthy. It's a tough job, but somebody's got to do it!

The Bucket List

83 Club Street
6690 7563 | thebucketlistbar.sg

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: A typical sports bar set-up with the feel of a pub; high tables and chairs on the verandah – nothing pretentious here! Inside, there's a long bar with a few TV screens, a football table to keep you entertained at half-time and plenty of space for match-watching. We just wish there were TV screens outside so bar-goers could watch sports from all areas.

THE CHOSEN ONE: **San Miguel Beer Tower** (\$55) – a three-litre centrepiece for your table. This makes for a sociable drinking experience and goes well with an evening's sport.

THE CHEAPSKATE: A bucket of five Tiger beers for \$40, or choose from the extensive menu of other lagers to go into your bucket – from Australia's Little Creatures Pale Ale to Brewdog Punk IPA from the UK.

BITE ON THIS: The **Combo Set** (\$26) features chicken pops, fries, onion rings and cheddar cheese and chicken wings, and makes for a substantial snack when those beer munchies start to kick in. Each table has its own quirky little order form for your food; just fill it out and give to the bar staff – pretty stress-free!



LAST BUT NOT LEAST: Fear not, it's not all beer here: there's a decent range of wines and spirits too, and an array of fun and cheap shots starting from \$6.

Emily Finch

Smoke and Mirrors

1 St Andrew's Road,
#06-01 National Gallery Singapore
6384 5595 | smokeandmirrors.com.sg

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: Simply stunning! Making your way to the highest point of this newly transformed, grand colonial architectural treasure is a thrill in itself. With both air-conditioned indoor and alfresco terrace seating looking across the Padang to the Theatres on the Bay and beyond, it has a genuine sense of place.

THE CHOSEN ONE: From a very good menu of drinks (not all of which were available on the night, however), the **Tiger Blood Daisy** (\$20) is a best-seller, says bartender Yugnes Susela. The cocktails are beautifully presented, but tend not to be strong. **Lotus in a Breeze, 1970** (\$22) is a Pisco sour with a twist, inspired by artist Georgette Chen's eponymous painting in the DBS Gallery downstairs: it magically turns from blue to pink before your eyes, courtesy of a dash of lemon. A nice selection of wines by the glass includes Jurtschitsch Grüner Veltliner (\$17) and Hugel Riesling (\$18).

THE CHEAPSKATE: A bottle of Sol is \$14, but for two dollars more you could get 330ml of our local draught Samui Ale or Bohemian Lager.

BITE ON THIS: From the kitchen of Yan, the high-end Chinese restaurant one floor down, come a selection of Bites and Mains. Try light-as-air **crispy silver fish** (\$8), truffle fries with dips (\$12), the heartier signature **chicken wings** (\$14), or **crab claws with chilli dip** (\$18), the dip reminiscent of our iconic Singaporean chilli crab. (They'd run out of the crispy pork belly and several other items.)

LAST BUT NOT LEAST: The term "destination bar" is much bandied about, but here it's well deserved.

Verne Maree





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DESTINATION: DUXTON

From authentic Italian, French fusion and upscale Russian to scrumptious seafood and trendy tapas, the Duxton dining scene is anything but bland. With such an eclectic mix of cuisines, combined with charming shophouse flair, it's no wonder the area is one of the most appealing foodie destinations on the island. Here, we check out some of the neighbourhood's hotspots.

Etna

49/50 Duxton Road
6220 5513 | etnaitalianrestaurant.com.sg

Though Etna's been around since 2006, it's anything but passé. In fact, it was packed on the Saturday night we visited; the lively, bustling dining room is decorated with Italian artefacts, giving it a cosy, upscale trattoria vibe. It's unpretentious, each table receiving personalised attention – something truly refreshing to see here in Singapore; a warm welcome by owner Gianluca Impemba and a staff of knowledgeable waiters who happily provide recommendations made the experience that much better.

First up was a baseball-sized portion of creamy **fresh burrata with Parma ham, rocket salad and a vine of juicy tomatoes** (\$42) – melt-in-your-mouth delectable, and enough to feed four. (Of course, the two of us had no trouble polishing it off.) We followed with a weekly blackboard special: **homemade green linguine with mixed Mediterranean fish ragout** (\$39) in saffron and cherry tomato sauce – not overly fishy and with just

the right amount of creaminess, this flavourful pasta dish should be on the menu permanently. But, if you come on a night when it's not available, there's the always-popular *linguine al granchio* (**linguine with crabmeat and soft-shell crab in lobster bisque**; \$27) that we hear is just as tasty. Etna also serves over a dozen wood-fired pizzas – the **Etna Pizza** (\$26), made with mozzarella, porcini mushrooms, Parma ham, cream cheese and pistachio, is a fan favourite; other popular dishes include **grilled**

pork cheek (\$34) and **seabass** (\$68) flown in fresh from Italy each week.

Must-try: Any linguine they've got – whether it be a daily special or the signature *linguine al granchio*.

Tip: End your meal with a traditional **cannoli** (\$12) filled with ricotta cheese and chocolate chips, topped with powdered sugar – yum!

Amy Greenburg



STRAIGHT
OUT-OF-
SICILY
ITALIAN

Rhubarb

3 Duxton Hill
8127 5001 | rhubarb.sg

Cosy, intimate, and bedecked with starched white tablecloths, this little restaurant could be the place for a romantic dinner, a birthday or a business lunch to celebrate a deal. Opened over a year ago by the team from Dempsey stalwart Au Petit Salut, Rhubarb serves up exceptional value-for-money French food with an inimitable, international twist. The **hamachi** (\$26) entrée is an example: the Japanese fish is vanilla-cured and served raw with cubes of sweet vanilla jelly, burnt pomelo and *shiso*, a fragrant herb. Rhubarb's signature dish (top marks for the warm plates) is **pigeon** (\$64) sourced from the Loire Valley; the tender breast is served with a *confit* leg, rhubarb and rose puree, and special sugared grapes. The flavours are outstanding, and the dish is well complemented with a glass of Rhone Valley syrah. Dessert offers



more surprises, this time trifle (from the set dinner menu), a combination of fresh raspberries, delightful bergamot (an Italian citrus fruit), mousse and granita. Add this restaurant to your must-visit list.

Must-try: Emulsion of Jerusalem artichoke and black truffle (\$26), a foamy soup of to-die-for flavours; try it

regardless of whether or not you know what a Jerusalem artichoke actually looks like!

Tip: Lunch is good value at \$42 for three courses, or upgrade to the chef's menu for \$68 – Chef Paul won't disappoint.

Katie Roberts

Latteria

40 Duxton Hill
6866 1988 | latteriamb.com

On the weekday evening we stepped into Latteria, around 6pm, the vibe was warm and casual, with just a few diners dotted around – the perfect locale for a good catch-up. We had the option to sit

indoors or outdoors on the beautiful, large terrace (a cute setting for date night), but we sat inside to shelter from one of Singapore's typically random downpours.

I feel you can't leave an Italian joint without sampling the cheeses. That's why for starters we tried both the

burratina with roast pumpkin and truffle (\$23) and the **stracciatella with eggplant caponata and pine nuts** (\$23) – and no, I'm not talking about the ice cream here. In this case, *stracciatella* is actually the very creamy, very delicious, savoury stuffing inside burrata cheese, which is traditionally made with mozzarella and cream. Both got a big thumbs-up.

For mains, we had two of Latteria's house specialties: the tender **slow-roasted lamb shanks with chickpeas and red wine casserole** (\$35), which just fell off the bone (I'm told by restaurant manager Daniele that it's gently braised for at least nine hours), and the **porcini and burrata pasta bake** (\$28), which was cooked al dente and had a rich, earthy flavour from the mushrooms. To end, the **raspberry and pistachio meringue cake** (\$16) was light, tangy and refreshing to the palate.

Must-try: Any of the delectable cheeses.

Susannah Jaffer



BUYAN Russian Restaurant and Caviar Bar
9 Duxton Hill | 6223 7008 | buyan.sg

We've not had much experience with Russian restaurants before tonight – barring the little blinis my mother used to make and serve with black lumpfish roe, sour cream, chopped egg-yolk, diced onion and chives. From the BUYAN presentation, I see she got it exactly right; only here it's proper caviar, starting at \$5 per gram (minimum order 10g) and going up to a heady \$25 per gram for Iranian Beluga.

Speaking of heady, this is a place for serious imbibers. (Three men at a nearby table see off one bottle of high-end vodka and call for another; mind you, one of them disappears quite soon after that and is substituted by another who's far less red of face.) Don't miss the traditional **infused vodkas** (\$13 per shot, \$60 for a flight of 6) – we love the horseradish (wasabi) one, and they're all prepared on the premises in accordance with recipes from an 18th-century cookbook. (Cookbook? Yes, we're wondering about that too.)

Other drinks from a vast and impressive list include killer concoctions like the yummy **Spetsnaz cocktail** (\$20; *pictured here*) – vodka and pickle juice, served with pickles on the side and topped with a fiery little chilli. Its name is Russian for “special military force” – you've been warned. Though Russian wines tend to sweetness, not so the beautifully brut **Abrau-Durso sparkling** (\$14 per glass, \$65 bottle), which has been produced in Russia since 1871 and compared

to some of the finer French champagnes; BUYAN is the only restaurant outside Russia to serve it. (There may well be more drinks sampled, but from this point it all becomes understandably hazy.)

The jovial vibe is partly due to the well-informed and exceptionally friendly Katia Gabalova at front of house, who entertainingly introduces us to dishes from Russia and countries of the former Soviet Union, including Ukraine, Georgia and Uzbekistan.

As these cuisines famously feature hearty soups and stews, we try both the **borscht** – beetroot and cabbage soup with beef, and the **solyanka** mixed meat soup – thick, slightly sour and spicy (\$14 each). They conjure the coldest scenes from *Dr Zhivago* and are much improved by being slurped together with swigs of the horseradish vodka. The **shashlyk** (\$40) is a platter of tasty charcoal-grilled chicken, lamb and salmon, and what's not to like about that? Pity the **salted herring under a fur coat** (\$18) isn't available; we'll have to return one day soon for that. Highly recommended for a fun night out!

Must-try: Horseradish-infused vodka.

Tip: Preferably choose a weekend night, when you can sleep in a bit the next day.

Verne Maree



Alba 1836 Wine Bar and Restaurant
28 Duxton Hill | 6222 2048 | alba1836.com

Located at the top end of Duxton Hill, Alba 1836 is a chic Italian restaurant and wine bar with indoor and outdoor seating, modern décor and a stylish bar; we love the copper-coloured lamp shades, which give it that “cool kid” vibe.

Head Chef Luca Piras has definitely mastered the art of presentation, with each dish having a wow factor: the **tuna carpaccio with smoked caviar** (\$22) was almost too delightful to tuck into; I could have admired it all night long. The **raw red Sicilian prawns marinated in olive oil and lemon burrata cheesecake** (\$30) were truly delectable – the burrata and prawns went down especially nicely with a glass of the light and fruity Pala Stellato Vermentino 2011 (\$10). In fact, they offer more than 40 Italian wines, starting from \$40 a bottle.

Must-try: Dark chocolate millefeuille (\$16) with mascarpone cream and raspberries – the highlight of the night for me, thanks both to its delicate presentation and its taste. The millefeuille has the texture of a typical brandy snap, but the taste of caramelised chocolate.

Tip: If you're looking for a reasonably priced lunch, try Alba's set lunch menu, which includes a starter, main course and dessert for \$28; \$55 with wine pairing.

Valmai Dhir



DID YOU KNOW?

Despite its charming cobblestones and heritage shophouses, Duxton Hill was, until fairly recently, considered a sleazy, rowdy red-light district known for its seedy karaoke lounges. Sure, you'll still find some of those around, but the neighbourhood, located within the vicinity of Tanjong Pagar Conservation Area, has shed its shady image and become one of the trendiest dining destinations in town – thanks to a revitalisation that happened around 2011, when restaurateurs recognised the area's potential and began opening hip watering holes, eateries and coffee shops.



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CONTEMPORARY
TAPAS**Sabio**

5 Duxton Hill
6690 7562 | sabio.sg

This casual Spanish tapas bar is a great place to unwind with friends after work. The cosy space is an inviting mix of contemporary elements like neo-industrial chairs, graphic mirrors and traditional Spanish design featuring painted Catalan tiles – perfect to relax in while you eat your way through an extensive tapas menu, which features a variety of hot and cold tapas, from chorizo and *jamon* to the traditional favourite, *paella*; also on the menu are select dishes by culinary host and TV personality, Angela May.

We started the evening with the simple but delicious **pan con tomate** (fresh tomato bread, \$7) and **croquetas de jamon** (ham *croquetas*, \$14); the latter were equal parts creamy and crispy, and went down easily. We also tried the **pulpo con sofrito** (\$15), a delicious dish of baby octopus, sunny-side-up egg and *sofrito* mushroom pickle from Chef May's menu. The highlight, however, was the **beef meatballs in spicy tomato sauce** (\$13); each succulent meatball coated in tomato sauce was an explosion of flavour in the mouth.



We washed it all down with a couple of glasses of **sangria** (\$12 per glass; \$49 for a jug). If, however, you prefer beer, wine or cocktails, they have those too.

Must-try: Beef meatballs in spicy tomato sauce.

Tip: They don't take reservations, so go early and preferably in a group to avoid being seated on the uncomfortable bar stools.

Smita DeSouza

Pince and Pints

32-33 Duxton Road
6225 7558 | pinceandpints.com

If it's luscious lobster you're after, you must try this place. Its simple menu of three choices means you won't spend ages deliberating over what to have: it's all fresh, and it's all good. Your lobster is served in one of three ways: either as a

classic lobster roll with garlic aioli, as a whole lobster grilled or steamed with an addictive herbed butter sauce, or as a **chilli lobster** – each paired with a classic side salad and **hand-cut fries** for \$58.

Must-try: The **truffle lobster roll** (\$58). Truffles are now in season, so try this dish before it leaves the menu at the end of January. Succulent, meaty bites

of lobster in a classic soft sub, with a generous dollop of truffle mayo, laced with truffle shavings. A special mention goes to the **truffle butter**, which made a beautiful accompaniment to the leftover fries; we had to ask for another jug-full – it was that moreish!

Tip: If ordering the rosé wine, opt for a magnum (\$156), extravagant as it may sound, as the wine carafes (\$59) soon add up, and the magnum may prove more cost-effective, especially for a group. They mix a mean cocktail here too, and the bar staff are on hand to guide you with your choice; they're one friendly and helpful bunch. *Pssst...* they don't serve starters or puddings here (please, can we see these added to the menu, Pince and Pints?), so go easy on those cocktails!

Emily Finch

NO-FUSS
LOBSTER

Pince and Pints now accepts reservations, thanks to the recent opening of a second level – so you should be able to snare a table without trouble.

Merchants Wine Cellar

52-53 Duxton Road
6222 1162 | merchantsofsingapore.com.sg

Situated across two beautiful shophouses, Merchants is a wine bar, cellar, café and restaurant all under one roof. As we enjoyed the relaxed, casual atmosphere, owners Ainslie and David told us about the 45 independent winemakers that are represented here, spanning 26 regions of Australia and New Zealand. (Merchants actually has the largest collection of boutique Australian and New Zealand wine in Singapore.)

While the main business here is wine, this cosy establishment also hosts regular tastings from interesting small vineyards. (Look out, too, for regular visiting winemaker dinners that are announced on the Merchants Facebook page). The wines are personally chosen, and there are some amazing blends to taste, even by the glass; opened bottles are kept in a state-of-the-art machine.

A comprehensive menu (complete with suggested wine pairings) keeps those who choose to nibble very busy,

with a wide range of salads, meats, cheeses, mains and desserts. To start, we opted for the outstanding house-made **brandy chicken paté and toast** (\$14) – David's grandmother's recipe – and the **meatballs** (\$18). For mains, we were tempted by the superb **half-rack of lamb** (\$32), served with couscous, tzatziki and lemon wedges, and the **Australian grass-fed grilled rib-eye steak** and fries (\$29), which was cooked to perfection. We didn't have much room for dessert, but couldn't resist the **tiramisu** (\$8) – the perfect end to an enjoyable evening.

Merchants is open seven days a week, and serves brunch and lunch as well; in fact, it opens at 8am daily and even has its own locally roasted coffee blend.

Must-try: Half-rack of lamb.

Tip: Arrive thirsty and hungry – there's a lot to try. Also, check out Merchants' online wine shop, which has some great discounts with the purchase of multiple bottles.

Jacqui Young



ALSO TRY

For tequila and tacos
Lucha Loco
15 Duxton Hill
luchaloco.com

For wine-sipping and French-Asian bites
Praelum
4 Duxton Hill
praelum.wix.com/praelum

For steak frites and escargots
L'Entrecôte
36 Duxton Hill
lentrete.sg

For a relaxed reading spot and all-day breakfast
Group Therapy Coffee
49 Duxton Road, #02-01
gtcoffee.com

For trendy burgers, deep-fried fare and cocktails
Meat Liquor
99 Duxton Road
meatliquor.com

For a java jolt
Department of Caffeine
15 Duxton Road
deptofcaffeine.com

For post-dinner cocktails and craft beers (or drinks on the go!)
Kiosk
40 Duxton Hill
kiosk-singapore.com

Piece of Cake

Let's face it: not all of us are cut out to be cake bosses. We might be able to throw together a straight-from-the-box recipe, but a beautiful confection suitable for more than just your spouse to see? Forget it. When the occasion arises, we'd rather avoid hours of sweating it out in the kitchen and call in the experts. Here, then, is our guide to buying birthday cakes for every budget.

By Amy Greenburg

Made-to-order masterpieces

Sally T Cakes

When it comes to cake personalisation, Sally Turnbull from Sally T Cakes can pretty much work with whatever creative ideas you have in mind – from your loved one's favourite movie character and beyond. Tasty, homemade and delicious, each cake is made to order, with prices starting at \$120 (depending on size and design). **9859 4769** | facebook.com/sallytcakes

Fresh Bakes

These guys have been creating customised cakes (starting from \$90), as well as cupcakes, cake pops and tea pastries, since 2010; they hand-make their confections with less sugar and no added preservatives, while still keeping things tasty. 520 East Coast Road, #01-01 Ocean Park Oranda. **9154 1812** | freshbakes.com.sg



Jumi Cakes

These beautiful and creative cakes are handmade by owner Misato with a lot of love and care. Seven-inch round cakes start at \$200 and go up from there, depending on design and size. Her 3D cakes are works of art in themselves – so pretty, we almost don't want to cut them. (Almost.) She also offers cupcakes and dessert tables. [facebook.com/jumicakes1](https://www.facebook.com/jumicakes1)

Emicakes

This cake shop has tons of options to choose from, either in-store or online (pre-order, and pick up or get your cake delivered). Select from over ten signature styles – their bestseller, Choco Truffle, is to die for – or you can order a custom design to suit your occasion. Fifteen-centimetre cakes (serving five to eight) start from around \$33; 40-centimetre cakes (serving up to 60) are around the \$230 mark. Emicakes also recently introduced a \$29 “naked cake” range (with unfrosted sides) in four flavours including red velvet and carrot. Various locations. emicakes.com.sg

The Pantry

The Pantry at Loewen Gardens is always there to meet your customised birthday cake requirements. Standard buttercream birthday cakes (Victoria sponge and rainbow are the most popular) start at \$60, while custom fondant styles start at \$110; they can even create carrot and banana birthday cakes – you name it, they'll make it! These guys also have a cute little café, so you can enjoy a coffee while you mull over the sugary options. 75 Loewen Road. **6474 0441** | thepantrycookeryschool.com

Flor Patisserie

Whether you're after alphabet letters, hearts or figurines, this patisserie can create some pretty special and detailed cake designs including layered and posh-looking tiered cakes; their Berry Berries (strawberry shortcake) and Cacao Royal are bestsellers. Cakes range from around \$31 to \$318 depending on size. 2 Duxton Hill #01-01. **6223 8628** | cakeflor.com.sg



Temptations

This bakeshop has a loyal following thanks to the impressive novelty cakes it churns out for customers seeking specialty designs – from animal- and princess-themed styles to 3D soccer balls, nautical and floral designs. Cream-covered confections with edible prints begin at \$60, while fondant-covered creations – red velvet, vanilla velvet, carrot walnut and rich chocolate with ganache filling are popular favourites – start at \$100 (per 1kg) and go up from there, depending on size and design. 42 Joo Chiat Place. **6440 9200** | temptationscakes.com.sg



Wallet-friendly finds

Awfully Chocolate

Chocolate lovers will always appreciate a cake from these guys, known for their delicious choccie recipes. Choose from their original chocolate cake with dark chocolate fudge, chocolate banana or chocolate rum and cherry; it's \$34 to \$38 for a 15-centimetre cake and \$68 to \$76 for a 20-centimetre cake. Order in person or online, with options for pickup or delivery; and, if you need any wording customisation, they can do it on the spot in-store. Various locations. awfullychocolate.com

Cat and the Fiddle

It's all about cheesecake here, with over a dozen different cheesecake confections to choose from – blueberry, mango, caramel, coconut, Oreo, classic and so on. Prices range from around \$20 to \$39 (cakes are approximately 18 centimetres); both pickup and delivery options are available. catandthefiddle.com

Island Creamery Ice Cream Cakes

Combining ice cream and cake is oh-so-right! Cue ice cream cakes from Island Creamery. Choose from the shop's signature flavour combinations or customise your own. The Baked Alaska (\$35; serves six) – berry ice cream on a layer of sponge cake covered in meringue – is always a popular choice, as is the Mud Pie (\$45; serves 16) – layers of chocolate, cookies and cream, plus burnt caramel ice cream topped with Oreo cookie crumbs. Various locations. islandcreamery.com

Bakerzin

Strawberry shortcake, mango mousse, rainbow cake or tiramisu – this shop has plenty of delicious and affordable options to pick up at a moment's notice. Prices start from around \$35 for a cake that feeds four to six and go up to around \$260 for a cake that serves 55. A popular choice is the Foret Noir cake, going at a pocket-friendly \$68 (serves 10 to 12). Various locations. bakerzin.com

Cedele

If you're looking for a quick birthday cake on-the-go, Cedele's gourmet cakes – made with organic, unrefined sugar and grapeseed oil – are an absolute fail-safe. Our fave flavours here include dark chocolate fudge and carrot walnut, from over a dozen options. Prices start at \$48 for whole 20-centimetre cakes, and go up to \$213 for 35.5-centimetre cakes. Various locations. cedelegroup.com/bakery

Antoinette

Antoinette's cakes are pretty reasonably priced; all full-size, 20-centimetre cakes come in at under \$100. Choose from strawberry shortcake, dark chocolate mousse with hazelnut, pistachio sponge with raspberry mousse, and the "Antoinette" – milk-chocolate mousse infused with Earl Grey tea, chocolate biscuit, dark chocolate Earl Grey *cremeux*, raspberry coulis, Earl Grey tea crumble – among other interesting flavours. Multiple locations. antoinette.com.sg

B-I-Y Cakes

Keen on trying to whip up the cake yourself? This one-stop cake decoration shop stocks everything you could possibly need for fashioning your edible masterpiece – from animal-shaped cake pans, baking trays and decorations to icing, sprinkles and novelty candles. But if you get there and it's all a bit much, B-I-Y also has a bakery to make whatever you'd like with three days' notice. 9 Circular Road. 6100 2253 | b-i-y.com

Do it yourself



DIY Chocolately Goodness



If you've opted to bake your own birthday cake, you definitely can't go wrong with chocolate – and we've got just the recipe for you. Whether you dress it up or keep it plain, this chocolate layer cake is bound to be a hit with everyone at your party.

Ingredients

For cake:

- 100g cocoa powder
- 375ml boiling water
- 190g butter, softened to room temperature
- 410g caster sugar
- 300g plain or all-purpose flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder
- 4 eggs

For chocolate buttercream frosting:

- 175g dark chocolate, minimum 70 percent cocoa solids
- 250g unsalted butter, softened
- 275g icing sugar, sifted
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Mix the cocoa powder with the boiling water and allow to cool; set aside.
3. Butter and line two 20cm (8-inch) sandwich tins with baking parchment.
4. In a large bowl, sift flour, baking soda and baking powder.
5. In a separate bowl, using an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, with a tablespoon (15ml) of the flour to avoid curdling. Mix until ingredients are well combined.
6. Fold in remaining flour, alternating with the cocoa mixture until combined. Divide between the two pans and bake for one hour or until a skewer inserted into the middle of the cake comes out clean.
7. Leave to stand for 10 minutes; then put on to wire rack to cool.
8. To make the frosting, melt chocolate in the microwave for two to three minutes on medium and let cool slightly.
9. In another bowl, beat the butter with an electric mixer until soft and creamy; then add the sifted icing sugar and beat again until light and fluffy.
10. Gently add the vanilla extract and chocolate, and mix together until everything is glossy and smooth.
11. Cut cakes horizontally and sandwich the middle of each cake with about a quarter of the icing; then ice the top and sides, spreading and smoothing with a rubber spatula.
12. Serve as is or impress by decorating with Kit Kat bars or finger cookies and M&Ms; these should easily stick to the frosting. Happy Birthday!

This recipe is courtesy Expat Kitchen.

For more details, visit expat-kitchen.com.



THE GREAT RECIPE SWAP

Most of us have our go-to recipes, be it for a mid-week lunch, a dinner party pleaser or a sumptuous cake that Nigella Lawson would be proud of. In case you're stuck in a food rut, however, here are some of our readers' fail-safe recipes from around the world to add your repertoire. **Bon appétit!**

CHICKEN AND ASPARAGUS LEMON STIR-FRY SERVES 2

DINNER



**JENILEE RAWLINS,
BRITISH**

"This stir-fry is one of my fail-safe recipes. It's a favourite of my partner's and mine – quick and easy, not too many ingredients involved and handy for a mid-week dinner."

INGREDIENTS:

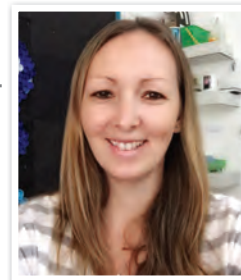
- 2 chicken breasts, cut into one-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons corn starch
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 bunch asparagus, ends trimmed, cut into 5cm pieces
- 2-3 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon ginger, crushed
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Salt and black pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS:

1. Lightly season chicken with salt and pepper and place in a bowl with soy sauce to marinate for 15 minutes.
2. In a second bowl, combine corn starch, lemon juice and water.
3. Heat wok to medium-high. Add half the sesame oil, then the asparagus, and stir-fry for three to four minutes until just tender.
4. Add garlic and ginger and cook for one minute until golden. Set aside.
5. Increase heat to high and add the rest of the sesame oil. Stir-fry chicken until browned and cooked through.
6. Add lemon juice and corn starch mixture, stir well. Add asparagus, garlic and ginger and mix well.
7. Serve immediately with healthy brown rice.

KNÄCKEBRÖT (SWEDISH CRACKERS)

HEALTHY
SNACK



GAIL ZOBRIST, BRITISH

"This recipe is from a friend from Copenhagen. The crackers are full of healthy ingredients and the children love to help make them; they take them to school a couple of times a week as snacks. I change the dried fruit according to what I have available in the house – I often use figs or cranberries, but you can use raisins, dates, dried cherries and so on."

INGREDIENTS:

- 50g oats
- 100g sunflower seeds
- 50g flax seeds
- 50g pumpkin seeds
- 200g plain or wholemeal flour
- 1 teaspoon salt (or less)
- 100ml water
- 50ml vegetable or coconut oil
- Dried fruit, chopped small (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Mix all the dry ingredients together in a bowl, then add the wet ingredients.
2. Stir until it forms a dough ball.
3. Place this ball onto a sheet of baking paper, then place another sheet of baking paper on top and roll out the dough till it's cracker-thin.
4. Take off the top sheet of baking paper and use a knife to cut the dough into small or large squares.
5. Bake in an oven preheated to 180°C for about 25 to 30 minutes or until lightly browned.
6. These keep well in a sealed container for a few days.

PLUS



If we publish your recipe in our magazine, you'll receive a fantastic **Greek Kouzina** hamper of imported Greek goodies like extra virgin cold-pressed olive oil, dried basil, rosemary and oregano, olives, honey and sundried tomatoes. Greek Kouzina is an online shop supplying 100 percent natural Greek olive oil, olives, honey, dried fruit, nuts, spices and herbs brought in directly from the producers in Greece. **greek-kouzina.com**

BE PART OF THE GREAT RECIPE SWAP!

If you have a fail-safe recipe you'd like to submit for our next issue, send an email titled "Great Recipe Swap" to Beate at contribute@expatliving.sg with your recipe, a photo of yourself and a few words about your dish. Thanks, Chef! 

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Dr Ganesh Ramalingam

MBBS(Sing), MMed (Sing),
FRCS (Edinburgh), MRCS (Edinburgh)

Consultant General Surgeon
Gastrointestinal, Bariatric and
Laparoscopic Surgery



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Travel

WHAT'S NEW

Hot destinations & great places to stay



With sandy beaches and swaying palms, Port Dickson – “PD” to locals – is a popular getaway close to Kuala Lumpur (an hour’s drive away) and Singapore (three hours). Located on PD’s Pasir Panjang beach, unique five-star resort **Lexis Hibiscus Port Dickson** has 500-plus seawater villas – some of them almost a kilometre out to sea – with private dip pools and steam rooms. There’s an array of food and beverage outlets (opening soon is a Sky Lounge overlooking the Strait of Malacca), and activities from indoor games to water-skiing, treatments at LexSpa, and plenty for young ones to do at Kids World. Lexis Hibiscus has a helipad for those choosing to arrive in style, and is home to the tallest water fountain in Malaysia (over 120m). lexishibiscuspd.com ▲

CULINARY CRUISE

Join Singapore’s celebrity husband-and-wife cuisine team, Sam and Forest Leong, on a gastronomic adventure on *Mariner of the Seas* from 18 January 2016. You’ll have a chance to taste some of the chefs’ special dishes, which will be specially prepared and served on the gala night of this



four-night cruise to Penang and Langkawi.

You’ll also hear their culinary tips and get to sample delicious, easy-to-make dishes from a cooking demonstration. *Mariner of the Seas* is the largest ship in Southeast Asia and can carry over 3,800 guests; it offers 15 decks of fun activities such as DreamWorks Entertainment, an ice-skating rink, Adventure Ocean activities for kids and teens, and the Royal Promenade, a boulevard of shops and cafés. **6305 0033 | royalcaribbean.com.sg** ▲



NEW AT Telunas

Located just 50km south of Singapore, Telunas Private Island’s new poolside bar and separate kids’ area are now open and in the process of bringing a full staff on board. A family-friendly bar captain from Jakarta has joined the team, along with university graduates who love children and can give parents a break from child-minding; and new Executive Chef Budi joins the Private Island team after working in the Maldives, Dubai and the Banyan Tree on Bintan. The original

Telunas Beach Resort, meanwhile, now has additional complimentary amenities and a wood-burning kiln where guests will love creating their own pottery from indigenous materials. Prices for overwater Sea Villas start from IDR 2,000k (around S\$200), while at the Beach Resort, overwater Deluxe Rooms start from IDR 750k and stand-alone chalets IDR 1,150k (excluding dining, transport, and taxes). **+62 811 771 0951 | telunasresorts.com**



Just 50km South from Singapore
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MYANMAR ONLINE

For those who haven't yet experienced the wonders of Bagan, the delights of Inle Lake or the sights of burgeoning Yangon – or for those who want to return to discover more of them – Myanmar's leading travel online portal, **Flymya**, recently upgraded its website and is now providing tour packages and car rentals online, in addition to domestic flights. The company's goal is to make travelling to Myanmar and within Myanmar as painless as possible, which sounds like great news to us. **flymya.com**

BUNGALOW RETREAT

Just opened in Sri Lanka is **Thotalagala**, the sister property of the renowned Galle Fort Hotel. The niche boutique hotel, located within a collection of estates that produces some of the finest tea in Sri Lanka, was originally a tea planter's bungalow – its estate was founded in 1870. The seven themed suites at Thotalagala are based on personalities such as Sir Thomas Lipton and James Taylor, who shaped the history of Ceylon tea. Guests can walk in the footsteps of Sir Thomas by taking the Lipton's Tea Excursion, which includes a tour of the fields where the famous merchant first grew tea, along with a visit to his bungalow and his first factory. The property is surrounded by 20 acres of lush greenery and sweeping vistas. **thotalagala.com ▶**



ISLAND OASIS

If you haven't made any winter travel plans yet, and you're feeling the need for a spot of tropical luxury, here's some good news: **Salinda Resort Phu Quoc Island** in Vietnam is not only offering discounts of up to 45 percent on stays at the property throughout January and February, but it's also holding special holiday events and spa promotions over the winter season. Salinda, incidentally, has the only spa in Vietnam that is managed by a professional team from Thailand. Room rate starts from US\$171 per room per night. **salindaresort.com ▶**



VIRTUAL TRAVEL

Everyone loves flicking through a travel brochure and dreaming of their next getaway, but **Flight Centre Singapore** has taken this concept and kicked it into overdrive with the launch of its Virtual Reality experience. Visitors to the three Flight Centre stores can don a state-of-the-art headset – worn like a pair of goggles – and go on an immersive, 360-degree video tour of various global destinations. Currently there are three experiences to enjoy: Hoi An in Vietnam, Tokyo in Japan and Cairns in Australia, with more destinations in the pipeline. Flight Centre has collaborated on the project with a Singaporean company, TaKanto Virtual Reality. Find Flight Centre at CityLink Mall, Plaza Singapura and 137 Cecil Street. **6692 9778** | **flightcentre.com.sg ▲**

NEW TO DO IN VIETNAM

The team from **Country Holidays** is always on the lookout for new activities, speaking to people on the ground and even personally visiting the many countries in which they offer itineraries; here are some of their new favourite things to explore in Vietnam.



Halong Bay Seaplane

See Halong Bay an entirely new way by soaring above the limestone peaks on a seaplane; and if you book your scenic seaplane transfer from Hanoi to Halong Bay now, you can enjoy 30 percent off the usual price.

Vietnam by Vespa

Hop on for an insider Vespa exploration: ride on a food trail through Saigon or go beyond the city bustle in Central Vietnam, riding across the countryside away from the mass of tourists.

Caving Adventures

Journey into the rugged and untouched natural landscape of Central Vietnam's Phong Nha National Park, where the adventurous can explore the world's largest cave, underground rivers and karst mountains.

Cu Chi Tunnels with a War Veteran

Learn about the fascinating Cu Chi Tunnel complex from a war veteran and listen to his first-hand experience of life in the tunnels.

To find out more about any of these experiences, to explore Country Holidays' range of Vietnam itineraries, or to book your next trip, visit countryholidays.com.sg.



RUN IN NORTH KOREA

The next edition of the Pyongyang Marathon will be held on 10 April 2016, and now you can join other runners in the 10K, half-marathon or full marathon, finishing inside Kim Il Sung Stadium in front of a 50,000 crowd. While this IAAF-certified marathon has been held annually since 1981, foreign amateurs were only first permitted to take part in 2014, thanks to repeated requests by British-run, Beijing-based **Koryo Tours**. Since then, Koryo, which has been taking tourists into North Korea for 20 years, has partnered with the race to assist tourists wanting to take part. Also, for each runner who signs up, the company donates over 300 meals to North Korean orphanages. pyongyangmarathon.com | koryogroup.com/pyongyang-marathon.php. ▲

BEST OF BANGLADESH

One of Bangladesh's oldest cities, Dhaka has a history dating back more than 3,000 years, blending architecture of the Mughals and the Victorian era with more modern designs. Sightseeing highlights include walking tours of Old Dhaka, and exploring museums and forts such as the iconic Ahsan Manzil and The Pink Palace. A great base is **Amari Dhaka**, located in Dhaka's new business district Gulshan, in the heart of the city. *Special offer:* The hotel is offering a one-night stay from US\$195, including breakfast, a room upgrade, 10 percent off F&B and late checkout (subject to availability). Valid on stays to 31 December 2016. amari.com/dhaka





When It's Spring Again

Fifteen years after her last visit to the Dutch capital, VERNE MAREE drops into Amsterdam for three short days in search of the things of spring: tulips, new herring and the Late Rembrandt exhibition at the Rijksmuseum.

*Story and photography
by Verne Maree*



Did you know?

In the 13th century, a bunch of entrepreneurial types built a rough system of dikes and dams in the Amstel River – hence “Amsteldam” – as a base from which to demand tolls from passing herring and beer traders. Count Floris of Holland granted the growing merchant town special toll privileges and it got its first charter in 1300.

The five-star Hotel Krasnapolsky – or, to give it its full name, the **NH Amsterdam Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky** – was where Roy and I stayed last time; so, being creatures of habit, here we are again. Located on **Dam Square**, opposite the Royal Palace, it's a veritable institution at the very heart of Amsterdam, where the city began.

Named for the German-born tailor of Polish extraction who opened a Polish coffee shop, added a few hotel rooms and determinedly expanded that modest site over the next several decades,

Hotel Krasnapolsky's “grand” legacy is nowadays most apparent in the magnificent Winter Garden restaurant – an expanse of black-and-white chequered floor-tiles with a soaring Victorian-style wrought iron and glass ceiling.

Service is luxurious but low-key. Having just seen that marvellous film *The Grand Hotel Budapest*, I'm trying hard to make a connection. It might just be there in the series of young Eastern European-looking men who bring Roy different pillows from the pillow menu until they finally get it just right.



DAY ONE

You can cover a lot in a day if you put your mind to it, as long as your hotel is centrally located. Our 7am arrival on Singapore Airlines at Schiphol Airport gets us to the hotel by 8.30am, swiftly checked into our Superior Room, and soon heading out through the back of the hotel down to the canal – and right in the middle of the **Red Light District**.

It's Sunday morning coming down, with a vengeance. We're here before anyone's had time to clean up the seamy, graffiti-plastered and vomit-streaked canal-side paths and streets, and, to be honest, it's not the best re-introduction to Amsterdam.

Prostitution is both legal and regulated here, of course; even at 9am on the Sabbath, a scattering of bored-looking and variously naked women are on show from behind their street-side windows. (You're not supposed to photograph them, remember.) Let's just say that the light of morning shows a harsher reality than the kinder light of a summer evening, especially without the blurring effect of a few drinks beforehand. Tip: Don't go sightseeing in the Red Light District before breakfast.

Barging around

Dam Square is a fantastic location, I must say again, with high-end shopping mall De Bijenkorf right next to our hotel on the one side, and a couple of people-spotting pavement cafés on the other. And it's barely a ten-minute walk from here to **Centraal Station**, where our Eyewitness travel guide promises we can buy tickets for a canal boat trip. As it's been so long since our last holiday visit to Amsterdam, a canal cruise seems like a good way to get reoriented.

Opposite the station is the ticket office, right next to the ever-popular **De Looije café**, which, judging from the constant stream of tourists literally lining up to drink coffee and eat *appelbakken* in today's glorious sunshine, might as well have a licence to print money. I've been immersed in *Dutch for Dummies* for the past few weeks (it's much easier if you already know Afrikaans), so I'm grateful to the nice young man who humours me by replying in Dutch to my halting "*Waar zijn de toiletten?*"

It's 16 euros (about S\$25) for an hour-long cruise of the various canals or *grachten* – Prinsen-, Heeren-, Singel- and more, with a fairly basic recording to explain where you are and what you're seeing:

- **Seventeenth-century gabled warehouses**, now mainly residential, with hooks attached to their slanted gable tops for the purpose of lifting cargo from boats piled high with commodities from all over the world, including spices from the East. During the Netherlands' Golden Age (roughly the 17th century), we're told, almost anything that was traded globally came through the entrepôt of Amsterdam. The hooks still come in handy when residents move house.
- The inevitable crushing queue waiting to tour the **house of Anne Frank**, the Jewish girl whose moving account of her experiences here during the Second World War – before her death in Belsen at the age of 15 – is one of the Western world's most famous works of literature.
- Thousands of **houseboats**, some colourfully painted, others stylishly matte black in what seems to be the fashion de jour.





The Old Town

It's fun to join the tourists and locals who throng the Old Town, also known as Nine Small Streets (De 9 Straten, in Dutch), shopping, eating, drinking and generally chilling. It's in fact made up of three streets crossing two canals: Herengracht and Kaisersgracht, and full of trendy cafés, boutiques, bookstores and galleries.

Nieuwe Market, in the shade of Nieuwe Church – well, the church was new when they started building it in 1395 – is a good place to buy a fine-woven Panama hat to replace the one I left in a taxi. Next up is a good spot for our first round of Amstel on tap: CVB (**Café van Beeren**) on Nieuwendijk. Pints are pulled by a no-

nonsense English barmaid, who'll order in delicious bacon-and-cheese burgers from the C&W (Crepes and Waffles) over the road, if you like.

Plenty of walking – and this is an eminently walkable city – builds up an appetite for dinner. **De Reiger** (Nieuwe Lelie Straat, in De Jordaan) is just a ten-minute stroll from Dam Square. This is a pretty good *eetcafé* (bistro) with plenty of character, heavenly fresh mackerel with roasted potatoes and buttery mustard sauce. Two main courses, a couple of icy shots of *oude jenever* (old gin) to start, plus several glasses of house wine brings a reasonable bill of 70 euros.

Changing Attitudes

Amsterdam has for centuries been known for its broad-minded tolerance in matters such as religious affiliation, gender orientation, substance enjoyment, prostitution and more. On one hand, nothing much seems to have changed: every street corner brings a new and pungent whiff of herbal smoke, openly gay couples abound and sex workers gaze indifferently (at me, anyway) through glass-fronted boudoirs.

According to one middle-aged resident I speak to, however, the past ten years have brought some unwelcome social changes. Amsterdam no longer deserves a reputation for tolerance, he says, citing frequent attacks on LGBTs and similar "hate crimes". He puts this down to a too-rapid influx of immigrants from religions such as Islam – but not only Islam – that has ghettoised certain areas of the city.

That's a great shame, especially in view of the city's proud history of welcoming and sheltering refugees of all persuasions. As he reminds me, the name of the De Jordaan area is a mangling of the French phrase *le jardin* (the garden), referring to this previously low-rent district where Amsterdam gave refuge to a flood of Protestant French Huguenots fleeing persecution in their own country during the 17th century, and later to a stream of Spanish and Portuguese Jews and other refugees.



DAY TWO

The 17-euro buffet breakfast at **De Roode Leeuw** down the Damrak is a good if obvious spot for watching the passing parade; we had dinner here in summer 2000, and may just pop in again around 2030 for lunch – if we're still alive and kicking, that is.

From Dam Square it's a short tram-ride – number 2, 13 or 14 – to the **Rijksmuseum**, way over at the other side of the map. Having booked online a couple of weeks in advance, we're just in time to catch its **Late Rembrandt exhibition**, the cultural highlight of the year. What makes this so special is that most of these works from the last few years of Rembrandt's life are owned by private collections, rather than museums, and have been specially lent to the Rijks for this once-in-a-lifetime event.

My Roy has a strict "only one museum per city" rule, to go with Rule Number Two: "Only one temple or similar place of worship". (Harsh, but fair.) With so much to see in addition to the special exhibition, a museum like the Rijks deserves the better part of a day. I also recommend the wonderful **Van Gogh Museum**, which we enjoyed so much last time.

Dinner is again in De Jordaan, this time at tourist hot-spot **Moeder's**. Though the traveller is warned never to eat anywhere called Mama's, it's fun to sit at a long table,



cheek by jowl with a United Nations of diners, all tucking into typically hearty and rather heavy Dutch fare: *hapjes* (small bites), hotchpotch, mashed potato and sauerkraut, washed down with a rough *oude jenever* and an even rougher house red. Superb Irish coffees, though, and charmingly cheerful service. Again, it's around 70 euros for two, and we're more than stuffed.



DAY THREE

On our first morning, at the ticket office next to De Looftje, we were just in time to book a 5.5-hour trip (50 euros) to **Keukenhof Gardens**. We're in luck: this annual floral extravaganza comes to an end next weekend, in mid-May.

(You could, if you liked, top that up to 85 euros and make it a full-day trip to see more windmills, plus the traditional village of **Volendam**. For me, though, there are only so many times you can dress up in traditional Dutch costume and pose in front of a painted studio windmill – just once, actually – and I did that way back in the eighties.)

It's a 45-minute bus ride south to where Keukenhof is located. The name "Keukenhof" means "kitchen garden", and its history goes back to the 15th century, when the Countess Jacqueline of Bavaria foraged there for fruit and vegetables for her kitchen. In 1857, the extensive gardens of Keukenhof Castle were redesigned in the English style by the same landscape artists who designed Amsterdam's famous Vondelpark; and it has been the site of a wildly popular spring flower show from March to May each year since 1950.

This two-month period is the short growing season for the bulb industry, and had we been here earlier in

the season, en route to Keukenhof we would have seen mile upon mile of fields carpeted brilliantly with flowers. Now, they're almost at an end; and shockingly, we're told, these gorgeous blooms are not harvested for sale: instead, they're left to flower as long as possible to ensure healthy, saleable bulbs – and then the blooms are fed to cattle!

Keukenhof itself is still magnificent, however, with an estimated seven million blooms on display. Plenty of cafés and restaurants cater for the crowds of visitors from all over the world, most of whom seem focused on taking selfies with everything from amaryllis to zinnias.

Last Supper

Hotel barmen can be a great source of recommendations for dinner. Ours gives us an old-fashioned look when, on our last night, we ask him to name a good restaurant that's close to the hotel but not touristy. After some reflection, he points us to the fantastic **Lucius Seafood Restaurant** in Spui Street: across Dam Square and just two streets behind the Royal Palace.

It's the start of the *nieuwe haring* (new herring) season, and Roy's is served deliciously creamy



just as it is, with chopped mild white onion and a shot of smooth *oude jenever*. My delicately marinated eel with wasabi sauce channels a Japanese influence, yet it's perfectly Dutch. We'd compliment the chef, but all he's really done is to put this top quality fish on the plate.

Main courses include a *bourride* of various poached fish with a fresh chilli *rouille* for me, and for Roy, a generous trio of fried soles and buttery potatoes. This classy yet cosy place is the perfect way to round off three nights in one of the world's most picturesque cities.

Onward to Rotterdam

It's about an hour's drive to the shipping hub of Rotterdam, where we're spending a couple of nights on business (Roy's). It's one of Europe's oldest ports and its busiest, and worth more time than we gave it.

If you have the opportunity to visit, do stay at **Hotel New York**. Built as the headquarters for the Holland America Line, it has a lovely location on the New Maas river, from where thousands of European emigrants left to make new lives in the fledgling United States. Creatively repurposed, each distinctively decorated room in this Art Deco treasure has its own character; the popular restaurant attracts lots of discerning locals, and sought-after alfresco tables bask in the spring sunshine.

Reluctant to leave Holland without having seen what I regard as my fair share of windmills, we persuade our airport chauffeur to make a detour to **Kinderdijk**, the UNESCO World Heritage site just 15km from Rotterdam. This group of 19 monumental, still-working windmills was built in 1738 and 1740 as part of an ongoing water drainage project. We park just off the road and I'm allowed an hour to wander off and explore to my heart's content. Mission accomplished! 🇳🇱





Amazing Atoll

JACQUI YOUNG takes a return visit to the Maldives with her family, and once again the relaxation capital of the world delivers the goods.

It's years since we last visited the Maldives, but as we stepped off our speedboat at **Amilla Fushi Beach Resort**, it seemed like only yesterday. Needless to say, we were thrilled to be arriving back in paradise!

Managed by The Small Maldives Island Co., Amilla Fushi (meaning "your island home" in the local Dhivehi language) is a truly spectacular place, located in the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of Baa Atoll – one of only 26 natural atolls in the Indian Ocean.

The resort offers a vast choice of stunningly designed modern contemporary homes, including options for every kind of traveller. In keeping with the natural environment, the Tree Houses are fabulous wooden structures rising up from the lush jungle foliage, each with its own swimming pool, which our little monkeys thought was amazing!



The Ocean Lagoon Houses and Ocean Reef Houses sit over the island's crystal waters, while the beautiful Beach Villas are perched neatly in the soft white sand. Beach Residences, with up to eight bedrooms, have also been added to the mix for those larger parties wanting to celebrate in style or just chill and relax.

Whichever you choose, each house and villa is fully equipped with all the mod-cons, from Nespresso machines to fancy tea-pod machines, fully stocked minibars and snack bars, and an indoor and outdoor surround-sound music system. Opening the doors to the bathroom – which, incidentally, was nearly the size of my house – gave me complete home-interior envy; the colour scheme and the eclectic features were such a treat.

Amilla's resort staff are wonderful. Each house runs on a *katheeb* concept – that is, with a butler who looks after your every need, whether it be a buggy ride to breakfast, an evening trip with the kids to see the small sharks swimming around the Reef Houses, or a trip to the resident doctor to deal with an unexpected illness. Smiling seemed second nature to all of them, and nothing was too much trouble – and yet everything was done without an intrusive feeling.

There's no dress code on the island, which makes it all the more relaxing. The main dining area, The Bazaar, is a collection of fabulous restaurants with a linked iPad ordering system – this means that you can order from any of the restaurants regardless of where you're sitting. Our kids loved it. The resort boasts the first "fish and chip shop" in the Maldives, with the freshest catches. There's something for everyone, from pizzas to a wine store with nightly wine and cheese tastings, and the fine-dining restaurant Lonu, by acclaimed Aussie chef Luke Mangan. Amilla even has a general store where you can buy beautiful sandwiches, ice creams and fresh fruit and veg. Sit outside with a lovely coffee and listen to the tunes from the resident DJ. The Bazaar is centred around one of the largest communal pools in the Maldives, too, so it's an ideal setting for the most amazing cocktails and spectacular sunsets.

The resort offers some wonderful free additions to help you enjoy your stay. A huge daily buffet breakfast is included in the cost, along with a 50-minute spa treatment, all non-motorised water-sports (including the hire of snorkelling equipment) and a 20-minute session of a motorised water-sport. Children are welcomed and loved by all; there's a kids' club, plus babysitting services with fun activities on offer. There's also free laundry and Wi-Fi. These are the kinds of extras that can really add up on a holiday, and it means that when you come to leave Amilla, there's no nasty shock upon paying the bill.

Along with these freebies, there are all kind of activities to keep everyone busy. The Javvu Spa is superb! It has 10 wooden treatment pods, each with either a sauna or a steam room; there's also an outdoor yoga pavilion.





Amilla's own house reef has the renowned "Blue Hole" diving site, which is actually within snorkelling distance of the beach. Elsewhere on the island there are tennis courts, plus a resident tennis pro to help those of us who need it. The Maldivian fishing trip is one not to be missed, and you can even have your own catch grilled or baked for the following day's lunch.

Amilla has a beautifully relaxed atmosphere with some of the most genuinely friendly and helpful staff I've ever encountered on a holiday. It truly was sad to leave – in fact, we had some tears on the boat back to the mainland. They really have done a great job in creating "your island home". 🏝️

Getting there

Following the four-hour flight from Singapore, it's just a 15-minute domestic flight from Male to Dharavandhoo Airport on a **Flyme** plane. Flyme (flyme.mv) is the Maldivian airline operated by Villa Air, which provides scheduled flights to domestic airports. After your short flight, the Amilla speedboat will transport you from the airport on your 10-minute journey to the resort.

For more information, including details of some great offers and packages, visit amilla.mv.

Something Fresh



on Samui

REBECCA BISSET takes some time out on the Thai island of Koh Samui.

Although Koh Samui has developed rapidly over the last five years, it's still got that cruisey beach feel to it. It's more "appropriate" than Phuket if you're holidaying with family, and a lot less busy and congested than Bali – plus, the quaint little tropical airport is a dream to get through, with only smaller planes landing and no visa-on-arrival queues or departure taxes. It makes the more expensive fares worth the money.

We stayed in the new setup of resort villas, **Lime Samui**, on the northwest corner of the island, about 30 minutes from the airport. On the way to the property, you pass Bophut and Maenam, all with shops and resorts of various kinds. Before you get to Nathon, the major ferry port to mainland Thailand, is the fairly steep and winding road to Lime.

Villa number four at Lime, **Villa Zest**, is just below the larger Lime villas, so you could have a huge party of guests staying within walking distance of each other but still in separate accommodation.

Zest itself has four double bedrooms, each with a different layout and décor, and all with large ensuites – some with outdoor showers and a couple with verandahs, but all with great views of the sea. The fifth bedroom has a clever combination of double beds and bunks that can sleep six easily, so it's the perfect kids' room – and with décor to suit.



TRAVEL

The accommodation is very well thought out and beautifully finished. There's a large seating pit for the TV, which can also play music videos, and indoor and outdoor dining areas, plus a barbecue pit, making it perfect for wining and dining with ease. The living areas have free Wi-Fi, and some of the other rooms have intermittent connections. All bedrooms have TVs, too. With its funky artworks and décor accents, Zest makes you feel like you're in an actual home and not in a hotel – but you also don't feel that you're in someone else's home, if that makes sense!

The villa fits into the side of the hill, with two bedrooms higher than the living area and three below. Sun loungers and the infinity pool give you the view over the ocean during the day and some pretty spectacular sunsets in the evening.

With an in-house chef and hostess Kai on hand, it's easy to order food the day before or even earlier on the same day, from delicious Pad Thai and green curries to Western choices. Continental or full English breakfasts are available too. Kai is there to look after everyone, but most of the time the staff are behind the scenes and don't disturb you.






On the opposite side of the island is the larger commercial area of Chaweng with the shopping centre of Central, with some fairly good regular-priced shops as well as smaller street markets. For really good Western food, try The Kitchen – we thought it was excellent, with great pizza and bruschetta. The larger and longer beach stretch and nightlife area is here too, though there are obviously pubs and other nightlife hangouts all over the island.

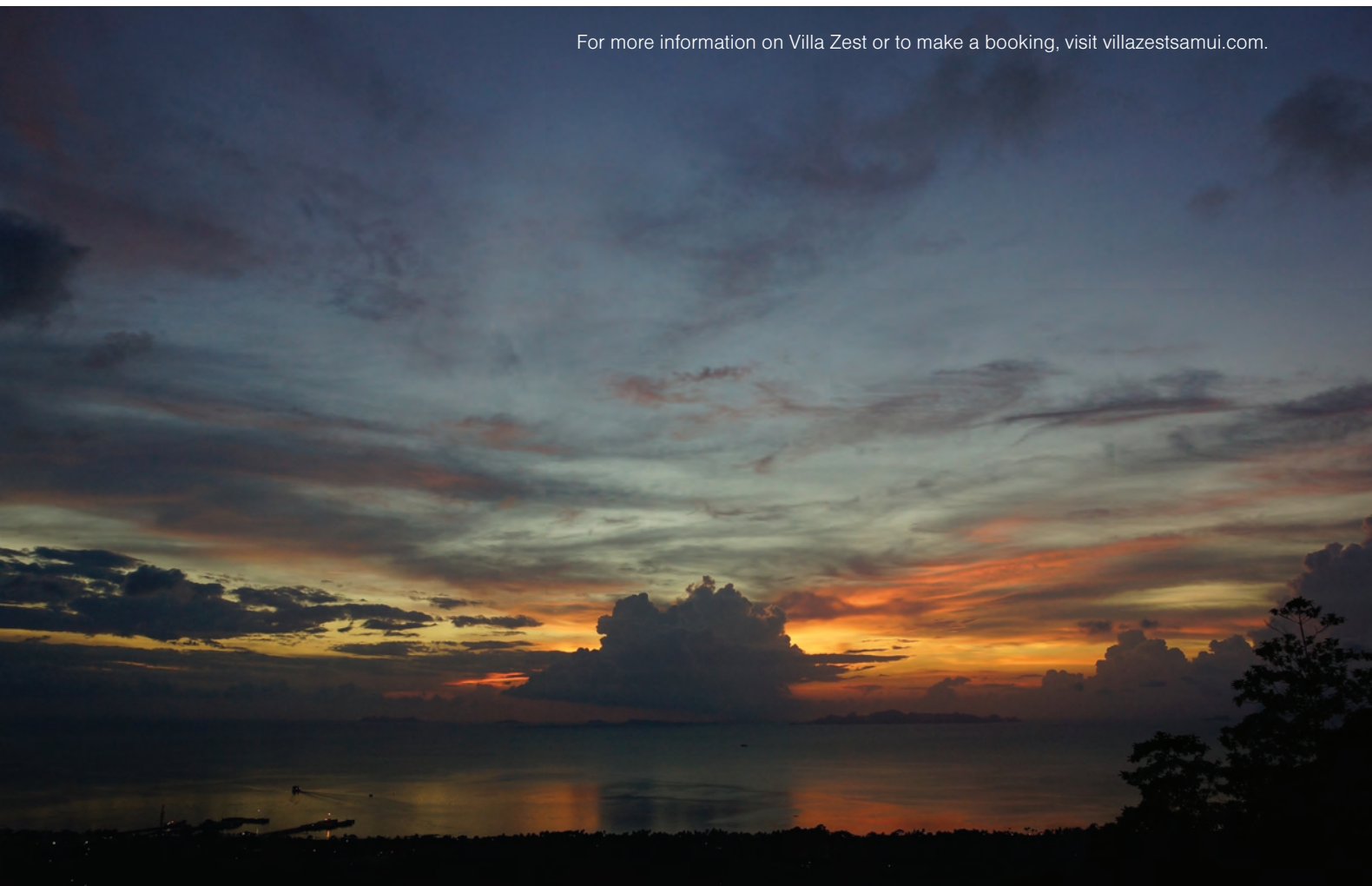
We visited the Bikini Bar at Lamai Beach and had a cocktail with a good Pad Thai and a not-to-be-recommended Cuban sandwich. The bar was almost in the water on the day we were there, and we sat at a table with our feet in the waves at high tide, listening to fantastic reggae music.

South of the villa is the Na Muang waterfall with a little market and elephant rides, the famous Mummified Monk and various outdoor activities like zip-lining, go-karting and monkey conservation shows. There are plenty of boat trips on offer, and snorkelling and diving too.

In all, Villa Zest is a really well done resort villa in a chilled location but still with plenty nearby to occupy all ages. 



For more information on Villa Zest or to make a booking, visit villazestsamui.com.





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SHAKING IT UP

A hotel with a difference in Phuket

The no-frills approach to hotels tends to be found in budget chains on inner-city streets rather than beside a pristine beach. Newly opened **Cassia** on the resort island of Phuket shakes up traditional expectations of holiday accommodation. KATIE ROBERTS road-tested the minimalist, apartment-style hotel with her family.

It's been a while since a new hotel opened in Laguna Phuket on the island's west coast, about a 20-minute drive south of the airport. Well-known for pretty resort-lined lagoons and a well-ordered sense of calm, it's home to a Banyan Tree, an Angsana and two Outrigger Resorts, plus numerous private residences and villa estates, all a stone's throw from the gorgeous fine white sand of Bang Tao Beach.

Visiting Cassia Phuket just a few days after the opening was always going to be fun, but it didn't dawn on me until we opened the apartment door that we were to be the first to sleep in the beds, use the kettle and turn on the shower; our children would have the first turn at assembling the Lego sets in the kids' club room, walk dripping wet through the lobby and ask multiple questions of the friendly staff.

If Banyan Tree is the first-class suites of Singapore Airlines, then the hotel group's new brand Cassia might be said to equate to the Scoot of the airline industry. It was the widespread use of the colour yellow, from staff uniforms to feature walls, which triggered this association in my mind. Also, what you see is what you get at Cassia. And while the low price is a trade-off for a standardised, no-frills approach, the hotel is definitely stylish rather than gaudy. There's an emphasis on fun and freedom, too, but without some of the luxury inclusions you'd expect from more expensive accommodation. The question was, could our family enjoy a holiday well enough without them?





Can you live without...:

a porter to convey your luggage to your apartment?

THE CASSIA WAY: Colourful, airport-esque luggage trolleys with gorgeous (and loud!) bicycle bells are on hand at the entrance for you to load your luggage directly from drop-off, and push to your room after check-in.

THE VERDICT: The kids loved it, and there was no messy bag-tagging, or waiting around for suitcases to arrive at the room.

Can you live without...:

poolside service and an umbrella in your cocktail?

THE CASSIA WAY: Don your sarong and trot inside for self-service at the bar; there's a good selection of local and international beers and wines that are definitely cold.

THE VERDICT: Drinks are cheaper here than in Singapore, and since you'll need to move off your sun lounger to sign for them, there's probably less chance of over-indulging – and you'll likely meet new people too.

Can you live without...:

an enormous international buffet breakfast spread?

THE CASSIA WAY: A tiffin breakfast is delivered in an insulated bag to the apartment hatch (1960s milkman-style) with a choice of Western, Asian or vegetarian. Make use of the microwave oven to heat it up and the coffee machine for your caffeine fix.

THE VERDICT: There's absolutely no need to get changed out of your pyjamas and the delivery concept is fun. The food is standard fare that's sufficiently filling to get you through to lunchtime.



Apartment test drive

At Cassia, the one- and two-bedroom apartments have kitchens and balconies and range in size from 42 to 77 square metres. Wi-Fi is free and available everywhere, even beside the pool. Room 340 rated highly for our family of four. The spacious lounge, kitchen and dining area gave us room to move, and the two bedrooms – one with a king bed, one with twin beds and each with a bathroom – meant there was no arguing over who had to sleep on the sofa. Minimal toiletries are supplied, so be sure to bring everything you need. Many rooms have gorgeous lake views; ours, though, had a street and park view to the rear.

Tip! There's a kids' club room off the hotel foyer with toys and games for rainy days, but it's unstaffed, so it mightn't be suitable for leaving little ones unattended. Children over eight, on the other hand, will love it.

Can you live without....:
**on-site full-service
 restaurants?**

THE CASSIA WAY: For all-day food, drinks, snacks, pre-prepared meals, ingredients and alcohol, head to **Market 23** in the foyer and stock up on supplies. Eat at the tables nearby, or cook meals in your apartment. The kitchens are kitted out with microwave, cook-top, toaster, snazzy pink and yellow pots and pans and appliances, and you have a dining table.

There are also abundant dining options at nearby resorts, or just step outside the Laguna front gate and find traditional Thai, Indian or new choice **Bake Flame Pasta** offering Italian, Japanese and tasty flame-grilled chicken and wood-fire pizza. We also heard good things about upmarket restaurant and bar **Bampot** by chef Jamie Wakeford. On Fridays, **Boat Avenue** has live music, cold beers and a food market with a friendly atmosphere.

THE VERDICT: Easy, easy, easy – especially when you're travelling with kids.

Can you live without....:
**traditional Thai
 architecture with subtle
 décor and solid wooden
 furniture?**

THE CASSIA WAY: Colour. From the enormous and bold graffiti-style artwork to the pink kettle and the yellow feature walls, there's not a hint of brown or traditional Thai to be seen; everything is bright or white.

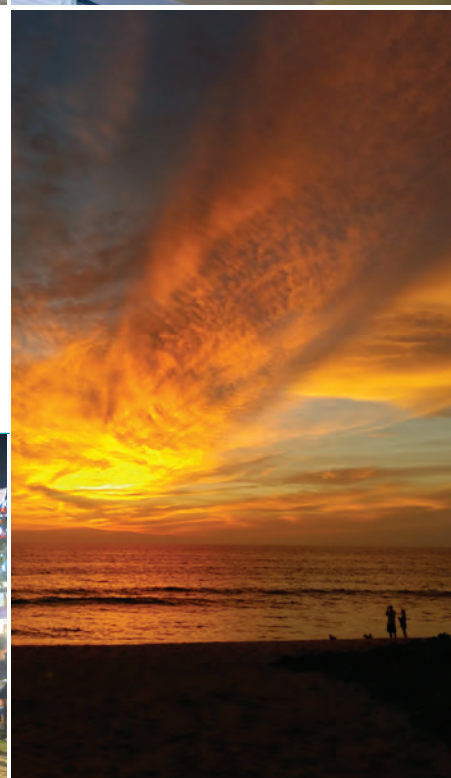
THE VERDICT: Cassia sweeps aside the traditional with a breath of fresh air that's very welcome.

Overall: Cassia will suit families on a budget, long-stay travellers, big groups on a price-conscious weekend break and those looking for flexibility. We can't wait until similar new establishments open in Bintan, Indonesia, Lijiang, China and Beruwala, Sri Lanka.



Getting around:

The free Laguna shuttle stops at Cassia on demand, and at resorts within the enclave, as well as at the Laguna front gate. The free ferry will also stop to pick up guests from Cassia; it does a circuit of the inter-connecting lakes, the other resorts, the beach and the shops. It's a pleasant trip, even if you don't intend to get off anywhere. Cassia doesn't have direct beach frontage but it's quick enough to find your way. A dedicated beach facility is opening soon. Surrounding resorts offer a day rate for the use of their facilities. **31**



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REALITY ACTION

Hitting your screens this month is the second season of reality show **Fit for Fashion**, which sees 14 contestants go through a gruelling 10 weeks of challenges to achieve the best version of themselves. With the help of celeb mentors, the participants overcome various challenges each week to improve their health and appearance. Now you can download the CustomFit 3.0 app, which includes a Fitness First 10 Week Get Fit Programme designed by Mitch Chilson and a panel of fitness experts. **See it on Star World, 7 January at 8pm.**



IN SIGHT

Acuvue's latest addition to its range of **contact lenses** includes the 1-Day Acuvue Moist Multifocal, ideal for individuals with presbyopia (the ageing-related reduction in the ability to see up close). Longwearing and comfortable, the lenses keep eyes hydrated, and even provide UV protection. **Available at pharmacies, personal care stores and opticians island-wide. acuvue.com.sg** ▲



FRENCH DELIGHTS

Just opened at PasarBella is French grocery store **Quartier**, an addition to its original outlet at Serangoon Gardens. It carries a wide range of dairy products including delicious yoghurt, milk, butter and high-quality cheese as well as fresh meat, vegetables, fruit, herbs and bread, all imported from France. You'll also find an organic selection, gluten-free products and even baby food! **Can't make it down? Shop online at quartier.sg and they'll deliver your shopping the following day.** ▲

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BACK AT IT

New in town is chiropractor **Dennis Lim**. The doctor has trained and registered in Australia – where he's been for the past three years – as well as Singapore, where he specialises in the Active Release Technique. He'll be practising at Osteopathic Treatment Centre, a multidisciplinary clinic with a team of knowledgeable healthcare professionals across a range of disciplines, including osteopaths, podiatrists, physiotherapists, naturopaths, hypnotherapists and neurofeedback trainers. **For appointment enquiries, contact 6734 6440. osteopathy.com.sg** ►



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Help yourself to a good night's shut-eye with **Marz Sleep Spray**, a new and innovative product that works to support sleep. The oral spray has a better absorption rate than tablets or capsules, and includes active ingredients such as GABA, valerian root and chamomile to help you fall asleep and wake up refreshed. What's more, the spray is sugar- and gluten-free, and aims to avoid the grogginess that can be caused by commonly used melatonin pills. **\$29.90, available at Guardian stores island-wide.** ◀

NEW STORE ALERT!

Psst! **Under Armour** has just opened its largest store in Singapore at Bugis Junction (#01-77/80).

The new flagship is the first to stock basketball kit and children's sportswear, as well as hunting, tactical and outdoor ranges. **Prices range from \$12 to \$199.** ►





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It occurs to me that a row of pointy little teeth would be jolly easy to floss, though, and that brings me to lesson number three, this time from the dental hygienist: it's essential to **floss every day**. I've heard it all before, of course, but removing mascara before bedtime is bad enough, and I'll guiltily admit that the tedious business of flossing has all too often fallen by the wayside. This time, though, the message sinks in

– something to do with the suggestibility effect of the tequila, I mean nitrous oxide.

Not flossing has long been known to cause heart disease, and recent studies have now also shown that it's associated with rheumatoid arthritis, as unlikely as that may sound. It has to do with the bacteria – particularly streptococcus gordonii – that tend to colonise our teeth. Apparently, they produce an enzyme that attacks proteins in the body, causing chronic inflammation that destroys bone and cartilage within the joints.

Interestingly, **people can be differently prone to plaque build-up**, my dental hygienist tells me while scaling and polishing my teeth: this involves the appalling job of scraping off every bit of plaque, while nagging me to be more conscientious in future. She never nags my husband, even though I know for a fact that I brush and floss at least twice as often as he does. It's


annoyingly unfair! Various factors are at play, she explains, including blood type and acidity levels.

One of her patients, despite brushing and flossing after every meal, had such an acidic mouth that even the biting surfaces of her teeth would be riddled with plaque just a few days after scaling and polishing. By seeking advice from a nutritionist and following a more alkaline diet, the patient managed to largely overcome the problem.

Another thing you can do to improve both oral and general health is to try **oil pulling**, the natural Ayurvedic way to disinfect the mouth. It's simple: swill a tablespoon of coconut oil around your mouth for ten to 20 minutes a day and then spit it out. New scientific studies have shown remarkable results in



preventing cavities, and my dentist says he's noticed unusually quick healing of the wounds of several implant patients who've given it a go.

I've been oil pulling it for the past week, and it's less difficult than it may sound – especially when you're home alone and there's no one to talk to. Isn't it amazing what you can both learn and achieve by keeping your mouth shut! 



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- Graduated from the University of New South Wales, Australia (1998)
- Senior Clinical Fellow in Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, Prince of Wales Hospital, Sydney (2007)
- Registered as a Medical Practitioner with the Medical Board of Australia
- Member of the American College of Phlebology



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FITNESS GURU

Looking for a personal trainer offering multiple get-fit options? SAM BLAKEY, founder of **Ooberfit**, gives us her tips for weight loss and a healthier lifestyle.

1 Factor in more sleep.

Did you know that more sleep leads to less hunger, fewer cravings and more energy and motivation to exercise? Sleep deprivation is one of the main reasons why so many new mums struggle to lose their baby-weight.

2 Follow a diet and exercise plan that honours your individual preferences and targets improving your metabolism so you can burn more calories.

The trick, really, is to give ourselves as much as possible of what we love while still getting results. Research shows pretty clearly that we can only focus on a maximum of one to three changes at a time, so we need to determine keystone habits that, when changed, make other habits easier to alter.

3 Once you've distanced yourself from faddy diets and quick fixes, exercise really makes the difference.

Studies have shown that HIIT (high intensity interval training) and Tabata Training routines effectively boost metabolism.

Personal training is all about changing your life, including adopting a better diet and becoming a healthier you. On one hand, it's a big overhaul – but it could transform your life and the lives of your family!

Get in touch with Sam at 8218 8513 or by emailing sam@ooberfit.com.



Psst! Ooberfit is offering new clients free access to all its boot camp and Pilates sessions for a whole week at the end of January. Sessions are suitable for people of all fitness levels – even complete beginners. Classes are located in West Coast Park, Siglap, Kent Ridge and Kent Vale (Pilates), and postnatal classes are held in the Botanic Gardens.

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Our Doctors



Dr Lim Kar Seng

MBBS (Singapore), MRCP (UK),
FAMS (Dermatology)

A consultant dermatologist with The Dermatology Practice, Dr Lim Kar Seng has more than 14 years of medical experience both locally and internationally including centres such as St Vincent's Hospital and The Skin and Cancer Foundation Australia. His subspecialties are in skin cancers, phototherapy and psoriasis.



Dr Lynn Teo

MBBS (London), MRCP (UK),
FAMS (Dermatology)

Dr Lynn Teo is a consultant dermatologist at The Dermatology Practice with more than 14 years of medical experience, having trained and worked in London and Singapore. Her clinical interests are in hair loss and scalp disorders, and in immune system conditions affecting the skin. She has trained in hair transplant procedures and dermatosurgery at Mount Sinai Medical Centre, New York.

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LIFESTYLE SOLUTIONS

Interested in getting a personal trainer? NADINE HEYDENRYCH tells us about her experience with mobile personal training company **EZFIT**.

Why were you looking for a personal trainer?

My ambitious work schedule together with a killer travel schedule meant an unbalanced lifestyle for me. Enlisting a personal trainer was a great solution, because it meant I had to commit rather than make excuses. It's all planned for you, so it keeps you motivated, interested and never bored.

What do you find most appealing about the workouts?

The fact that I don't have to plan anything! I find that not knowing what's coming makes me achieve more than I'd have thought possible. I would never say to myself, "OK, let's do some high-intensity interval training today, with mountain-climbers, burpees, planks and leg squats" – that would've scared me off at the beginning of my health journey.

How has it changed your perception of your physical wellbeing?

I've realised you just need to make a conscious decision to look after yourself and make healthier choices. Personal training has helped me see that exercise is a lifestyle choice, and that while there's no quick fix, the rewards of our hard work endure. Through EZFIT's three-month programme, Weight and Inches Melt, I've dropped 3kg and a whopping total of 25 inches! The programme has taught me how to eat right, how to exercise on the go and other important factors. I now fit into clothes that previously didn't fit, and that has made me one happy woman! Kudos to Vanan and the EZFIT team.

For more information, contact 9007 9742 or email vanan@ezfit.sg.



BODY TRANSFORMATIONS

There's no age limit for starting a fitness regime. **Ultimate Performance** client ROGER GRAHAM, age 50, shares his journey.

"I took up a personal training package for a number of reasons. First, to improve my health and appearance by becoming leaner; second, to become lighter with stronger legs to help with my (very amateur!) ultra-marathon racing; and third, to improve my abysmal upper-body strength. I want to keep active in my fifties and onwards, especially so I can keep up with my niece as her running develops!

I'm amazed by the progress I've made in 12 weeks. If you'd told me that I'd be down from 19.2 percent to 12.5 percent body fat and lifting some of the weights I do now, I don't think I'd have believed you.

My trainer Eran was brilliant. He always made sure my form was right, helping to prevent injuries, exercise the right muscles in the correct way, and fixing my slouch. He knew when to push me a bit harder, mostly with quiet words of encouragement to help me dig out that last bit of strength I wasn't sure I had. Even better, his background in sports injuries and rehabilitation helped me sort out some of the niggles I've had on the left side of my body."

Testimonial from Eran

"Roger is one of the nicest guys you'll ever meet – friendly and down to earth, and is an absolute joy to work with! He'll make an effort to strike up conversations with everyone in the gym and knows all the trainers by name. He always gives 100 percent in his sessions, is extremely dedicated, and diligently records his food intake."

Interested in beginning your own transformation? Visit upfitness.com.

TAKE THAT!

Into action sports and having some serious fun? Give martial arts a go!

JH Kim Taekwondo is a dedicated specialist in its field. Its instructors take students of all ages and stages, and the curriculum helps them learn in a straightforward, systematic way. The company's internationally certified black belt instructors are trained to teach in a technically precise yet intuitive manner, keeping the practice relevant to modern times while tapping into a deep understanding of martial arts traditions.

Programmes on offer:

Taekwon Tots (3 to 5 years old)

Get the kiddies in when they're young! Your little one will complete age-specific games, exercises and drills to complement each stage of their development. Classes are small (a 5:1 ratio to be precise) to ensure individual attention to each child's needs.

T-Kids Programme (5 to 10 years old)

These classes are fun, yet challenging and goal-orientated – and they instil much more than just learning to kick, punch and earn belts. The T-Kids approach encourages self-discipline, builds up confidence and teaches young ones to maintain a positive attitude.

Teens and Adults Taekwondo

Here, teens and adults train together in an enjoyable social environment that provides structure and discipline. The syllabus allows members to experience different facets of taekwondo (sport versus traditional martial arts) with the goal of identifying and nurturing each person's strength and developing him or her into a well-rounded martial artist.


#02-26/27/28 Millenia Walk. If you're interested in finding out more, call 6299 0495, or visit jhkim-singapore.com.



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Located at Raffles Town Club, Tanglin Trust School, AIS, SJII and the SITA Tennis Academy, **Total Fitness & Leisure** group, with its experienced coaching team, specialises in a range of sports, including tennis coaching, swimming and personal training sessions for all ages.

The group holds tennis and swimming "combo" camps throughout every school holiday period that are perfect for getting the kids out of the house and providing them with non-stop activities where they'll learn new skills. Also on offer are boot camps, circuit training, ladies' morning clinics and private lessons at your own home or condo.

The new SITA Tennis Academy, directed by professional coaches and stalwarts of Singapore tennis, Joe Russell, Todd Koning and Simon Mason, is held at a newly resurfaced four-court tennis facility located near the Botanic Gardens, just next to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The coaching team, which consists of professionals from Southeast Asia to Spain, teaches a wide range of programmes starting from mini-tennis for kids aged four to 10 and including a fully fledged tournament squad programme. Private coaching, group classes and holiday camps are available for all ages and abilities, from beginning to elite. 

To find out more, call 9750 7400 or 9021 6245 or email info@tfl-training.com.
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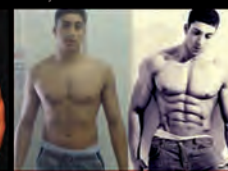


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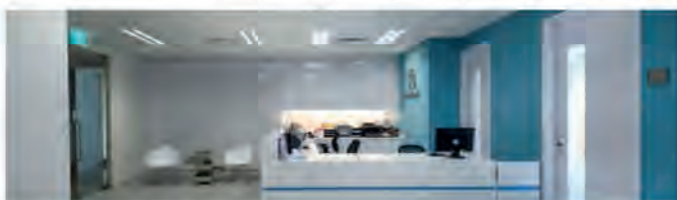
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• Urban Design Church	9247 8895

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• American Women's Assoc.	6734 4895
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• Canadian Association	6622 5485
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• Consumer Association (CASE)	6463 1811
• French Association	6737 8422
• German Association	6467 8816
• PrimeTime Business & Professional Women's Assoc.	6234 0973
• Protea Group of South Africa	6465 6908
• SACAC Counselling	6733 9249
• Scandinavian Women's Assoc.	9168 0745
• Singapore Oilwomen's Club	6365 2096
• Spanish Speaking Women's Assoc.	9712 9948
• St Andrew's Society	9763 4141
• St Patrick's Society	6345 0253
• Swiss Association	swiss-sg.org
• Friends of the Museum	6337 3685

BUSINESS & TRADE

• AmCham	6597 5730
• Association of Dutch Businesspeople	9101 6201
• AustCham	6738 7917
• Belgium & Luxembourg Business Group	8180 4061

• BritCham	6222 3552
• CanCham	9368 8004
• Danish Business Association	6318 3557
• EuroCham	6836 6681
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• Italian Chamber of Commerce	6223 0356
• Japanese Chamber of Commerce	6221 0541
• New Zealand Chamber of Commerce	6235 7119
• Spanish Business Association	sbasg.sg
• Swedish Business Association	6734 5009
• Swiss Business Association	6722 0799

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• Comfort & City Cab Limo	
• Cab Service	6552 2828
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• Dover Park Hospice	6500 7272
• S'Pore Environment Council	6337 6062
• Nature Society	6741 2036
• National Volunteer Centre	6550 9595

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CHARITY & DONATION OUTLETS

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ENTERTAINMENT

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• The Esplanade Theatres	6828 8377
• Showbiz	6651 7871

HELP LINES & SUPPORT GROUPS

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• Anti-Narcotics Association	1800 733 4444
• AWARE Helpline	1800 774 5935
• Drug & Poison Information Centre	6423 9119
• New Mothers' Support Group (NMSG)	nmsg-singapore.com
• Samaritans of Singapore	6220 7758
• SOS Hotline	1 800 221 4444

PROPERTY

• Expat Realtor	6255 1027
	expatrealtor.net
• Property Guru	6238 5971
	propertyguru.com.sg

WEBSITES

ENTERTAINMENT

- eventshub.sg — Information on cultural and entertainment events
- sistic.com.sg or ticketbooth.com.sg or showbizasia.com — Online bookings for events
- gv.com.sg or cathay.com.sg — Online movie bookings

FOOD & GROCERIES

- coldstorage.com.sg
- expatfoodhall.com.sg
- fairprice.com.sg
- redmart.com
- theorganicgrocer.com.sg

INFORMATION

- angloinfo.com — Online information and free interaction
- expatliving.sg — Online magazine, years of useful archive material, facts about the magazine, unique content
- expatrealtor.net — Properties for sale and rent — previously Expat Rentals
- google.com.sg — Singapore-specific search engine portal
- hardwarezone.com.sg — Up-to-date computer prices in Singapore
- gov.sg — For official matters pertaining to the government
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- app.www.sg — An extensive site about Singapore services and what's available
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- singaporum.com — A useful expat message board
- singpost.com — Have you got the right postcode for your mail?
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JANUARY

2015 TAROT FORECAST

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CAPRICORN DEC 22 - JAN 19



THIS MONTH

The New Year sparks off new and unique ideas. It's all in your head for now, and there is a lot of excitement about it. However, things are all at the baby stage and you really need much more focus and structure if you're to see these ideas through to implementation. They may involve anything from a career move or business venture to involvement in politics or even travelling for inspiration.

One point to note, however, is the financial investment required in all of the above. As exciting as things are going to be, try not to get ahead of yourself with the spending – otherwise you could be left with nothing and back at square one! Focus and structure will be your aids this month.

YEAR AHEAD

2016 seems to bring out the ambition in you, Capricorn. You could make it really big this year, but you can't really do it on your own. There will be a community or team that will provide your support. The first quarter seems very dynamic; there's a sense of restlessness that triggers the need to create something different. Like with everyone else, a New Year always inspires change. Yet the change you're thinking of pursuing will seem very unlike you – it's not going to be a safe option. Still, you're tired of being safe. Instead, it's about throwing yourself in the deep end and taking that crazy chance – not just hoping for things to work out, but working at making things work. Your calmness does assist in riding you through this chaotic first quarter while you settle down and find your bearings.

You begin to move slowly and steadily ahead in the second quarter and everything seems to fall into your lap. This includes returned favours from people you have helped in the past. Your connections seem to come in very handy.

There's a concern of taking on much more than you can handle as we move into the second half of the year. Remember to delegate, and trust and know that you have a solid team with you and are never alone. A much-needed break is taken and spent with family. As you take time out to reflect, you cannot believe how your luck has changed this year and how easily things have come to you. You could never ask for a better year than this!

Your industrious nature carries on as you close into the final quarter. Your energy is endless when it comes to having time for family and your ambitions. As chaotic as things may be, you place an equal importance on everything and everyone in your life, and this doesn't go unreciprocated. It's going to be a nice end to the year, when what you set out to create takes place. And you have done it really well, too. It mightn't have been an easy road, but you never let your confidence waver one bit; instead, you carried on trying and experimenting till you got it right. Well done for not giving up!

*It's Your
Birthday!*

AQUARIUS JAN 20 - FEB 18



Rather than looking on the outside, you switch your perspective inwards this January. You haven't really given

yourself the opportunity to reflect on your past achievements. You are indeed a very proud and self-reliant person and intend to keep it this way moving forward. You aspire to create new things for yourself this year, which will draw the attention of prospective employers or investors. It feels like a very positive start to the New Year as these opportunities are presented to you from a familiar person or place from the past.

PISCES FEB 19 - MAR 20



You approach the first month of 2016 with an outlook of choosing to live life on your own

terms. Do things that make you happy and build a pot of wealth to treat yourself rather than others first. You've never felt more strongly about loving yourself first. If a travel opportunity comes up, you'll find yourself thinking about how exciting it's going to be for you rather than what the kids might think about it. Or if that dream job pops up, you decide to grab it instead of thinking a million times how it's going to affect people around you. Good for you, Pisces – it's a time that is very well deserved. *Carpe diem!*

ARIES MAR 21 - APR 19



It's a pleasant beginning to the year for Aries. There is part of you that dreams and hopes for many things, but the reality is somewhat different. However, the mood is rather positive. And you believe that, sometimes, there's no harm in a little dreaming. You've struggled to keep your feet on the ground because of this in the past, so try a different approach this time. Be patient, too – good things might take a little longer to come around. A nice, familiar joy will return towards the end of the month. Expect to see a family member or a friend from the past, or enjoy a joyful experience that you had in your childhood.

CANCER JUN 21 - JUL 22



January seems to be a very emotionally intense one for Cancer, which is not a surprise. Not only are sensitivity levels high, so is your intuition. It's a good time to be putting plans in place to achieve your ambitions, and with the help of your heightened senses all the more better it will be. You enjoy being in control and like being seen as the queen or king of the castle. You value community spirit, and it would make you happy if you're on the pedestal of your community. However, be prepared to be thrown off your throne. It's not a time for sulking; it just means it's time to give your attention elsewhere and let someone else be in charge for a change. It might make for a refreshing start to the New Year, so try not to take anything too personally.

LIBRA SEP 23 - OCT 22



While everyone else is making resolutions for achieving high ambitions in career and finances, you on the other hand, Libra, are taking a much more humble approach. The past year has taught you that family time has never been so precious. The joy it gave you and others has been priceless. So you carry on with indulging in familial relationships and creating beautiful memories. What others deem as "life" feels alien to you for now. You're determined a balance can be achieved in all areas of life and this is what you seek to carve out for yourself this 2016: a plan to enjoy the best of both worlds, time with family and friends, and achieving your personal ambitions.

TAURUS APR 20 - MAY 20



2015 was quite a rough one for Taurus in terms of ambitions and career path. This year will begin with an awakening that each person is truly for himself or herself in the pursuit of dreams and goals – community is, in fact, non-existent. It's a harsh reality indeed in this very busy world. You've always been the one for doing things together and keeping the team and community spirit alive. It's your belief that things can be better achieved when done together. But, this year, you find yourself letting go of this conception and doing things on your own and for yourself for a change.

LEO JUL 23 - AUG 22



You've made a decision that you aren't going to accept any sort of defeat when it comes to achieving your ambitions this month. You have been rather dissatisfied with yourself in the past. And when you look back now, you realise how spoilt and unappreciative you actually were. You aren't going to make any mistakes now – you will go all out! There are doors of opportunities ahead of you and each of them will seem equally plausible. Take your time to find the best fit. Not everyone gets to be in this enviable position, so use the time wisely.

SCORPIO OCT 23 - NOV 21



It's going to be a very emotionally as well as financially distressing time, this first month of the year, Scorpio. It can also be a time to fall into a depressed state, so be very aware. Avoid rubbing any family members or peers the wrong way as emotions may be up one minute and down the next. On the whole, this experience will leave you appreciating this hard time very much. You come full circle in understanding that it's part and parcel of life to go through these experiences from time to time. With this you move forward with an inner knowing that things can only get better from now.

GEMINI MAY 21 - JUN 20



There's a lot of competition clouding your ambitions. Everyone is in a power struggle and you question how can you make yourself stand out this New Year. Every possible idea you have thought of is something that everyone else has thought of, and some have done it better. But you are confident that you can do better than in the past and continue to dig deep into your well of creativity. The good news is your boundless energy never lets you give up this search and you do end up finding something that brings you the financial independence that you have craved since the beginning of 2015. The search pretty much ends towards the end of the month and the path starts to reveal itself.

VIRGO AUG 23 - SEP 22



You embrace a new outlook for the New Year where you become more polite and neighbourly to your peers and family. You've had enough of being called aloof and cold, and you wish to show everyone you aren't really like that. You have many times been misunderstood, and you feel it's now time to put the record straight. It's going to be a nice refreshing change and the response is going to be very warm as well. However, just remember you can't really please everyone. So don't be too hard on yourself. You're a headstrong Virgo anyway, someone who lives life according to their own terms.

SAGITTARIUS NOV 22 - DEC 21



It's a rather laidback start to the New Year for you, Sagittarius. On the finances side, you opt to lie low – no big investments and keeping spending to a minimum. If it's not a genuine need, you're not getting it. You've never been this disciplined and this will attract the attention of close ones. Instead of being in the limelight, you choose to retreat and spend more time on your own as well. This could be to reflect or just to take it easy from a rather full-on 2015. On the whole, things plod along slowly and steadily when it comes to career and finances – just the way you like them to.

See your stars for the full year in this month's issue of L/V!

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ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

(for Dad)

By Stefania Hartley

Dad is about to shave when one of his children walks into the bathroom. The razor is resting on the polished marble countertop and the little one stretches one arm towards it.

"Don't touch it, sweetie," says Dad, collecting the instrument before the little hand grabs it.

"Why?" comes the child's favourite refrain.

"Because it's sharp and it can hurt you."

Dad reaches for the shaving gel. The child watches intently the blue jelly emerging from the Gillette can. Then, magically, as Dad massages it onto his cheeks, it transmutes into a milky foam.

"Dad, what's that for? A painkiller?" she asks.

"No, dear."

"What is it, then?"

"Tell you later," he mumbles, checking the watch on his left wrist while shaving with his right hand.

"Which animal's pee-pee would be better to drink if you had to survive in the desert?" another child demands to know, science magazines splayed all over the sitting room floor. But Dad has no time for animal-pee-pee questions. He slips into his loafers and he's out of the flat.

Walk, train, bus. Dad has managed to squeeze into a packed bus and feels lucky. The next one could have been a long wait. At the next stop, a semi-empty bus with the same number overtakes Dad's bus and rolls off without stopping. It will glide past the office well before Dad gets there.

At work, Dad tip-taps on his computer, speaks on the telephone, forces a laugh in response to colleagues' silly jokes, drags out of remote recesses of his brain the names of clients, sleeps with open eyes during after-lunch meetings.


On the train journey home, Dad finds a seat. Plugged into the BBC World Service, he's catapulted to the dizzy heights of world politics. He barely notices a weight on his left shoulder. A head. He ignores it, as you would on a train. The hair tickles his neck and dangles down his shoulder. It smells like a woman's. A hand flops onto Dad's thigh. A pale, manicured, hand. On his left thigh. Dad blushes. Can he still ignore this? Is it a candid camera, a practical joke or something? Dad looks around for signs of photo-recording devices. Nobody has noticed. If they have, they pretend not to. Dad jumps up at the next station, any station. The hand flops, the head jolts. Dad has disturbed the woman's sleep.

Dad is almost home. There's a letter in the mailbox. The girls will be happy: it's from Grandpa to them.

Squealing in excitement, four soft hands tear the envelope and pull out the latest David Walliams picture book. Dad fetches the telephone and dials Grandpa's number to thank him.

"I hope the girls don't mind that I've cut it to make it fit in the envelope."

Dad picks up the book. Grandpa's right: a pair of blunt scissors has feasted on it.

"I've cut at top and bottom," continues Grandpa, "so as not to lose the words..." 



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