

### GARY WINFIELD

REDSEA gallery is proud to present a collection of new paintings by Australian artist, Gary Winfield.

Winfield's work focuses on the current thinking on consciousness - what it is and where it is. His artwork endeavours to visualise the abstract notions of consciousness through splashes of vivid colours that fall and spider onto the canvas.

His art does not attempt to interpret science but instead to illustrate the sheer and ungraspable complexity of the ghost in the machine; the uncertainty of mixing paint a reference to the mathematics at the core of quantum physics.

"Physicists cannot predict the behaviour of a particle but can predict the probability of particle behaviour. In my work I am seeking a level of complexity that befits this consciousness, by using motion and movement through, across and into different depth spaces. My organic coloured shapes both create the space and are created by it." Gary Winfield, 2015.

View Winfield's newest collection in the gallery through the month of March.

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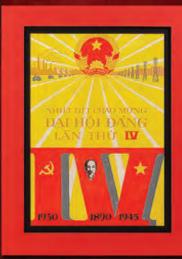








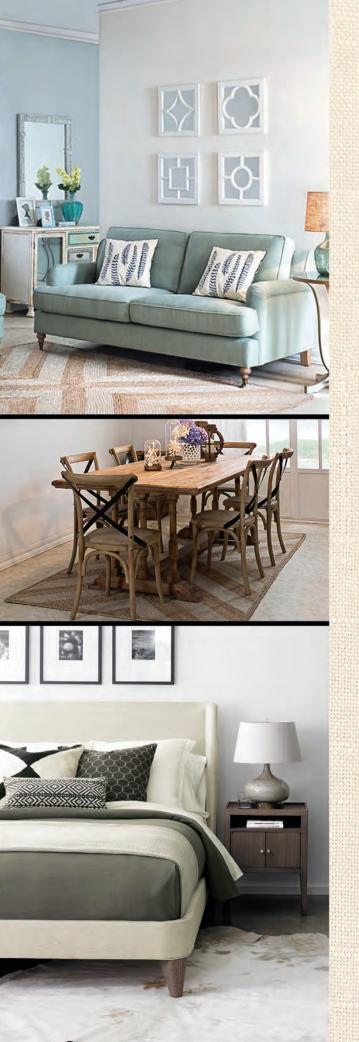












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### Editor's Letter

Every time I take my dogs for their "constitutional" walk, it goes like this: Riley – the dad and smaller one – jogs along out at the front of the pack, while Luke – the son and larger one – needs to be dragged along.

Riley cocks his little leg with such vigour he nearly tips over; Luke sometimes lifts his leg a few centimetres off the ground, and other times squats like a girl dog. Riley "goes" hundreds of times each walk, spreading his scent for the world to smell; Luke goes once.

You could call it "little man" syndrome I guess, but the difference in personality traits – especially within the same family – fascinates me. And it seems it's no different with other animals.

There are some fantastic videos of various creatures being circulated on social media, from pandas to pigs, and I feel it has helped us learn more about their characters. They're not so different from us! There's also some wonderful photography out there too.

It's so good that everyone has the opportunity to be creative now; mobile phones, GoPros and apps that let you alter images have all enabled us – and you can start when you're old enough to hold a phone or a tablet!

If you've taken some good shots lately (or even if your toddler got hold of your camera...) and want to try to win a four-night stay in a spectacular Koh Samui villa or a lavish champagne brunch, then make sure you enter our annual photo competition – see the details on page 156. We look forward to hearing from you!

Also, stay tuned for our revamp in April; we're sure you'll be pleased with what we've come up with!



### 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**

You'll never miss a concert, play, sale or exhibition again. Plus, upload your own events for free by hitting "Post an Event" on the homepage (top right).

### WHERE TO BUY A COPY

Head to expatliving.sg/about\_us for a list of retail outlets where you can buy the latest copy of *Expat Living*. Better still, subscribe at expatliving/shop.

### **HOW TO SELL YOUR OLD STUFF**

Looking to sell off items online or in the magazine? Post all the details and photos by hitting "Post a Notice" on the homepage (middle left).





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# GET RID OF VARICOSE VEINS SPIDER VEINS HAND VEINS FACIAL VEINS

- Do you have big, bulgy and ugly veins on your legs?
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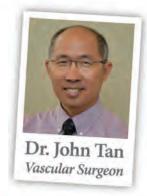
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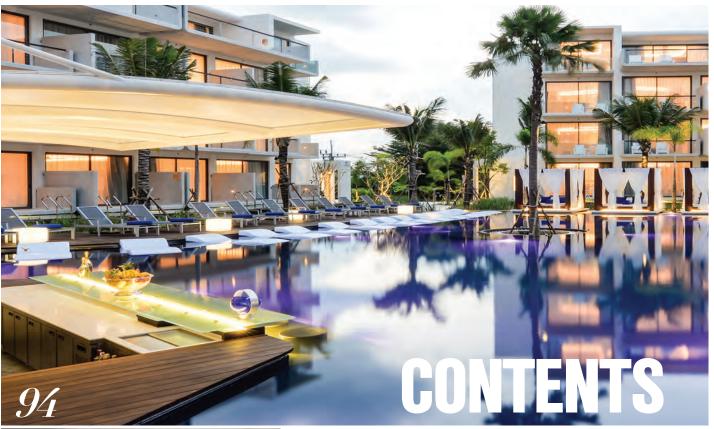
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The B.E.S.T. School

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### CHINA COLLECTION

BY ANNE LOCKETT



### UPFRONT New choices and things to do, buy and try

### LIGHTING UP **MARINA BAY**

This light festival is bound to send young and old scrambling for their cameras in a flurry of selfiesnapping. Combining visual art and illumination, i Light is a collection of more than 20 innovative



and sustainable light art installations, dreamed up by some very clever designers. Look out for wind-generated LED lights that change colour according to the strength of the breeze. Check the programme for a diverse range of food and entertainment experiences, including markets, boat tours and artist workshops every weekend. 4 to 27 March. 7.30pm to 11pm nightly. Marina Bay Waterfront Promenade. Free. ilightmarinabay.sg

### **GO CAR-FREE**

As Asian cities go, Singapore, with its treelined streets and well-maintained pathways, is one of the more pedestrian-friendly. In a bid to up the liveability factor and promote healthy lifestyles, a six-month Car-Free Sunday trial started at the end of February on a 4.7km stretch around the Civic District and CBD. Linking up landmarks including the Padang, the Asian Civilisations Museum and National Gallery Singapore, this scheme frees the roads from 7am to 9am for bikes, dogs, strollers and roller-bladers. The new initiative adds to the 10 existing car-free zones that operate at various times around the city, including Orchard Road, Circular Road, Haji Lane, Baghdad Street and more. ura.gov.sg ▶



### A SEA OF GREEN

The Irish community and their many friends will be out in full force to celebrate St Patrick's Day on 19 and 20 March, and everyone is welcome to join in the green-tinged carnival. The parade kicks off on the afternoon of 20 March at the Sir Stamford Raffles statue and finishes up near Boat Quav. On both days, get stuck into all things Irish including pints of Guinness and live music at venues around Boat Quay and Circular Road. facebook. com/stpatsdaySG ◀



Shoppers rejoice, as Boutiques at the Pit Building returns for another retail extravaganza. Gathered under one giant roof are 150 boutique spaces featuring home décor, toys and lifestyle, plus fashion, shoes, bags, jewellery and accessories. There's always something new at Boutiques, and this time you can catch some exclusive fashion brand and design collection launches. It's not all shopping though; chill with your pals in The Lounge or at the Champagne & Wine Bar, or divert the little ones at the new Art Space. Extended shopping hours run from 9am to 8pm on Friday 11 March and from 9am to 6pm on Saturday 12 March. Pit Building, 1 Republic Boulevard. facebook.com/ BoutiquesSingapore A

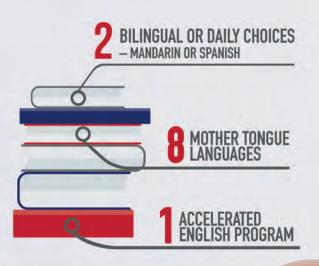
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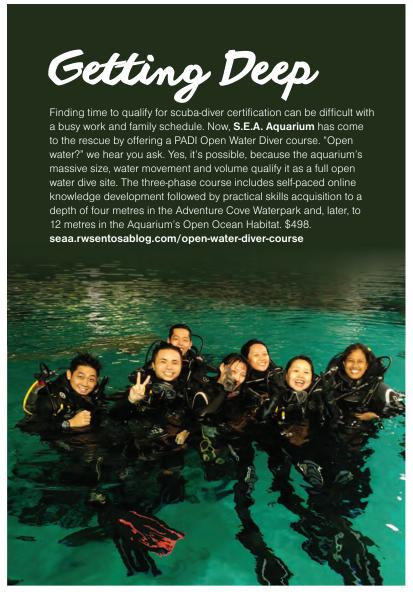








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### **CLASSICAL KIDS**

Calling all musicians! Whether you're learning the violin, oboe or another instrument, this journey through music history with the **Singapore Symphony Orchestra** led by Associate Conductor Jason Lai is sure to sort your Bachs from your Beethovens! Discover Baroque, Classical and Romantic music, be introduced to some of the composers, and hear their memorable music too. 18 March, 2pm and 4pm; 19 March, 2pm. Victoria Concert Hall. Tickets at sistic.com.sg and Sistic counters. **sso.org.sg** ▶



### RECOGNITION

Avondale Grammar School Principal Robert Stokoe returned to Singapore after a recent trip to the UK with something extra-special in his luggage: an OBE, or Order of the British Empire, presented to Robert for his service to education by the Prince of Wales himself. at a ceremony in Buckingham Palace just before Christmas. With over 30 years of leadership experience in international schools in the UK. Dubai and Singapore, Robert now heads Avondale Grammar School. the only international school in Singapore solely focused on the Australian Curriculum. avondale.edu.sg ▼



### Results that speak for themselves

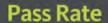
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**ATAR 2015** 

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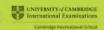












### CALENDAR MARCH 2016

### **SHOPPING & FAIRS**



### **CRAFT SINGAPORE 2016**

(4-6 MAR)

Held in conjunction with the i Light Marina Bay Festival, CRAFT is a weekend of culture and fun, featuring quality beers, delicious food and artistic lighting displays. Accompanying the great array of eats and drinks will be a host of local musicians and DJs performing across the weekend, as well as plenty of activities for families.

### Marina Bay. Tickets from Sistic. craftsingapore.com

### **BOUTIQUES: SPRING FAIR**

(11-12 MAR)

Grab a coffee or a glass of bubbles and enjoy a browse of this fair's chic, independent vendors, including items for the home, outdoor furnishings, fashion for adults and kids, and more. You'll definitely need to block out a half-day to explore all the fantastic pop-ups. **The** 

### Pit Building. facebook.com/BoutiquesSingapore

### EXPATS WEEKENDER FAIR AT PASARBELLA

(11-13 MAR)

This family-oriented, open-concept market has been a passion project from the start, and continues to stay true to its goal of being warm and community-based. **200 Turf Club Road. expatfairs.com** 

### THE FAIR BY FAIRS AND BAZAARS

(17-18 MAR)

The Fair's 2016 incarnation includes offerings from budding entrepreneurs, plus women's and kids' clothes, jewellery, pashminas, skincare, bags, toys and confectionery – so it's definitely worth pencilling this date in the diary! Pan Pacific Orchard. 10am to 6pm. 9737 2384



### SPORTS & FITNESS

### TERRY FOX RUN SINGAPORE 2016

MAR)

This non-competitive run for individuals, families and groups raises money for cancer research in the name of the Canadian athlete and activist. It's a day of celebrating Terry's legacy and helping keep alive his dream of finding a cure for cancer. The Big Splash, East Coast Park. tfrgeneralsg@gmail.com

### **GREEN CORRIDOR RUN 2016**

(6 MAR)

The last-ever Green Corridor Run will be held in conjunction with Singapore's World Water Day celebrations. World Water Day started as a United Nations initiative to focus attention on the 768 million people who lack access to fresh drinking water and sanitation.

### greencorridorrun.com.sg

### 2016 SUPER RUGBY

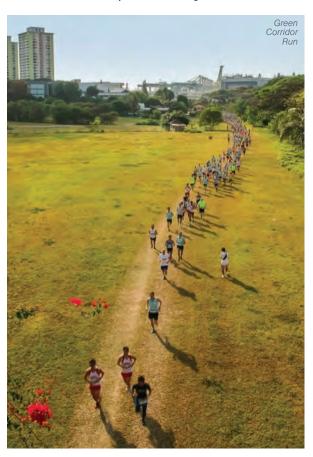
(12 MAR)

World-class rugby hits fever pitch as 2016 Super Rugby rumbles into Singapore! Don't miss the action as Japan's Sunwolves take on South African giants the Cheetahs at the National Stadium for the very first time. **sportshub.com.sg** 

### SUNWOLVES VS BULLS

(26 MAR)

More great rugby action hits the National Stadium with a Super Rugby fixture that sees Japan's Sunwolves take on the might of the Bulls from South Africa. **sportshub.com.sg** 





#### FAMILY

### COOKING COURSES WITH EXPAT KITCHEN

(1, 11, 18, 31 MAR)

A host of cookery courses are on offer this month at the popular Expat Kitchen. Choose from Mexican Fiesta, Gluten-free Baking, Healthy Thai Eats and Cooking with Quinoa. **Expat Kitchen. expat-kitchen.com** 

### THE BRITISH CLUB OPEN HOUSE

(6 MAR)

Spend a day touring the lovely grounds of The British Club and enjoy its renowned British cuisine. Fantastic membership offers are available for those who sign up. The British Club, 73 Bukit Tinggi Road. britishclub. org.sg

### DISNEY ON ICE PRESENTS MAGICAL ICE FESTIVAL

Enter the wintry world of the number-one animated feature film of all time, *Frozen*, meet sassy Rapunzel and her charming ally Flynn from *Tangled*, and get swept away by the characters from *Beauty and the Beast*. These and other Disney films feature in this ice-skating extravaganza. **Singapore Indoor Stadium. sportshub.com.sg** 

### SWING FOR THE KIDS 2016

(12-13 MAR)

Charity organisation Little Heroes' Dreams is holding its annual charity golf tournament, Swing for the Kids, and this year it will be bigger and more exciting, with a family nine-hole golf event and a Fun Olympics on the day before the main tournament. Special spectator areas have been set up for families and friends to watch the tournament.

Montigo Resorts Nongsa and Palm Springs Golf & Country Club, Batam. sftk2016.golfgenius.com



### PARENTING WORKSHOPS

(17-18 MAR)

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 and psychologist and one of Australia's foremost parenting experts, has developed parenting programmes to help parents manage children's difficult behaviour. **The Community Hall, 51 Sunrise Avenue.** parentshop.com.au/seasia

### **ETONHOUSE OPEN DAY**

(19 MAF

Visit EtonHouse International School at 8 Thomson Lane (playgroup, preschool and primary) for its Open Day and enjoy an exclusive 50 percent off the registration fee when enrolling. RSVP at **etonhouse.com.sg**.

### EASTER EVENT AT CLUNY COURT

(19 MAR)

Take the kids along to this fun event at the pretty corner shophouse building that is Cluny Court. Highlights include an award-winning magic show, complimentary activities and plenty of giveaways: caricatures, colouring, balloons, chocolates, candy and more. Cluny Court, Bukit Timah Road.





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### THEATRE, DRAMA & DANCE





### 5 SECONDS OF SUMMER

For the first time, the wildly popular Australian pop-rock band is coming to Singapore where they'll play a show at The Star Theatre as part of their global "Sounds Live Feels Live" tour. **Tickets through Sistic.** 

### MOONBEATS ASIA PRESENT PANAMA, LIVE IN SINGAPORE

(6 MAR)

Marrying the timeless power of a good song with an eye to the future, Australian electronic artists Panama are winning hearts with their trademark power ballads. Their Always EP saw them top the Hype Machine charts, with more than three million Soundcloud plays of the title track.

### The Substation Theatre. facebook.com/ moonbeatsasia



### THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR & OTHER ERIC CARLE FAVOURITES

(5-13 MAR)

A returning crowd favourite, this theatrical showcase of the amazing works of children's author Eric Carle is by the Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia, Canada, and is sure to get the creative juices flowing in your young

kids. Drama Centre Theatre, 100 Victoria Street. sistic.com.sg

### LEE STRASBERG'S METHOD ACTING (INTRO) COURSE

(7 MAR – 25 APR)

Aspiring thespians, listen up! If you're looking to enhance your skills, this course highlights Strasberg's method of bringing out the inner life of a character. Actors trained in this method use their personal experiences to inhabit characters.

### Haque Centre of Acting and Creativity. methodactingasia.com

### THE BOY WHO CRIED WOLF

(UNTIL 19 MAR)

Based on Aesop's classic fairy tale, *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* teaches us why it's important to tell the truth and how even one lie can make a world of difference. **Jubilee Hall, Raffles Hotel. sistic.com.sg** 

#### ART

### JANE LEE: FREELY FREELY

(UNTIL 5 MAR)

The Singaporean artist's latest solo exhibition is of original works produced during her residency at STPI. Lee often blurs the line between the two- and three-dimensional with her visually stunning and tactile pieces. Singapore Tyler Print Institute. stpi.com.sg

### ARTWALK@WESSEX

(12-13 MAR)

Participating artists will once again open their doors for this annual art walk. Wander through the open spaces and visit fabulous studios showcasing paintings, prints, photography, ceramics and more. 5 Westbourne Road. facebook.com/

#### 5 Westbourne Road. facebook.com/ ArtWalkWessex

RAW MOVES PRESENT REPERTORY PLATFORM (R.E.P) 2016 (17-19 MAR)

Interested in dance? New York-based Singaporean artist Jo-anne Lee's *Bound* transforms the theatre into a boxing ring, challenging the physical limits of strength and endurance.

### HOME

### SENSES - THE SINGAPLURAL 2016

Returning with a new theme, "Senses - The art and science of experiences", The SingaPlural encompasses an agglomeration of scents, textures, sights, sounds and tastes, with participating designers invited to build their narratives in a sensual sphere of experience, where visitors are able to fully immerse themselves. 99 Beach Road. singaplural.

### MAISON & OBJET ASIA

(8-11 MAR)

The third edition of this annual trade event will feature a curated showing of high-end interior design concepts and solutions for the Asia-Pacific region, allowing property developers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, interior designers and architects to gain insights into recent market developments. Marina Bay Sands. maison-objet.com/en/asia

### INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR & THE DÉCOR SHOW

(10-13 MAR)

This well-known fair features exhibitors of dining room furniture, handcrafted furniture, bedroom furniture, upholstery, occasional furniture, components, soft furnishings and more. Singapore Expo, 1 Expo Drive. iffs.com.sg



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# **PLAN AHEAD**

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### singaporeyachtshow.com

### TRUE NORTH GALA DINNER

Get those glad rags on and enjoy an award-winning menu and free-flow drinks at this fun gala dinner, hosted by the Canadian Association of Singapore. Members, \$200; non-members, \$250; table of 10, \$1,600. Four Seasons Singapore.

### HSBC WORLD RUGBY SINGAPORE SEVENS 2016

(16-17 APR)

Get ready to rock, ruck and rumble as Singapore welcomes the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series to the National Stadium in April. This is shaping up to be an amazing spectacle of sport, with an electrifying atmosphere to boot.

### The National Stadium. sportshubtix.sg

### MADAGASCAR LIVE!

(21-24 APR)

Everyone's favourite Madagascar characters will star in a live theatrical show based on the blockbuster DreamWorks franchise, reliving the fun and humour of the animals and their escapades, brilliantly recreated in a stage production of lively storytelling, dance and music - including, of course, the hit song "Move It, Move It". Tickets through Sistic.

### AFFORDABLE ART FAIR SINGAPORE

(22-24 APR)

The spring edition of this wonderful art fair is back. Anyone who thinks great art is out of their financial reach can check out the "\$1,000 Wall" to pick up a bargain from an aspiring artist; you never know, it might be worth much more than that in years to come! Bring the young ones as there's a kids' corner, too. F1 Pit Building. affordableartfair.com

### SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK - ROMEO AND JULIET

(27-29 APR, 30 APR - 22 MAY)

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## LETTERS Readers' thoughts and comments



We want to hear from you! Send us your thoughts on the magazine, or on any subject under the sun. To help her celebrate her upcoming trip to Bhutan, Julia Hynes wins a bottle of champagne!

### Double Bouquet

I just had to comment on two excellent articles in Expat Living's February issue. First, Kim Forrester's thoughtful piece titled Healthy Challenge. If only we could all take on board the advice that every challenge can be seen as a springboard to greater growth, understanding and fulfilment. The other was the article on Bhutan, one of the few Asian countries I've not yet got around to visiting during our nine years in the region. By the way, nearly five of those years have been in Singapore, and I'm still addicted to Expat Living. Keep them coming!

Julia Hynes



### Tech Boundaries

I thought your Editor's Letter on parents setting some boundaries around technology was good (and brave). We seem to think alike about what parents can control at home. I also think that you would like our one-day Engaging Adolescents course for professionals, which we are bringing to Singapore on 18 March.



Michael Hawton michaelhawton.com | parentshop.com.au

Ed: Thank you! Readers, you can go to the Parent Shop website for details of this course and another titled Talk Less Listen More (17 March), for parents of children aged two to 12.

### Get Published!

I'm a keen amateur writer - and mother of two young kids - newly arrived in Singapore, and I just love your mag. At long last, my younger son is about to go into preschool, so I'm hoping to find some time to follow my passion. Do you look at freelance submissions, and if so, what sort of articles are you looking for?

Anna Dijkstra

Ed: Contributing to our Parting Shot on the last page of the magazine would be a great way to start, and we'll publish your byline. For this page, we're always open to fun, witty, informative or insightful comment from our expat readers - around 500 words on any subject that's related in any way to the expat experience. Send it to shamus.sillar@ expatliving.sg. He looks forward to hearing from you.



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# READER AWARDS 2016

The annual Expat Living
Reader Awards are back for another year! Once again, we need your opinions and recommendations on the best of what Singapore has to offer, and with your wonderful contributions we can support businesses that are doing a fantastic job, as well as help spread the word to others.

Vote for your favourite businesses in the following categories, and help highlight them to other Expat Living readers:

#### HOME CATEGORY

Best furniture store Best home accessories store Best insurance, service & financial advisors Best antiques store

#### **FITNESS CATEGORY**

Best yoga/Pilates studios

#### ARTS & LEISURE CATEGORY

Favourite photography studio

#### WINE & DINE CATEGORY

Favourite champagne brunch Favourite wine bar Favourite restaurant (higher-end) Favourite afternoon tea Best butcher Best online grocer

#### TRAVEL CATEGORY

Best airline Favourite hotel, resort or villa in Asia Best travel provider & booking site

#### **FASHION & BEAUTY CATEGORY**

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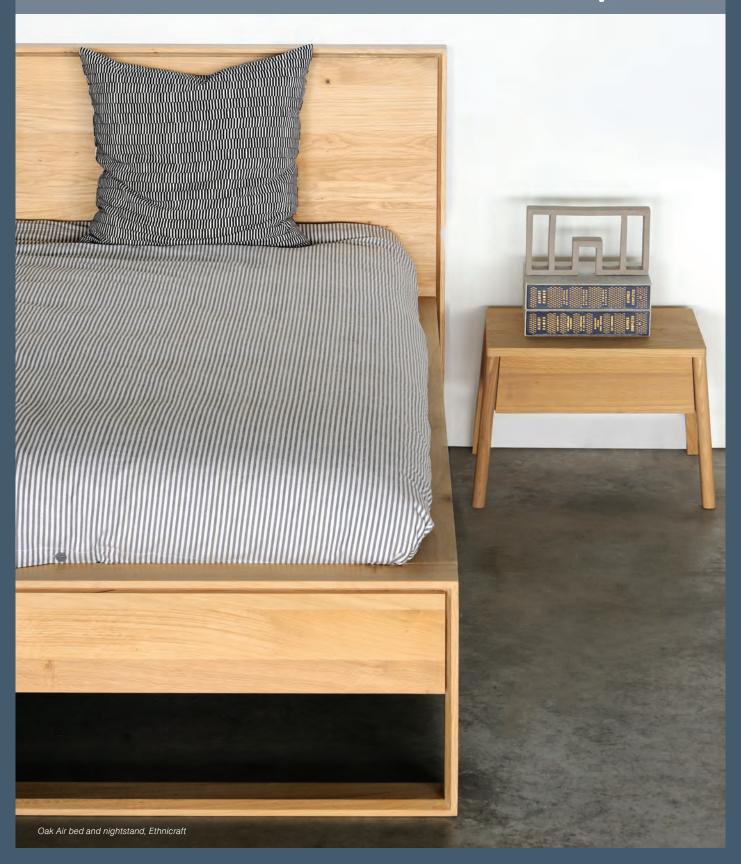


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Home



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#### **CURRENT COLLECTION**

Marvellous, magnificent or matchless? We don't know what the M stands for in M Collection, but we do know that new furniture has arrived at Gallery 278, including the M Chair, the M Folding Table and the M Bench. 278 River Valley Road. gallery278.com



# The Rug Maker has collaborated with design collective Outofstock Design and will be launching its new rug collection, The Tropicals, this March at design fair Maison & Objet. The six new designs are inspired by the natural forms of tropical flora, and are the product of three years of research by Outofstock Design into the art of rug-making. therugmaker. com.sg | outofstockdesign.com

The new minimalist lounging collection at outdoor furniture specialist OHMM offers practicality and comfort. SLIM-X features thinline frames, smooth corners and generous seating (great for smaller spaces). Choose from an array of lounge chairs, sofas, chaise longues, daybeds, side tables and coffee tables at its showroom at 30 Merchant Road, #03-09 Riverside Point. ohmm.sg ◀

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#### **GREEN HOME**

Sustainable design firm **Pomeroy Studio** has just completed Singapore's first carbon-negative home that generates more green power than it consumes. The B House is a private commission in Bukit Timah, and uses solar energy that produces surplus energy that can be fed back into the grid. For more on the house and its innovative design, go to **pomeroystudio.sg. V** 





### Design Dates

There are two exciting design fairs to explore this month. **Maison & Objet**, now in its third year in Singapore, is on from 8 to 11 March at Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre, and the ever-successful **International Furniture Fair Singapore (IFFS)** runs from 10 to 13 March at Singapore Expo. For more information, go to **maison-objet.com/en/asia** and **iffs.com.sg**.

#### **CUSTOMER ACCOLADE**

Singapore-based interior design house **Mara Miri** has been awarded best customer service award by online home remodelling and design platform Houzz.com. Mara Miri has projects in Europe and Asia under its belt, and has recently launched a furniture range that can be customised in a wide range of colours and finishes. For more information, go to **maramiri.com**.



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# LAS KAMPONG

TULA GOODWIN and her husband Henry live together with Daisy (8), Agatha (5) and Margot (3) in a century-old Peranakan house in a Chancery cul-de-sac. On a weekday morning, it's hard to believe how quiet this District 11 neighbourhood is; the chirping of birds is the only sound to be heard.

By Verne Maree; photography by Ken Tan with family portraits by Katie Martin-Sperry

he word *tula* means "be quiet" in the language of the Shona people of Zimbabwe, where Tula was born and spent her early years before being packed off aged nine to England and boarding school. She's not sure whether it came from her nanny, or from her younger sister being unable to pronounce Tula's given name, Victoria.

Either way, she has fully embraced the nickname – and as we enter the house together she tells me how much she revels in its peace and quiet. The silence is short-lived, however, as three blonde bombshells hurtle out of their playroom to welcome Mum home from gym. A couple of weeks into the long December holidays, it's evident that three lively little girls could be a full-time job in themselves; but that's by no means the case, as I'm about to find out.

### What brought you to Singapore from London in early 2008?

Singapore ticked a number of boxes for us. It was good for Henry's career as a lawyer, and I liked the idea of living somewhere other than England and being able to travel around Asia. It's the classic story; we planned a two-year adventure, and we're still here eight years later.

Not that it was all easy: I was heavily pregnant with Daisy, so Henry came here ahead of us and I followed later with a six-week-old baby. I remember having to bath her in the sink in the serviced apartment we stayed in before our container arrived!

#### How did you find this house?

When we lived in Espana, a cluster house complex in nearby Dyson Road, I used to walk past this house and wonder about it. One day, I saw a listing on a property website for an "original Peranakan house" in Chancery Hill Road. I just knew it was this one. So Henry and I took a walk down here and happened to spy the owner; she and her family had lived in the old house for many years before building a big, new one just across our garden.



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She showed us around and I immediately fell in love with the place - its peaceful, colonial feel somehow reminded me of Africa. Though it's a hundred years old, it still has almost all its original features: high ceilings with suspended fans, wooden floor beams that you can peek through to the area under the house, which is raised on stilts kampong-style. Interestingly, we're told that the two little steps at the back are where women used to enter the house, while men came in through the front entrance.

Another wonderful feature is a cool verandah that runs the length of the house. Effectively open on both sides, and with no glass in any of the downstairs rooms, the house is designed to catch the breeze and stay cool. That said, it was absolute hell during the recent haze. The kids had to be confined to either the playroom or their bedrooms.













**Top:** "My living room carpet is from Ruby Slipper; there's another in the bedroom. Michael Tan made the big sofa, and Homes Etc. made the coffee table ottoman and the sofa table; the smaller sofa and the armchairs came with us from the UK, but I had them recovered here using UK-sourced fabric. Most of the fabrics, in fact, including the dusty-pink cushion covers, were purchased in the UK and made up here. The cabinet is from Taylor B; I added the bone-inlaid handles."

**Right bottom:** "The cabinet is from Originals and the butterfly collection from an antiques store in London."



#### Did you have to do much before moving in?

Yes, quite a bit! There wasn't much of a kitchen, so we installed a proper one in the outbuilding; we repainted and sprayed the bathrooms white (they were bright pink and yellow), replaced the showers, loo seats and taps and added fans. We also replaced the harsh fluorescent tube lighting in the bedrooms with warmer, more attractive lights. And we turned what was a helper's room into a bright playroom for the girls and a study for me.

#### What's it like to live here?

It's lovely to have a garden like this. I brought in the children's slide and the swing, and our neighbours lent us their croquet set to play croquet on the lawn. It's quite fun! After supper, the kids in the neighbourhood scoot and ride their bikes up and down the road; being a cul-de-sac, it's pretty safe.

Having a vacant and overgrown field at the end of the garden enhances the sense of living with nature, but it's a mixed blessing. All sorts of wildlife comes in: squirrels that try to nest in our ante-room, wild kampong chickens, a couple of cobras, non-venomous paradise tree snakes at the gate, even a monitor lizard who emerged from a drain during the unusually dry period last February.

There's plenty of space for our dog Sumba to run around in. (He's a rescue dog who was found on a construction site.) We named him after the Indonesian island of Sumba, having visited Nihiwatu resort on honeymoon in 2006; Henry chose it for its idyllic surf break. Funny to think that we spent the first night at The Fullerton Hotel here in Singapore, little knowing that we'd end up living and raising our family here!





Left: "Our bedroom furnishings are an interesting mix: Corla fabric was used for the blinds and the bedhead; the bee cushions are from England; the pink throw and the mirrored dressing table came from Bali. The budgie picture is from the Affordable Art Fair (I'm a fan). Both the bone-inlaid chair and the rug are by Lucy Ridgwell's Ruby Slipper.

The children's spacious playroom is also sometimes my office; it's located in the outbuilding, along with the kitchen, a storeroom and our helper Dolor's bedroom."

Right: "We're lucky that all the bedrooms are of a good size. Margot's tutu collection gives hers a pop of colour."











### How would you describe your style, and where do your furnishings come from?

I'd say it's traditional, eclectic and colonial. Though it includes masses of things picked up both here and during our travels in Asia, I feel my style could translate to wherever I go. Henry thinks I have too many pictures of animals, however, and I admit there's a lot of silver bits and bobs to clean!

#### Finally, tell us about your business.

Before Aggie was born, I started importing Masai-beaded belts, dog collars and leads, selling them in pet shops and at fairs. More recently, I set up a property, travel and lifestyle PR business with Fiona Vogel, an old colleague of mine from London who had been posted to Singapore. We're called VogelGoodwin.

We've just been involved in the international launch of Hotel Jen – behind Tanglin Mall where Traders Hotel had been for 30 years. It's under Shangri-La management, targeted mainly at business travellers and those coming via Singapore to Australia. I can recommend the coffee at its very nice artisanal café, Jen's Kitchen on the Go.

# With three children to bring up, plus a business to run, how do you manage your time?

It requires a bit of juggling, I must say, especially as I still pick up the kids and do their homework with them. Whenever possible, I aim for a four-day week, reserving Friday to do things with my girls. For calls to UK clients, I tend to wait until after the children's bedtime. What's so amazing about living in Singapore is that I have the great help of someone like Dolor. I don't think I'd be able to do all this in London.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Ruby Slipper rubyslipper.com.sg

Clare Pannell (for bespoke greeting cards) clarepannell.com

Tory Lodder (for bespoke fine jewellery) torylodderdesigns.com

Katie Martin-Sperry (photographer) katiemsperryphotography.com

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# GRAND DESIGNS

We sat down with interior designer and principal of **Design Intervention**, NIKKI HUNT, and found out what spurred the recent stunning transformation of the company's Dempsey showroom, as well as her views on the industry and her business.

By Amy Brook-Partridge



# Tell us, how has the studio changed and what motivated the redevelopment?

When we first moved into the Loewen Gardens location we were a small team of five and the space seemed enormous. Now we're a team of 25 and we've been constantly tripping over each other in the cramped area. When the hair salon and spa decided to move across the road, also to new and bigger premises, we grabbed the opportunity to expand. Finally we have some space to breathe!

### How would you describe the new location?

This is very much a working studio and so it was important that it had all the practical functionality of a 21st-century office, but at the same time we wanted it to reflect what we do, which is high-end residential design. We wanted it to feel less like an office and more like a beautiful home. We modelled our meeting rooms after dining rooms and a library that we had designed for one of our favourite home projects. At the same time, we wanted the interior to complement the elegant colonial façade of the building; so it has an inherently classic feel reinterpreted with a contemporary edge.

# With the hindsight that comes from 12 years in the business, what would you tell yourself if you were just starting out?

Starting a business is hard, especially in the early years when there is no one else to rely on. When I worked for a big firm, there was always IT support to call, or someone to cover for you when you were on holiday. When it's your own business, though, you can never put it down; you have to be constantly available for everything, from winning the client to dealing with the gripes of the cleaning lady, or doing the cleaning yourself when she doesn't turn up!

So the important thing is to make sure you love what you do. I simply love design. I count my lucky stars every day that I get to make a living out of something that I absolutely adore, and because I love it I don't mind the late nights and weekends – even the trivial and mundane aspects – because there's nothing else I'd rather be doing with my time.

And then, when we really began to grow quickly, I took on a partner, Andrea Savage, who has been with me now for four years. It was a big decision to share my "baby" with someone else, but I've never looked back, and the company



### count my lucky stars every day that I get to make a living out of something that I absolutely adore

has grown from strength to strength since then. The saying really is true: if you find the right partner, "a problem shared is a problem halved".

It also means that I can finally take a holiday and know that there is someone to cover for me. And perhaps, most importantly, it's just more fun! Success is so much sweeter when you have someone to share it with.

# How would you like to see the next 12 years pan out for Design Intervention?

We've recently been named Best Residential Interior Designer in the Asia-Pacific region for the second consecutive year at the International Property Awards. It has taken us 12 years to establish ourselves at this level. I think it would be wonderful if we could go on to win the title of Best in the World!

It seems unthinkable that our small Singapore design practice could even dream of aiming so high; 12 years ago it was unimaginable that we would be considered amongst the best in Asia. My advice is to dream big and aim high – who knows what can be achieved?

### What trends are you seeing this season?

The biggest trend among our clients is for bespoke items. In today's globalised world, where the same international brands are stocked in malls from Bangkok to Birmingham, interiors are increasingly homogenised. It's becoming more and more difficult to personalise our homes, and so many of our clients are looking for bespoke pieces that can add a unique signature.



#### Nikki's Favourite Things

**Eating out...** "My favourite restaurant in Singapore is Tatsuya Japanese restaurant at the Goodwood Park Hotel. Ask for a seat at the sushi counter and let head chef Sasaki San unleash his culinary magic."

**Vacation...** "My favourite hotel in the region is the InterContinental in Danang, Vietnam. It's a short direct flight from Singapore, Danang airport is small and immigration is fast, and the hotel is an easy drive, all of which makes it ideal for a weekend getaway. But most of all, it's exquisitely designed, with every small detail considered, and the food is great too. There's even a restaurant run by a Michelin-starred French chef."

Design inspiration... "Everywhere and anywhere; I find inspiration all around me. I might notice the colours of a colleague's dress or a tree with an interesting shape, or when I relax with a television programme I will notice the set design. Fans of Downton Abbey may recognise the lines on the dramatic four-metre sofa in our showroom, although I have reinterpreted it to be relevant today and given it a fun tropical twist.

"If design is in your blood, you really can't turn it off – you find ideas almost everywhere. A better question for me is where I don't find inspiration; and I can honestly say that there is only one place: on the ski slopes. There is very little to see that is not covered in snow, and I'm such a bad skier that I need all my powers of concentration to keep from falling down; consequently, a ski slope is the one place where I truly switch off and relax."

Design Intervention is at 75E Loewen Road, Tanglin Village. Call 6506 0920 or visit designintervention.com.sg for more information.



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The two bright paintings behind the sofa are from Venezuela. "One shows a typical Venezuelan drum dance, and then there are the parrots; people say I speak like a parrot!" The Thai figures to the left of the sofa were from Jim Art at Holland Road Shopping Centre.

# COLOURFUL ECLECTIC

By Amy Brook-Partridge; photography by Ken Tan

A graphic designer by trade, Venezuelan expat CAROLINA LABASTIDAS has cast her professional eye over her Singapore home and turned it into an eclectic and glitzy treasure trove. We met up with her to find out how she combines her home décor finds in such a stylish way.



**Who lives here:** Maria Carolina Labastidas, ten-year-old son Albert, helper Jenny and pet Chihuahua Lola.

**Time spent in Singapore:** They arrived in January 2015 from Guangzhou, where they spent three-and-a-half years.

**Size of home:** 300 square metres, 4-plus-1 bedrooms in a four-storey walk-up in Bukit Timah.

**Style of home:** Refreshingly eclectic, and a reflection of Carolina herself.

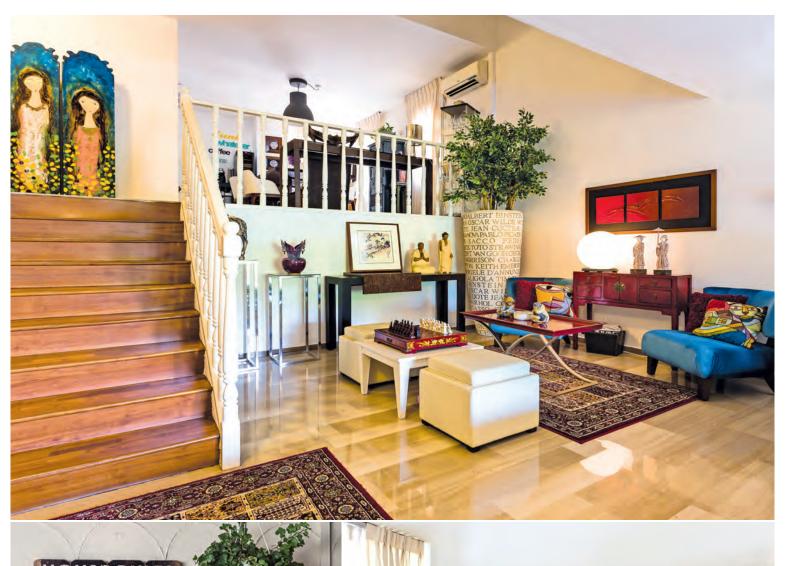
riginally from Venezuela, Carolina has lived overseas for eight years, first in Panama for three-and-a-half years, then Guangzhou for the same length of time, and now here in Singapore for just over a year. Her job as a design leader for Procter & Gamble has seen her travel across the regions of Central and South America and the Asia-Pacific, allowing her also to indulge her passion for home décor. "I love to buy pieces on impulse, and then find a way to make them work at home and fit into my style. I don't follow a particular style, just my heart," she explains.

Her four-bedroom walk-up home on Shelford Road in Bukit Timah is the perfect size to house not just her ten-year-old son Albert and dog Lola, but also her varied collection of furniture and furnishings. Her 23-year-old daughter, Maria Paulina, otherwise known as Polly, now studies overseas, but there are still plenty of reminders of her in photographs along the walls, and there's also a bedroom styled just for her for when she visits.

"When I landed last year I was looking at newer property developments, but I soon realised my furniture wouldn't fit. This place was perfect, the space was big and, even though I do love new things, I also love older places." Décor-wise, Carolina says, she's going through her blue and grey phase right now. "I don't follow a specific style," she reiterates. "Everything I have in my house I have because I saw it and loved it, and then I make it work. Sometimes I will refresh the style and look."

### **Opposite page:** The "house

rules" wall hanging is from Monoyono in Plaza Singapura.







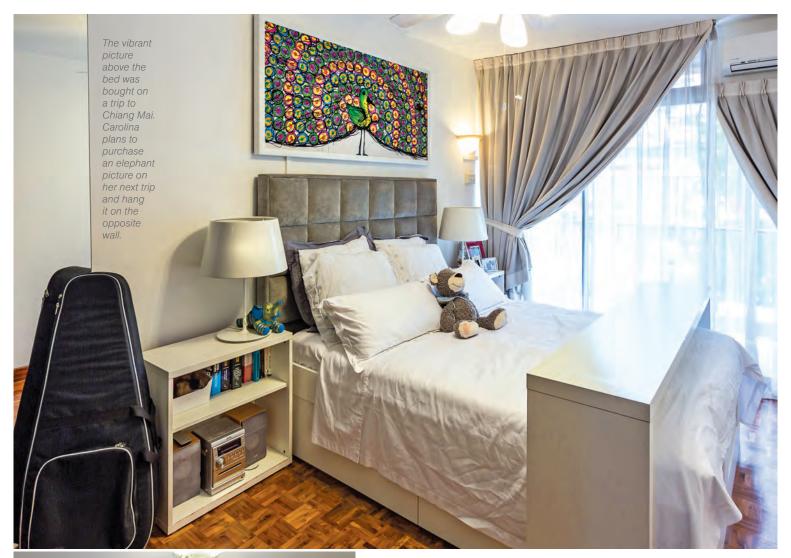
# "I don't follow a particular style, just my heart"

There's a wide range of pieces around her home from a variety of countries, including the large, vivid Venezuelan paintings behind the sofa, a second-hand rocking chair from Panama in the living area, custom-made furniture from China, and plenty else from Argentina, Peru and Mexico. Corners and alcoves are grouped together to create cohesion, yet no room has one specific overall theme; rather, there are pockets of different décor.

One example of this is the living area and its challenging L-shape. Working with the shape, Carolina has created three different zones: one in front of the balcony, one beside the television that gives a cosy touch but is also integrated into the living room, and the small area in front of the entrance to her home. "I have no physical resources to separate the areas because it's a rented apartment, so colour combination was the key. While the hall is dominated by blue, cream and red, the television area is brown and black, and the main living space mixes all these colours because it's the focal point. This is the key reason I chose two big paintings for that wall, with tons of warm and vibrant colours together."









#### **Future Plans**

While living in Panama, Carolina and her then husband decided to divorce, and she admits that although she found the ensuing experience in China an exciting one, as a single woman it was also tough. "It did give me a chance to breathe, to learn about myself and to confront new things, but I knew I couldn't stay for much longer than I did."

Still, she wouldn't change the experiences she's had in the past eight years for anything. "It's been amazing and I've been superhappy with all of my international assignments; but Singapore has given me a chance to connect with so many different cultures, a magical thing for me as a person and a designer."

Carolina isn't quite sure where she will end up, but right now she has put some roots down in Singapore, with Albert attending the Australian International School and enjoying the freedom and security the city offers to families. "It's the first freedom of that kind that he's experienced."

Carolina also has a strong circle of friends, and loves to entertain at home every couple of months. "I didn't immediately immerse myself in the Latin community as I had done with my previous postings." Instead, she opened herself up to a more culturally diverse friendship group, though says she's now starting to make more Hispanic connections.

Clearly happy with her current situation, Carolina's future plans are uncertain. "I don't know if I'll go back to Panama, but at some point I suppose I'll have to settle down; I can't keep jumping around like a frog," she laughs.



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# RECOMMENDATIONS

Food and Drinks

Belmonte Latin Food ("a nice, small store that sells Mexican white cheese and other Latin delicacies") 5 Ridgewood Close #G5 Ridgewood Condo Retail Wing 9652 9274 | belmontemex.com

Bochinche ("an Argentinian restaurant for extraordinary beef and fantastic 22 Martin Road, #02-01

6235 4990 | bochinche.com.sg

Coastes ("a wonderful place to spend mum-and-kid time; you can eat on the beach and it has a great menu, particularly if your kids are a bit difficult with food, like mine are!") Siloso Beach 6631 8938 | coastes.com

Vasco ("great cocktails - try the mojitos, and the great Latin kitchen serves delicious ceviche, empanadas and chimichurris") 42 Hong Kong Street 8799 7085 | vascosingapore.com

#### Pampering

Modern Beauty Salon ("for facials and massages") Various locations modernbeautysalon.com

Wow Hair ("a great place for a keratin treatment") 211 Holland Avenue, #02-10D 6466 5200

Bungalow 55 ("I found the cushions in front of the television there") #01-05A Cluny Court 501 Bukit Timah Road 6463 3831 | thebungalow55.com

Far East Flora ("all the plants on the balcony are from there") 555 Thomson Road 6254 6662 | fareastfloragarden.com



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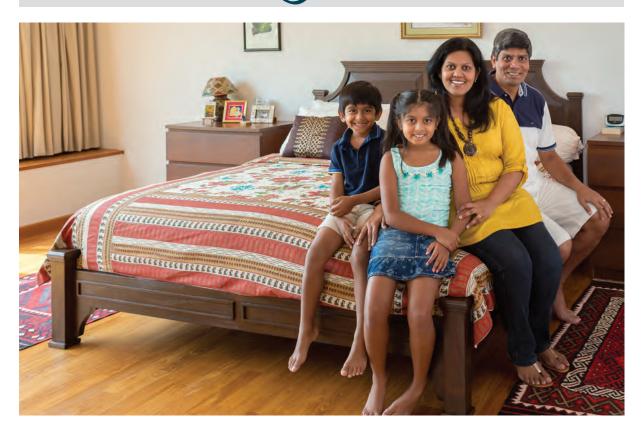
Register by:Calling 64620028
or email to
hedgerscarpets@singnet.com.sg



# SLUMBER in Style

Find out how our readers picked their favourite bedroom pieces to make bedtime a stylish time.

Photography by Ken Tan



# Roland and Charlene Saldanha, and children Kaelyn and Keegan, Indian

When we moved to Singapore recently, we chose not to bring our old bed with us as we wanted to have a teak bed custom-made in Asia. Our intention was to get the bed made to order and then work around that when picking other pieces such as the bedside tables. We were looking for a reputable place to make our bed. Product design, quality and finish were of utmost importance to us.

Scanning through the Expat Living website, I stumbled upon an article on

bedroom furniture and that's where I learnt about Gallery 278. We were impressed with the quality of their products, the designs we saw and the reviews we read online. We met with Phillip from Gallery 278 at least three times before we finalised everything. I designed my own bed and gave my sketch to Philip, who then provided us with a final drawing that included dimensions. They informed us that it would be several weeks before our bed arrived, and they loaned us one in the meantime.

We wanted a king-sized bed with some Asian elements, but not the kind of opium bed that we saw everywhere we went. We also wanted it to be made from reclaimed teak, and we decided on a darker colour that would stand out against our honey-coloured wooden floor and also tie in with other elements in the room.

We're very happy with our bed and with our experience at Gallery 278. They kept to the timeline, communications were always spot on, and we felt the price was good for a custom-made, quality product. Most importantly, they were able to make my design come alive.

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

# Yolanda Ribeiro, South African

We first shopped at Ni-Night over six years ago, when our son, then seven, wanted a bunk bed. Our requirements were simple: a wooden bed, preferably white, with an option of using it as two singles in the future – and it had to be durable.

We took the whole family to Majella's home on the East Coast, where she used to run her business before she opened her shophouse in Joo Chiat Place, and my mum ended up buying us the bunk bed as a gift. We also purchased mattresses and ordered the trundle underneath. I had been a little unsure about a trundle, but it turned out to be a great investment as my son set up his Lego army in it and every night we could wheel it back under the bed. It now holds the extra mattress and linen we keep for our quests and their kids.



We are delighted with our Ni-Night purchases and continue to support the shop; in fact I recently bought two wrought iron beds, which I love for their shabby chic charm, as well as two duvet sets in navy blue to refresh my now-teenage son's room.

Our beds are now six-and-a-half years old and have survived three home moves, sleepovers, tent conversions and lots of rough play. We recently converted

the bunk to two single beds more suited to a teenager, which instantly transformed the room.

It's great to start a relationship with a small business and to see it grow and succeed, and we look forward to investing in some new pieces.

Ni-Night 7 Joo Chiat Place 6440 7567 | ni-night.com



# Srijay and Sanchita Ghosh, Saket (3) and Shiven (3 months), Indian

We were replacing our queen-size bed with a king-size one, and we needed a desk for our master bedroom. For both pieces we were keen on rosewood or mahogany with an antique touch, and were interested in a four-poster bed.

We had read about The Past Perfect Collection online as well as in various home and lifestyle magazines, and when we visited the shop we were immediately enticed by the collection. It clearly gave the impression that each piece had been carefully and lovingly selected, and transformed painstakingly to its current condition. Each piece carried its colonial past with it, and speaking to Marie-Hélène and Pieter further affirmed our choice.

We purchased a four-poster bed and a table, both rosewood pieces from Bombay that belong to India's mid-19th-century British colonial period. These fit perfectly with our requirements and our overall home furniture setting, which is a mix of oriental Chinese and colonial India.

We're highly pleased with our purchases and have had many complimentary comments from guests. We will definitely consider purchasing further items, including cupboards and trunks.

It's essential to take the time to see a range of choices before making your purchase decision on these hardwood items, as they're a long-term investment. After all, furniture makes up the home, and a home is a reflection of the family living in it.

The Past Perfect Collection 896 Dunearn Road, #02-01D Sime Darby Centre 6737 3078 | pastperfect.sg







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( Pasarbella @ The Grandstand )

# Andrea and Helmut Krebber, German

Our old sofa bed was no longer comfortable, so we were looking for a king-size bed for guests and for our children when they visit from Germany. We will also want to take it back to Germany when we leave Singapore in a couple of years, so it had to be durable and fit with our style. I read about Originals in *Expat Living*, and thought the pictures in the article were amazing. I like to mix modern contemporary with furniture from Southeast Asia, and Originals' mix of industrial shabby-chic and ethnic style attracted me immediately.

We purchased a beautiful natural teak bed from Indonesia, from the Java recycled range. The legs have some distinctive carving, would fit with almost any style and are very robust, which is important for when you move back home. The wood used by Originals is old enough to survive the move to a drier climate, too; we have a number of expat friends who have moved back to other countries, particularly within Europe, and whose Asian furniture has split and cracked.

I've also purchased a grey Indian recycled dining table and Vincent Sheppard chairs, old corn mills used as a coffee table and stool, mirrors, and a carpet with amazing colours.

We're happy with every single piece, and I often go and have a look at new things that have come in. I would still like to buy one of the grey glass-cabinets, but would have to move to a bigger apartment first as our space is already full. My advice would be to just go to the showroom and get inspired!

Originals 896 Dunearn Road #02-03 Sime Darby Centre 6471 9918 | originals.com.sg



# Sandra Pineda, Mexican

My husband and I recently decided to replace our own mattress and were looking at either a spring mattress or memory foam; as far as we were aware they were the firmest and and therefore best for the back. We tested our coilspring one at the department store, lying down for at least half an hour; all seemed OK, but we've since realised that 30 minutes on a bed is not the same as spending all night in it!

While we were looking for a bigger bed and a new mattress for our guest room, we visited Sofzsleep to try their latex mattresses. We lay down on one and it was amazingly comfortable. Despite it being supposedly for the guest room, my son now uses it instead. Purchasing the bed and mattress was very easy; we didn't have to wait for delivery, and the price was very good.



We're now looking to change our recently purchased, very expensive and not-so-comfortable coil-spring mattress for latex, which has proven to be much more comfortable! Indeed, our recommendation is to try a latex

Sofzsleep 6100 4569 | sofzsleep.com







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Bedroom décor by **E&A Interiors**, 46 Kim Yam Road, #04-24, 6702 4850, eandainteriors.com



Victoire king bed frame, **Finn Avenue**, 8B Admiralty Street, #02-21 8B@ Admirality, 6753 3466, finnavenue.com

# NEROYI DERVIS I

Zinnia queen metal bed, **Big Box Singapore**, 1 Venture Avenue, 6668 0812, bbf.com.sg

Bunk bed and furnishings, **Ni-Night**, 7 Joo Chiat Place, 6440 7567, ni-night.com

# BEDROOM FURNITURE

Latex topper, **Sofzsleep**, 6100 4569, sofzsleep.com











Vinkel natural teak bed, **Scanteak**, 60 Sungei Kadut Drive, 6368 2802, scanteak.com.sg



Monet rattan rocking chair, **Dreamweave Concepts** 













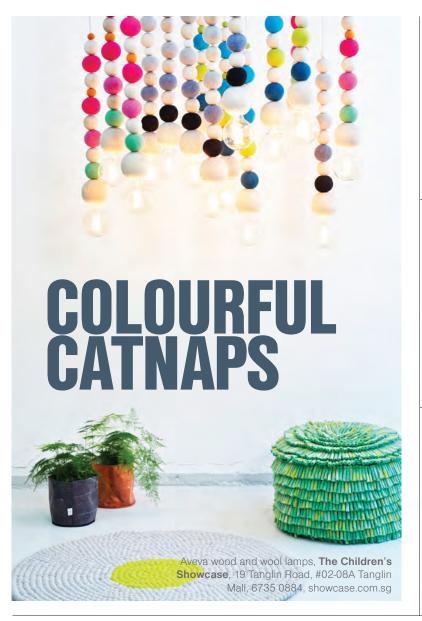


2760, wtpstyle.com





Elm wood tapered bedside cabinet, **Just Anthony**, 379 Upper Paya Lebar Road, 6283 4782, justanthony.com





Blue bone inlay side table, **Hacienda Blue**, Watten Heights (by appointment only), 9061 9446, haciendablue.com



Hart chest of drawers,
Gallery 278, 278 River
Valley Road, 6737 2322,
gallery278.com



Felix studio bed, **King Living**, 22 Kallang Avenue, #01-00, 6805 4198, kingliving.com



Textiles from **E&A Interiors**, 46 Kim Yam Road, #04-24, 6702 4850, eandainteriors.com



Bedroom décor, **Arete Culture**, 63 Hillview Avenue, #09-08 Lam Soon, 6310 8098, areteculture.com



Sleigh bed and furnishings, **Ni-Night**, 7 Joo Chiat Place, 6440 7567, ni-night.com



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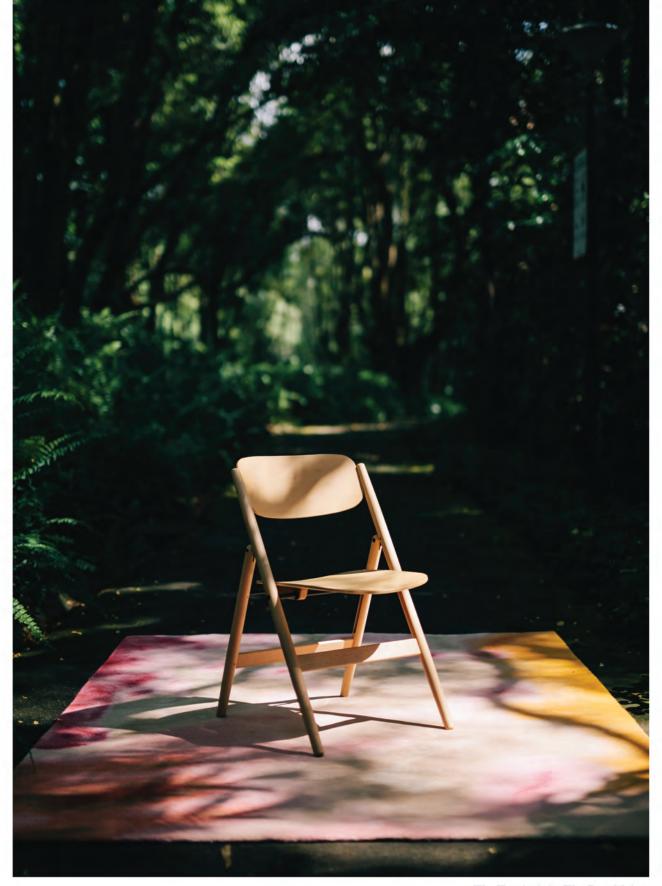


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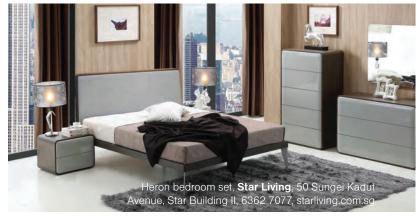


The Tropicals by The Rug Maker











Emerson grey bed with trundle, **Piccolo House**, 6743 8884, piccolo-house.com

Black bone inlay side table, **Hacienda Blue**, Watten Heights (by appointment only), 9061 9446, haciendablue.com





Daybed in ebony with original rattan work (circa 1910s), **Treasures of the Raj** 



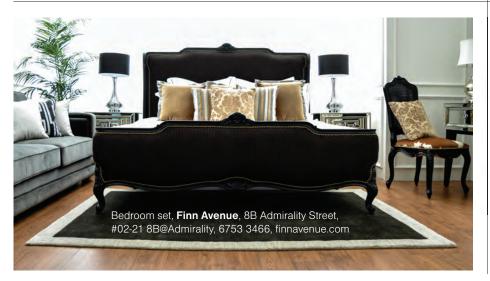




Octagonal ebony occasional table with delicate ivory inlay (circa 1890s), **Treasures of the Raj**, 19 Tanglin Road, #02-30 Tanglin Shopping Centre, 9173 5041, totr.pw



The Bleinheim reading chair, **The Indonesian Company**, 18 New Industrial Road, #03-08, 9187 3564, theindonesiancompany.com





Arthur M upholstered dog bed, **House of AnLi**, 163 Tanglin Road, #03-13 Tanglin
Mall, 6235 3851, houseofanli.com



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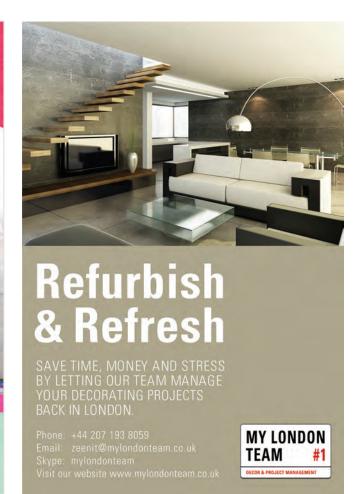


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# A Dream Investment

We talk to the CEO of the Castlewood Group, CHRIS COMER, about hassle-free investment in the new **Dream Phuket Hotel & Spa**.

By Aimee Fordos

hen it comes to Asia property investment, Chris Comer knows his stuff. From Dubai to New Zealand, Singapore and China, the Liverpudlian with a no-nonsense style has made Asia the heart of his career and family life for the past 20 years. He set up his real estate development and investment company, Castlewood Group, in 2006 as an antidote to the blue chip investment funds that power most pensions funds, whose value plummeted in the global financial crisis. The way he sees it, everyone has a responsibility to plan for their future, and property, especially hotels

in high-volume, high-demand tourist destinations, make for a far less risky mid-to-long-term proposition.

Enter Dream Phuket Hotel & Spa. The flagship development from Castlewood Group offers a transparent, low-risk, hotel room investment opportunity that is affective.

investment opportunity that is affordable and straightforward. It's already proven popular with Singaporean investors for its affordability and stability compared with the local property market, and for











the tax-free income it generates – all of which get a big thumbs up for expat investors as well. Plus, compared to a traditional property investment, it's completely hassle-free: there's zero management required.

Options start from as low \$35,000, though as Chris explains, the average investment is \$120,000. "\$35,000 is a bank-beater; it's better than leaving your money sitting in the bank but it's not going to change the world. For \$120,000 you get a Platinum level of investment and all the revenue it generates. After the hotel running costs are taken off, it's all yours."

Also appealing is the ready-made exit plan. "Our business model is to sell," says Chris. "After seven years you've optimised your existence as a hotel and it becomes a very saleable item. This means investors can plan ahead, knowing they'll receive that increase in capital and great revenue throughout, then they're out. A lot of people like that."

So, how does it work? As a potential investor, you can expect a short meeting with a Castlewood Group associate who will introduce the project and investment opportunities. From there it's up to you. "Experienced investors have usually done their homework," Chris tells us, "but first-timers are, understandably, more fearful of spending their money. It may take longer to answer their questions, but there's no hard sell; no one is allowed to buy until they've been flown to Phuket on a VIP trip to see it for themselves."



# Luxury Nights

Dream Phuket Hotel & Spa is the first new development to hit Phuket's ritzy Bang Tao district in 23 years. It's a luxury hotel that has already won awards for its vibrant, fresh and contemporary design – a style that stands out in a market traditionally dominated by Thai-influenced architecture. A fine-dining restaurant overseen by Michelin-starred chefs and a beach club, Dream Beach, that hosts the likes of Pete Tong and other international DJs, as well as acts such as Soul II Soul and the Brand New Heavies, are just a few of the facilities that make it a world-class draw, and keep the place buzzing with guests and other visitors alike.

A new airport terminal, pegged to open mid-2016, will bump visitor numbers up to a whopping 12.5 million per year, making Phuket the place to be in Thailand for some time to come. Interested? Visit **cwdgroup.sg** for more details. **2** 



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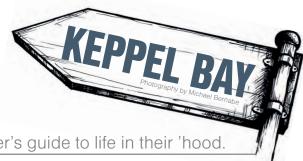
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# THE SPECIFICS





What street do you live on? Telok Blangah.

What does the name mean? I believe it means "cooking-pot bay".

Exact words you tell a taxi driver to get home?

"Caribbean at Keppel, please."

#### Closest MRT station?

HarbourFront (North East Line and Circle Line).

# How long have you lived here?

Four years; we liked it so much after the first two that we've stayed another two.

#### Why here?

It's a very child-friendly condo with great facilities, plus we like the close proximity to the city and the easy commute, with loads of buses to choose from. Most importantly, we like the waterfront boardwalk.



# THE SCENE

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

Sailboats bobbing up and down at Keppel Marina, and joggers running on the boardwalk.

# The closest store to your front door is:

The 7-Eleven within the condo, and the nearby VivoCity and HarbourFront malls.

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

A scene from the 70s show *The Love Boat*, as gigantic cruise ships often pass by; or the legendary diner scene from *When Harry Met Sally* at Privé Café!

# Your neighbours are great, but you wouldn't mind a little less: Dog poo.

# The unofficial uniform of your street is:

Running attire.

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

British sailor Ellen MacArthur – I reckon she wouldn't mind the view!

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

Go to nearby Gillman Barracks, which really caters for the whole family. There is Playeum, for example, which is a fun and educative play area for kids; I had to drag mine out after four hours the last time we went there!

#### If you're missing home, you:

Take the Sentosa Express from Vivo to Siloso Beach (nice environment, though the quality of the beach isn't remotely like the ones in Turkey).

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

Takumi, the Japanese restaurant at Keppel Island, where the lunch sets are both value-for-money and seriously yummy, and the extremely polite and friendly female manager is unbelievably patient with my kids.

# You'd swap houses in a second with:

The dude that sips his morning coffee while watching the sea from his gigantic patio, or one of the many fancy sailboats and catamarans in the marina.

# A common myth about your neighbourhood is:

That a four-metre python was caught in the canal.

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

ZoukOut music festival on Sentosa.

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

The love-hate relationship between the stray cats in the condo. (I think they are stray, but who knows?)



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# THE SUPERLATIVES

#### Your favourite neighbourhood joints are:

Takumi and Privé Café on Keppel Island as the location (especially if you're sitting outside) makes you feel like you're a million miles from the buzz of the city. Privé's kids' corner keeps my young ones entertained and happy while I enjoy a nice cold beer. A short bus ride away is Fat Boys and E-Sarn Thai on Pasir Panjang Road; hands down the best burger joint and Thai restaurant.

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

A family of four otters in the swimming pool. They came out of the canal, swam in the pool for a while and then jumped back in the canal before Security even had time to chase them away!

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

Daiso at VivoCity for all sorts of knickknacks, Takumi for the set lunch and Playeum for kids' entertainment.



#### The guiltiest pleasure in your area is:

Awfully Chocolate at VivoCity, especially for movie snacks.

#### One thing you'd never change is:

The marina and the boardwalk, and the green Southern Ridges stretch that connects Labrador Nature Reserve, Kent Ridge Park and Hort Park, all the way to Mount Faber.

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

The cement trucks and the rest of the construction of Corals next door.

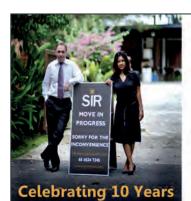
# The city gives you \$5 million to soup up your street. You use it to:

Build a bike lane or cycling route all the way to the city.

# Why should your neighbourhood be featured in a guidebook?

Although it's very central and within easy reach of the city, the boardwalk to Labrador Park and Keppel Island makes you feel a million miles away.

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.



2016 marks a decade of SIR's operations in Singapore and owners Charlie Scott and Shyla Mathews are celebrating with gifts. For three months customers who book a move will stand a chance of winning sponsored items.

To be eligible for a prize, customers need to book a move between February to May 2016, and complete the move by September 2016.

They will then be automatically enrolled in the draw.

# **RAYMOND WEIL**

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Urban Fairways



\* Prizes include a ladies or gents watch, food and membership vouchers and a 1 hour photography shoot. Terms & Conditions Apply. Enquire directly for more information.



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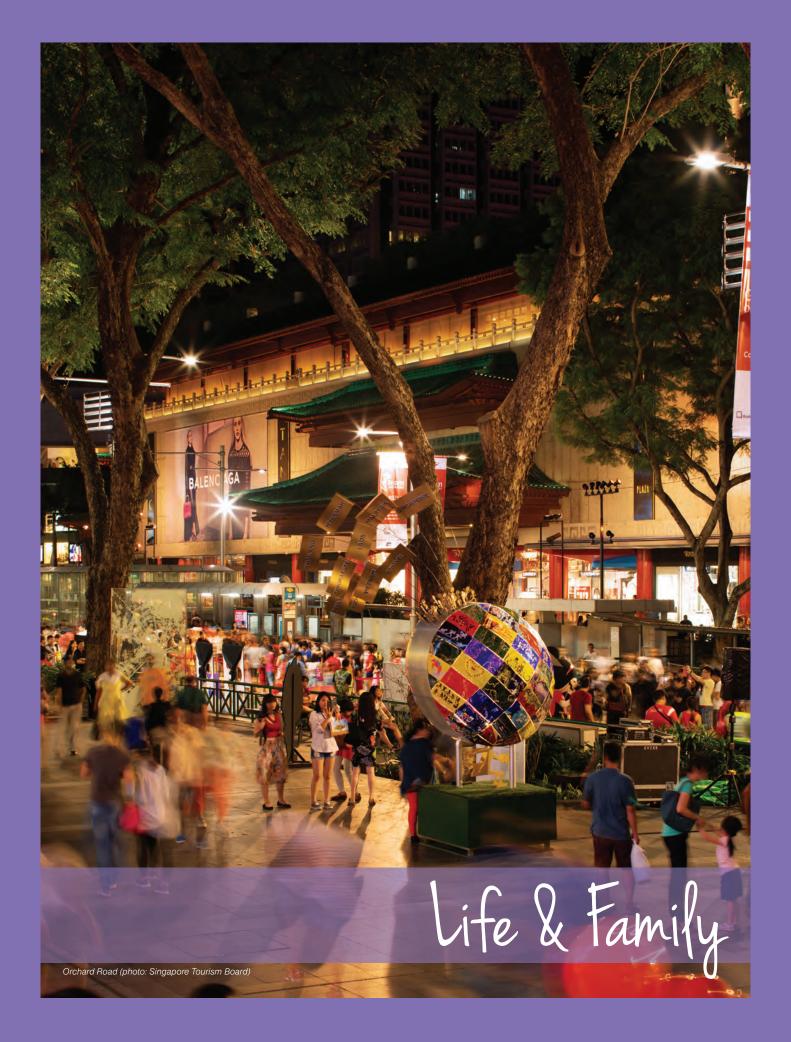






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# WHAT'S NEW Latest updates for parents & children



Just launched by Japanese brand Pigeon and set to get parents talking is skincare line **Newborn** Pure. Mums are sure to see the difference it makes to their babies' skin, especially those with sensitivity to other products. Newborn Pure's double layer of protection, Natulayer, mimics the two natural components, vernix and ceramide, which babies develop to protect their skin in the womb. Along with providing this dual layer of moisturisation, Natulayer maintains the skin's fatty protective layer through balancing pH levels and boosting hydration. For a free skincare consultation and samples, head to Motherswork, #02-16 Great World City; or #03-11C Tanglin Mall. newbornpure.com.sg ▶





# CARE FACTOR

Stylish, durable, fair-trade backpacks are just some of the sustainably developed products on sale at this month's UWCSEA East annual family



festival. Among the many alliances developed by the school's student-run groups is one with Tiny Toones, a nongovernment organisation in Phnom Penh that has developed the backpacks in collaboration with Cambodian social enterprise Smateria. They're made from "up-cycled" materials, employ Cambodian workers and give job priority to women and mothers, giving them free preschool and childcare for their children. On 19 March, visit the festival to find more wonderful products committed to supporting global concerns. 1 Tampines Street

73. uwcsea.edu.sq

# **IRON BABY**

Iron is one of the most important mineral nutrients needed by the body to make the red blood cells that carry oxygen around the body. To ensure that babies receive enough iron for their healthy development, Nestlé has released a new Cerelac cereal range with iron levels that meet 50 percent of an infant's daily requirements. Check your baby's current iron consumption at cerelacironcalculator.com. ▼



# **BLUNT SPEECH**

Designed by two Kiwis in the Land of the Long White Cloud and acclaimed as the world's best, BLUNT umbrellas are incredibly durable, tested in wind-tunnels and in real-world wind, in drenching rain and hailstorms. They're "inversion-resistant" and incredibly durable, ranging from \$79.90 to \$139.90 for the Golf version; order yours from bluntumbrellas.com/sg. They make cool gifts, especially for men - but don't you just love this colour? ▶







Children begin loosing baby teeth at age 6.

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# SEEKING INSIGHT

Joining the international team of therapists at **The Counselling Place** this month is Irish-Australian Mary-Clare Bagot. Mary-Clare works with children, teens, adults, couples and families. Her experience strengthens the established Counselling Place team, well known for its counselling, life coaching and assessment services. 7500A Beach Road, #04-323 The Plaza. **6887 3695** | **thecounsellingplace.com** 



# **OUALITY CLEANING**

Join us in congratulating **A-Team Amahs & Cleaners** on their 12th anniversary this year. To celebrate, the company – well known for its reliable part-time maids and babysitters – is generously offering a \$100 discount off the agency fee to *Expat Living* readers. Quote "Expat Living Promo" when you call 6100 6131. **a-team.com.sg** ▲

# HOLE IN ONE

How can a game of golf help underprivileged kids? Turn your sporting passion into real support for children in need at annual charity golf tournament **Swing for the Kids**, to be held on Batam Island on 13 March. New this year is an emphasis on family involvement, with



a fun Olympics and nine holes of golf scheduled on 12 March at Montigo Resorts, Nongsa. Organisers are aiming to raise \$100,000, which will go towards Singapore beneficiaries including WELL Centre for children from low income families, IC2 Prephouse for children with impaired vision, and Society of Father and Son, a centre caring for youths at risk, plus scholarships for needy students in Indonesia and the Philippines. Palm Springs Golf and Beach Resort, Batam. sftk2016.golfgenius.com



**Janette Osvay** opened her first photo studio in Sydney in 2007 to pursue her real passion for capturing special moments in family life. Having recently moved to Singapore after two years in Cambridge in the UK, Janette is looking forward to welcoming families to her new studio and helping them create new memories. Janette Osvay Photography, 11 Holland Link.

8104 4347 | janetteosvayphoto.com



# MELBOURNE

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## Learn the Lingo

Are you looking for a convenient, efficient and fun way to teach your child a new language? Try out **VivaLing**, the world's first online language academy for kids! VivaLing currently offers Chinese, English, Spanish and French in 30 countries to young learners aged three to 15. Through real-time video and with highly qualified native language coaches, VivaLing enables kids to learn languages at home in a fun, natural way. It's suitable for those who need to pick up a new language, continue with a language after getting back to their home country, or prepare for an exam. **vivaling.com** 



#### LITTLE LEADERS

Want to make sure that your kids are on the right track to the future? **The Keys Academy** offers learning pathways that combine business, technology and communication fundamentals for kids as young as six. The CEO Track (or Mini-MBA) is the only one of its kind that can help your child cultivate essential leadership qualities such as initiative, critical thinking and confidence. The Tech Star Track is perfect for little engineers, offering the basics of computational thinking through coding and robotics. Look out for the Debater Track too! Registration now open. 331 North Bridge Road, Level 2 Odeon Towers.







#### **PLAY SAFELY**

Heard about "helicopter parents"? A study by New York's Winthrop University Hospital found that injuries reported on playground slides occurred while a child rode on the lap of a parent – there were no records of injuries sustained when a child slid alone. It's thought that these protective behaviours can lead to children lacking in responsibility, suffering low self-esteem, and preferring to shy away from challenges rather than face them. Acknowledging this concern, **Kinderland** preschools have developed physical environments that inspire infants and toddlers to explore, play and make sense of the world they live in – safely. **kinderland.com.sg** 



#### LIFELONG LEARNING

The innovative teaching model of Melbourne Specialist International School (MSIS) recognises that students with special needs are often better suited to a vocational curriculum, and that valuable work experience prepares them well for life after school. The school's partnership with The Pantry (thepantry.com.sg) provides students with a platform to acquire this experience every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9am to 11am and at the monthly Farmers' Market. Anyone visiting the café (for delicious cakes, lunches, brunches and breakfasts) during these times will be supporting MSIS's programme and helping students gain more confidence and skills. 75C Loewen Road at Dempsey Hill. msis.edu.sg



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Visit www.uwcsea.edu.sg to find out more.



# **ENVIRONMENT NEWS**

#### **MOZZIE CONTROL**

Anyone who has had **dengue** would agree to any innovative way to control mosquito populations. The debilitating illness lays low thousands every year despite concerted fogging programmes all over Singapore. Researchers at the University of Malaya have come up with an approach that is environmentally friendly and cross-functional: a smart outdoor light that combines wind and solar energy generation, LED lighting and a mosquito trap into one sleek, hybrid design. Plus, it can operate in the absence of an electricity grid, making it suitable for remote areas. **researchsea.com**  $\blacksquare$ 



It's no secret that burning peatlands in Indonesia last year led to some of the worst haze Singapore has ever experienced. In addition, fires spread to the Sebangau National Park in Central Kalimantan and threatened the home of the world's largest population of orangutans. But now you can help to restore their forests and, better still, watch as it happens! Geotag technology allows anyone to keep an eve on a sapling planted in Sebangau, via Google Earth. Your tree will start as a seed in a nursery and for US\$15 you can name and track its location after it's planted in the national park. More details at wwf.sg.

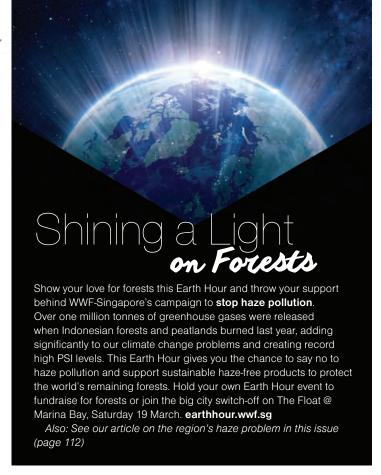




#### **MONKEY MAGIC**

Those born under the Chinese Year of the Monkey are said to be intelligent and confident, but can have a tendency to be arrogant and snobbish (no one's perfect!). Please be prepared to forgive the **proboscis monkey**, though, if it looks down its nose at you, because it has one of the most interesting and sizeable snouts in the animal kingdom. Within the troupe, the male with the biggest nose is boss – and irresistible to the ladies. Native to Borneo, the proboscis monkey is listed as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The main threats to the species are deforestation and hunting – including for use in Chinese medicine. ▼









While the political and corporate response to last year's terrible haze pollution has been less than overwhelming, its causes and the consequences for people across Southeast Asia are clear. In view of the haze predicted to return this month, we took a close look at the facts, with the help of WWF.

ast year, like many people across the region, I was outraged by the weeks of haze that rolled into months, until it finally dissipated in early December with the arrival of the northeast monsoon. But the infuriation for me reached fever pitch when we took a long-awaited break in Phuket, Thailand, and a much-anticipated boat trip to Phang Nga Bay. Like much of the region, it was blanketed in smoke – to use a skiing analogy, a whiteout.

I found it incomprehensible that we could be cruising this normally stunning bay, trying to peer at the beautiful karst limestone formations through poor visibility caused by preventable fires raging hundreds of kilometres away. In one way I wished I were as ignorant as some of the tourists around me who thought that grey skies were the norm in this part of the world.

It got me thinking – not least because the inconvenience to me was so trivial compared to the serious health issues and innumerable disruptions to daily life that the haze causes to millions of people. What is the truth behind these unhealthy skies? How does it relate to our consumption of palm oil? If the impact of the fires could spread so far

into the region, what do the locals at ground zero think? And what can we as individuals do to help?

#### 2015: a perfect storm

Haze pollution is attributed to the unsustainable "slash-and-burn" practices used in land clearance to make way for palm oil plantations. Singapore has been affected since the 1970s, owing to its proximity to Malaysia and Indonesia where 85 percent of global palm oil is produced. Production of the oil rose from 10 million tonnes per year in 1990 to 50 million tonnes in 2011.

"Unfortunately, 2015 was a perfect storm of haze conditions," says Kim Stengert, Communications Director at WWF-Singapore. "The combination of an expanding palm oil industry driven by consumer demand for the many products containing palm oil, poor agricultural management practices including slash-and-burn clearance, and the presence of the cyclical weather phenomenon known as El Niño, which brings hot, dry weather, meant the conditions were ideal for fires to spread."

Winds carried the resulting smoke hundreds of kilometres over Southeast Asia, reaching Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines, and causing health, economic and environmental impacts across all those countries. Peatlands contributed significantly to the haze – even if fires are extinguished on the surface, smouldering fires burn underground in the carbon-rich peat swamps.

The Guardian reported that, as of 11 November, 19 people had died and an estimated 500,000 cases of respiratory tract infections had been reported since the start of the fires in July. Some estimates say that the fires could cause more than 100,000 premature deaths in the region.

In 2015, the World Resources Institute reported nearly 100,000 active fire detections in Indonesia. Incredibly, on some days, the daily estimated greenhouse gas emissions from fires in Indonesia surpassed average daily emissions from the entire US economy.

#### What can be done?

According to Kim Stengert, the solution to haze pollution won't come from one angle only. "It is action on the part of multiple parties that's needed to solve this problem. Consumers must make the connection between the things they are purchasing and the growth of plantation agriculture in Indonesia, and start insisting on sustainable palm oil as the way forward.

"At the same time, companies growing palm oil and manufacturers and retailers using palm oil products must embrace a more sustainable way of doing business. Although many large By Katie Roberts palm oil companies have pledged not to convert any new natural forest, this needs to move from a code of conduct to governmental legislation to protect forests with high conservation value.

"And we need strong legislation with complete protection for peatlands. The current moratorium on them issued by the Indonesian President in October 2015 prevents planting on peat with a depth greater than three metres. WWF would like to see this extended to all peatlands, regardless of depth," he says.

#### **Local feelings**

When the haze is particularly thick in the air in Singapore, horrifying reports come through of PSI readings hovering at 1,000 for locals living in hotspots. Yet a report commissioned by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) shows that 59 percent of consumers surveyed in Indonesia view palm oil as mostly positive; most respondents identified palm oil simply as cooking oil.

While they observe that palm oil provides jobs, increases the welfare of smallholders and increases state revenue, their understanding about the impact on the environment and communities is low. In response to these results, the RSPO has developed a series of in-depth observations and recommendations for companies, governments and environmental groups.

#### **Fact or fiction?**

It's all Indonesia's fault. WWF says consumers have been driving the expansion of the palm oil industry through the things we buy. Palm oil is in 50 percent of the packaged goods on supermarket shelves, and the majority of this palm oil is produced unsustainably, contributing to deforestation and affecting the rights and wellbeing of local communities. Currently, only around 20 percent of the global palm oil supply is sustainable. WWF is campaigning to raise this percentage and make sustainable palm oil the norm.

I can't do anything to help it. The WWF urges everyone to lend their voice to the campaign for a switch to sustainable palm oil. This support gives WWF an even stronger argument when

#### Definitions to remember

Pollution Standard Index (PSI): an air-quality index that is based on whichever of six pollutants is worst at the time – sulphur dioxide, particulate matter and fine particulate matter (PM2.5), nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and ozone. For example, if PM2.5 concentration is the highest for the day, the PSI reading will be based on PM2.5.

Fine particulate matter (PM2.5): particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 microns or less. This is 20 to 30 times smaller than the thickness of a strand of hair; these particles are so small they can penetrate deeply into the lungs and may even be able to cross into the blood. The World Health Organisation has classified fine particulate matter as a cause of lung cancer.

Peatlands: wetland areas composed of soil and made up of thousands of years of decaying vegetation. Peatlands store carbon which, when burned, is released as CO2, a major greenhouse gas and contributor to climate change. Palm oil companies divert water away from this fertile land to make it suitable for palm oil planting. Dried peatlands are like tinder and catch fire very easily. In 2015, 79 percent of fires in the region were on peatlands.

persuading manufacturers and retailers to buy sustainable palm oil products.

If it's not in the ingredient list, it does not contain palm oil. Palm oil can masquerade behind other names, most commonly as just vegetable oil, and it has become an accepted ingredient in everything from toothpaste to lipstick; but you are unlikely to see sustainable palm oil listed as such. WWF says consumers must put pressure on manufacturers and retailers to support sustainable palm oil options.

Palm oil is bad; we should boycott it. As the global population grows, so does the demand for commodities. Palm oil is the most used oil in the world, and a boycott on palm oil would merely see it replaced with another oil product. Currently, palm oil is the most efficient and versatile oil option, producing more yield per hectare than any alternative oil

crop. Replacing it with something else would require more land to produce similar quantities of oil. The palm oil industry has also lifted communities out of poverty, providing livelihoods and incomes that promise education and a brighter future for many. The answer, then, is to farm palm oil differently, in a sustainable way that limits adverse impacts on the environment.

#### What's predicted for 2016?

Indonesia's Climate Agency has already predicted that March will see the return of the haze as the dry season kicks in. Also expected is another surge in the El Niño effect. "The haze problem is not over and will not be over until all plantations, large and small, switch to sustainable practices and 'no-burn' policies; as consumers, our purchasing choices can pressure them to do this," says Kim Stengert. **2** 







To help put an end to the haze, support a complete ban on planting on peat in Indonesia at earthhour.wwf.sg.

# NOTICEBOARD Births, engagements and weddings, plus items for sale

#### **FAMILY NEWS**



Arlo Jack Wilson arrived 3 December to excited parents Angela and Toby.



Jemima Liew-Yeo was born on 13 December, a sister for Caleb Liew-Yeo and the first daughter of Joanne Yeo and Edmond Liew.



Mark John and Sally-Ann Tinkler are thrilled about the birth of Charlotte-Rose Elizabeth, born 28 September.



Romy Payen, born 11 January, joins big brother Floris and happy parents Nicolas and Eveline Payen-Noya.



Proud parents Anju and Guy Cawthra, and big sister Lara (4), are delighted to introduce Ruby Mary Lila, born 12 October.

#### **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 babies featured on this page will receive a \$500 voucher from Tomato Photo, which can be redeemed against a photoshoot and small product. The voucher cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer, and is valid for three months upon prizegiving. 6440 7567 | tomato.sg

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#### ANIMAL ADOPTION



**Kaiser** is almost seven years old, and despite his larger size he is easy to take on walks and responsive towards treats and his handler. He approaches other dogs with care, and often meets them calmly, with curious sniffs and a gently wagging tail. Kaiser is not HDB-approved.



**Vernice**, five years old, is affectionate and gentle and would make a great home cat. She is a lovely combination of colours, with ginger, black, white and tabby all rolled into one package.





Four-year-old **Rover** is an energetic boy who loves to go on walks. He's currently learning to be calm and polite while interacting with humans, and is showing progress. He's vocal, and will give you his utmost attention during training when food is used. Rover is HDB-approved.



#### **SPCA**

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) is not a government agency, and it relies on donations from supporters to continue protecting animals. Over \$2 million is required annually for its welfare work, which sees around 400 pets and stray animals being received by the SPCA each month.

There are a variety of ways to show support for the SPCA, including donation, adoption, and fostering animals that may not thrive or even survive in a shelter environment.

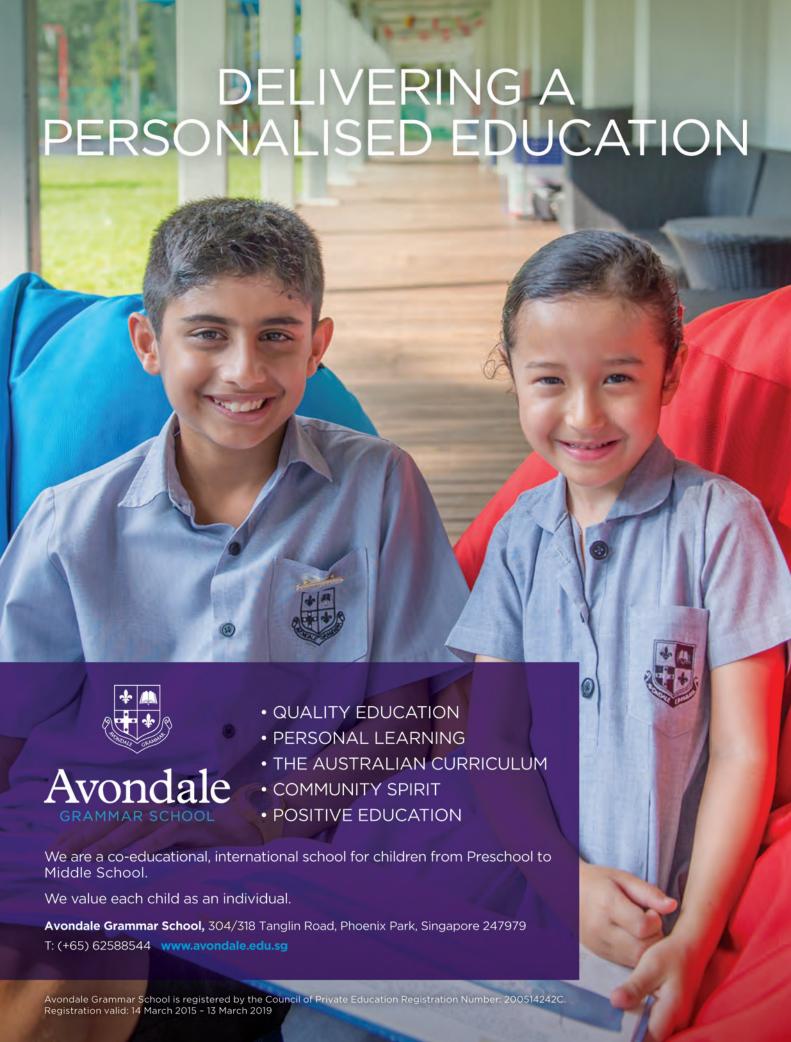
To find out how you can help, call **6287 5355** or go to **spca.org.sg** for more information.

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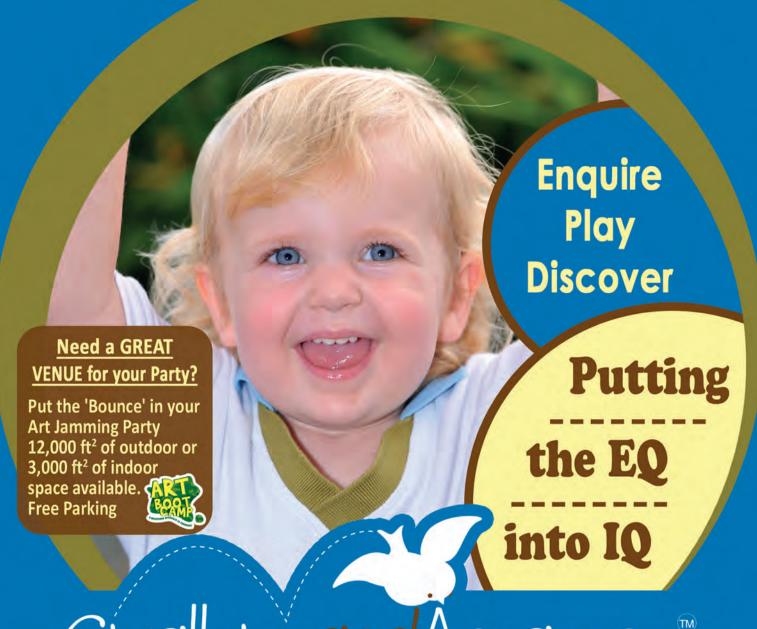
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# Satisfaction Guaranteed By Katie Roberts

After 13 years in Singapore, Brazilian ANDREA GROTH needs little introduction; she is well known to many of us as the gregarious personality behind her inimitable store, **The Children's Showcase**.

couple of hours after meeting the energetic Andrea and hearing about her customer service principles, I happened to be standing at a school uniform supply shop. Her words about the customer always being right, and providing refunds without question (and without a receipt) rang in my ears as my timid request to exchange my daughter's skirt for a different size were met with a scowl – not to mention a very close inspection to verify that the item hadn't been worn, washed or ironed.

I breathed a sigh of relief when the shop assistant made the exchange – and I wished for immediate teleportation to Andrea's gorgeous store at Tanglin Mall, where customers are genuinely appreciated.

"I like people to see us as a business with a heart, to feel comfortable about buying here and not to feel trapped. Our priority is service. My girls are carefully trained and we have a no-questions-asked return policy," says Andrea. What's more, she answers all customer emails personally. "There's no autoresponse; service is number one for me."

She believes her loyal and faithful customers return again and again for her special, high-quality items, outstanding customer service and willingness to meet requests – no matter how unusual. "We've had requests for a back-scratcher, a rose-gold bed from Australia, a particular brand of play kitchen, and an order for 50 dinosaurs to be delivered in just one week!"

Her other passion is to give back, and go beyond being "just a retailer", in her words. At Christmas, she received enthusiastic support for her campaign for donations for needy children. This fulfilled two aims, says Andrea: to encourage kids both to receive and to give, in order to understand the true spirit of Christmas; and to help those in need.



The donated goods are for distribution to Singapore's KK Hospital and an orphanage here, plus three locations in the Philippines where less-fortunate children will benefit. "We got a massive amount – the generosity was overwhelming."

Now located in Tanglin Mall and PasarBella Market, The Children's Showcase has an interesting backstory that Andrea is happy to share. She's the only partner remaining from the original seven that were involved in the business when she joined it eight years ago, following its launch in 2006.

At that time, it was located in a little house in Loewen Gardens (near Dempsey), which wasn't licensed for retail. "That's how the name came about – we showed the products only, and we delivered them later," she says with a laugh. "We each worked one day a week, but we didn't have a system, not even barcode scanners. We used Excel spreadsheets to keep track of stock and sales, and sat on the floor at the end of each month and divided the proceeds between us – it was a bit like Monopoly!"

"Eventually, we moved to Cluny Court and our customers followed. The concept remains the same to this day: selling exclusive children's brands, although we have expanded as the children have grown with us! Now, we cater to children from babies to 16-year-olds, with something for mothers and other family members too."

Over the years, the other business partners have left Singapore (one opened a similar concept in New York City), but they are all still in touch. Andrea's last remaining business partner, Stine Tvilde, repatriated to Denmark before Christmas – leaving her, she says, "with the good and tasty hot potato".

Andrea's children (now aged six and eight) have grown up alongside the business and she is keen that they establish a strong work ethic. "As their mother, I want to show them that if you like something you have to be prepared to work for it – even simple things like their

favourite swap cards. They help in the warehouse with pricing, sorting stock and other age-appropriate tasks – and this teaches them about earning in order to buy the things they like."

What's Andrea looking forward to this year? She expects to launch her new website by mid-year, and an online shop is under design. "It's a massive task to photograph thousands of products!"

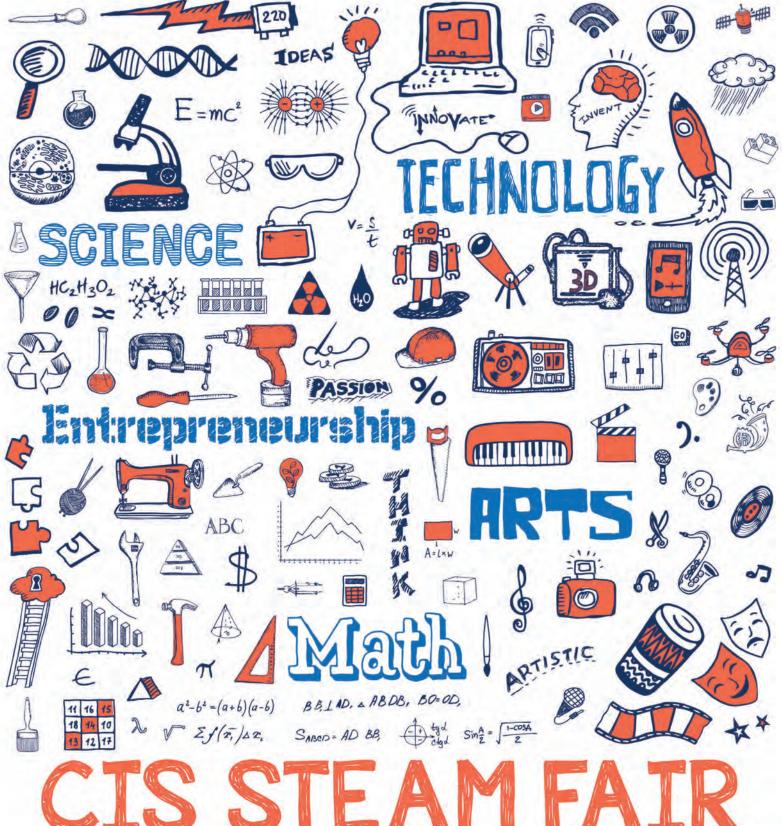
Andrea is always on the lookout for new products (Danish and French brands are favourites), so she's going on a buying trip to this year's Nuremburg Toy Fair in Germany, the world's biggest such fair. "I've been warned it takes at least four days to see all the brand exhibitors! It will be immense, and my aim is to find more distinctive products."

As always, Andrea wants to stay ahead of the game, seeking out items that she knows her customers will love.

#### What's in the store?

- **RICE**, the colourful melamine tableware from Denmark, is the bestseller among the 75 brands and 15,000 products available.
- The full range of Maileg soft toys is also from Denmark.
- The **pink T-rex** dinosaur is a bestseller to boys, girls and even men!
- Andrea regularly brings in 10 to 15 new brands at a time, mostly from Europe. New are Aveva (Swedish lifestyle brand), Eeboo (board games), Zoo Design (newborn baby accessories) and Mimi'Lou (wall stickers).

The Children's Showcase is at #03-08A Tanglin Mall and PasarBella, 200 Turf Club Road. 6735 0884 | facebook.com/thechildrensshowcase



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# Wildest DREAMS

By Katie Roberts

Fabulous parties are not easily forgotten. We asked NICK OXBORROW of **Fabulation** about some of the recent events he has created with his hardworking team of professionals – and how they bring it all together.







## **Expat Living Christmas Party**

BRIEF: To celebrate Christmas in style (event creation and management).

EXECUTION:

- **Music:** A jazz duo pumping out up-beat tunes and an energetic fan dancer adding visual interest.
- Photos: Fun props with a Christmas twist against a natural, leafy-green background
- Food: Wood-fired pizza and pork sliders, cooked on-site in an outdoor kitchen
- **Styling:** A play on the blue of *Expat Living*'s branding, plus subtle hints of Christmas through vases filled with shiny baubles, to add flair to the industrial building.

#### **Mont Blanc Launch**

BRIEF: The modern journey of an explorer through Africa (event creation and management).

#### **EXECUTION:**

- Styling: Elegant black-and-white to meet the brand identity.
- Food: Jasmine Cheah and Chef Stephan's four-course menu told a story of the explorer's journey; spices played an important part.







#### What's in a name?

The name of Nick Oxborrow's business was dreamed up many years ago in a London pub and is a tidy combination of two words synonymous with events: fabulous and celebration. The dictionary meaning of the word is "to create fables or stories filled with fantasy", and for Nick it is the perfect fit for the business he has created.

Nick works closely with his "dream team" to deliver a concept tailored carefully to every event. Karen Lacey provides entertainment, Jasmine Cheah covers food and beverage, and Adam Lim takes care of photo booths. "When you set up a party you need to tell a story, whether it's a corporate event or a wedding. The experience should intertwine through the styling and food and music, and, importantly, offer a tangible experience."

He strives to change the expectations of people when they arrive at an event – from the ho hum to something fun and unusual. While he has the operational aspects of the business well in hand, his own talent lies in creative control: to take an event from concept to execution and present the story his clients wish to tell. He says it's a misconception that you need a lot of time for planning. "Actually, the longer you have, the more complicated it can get, so a month – or two for something bigger – should be sufficient."

#### Randstad "Route 55 Party"

BRIEF: Randstad's 55th anniversary event was held in various countries on the same day; in Singapore, the theme was cosmopolitan with an emphasis on glitz and glamour (event creation and management).

#### **EXECUTION:**

- Entertainment: A fairy with LED wings balancing food on a Perspex tutu, a bubble artist, a percussionist, local band The Sam Willows, a wood-block juggler, a global company talent show, and an LED dance floor and DJ.
- Photos: The photo-booth's green screen had a choice of backgrounds including glitter and the Singapore skyline.
- Food: Jasmine's menu supplied fusion Asian and Western options for 400 guests served in hawker-stall style: noodle boxes, sliders, chilli crab, chicken rice balls, salmon and more plus a dedicated halal stall and separate non-alcoholic bar and dessert buffet.







#### Planning your event:

- The sky's the limit, so have a budget in mind that you feel comfortable with.
- 2. Think about the experience you want the guest to take home
- 3. Consider the venue; unusual buildings with distinctive features can be challenging. For example, if the carpet is red, you need to work with that and throw out the idea of using pastel pink!
- Have ideas about how food and beverage, entertainment and styling ideas can tie in together to create the overall event concept.
- 5. Know roughly how many guests are expected to attend.

#### A Shanghai Tang-style wedding

BRIEF: A modern twist on vintage chinoiserie (styling and flowers)

#### **EXECUTION:**

- Flowers: The bride carried a sexy bouquet of red chillies, amaryllis and stunning green hydrangeas.
- Food: A vintage take on Singaporean food e.g., chilli crab sliders.
- **Styling:** Chinese patterned silks and red cages decorated with birds and willows. The couple walked an aisle decorated with a forest of willow with a vintage "double happiness" backdrop.











#### Kick Sarcoma Annual Fundraiser

BRIEF: James Bond (styling and flowers).

• Styling: The latest James Bond film, Spectre, and its references to Mexico's Day of the Dead festival dovetailed nicely with the event date being 31 October. Table decorations included gold skulls and glamorous flowers in black vases. The Bond story continued during the art auction when James "stole" one of the paintings, adding extra excitement.

#### **Little Black Event Book**

#### Gastrogig

Jasmine Cheah designs personalised menus, finds chefs and brings together reasonably priced food to integrate with Nick's event concept.

6474 6347 | gastrogig.com

#### **Vivid Snaps**

Photo booths are standard at most events, and technology is moving quickly. Adam Lim offers green screens with special backgrounds to suit any event.

9115 4874 | vividsnaps.com

#### White Noise

Karen Lacey has access to a range of musicians and entertainers, and specialises in tailoring entertainment for each event, from enhancing ambience to creating large spectacular shows.

8509 3968 | whitenoisecreations.com

#### **Fabulation**

As well as weddings, Nick Oxborrow handles event styling and flowers, and he offers a full event management service that includes integrating the entertainment and the food and beverage with the styling.

fabulation.com.sg





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Joining a social club is a popular choice for people seeking a place to settle in and meet new friends. These *Expat Living* readers explain which club they joined and why.







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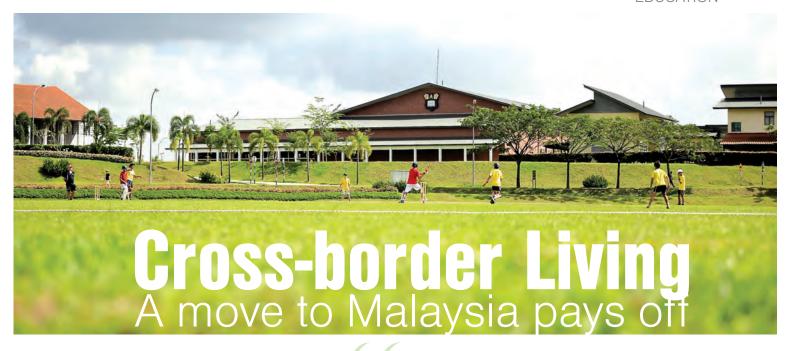
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For those contemplating making the leap from Singapore, the experience of the Muller family is an interesting case study of life just over the border. We spoke to SUSANNAH MULLER about her and her children's happy experience at Marlborough College Malaysia.



Who: Jeremy and Susannah Muller, James (11) and Charlie (9); British Years in Malaysia: 2.5; they moved there from Singapore in August 2013 Years in Singapore: Susannah since 1998, Jeremy since 1993; both children were born in Singapore



We moved to Malaysia because of Marlborough College, together with the promise of more living space. As a family we all benefit from the lower cost of living, value-for-money housing, additional space, more family time and less stress. It's definitely a more relaxed lifestyle than what we experienced in Singapore.

We feel remarkably safe, and not one of us has ever had any personal issue relating to security. The only two downsides are that there are fewer amenities than in Singapore, and the border crossings can be stressful since they're unpredictable. On the other hand, the strong sense of community makes everything possible.

I drive the children to and from school, and we car-pool with other parents. We're currently renting a home at Leisure Farm, and it takes about 20 minutes to drive from there to Marlborough College. The drive from our new home (currently under construction) in Ledang Heights will be less than 10 minutes.

Both of our children are day students, and we have all formed wonderful friendships within the community; it feels a little like extended family, since you share so much together and inevitably lean on one another.

Constant activities, both in and out of school, keep the children busy, and they have developed some amazing talents. On weekends and holidays, there's a lot of sport, whether at school or elsewhere: rugby, football, tennis, bike-rides, swimming and walking the dog, not to mention play-dates, movies and pot-luck dinners at friends' homes.

Shopping is straightforward at Jusco, the supermarket in AEON, and they have a good range of organics. We buy our meat from Harvest, a butcher in Johor Bahru. Otherwise, I pack an Esky each time I travel to and from Singapore for the odd things that I can't get (like spinach leaves and pork!).

The education at Marlborough College is comprehensive and we're very happy. The focus is not only on the academic side, but on overall personal development, which we feel is just as important. Children are taught that with privilege comes responsibility. Our hope is that the school will encourage our children to be strong, grounded individuals who are true to themselves, have a conscience and value achievement.

Marlborough College Malaysia is at Jalan Marlborough, Nusajaya, Johor, Malaysia. +60 7 560 2200 | marlboroughcollege.my



# At Hillside World Academy, a second language becomes second nature





Hillside World Academy (HWA) is a three-programme IB World School that integrates Eastern and Western cultures in education, and caters for kindergarten to grade 12 students. Within the IB framework, HWA offers a Chinese and English bilingual programme, immersing your child in a truly multicultural environment.









# Amazonia Rocks!

# Why do kids and their parents love Amazonia? The play centre's General Manager DOMINIC TAN reveals the many reasons.

#### What is Amazonia?

An air-conditioned play centre is a brilliant option for restless kids, especially in Singapore's heat, and Amazonia has loads of play and learning opportunities. Family play is encouraged in every area and parents can often be seen braving the eight-metre slide and 10 metre climbing maze – it's all about plain old-fashioned thrills. With 9,500 square feet of play space, Amazonia is a unique environment where children aged three to 12 can do much more than have fun (though that is essential too!)

#### You've been open five years; what's new?

The party rooms had a revamp last year and we installed some 4D-seaters that the kids and parents really enjoy. Unlike typical mini-tables and chairs, kids can sit in an actual purpose-built structure. So far we have an F1 Grand Prix racing theme, and a princess carriage in the castle room – it's adorable, and the girls love it.

Soon we'll be launching our i-Dinosaur augmented reality experience. This uses technology in the form of an app, and when kids move through the play centre they point to a special series of books and flash cards. The pictures really come alive. It's interactive, too, as the kids can move the animal images with their fingers.

### What's the most popular part of the centre?

Definitely the four-wave eight-metre slide – it's for adults and kids alike, and families love to see who reaches the bottom first. The Amazonia experience is really focused on families playing and

spending time together. It's endearing to see parents really enjoying the slides – they lose their inhibitions and become childlike again.

## We hear you do amazing birthday parties; tell us a bit about them.

We've recently added a new themed birthday party that is very popular because it includes the chance to touch and learn about animals. The Wildlife Encounter Party includes a 45-minute experience with me, a trained wildlife presenter, in which a juvenile crocodile, an albino python and colourful birds take centre stage. Kids learn fun facts about wildlife and I relate their experience to a bigger Amazon experience. The whole party is animal-themed, including the decorations and tableware - even the food. It's now open for bookings for kids up to 12 years of age.

#### Special Offer

Bring this page along to Amazonia to claim the following special offer:

Book any birthday party package (from \$978) for up to 15 children in 4D-themed rooms, and five children can enjoy FREE entrance plus FREE Mini Golf or Spaceball (full payment at booking applies).

Amazonia is at #03-08 Great World City, 1 Kim Seng Promenade, and is open daily from 10am to 10pm. 6235 4522 I amazoniafun.com



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West Coast 9 South Buona Vista Road, Tel: 6779 8465



### www.whitelodge.com.sg













# Special By Katie Roberts OCCASION MOTORING

Car ownership and even long-term leasing is beyond the budget of many, so there are plenty of good reasons for hiring a car for a weekend. With this in mind, we put together four weekend experiences in vehicles available on shortterm rental at Wearnes Leasing.



What man doesn't love to get behind the wheels of a sports car? The two-door

Renault Laguna Coupe (Sports) is a very cool choice for a couple's weekend - especially if you're treating him for his birthday. Whether you choose a staycation or a meal at a special restaurant, be sure that the birthday boy can stop the vehicle in style out front (remember to check for valet parking!).

FUEL UP AT: a French restaurant to match the French car - perhaps fine dining at Joël Robuchon Restaurant at Resorts World Sentosa. Or, take in the view from the Marina Bay Sands Skypark and dine at Spago by Wolfgang Puck - then win all your money back at the casino!

CAR FANATICS: Expect to impress as passers-by check out this sporty car with attitude.





#### #2 Glamorous Nuptials

Get to the wedding in style and comfort (no matter how long your bridal train), and on time. Afterwards, the Jaguar XJ will turn heads as you make an elegant getaway following the wedding celebrations. (Or check out the Range Rover Evoque if you want more space.)

FUEL UP AT: your faultlessly planned wedding feast.

CAR FANATICS: The XJ features an eight-speed automatic transmission for smooth gear changes and a super-light, 100 percent aluminium chassis and body structure.



#### #3 Border Crossing

Count on Swedish safety for peace of mind as you cross the border in the **Volvo XC90** for a Malaysian getaway to Legoland (or drive two hours further up the freeway to Malacca). Pack up the kids, any visiting relatives and an overnight bag – and don't forget your passports! After a big day of rides and Lego, put exhausted kids to bed at Jen Hotel, about 2km from Legoland and with views over Puteri Harbour.

FUEL UP AT: Espresso Garage, Brussels Beer Café (for Happy Hour, especially as there's no drive home) or Spice Grill at Puteri Harbour.

**CAR FANATICS:** Among a long list of safety innovations, the Volvo XC90 features a state-of-the-art auto emergency braking system with pedestrian and cyclist detection, intersection auto braking and run-off road protection system.





#### #4 Island Tour

Grab a group of friends and head off in the **Range Rover Evoque** to one of those less-accessible locations that, let's face it, we'd never get around to visiting if we didn't have wheels. Think wildlife-spotting at Sungei Buloh, trail-riding at Gallop Stable (Turf Club Road, Pasir Ris Green or Punggol Road), visiting the farms at Kranji Countryside in the north, or heading west to check out the historic

"dragon kiln" at Thow Kwang Pottery Jungle.

**FUEL UP AT:** Little Island Brewing Co at Changi Village for great pub grub, Picotin Express on Fairways Drive, or the variety of restaurants at Quayside Isle on Sentosa.

**CAR FANATICS:** Get your Spotify playlist ready for the drive; the Evoque has a Meridian audio system with 11 loudspeakers and a dual-channel subwoofer ("500 Miles" by The Proclaimers, anyone?)

#### Road rules to remember

- ▶ Permanent residents and foreigners on Employment or Dependant's Passes require a Singapore driving licence if their stay in Singapore is longer than six months. Visitors who are here for less than six months should obtain an International Driving Permit.
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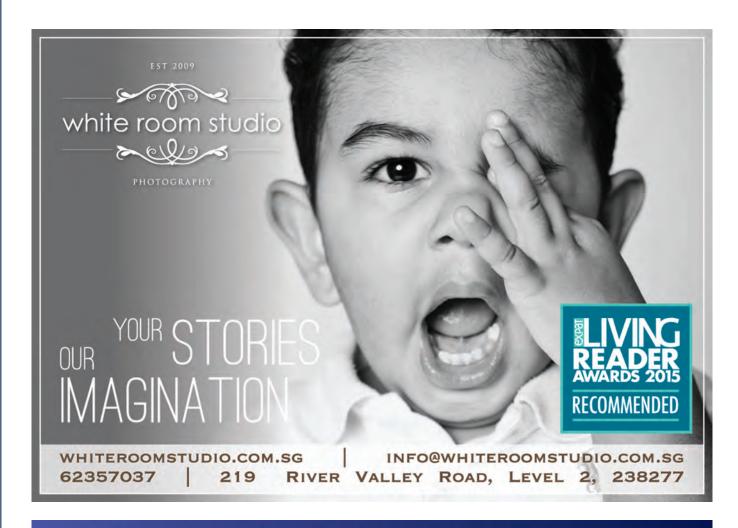
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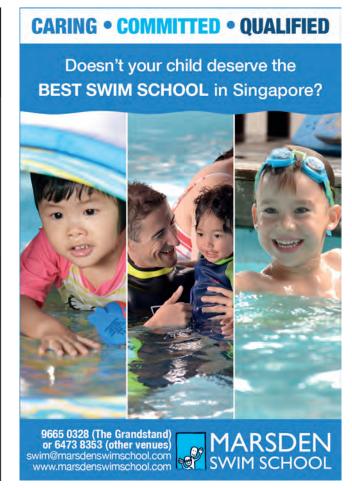
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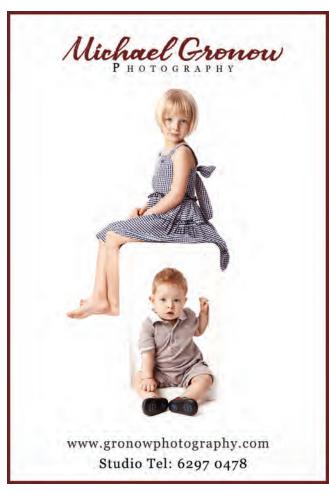
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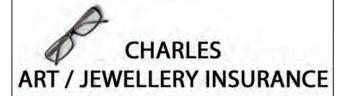






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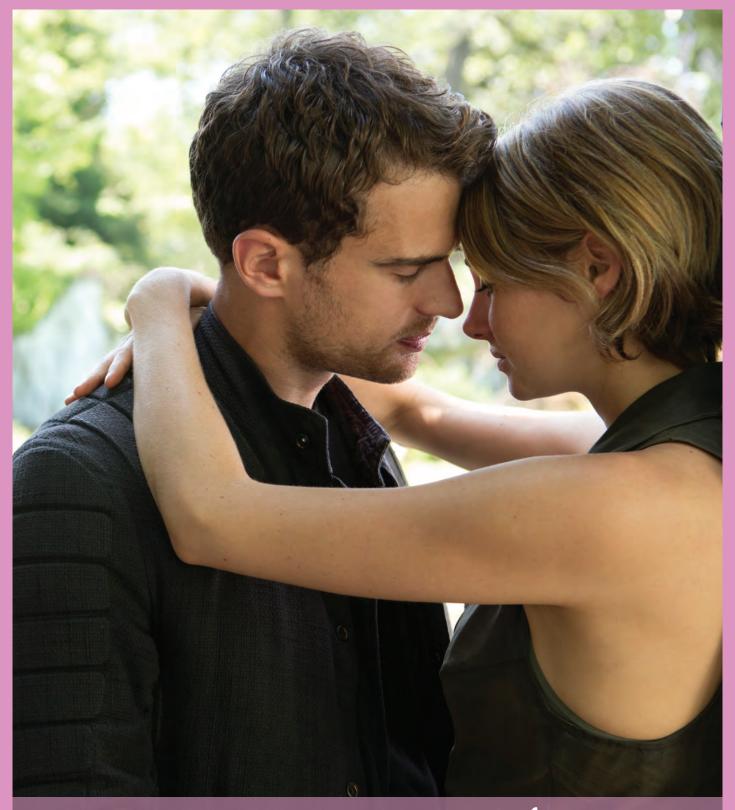
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Arts & Leisure





Aside from our main winner, we have one runner-up prize and five category winner prizes up for grabs.

#### **RUNNER-UP PRIZE**

The runner-up will receive a creative photography session with **Littleones Photography** and a desktop photograph from the acrylic range. **littleonesphotography.com** 

#### CATEGORY WINNER PRIZES

If you're one of the category winners, you'll win a Sunday Prosecco brunch for two at Grand Hyatt Singapore's Italian restaurant, Pete's Place. singapore.grand.hyatt.com



## THIS YEAR, WE ARE LOOKING FOR PHOTOS IN FIVE CATEGORIES:

#### THE GREAT OUTDOORS

This category's all about capturing great shots of natural surroundings and some animal action, too.

#### **CITYSCAPES**

Think architectural masterpieces, structures, landscapes and urban atmosphere.

#### **EPICUREAN ADVENTURES**

Take us on a journey to discover amazing food and delightful delicacies.

#### **CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

Here, we want to see people in their element, and places saturated in tradition – from monks in ancient wats to the village women in the remote hills of far-off lands.

#### **FAMILY MOMENTS**

This category covers special shared moments, images of loved ones recorded in Singapore and beyond.

#### **DEADLINE: 20 MARCH**

**HOW TO ENTER:** You can email photos in JPG format (ideally between 1MB and 5MB in size) to contribute@expatliving.sg (with the subject, "Photo Competition 2016"). There's a maximum of 10 photos per entrant.

Photos should be accompanied by a text document (no embedded photos, please) with captions of no more than 50 words per photo – giving a title and perhaps some background information on the shot; feel free to share what you loved about the location, or what you like about the photo in general.

You must keep your original files (digital files or scanned photos) for reference; they may be needed to demonstrate that this is your own work.

Each photo sent by email must not exceed 5MB in size. If your photo is larger than 5MB, please reduce the size, and we will ask for a larger version if you have a winning entry.

Photos taken on a camera-phone are acceptable. Images taken on film must be scanned into digital format by the entrant.

Some digital manipulation of photos is acceptable (cropping, sharpening and so on).

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS:** Results will be announced in the June 2016 issue of *Expat Living*.

Be sure to check expatliving sg/photo for further details on the competition and confirmation of our panel of judges.

# ONTHE

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

#### **AN ARTSY AMBLE**

This month, artists in Wessex Estate will open their studio doors for the annual ArtWalk@ Wessex, an opportunity to visit the studios of 10 local and international professional artists living and working in the historic complex of 1940s black-and-white houses and walk-up apartments in lush



Portsdown Road. It's also a chance to buy directly from the artists, who work in a variety of media from painting and drawing to printmaking, photography and ceramics, and find out about their inspirations and techniques first-hand. The weekend walk is free and self-guided, with maps available at every studio. Recommended starting points are #03-05 Block 28, Woking Road, and #02-03 Block 2, Whitchurch Road. See it from 12 to 13 March from 11am to 7pm. Check facebook. com/artwalkwessex for updates.

#### **MONKEYING AROUND**

In honour of the Year of the Monkey, the Singapore Philatelic Museum (23B Coleman Street) is presenting **More Than Monkeys**, an exhibition designed for children and families to explore the world of our primate friends through stamps (there are 300 on display!) and other philatelic materials, plus puzzles and various educational activities. See it until 25 September. **spm.org.sg** 









#### PROPHETIC PARODY

Best known for his "Singaporeanised" parodies of iconic artworks, artist Eugene Soh returns to Chan Hampe Galleries with yet another solo exhibition, **Second Coming**. This time, his photo compositions touch on biblical narratives in which the prophesised reappearance of Jesus takes place, reinterpreting them within the context of contemporary society. For instance, in his *Madonna and Child*, the multiracial makeup of Singapore is conveyed in the portrayal of Jesus and Mary as Asian – a tongue-in-cheek contradiction to common Western depictions of the two; meanwhile, *The Last Christmas* features the messianic figure celebrating his birthday in Singapore with partygoers contemplating its apocalyptic undertones. See it until 13 March at Chan Hampe Galleries, 328 North Bridge Road, #01-21 Raffles Hotel Arcade. **chanhampegalleries.com** 



#### **SCULPTORS IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

Until 15 April, catch Envision: Sculptures @ the Garden City, an outdoor sculpture exhibition featuring 13 monumental (and some interactive) works by 11 artists from Singapore, Taiwan, China and Indonesia. Made from materials such as aluminium, painted bronze, stainless steel and fossilised rocks, the 3D creations touch on various subject matters including mankind's relationship with nature. The sculptures are placed in key cultural zones throughout the city, and you can see them all by following The Fullerton Heritage Trail, which starts from the Arts House Lawn and continues to such locations as the Asian Civilisations Museum Green, the Empress Place Lawn, The Fullerton Hotel, Clifford Square, The Fullerton Bay Hotel and along Marina Bay Boulevard; there are also free guided tours on weekends. For more details, visit ipreciation.com



## Your child is not a statistic.

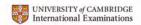
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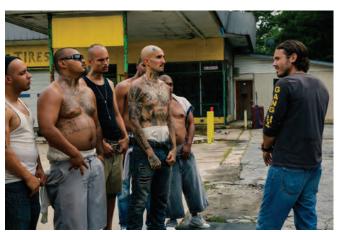
## ON THE SCREEN

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

#### **BIG SCREEN**

#### TRIPLE 9

When a crew of dirty cops is blackmailed by the Russian mob to execute a virtually impossible heist, they decide to pull it off by staging a "triple nine" – police code for "officer down". Their plan is turned upside-down when the unsuspecting rookie they set up to die foils their attack, triggering an action-packed chain of events filled with double-crosses, greed and revenge. This crime-thriller stars Kate Winslet, Casey Affleck, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Woody Harrelson. Opens 17 March at Cathay cineplexes.









#### THE BROTHERS GRIMSBY

When Nobby (Sacha Baron Cohen), a sweet but dim-witted English football hooligan, reunites with his long-lost brother, deadly MI6 agent Sebastian (Mark Strong), they work together to prevent a massive global terror attack – proving that behind every great spy is an embarrassing sibling. This comedy also stars Rebel Wilson, Penelope Cruz and Isla Fisher. Opens 10 March at Golden Village cinemas.



#### THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT

Set in a post-apocalyptic Chicago, *Allegiant*, the third instalment of the popular *Divergent* franchise, finds Tris (Shailene Woodley) and Four (Theo James) escaping beyond the wall enclosing their troubled city. Once outside, Tris must make tough choices about courage, allegiance, sacrifice and love, and decide who she can trust as a ruthless battle threatens humanity. The sci-fi action-adventure flick also features Jeff Daniels, Octavia Spencer, Ray Stevenson, Zoe Kravitz, Maggie Q and Naomi Watts. Opens 17 March at Golden Village cinemas.

#### **ART AT PLAY**

From 24 March to 2 April, theatre company Toy Factory presents Grind, a "contemporary gay play about an age-old prejudice". Performed as a tapestry of stories involving four gay men. the show unusually takes place within an art installation featuring various machines, gym equipment and metallic fixtures. Instead of formal seating, the audience is encouraged to move around and watch the performers from different vantage points. See it at the Drama Centre Black Box Theatre, 100 Victoria Street, #05-01 National Library Building. For tickets and more information, visit toyfactory.com.sq.



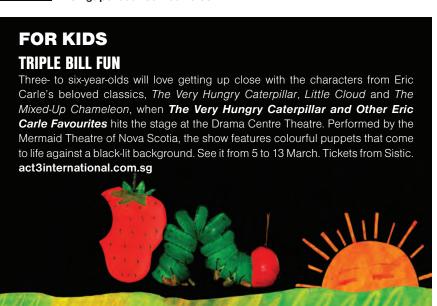


#### AT THE BALLET

Singapore Dance Theatre (SDT) opens its 2016 season with **Don Quixote**, the classical yet guirky ballet that was initially created for the Bolshoi Ballet in Russia. Set in Spain, it tells a story of love, betrayal and eternal devotion. When Kitri, the beautiful daughter of Lorenzo the innkeeper, falls for a poor young barber named Basilio instead of the wealthy man chosen by her father, and the two decide to run away, they meet the old knight Don Quixote and his faithful companion, Sancho, along the way. After a series of chivalrous acts and whimsical twists, the two lovers finally get to celebrate their marriage. See it from 10 to 13 March at Esplanade Theatre. singaporedancetheatre.com

#### **MUSICAL MASTERPIECES**

From 11 to 12 March, audiences can enjoy The Iconic Film Scores of John Williams: Star Wars and Beyond - a musical journey through a galaxy of famous film scores, featuring a special light and laser display. The 80-piece Metropolitan Festival Orchestra will perform music from such cinematic masterpieces as Star Wars, E.T., Superman, Jurassic Park, Jaws and Harry Potter, conducted by British conductor Anthony Inalis. See it at MasterCard Theatres at Marina Bay Sands. Tickets from Sistic.



## ON THE STAGE

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

#### **LAUGH OUT LOUD**

Grammy-and Emmy-nominated comedian **Margaret Cho** takes the Kallang Theatre stage on 5 March, bringing her Psycho Tour to town for the very first time. Expect razorsharp insights on everything from singlehood to female empowerment, Boko Haram to Bruce Jenner's transition, racism to police brutality – plus a fun musical performance. Tickets from Sistic.



la-comedylive.com

#### **ALL JAZZED UP**

This month, the **Singapore International Jazz Festival** (also known as Sing Jazz), returns for a third edition, bringing over a dozen local and international artists to the stage at the outdoor Marina Bay Sands Event Plaza. Jazz-lovers can look forward to a three-day line-up that includes: Darker Than Wax Sound System, Charlie Lim, Badbadnotgood, Taylor McFerrin and Hiatus Kaiyote on Friday 4 March; Jeremy Monteiro and Friends featuring Nancy Kelly, Incognito, Vadim Eilenkrig, Candy Dulfer and Joss Stone on Saturday 5 March; and Enrico Rava, Hector Infanzon, Orquesta Buena Vista Social Club, Seun Kuti and Egypt 80 on Sunday 6 March. Tickets from eventclique.com. **sing-jazz.com** 





#### **GET PUNKED**

Australian pop-punk band **5 Seconds of Summer** (also known as 5SOS) is set to rock The Star Theatre stage on 3 March, when band members Luke Hemmings, Mike Clifford, Calum Hood and Ashton Irwin bring their Sounds Live Feels Live tour to Singapore for the very first time. The group is known for songs such as "She Looks So Perfect", "Good Girls", "Amnesia", "She's Kinda Hot", and the latest high-octane single, "Hey Everybody". Tickets from Sistic. **livenationlushington.net** 

#### **FEELING BLUE**

Blue Man Group, the off-Broadway and Las Vegas smash hit, arrives in Singapore this month for the first time, bringing its unique mix of comedy, theatre, dance and rock to



audiences looking for a fun time – who doesn't want to see what happens when you give three guys 30 litres of paint? Now in its 25th year, the high-energy show takes viewers on a funny and visually stimulating adventure, accompanied by a live band whose tribal rhythms help drive the show towards its unforgettable trademark finale. See it from March 29 to April 10 at MasterCard Theatres at Marina Bay Sands. Tickets from Sistic. **baseentertainmentasia.com** 





## WHERE EVERY CHILD SOARS

For young learners, every moment is filled with new ideas, quiet discoveries, and excitement. When our youngest students at SAS explore our campus rainforest, watch kites soar in the wide sky, or build imaginary worlds, they discover that what they say, think, and wonder matters. Early childhood teacher Laura Jo Evans believes the best teachers are constant learners who trust children to be capable and to grow. She's inspired by her creative and confident students who ask questions and explore their world. Through a Reggio Emiliainspired approach and a focus on inquiry and self-guided learning, SAS helps children realize they can all soar.



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#### Wide Open Spaces

Science exploration stations, making snacks, poetry, puppetry, drama, music, and movement–early childhood center students get to do it all in a newly renovated, open-concept indoor space and outdoor playgrounds.



#### APPLY NOW AT WWW.SAS.EDU.SG/ADMISSIONS

#### **LONDON HAS FALLEN**

After the British Prime Minister passes away under mysterious circumstances, all leaders of the Western world must attend his funeral. What starts out as the most protected event on earth, however, turns into a deadly plot to kill the world's most powerful leaders – and the President of the United States, the formidable head of his secret service and an English MI6 agent are the only people with any hope of stopping it. This action-thriller stars Gerard Butler, Radha Mitchell and Morgan Freeman. Opens 3 March at Cathay cineplexes.

#### CELL

Based on Stephen King's 2006 novel by the same name, *Cell* centres on a group of survivors who must deal with the chaos that ensues when a mysterious cell phone signal starts a murderous worldwide epidemic. This sci-fi horror film features John Cusack, Samuel L. Jackson and Isabelle Fuhrman. Opens 10 March at Cathay cineplexes.



#### **NEW SEATS. NEW EATS**

Movie-watching at Gold Class VivoCity (1 Harbourfront Walk) just got even more luxurious, with new "Barcelona recliner" seats in soft nappa leather – the same material used by European automakers – as well as new menu items such as truffle fries, Reese's chocolate peanut butter pie and an Oreo milkshake. Sign us up! gv.com.sg/goldclasshome



#### **SUBURBAN CINEPLEX**

Shaw Theatres recently opened Shaw Theatres Waterway Point – its ninth movie theatre in Singapore – in suburban neighbourhood Punggol's new Waterway Point mall. The brand new cineplex has 11 screens, including a digital IMAX theatre – the third IMAX screen in Singapore. 83 Punggol Central, #B2-11 Waterway Point. **shaw.sg** 

#### **SMALL SCREEN**

#### **HOUSE OF CARDS, SEASON 4**

Get ready for some binge-watching as *House of Cards* returns for a fourth season; and RTL CBS Entertainment HD (StarHub Channel 509; SingTel Channel 318) will be premiering the entire season as a marathon on 5 March, from 4pm. That's right – all 13 chapters released together, on the same day as the US premiere. If you're not in a marathon mood, catch individual episodes every Tuesday at 9.55pm on the same channel.



#### **GENIUS**

This eight-part mini-series explores the forces behind some of the greatest inventions in history, from electricity to television to the computer, with each episode focused on the competition between two innovators – Bill Gates vs Steve Jobs and Thomas Edison vs Nikola Tesla, for example. Premieres 16 March at 9pm on the History Channel (StarHub Channel 401).



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# PAGE

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



#### **BACK TO THE START**

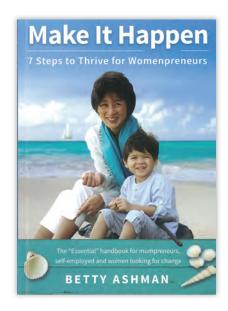
Belinda Fox Goff Books | 163 pages

If you're one of the many who appreciate the "lyrical and abstract" work of Singapore-based Australian artist Belinda Fox, you'll love this richly illustrated and handsomely bound coffee table book. Described as a monograph, it was designed by Sally Roydhouse (also Singapore-based) and written by four different arts professionals from the UK, Singapore and Australia.

Their insights into the artist and her work are presented in four chapters, titled Painting/Process, Paper/Past, Travel/Nature and Collaborations/Connections. The result is a thoughtful reflection of the different facets of this extraordinarily engaging young artist, including her comprehensive study of printmaking and its influences on her sculpture and painting, and her sustained artistic development – technical, thematic, philosophical and more – during the course of various residencies and international travels.

Here's an artist to watch – and to buy, if you're in the market. Apart from several impressive awards and accolades, she has already been listed as one of the 50 most collectable Australian artists.

Verne Maree



## MAKE IT HAPPEN - 7 STEPS TO THRIVE FOR WOMENPRENEURS

Betty Ashman

bettyashman.com | 156 pages

Billed as the essential handbook for mumpreneurs, the self-employed and women looking for change, this is just one of many available books on the subject. What makes it special is that it's by Betty Ashman, owner and managing director of The Expat Fairs website since 2008, and is full of locally relevant advice. Its practical insights and tips have had praise from a couple of successful entrepreneurs you may just have heard of: Expat Kitchen's Annette Lang, and our own Expat Living editor-in-chief, Rebecca Bisset.

Betty reminds us that acknowledged female qualities – such as attention to detail, intuition, risk-averseness and the ability to connect with others – particularly equip women to succeed in business. Her seven steps (spoiler alert!) include: know the loopholes of entrepreneurship; leverage your strengths and outsource your weaknesses; specify what you want to achieve; get help from mentors; beat the stress; connect with people; and understand the marketplace.

This little book is guaranteed to interest, inspire and inform would-be entrepreneurs, especially those based in Singapore. (And for even more inspiration, check out this month's great *LIV* cover story on Danielle Warner, the founder of Expat Insurance.)

Vanessa Harvey



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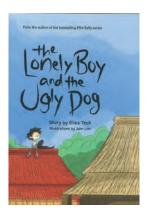
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#### **JUST FOR KIDS**

## THE LONELY BOY AND THE UGLY DOG

Story by Eliza Teoh; Illustrations by John Lim Bubbly Books | 44 pages

When I tell my eldest daughter, Tabitha, the title of the book we will be reading, her first comment is "Why's he ugly? He's not ugly, he's cute." Her adoration for dogs knows no bounds, and she already has empathy with one of the main characters, "ugly" dog Red, before even having begun to read the story.

The author found inspiration for this book in her own love for animals, particularly strays (she adopted her street dog BB in 2013), as well as in her interest in local artists and the history of Singapore. In fact, a painting by Liu Kang, titled *Life by the River*, features an image of a boy that sparked the idea for the story.

The boy in the book is lonely and left out, but he finds a friend in stray dog Red, who is equally lonely. They bond, but the boy's parents don't like Red and so he sleeps on the street at night. This works to his advantage however, when a fire spreads quickly through the kampong. Red manages to wake the family, save them, and ultimately endear himself to the other villagers.

It's a charming story that was easily followed by my seven-year-old. Asked what she particularly liked or didn't like, she said: "I liked the part when the boy meets Red, and when the fire came, as it meant Red saved the boy and his family. I didn't like it when the boy was left alone, or when the dog's paws started bleeding because he was digging to try and get into the house and rescue the family."

With snippets of history at the back of the book, advice on the handling of dogs and information on the situation of strays here in Singapore, this book has a little something for everyone, it seems.

Amy and Tabitha Brook-Partridge

## 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!



Katie Roberts Australian

THE LIFE-CHANGING MAGIC OF TIDYING UP: A SIMPLE, EFFECTIVE WAY TO BANISH CLUTTER FOREVER BY MARIE KONDO Genre? Self-help

#### How did you get hold of it?

At a recent goodbye dinner party, a friend of my departing friend explained how she had rid herself of six or seven garbage bags of "stuff" after reading this book.



She was triumphant about her de-cluttering and particularly made the point that she threw it away rather than trying to sell it or give it away. The reservation waiting list on the National Library Board online catalogue numbered 163 people, so I purchased it online at Book Depository.

#### How far have you got with it?

I'm delving in and out, selecting chapters at whim. Of course, the book is incredibly well organised, so this is easy to do. The fact that it's a *New York Times* bestseller that has sold millions of copies is spurring me on.

#### What do you think of it so far?

Written by a Japanese cleaning consultant with a three-month waiting list, it's billed as a guide to her "revolutionary KonMari Method for simplifying, organising, and storing". It offers a new way of thinking which challenges my traditional approach to de-cluttering. For instance, she advocates placing all your clothing in one massive pile and then sorting through it piece by piece. If you don't love it, it goes. The other gem I've taken on board is to quash the desire to try to give away or sell the unwanted items, a legacy of a "waste not, want not" upbringing. Fill the bags and get rid of them, pronto.



Gunther Scherz Austrian managing director

CATHERINE THE GREAT: PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN BY ROBERT K. MASSIE Genre? Biography

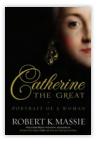
How did you get hold of it? Downloaded to iPad (by my wife).

How far have you got with it? More than halfway.

#### What do you think of it so far?

Great book for anyone interested in how

the last Empress of Russia (who was originally a German!) shaped the country, with actions that are still felt today – in Crimea, for example.







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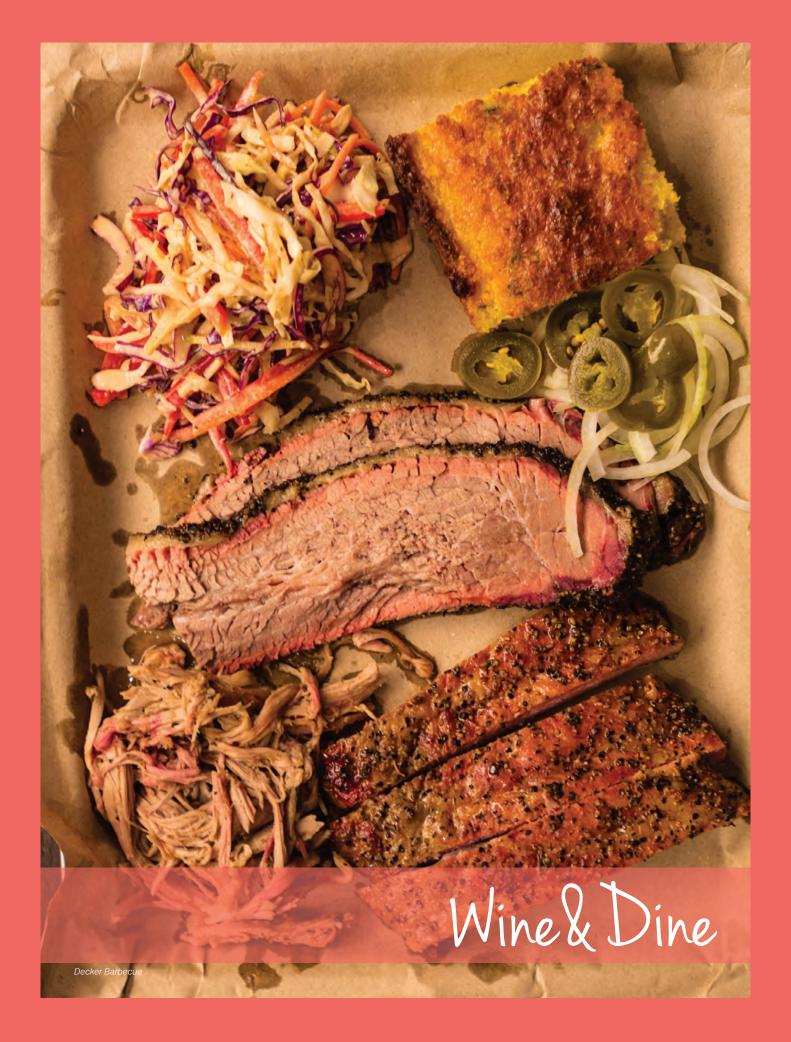
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## WHAT'S NEW The latest trends in food and wine

#### **EXPERIENCE WITH THE EXPERTS**

This month and next, Marina Bay Sands is offering an exclusive opportunity to learn from some of the very best in the culinary and craft cocktail worlds. Every Saturday in March and April, Craft to Taste - A Culinary and Mixology Series lets participants watch pros like Executive Chef Sabrina Stillhart of Bread Street Kitchen and Executive Chef Jonathan Kinsella of db Bistro and Oyster Bar work their magic in the kitchen, getting one-on-one guidance in an intimate group setting, before sampling the culinary creations with wine and other beverage pairings. Cooking sessions takes place from 10am to 2pm, starting with a chef demonstration and ending with lunch. At the Mixology lessons, held from 4pm to 6pm, experts like Waku Ghin's Head Bartender, Kazuhiro Chii, demonstrate how to shake up cocktails before participants try their own hands at it - sessions end with drinks and bar bites. For details and ticketing, visit marinabaysands.com/dining.







#### **GET CRAFTY**

Attention beer lovers - Southeast Asia's first-ever craft beer festival, Craft Singapore, takes place this month from 4 to 6 March, featuring more than 25 well-known and niche beer and cider brands, plus gourmet foods by local restaurants and live music. Festival-goers can expect artisanal beers from international brewers and famous local breweries such as Brewerkz, as well as newer kids on the block like Little Island Brewing Company, plus all sorts of activities like master classes and beer pong. The family-friendly event, held in conjunction with Singapore's sustainable light art festival, i Light Marina Bay, will feature a kids' corner on 5 and 6 March, with face-painting and balloon-sculpting. Marina Bay Waterfront, 10 Bayfront Avenue. Tickets from Sistic. For more details, visit craftsingapore.com.

visit singaporecocktailweek.com.sg



## Hop into the Easter Festivities!



Make Easter celebration with friends and family even more fun and joyous with these delights and treats.







#### **FEMALE FOOD STAR**

For the first time ever, the title of Asia's Best Female Chef has been awarded to a chef from the Philippines, Margarita Forés, whose Manila-based Italian restaurants include Cibo (10 outlets throughout the city), Lusso, farmto-table-focused Grace Park, as well as her successful catering company, Cibo di M. The accolade recognises an exceptional female chef whose culinary skills, entrepreneurial spirit and artistry have earned her the respect and admiration of critics, connoisseurs and fellow chefs; it is one of eight that make up Asia's 50 Best Restaurants programme, voted for by over 300 industry experts from across the region including food writers and critics, chefs and other foodies. For more details, visit



If it's your birthday month, you'll definitely want to head over to KPO to celebrate – the bar is giving away a complimentary bottle of G.H. Mumm Cordon Rouge champagne to anyone who comes in on a Saturday night during their birthday month and spends a minimum of \$75. For details, visit facebook.com/KPO.sg.

## REVOLVINGDOORS

- Previously located at Marina Square, Italian-Japanese fusion restaurant NUVO has found a new home at Customs House (70 Collyer Quay, #01-04) in Marina Bay, serving up such items as threecheese gyoza (\$21), mozzarella okonomiyaki (\$25) and goma soy panna cotta (\$12). facebook.com/nuvosingapore
- Modern Indian fine-dining restaurant Saha Signature Indian
   Restaurant and Bar has shifted from its Duxton Hill shophouse to
   a much larger space at National Gallery Singapore (#01-03). While
   the menu has remained mostly the same, new dishes have been
   introduced alongside some non-Indian ingredients and snazzy
   cooking equipment. Signature dishes include foie gras with spice stewed mango, mattar paneer with assorted Indian mini-breads, a
   masala "cappuccino", and frozen chocolate ganache powder with
   cardamom, saffron and mint "soil"; mains range from \$25 to \$40.
   saha.sg
- Replacing casual Vietnamese chain Nam Nam Noodle Bar at Owen Link is Jinzakaya, a new Japanese dining spot by the Les Amis Group. The casual modern izakaya serves up value-for-money set lunches (\$12.80), which come with a main course and hot or cold houjicha (green tea). Dinner-wise, skewers (from \$2.50 each) and more filling options like Australian wagyu (\$60 for 100g) are available. 1 Farrer Park Station Road, #01-08/10 Owen Link.
- Burger joint South Bronx has taken over The Connoisseur
  Concerto's spot at PoMo Mall (1 Selegie Road, #01-02). Started by
  the folks behind Montana Brew Bar, this place is for the burger and
  fries lover in you; one highlight is "The Mac Daddy" (\$16), which
  includes a house-made beef patty, jalapeños and mac and cheese.
  facebook.com/southbronxsingapore



#### HAVE YOUR BREW COME TO YOU

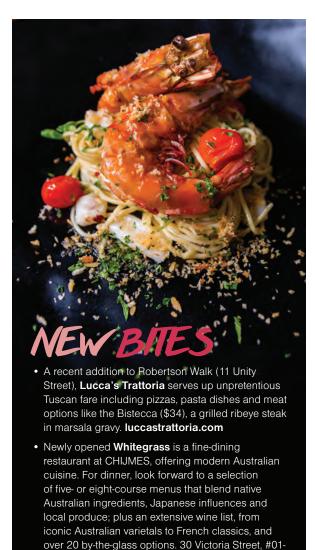
Created with the goal of making freshly roasted specialty coffee conveniently accessible to everyone, Hook Coffee, an e-commerce concept that brings artisanal brews right to your doorstep, means never having to run out of your favourite beans. Hook offers a subscription service where customers can get deliveries regularly (and with no long-term commitment!), as well as à la carte ordering for less-frequent coffee-drinkers. So, here's the scoop: focused on sourcing sustainably grown and ethically produced coffees from farms around the world - from Colombia and El Salvador to Brazil and India - Singaporean founders Faye Sit and Ernest Ting roast the coffee locally, then send it out to customers within one week of roasting, for maximum freshness. Beans are ground on demand, and can be ordered to work with five different brewing methods: espresso machine, French press, Aeropress, drip and stovetop. There are currently five coffees on offer, though Faye and Ernest have plans to add more options soon. \$18 per 250g bag. hookcoffee.com.sg ▼



#### **PRICE-MATCH PROMISE**

With over 2,600 alcohol products available, RedMart has something for every craft beer fan, whiskey lover, sake drinker and oenophile - and at great prices. In fact, the online grocer is so set on low prices that it offers a Price Match Guarantee on both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (excluding fresh milk and chilled drinks). So, if you buy your favourite chardonnay from RedMart and then see it cheaper in the store or online at NTUC or Cold Storage, simply snap a picture or take a screenshot that shows both the product and the corresponding price tag with the lower regular selling price (not the promotional, discounted or "special" price!), and submit a claim at redmart. com within seven days of your original RedMart purchase. You'll be reimbursed double the difference in RedMart credits, which you can use for future purchases. And, RedMart will drop its regular selling price to match the lower price within three days. For more details, visit redmart.com. ▼





#### CALLING ALL COOKS

26/27 CHIJMES. whitegrass.com.sg

If you're looking to spice up your skills in the kitchen, here's your chance – **Expat Kitchen**'s got some brand new courses (\$165; 10am to 1pm). This month, learn how to make green curry chicken, tom yum soup with



fish, basil chicken, pad Thai and mango salad in the "Healthy Thai Eats" course, taking place on 18 March. Then, on 21 April, join the "Dips and More" class, where you'll learn how to create all kinds of party-perfect dips and nibbles, from smoky baba ganoush and roasted red pepper and artichoke dips to pita crisps and crudités. For more information and a full list of classes, visit **expat-kitchen.com**.

### Vietnamese with a Twist

Craving Vietnamese? Get yourself a table at the new and homey **Fat Saigon Boy**, where Australian-born Vietnamese chef Cai Lang dishes out contemporary Australian-Vietnamese fare. Start with **Vietnamese barbecued pork skewers** (\$10) and the **soft shell crab slider** (\$10) – you won't be disappointed. When it comes to mains, don't miss the **duck pho** (\$15), succulent slices of smoked and twice-cooked duck in a rich, flavourful broth; nor the **pork noodles** (\$15), perfectly chargrilled pieces of pork that melt in your mouth; extra points for the **yuzu-infused fish sauce dressing** that comes with it. Wash it all down with a **Vietnamese sangria** (from \$10). Open six days for lunch, and Wednesday to Saturday for dinner; closed Sundays. 14 Ann Siang Road. **6221 6784** | **fatsaigonboy.com.sg V** 



#### Fun Fusion

When we heard the words "kimchi" and "panini" in the same sentence, we couldn't wait to get over to Australian-Korean café, **Da Bang**, to try it out, along with other fusion treats. In addition to Korean-inspired toasted paninis (\$12-14), the café's signatures include *bingsu* (a shaved ice yoghurt dessert; \$18), "latte ice cubes" (\$9) – cleverly frozen into cubes



so your coffee doesn't get watered down as they melt – and super-rich **hot chocolate** (\$3) that's so thick and chocolaty, it's like a meal in itself. And, though the kimchi panini was undeniably delish, we loved the **bulgogi panini** even more; of course, you can't go wrong either with the **French toast** (\$12). Once 5pm hits, the eatery turns into **Don't Tell Mama**, a Mexican-Korean bistro-bar with fun cocktails like **Spicy Melon** (\$12) and **Lychee Margarita** (\$10), plus bar bites such as **kimchi fries** (\$18). Our only gripe: we wished the food menu stayed the same from day to night – we wanted the night menu's kimchi fries with our lunch! 52 Tanjong Pagar Road. **dabang.sg** 



#### SHOW-AND-TELL DINING

For the indecisive menu-lingerers and those in need of a nudge out of their comfort zone, **Chef's Table by Stephan Zoisl** is a must. The rules are simple: choose from three, four, six or eight courses, let any dietary requirements be known, then sit back and enjoy a sensory adventure.

Food takes centre stage here; walls are lined with fine wines while high table-tops and barstools allow for optimal views of the open-plan kitchen. The space is intimately small, and the interior simple and relaxed, welcoming both casual diners and dolled-up dates.

Compellingly experimental and everchanging, the menu is inspired by the season's best. Dishes are personally served by Stephan and his right-hand man, and both the produce and methods are explained in detail, leaving you in awe of the "journey" behind your meal. Ingredients are sourced from around the globe and back again, with garnishes grown in the restaurant's own herb garden. We loved the playful duck trio (breast, confit, foie gras) with caramelised onion purée, charred Roscoff onion and burned leek, and the closing act, Chef Stephan's Chocolate Test. Eloquently plated, this dish is a play on variations of texture and the cocoa percentage in Valrhona chocolate. You'll sample chocolate powder, mousse, ganache, sponge cake, brownie and flakes. all while witnessing liquid nitrogen create chocolate ice cream within seconds. Threecourse meals start at \$75.

Tip: Celebrating? Get a group together and nab the 12-seater chef's table. The unobstructed view of the kitchen at work, coupled with the personable nature of Chef Stephan, will get you a gold star in partyplanning. 61 Tras Street. 6224 4188 | chefstable.sg ▲

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WINE&DINE

# BATTHE

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

#### **Copper on Stanley Sake Bar**

3 Stanley Street 6221 3639 | copperonstanley.com

#### FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

You could miss Copper's low-key entrance, so remember that it's number 3 and don't get distracted by the other bars in this festive little street on the edge of Chinatown. Once inside, pride of



place is taken by a dispenser stocked with a judicious variety of ten sakes at any one time; somewhat obscured is a full bar that serves whatever else you might fancy. Good music, good vibe.

**THE CHOSEN ONE:** It's impossible for us amateurs (however enthusiastic) to pinpoint the best of the six or so that we tried from the dispenser and thoroughly enjoyed.

**THE CHEAPSKATE:** There's always at least one sake going for around \$7 (60ml). "I want to change the way people perceive value," says owner Felicia – "a cheap sake is not necessarily a bad sake."

BITE ON THIS: Outstanding small plates by South African chef Damian Pentelow (\$7 to \$15) are good value and perfect for sharing. Highlights include: an exemplary beef tartar; swoon-worthy tempura-fried oysters; grilled smoked chicken with mustard and coriander seeds; soft smoked eggs; and wonderful strips of Angus steak with beef jus and asparagus. Wash down the go-straight-to-hell Oreo cheesecake or the marginally less sinful goma ice cream with nori and sesame (\$5) with a dessert sake called Time Machine, and ask for its backstory. (Note: During the day, before 6pm, Damian whips up breakfasts and sandwiches for the sake bar's daytime alter ego, Crack & Press.)

**LAST BUT NOT LEAST:** Felicia knows about sake and is delighted to share her passion for the stuff. Get down here with a few good friends, and you cannot but have a good time.

Verne Maree



Oxwell & Co Rooftop Bar 5 Ann Siang Road

6438 3984 | oxwellandco.com

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: The recently opened, Hendrick's-exclusive rooftop bar at beloved British-inspired gastropub Oxwell & Co is such a pleasant small-space spot, I almost don't want to spread the word! It has a secret garden feel – after all, it's an organic herb garden from which the chef and bartenders get herbs for food and cocktails – with a green bar, vintage phone booth and fairy lights, plus an awesome view of Chinatown.

**THE CHOSEN ONE:** While all five of the bar's signature cocktails are delish, my favourite was **A Brew on the Roof** (\$22 per glass; \$80 per "tea set"); a mix of Earl Grey-infused Hendrick's Gin, Indian borage, fresh lemon, sugar and grapefruit bitters, it's really refreshing and comes in a tea cup!

**THE CHEAPSKATE:** A bathtub (yes, it's actually a small bathtub that sits on your communal table) of classic Hendrick's Gin and Tonic, **Bathtime** (\$60) has around four servings, according to the bartender (that brings you to about \$15 per glass); garden botanicals can be added upon request.

BITE ON THIS: Though the cocktail menu was created specially for the rooftop, the bar bites menu is the same as in the downstairs bar. We especially loved the fried artichoke hearts with anchovy mayo (\$17), crispy corn and cumin (\$6) and vine tomato, sugar snap pea and spring onion salad (\$16/22; it tasted like caprese with pesto!); of course there's also a selection of Brit favourites like fish and chips (\$26) and pork scratchings (\$6).

**LAST BUT NOT LEAST:** Even if you don't plan on eating, I'd suggest booking a table for drinks, as the intimate space is sure to fill up quickly.

Amy Greenburg

## AFTERNOONS MADE FOR INDULGENCE.



Embracing the heritage setting that defines InterContinental<sup>®</sup> Singapore, The Lobby Lounge is the ideal setting for a leisurely afternoon tea experience, encapsulating the grandeur of the old-world while radiating elegance and charm. Enjoy a selection of sweet and savoury creations in delightful company while the enchanting tunes by the pianist add a magical note to your indulgent afternoon.

Your afternoon tea experience starts from \$42++ per person between 2pm to 5pm daily.



For reservations and enquiries, please call +65 6825 1008 or email intercontinental.dining@ihg.com.



In the mood for meat, but don't feel like hitting up a posh steakhouse? Well, you're in luck. Singapore's chock-full of choices when it comes to meat-centric meals. From smokehouses and rotisseries to gournet burgers and nose-to-tail dining joints, there's truly something for every meat-lover in the Lion City. Here, we've rounded up some of the hottest spots to try across town.

#### **Dehesa**

12 North Canal Road 6221 7790 | dehesa.com.sg

**Their thing:** Dehesa is the newest kid on the block to offer fashionable "nose-to-tail dining", a style of cooking that utilises the entire animal, including offal.

Dehesa's Spanish-Italian chef-owner Jean Philippe Patruno (JP) has created a dining experience with flair that offers an escape from the ordinary – a menu of delicious, meaty dishes with rich, robust flavours.

This cosy, buzzy little eatery focuses on communal dining and, while you can sit at the bar and watch Chef JP at work, you can also perch on the long wooden benches with other parties of diners, and make yourself some new friends. The dishes are all for sharing, too, which is perfect since you'll want to try every single mouth-watering item on the menu. We enjoyed a variety of plates, including the octopus (\$28), perfectly cooked and draped with

a sinful layer of lardo that melted into the octopus and gave it a smoky flavour. Other notable dishes included the **Ibérico jowls** (\$28) – a tender cut of meat from under the pig's shoulder that's rich in taste – which was perfectly accompanied by a refreshing apple base, and the **Iala** (\$15), a clam dish (the clams are procured locally) served with a broth that included *fino* sherry and chillies.

#### Don't leave without trying: The platter of cold meats

(\$32) – it's the ultimate example of nose-to-tail dining at Dehesa. Chef JP has artfully used each section of the pig, from the head in the terrine, to the ear and shoulder, and has even thrown in some crackling to create a delicious cold-cuts delight that melts in the mouth. Pair it with a glass of divine **Rioja** (\$7).

Natalie Whittell

#### **Meat Smith**

167/169 Telok Ayer Street 9245 5675 | meatsmith.com.sg

**Their thing:** Smoked meat, and plenty of it!

This buzzy eatery on ever-trendy Telok Ayer has a quirky and industrial feel with a rather masculine "metro" vibe. The busy semi-open kitchen houses the two awesome smokers used to smoke most of the meat in-house. This seriously impressed my husband, who ran a locally-reared-and-sourced meat business for five years – I was dining with one pretty discerning customer!

To start, we feasted on a few starters (in hindsight we slightly over-ordered here): **crispy pork rinds** (\$6) – think posh pork scratchings; **smoked pork croquettes** (\$10), featuring Meatsmith's own bacon; and **chicken wings** (\$14), which can be ordered Nashville-style (spicy) or Southern-style (milder).



What can only be described as "the main event" followed next: the **BBQ Platter for two** (\$95) – the chef's selection of meats including brisket, pulled pork, and chicken, with a few croquettes for good measure, accompanied by a hunk of **smoked garlic bread** plus a side of your choice: we chose the **sweet vinegar slaw** (\$15 on its own).

As if that wasn't enough, we also ordered the **bacon mac and cheese** (\$10). Thankfully, the sides are of a

manageable size and we polished off the lot – washed down with a half-pint of Pilsner Urquell (\$8) and a pint of Brew Dog Dead Pony (\$17). This is the right spot for when you're craving cookedto-perfection meat and artisan beers, downtown.

**Don't leave without trying:** The meat platter for two, and the **apple cobbler** (\$8) for dessert.

Emily Finch



#### The Chop House #01-13 112 Katong, 112 East Coast Road

6443 1011 | the-chop-house.com

**Their thing:** A gastro-bar offering feelgood grub, the Katong branch boasts a Southbend broiler from the US, which helps sear the steaks perfectly, keeping the flavour and the juices in.

The Chop House has something that is hard to come by in Singapore – quality steaks at reasonable prices. The atmosphere is very relaxed, with both indoor and outdoor seating offered all day until midnight, catering for everything from casual lunches and family dinners to group get-togethers.

We started with the **burrata** (\$16) - a melt-in-the-mouth, gooey delight

accompanied by a drizzle of pesto and firm, ripe tomatoes. The **crispy pork belly** (\$18) was not too fatty and was covered in crunchy crackling. For mains, we opted for the **USDA Prime grain-fed ribeye** (\$38) and the **Australian lamb chops** (\$32) with a side of **French fries** (\$5) and **steamed broccoli with almond butter** (\$7) – both dishes were cooked to perfection, and exactly as requested, while the quality of the meat was excellent, the ribeye not as fatty as it can sometimes be. We washed it down with a delicious **malbec**, a steal at just \$10 a glass.

We managed to squeeze in some churros (\$6), and a sago gula melaka pudding (\$6) with an odd texture (think sweet caviar balls!) but great flavour from the coconut and pistachios mixed in.

Don't leave without trying: The Australian grass-fed tenderloin (\$32) – extremely tender, juicy and tasty. And, make sure you sample the onion jam – made in-house and the best I've ever had.

Katherine Allaway

#### **Bergs Gourmet Burgers**

10 Haji Lane 6293 3424 | bergsburgers.com

**Their thing:** As the name suggests, they're all about gourmet burgers, from traditional beef and chicken patties to lamb, fish and even tofu and falafel burgers.

Bergs has an unapologetically casual charm, accentuated by colourful wooden tables and chairs, retro tunes (think *Grease* and *Boogie Nights*) and baskets instead of plates.

The burgers here are really spectacular. The grass-fed beef is sourced in Australia, from where the three owners hail. All the patties and sauces, including the signature tomato sauce, are made from scratch. They also offer different size options for those daunted by the "Berg-sized" burger (\$12.50 to \$20); you can get a small burger (\$10.50 to \$18) or even mini Bergs (\$15 for a trio).

We tried the Berg-sized **Miss Piggy** (\$14.50), which includes bacon and cheese, with some **chunky steak-style chips** (\$6). Offering a decent filling-to-bun ratio, the delicious beef was perfectly accented by the bacon and cheddar; the signature sauce and aioli mix was also finger-licking good (you'll need a pile of napkins). We also sampled some mini Bergs, including the **Budgie Smuggler**, chicken in orange honey marinade and sweet chilli sauce, the **Porto Polo**, chicken in spicy Portuguese marinade and peri-peri sauce, and the **Mumbo Jumbo**, chicken marinated in Cajun spices with lemon yoghurt and aioli – all three were tasty and different.

We finished our meal with an **ice cream sandwich** (\$7), ice cream sandwiched between two chocolate chip cookies - a fittingly unrefined yet delicious dessert for a night of burger-y goodness!

**Don't leave without trying:** Any Berg burger will do – just bring your appetite (and some wet wipes!).

Katie Peace

Bonkers for Burpers

There's no denying the deliciousness of juicy burgers topped with all sorts of goodies. Here are some of our personal picks for the best burgers in Singapore.

"I love **Potato Head Folk** on Keong Saik. Not only do they have phenomenal burgers, but also the cocktails and finger foods are top notch. Burgers start from \$18, but if you have the appetite (or a buddy to share with), try the **Truff Rider** (\$45) – a 150g wagyu beef patty topped with pan-seared *foie gras*, four artisan cheeses, black truffle and *confit* of onion jam."

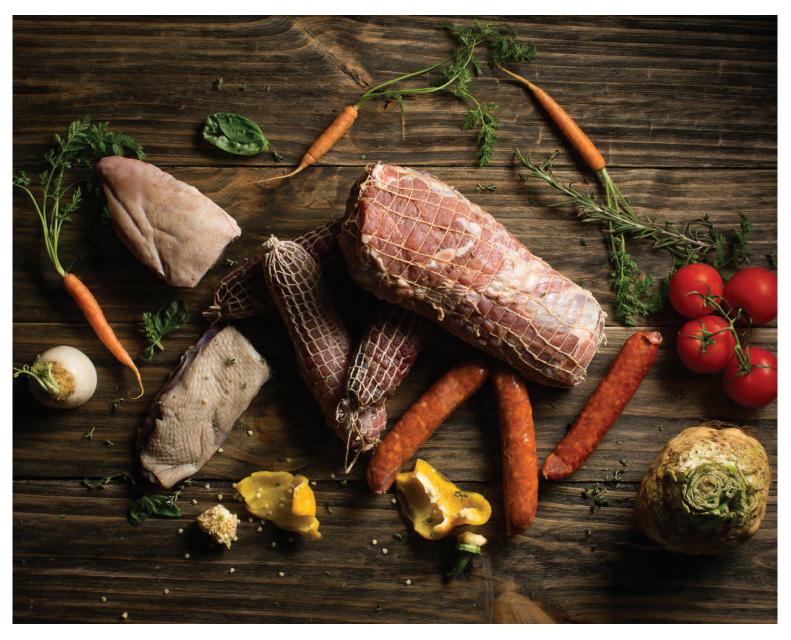
Leanda Rathmell

"I rarely order burgers, but the one I had recently at **Open Farm Community** was amazing – the meat was tender and succulent, the roll was perfect and the fries were crunchy and hot. Servings are generous though, so go there hungry!"

Katie Roberts

"Although I love the thought of a nice cheesy burger, I'm almost always conscious that the grease will pretty much immediately attach itself to my stomach, hips and thighs. So for me, a burger is a rare treat, but when I had the **Green Chilli Cheeseburger** at **Meat Liquor** it was well worth it. It's served simply on paper and a tray, no messing around with cutlery (who eats a burger with cutlery anyway? – that's like eating a pizza with a fork). For \$19.50, you get a big beef patty covered with cheese, spicy chilli butter, red onions, pickles, lettuce, mustard and ketchup. I've heard the **Dead Hippie Burger** is amazing too, so I'm hoping that will be my burger for 2016."





#### **5th Quarter**

39 Syed Alwi Road 6291 1936 | 5thquarter.com.sg

**Their thing:** Cured, pickled and smoked meats.

Located on the ground floor of luxury boutique Hotel Vagabond in Jalan Besar, 5th Quarter's tables are mainly low, making the dining experience extra-cosy, while the deep red velvet floor-to-ceiling drapes, gilt trees and life-sized golden elephant statues give it something extra.

Australian-born Executive Chef Drew Nocente (formerly of Skirt) has mastered the techniques of curing, pickling and smoking different types and cuts of meat. The menu is divided into six themes: "Salted and Hung", "Fermented, Fried, Braised", "Smoked, Brined, Cured", "Grilled, Seared, Charred", "Roasted and Green", and "Frozen, Churned, Baked".

The **chef's selection of five types of charcuterie** (\$22) from the "Salted and Hung" selection is perfect for trying a variety of cured meats, including a pâté and

fennel seed wafers. Or try a plate of **kangaroo loin** (\$12) – its flavours and texture are smooth on the palate. **Pork jowl, apple and basil** (\$12) from the "Fermented, Fried, Braised" category was crispy on the outside but could easily be pulled apart.

Save room for the **chocolate salami, salted caramel ice cream** (\$16) from "Frozen, Churned, Baked" – cleverly created to look like salami with dehydrated heirloom tomatoes and lightly salted caramel ice cream. Finally, don't miss the complimentary **Anzac biscuits** made with bacon and topped with caramel sauce!

**Don't leave without trying:** the **beef tongue**, **onion**, **wasabi** (\$12). I took the plunge and was pleasantly surprised – very tender, and the fermented veggie condiments complemented the flavour.

Valmai Dhir

#### **Shelter in the Woods**

22 Greenwood Avenue 6466 6225 | shelterinthewoods.com

**Their thing:** Traditional rotisserie delivering Michelinstar-quality cuisine – meat, meat and more meat, from nose to tail. Their secret ingredient? – stellar consultant chef Asai Masashi, literally cooking with gas.

Though the ambience and the menu are apparently rustic, this is by no means casual food: every dish – and we feasted on several more than was perhaps good for us – is prepared and served to fine-dining standards.

My discerning spouse sometimes sneers at **snails**, but not tonight: these off-menu beauties, gently glued with creamed potato to a marrow-bone and straight from the broiler, are to die for (or – perhaps less dramatically – just to go back to Shelter in the Woods for).

Our **Fines Platter** is a generous selection from the **Pâté Board** (\$33 to share), a selection of three of the daily range; and the **Charcuterie Board** (\$37) of three items available today, including foie gras *au torchon* (\$28 per 125g), duck rillettes (\$18 per 125g) and pâté en croute (\$19.50 per slice), all served with lightly dressed mesclun leaves, poolish brioche and poolish baguette. We're raving about the divinely short-crust **quiche** to share (\$15), straight from the oven and bursting with fat forest mushrooms, gruyere cheese, onions and fresh herbs. This is as good as it gets anywhere.

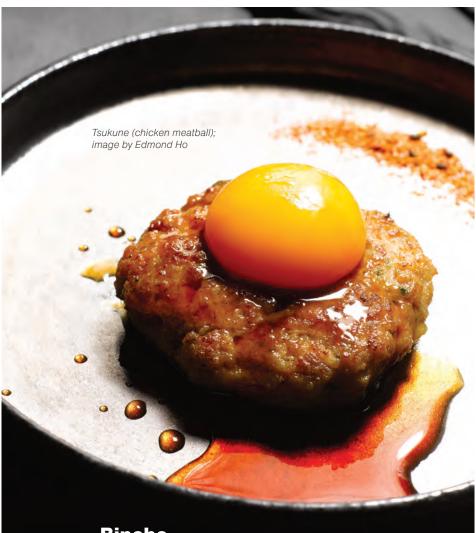
Seafood lovers will swoon for the seasonal **seafood casserole** (\$39 to share), a mélange of snapper, prawns, scallops, cockles and mussels in a rich broth; ours comes garnished with a couple of perfect Pacific **oysters** (\$3.50 each from the blackboard). From the rotisserie come New Zealand **rack of lamb** (\$45), four herb-crusted ribs with gravy; roasted French chicken (\$22 half, \$40 whole); and the succulent yet crispy-skinned signature **suckling pig** (\$35, \$68 to share, or pre-order a whole one for \$300).

Our wine by the glass includes a lovely white Burgundy (\$22) and a suitably complex Bordeaux (\$19). Having sampled much of the barnyard and a swathe of the ocean, it's not easy to find a corner for **meringue glacée** (\$12) and **chestnut tiramisu** (\$17), but we bravely manage the feat.

**Don't leave without trying:** In this meaty nirvana, would it it be rude to say the **quiche?** The **snails**, the **duck rillettes?** But what about the **suckling pig?** And we have to go back for Masashi-san's **duck confit** (\$30) and **côte de boeuf** (\$158 for two or three to share). If they're as good as the rest, they'll be divine.

Verme Maree





#### **Bincho**

78 Moh Guan Terrace, #01-19 6438 4567 | bincho.com.sg

**Their thing:** Inspired by *yakitori-ya* grilling stalls in Osaka, Bincho serves up cocktails, whisky and sake, and specialises in grilled meats, with a focus on chicken.

A hole in the wall located just off Kim Pong Road (close to infamous brunch spots Open Door Policy and Forty Hands) in a traditional *kopitiam* (coffee shop), you could almost miss this little Japanese diner, which exudes an old-world charm – featuring a *mee pok* stall, rickety brown chairs and marble tables.

After a refreshing cocktail, I'm asked by chef Asai Masashi if I eat "all parts of the chicken". I know what he's getting at, and my insides scream "no!", but for manners' sake I agree to give it a try. Gulp.

First up is the **Miyazaki-style grilled chicken necks** (\$28) from the traditional yakitori grill, seasoned with special sauce and garnished with yuzu paste and finely chopped spring onion. I'm pleasantly surprised – it tastes tangy and delicious, and it melts in the mouth. I'm told the meat is delivered and prepared freshly every morning. Another treat is the **tsukune** (\$18), a large, minced chicken meatball covered in sweet soy and raw egg (you crack it yourself). Also worth a try is the **vegetable platter** (\$30), a cool combination of grilled and garnished turnips, young corn and eggplant.

**Don't leave without trying:** The succulent **kurobuta pork with sweet black garlic** (\$30), a true palate sensation.

Susannah Jaffer

#### More meaty eats

#### **Club Meatballs**

20 Cross Street, #01-35 China Square Central | clubmeatballs.com **Their thing:** All kinds of meatballs, from free-range chicken to grass-fed beef to chickpea, spinach and chilli

#### **Naughty Nuri's Singapore**

15 Stamford Road, #01-84 Capitol Building | 6384 7955 **Their thing:** Indonesian barbecued pork ribs (yes, the same ones from Ubud, Bali!)

#### **Braseiro**

333 Joo Chiat Road | braseiro-sg.com **Their thing:** Brazilian churrasco-style barbecue For more East Coast restaurants, turn to page 192.

#### **FYR Cycene Ond Drinc**

19 Boon Tat Street | facebook.com/ FYRBTS

**Their thing:** Grilled meat platters from a Josper charcoal oven

#### **Don Quijote**

#01-02 Block 7 Dempsey Road don-quijote-restaurants.com **Their thing:** Spanish jamón dishes and paella de carne (with seafood options, too)

#### 8 Korean BBQ

6 Eu Tong Sen Street, #02-79 The Central facebook.com/8koreanbbq **Their thing:** Korean barbecue with a focus on pork belly – in eight flavours

#### Sacha & Sons

333A Orchard Road, #03-02 Mandarin Gallery | sacha-deli.com.sg

Their thing: New York-style delicatessen grub (think chopped liver, pastrami and corned beef)

#### The Rotisserie

Multiple locations | therotisserie.sg **Their thing:** Delicious roast chickens for dine-in or takeaway

Also, check out our guide to Singapore's best steakhouses at expatliving.sg/ wine\_and\_dine.



#### Beef eater? Try veal

Veal comes from calves of around six to seven months old. It tends to have a lighter colour, a finer texture and a smoother, tenderer taste than beef; it's also slightly cheaper in Singapore. Try it in osso bucco, for example; one of Italy's most renowned meat dishes, this Milanese specialty is made of veal shanks cooked in a rich broth with tomato and wine. Salting the meat before cooking makes it even more tender.

#### Chicken chooser? Try other birds

One alternative is succulent spring chickens, so small that you'll need one per person; they're an interesting option for serving at dinner parties, especially spatchcocked (split open) and grilled. Quails are even tinier, fattier than chicken and tending towards a gamey taste – though Huber's Butchery (hubers.com.sg) carries a variety of quail from France that's not quite as gamey as others. Other alternatives are pheasants, guinea fowls and Hungarian ducks, which, according to Greg Hughes, General Manager of The Butcher (thebutcher.com.sg), tend to be tenderer than local ducks and geese. You can buy frozen ones fairly easily in Singapore.

Another alternative to chicken, although not a bird, is rabbit. In a sauce, you may be hard pushed to tell the difference between the two. Most rabbit meat is frozen and comes from the US (you can get it at Swiss Butchery, for instance). It's best to cook rabbit meat on the bone, as taking it off first can be tricky, and might leave you with not much meat.



#### **Prefer pork? Try new breeds**

A lot of the pork in Singapore comes from Australia, so for a different taste, try Ibérico pork, which comes from the Black Iberian pig. This breed accumulates fat between its muscle fibres, producing a marbled, dark meat that's very tender – and the loin cuts have lots of flavour. Ibérico pork can cost around 20 percent more

than Australian pork, but for a special occasion it may be worth it.

You could also try Japanese Kurobuta pork, which originates from an ancient English breed of pig, the Black Berkshire. Prized for its juiciness, flavour and tenderness, the meat is pink-hued and heavily marbled. Both of these types of pork are readily available in Singapore.

## Lamb-lover? Try mutton, goat or kangaroo

If you like lamb, try mutton or goat. In a strong or spicy sauce, like a curry, it can be difficult to tell the difference. So, what exactly is mutton? It's the meat of an adult sheep, older than a year, whereas lamb meat is from a sheep that's less than a year old. Mutton tends to have a stronger flavour than lamb, while goat meat is darker than lamb and has an even stronger flavour that can put some people off.

Another alternative is kangaroo meat. According to Andre Huber, Executive Director of Huber's Butchery, kangaroo has a relatively strong gamey taste, but is very lean and healthy; it's low in fat and a good source of protein, iron and zinc. Buy it at Huber's Butchery, or try it at Boomarang Bistro and Bar (boomarang. com.sg), where it can be ordered on its own as a peppered kangaroo loin, or as a burger or sliders, and on pizza.

#### If you're game, try:

**Turtle meat:** Depending on what part you're eating, it can taste like turkey, fish, pork or yeal.

Try it at: Old Geylang (oldgeylang.com.sg) serves it steamed, stewed or fried.

**Crocodile meat:** Tastes like a cross between pork and shark meat, rich in protein and lower in cholesterol than chicken.

Try it at: Old Geylang, stir-fried, braised or stewed; or try the tandoor-style croc skewers at Intrepid Gastro Bar (facebook. com/intrepidbyzumo); you can also buy crocodile meat at Cold Storage NEX (23 Serangoon Central).

Frog's legs: High in protein, low in fat, and a rich source of omega-3 fatty acids, potassium and vitamin A, it tastes quite mild, in-between chicken and fish.

Try it at: In frog leg porridge, served at many of the late-night

diners in Geylang, in Chinatown and elsewhere.



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# Beef Op Your Dossier

### **Tagliatelle with Pulled Lamb**

Serves four

#### **Ingredients**

- 3 pieces lamb fore-shank
- 350g tagliatelle pasta
- 750ml Freshstock lamb stock, defrosted
- 1 tin tomatoes
- 50g tomato paste
- 3 sticks celery
- 3 carrots
- 1 onion
- 15 anchovy fillets
- · 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 bay leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon saffron
- 1 cup red wine (optional)
- 10g chopped parsley
- Fresh Parmesan
- Flour
- Olive oil
- · Sea salt and freshly cracked pepper

#### Instructions

Dust the lamb shanks with flour that has been seasoned with salt and pepper.
 Add oil to a large pan and brown the lamb shanks in the pan, remove and set aside.

now!

Looking for fresh ways to spice up your dinner routine? Go on, set aside your same old salmon and put your go-to grilled chicken breast on the backburner – here are two meat-based meals to try

- Heat some olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Toss in the onion, carrots and celery, and sauté for five minutes or until soft. Add anchovies and garlic, and cook until softened (and anchovies have dissolved).
- 3. Add the tomato paste and cook for one minute before adding tomatoes, lamb stock, red wine, bay leaves and saffron. Return the lamb shanks to the pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and allow to simmer gently for two hours. After one hour, remove the lid to allow the sauce to thicken.
- 4. After two hours, remove the lamb shanks and further reduce the sauce as necessary; season it to taste. Remove the lamb meat from the bone and, using two forks, pull the meat apart. Then return the meat to the thickened sauce.
- Cook the pasta according to the packet instructions, drain in a colander and set aside.
- 6. Toss the pasta with the sauce, divide between four bowls, and garnish with parsley and freshly grated Parmesan.

This recipe is courtesy of Huber's Butchery (22 Dempsey Road). For more recipes, and to buy ingredients online, head to hubers.com.sg.

## **Bulgogi** Serves four

#### **Ingredients**

- 500g thinly sliced beef (top sirloin, flank steak or any tender grilling beef)
- Optional: sliced onions, mushrooms (shiitake, white or oyster), bell peppers, sliced carrots

#### For marinade:

- 3 tablespoons light soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon caster sugar (or brown sugar)
- 1 tablespoon honey (or 2 teaspoons agar-agar)
- 2 tablespoons rice cooking wine (or sake, or red wine)
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 2 minced garlic cloves or more, if you love garlic!
- 1 large red chilli, finely chopped (use chilli padi or bird's-eye chilli for more spice)
- 1 pear, puréed in a processor or blender
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame seeds (plus extra for
- 1 to 2 spring onions, sliced (plus extra for garnish)

Tip: The most authentic and traditional way to cook this Korean specialty is on top of a charcoal grill or barbecue. You'll need a stainless steel, mesh grilling panel or heavy duty foil to cook the meat, or else it will fall through!

#### Instructions

- 1. Make the marinade by mixing all the ingredients (except the optional vegetables) in a large glass or ceramic bowl.
- 2. Add sliced beef to the marinade and use your hands to coat well.
- 3. Using a well-heated grill skillet or barbecue, lightly brown the meat on both sides. Your pan should be hot enough so that the meat sizzles as it touches the pan. Bulgogi is supposed to be well done, and tastes great if it's a little burnt. Add your sliced vegetables to the pan about a minute after you start cooking the bulgogi.
- 4. Garnish with sesame seeds and spring onions, and serve with rice or lettuce cups. 31

This recipe is courtesy of Expat Kitchen. For more details, visit expat-kitchen.com.







## MORETHAN JUST MEAT

Visiting newly revamped **Huber's Butchery** isn't merely a shopping trip to buy some slabs of meat; it's an all-encompassing foodie experience. Here are seven reasons to check out the family-run, one-stop shop.

### #1

#### A mighty meaty selection

There's definitely no shortage of choices here, from grass-fed Tasmanian Angus beef to Japanese wagyu to pork from Canada – the meat is imported chilled from the butchery's trusted farms across the globe; in fact, customers can read about, and even see photos of, those very farmers at the butcher's counter, providing an extra personal touch.



### #2

#### Top-quality meats

Importing directly from the best farms worldwide not only allows for superb quality control, but also for making great savings by cutting out the "middle man". All hams and sausages at Huber's are produced in-house, using only the finest ingredients and natural casings – no added preservatives, chemicals, MSG, additives or fillers here. In fact, more than 90 percent of all meat and meat products sold at Huber's is hormone-free. Also, relevant items are clearly labelled "growth-hormone free" or "gluten-free" to avoid any possible confusion.

## #3

#### Personalised service

Not only do Huber's butchers remember customers' preferences, but they're also happy to answer questions, discuss recipes, and offer meat and cooking tips as they portion meat à la minute. They even offer free marinating services – simply pick your desired meat and get it smothered in the marinade of your choice. Customers can also choose to have cuts of meat dry-aged in the company's special dry-ageing chiller.

Save time by ordering groceries and meat online at hubers.com.sg - you can choose to pick it up from the store or opt for home delivery

## #4

#### Cheese... and lots of it!

Huber's has more than 100 types of cheese, all imported directly from cheese-makers around the world – including Switzerland, Germany, France, Austria, the UK, Italy, Spain and Australia – and portioned in-house. Customers can create and order their own cheese platters with one day's notice, or rent a raclette machine (great for parties!) when purchasing half a wheel of raclette. Accoutrements like crackers, bread sticks, jams and dips are on hand to go with the cheeses, as well. Pssst – stop by on a weekend, and you'll get to sample some cheeses!





#### A sleek, new space

Having recently moved to a much larger 13,100-square-foot space, you can bet the butchery's new home is bigger and better than ever, with loads of room to roam, and heaps more shelving space – which means a wider product selection. Enter at the shop's second level, where you'll find cold cuts, sausages, cheeses and other epicurean treats before making your way downstairs to the fresh meat department, fresh produce and more gourmet groceries.

## #6

#### Gourmet goodies galore

In addition to meat, cheese and air-flown produce, Huber's offers an array of wine, craft beer and liquor, as well as freshly baked breads and imported sweets, pastas and spices. There's even a "BBQ corner" with all the essentials, from charcoal and tongs to all kinds of salts and rubs.

## #7

#### A family-friendly atmosphere

There's an outdoor children's playground next to the Huber's Butchery Bistro on the ground floor – which means diners can watch their kids play while enjoying beer, sandwiches, soups, salads and sausages, and mains like rib-eye steak or a beef burger with bacon and gruyere cheese. The bistro serves lunch and dinner and is open Tuesday to Sunday until 10pm.

Huber's Butchery 22 Dempsey Road (free parking) 6737 1588 | hubers.com.sg

## East Coast Eats

Culture-rich Katong and Joo Chiat are known for their colourful Peranakan shophouses and, of course, their wide array of food offerings. We set out to sample some of these neighbourhoods' foodie favourites.

#### Carvers & Co 43 East Coast Road 6348 0448 | carversand.co

Situated on the row of restaurants facing 112 Katong, this is a casual, contemporary space with a community feel – concrete walls, monochrome prints from an Italian graffiti artist and simple wooden furniture made especially for the restaurant owners by friends.

We started with a plate of **candied**, **deep-fried bacon chips** (\$8), and the only way from there was to the burger (\$25), one the best we've ever tried in Singapore – a moist, juicy patty full of flavour, with some bacon-flavoured chips, house-made ketchup and a salad; makes me want to try their new burger joint, Wolf Burger!

I'd normally never order pasta at a restaurant that specialises in meat, but the **anchovy aglio olio** (\$20) was sensational – al dente spaghettini tossed in a mouth-busting umami anchovy garlic paste with a *sous vide* soft-boiled egg on top.

We drank a sharing bottle of Simtra Pale Ale (\$30), which was big on flavour (and alcohol – 11.25 percent!) and matched the strong flavours of the food perfectly.

Next time, I want to try the **Carvers Plate** (\$35/\$70) – pork belly, roast chicken and another meat, which changes daily; the flavours they can infuse into the food makes such a difference!

**STAR DISH:** The bacon chips were certainly something special, but I would travel across town for this burger.

Danielle Rossetti





#### **Trattoria L'Operetta**

244 Tanjong Katong Road 6440 9322 | trattoriaoperetta.sg

Open concept kitchen, huge pizza oven, high ceilings, exposed beams and brickwork, vintage furnishings and bric à brac, plus racks of untold bottles create oodles of atmosphere in the Katong shophouse that's been home to Trattoria L'Operetta for the past four years. It's by no means the only Italian restaurant in this foodie haven; but as we're about to discover, this joint has something a bit different up its sleeve for us: Japanese executive chef Takashi Okhawa.

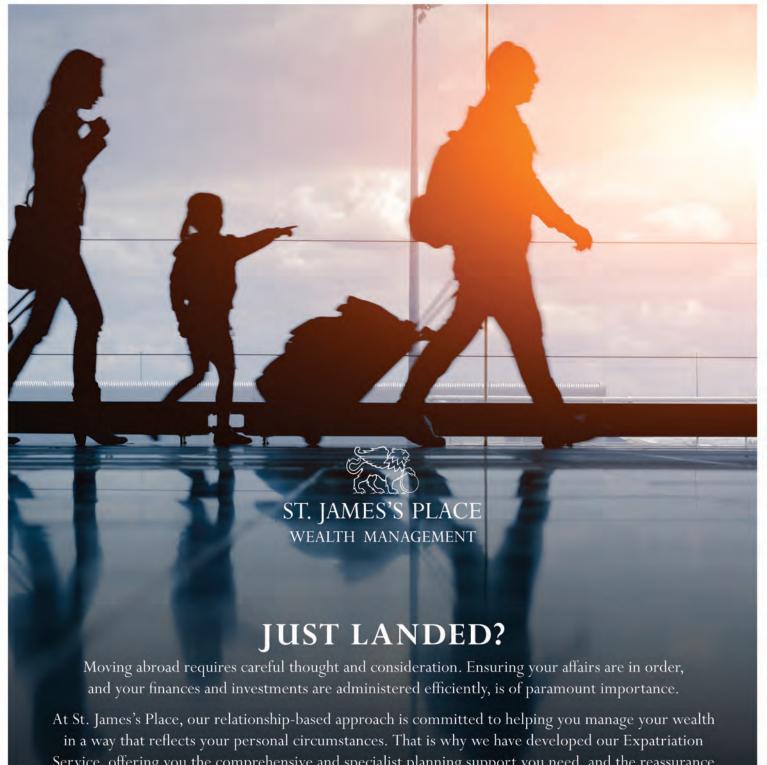
Highlights include just about everything we put in our mouths, from the amuse bouche of melba toasties sporting chicken liver pâté with fig. and taleggio cheese with black truffle. Burrata cheese with prosciutto comes with rocket and baby tomatoes (\$32); sea-fresh sautéed langoustines with eggplant purée (\$48 when available à la carte, and also featured on Chef's occasional omakase menus). Then follows bee-yoo-ti-ful house-made tagliolini with Hokkaido sea-urchin and bottarga (\$38), and grilled iberico pork (\$28), surprisingly pink and deliciously tender with a caponata of mixed vegetables; finally, an exquisitely simple tiramisu (\$10).

House wines by the glass include a nice Prosecco (\$12; \$68 per bottle) and a quaffable Montepulciano Illuminati (\$14; \$68).

Prices aren't exactly low-end – today's specials include an 800g T-bone at \$118, for example – but there are well-priced alternatives, including authentic Neapolitan-style pizzas that East Coast friends of ours rave about. And all, remember, from the hands of a brilliant chef.

STAR DISH: Tagliolini with Hokkaido sea-urchin and bottarga

Verne Maree



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#### Smokey's BBQ American Smokehouse and Grill

73 Joo Chiat Place 6345 6914 | smokeysbbq.com.sg

This low-key, open-air family restaurant is decked out with American football jerseys, American flags, flat-screen TVs playing American football games, red-and-white chequered tablecloths and a kitchen entrance with funky saloon doors.

There's a good selection of starters, with plenty of vegetarian options if you're saving your meat fetish for later. The **buffalo** wings (\$12 for 6 pieces, \$20 for 12, \$28 for 18), served with four varieties of sauces (mild, spicy, extra spicy or blue cheese), are a goodie and well worth trying. *Psst:* Smokey's offers \$1 wings on Wednesdays!

Also worth a taste are the **jalapeño poppers** (\$11) – jalapeños stuffed with cream cheese and served with marinara sauce; you'd think they would send you flying through the air, but the cream cheese keeps the heat down.

Smokey's is best known for its ribs, and the **baby back pork ribs** (\$29 for a half-slab) was definitely a good option, accompanied by coleslaw and sides like french fries and beef rice. One reason why these ribs are so good is the sauce – made from a secret recipe; also, the restaurant's hickory and mesquite wood chips are imported from the States. I went for the **Smokey's Original** sauce which suited me fine, but for more of a kick, go with the **Smokey's Ghost**. We had the **baby ribs and brisket** combo (\$45); the brisket was tender, juicy and melted in our mouths – just the way brisket should.

The craft beer selection is surprisingly large; I tried the light **Summer Love Ale** (\$14) from Downingtown, Pennsylvania, and the **Summer IPA** draught beer (\$11 for 300ml) – worth a try but nothing to write home about.

STAR DISH: Buffalo wings dipped in extra-spicy sauce, followed by blue cheese sauce, stole the show for me.

Valmai Dhir



#### Other eats in the area...

Al Forno | alfornoeastcoast.sg Rabbit Carrot Gun | rabbit-carrot-gun.com Zaffron Kitchen | zaffronkitchen.com

## More hot 'hoods to check out

#### SIGLAP

Though it may be more low-key than hip Katong and Joo Chiat, Siglap's got a lot going for it on the food front, from coffee shops to cafés to gastropubs.

#### Slake

15 Swan Lake Avenue 9245 0184 | slake.sø

Located in the quiet and unassuming Opera Estate, Slake is a cosy restaurant and bar serving Asian-inspired fare. There's nothing boring about the menu here. A recommended starter is the **chilli crab rillettes** (\$14), served with four pieces of fried mini-mantou (Chinese buns). Rich in flavour, and loaded with real crab chunks, the pâté-like texture is dangerously addictive; slather it generously on the crispy-sweet buns and you've got a winning combination. Just remember to order an extra portion of the buns (\$3) so none of that crab paste goes to waste.

For mains, the **spice-rubbed Norwegian mackerel** (\$25) is an impressive-looking dish dedicated to true-blue fish lovers. Served whole with accompaniments like tomato chutney (which we loved), this dish is best shared among two or three diners. We thoroughly enjoyed the well-seasoned skin that was grilled to perfection, as well as the soft and tender flesh.

#### Other eats in the area...

Etna Italian Restaurant etnaitalianrestaurant.com.sg

Plank Sourdough Pizza plankpizza.biz

Perle Noire Oyster and Grill Bar perlenoire.com.sg



#### **EAST COAST PARK**

Located along the coast, this beachside park and recreation area has heaps of coffee shops and eateries - just take your pick.

#### SandBank

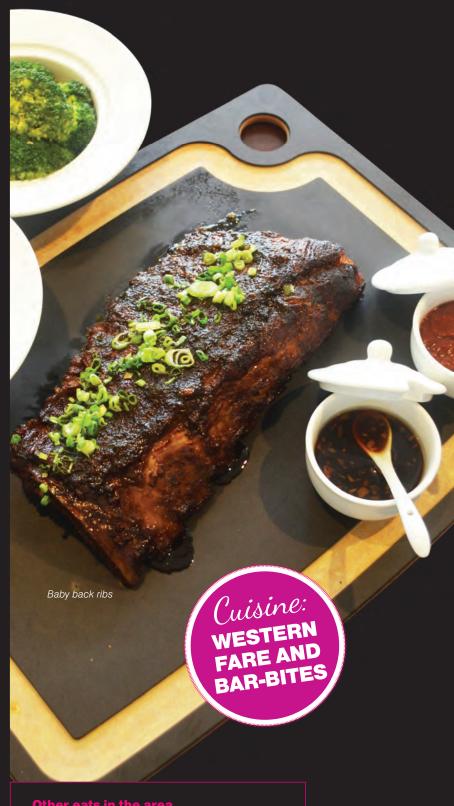
This family-friendly sports-bar spot is all about chilling out, from its laid-back beach-facing setting to its extensive menu of easy Western eats (not to mention a large list of cocktails, beers and ciders): we started with the simple and tasty fresh avocado and tomato bruschetta (\$8) appetiser, made with guacamole and served with rocket.

From the selection of a dozen 10inch pizzas, I opted for the spicy chilli crab pizza (\$23) - crabmeat, onion and spicy chilli crab sauce - which was absolutely delish (I'm definitely returning for seconds). There's also a great selection of pastas (\$16 to \$23) and seafood mains (\$23 to 28) - my husband ordered the seared Cajun **salmon** (\$25) - plus steaks (\$28 to \$31), burgers (\$19 to \$23), soups (\$9 to \$10), salads (\$15 to \$17) and sharing plates like roasted beer chicken (\$28) and a charcoal grilled sausage platter (\$35). Kids eat for \$10.90. with a choice of cheese quesadilla, mini fish and chips, mac and cheese, ham and cheese sandwich, or chicken sausage Neapolitan, served with chicken nuggets, fries and fruit punch.

And, while mum and dad catch a sports game on the TV screens, kiddos can enjoy the restaurant's most important feature, the 15-metre plunge pool, making SandBank a great weekend go-to.

STAR DISH: Save room for the chocolate peanut butter lava cake (\$14.50) served with vanilla ice cream. It's as good as it sounds!

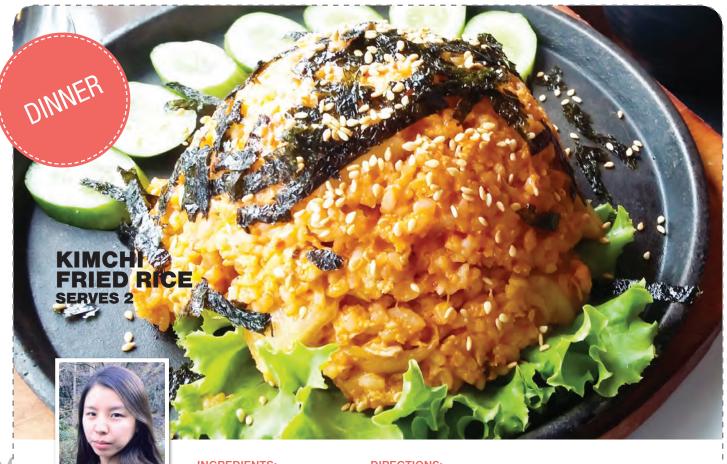
Amy Greenburg



Brussels Sprouts | brusselssprouts.com.sg Full Pint Brewery | fullpintmicrobrewery.com.sg Pick Me Up Café | facebook.com/pickmeupcafe 21

## 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!



#### YOUNG EUN CHOL SOUTH KORFAN

"Kimchi is a well-known Korean side dish, but it can also make an excellent main dish with rice. Kimchi fried rice is easy to make, and you barely need any other ingredients. When my fridge is almost empty, this is one of my favourite recipes as I always have kimchi on hand!"

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

- <sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> head of napa cabbage kimchi (including the kimchi juice)\*
- 2 bowls of rice
- 3 tablespoons of sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds
- 1 tablespoon seaweed flakes
- mozzarella cheese (optional)

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

- 1. Chop the napa cabbage kimchi into 1 to 2cm pieces.
- 2. Heat sesame oil in a pan over medium heat.
- 3. Put the chopped kimchi in the pan and stir-fry until the kimchi is tender, about 3 to 5 minutes.
- 4. Add two bowls of rice to the pan, together with some kimchi juice.
- 5. Gently stir together until the rice has warmed through and the flavours have mixed.
- 6. Turn down the heat and sprinkle with sesame seeds and mozzarella cheese (optional - this is good for neutralising the spicy and pungent taste, especially for kids).
- 7. Turn the heat off when the cheese has melted.
- 8. Sprinkle seaweed flakes on top. Serve with fried eggs for a complete meal.

<sup>\*</sup> You can fine whole heads of napa cabbage kimchi in Korean online stores.





VEENA THOMAS, INDIAN

"This is a traditional coconut pudding from Kerala, India. It is subtly sweet and very refreshing, especially after a heavy lunch."

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

- Flesh of 3 tender coconuts
- Coconut water from one coconut
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 2 cups whole milk
- 3 teaspoons gelatin
- 2 tablespoons cornflour
- 10 tablespoons sugar
- 5 drops vanilla extract

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

- 1. Blend together the coconut flesh and coconut water and keep in the fridge.
- Whisk powdered gelatin into a bowl of cold water and then leave to soak until it becomes spongy.
- Put the coconut milk, whole milk, sugar and cornflour (to avoid lumps, mix the cornflour smoothly with a little milk first) in a saucepan to boil, stirring slowly until it thickens slightly.
- 4. Next, add the gelatin then immediately take the pot off the flame and mix well.
- After the pudding has cooled down, add the vanilla extract and the blended coconut flesh from the fridge. Pour into dessert dishes, cover with cling wrap and leave in the fridge to set.

#### **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!

# THE PERFECT COUPLE: Red Wine and Red Meat

How do you know which wines to pair with which meats? JAMES HINDLE, meat lover, wine aficionado and chief tasting host for online wine shop **Pop Up Wine** clues us in.

here is a scientific theory as to why red wine and red meat complement each other so beautifully. It relates to tannins, the naturally occurring compounds in grape skins, seeds and stems. These materials dissolve into red wine during the production process, and they dry out the mouth when we consume them: they are one of the reasons our mouths sometimes feel dry the morning after an evening spent enjoying red wine.

According to the theory, high-tannin red wines such as Chilean malbec are at the exact opposite end of the taste spectrum to smooth, tender red meat. Such wines, therefore, dry out the mouth at the exact same time that red meats, such as a dry-aged wagyu porterhouse, for instance, moisten

it. Using this as a starting point, Australian winemaker Hamish McGowan set out in 2003 to produce the perfect wine for red meat. His creation, a cabernet sauvignon blend brilliantly titled Angus – The Bull, has proved hugely popular in the steak-obsessed United States. (It's available in Singapore from Pop Up Wine.)

A useful rule of thumb when choosing which wine to pair with beef is to let the cut guide you: a heavy steak calls for a heavy – high tannin – wine; the leaner the cut, the lighter the wine. For example, fillet steak and top sirloin – both lean cuts – are delicious when served with aged red wines whose tannin content has softened over time; ten-to 20-year-old Bordeaux wines generally pair beautifully in this instance. In contrast, richer cuts, such as ribeye, or wagyu with its splendid marbling, require robust, high-tannin wines such as a relatively young Australian shiraz or cabernet sauvignon.

#### An Evening of Meat and Wine

Pop Up Wine, which carries premium wines at discounted prices and offers same day delivery, and barbecue experts Stoke (stoke.sg) are joining forces to host an evening of wine and meat pairing on Thursday 31 March.

Tickets are available at \$70 per person, and include tastings of six award-winning wines from Pop Up Wine, as well as a live cooking demonstration and generous tastings of Spanish pork Ibérico "Secreto", organic Australian grass-fed beef ribeye, and organic Australian saltbush lamb ribs by Stoke.

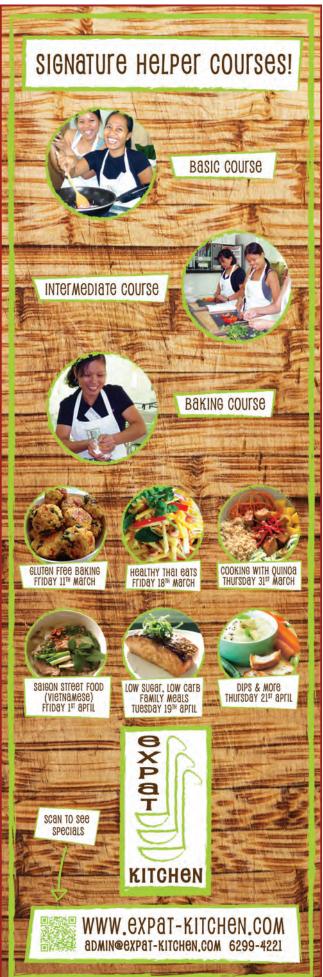
The interactive presentation will include details on pairing meat with wine (including red meat and white wine – considered a nono in many people's minds), and how to make "barbecue and bubbles" work.

For tickets, contact sam@popupwine.com.sg or call 9831 1037.

Pop Up Wine 9831 1037 | popupwine.com.sg

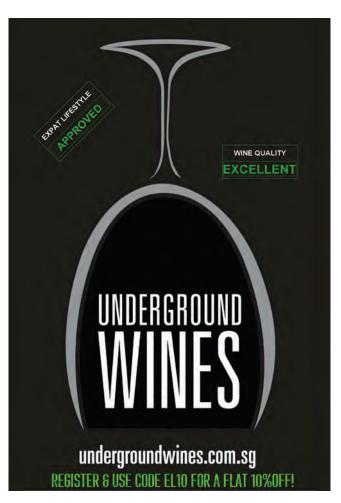


















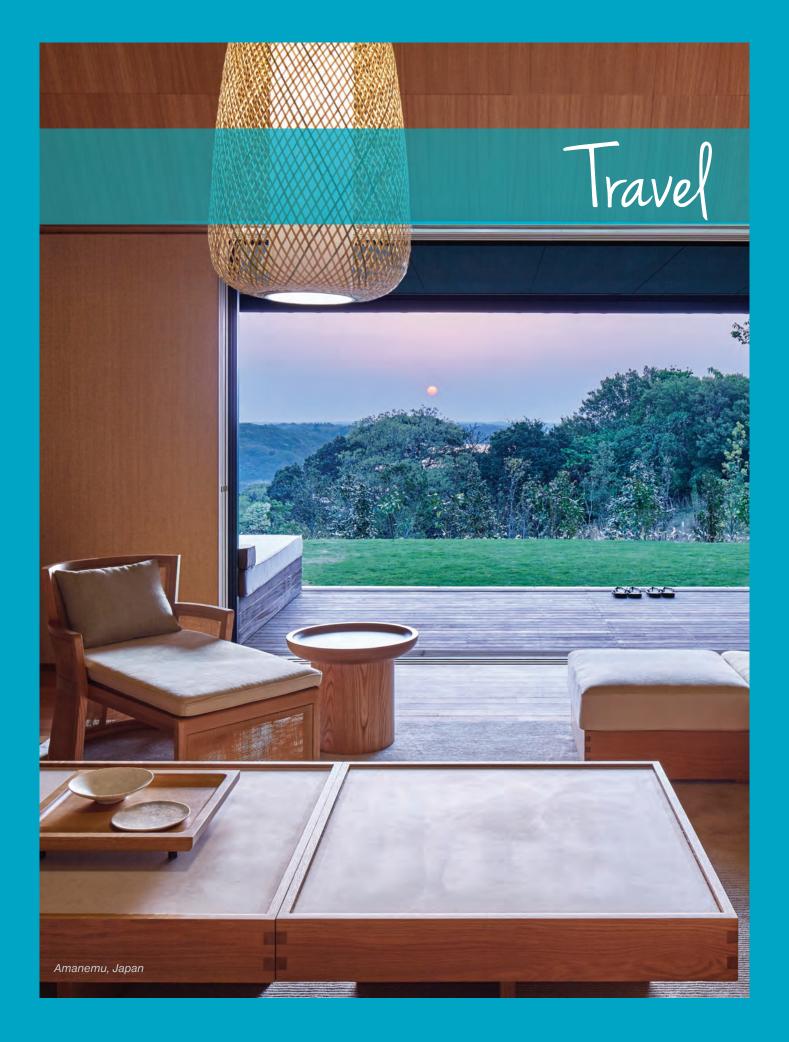






Let us take you to the far flung reaches of indonesia where dragons roam free, birds of paradise dance, frigate birds ride on thermals, and ancient cultures inhabit remote islands still perfumed with the scents of exotic spice.





## WHAT'S NEW Hot destinations & great places to stay



Frasers Hospitality has been named World's Leading Serviced Apartment Brand at the World Travel Awards – among the highest honours that can be bestowed in the travel and tourism industry – for an impressive third time. Adding to this feat, Fraser Suites Singapore has emerged as World's Leading Serviced Apartments, bringing the total number of international accolades won by the hospitality group last year to 84. To find out more about Frasers properties in Singapore and beyond, visit frasershospitality.com.

#### WANT **WELLNESS?**

Thailand's pioneering wellness destination Chiva-Som has kicked off 2016 with some exclusive programmes designed to aid specific areas of health. Thirteen retreats are now available, including five new ones that require a minimum 10-night stay. The latter include Cell Vitality, created to support those recovering from cancer, Cranial Relief, for those who suffer from migraines and life-disrupting headaches, Emotional Wellbeing, for improving the ability to control stress, mood and overall wellbeing, and Sustainable Slimming, for effectively losing weight and beginning a journey towards a healthier lifestyle.

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#### **EXPLORE MARGARET RIVER**

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#### ADVENTURE ON TWO WHEELS

SpiceRoads Cycle Tours has launched Thailand to Singapore by Road Bike, a three-country, 15-day journey that covers more than 1,300km of fascinating Southeast Asian terrain, with expert guides and an air-conditioned support bus. Departure dates from Krabi are 24 July, 16 October and 20 November; the trip requires a minimum of four people and a moderate level of fitness. Highlights include Thailand's Andaman Coast, the Thale Ban National Park, foodtasting on Penang, and visiting a turtle hatchery for hawksbill turtles in Port Dickson. Cost is from US\$3,650, with an additional \$450 for standard bike hire or \$650 for a Trek Emonda S5 carbon bike. sujittra@spiceroads.com | spiceroads.com ▼





Bintan Island, Indonesia







#### **NEW IN JAPAN**

Launching this month - just in time for the celebrated sakura season - is a brand new Aman resort in Japan. Amanemu, the group's second property in the country, is located in Ise Shima National Park (which will host the G7 summit this Mav) and features an onsen in every room. The design draws inspiration from Japanese minka, vernacular houses with traditional low-slung tiled roofs and dark-stained timber exteriors. Set on the shores of Ago Bay, known as the "Bay of Pearls", Amanemu offers private tours, including visits with the fascinating ama, female Japanese divers who played an integral role in the development of the cultured pearl industry in the 19th century. aman.com ◀

## BEELINE FOR BHUTAN

If last month's story on travelling to Bhutan with Country Holidays has piqued your interest and you're looking into travel dates, keep in mind that Druk Air now has three direct flights weekly from Singapore to Bhutan's international airport at Paro (around six hours, with a brief refuelling stop in Kolkata); the alternative is daily via Bangkok, with an overnight in that city. The Bhutanese national carrier provides an excellent service - reliable and clean, with tasty food and incredible views of the Himalayas through the windows; economy and business class seats are available. drukair.com.sg V





## COOK LIKE THE MASTERS

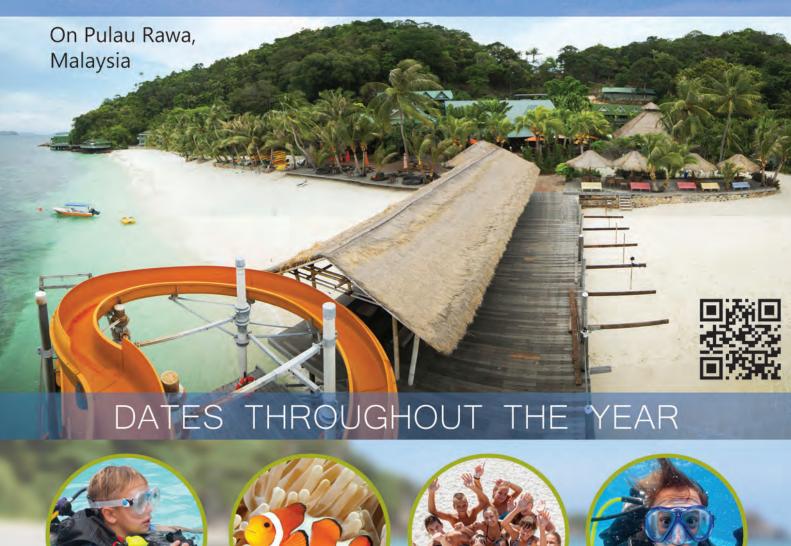
More than 90 of the properties under the Small Luxury Hotels of the World (SLH) banner carry Michelin stars or equivalent awards, so it's fitting that they've released a compilation of their hotels' recipes. *The Small Luxury Cookbook* features 480 pages of recipes celebrating signature dishes prepared by chefs across 80 countries, from Delos Island sea urchin to stuffed courgette flowers, and the crowd-pleasing "Apple Tart" (*pictured*) by Chef Reon Hobson at Pescatore at The George in Christchurch, New Zealand – a sugar apple filled with crème brulée mousse, caramelised apple and apple jelly. The book is available from participating SLH hotels, or at slhcookbook.com for US\$57. slh.com ◀





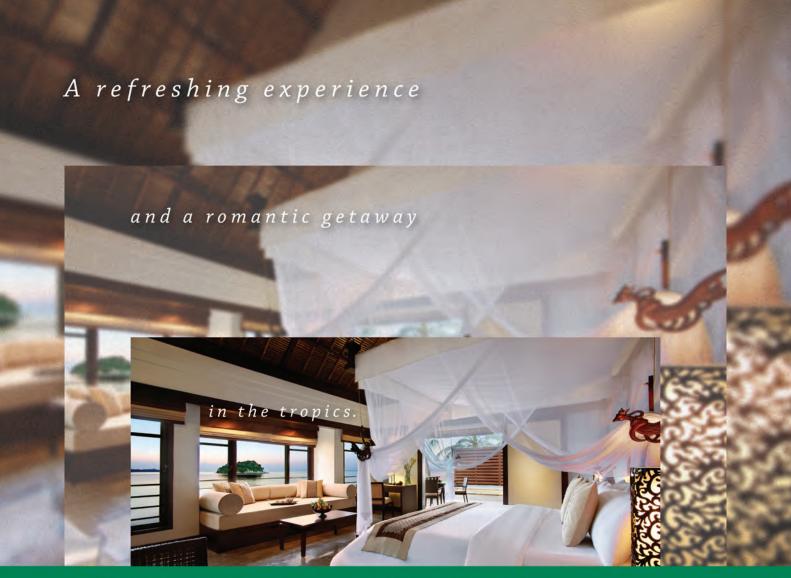


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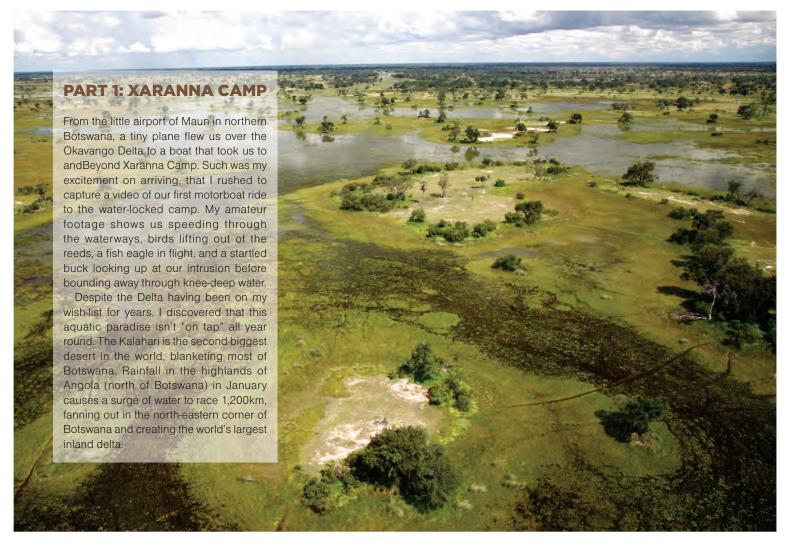
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LARA SAGE explores Botswana's unique waterscapes and state-of-the-art safari lodges, and is touched even more deeply by the **Okavango Delta** than she expected.





A staggering 30 million litres of water per day drains from the Okavango River into a labyrinth of lagoons and channels, flooding the area for the next four months but never reaching the sea. After transforming this semi-arid landscape into a verdant oasis, 95 percent of the water is gradually sucked into the sands of the desert and lost to evaporation, making this a place of both flood and drought. We visited just in time to catch the last of the floodwaters in September. In a matter of days we felt this tapestry of waterways changing as we watched the watermark receding daily on the jetty.

Here I took my first mokoro ride, propelled through shallow waters by a guide standing in the stern and pushing with a pole, in the same manner as punting. A mokoro is a canoe made traditionally by digging out the trunk of a tall, straight tree. (Today, they're increasingly made of fibreglass, which

helps preserve the endangered trees.)

While we sat in the mokoro (they usually carry one or two passengers), our well-practised guide manoeuvred the vessel through the clear water channels, following the pathways carved by hippos walking through. With only the faint swoosh of the mokoro pole in the water and the sound of frogs. the tiniest creature could be watched without disturbing it. This is the place to admire intriguing aquatic plants and bright-bodied birds, the latter including an assortment of kingfishers in action; you'll also see jacanas darting across the lilies, tall and regal storks, and the African fish eagle with its expansive wingspan and distinctive crv. And elephants everywhere!

Xaranna comprises nine luxury tented suites with private plunge pools, set on fixed decks at the water's edge of the resort's own delta island. The décor

of the camp includes reminders of the indigenous wildlife, including comical white hippo carvings along the jetty steps. A regular lunchtime visitor was a mischievous elephant calf who ambled into the dining area, toppling tables and chairs for his amusement and ours! We enjoyed a sunset gin and tonic beside the lanterns on the riverbanks, watching flocks of birds flying low over the water to roost.

From Xaranna, we took boat safaris and also game drives. Always ready with information, the rangers showed us the stem of a minty plant that rural people crush and use as a toothbrush, the hollow reeds they weave into mats, and how water-lily stalks can be used to suck up clean water. While the boat and *mokoro* rides stole my heart here, there is much to be said for an open-vehicle safari, and this trip encompassed both brilliantly.

#### **PART 2: SANDIBE SAFARI LODGE**

After two idyllic days at Xaranna, we left via light aircraft, flying over the Delta again to another and Beyond Lodge, Sandibe. Before the incoming planes could land to fetch us, our vehicle had to "clear" the runway – that meant driving along the dirt airstrip, checking for buck and elephants. You have to see it to believe it! And we did when a herd of elephants meandered onto the runway and stalled our departure.

Light aircraft flights between lodges were a wonderful indulgence and a chance to view the surrounds from the air, as well as the only means of travel between these lodges. It was amazing to look down on lime-green islands, dark lagoons, clear channels, animal sand tracks and and dusty landscapes between the life-giving stretches of water. We saw countless elephants and herds of antelope; even two hippos grazing, out of the water, their cumbersome bodies exposed to the African sun.

Sandibe Safari Lodge is both organic and futuristic. Standing out from traditional lodges, the new design is intentionally bold and pushes the boundaries in both sustainability and style. A concession lasts just 15 years, so andBeyond was compelled to bid for this again a few years ago. By then, the Okavango Delta had been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. New rules meant building materials had to be biodegradable; 70 percent of electricity had to come from solar power and renewable sources; and when existing buildings were deconstructed, every scrap of non-biodegradable material had to be removed from the Delta. This enabled the architectural and design teams to reconceive the entire safari lodge concept when rebuilding









from scratch; elements of the original camp were recycled and tonnes of concrete removed. Since re-opening in late 2014, Sandibe remains the lodge du jour, with its acclaimed design, ecological standing and deserved world press attention.

Sandibe in September was a spectacle of sand-coloured textures, the spaces between pathways to the property's elevated suites covered in scattered leaves, grasses, elephant dung, fallen branches and palm fronds. The 12 suites echo the look of weaverbird nests commonly found along the banks of the channel. But there's nothing common about these elegant suites that peer out of the tree canopy and overlook the papyrus-filled riverside that gleams golden in the sunlight.

Large sliding doors open to a verandah, each with a deep, round plunge pool to combat the heat of summer, and wood-burners inside for cosy winter evenings. A conical termite mound-shaped shower with skylight allows you to view the blue African sky by day and starry splendour at night. Or if you want the real deal, there's an outdoor shower too. Design-wise, the taupe and creamy-white tones with bronze accents are calm and understated, bringing the innovative architecture into focus. Indoor and outdoor day beds and discreet butler hatches all add to the ambience and to the exclusivity of the experience.

The main lodge consists of 90 percent wood: South African pine for the walls, Australian eucalyptus for the

floors, decks from low-maintenance Brazilian hardwood, and roofs shingled in Canadian cedar. Curved beams suggest the scales and ribs of the rare, native armadillo, the pangolin, and the 11,500-square-foot building hugs the ground, an open-sided structure curling into itself and embracing the forest.

A viewing deck invites you out, while an extraordinary bar is contoured to wrap around into the lounge. The space is softened by oversized shades made from locally woven baskets turned upside down. A striking copper *mekoro* sculpture hangs over a large wooden table, and a massive organic tree trunk is polished into a masterpiece providing a functional serving area. A copperclad pizza-cooking area enhances the interactive kitchen, and, while I turned out some delectable creations, they didn't nearly match the gourmet meals created by the chef.

Sandibe was drier than Xaranna; no *mekoro* rides here. The focus instead was on game drives, but there are still many rivers and waterways to ford, making the snorkel on the vehicle a noteworthy addition. The landscape varied in the large area we traversed, with scenery including massive old baobab trees, flowering sausage trees, and tall termite mounds, some as old as 800 years.

The game viewing in this concession was superb and we saw lions, leopards and more of Botswana's treasure – the endangered wild dog, one with a litter of 16 puppies. Their ankle-height attempt at stalking a group of giraffe was commendable, even if ridiculous!

I loved the sandy hues of Sandibe, the gnarled wood of its ancient trees, the grasses rustling in the passing breeze. I loved the nesting birds, the fowls scratching in the sand, the shy antelope tiptoeing past us, the elephants who moved remarkably quietly below our room and through the camp.

Lifting off in the tiny plane, my face pressed against the glass for one last look at the Okavango Delta below, I unexpectedly felt tears running down my cheeks. Could a place touch a person so much in just four days? Apparently still waters run deep.



#### **PROTECTING THE RHINO**

Conservation manager LES CARLISLE explains the Rhinos Without Borders project, a partnership between and Beyond and Great Plains Conservation that moves rhinos from South Africa, where poaching is rife, to Botswana.

Understanding that we're losing three or more rhinos every day in South Africa was the motivation for Rhinos Without Borders. One of the reasons why Botswana is a rhino haven is its political resolve; the country has banned all commercial hunting and puts anti-poaching in the hands of the Botswana Defence Force.

South Africa currently has 80 percent of the world's rhinos, but recent stats estimate a rhino is killed there every 7.5 hours.

South Africa has a different constitution to Botswana; human rights are given absolute priority. The country is using its resources as best it can to protect rhinos, but the areas are vast and the numbers of impoverished people are huge, so it's a very difficult task.

In neighbouring Mozambique (one of the poorest countries in Africa), there's a massive pool of potential poachers, as there is little alternative employment. About 70 percent of the poachers in South Africa are from Mozambique. One of the roles of Rhinos Without Borders is to generate benefits to the surrounding local communities in order to protect rhinos, and in turn tourism.

The rhino is an iconic species, but also acts as an indicator of the health of the whole system. If we lose our rhinos, what's next? If we can't protect them, we won't protect the other species. We have to do more of everything to save the rhinos; we've chosen translocation as our current focus, but other people, who are focusing on other activities, must continue.

We also have to keep trying to devalue the horn on the markets. As one option, South Africa is looking at legalising the trade of rhino horns. The reason for this is that it's the only wildlife product that is completely renewable because it grows back; you can't do it with elephant ivory or tiger bones, or any other international wildlife products. We have to keep trying to educate people in Asia about the impact that their illegal demand for this product is having on Africa. We have to improve rhino security, and for Rhinos Without Borders this means moving rhinos to more secure areas, namely Botswana.

The first and best way to support rhino conservation is to travel to Africa to see the animals in the wild. That way, you make them valuable. 3



#### **TRAVEL TIPS**

- The best way to visit Botswana is via Cape Town or Johannesburg. SQ flights are convenient and well-timed.
- Try to travel between April and September. (This is the dry season for Botswana, but the waters from Angola are still in the Delta.)
- We stayed two nights at each camp, proving that a quick visit is a viable option when pressed for time or money.

For more information about and Beyond's camps and lodges, visit and Beyond.com.









# Dreaming of Bay

Did you know that the world's ninth-best beach is just a one-and-a-half-hour flight away in Langkawi, Malaysia? JESS SMIT discovers **The Andaman**, a Luxury Collection Resort, which takes the trek out of tropical beach holidays.



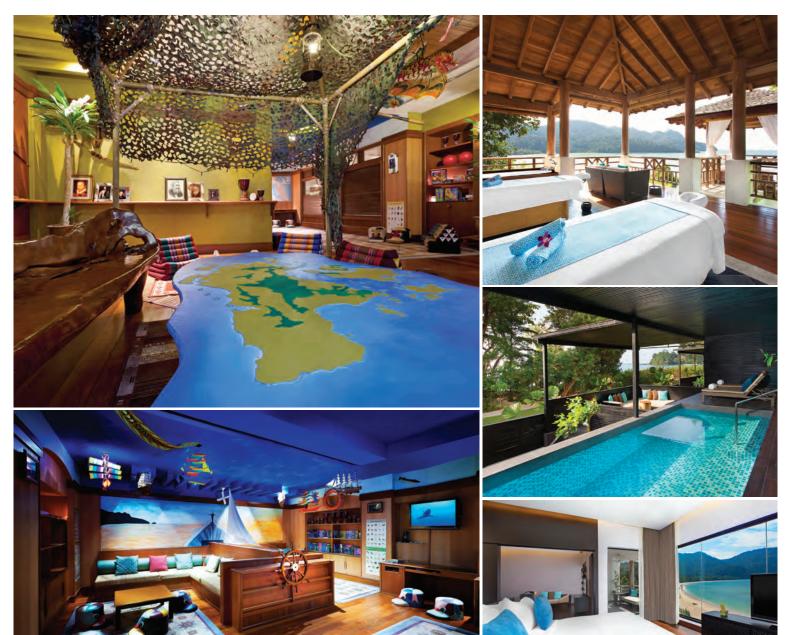
ometimes I feel like we're on our own personal mission to track down the most family-friendly break out of Singapore. See, when it takes just shy of a day to cram everyone's things into a 20kg suitcase, wherever we're headed had better be amazing enough to make me forget all the planning and packing involved.

And so it is that we find ourselves with the loftiest of expectations at The Andaman, a Luxury Collection Resort, in Datai Bay, Langkawi, 30km off the northwestern coast of mainland Malaysia and a totally manageable one and a half-hour flight away. So far, so great.

Part of Starwood Hotels & Resorts and The Luxury Collection Hotels & Resorts, The Andaman has 178 rooms and suites - all decked out in contemporary Malayeian style and with sweeping views over Datai Bay and ancient rainforest. Checking into our 86sqm

Executive Pool Suite wasn't your average bag drop before heading off to explore – the children had stripped and were christening our private plunge pool before we could even crack open the complimentary minibar.

We pool-hopped to the resort's lush lagoon-style swimming pool just beside the beach, with the waterslide ("Again! "Again!") and toddler-friendly wading-section wearing out the little ones enough for us to justify dropping them off with the smiling ambassadors at the Young Explorers' Club. (It's a holiday for us too, right?) You don't need to work too hard to extricate yourself from here, with heaps of books, toys, games and educational adventures to distract. Our lot did junior yoga, made friendship bracelets, built sandcastles, collected seashells, and got crafty with nature – all of that and we were only there for four days (and we didn't check them in the whole time, promise!).



The likes of *Harper's Bazaar*, *Condé Nast* and TripAdvisor have made a real deal about The Andaman's V Botanical Spa over the years, giving it numerous spa awards. And so, along the rainforest-fringed pathway I went, like seasoned spa-goers before me, towards my open-air spa villa perched on the hillside with the most incredible view of Datai Bay below. Signature treatments include the Kahuna Wave Massage and Song of the Malay Rainforest ritual – save some time for this, folks!

Was it coincidental that my stresses and strains were kinked out just in time for Happy Hour at The Beach Bar at 5pm? We had to clink and drink fast, though, as fish feeding at the Coral Nursery along the beach started at 5.30pm and our lot aren't queuers.

Part fun, part extensive coral conservation programme, the Coral Nursery aims to restore the 8,000-year-old coral reef fringing the resort that was badly damaged in the 2004 tsunami. Guests are encouraged to give a helping hand by getting involved in everything from live coral transplanting to coral clearing, and you can discover more about the underwater world by joining guided coral reef walks or donning a lifejacket and taking a private guided snorkel in the Coral Nursery. (You'll see everything from anemones and clown fish, to sea cucumber, crabs and lobster.) The lobby-level Marine Life Laboratory is worthy of a look-see too, and packed with aquaria to help guests understand more about the ecosystem that exists in Datai Bay. You can even sign older children up to become a marine biologist for a day – work experience à *la* tropical beach!

Just in case you haven't picked up on this yet, children are treated like royalty here. Plus, if you sign up to become a Starwood Preferred Guest (it's free to join), children aged 12 and younger will qualify for an SPG Kids Pass for 80 ringgit (around S\$27) a day. They'll be kitted out with a wristband that means they're able to nosh for free from kids' menus across the resort – think junior salads, Asian





slaw, chicken quesadillas, bangers and mash, fruit platters, ice-cream sundaes, and way more – as well as participate free in all Young Explorers activities. (FYI: children under three don't need a wristband to munch *gratis!*)

With six restaurants dotted around the resort, we had plenty of dining options, but the casual beachside vibe at Tepian Laut saw us return most often for lunch and dinner, with their waiting staff prepping our table before I could even say "highchair, please".

But date night Andaman-style can only be at Jala, the fine-dining seafood restaurant headed by chef de cuisine Thorsten Killian. This is barefoot chic, with footwear checked into the Shoe Concierge on your way in. Meaning "fisherman's cast net" in Malay, Jala's sand flooring, beachfront position and open-kitchen concept set the stage for a gastronomical adventure of Malay and Western cooking styles. Go à la carte or head up to the sustainable seafood counter to choose your catch (brought to the beach by local fishermen every few days), method of preparation, sauce and trimmings – it's worth stepping away from your sauvignon for.

Special mention must also go to the buffet breakfast at The Restaurant: sparkling wine and a brand-new bakery wing (hello, brioche, croissants, bread and butter pudding, gluten-free muffins, muesli bread and apple strudel puffs!) earned it some serious Smit points.

Using chocolate-sprinkled doughnuts smuggled from breakfast as bait for the children, we set off one morning en famille for the Rainforest Awakening Nature Walk, a guided stroll around the resort grounds. The architect who designed the main hotel building did everything he could to preserve as much of the precious 10-million-year-old rainforest as possible, and it shows. We saw creatures such as giant geckos, hornbills, dusky leaf monkeys and colugos – and even had a first kingfisher sighting, much to our guide's delight, before we'd so much as left the carpark – and learnt about the medicinal qualities of the rattan palm, mischievous macaques with an eye on your minibar, and the eating habits and artistry of the ghost crab.

The tour ended on the stretch of beach in front of The Andaman that's been voted ninth-best in the world by *National Geographic*. Swim, sunbathe, kayak, windsurf or paddleboard your days away here, as it's this idyllic tropical setting you'll dream about once you're back in Singers. (No offence, Sentosa!) **2** 

**Getting there:** SilkAir, AirAsia and Tigerair fly direct from Singapore to Langkawi. Visit theandaman.com for more details on the resort or to make a reservation.



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Aboard the world's oldest registered passenger ship, HEIDI SARNA and her family enjoy a cosy North European canal cruise.

ur trip last July aboard the historic 48-passenger M/S Juno was my first canal cruise and it won't be my last. It was a great way to chill out and step off the grid for a few days; we loved moving at a snail's pace through the beautiful Swedish countryside aboard the intimate little boat.

Squat and oblong with a short stack, stubby nose, and a necklace of wooden planks strung around the hull for protection when passing through narrow locks, *Juno*'s looks haven't changed all that much from 1874 when she was built to carry cargo such as timber and grain on Sweden's Göta Canal, the backbone of a 600km waterway that links rivers, lakes and manmade canals across the heartland of Sweden. The Göta Canal opened up the country to trade and commerce in the early years of industrialisation and enabled Sweden to avoid paying taxes to Denmark for using its waterways.

Our four-day cruise from Gothenberg on the west coast to Stockholm on the east coast took us through 66 step-like locks – 58 on the Göta Canal, six on the Trollhätte Canal, and a pair of locks near Stockholm. On either end of the cruise, we spent several enjoyable days in each of the historic and very walk-able cities.

#### A COSY CANAL BOAT

My husband and I and our twin 12-yearold sons occupied a pair of snug, traincompartment-sized cabins at the topmost of three passenger decks. Each had bunk beds, a basin with running water above a small cupboard, and a slim closet thick enough for a few articles of hanging clothes. Our luggage went under the lower bunk (large suitcases get stored on a lower deck). None of *Juno*'s 29 cabins have TVs or bathrooms, with the 48 passengers sharing seven toilets and four showers. Frankly, I had dreaded this part, but it wound up being fine.

Lunches and dinners were served in a dining room (that also resembled a rail car) on elegantly set tables from a fixed menu; dietary requests are accommodated with advance notice. Highlights included a delicious seafood stew and an excellent raspberry pie that my family still talks about. The only dish we were lukewarm on was the reindeer! Breakfasts were buffet-style, and the daily filka was a teatime snack such as freshly baked cinnamon buns.

We passed the days shuffling between the large, open-air seating area at the stern of the top deck, the open bridge where you can chat with the captain or take a turn at the wheel, and the triangle of open deck at the bow, one deck down.

#### DAY 1

We boarded *Juno* in Gothenburg on a beautiful, but chilly, sunny morning, greeted at the mini-gangway by our multilingual guide Katarina, who said everything once in each of English, Swedish and German to accommodate the mostly European passengers, and by Captain Albert Håkansson, whose handsome weathered face and pipe habit were straight out of central casting.

We were soon under way, and the boat's passengers sat in sun-filled pockets of deck, wrapped in the coal-grey woolly blankets draped over all the deck chairs, taking in the pastoral sites as *Juno*'s engines hummed and trees rustled in the wind. Puffy white clouds, cranes and seagulls cast pretty shadows on fields of undulating grain and across the rippling water. A feeling of peace and serenity would linger during the entire journey.

We came to our first lock after lunch, the eight-metre-high Lilla Edet dating from 1916. *Juno* waited outside the giant doors of the chamber until it emptied and we could enter. Meanwhile, the pair of young blond Swedish deckhands hopped off the boat to secure it by looping ropes from the boat to the bollards that line the canal system, a routine they'd repeat dozens of times over the next four days. When we moved into the chamber, the doors closed behind us, the lock compartment flooded and *Juno* was raised to the height of the next section of canal. It was fascinating to watch and educational for my sons.

Next were the four century-old Trollhättan locks, totalling a height of 32 metres. At the top, we docked near Trollhättan's Canal Museum for a look around. Back on the boat, we soon passed under the first of two lift bridges, whose spans rise up to allow ships to pass underneath. The crew popped champagne to toast the first day of the cruise, then the Captain brought us back down to earth: a storm was expected that night over Lake Vänern, Europe's third-largest lake, and he decided it was best to dock for the night and cross it in the morning.











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#### DAY 2

When Juno resumed cruising early the next morning, it was rainy and windy; the boat has no stabilisers and it bobbed and swayed across the lake. Fewer than a dozen people made it to breakfast that morning, too queasy to eat.

By midday, sunny skies had returned and we were back in the calm waters of the canal system, though we were now behind schedule. Unfortunately, we had to skip visits to 19th-century Karlsborg Castle and historic Motala. Oh, well – going with the flow is part of being on a cruise. Instead, the four of us took turns riding Juno's two bicycles (others walked) along the wildflowerlined towpath, enjoying the fresh air and the exercise, as Juno slowly moved between locks in the middle of the Swedish heartland.

Dinner that evening was our favourite meal of the cruise – delicious baked pork with parsnip puree and red onion marmalade; afterwards, we returned to the deck to admire the scenery and the gorgeous interplay of cloud and shadow in the waning daylight, as the ship inched across Sweden.

#### DAY 3

We awoke to calm canal cruising, with the occasional bump as Juno's hull grazed the bottom of the shallow canal. Sipping our morning coffee and tea, we sat on a bench on the lower deck promenade, nearly level with the shoreline, and watched a flock of sheep nibbling grass a few metres away. We passed "through" small country roads that were cleverly engineered to slide or swing open, and we admired the cute, doll-like wooden houses trimmed in white along the banks. At each lock was a pretty yellow cottage, originally inhabited by the lock-keepers and now rented to anyone willing to keep it looking spiffy for tourists.

Before lunch, the drinkers were already at their sunny perch on the foredeck, sitting next to a coil of rope and a big chunky anchor, soaking up the scenery with bottles of beer and wine from the self-service bar. (You're billed for drinks at the end of the trip.)











The highpoint of the day was reaching the famous Karl Johan Locks, a steep staircase of seven short locks named after the Frenchborn King Karl Johan. *Juno* fit into each compartment like a hand in a glove. Many of us got off at the top and walked down the hill along the locks to take pictures, along with other tourists.

Later, we tied up and followed Katarina on a three-kilometre walk to the ruins of the 12th-century Vreta Benedictine Convent and its well-preserved parish church, whose pretty graveyard was full of pink and red flowers. After dinner it was ice-cream cones and a stroll though the medieval town of Söderköping to admire the brightly painted wooden cottages and the ubiquitous flowers.

Back on board, as the day was fading into night, we once again stood at the railings and swooned over the stunning twilight sky.

#### DAY 4

After breakfast was a visit to Birka, one of the most important Viking sites in Scandinavia and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with burial mounds dating back more than 1,000 years. Our tall archaeologist guide Andreas fit the part with long, rock-band hair and a Viking's belted tunic. He told us that being a Viking was a profession – they were warriors and traders who travelled in their famous wooden ships all over Europe and also to eastern Canada and the Middle East.

Following our final lunch on board, our quirky little *Juno* reached Stockholm's 13th-century town by 4pm, docking alongside huge cruise ships and ferries whose passengers, like us, were there to enjoy the medieval city's beautiful architecture and attractions. **2** 







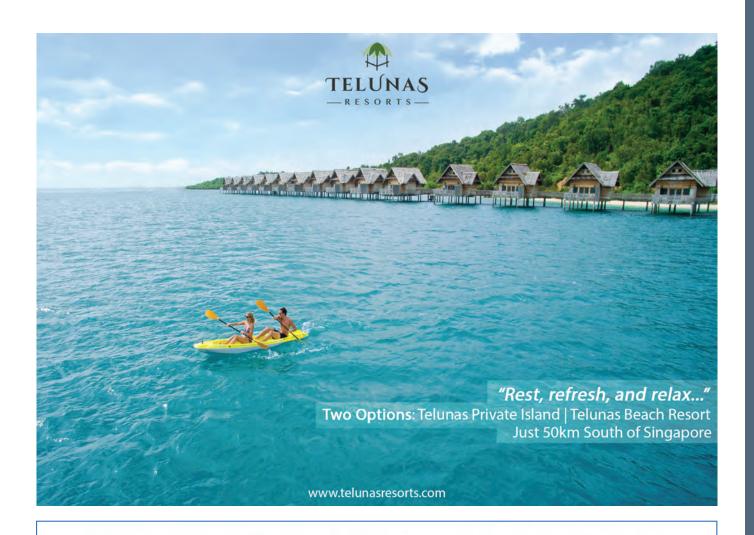
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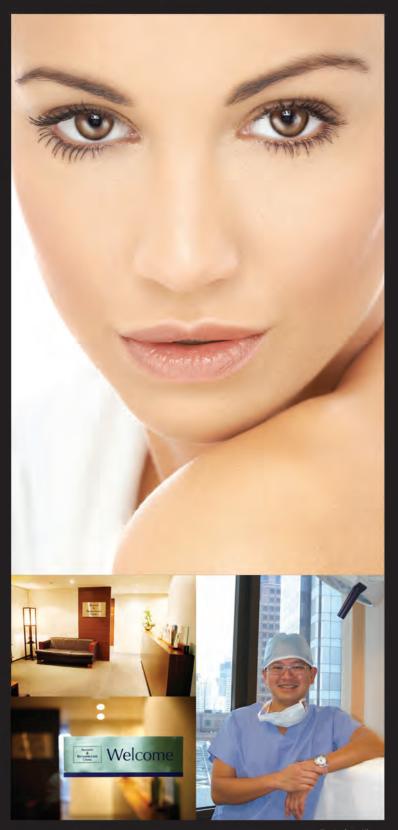


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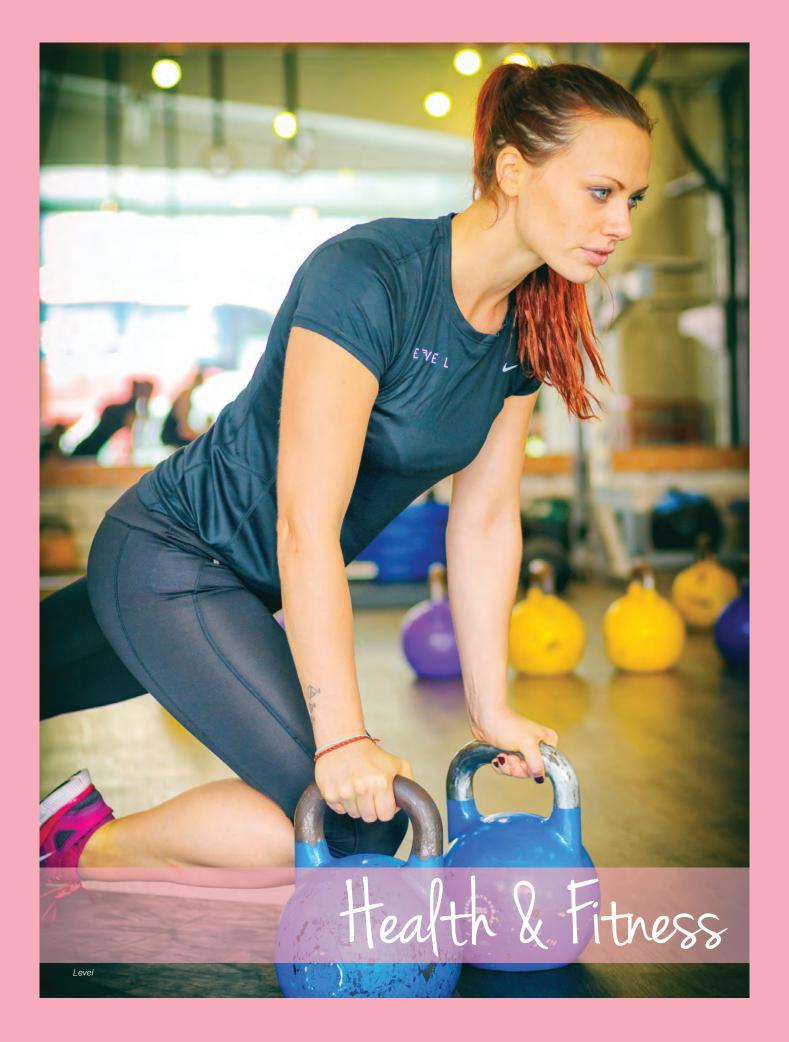
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In our regular health column, VERNE MAREE takes a look at something fairly new, and wonders what makes us either believers or non-believers.

hink how many of the nuggets of knowledge we learnt at mum's knee turned out to be plain wrong. For starters, that she knows everything, that Christmas presents come from Santa, that kissing a sore knee makes it better, that a little butter heals a burn (maybe that was Granny, come to think of it), that eating carrots makes your hair curl... and that you absolutely have to eat your breakfast.

Fortunately, a flexible young mind manages to accept the horrible truth about the bearded man in red, and by the age of 15 we realise that it is ourselves who know everything, and that the adults know nothing at all.

Take breakfast, for one. (Or skip it.) When it comes to what we eat – as with most other things – I believe we are all so different that we need to find out for ourselves what works for us. Especially, we need to question the foundation of the myths we're fed; I reckon the breakfast story was started by the Kelloggs and Quaker Oats of this world, supported by food industry lobby groups.

I've never been a happy breakfaster. My well-meaning mother insisted on forcing a bowl of hot cereal into us every morning before school, alternating between oats porridge, maize porridge, Maltabella

(a sorghum meal porridge much loved by most South Africans) and Weetbix. How I dreaded Weetbix! Drenched in honey and hot milk, with more milk added incrementally by well-meaning parents as the grain absorbed ever more of the liquid, it would persist in expanding and become impossible to finish. (Granted, there's nothing intrinsically *wrong* with Weetbix, and I could probably eat one today: dry, like a biscuit, but not at 7am.)

Healthful:

Mother isn't entirely to blame (this time), as the whole world believed that breakfast was the most important meal of the day. You know: breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, dine like a pauper. And good for her that she went to the trouble of making us fresh porridge, rather than sugary crap like Froot Loops, Coco Pops and the like.

Nevertheless, breakfast made me feel sick then and still does; sometimes, I'd literally have to throw up. It wasn't just the slimy porridge that did it: our rare Sunday egg-and-bacon fry-up did the same unless it was postponed to late morning.

So, I've never believed that breakfast is good for me. Nothing that makes you feel so bad can possibly do you any good; as with everything else, you've got to listen to your unique body.

I have friends who must eat breakfast to maintain their blood sugar levels and avoid a 10am collapse at the water-cooler. Others are more like me – able to do a long morning run or even race on an empty stomach and then enjoy lunch much later, with no ill-effects. Not feeling hunger for several hours after a run, I watch amazed as others, still panting and sweaty and straight from the finish-line, tuck into the bananas, cookies, hot dogs, *mee hoon* or whatever else the organisers have kindly laid on. My friend Pat back in South Africa was like that too, ecstatically sniffing the bacon and coffee wafting from suburban homes as we jogged along Sunday morning sidewalks.

I know, I told you so!

So, imagine my delight when the tide of opinion started to turn away from the necessity to breakfast. In fact, there's no scientific evidence for it; it's nothing but an unsubstantiated "shared belief", in the words of John Beard, PhD (huffingtonpost. com). Lots of scientists and health gurus agree

Though some government authorities and mainstream doctors will no doubt continue toeing the old line for a couple more years (being notoriously slow to keep up with anything except the latest wonder drugs), there's plenty of evidence that breakfast is not essential for everyone:

with him.

 One 2015 Columbia study dispelled the

myth that skipping breakfast means eating more during the rest of the day. One group ate oatmeal for breakfast, another ate Frosted Flakes, and one skipped breakfast. Overweight people who skipped breakfast were the only group that lost weight.

• Discussed just last month in dailymail.co.uk, research from the University of Bath (published in the American Journal for Clinical Nutrition) found against the truism that breakfast-skippers merely make up for it by gorging later on. The main difference? The breakfast-skippers ate fewer calories over the course of the day. What's more, they found no change in metabolism between those who ate nothing for breakfast and those who consumed 700 calories before noon, 350 of those within two hours of waking.

#### Listen to your body

Are you actually hungry first thing in the morning, or might you do better taking a mid-morning snack of fresh fruit or a handful of raw nuts to tide you over until lunch? In your experience, does breakfast really "give you energy"? Or does it make you feel sluggish, and then just as hungry come lunchtime?

Here's another question. If you've always believed it's unwise to exercise in the morning without having eaten something, why not at

least give it a go? Both intermittent

fasting (as a lifestyle, not as a "diet") and exercising in a fasted state have

been shown to deliver astounding health and fitness benefits: promoting cellular repair and enhanced gene expression, lowering blood levels of insulin and increasing human growth hormone up to five-fold (for better fat-burning and muscle gain) for starters. Trawl mercola.com and authoritynutrition. com for more.

Conclusion
It's no wonder
that breakfast
is so popular with

those who can take it. As fitmole.com amusingly points out, it includes some of the yummiest foods on the planet, from fry-ups to Philly-laden bagels, and from eggs Benedict to waffles dripping with maple syrup. Thank goodness for joints that serve all-day breakfast!

Finally, eating nutritious food in the right amounts has to be what counts - far more so than when we eat it. And we can all benefit from keeping an open mind, and perhaps trying a different way that might work better for us. Here's to our good health!

# 40-So-Good

If you needed an excuse for a health kick, you'll be happy to know that many simple yoga moves have big health benefits for your body. Yogi DWI SISWIANTI, founder of boutique fitness studio **Yogabar**, takes us through a selection.

#### THE SITTING POSE

In Sanskrit:

Vairasana

Easy to do while relaxing at home or watching television, this pose aids digestion while also stretching the leg muscles. If you cycle or run regularly, holding this pose while up on your feet will stretch away any tightness in your plantar fascia area (the flat band of tissue connecting the heel bone to the toes).





THE FULL LOTUS In Sanskrit: Padmasana Though it may look relatively simple, this is actually considered an intermediate-to-advanced pose, and it may take a while to master. While stretching and strengthening the legs, this pose can also help to ease menstrual cramps, or any pain caused by sciatica - that's the compression of a spinal nerve root in the lower back, often associated with the degeneration of an intervertebral disc.

#### THE WIND-**RELIEVING POSE** In Sanskrit: Pavan

Muktasana

This reclined posture helps to stimulate the entire digestive system, relieving constipation, bloating and flatulence. It also helps to ease any tension in the lower back or stiffness in the spine. A note: don't try this pose if you have a spinal injury or are recovering from a hernia or any sort of abdominal surgery.



#### In Sanskrit: Baddha Konasana Also known as the butterfly pose, this move gives your legs a good stretch and helps relax tight hamstrings. It is also a relaxing posture that's ideal for pregnant women as it accommodates a growing stomach. If you're trying it at home, place your palms down on the floor behind your back to relax into the pose.

THE BOUND ANGLE POSE

Post! Check next for more yoga facts and tutorials.

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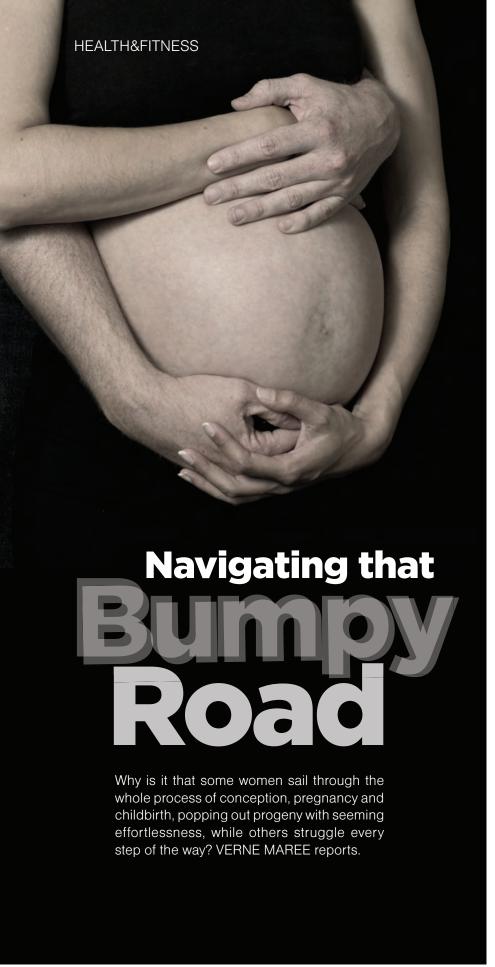


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ou probably know someone who has tried and failed to conceive, suffered one or more miscarriages, or battled with bleeding, amniotic fluid loss or birth defects – or with diseases such as gestational diabetes, hypertension and the potentially fatal pre-eclampsia. Perhaps you've had problems yourself. Fortunately, Singapore's medical community includes a host of great family doctors and medical specialists with experience in all these areas.

Pregnancy-related medical woes don't disappear like magic at the moment of childbirth, of course. Good news is that plastic surgeons, aesthetic doctors, dermatologists, urologists and vascular surgeons are all available to help you overcome any lingering side-effects that may include deflated breasts, jelly-belly, stretch marks, varicose veins, prolapsed organs, a compromised pelvic floor and a stretched vagina.

As for the longer-term fallout that parenthood can bring – sleepless nights, less sex, having to buy hundreds of birthday gifts for your child's class-mates, coping with sulky teenagers, the crippling costs of tertiary education – you may be on your own.

On a slightly divergent note, some women report unexpected and even rather weird physical changes - for example, straight hair becoming curly, or feet becoming bigger. Before she had a child, my sister Dale's feet were a full size smaller than my sevens (all right, seven and a half!); now my galumphing shoes fit her perfectly. Good thing we live in different countries! Her mind has pretty much gone, too; pregnancy hormones turned her into a goldfish, and she no longer even pretends to remember anything, including birthdays. (On the plus side, she's endearingly unable to bear a grudge.)

#### **CLINICALLY SPEAKING**

DR KELLY LOI is a fertility specialist who has been running her own obstetrics and gynaecology practice in Singapore for more than 15 years – and that includes a pregnancy clinic providing preconception health screening, fertility investigations and treatment, plus antenatal care and delivery.

#### Why would a couple go for prepregnancy health screening?

Identifying any medical issue early on means we can take preventive steps, making sure the couple are in good health and increasing their chances for the best outcome – the delivery of a healthy baby. We start by taking a thorough **medical history**; that's an integral part of the screening process. After that, **basic tests** include a polyic exam and ultrasound to detect

a pelvic exam and ultrasound to detect
any problems with the uterus
or ovaries, such as fibroids
or cysts. A Pap smear is
done to determine any
abnormalities of the
cervix, and we also do a
series of blood tests.
In addition, fertility
investigations may
be useful for couples
who have been
trying to

conceive for a while. The father-to-be may also consider a sperm analysis, as about half of all infertility cases are related to sperm quality.

#### How important is a mother-tobe's weight?

Very! A healthy woman at her optimal weight is more likely to become pregnant, and also to deliver a healthy child. Underweight or malnourished mothers are more likely to miscarry, and they tend to have smaller babies. Being overweight, on the other hand, increases a pregnant woman's risk of gestational diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. For the baby, there is also an increased risk of birth defects and stillbirths.

#### Once pregnant, how important is her nutrition?

Extremely, because both excessive weight gain and suboptimal weight gain are equally undesirable. Gaining too much may increase the risk of having a "large-for-dates" baby, but not gaining enough can restrict the baby's growth.

## What can you tell us about food chemicals and their association with epigenetics?

Studies have uncovered a process called "foetal epigenetics", where certain food nutrients or chemicals can act to switch certain genes on or off, causing a kind of "foetal programming" that can start very soon after conception.

Because of this, having an underweight mother who lacks essential nutrition may pre-dispose you to having chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease in later life (Barker's foetal origins hypothesis). This area is still under much research. But it does reinforce the importance of cultivating a healthy diet and lifestyle even before getting pregnant.

#### What does prenatal health screening involve?

Any possible **Rh incompatibility** between a pregnant woman and her child should be tested for by identifying

her blood type and Rhesus D antigen (Rh) status. Rh incompatibility is a condition that develops when a pregnant woman has Rh-negative blood and the baby in her womb is Rh-positive. When red blood cells from the unborn baby cross into the mother's bloodstream through the placenta, her immune system treats the Rh-positive foetal cells as foreign objects and attacks them. Knowing her Rh status in advance means that this can be prevented and the foetus kept safe.

Blood tests also flag diseases such as hepatitis B, HIV and syphilis. If they are present, effective prenatal and postnatal intervention can decrease the risk of mother-to-child transmission. A rubella screening or vaccination prevents the risk of contracting the disease during pregnancy; congenital rubella can cause birth defects such as deafness and blindness.

#### What is the value of pregnancy scans?

The **first trimester** viability and dating scan helps confirm the location of the foetus and whether it is healthy; and the **20-week foetal screening** can indicate any abnormalities that may need further investigation.

In the latter part of pregnancy, **serial growth scans** are useful to ensure that the baby is growing well, and whether it should be delivered early. They help to estimate foetal weight, determine the position of the baby and help doctors decide if the baby may be delivered by normal vaginal delivery, or instead by Caesarean section.

When deemed necessary, a 12th week **nuchal translucency scan** can screen for the risk of Down Syndrome. Also growing in popularity is the **3-D scan**, which helps to visualise the baby's facial features; the term **4-D** scan refers to a 3-D scan where the baby is in motion, for example, smiling or yawning.

Health and Fertility Centre for Women #18-06 Paragon Medical Suites 6235 5066 | healthfertility.com.sg



# TIPS FOR A HEALTHY PREGNANCY

Previously a paediatrician in both India and the UK, DR CHARU NARAYANAN is one of the team of GPs at **Complete Healthcare International** (CHI). Though a healthy pregnancy is determined by a healthy egg and sperm, she says, there's a lot you can do optimise your baby's health and your own.

#### **Eat sensibly**

- Follow a **balanced** diet that contains all the important food groups: fruit, vegetables including leafy types, complex carbohydrates, protein sources (eggs, lean meat, poultry, nuts and seeds, pulses) along with some fats and oils.
- Observing **food hygiene** during preparation, by washing fruit and vegetables and cooking eggs, meat and chicken well before you eat them, will reduce the risk of food poisoning.
- Stay away from **sugary and fried foods!** their empty calories contribute to unnecessary weight gain and increase the risk of gestational diabetes.
- Avoid fish with a high mercury content, such as shark and swordfish, and limit tuna to about four cans a week or two 170g portions (raw weight).
- Stick with **hard cheeses** and avoid any unpasteurised dairy products or pâté, which can harbour listeriosis, a bacterium that causes food poisoning.

#### Caffeine

Up to 200mg a day is considered safe. Your Starbucks tall latte or cappucino contains 150mg, a mug of instant contains 100mg and a cup of tea has about 75mg. Smaller amounts are found in chocolate (about 21mg in 50g of dark chocolate) and in cola drinks (about 24mg per can).

#### **Smoking and alcohol**

Avoid both completely. Smoking – including passive smoking – affects the foetal development and can trigger premature birth. Alcohol, too, has been linked to developmental abnormalities and low birth weight.

#### **Prenatal vitamins**

Take a daily prenatal supplement. Apart from a variety of important vitamins and minerals, including iron, iodine and calcium, it should contain 400mcg of valuable folate (also known as vitamin B9, or folic acid in its synthetic form) to support healthy nerve and spinal cord development in the baby.

#### Move

Regular exercise of moderate intensity – like brisk walking, swimming, yoga and Pilates – brings all the benefits that come with improved mood, sleep and circulation. What's more, through helping to control weight, exercise has a role in preventing and managing conditions such as gestational diabetes and hypertension and reducing the risk of a Caesarean birth. Do what feels comfortable for you! – but do consult your doctor if you have a specific health condition or it has been a complicated pregnancy.

Sleep

Put your feet up in the day to rest fatigued legs and relieve swollen ankles. Allow yourself at least eight hours sleep at night.

#### **Medication**

Discuss any medication with a doctor. For occasional pain relief, paracetamol is considered safe.

#### **Accident prevention**

Listen to your body when exercising – ligament injury occurs easily in pregnancy, due to hormone-induced laxity. The knees and hips also have to bear a much greater burden, and backache is commoner. When driving, secure your seatbelt properly, placing the lap belt under the bump and across the upper thighs.

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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



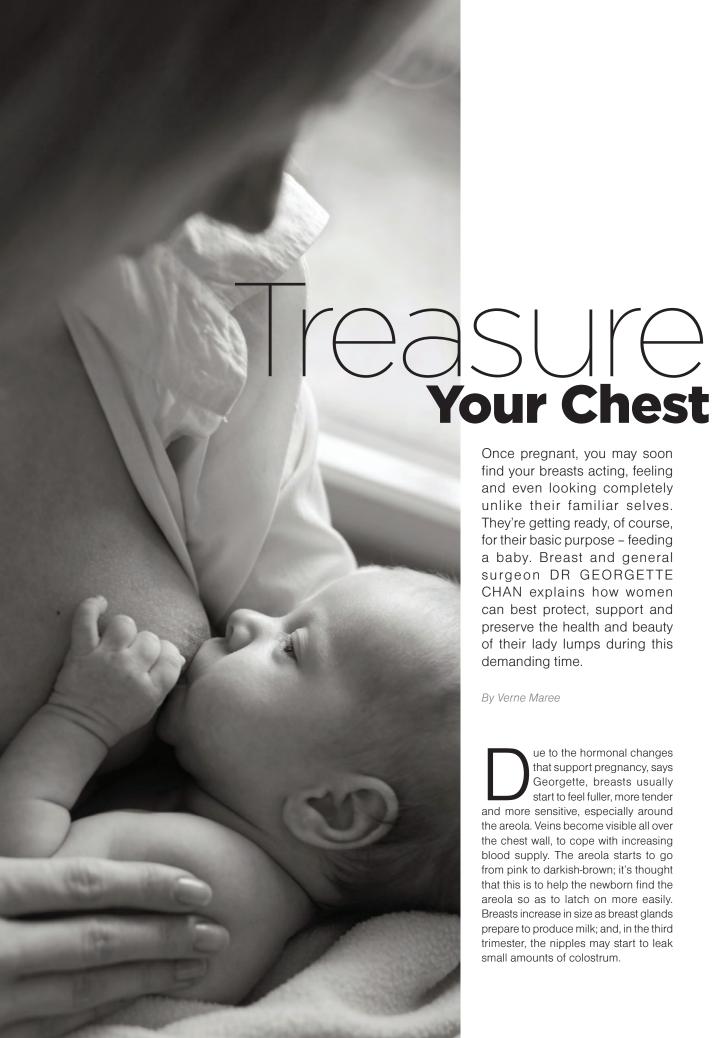
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Once pregnant, you may soon find your breasts acting, feeling and even looking completely unlike their familiar selves. They're getting ready, of course, for their basic purpose - feeding a baby. Breast and general surgeon DR GEORGETTE CHAN explains how women can best protect, support and preserve the health and beauty of their lady lumps during this demanding time.

By Verne Maree

ue to the hormonal changes that support pregnancy, says Georgette, breasts usually start to feel fuller, more tender and more sensitive, especially around the areola. Veins become visible all over the chest wall, to cope with increasing blood supply. The areola starts to go from pink to darkish-brown; it's thought that this is to help the newborn find the areola so as to latch on more easily. Breasts increase in size as breast glands prepare to produce milk; and, in the third trimester, the nipples may start to leak small amounts of colostrum.

#### Breast care during pregnancy... and breastfeeding

You'll need to buy a larger bra that fits properly, gives good support and will allow for later breastfeeding. Continue with your monthly self-examination, advises Dr Chan, and be aware that preexisting breast lumps may temporarily get bigger; she may recommend an ultrasound during the second trimester to keep an eye on them.

Again, she says, it's very common to find lumps in the breasts while breastfeeding, and about once a month, after a feed, is a good time for self-examination. These lumps are often due to blocked ducts or engorgement: they're very seldom cancer. Her advice? "Lumps that persist after a couple of feeds should be evaluated by a doctor."

#### Real mums with breasts

Our *Expat Living* office has no shortage of volunteers with firsthand experience of breasts and babies. My informal whip-around survey turns up:

- Melanie\*, whose tender breasts served as infallible pregnancy detectors for all three of her conceptions – a useful hint to cut back on the wine!
- Candice\*, who breastfed each of her two children for the recommended 12 months; neither was ever interested in the bottle. Her normally 36B chest was "huge" during pregnancy, "as flat as a pancake" after weaning, and took several years to build up to something a bit short of their original size.
- Bridget\* was a super-slim 32D, who lost a full cup size after each of her two kids. Four years later, she's still waiting hopefully for the sort of improvement that her sister experienced.

According to Dr Chan, having a baby will change a woman's breasts to some degree, whether or not she breastfeeds. Though some go almost straight back to their pre-pregnancy size and shape, some lose a full cup or more. Apart from your genes, other contributory factors are:

- Gaining too much weight during pregnancy, so you lose elasticity and start to sag.
- Going for too long without emptying the breasts; ideally emptied every three hours or so, they're less likely to stretch.

Some loss of pertness, she says, may be inevitable – "but I encourage my patients to love the breasts that nourished their babies."

#### Getting them back – what about augmentation?

A plastic surgeon might recommend a breast lift (mastoplexy) for a woman with saggy breasts, remarks Georgette. More important than the usual surgical risks of bleeding and infection, this type of surgery involves

incisions around the nipples, which can damage her milk ducts and affect her ability to breastfeed. "With implants, as long as the incision is under the breast or in the armpit, breastfeeding should not be affected."

From a general point of view, she doesn't think augmentation should be considered until a woman has completed her family and her breasts have "reached their final shape"; otherwise, you could find yourself back at square one.

# It's agreed that being breastfed gives your child a great start in life. Apart from knowing that, what's in it for Mum?

Women who've never borne children are at substantially higher risk of breast cancer, as are those who have their first baby after the age of 30. How much greater is the risk, and why is that so? (Or, as the childless Samantha acerbically put it in Season 6 of Sex and the City: "Since when did kids become the get-out-of-cancer-free card?")

Dr Chan is quick to point out that having babies, having them young and breast-feeding them does not confer immunity from breast cancer. But it's been estimated that just six months of breastfeeding can reduce the risk of breast cancer by about five percent.

How does breastfeeding confer protection? Firstly, she explains, it's closely associated with the cyclical hormone oestrogen. Each child carried to term means a nine-month break from menses, plus another five to six months if you're breastfeeding – about 18 months' worth of suppression of the ovarian function, particularly oestrogen production. "Childless women have never had a break from that monthly cycle."

Breastcancer.org mentions two other reasons why breastfeeding protects breast health: Firstly, constantly being occupied with making milk "limits breasts' ability to misbehave". Secondly, many women tend to follow a healthier lifestyle while they're breastfeeding: they eat more nutritious foods and limit smoking and drinking.

#### But that's not all...

Having breastfed both of her children, Georgette can attest to the way it immediately bonds mother and child – "in a way that no money can buy"; and it reduces the risk of postpartum depression. It also helps the uterus contract faster, minimising postpartum bleeding and flattening your stomach. What's more, the calories you use to make milk ensure a quicker return to your pre-pregnancy weight.

In the words of veteran breast-feeder Candice: "If I liked, I could have eaten chocolate cake all day long." Three cheers to that!

#11-09 Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre 3 Mount Elizabeth 6836 5167 | georgettechan.com.sg

# Came Certain Controls Updates and Outlooks

Sadly, cancer has had more than its fair share of media exposure in recent months. The scale of mourning after the passing of much-loved entertainment icons David Bowie, Lemmy, Sir Terry Wogan and Alan Rickman following their private battles with the illness has been considerable, to say the least. If there's one silver lining to these losses though – especially for those of us who've been lucky enough to avoid cancer so far – it's that it has raised awareness of the disease once more.

With this in mind, we thought we'd investigate the cancer screening process, and also place the spotlight on melanoma, a deadly form of skin cancer we should all be aware of, especially as we live in a region with the highest UV index in the world.

By Susannah Jaffer

# Getting Screened

A disease caused by the uncontrollable division of abnormal cells, cancer can originate almost anywhere in your body, but depending on your age, sex and lifestyle, you can narrow down areas you should look out for. It's never too early or too late to know what cancer screening options are available to you, and when to take them.

Thanks to ongoing research, the outlook for cancer treatment has never been more optimistic, but with more than 100 different types of the disease in existence, the thought of getting screened may seem overwhelming. In fact, the process is relatively easy – and it could save your life. To break it all down, we spoke to oncologist DR OOI WEI SEONG from the Harley Street Medical Clinic.

# At what age should we think about booking a cancer screening?

In a nutshell, screening increases the chances of detecting certain cancers early, when they are most likely to be curable and even before a person has any symptoms. The age to start screening depends on the type of cancer. A woman above 40, for example, should consider getting a mammogram done annually. Both men and women above 50 should consider a colonoscopy every five to ten years, or faecal occult blood testing. Women over 21 should get a regular Pap smear every three years to detect cervical cancer. Heavy smokers should consider a low-dose CT scan of the lungs to detect lung cancer.

If there's a type of cancer you're concerned about, you can speak with an oncologist to counsel you on your risk profile, particularly if there is a history of it in the family.

#### What happens after a diagnosis is made?

Once the cancer has been confirmed with a biopsy, the next thing to do will

Screening tests are used to find cancer before a person has any symptoms.

be to "stage" the cancer properly. From this we can find out if the cancer is still localised or has spread locally or somewhere else altogether. This will then determine the type of treatment you will be given.

#### What treatment options are there?

What method we use depends on the cancer stage. Treatments include surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, targeted therapy and, more recently, immunotherapy.

#### Do you do genetic testing for cancer? If so, what's involved?

Yes, we do. We'll usually take a blood specimen and send it off to detect the particular set of genes we're looking for. A full personal and family history will also be recorded, and you'll be counselled beforehand with regards to the implication of a positive or negative test result.

#### Is there aftercare available?

A lot. We provide lifelong support to patients and to their families. The entire period from diagnosis to completion of the treatment can be very stressful, and we try to make the journey as painless as possible. Once the treatment is completed, the follow-up process is just as important to detect any cancer relapse as early as possible.

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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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# De-Mystifying Melanoma

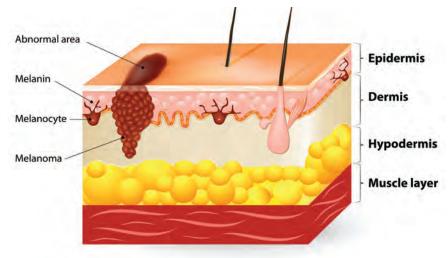
Just what is melanoma, and how can it be treated? According to the World Health Organisation, we're living in a region with the highest UV index recorded worldwide, so it would be wise to be clued up! To find out more about it, we spoke with DR DENNIS LIM.

With close to a two percent worldwide increase in diagnoses per year, it would be fair to assume that melanoma – a severe form of skin cancer developing from pigment-containing cells in our bodies called melanocytes – has been on the rise.

Dr Dennis Lim, however, doesn't think we should jump to conclusions. "I'm sure that one of the reasons behind this increase is that, simply through being better informed, more people have become aware of the condition and are coming forward to get checked out," he says. Supporting this idea is that despite the increase in diagnosed cases, death rates have remained the same, implying that melanoma is not only being dealt with very efficiently, but that there's also a high survival rate.

# Melanoma: The Facts Melanoma can manifest as a mole or spot that changes in appearance.

If you find a mark that has morphed in size or is itching or bleeding, it should be examined. "The best way to check yourself out is to see a dermatologist once a year," says Dr Lim. "They will use dermascopes and have the proper training to know what to look out for. Some even document and scan all of your moles in order to compare the results between annual appointments."



#### Melanoma is more common in Caucasian people.

The primary cause of melanoma is UV light exposure in those with low levels of skin pigment. "Simply put, lighter complexions aren't designed for life in the tropics, so a higher level of protection and caution is needed," says Dr Lim.

## Those with darker skin tones are less susceptible to melanoma.

Although it's not a hard and fast rule, people with darker skin tones – which have more melanin pigment – statistically tend to acquire skin cancer at a lesser rate. "Scientific data, particularly from Singapore, clearly shows that people in that category seem to be less susceptible."

#### Most melanoma cases are diagnosed in the early stages.

"Of all the patients that I see, 80 percent are diagnosed in the earliest stages, during which time melanoma is highly treatable and curable," says Dr Lim.

### Be Sun-Savvy

A bit of sensible protection goes a long way.

- Stay out of the noonday sun. A little sunshine is good for you, but try to catch early morning or late afternoon rays instead.
- If you have to be outside during the hottest part of the day, remember to wear a high factor SPF and a sun hat.
- If you feel your skin start to redden, get some shade. Even a single sunburn can increase your risk of melanoma. In fact, according to skincancer.org, suffering five or more sunburns can actually double your lifetime risk.
- Avoid UV tanning booths. When using a sunbed, you're acquiring almost 12 times the amount of UV doses from the bulbs than you do from the sun. Even the occasional sunbed session can triple your chances of developing melanoma.

# Getting Freated

Thankfully, the majority of melanoma cases are diagnosed in their early stages and are very treatable. "If you look at all cases of early-stage melanoma, the five-year survival rate is 90 percent," says Dr Lim.

#### Jargon buster: Five-year survival rate

Typically associated with cancer, the term is used as a benchmark to measure the efficacy of treatment on a patient. Dr Lim says, "To give you an example, if I have 100 patients with melanoma, after five years, 98 percent of them are disease-free without any relapse. So, the five-year survival rate is 98 percent."

#### Treating Stage 1 and 2 melanoma

The primary stages are treated with a simple surgical procedure under sedation or local anaesthesia. Dr Lim explains the process: "If you have a melanoma that is 1mm deep, 1cm of the mole or mark will be extracted to cure it. If it's 2mm deep, we'll need to take 2cm to cure it. If the melanoma goes over 3mm or 4mm deep, 2cm is still the maximum amount of skin we'd need to surgically remove." All this will leave is a pockmark scar in the skin. (You could liken this to a pitted scar left after acne.)

#### Treating Stages 3, 4 and above

The more severe cases of melanoma have a lower survival rate. "Only four percent of my patients have had Stage 4 melanoma and above; and only 16 percent have survived five years," Dr Lim explains. Thanks to medical developments, however, the chances are still encouraging. In fact, most advances in melanoma research have been to do with treating these later stages.

One of the major game-changers has been **Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy**. "To treat you well," says Dr Lim, "we need to stage you well. In the old days, there was the risk of over- or under-treating because of now outdated methods of staging. This newer biopsy enables us to be far more precise."

The procedure involves injecting radionuclide material into the patient, which works its way up to the sentinel lymph node in the affected area. Next, in the operating theatre, a Geiger counter is used to locate the node, and it is then extracted and analysed. If it tests positive for cancerous cells, the surrounding lymph nodes have to be removed too, resulting in further surgery. If the result is negative, however, no further action needs to be taken. Ultimately, Sentinel Lymph Node Mapping is a much better option for patients because of its accuracy, and it can prevent the emotional and physical stress of a much bigger surgery.

#### Knowledge is power

The final word? The best way to mitigate your chances of melanoma – and any type of cancer, in fact – is to arm yourself with knowledge. Know your risk profile and your family history and get regular check-ups. "The key is getting good quality knowledge interpreted by a doctor that you trust," says Dr Lim.

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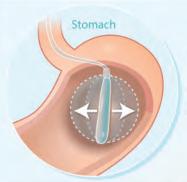
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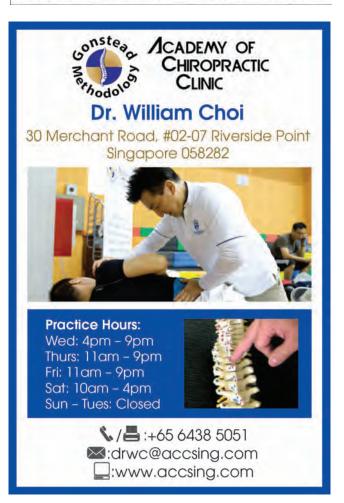


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<ul> <li>Ambulance Service</li> </ul>		• EuroCham	6836 6681			
(non-emergency)	1777	Finnish Business Council     Finnish Bus	6322 2451	CHARITY & DONATION	ON OUTLETS	
Civil Ambulance	6333 3000	<ul> <li>French Business Assoc. (FBA)</li> <li>German Business Assoc. (GBA)</li> </ul>	6226 6101	<ul> <li>Salvation Army</li> </ul>	6555 0188	
Fire	995	German Business Assoc. (GBA)     Irish Chamber of Commerce	6353 6841 6534 5100	<ul> <li>New2U Thrift Shop</li> </ul>	6837 0611	
Green Crescent Ambulance		Irish Chamber of Commerce     Italian Chamber of Commerce	6223 0356	<ul> <li>Something Old</li> </ul>		
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Service	9182 8211	Spanish Business	0200 / 110	Departures & Arrivals	1800 542 4422	
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• 24-hr Water (Pipes)	1000 202 4000	Swedish Business Association	6734 5009	ENTERTAINMENT		
Services	1800 284 6600	<ul> <li>Swiss Business Association</li> </ul>	6722 0799	• SISTIC	6348 5555	
				Ticket Booth	6296 2929	
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KK Women & Children's	6225 5554	<ul> <li>Comfort &amp; City Cab Limo</li> </ul>		- SHOWBIZ	0031 707	
National University (NUH)	6779 5555	Cab Service	6552 2828	HELP LINES &		
Singapore General (SGH)	6222 3322	SMRT Taxis	6555 8888	SUPPORT GROUPS		
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Parkway East Hospital	6344 7588	<ul> <li>Singapore Explorer River Taxi</li> </ul>	6339 6833	Anti-Narcotics Association	1800 733 4444	
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# 2016 TAROT FORECAST

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## PISCES FEB 19 - MAR 20





#### THIS MONTH

A rather emotional March awaits Pisces. Expect your mood to be up one minute and down the next. The lunar eclipse might just aggravate things for you, especially towards the end of the month. The reason for this moodiness is the realisation that you're wasting your time and energy on people or things that aren't worth your while. You get very

cross at yourself for not realising things sooner. But, hey ho, as the saying goes, things always happen for a reason – and there is a good one, too. You will pick yourself up as soon as you learn this, so well done!

#### YEAR AHEAD

The year ahead is going to be full of lessons – all to make you a better person or just better equipped to overcome whatever comes your way. You put into practice your ability to solve issues in a structured manner in all areas of your life. Relationships are very important to you, so laying the foundations for a good relationship is first on your list.

The first quarter begins with you ironing things out in an existing relationship, and working at making it more balanced by way of better communication – or, if single, working out ways to look for your soul mate.

The quest to "fix" things doesn't stop there. Stagnating relationships are a no-go for you this second quarter. This can relate either to your work or to your own personal wellbeing. If being in business is what you've aspired to, then you'll set in motion ways to achieve this. If you're in a career, then you can expect a change. If none of the above is what you're after, it could just be a lifestyle overhaul. This could be in the form of a health regime or a spiritual pursuit.

By the third quarter, you'll feel that you've forged a much closer relationship with yourself. You'll have spent time listening to your desires and made the changes to bridge the gap between yourself and contentment in life. So well done, you! As you work at perfecting the relationship with yourself, you'll realise a deeper meaning to giving and receiving in life, and you'll strengthen the art of listening to that inner voice of yours.

It's one thing to be giving and receiving, but achieving the right balance is another thing altogether – and it will be tested in the fourth quarter. Your generosity may be abused, which will put you on guard. You aren't usually the sort to give your feelings away, so this serves as a reminder to watch and observe first. The lessons of the year ahead will reveal a more confident, calm and meticulous observer in you. So learn them well!

#### ARIES MAR 21 - APR 19



It's a good month ahead for finances or starting a business venture and it will be a very smoothflowing time as well. You will learn the art of

delegating – this is very important if you're going to be working for yourself as it will be impossible to manage everything on your own. Making the right decisions is an obvious key ingredient, but how will you know if you're doing so? The end of March brings the lunar eclipse, which will be a very emotional time for many, so avoid making any important decisions then. Get the consensus of as many people as you can and you should be on your way to making March a productive month indeed.

#### TAURUS APR 20 - MAY 20



The pace is still pretty much slow and steady; don't expect things to move at lightning speed this month after a similarly

slow-moving February. And, really, I don't think having it any other way would be wise. Don't rush into making any decisions. Ensure that you have all the information at hand before you make any move. When it comes to business or career matters this March, it's vital that you commit to a decision. Even if there are two options and both look doable, and you think juggling is your thing, think again. You might just be overstretching yourself and the result would be losing out in both moneymaking avenues. Take time to think things through – that's the theme of your month.

#### GEMINI MAY 21 - JUN 20



Restless Geminis are on the lookout again for something new to do - something mentally stimulating enough to get out of bed for. This

could be in the form of taking a breather from your daily grind and pursuing a new course of study. Part-time study would be ideal in most circumstances, but not for the easily distracted Gemini. It looks like a case of all or nothing if you're to make the most of this desire to add to your portfolio. A big change is definitely heading your way and it feels like you will be laying the foundations for it this month. If going back to school isn't your cup of tea, fret not; it may be possible to learn on the new job!

#### VIRGO AUG 23 - SEP 22



You can lay your worries to rest - well, at least for this month. Good news comes around the first week of March, and two equally appealing options will be

laid before you. Things have been a little cloudy for you for a while. The path for moving forward hasn't been as clear as it will be this month. It will be a nice confidence boost for a change. Feel invincible as you cut through any issues with ease with the help of your intellect. Your swift actions and elegance will impress those around you. Your wishes will be granted, so make this the most productive month ever.

#### SAGITTARIUS NOV 22 - DEC 21



If something doesn't sit right with you then it's time to change it. If you aren't true to yourself, then you can expect to live a

life of discontentment. Like it or not – and whether you feel it's the time or not – you'll need to lay to rest the thing that isn't giving your soul contentment. Move away from a job, career or business if it isn't doing anything for your drive or ambitions. It's essential for this big move to happen, as it seems like discontentment will stay with you till you make things better and happier for yourself. Don't feel insecure about your next move. It will come to you as soon as you take this leap of faith to change things.

#### CANCER JUN 21 - JUL 22



Help is on the way this month. If things have felt hard to come by, you will find things getting easier this month. It's also a time

of healing for matters of the heart. This could relate to a love in your life or family. Stop walking on eggshells around people and holding back when it comes to expressing yourself. You're not going to hurt anyone with your thoughts. So it's time to stop limiting yourself and your capabilities and accept whatever comes your way with open arms.

#### LIBRA SEP 23 - OCT 22



It's always best to stick to what you know. In times of crisis, this can bring great comfort. As you carry on moving through uncertainty,

taking things slow and steady will be the best option. There are lessons to be learned, ones that have been around for some time waiting for you to take notice. As a result, you have felt that the pace has been struggling at times. It might be a good idea to take a look at past events and see if there is anyone or anything that needs forgiving, healing or letting go so you can get ball rolling again for yourself. Take this as an exercise in spring-cleaning your emotions this March!

#### CAPRICORN DEC 22 - JAN 19



It's a self-discovery month this March! You may have been devoting your attention more to those around you,

and so it's time to retreat inwards and step into your own personal Garden of Eden for some "me" time. You learn that if you're not happy yourself, you aren't going to be very good at keeping others happy. Your family and friends are extremely important to you – but so are you. This month, you tread the unknown to explore a side of yourself that you never thought existed. This could take you to some exotic holiday destination, a career change or even pursuing a new spiritual practice.

#### LEO JUL 23 - AUG 22



It's not a month for moving mountains. So take things easy and be kind to yourself. However, it will be good to know that luck

and change are around you. So if there is something you really want to achieve, know that help is always available and that you won't be alone in this journey. Reach out and you shall receive. If you want it badly enough it will happen. Emotions will fluctuate as frustration will set in from time to time when it feels like things aren't moving as fast as you would like them to. When you do feel this way, abstain from making any major decisions. This is especially so towards the end of the month when the lunar eclipse pays a visit. So it's best to let this time pass while you work on collating the right information to make that very important decision.

#### SCORPIO OCT 23 - NOV 21



The message is plain and simple this month: put your head down and lie low. Hold on to your finances

as well. If it's not a need, the suggestion is it can wait. Don't take on more than you can handle. Be kind to yourself. Treat yourself wherever you can. Do things that make you happy. There is no need to try to prove a point to anyone – you might just end up being the loser in the end. Be content in yourself. Remember, a life that is not lived according to your terms is a life not worth living. Quite powerful advice – so heed it well!

#### AOUARIUS JAN 20 - FEB 18



Sit up and listen to that inner voice this March. You have overburdened yourself of late, and the pressure has

mounted. You need to put an end to this endless chasing that you've got caught up in. You've lost yourself in the mayhem. It is possible to achieve the same level of success at a slower pace. So begin to find a balance between achieving and being kind to yourself at the same time. Don't be too hard on yourself – that's the key. No one is going to hold it against you if you don't meet your targets this month. It's OK to let things slip once in a while.

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he diggers had chugged off and the scaffolding had been taken down. Finally, everyone could see the much-awaited "B.E.S.T. Elementary School" in all its majesty and beauty.

State-of-the-art equipment had been installed in every classroom, lab, toilet – even in the janitor's cupboard. Only the crème de la crème of educational practitioners from all over the world had been recruited to teach at B.E.S.T. Elementary School, and lvy League Universities were already battling for first optioning rights on the future graduates.

A queue of hopeful parents snaked their way around the lily pond, through the compact lawn, across the swan canal on punts, and way out past the carbon-fibre gates. Wheelchairbound grandparents were parked in the queue to guard the family's position while the parents dashed off to work a bit harder to earn the much-needed cash for enrolment.

Then the time arrived. A disappointed murmur rippled through the crowd like a shiver when the principal announced there would be an entrance test. "Only the B.E.S.T. pupils for B.E.S.T.!" he added.

What would the test be like? The cicadas speculated that it might be a musical test, but they couldn't exclude the idea of a long jump. The kangaroos, toads, frogs and crickets agreed with the latter but they envisaged that a high jump might also be included. The cheetahs and the antelopes hypothesised a straightforward 100-metre sprint, while the swifts and the pigeons suggested it could be a flight navigation test.

Private tuition slots were sold at auctions to the highest bidders, and, all over town, the stress was searing hot. A toad swallowed a cicada who wouldn't stop singing; a ewe almost hung herself with a strand of wool after her monkey neighbour suggested that the monkey bars would be in the test – she was rushed for a medical certificate so that she could apply for a test deferment.

Only the tortoises and the snails remained cool. It was no surprise: everyone knew that they didn't like living in the fast lane. Still, they too turned up for the entrance test.

The first test turned out to be a leaf-cutting test. The tortoises, snails, cicadas, crickets, kangaroos and antelopes nibbled beautiful patterns on their test leaves and were promoted to the next test: the hide-on-the-spot test. In this one, the cicadas and the crickets pathetically tried to hide behind their scrawny limbs but failed. The kangaroos stuffed their heads into their pouches and for a while it was deliberated whether that could be considered acceptable, but in the end they were failed too. The tortoises and the snails passed.

The final test was the shell-hardness test. Much to the disappointment of family and friends, the snails didn't pass. But the tortoises did. Only they made it right through the entrance test, and so they were welcomed into B.E.S.T. (Balanced Education for Super Tortoises).

The others weren't disappointed for long, though. Shortly after all of this, a procession of diggers and cranes could be seen winding up the hill to the empty field at the top. The scaffolding went up and a banner was unfurled: "Opening soon: T.O.P. School – the school for High Flyers – swoop by and enrol now!"



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