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Great Skin

Leaving SG
Repats Tell
Their Story

40+

Ideas for Your
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Where to Eat Italian +
Cool Rooftop Bars



Anton Pulvirenti

an exhibition of new artworks

Antonio III, 2016, Charcoal on paper, 72 x 98cm





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- Vidhya Gnana Gouresan (art curator)

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P. Gnana, *My Garden By The Bay*, fabric and oil on canvas, 180 x 200 cm, 2016.



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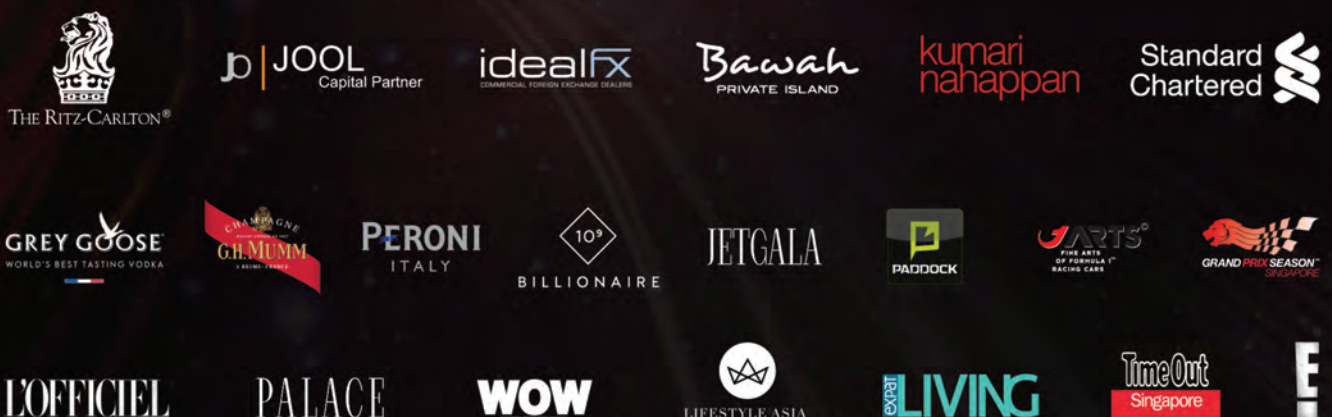
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EDITOR'S NOTE



You know you're getting on in life when the really old man in the movie used to be the "hot dude" you had a crush on.

I've recently watched *The Tudors* (which I thought was fascinating) and in the last few episodes I noticed the name "Simon Ward" in the credits. I briefly met him years ago so was trying to work out which of the characters he was. Eventually I gave up and Googled him, only to realise that he was old Bishop Gardiner – and he actually died shortly after the filming, at the age of 70.

My brain had him "locked in" as the actor who had appeared in *The Three Musketeers* (1973) and *Zulu Dawn* (1979) – and as the person I had met in the early 1980s. No wonder I didn't recognise him!

Unless you're Benjamin Button, getting older and changing is one thing that's guaranteed in life. At least these days we have access to aesthetic help and a better awareness of what's good for our body and what isn't, both of which should help to slow the ageing process. In the time of King Henry VIII, though, no one seemed to live very long – and gout seemed to be a big issue. If disease or childbirth didn't kill you, you were lucky to last into your 50s. Even if you were wealthy, you would have consumed large amounts of red meat – vegetables were seen as the food of the poor.

The upside of a lack of clean water back in those days was that you could drink alcohol all day long without feeling guilty, which holds some appeal and might have helped dull the aches and pains – for a few years at least!

We're not suggesting that you follow this route, but we do have some great wine and dine recommendations, along with cool rooftop places and top Italian dining experiences (from p161). As for slowing the ageing process, our Beauty section (from p235) and Health & Fitness section (p245) both contain plenty of tips, products and expert opinions to assist you on that front.

See you in September!



Rebecca
REBECCA BISSET
Editor-in-Chief



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CONTENTS

NEWS

- 20 News Headlines**
- 22 Calendar:**
What's on around town
- 30 Readers' Letters**
- 32 EL Forum:**
Find out what we've been up to online
- 34 Social Snaps:**
Photos from openings, parties, networking events and more

HOME

- 40 News**
- 42 Home Showcase:**
Turning a Robertson Quay condo into a super-cool apartment
- 54 Business Profile:**
The changing face of auctions
- 56 Home Showcase:**
Nevena and Daniel Hammer's eclectic Bukit Timah home
- 66 Company Insights:**
Furniture retailers take on our quick-fire round of questions
- 73 Product News:**
Pretty new things to put on your table
- 75 Reader Recommendations:**
Home office furniture
- 78 Fix It:**
How to make your home more feng shui friendly
- 81 Buyer's Guide:**
The latest in home office furniture
- 90 Street Talk:**
Living in Jervois



73

Product News: Pretty new things to put on your table




42

Home Showcase: Turning a Robertson Quay condo into a super-cool apartment

ARTS & LEISURE

- 98 On the Wall:**
What's on in the art scene
- 100 Street Art:**
Singapore's walls come alive with murals
- 102 On the Screen:**
Big- and small-screen highlights of the month
- 104 On the Page:**
Recent book releases
- 106 On the Stage:**
The latest in live music, dance and theatre
- 111 Performance Insights:**
Chatting with the Singapore Repertory Theatre's Charlotte Nors



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CONTENTS

LIFE & FAMILY

116 News

122 Noticeboard:

New births, plus pets for adoption

126 Toys for Every Child

EDUCATION FOCUS

129 Tips for the first day at school

131 Instilling the joy of reading

134 Reverse Culture Shock:

Four expats talk about the reality of returning home

143 Simplify Your Emotional Life

WINE & DINE

152 News

158 Bar Tab:

New nightspots to check out now

161 Italian on the Island:

Top spots for pizza, pasta, risotto and vino

174 Drinks with a View:

Our roundup of some of the best rooftop spots in town

180 Meet the Chef:

A chat with Bread Street Kitchen's Sabrina Stillhart



161

Italian on the Island:
Top spots for pizza, pasta, risotto and vino

TRAVEL

186 News

VIETNAM VOYAGES

192 Up-and-coming island retreat: Phu Quoc

198 City to coast: Hanoi and Halong Bay

206 Further Afield:

Five things to do in Mauritius

190

Travel Ideas:

Fancy a short break on Bintan?



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Liv CONTENTS

213 Words of Wisdom:
Stephanie Dickson, founder of
The Wedge Asia

FASHION

220 News

222 Chic Young Things:
Stylish, age-appropriate clothes
for tweens and teens

BEAUTY

228 News

232 Tried & Tested:
Kiehl's Nightly Refining
Concentrate

**235 Secrets of the Skin
Doctors**

HEALTH & FITNESS

246 News

250 Health Matters:
A look at orthorexia, the new
eating disorder

**252 Factors Affecting
Fertility**

254 Expert Voice:
Getting checked for critical
health problems

260 In the Gym:
Sweat smarter at one of these
fab fitness places

REGULARS

267 Numbers & Websites

268 Horoscopes for August

270 Advertiser List

272 Parting Shot:
Work, Burn, Love

213

**Words of
Wisdom:**
Stephanie
Dickson,
founder of
The Wedge
Asia



260

In the Gym:
Sweat
smarter at
one of these
fab fitness
places



Forget long workouts in conventional gyms. With their innovative approach to fitness, these gyms will have you fit and trim in no time.

LIFT
With studios at every turn, One North, TrainingPig and Body Think, LIFT (or Lifted) is the new fitness craze. It's a mix of Pilates, yoga, and strength training, all in a 10-minute session. The concept is simple: a 10-minute workout that can be done anywhere. The idea is to make fitness a part of your daily life, not a chore. The workouts are designed to be done in a small space, making them perfect for home or travel. The sessions are led by a personal trainer, ensuring you get the most out of your workout. The workouts are designed to be done in a small space, making them perfect for home or travel. The sessions are led by a personal trainer, ensuring you get the most out of your workout.

The PIT

For most of 2013, personal trainer Tracy Heston, the PIT is not your conventional gym. Here, the focus is on strength training and cardiovascular exercise, with a mix of Pilates and yoga. The workouts are designed to be done in a small space, making them perfect for home or travel. The sessions are led by a personal trainer, ensuring you get the most out of your workout.

Ritual

If you have trouble getting into the gym, Ritual is the place for you. The concept is simple: a 10-minute workout that can be done anywhere. The idea is to make fitness a part of your daily life, not a chore. The workouts are designed to be done in a small space, making them perfect for home or travel. The sessions are led by a personal trainer, ensuring you get the most out of your workout.

Move to Live

At its core, Move to Live is a mix of Pilates, yoga, and strength training. The workouts are designed to be done in a small space, making them perfect for home or travel. The sessions are led by a personal trainer, ensuring you get the most out of your workout.

HOW TO CHOOSE A GYM

Check in on your needs. Before you join a gym, think about what you want to achieve. Do you want to lose weight, build muscle, or just stay fit? Knowing your goals will help you choose a gym that meets your needs.

Check in on your budget. Gyms can range from a few dollars a month to over \$100. Make sure you can afford the gym you want to join. Some gyms offer a trial period, so you can see if you like it before committing.

Check in on the location. A gym that is close to your home or work is more likely to be used. Consider the hours of operation and the amenities offered. A gym that has everything you need in one place is more convenient.

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What's New



National Pride

We've become accustomed to incredible aerial acrobatic shows, awesome musicians and spectacular fireworks displays on 9 August and the trend is sure to continue at this month's **51st celebration of Singapore independence**. If you don't manage to score a seat in the National Stadium for the main event, there are other locations where you can soak up the patriotic and celebratory atmosphere – and lots of things to do all over the city. Check out the official site ndp.org.sg, or head to expatliving.sg for more ideas.



See the Light

Fire up the imagination, or simply be dazzled by the bright lights at the annual **Singapore Night Festival**. This year's theme, Inventions and Innovation, sees science fiction and fantasy interpreted into unconventional performances and colourful light art from local and international acts. Check online for the times and dates of activities and performances at venues around the Bras Basah and Bugis precincts. 19 and 20, 26 and 27 August. nightfest.sg ▲



Get Arty

A contemporary comedy about friendship, creativity and the complexities of human relationships, **ART** by French playwright Yasmina Reza has been phenomenally successfully since it was first performed in 1994, receiving numerous accolades, including a Tony Award. See it for yourself when the **Singapore Repertory Theatre** performs **ART** from 1 September to 1 October at the National Gallery Singapore, 1 St Andrew's Road. Tickets from Sistic. srt.com.sg ▲



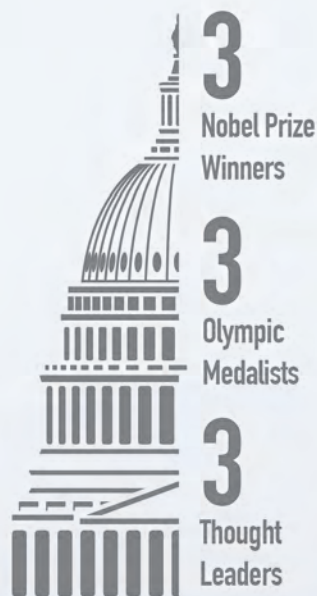
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Epicurean Market (12-14 AUG)

This year's food fair at Marina Bay Sands is aiming to be the best yet, with new offerings such as award-winning restaurant Yardbird Southern Table & Bar, plus an expanded farmer's market, and free and paid master classes by wine and spirits experts. **Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Halls A, B & C. marinabaysands.com**

SuperMom Bazaar 2016 (12-14 AUG)

Held annually for new parents and parents-to-be who are searching for deals, expert advice and support, this is one epic baby fair. Last year's bazaar featured over 200 exhibitors, 8,000 brands and 50,000 products for pregnancy and baby's first year – and this year's is shaping up to be just as big. **Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre. info@riseandshine-expo.com**

Healthy Vino Tasting with Bacco Wines (31 AUG)

Experience a slice of *la dolce vita* at this fun, informal wine tasting event run by Singapore's boutique Italian wine specialists. Start with a glass of bubbles, followed by whites and reds from Bacco's extensive cellar, as you pair house-made snacks with the right wines and learn more about Italy's grapes and wineries. **The Herencia #02-09, 46 Kim Yam Road. baccowines.com**



Healthy Vino Tasting
with Bacco Wines



Puma Night
Run Singapore

SPORTS & FITNESS

One Nation Run 2016 (9 AUG)

Celebrate Singapore's 51st birthday at this inaugural run, sure to be a fun experience for all. Also check out the carnival area for old-school games and rides, or fly an exclusive One Nation Run kite with other race participants. **Marina Barrage, 8 Marina Gardens Drive. onenationrun.sg**

New Balance Run On Singapore (20 AUG)

Back again after its successful inauguration in 2015, the New Balance event will this year cover a longer distance – 8K instead of last year's 7K. Register now and get ready to push yourself to your limits. **Gardens by the Bay (East). facebook.com/nbrunonsg**

The Color Run (20-21 AUG)

The Color Run Singapore is back for another vibrant weekend. Founded in 2011 to promote health and happiness, this run has since then been held annually in over 200 cities in 40 countries, so sign up and be part of the "Happiest 5K on the Planet". **Sentosa Beach Car Park, Sentosa Island. thecolorrun.com.sg**

Puma Night Run Singapore (27 AUG)

This night race takes place in the redeveloped Seletar Aerospace Park and includes new 6K and 12K routes along the fringe of Seletar Airport and through clusters of preserved black-and-white colonial houses. Up for grabs are prizes worth a total of \$10,000, including two return flights to Europe. **Seletar Aerospace Park. puma-nightrun.com.sg**



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DANCE, DRAMA & THEATRE

The Three Little Pigs (4-16 AUG)

Bringing together three adorable piglets, their single-parent mum and a misunderstood Big Bad Wolf, this original adaptation of the classic fairytale is an entertaining production that teaches little ones that success can be achieved through hard work and perseverance. **KC Arts Centre Home of SRT, 20 Merbau Road. srt.com.sg**

Films at the Fort (11-21 AUG)

Unwind with friends over a drink before enjoying an award-winning film, together with gourmet cuisine and wine by Casillero del Diablo, in the natural amphitheatre of Fort Canning Park. **filmsatthefort.com.sg**

Masterpiece in Motion 2016 (19-20 AUG)

Aside from premiering *Symphony in Three Movements* by Nils Christie in August, the Singapore Dance Theatre will this season feature other works of international standard, such as *Schubert Symphony* by Singaporean choreographer Choo-San Goh and Edwaard Liang's magnificent *Age of Innocence*. Tickets from Sistic. **Esplanade Theatre.**

Alternate Worlds II (20 AUG)

Featuring upcoming musicians, soloists and young talents, this concert series by contemporary group TO Ensemble explores new worlds of music. It tells the adventures of a young boy who discovers a mysterious device that allows him to travel in time, and to parallel universes. **Esplanade Recital Studio. toensemble.com**

Annie (24 AUG - 4 SEP)

One of the world's best-loved musicals comes to Singapore this month, bringing with it the classic tunes "Tomorrow", "It's a Hard Knock Life" and "Easy Street". Follow the story of little orphan Annie as she escapes from the clutches of the horrid Miss Hannigan! Tickets from Sistic. **MasterCard Theatres, Marina Bay Sands.**

FAMILY

PlayLAH! Let's Celebrate (6-9 AUG)

Celebrate Singapore's 51st birthday at PlayLAH! and enjoy fun-filled activities for your whole family. Register now, and stand a chance to receive complimentary activity coupons. **Singapore EXPO Convention and Exhibition Centre. expoevents.sg**

Rise & Shine Festival 2016 (12-14 AUG)

Explore, learn and have lots of fun at one of Asia's biggest enrichment and play festivals – three days of educational entertainment that will surely keep the kids busy and entertained. **Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre. marketing@riseandshine-expo.com**

The Friendship of Town Mouse and Country Mouse (16-25 AUG)

Join the two mice as their friendship is put to the test. In this classic production, your young ones will learn valuable lessons on sharing and understanding the feelings of others. Tickets from Sistic. **Drama Centre Theatre, 100 Victoria Street.**

Mums & Bubs Nutrition for Little People (19 AUG)

Calling all mums for a morning of learning from nutritionist Karin G. Reiter of Nutritious N Delicious. Find out more about how to take control of your (and your little one's) health by making good food and lifestyle choices. Register now. **Café Melba, Goodman Arts Centre, Block N #01-56, 90 Goodman Road.**

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SOCIAL

Back-to-Work Networking (25 AUG)

Escape the hustle and bustle of the CBD and expand your circle of business contacts at this networking event, while enjoying free-flow drinks and canapés in lush surroundings. **Treetops Terrace, The British Club.** britcham.org.sg

ANZ Aotearoa Ball (27-28 AUG)

Spend the evening appreciating fine Kiwi wine and cuisine at this popular annual ball, and then dance the night away to classic 80s rock tunes. There's also a chance to win a pair of Air New Zealand tickets to Auckland. **Shangri-La Hotel Singapore.** nzchamber.org.sg



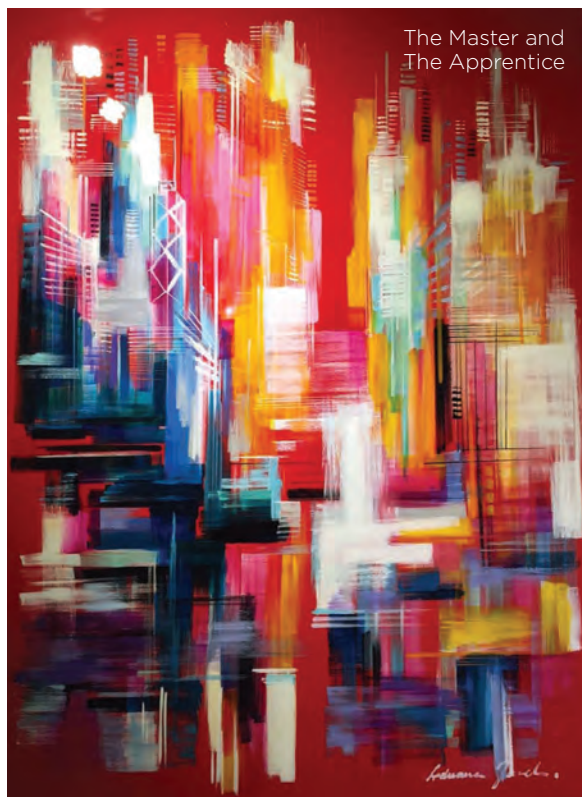
Back-to-Work Networking

Photo: British Chamber of Commerce Singapore

ARTS

The Master and The Apprentice (1-31 AUG)

Bruno Gallery is simultaneously featuring the works of Calman Shemi and Adriana Naveh – distinctive pieces made from aluminium sheets, car paint and lacquer – so you can appreciate the subtle differences between the two artists. **Bruno Gallery, 91 Tanglin Road, Tanglin Place.**



The Master and The Apprentice

Van Cleef & Arpels, the Art and Science of Gems Exhibition (UNTIL 14 AUG)

This show explores the interrelationship between the science of mineralogy and the art of crafting jewellery and gems. Over 450 pieces from the Van Cleef & Arpels Collection are on display over seven themes: couture, abstractions, influences, precious objects, nature, ballerinas and fairies, and icons. **Marina Bay Sands.** marinabaysands.com

Curator Tours (26 AUG)

Gain greater insights as exhibition curator Clement Onn discusses the motivations, forces and cross-cultural exchanges that have shaped the development of Christian art across Asia, exploring the intersection of splendour, beauty and faith. **Asian Civilisations Museum.** acm.org.sg

Early Chinese Newspapers in Singapore (UNTIL 9 OCT)

This exhibition features more than 100 rarely displayed artefacts, historical documents and images from 1881 to 1942, related to the development of Chinese newspapers and Singapore's printing industry, along with multimedia games, a photo booth and talks by industry veterans. **Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall, 12 Tai Gin Road.** sysnmh.org.sg

HOME

Feng Shui with HomesToLife (12 AUG)

Hear from expert Charies Chen how feng shui can create a positive environment in your home, while enjoying a cuppa from Gentlemen's Coffee at the Tasting Bar, indulging in Greek food, and sampling natural in-house products such as organic honey, herbal tea and olive oil. **HomesToLife, 65 Mohamed Sultan Road.** homestolife.com

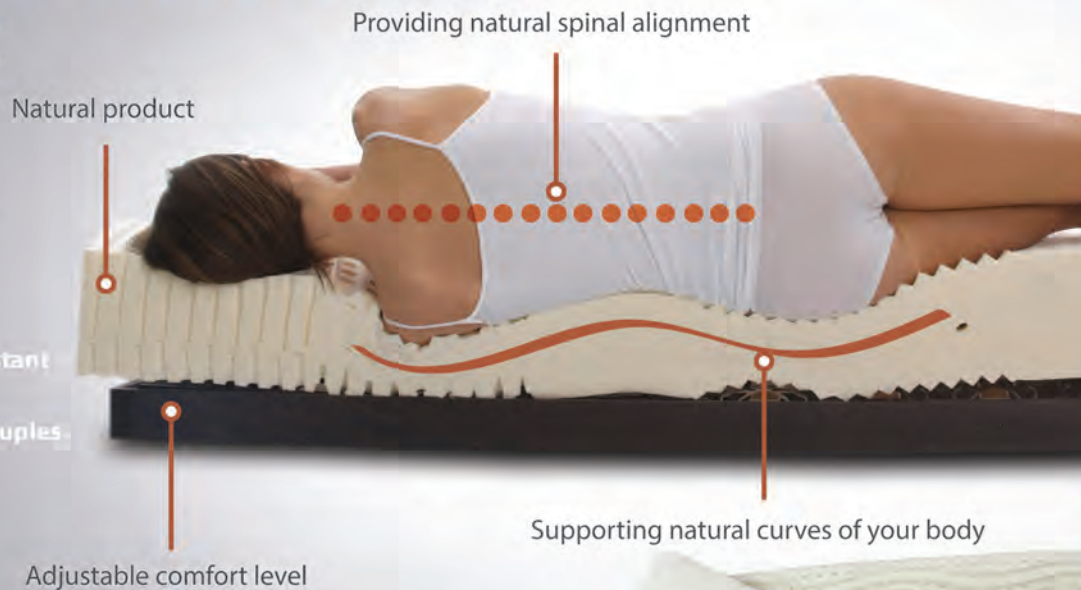
Italian Feast at Expat Kitchen (17 AUG)

Try your hand at whipping up authentic Italian favourites at Expat Kitchen this month. Learn how to cook classics such as bruschetta with tomato and basil, meatball soup with penne pasta, chicken risotto with pumpkin and mushroom, plus tiramisu and more. **9 Norris Road, #02-01.** expat-kitchen.com

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Plan Ahead

Glamorous Giving (6-7 SEP)

This fashion, accessories and homeware clearance sale, organised by jewellery brand Stones That Rock, is back for the sixth time, featuring over 35 independent local brands, designers and boutiques selling stock at clearance prices in support of the Singapore Committee for UN Women. **Hollandse Club, 22 Camden Park. stonesthatrock.com**

Bare Your Sole (10 SEP)

Be part of Singapore's barefoot charity walk this September. Choose to walk for 2.5km or 5km, making the lives of marginalised and needy communities a little better. All proceeds go to Habitat for Humanity Singapore. **OCBC Square. bareyoursole.sg**

Rev-up & Go (15 SEP)

Enjoy free-flow wine, beer and canapés at the British Chamber's networking session before the F1 weekend, held in the elegant Padang Restaurant of the SCC. Catch up with business partners and taste new whisky products from The Glenrothes and The Famous Grouse. **Singapore Cricket Club, Connaught Drive. britcham.org.sg**



17th Annual Business Awards Presentation & Gala Dinner



More Than Monkeys Exhibition

The Podium Lounge A-List After-Parties (16-18 SEP)

Returning for its eighth year, this celebrity-packed event will again feature gorgeous catwalks, F1 drivers, members of royalty, celebrities, ambassadors, supermodels and Asia's jet-setting party elite. Get your tickets now for the most glamorous celebration of Singapore's night race. **The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore, 7 Raffles Avenue. podiumlounge.com/sg**

More Than Monkeys Exhibition (7 MAR - 25 SEP)

In honour of the Year of the Monkey, the Singapore Philatelic Museum is showcasing an exhibition where children and families can explore the world of our primate friends through stamps, puzzles and activities. **Singapore Philatelic Museum, 23-B Coleman Street. spm.org.sg**

New Zealand Chamber of Commerce AGM 2016 (29 SEP)

Spend an evening with the NZ Chamber of Commerce Singapore next month, enjoying drinks and finger food as you network with other members and guests. Corporate and Ordinary members will have the opportunity to vote in the AGM. **New Zealand High Commissioner's Residence, 28 Queen Astrid Park. nzchamber.org.sg**

17th Annual Business Awards Presentation & Gala Dinner (29 SEP)

This award night helps businesses and individuals create new commercial opportunities. You'll meet British, Singaporean and international business owners and leaders at this event, so invite clients and colleagues for an evening of feasting and networking. **Shangri-La Hotel. britcham.org.sg**

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LETTERS

Best Letter

We want to hear from you! Send us your thoughts on the magazine, or on any subject under the sun. **Kim Dalglish** wins a bottle of champagne.



Heritage Hound

As a previous history teacher, I absolutely love your articles on the history and heritage of Singapore, for example Katie Roberts' interesting piece on Bukit Brown Cemetery in the May issue. They give us some fascinating glimpses of other aspects of this superficially



super-modern and glitzy new home of mine.

It's also encouraging to hear about the people, be they Singaporeans or expats like us, who are promoting the cause of conservation. I expect soon to have a few hours to spare in my week, so can you suggest ways in which I might be able to contribute something to these worthy efforts?

Kim Dalglish

Ed: If you're particularly interested in cemeteries, why not become a "Brownie", leading guided tours at Bukit Brown Cemetery (bukitbrown.com). Otherwise, the very active Friends of the Museum (FOM; fom.sg) regularly holds courses that can lead to your becoming a docent (guide) at one or more of the museums. And that's just for starters!

Tale of Two Cities

I've been feeling sad at heart about leaving Singapore after six eventful years to move on to Hong Kong – and *Expat Living* has been my friend and guide right from the start, when I picked up a copy from the reception lounge of our serviced apartment. Goodbye, *EL*, and thanks for all the tips!

Karen Bernstein



Ed: Good luck with your move! Luckily, you'll be able to find *Expat Living* on the shelves in Hong Kong, too. And to keep up with news from Singapore, just go to expatliving.sg.

Breathless

I'm a relatively new convert to jogging – I did a "Zeroes to Heroes" programme back home in England around this time last year, which got me covering around five miles (8km), and I was even doing the odd 5km timed parkrun in my neighbourhood on Saturday mornings. I was really loving it, until we moved to Singapore! For me, trying to run in this endless heat and humidity is like exercising in a bath of treacle. Our condo has a treadmill in an air-conditioned gym, but I hate how boring that is. Any ideas?

Amelia Johnson

Ed: It would be a shame to give up something you enjoy so much. Our advice? Take it gently and slowly until you acclimatise, which could take months or even a year. At first, alternate walking and running. Jog first thing in the morning, or after dark; wear a cap, use sunscreen and avoid the sun whenever possible. Good luck!

Email us at info@expatliving.sg

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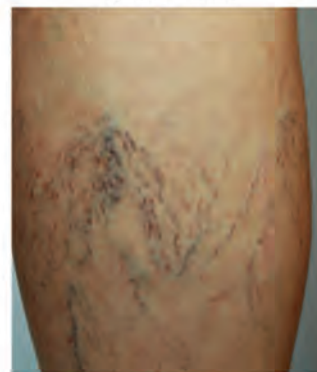
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Having fun at our monthly Expat Living events



Road-testing the latest fashion buys.



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Reader photo of the month

Thanks **@amandajbroad**



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Around Town



An Evening of Art and Wine

Expat Living hosted a newcomers' night at Dempsey Hill's REDSEA Gallery, where guests sipped drinks provided by Bacco Wines and enjoyed the gallery's art collection. Special guests included life coach and clairvoyant Lynda Woolf, who spoke about the ways in which art affects emotions, while St James's Place offered art investment tips. Look out for more EL events at expatliving.sg/events.



Exclusive Culinary Collection

A private dinner hosted by SLH (Small Luxury Hotels of the World) at The Scarlet Singapore's Casa Tartufo restaurant featured dishes from *The Small Luxury Cookbook*, specially curated by CEO of SLH, Filip Boyen.



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A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light-colored tank top and denim shorts, is sitting on a round, beige wicker outdoor sofa with a blue cushion. A small, fluffy dog is sitting next to her. There are several balloons (orange, yellow, blue, and purple) floating around the sofa. The background is a lush garden with many trees and plants.

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Artistic Transformation

Chilean artist Eugenia Gajardo presented a solo exhibition at Chilean Ambassador HE James Sinclair's home on 9 June. Guests gathered to view works from her Becoming series, which reflect Eugenia's metamorphosis from "an artist of the mind to a painter of the soul".



Beers and Book-swapping

Author and former Singapore expat, Liza Beazley, launched her debut novel *Keep Me Posted* at the Books & Beer 5th Anniversary Party at The Tuckshop and its connecting space, The Recess. Apart from the event's regular book exchange over beers, around 100 participants were treated to a Q&A session with Lisa, while kids were kept entertained with a craft table and a storytelling session of the Roald Dahl classic, *The BFG*; Penguin Books Singapore provided the top prize for Books & Beer's lucky draw – a set of 20 new classic Penguin titles.



Storytelling Fun

On 21 June, mums and kids spent the morning at Stamford American International School getting their faces painted by Happier Singapore and listening to *The Gruffalo's Child* story come to life through KidsFest Singapore's imaginative storytelling skills. Look out for our next Mums & Bubs event at expatliving.sg/events.




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HOME & PROPERTY



42 **Home Showcase:** Take a look at this enviable condo in Robertson Quay

66
In The Hot Seat: Three retailers answer our quick-fire questions

78
Expert Voice: Tips on how to feng shui your home office

81
Shopping: Get the most out of working from home with this office furniture

What's New



Funk up any room with this clay-beaded chandelier from **Atelier Lane**.



Outdoor Offers

Seeing off the Great Singapore Sale in style, outdoor furniture specialists OHMM are offering up to 50 percent off selected items until the end of August. This includes chairs, tables, sun loungers and parasols, which come with a five-year warranty and free delivery. Head to **#03-09 Riverside Point, 30 Merchant Road** or go to **ohmm.sg** to find out more. ▲

Stay for Less

If saving 20 percent on a 30-night or longer stay at Pan Pacific Serviced Suites Beach Road sounds good, this is the deal for you. Book before 15 August, a minimum of 14 days in advance of your stay (which can take place up until 31 December), and you can save up to 20 percent off the best available rate. Call **6678 8888** to find out more, or visit **panpacific.com/en/serviced-suites/singapore/beach-road.html** and click on "Offers". ▼



Lovely Leather

One or two statement cushions can really make a difference to your seat, so check out these embroidered leather cushions by **Studioart**. The Ricamo cushion collection comes in a wide range of colours, from white to slate to hues of ash, and is made from Waternatural leather, which has been treated with water-repellent products. The range can be found at **Tatum Company, 29B Keong Saik Road**. ▼



Unique Designs

Ethnicraft Online has added two Notre Monde statement pieces to its offerings: Cobalt Mist Organic hexagonal side tables and a Blue Mist Organic coffee table. They're all made with hand-painted glass affixed to metal frames, so no two pieces are exactly the same. Click on **ethnicraft-online.com.sg** to find store locations, or just shop from the website. ▼



Quintessential Style

British linen brand **Josephine Home** comes to Singapore this month. Products such as its classic 500-thread-count bed linen range and selection of chunky throws will be available at **B1 Takashimaya, 391 Orchard Road**, from 11 August onwards. ▼





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COOL QUAY DESIGNS

BY AMY BROOK-PARTRIDGE PHOTOGRAPHY KEN TAN





We invited ourselves over to NAMITA and PRANAY MEHRA's seriously cool Robertson Quay condo to find out how they turned a tired and dated apartment into a home with all the mod cons, including Namita's funky kitchen, where she dreams up the latest creations for her culinary company **The Indian Spicebox**.

Country of origin:

Namita was born in Nigeria and spent her first five years there; Pranay was born and raised in Mumbai.

Size of home:

1,800 square feet, originally four bedrooms now converted to three.

Who lives here:

Namita and husband Pranay, their three-year-old son Shivum and their helper Joy.

Style: Modern with eclectic touches in the soft furnishings and art.

Favourite room:

The living area is Namita's favourite space. The balcony is Pranay's preferred spot, and his favourite things are the couch, where he sits and listens to music, and the bar that holds, among other things, his beloved single malt collection.



The custom-made Hoerboard DJ console takes pride of place, and is one of Pranay's favourite possessions. Although he's now senior vice-president of ecommerce at SingPost, he was formerly a New York DJ, and music forms a major link between father and son. "Shivum loves music and says he wants to be a DJ too."

When I arrive at Namita and Pranay's apartment, the front door is wide open, helping to direct the breeze from the lift lobby through to the large, open-plan living-dining space and out across the balcony. The couple's son Shivum is fast asleep on the sofa; it's been a tough week for him, having only recently undergone a tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy, so it's no surprise he's taking an afternoon snooze. Tentatively starting up a conversation with Namita, I hope not to wake up the recovering patient, but Namita is soon talking animatedly about her recently published children's book, *The Magic Spicebox*, as well as the many other pies she seems to have her fingers in, including the recent purchase and renovation of their home by the river.

New York to Singapore

Namita and Pranay arrived in Singapore five years ago, following a ten-year stint in New York where she worked for an advertising agency and then as a marketer for Facebook. However, the distance between herself and her mother in India began to take its toll. "I felt disconnected from family, and I really wanted to be closer to them." When a role within Facebook's Singapore office came up, she jumped at the chance.

For the first two years, the couple lived in the River Valley area, in a new and contemporary apartment. "It was tiny, but we loved it there. The location, being so close to Great World City, was super-convenient, and we love this neighbourhood. I would walk along the river when I was pregnant with Shivum, if only to get to Laurent Bernard for ice cream at the other end!"

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ABOVE

The cupboards behind the dining area store a multitude of things, including a funky backlit bar. The spider dining table is from Molecule. "We wanted real wood but in the end opted for veneer, mainly for the maintenance aspect."

LEFT The kitchen fittings are by Dream and the backsplash from Rice. Namita admits it's small, but she has done it up exactly as she'd want her dream kitchen to look: "From the marble backsplash to the white Shaker cabinets and the under-counter lighting, its cuteness and perfectness make up for its small size!" It also has a touch-sensitive tap in the ceramic sink and some clever storage to maximise the space. "The combination of the latest technology plus space optimisation and clever minimal storage solutions are general themes throughout my home."





When Shivum was born in March 2013 and they realised they were going to need more space, they veered towards the other end of the spectrum, deciding on an old but huge condo next to the Tanglin Club. “It suited us at the time and we also loved it, but we did miss River Valley.”

Coming to the end of their next lease, and with the housing market looking more favourable for buyers, Namita and Pranay decided to start looking for a home to buy. “We started casually, but in the end I must have seen around 50 properties. When this unit came up, our realtor warned me that it was much smaller than we had anticipated and the interior was not in good shape. Although it was hard to visualise at first, there was an energy about the place when we first stepped in.”

As the property was within their budget, including renovations, within 24 hours the decision to buy was made. “We know this condo is very rentable; it’s so family-friendly, and the location couldn’t be better. Right now it’s our home – but we are always on the lookout for the next adventure.”

Rivergate renovations

The couple called on the help of their friend Gaurang Khemka, who owns architecture firm URBNarc. “We didn’t think he’d be interested in a residential project, as he focuses primarily on commercial work such as the gorgeous Alila Resort in Bali, but to our delight he agreed.”

The condo’s style is a combination of Namita, Pranay and Gaurang’s creative visualisations. “My husband and I have quite different tastes: his is very visual, very creative, quite crisp, cool and modern; I’m more eclectic; and Gaurang’s style is very modern, clean and Zen. We went through an intense three-month design process, with plenty of great discussions, and some disagreement on things like built-ins, concealing televisions and the choice of materials, but in the end we collaborated like crazy and ultimately trusted him. Our home looks shockingly like his original designs!”

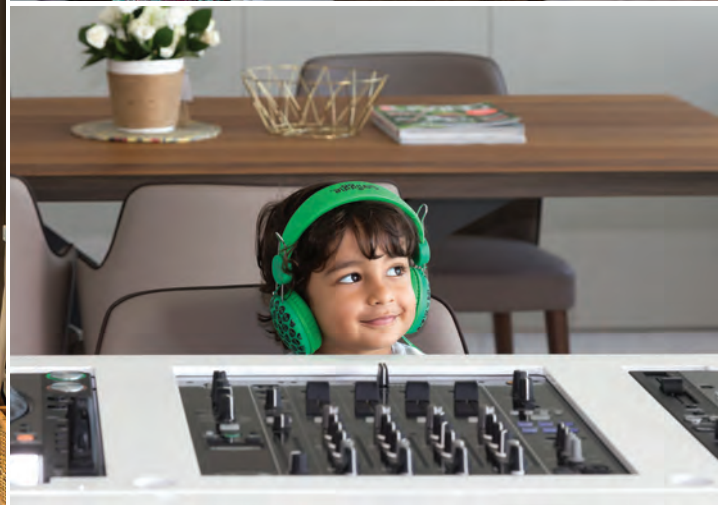
Namita admits she researched intensively, spending over 200 hours looking into every part of the décor and design, from sending Gaurang Pinterest images

CLOCKWISE

In the hallway, the subway picture (made in aluminium) is from New York, and is by Parvez Taj.

“The Ganeshas are from my mother in India. Ganesha is the remover of obstacles and I feel that these two have been very lucky for us.”

Namita and Pranay are particularly proud of this MF Husain carpet artwork on the wall.





ABOVE
Shivum's room has an "up in the air" theme. Namita ordered the posters from an artist on Etsy.

OPPOSITE
The closets are from Dream. "They can hold so much - Dream did a great job of maximising the space." Namita says their ensuite master bathroom looks just like the Pinterest picture she sent their architect.

"Although it was hard to visualise at first, there was an energy about the place when we first stepped in."

for design ideas to sourcing taps and tiles. "We were very involved; it's been a real labour of love. Pranay is the decision-maker, while I'm the researcher."

Having purchased the apartment in July last year, the family moved in in November – an impressive feat, Namita agrees, especially considering that the entire apartment was gutted and one of the four bedrooms opened up to allow for a large, open-plan living space.

Books and cooks

The couple found out that Namita was pregnant exactly a year after arriving in Singapore. "After having Shivum, I did go back to work for three months, but then I couldn't bear to be away from him. I felt like I'd put my career first for a really long time, and as my job involved a lot of travelling I struggled with being away from my baby."

She took a position with a venture capital firm for six months. "While there I met lots of founders and entrepreneurs, and that gave me a real buzz. By the time I left I'd written two business plans."

She had in fact already started up a Facebook page for The Indian Spicebox in 2009, which had gained quite a following. The idea behind it was to make Indian cooking at home accessible to everyone, by sharing recipes and ideas. Then, in November 2014, Namita launched her Spicebox set, a box packed with some of the essential spices needed for cooking Indian food at home – part of the proceeds of sales go to fund meals for street children in India. She also self-published her own cookbook, *Cooking with Indian Spicebox*, and her children's book *The Magic Spicebox* was recently published by Scholastic. Then there are her cooking classes at The Providore's cooking studio in PasarBella.

So what's next for Namita? Apart from recently becoming a regular blogger on the Huffington Post, she has her sights on publishing more books. "Another one is inevitable, to be honest; I actually have the idea already, looking at spices from around the world, and mixing food and travel, which are both huge passions of mine."



Recommendations

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25B Kreta Ayer Road
6222 7600 | urbnarc.com/en

XTRA (multiple locations)
xtra.com.sg

Rice
213 Henderson Road,
#01-03
6692 1199 | rice-fields.com

Dream
456 River Valley Road
6235 0220 | dream.com.sg

Hoe Kee Hardware ("for the best selection of Blanco Silgranit sinks")
8 Genting Road,
The Blue Building
6749 4521 | hoekee.com.sg

Grohe ("they were so patient, and amazing to work with")
grohe.com/sg

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30 Victoria Street
6837 0142 | corianderleaf.com

Spago
Tower 2 Level 57 Marina Bay Sands, 10 Bayfront Avenue
6688 9955 | marinabaysands.com

Cufflink Club
6 Jiak Chuan Road
9694 9623 | thecufflinkclub.com

Laurent Bernard ("just one of our Robertson Quay favourites")
#01-11 The Pier at Robertson Quay,
80 Mohamed Sultan Road
6235 9007 | laurentbernard.com.sg

The Indian Spicebox
info@indian-spicebox.com
indianspicebox.com

SHOPPING

The Providore
#02-K1 PasarBella at The Grandstand,
200 Turf Club Road
theprovidore.com

Crate and Barrel
#04-21/22 ION Orchard,
2 Orchard Turn
6634 4222 | crateandbarrel.com.sg

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Online Shopping, *Taylor-made*

You'd be hard-pressed to find many people in Singapore who haven't heard of home furniture and furnishings emporium **Taylor B**. Visitors to its huge showroom on Keppel Road could get lost for days – and now there's a new online store to escape in, too. We find out from the company's ANTHONY DESARAM what customers can expect.

Why launch an online shop now?

We see the move into ecommerce as a natural extension of our business. We already offer furniture and special finds at low warehouse prices in our store, and now we can offer our customers the convenience of shopping at Taylor B 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from the comfort of their own homes, whenever it suits them.

Can we expect anything from the website that we won't find in the store?

Of course there are some things available at our store that aren't available from our webstore, and vice versa, but, as always, new products arrive daily from around the world and our inventory grows daily. Some of the products currently available include furniture, accessories, lighting, mattresses and linen, to name a few.

We do have a special "Grab It Now" category online, featuring not-to-be-missed offers. These deals will change frequently – even daily – so it's important to check back regularly to make sure you don't miss out on something special at a great price, as all these items are in limited numbers.

You can also expect a growing range of products to choose from, with the same style and customer service that have always been part of shopping at Taylor B. Just like in the store, everything online is available for immediate and free delivery anywhere in Singapore.



What's coming up for the online store?

We have lots of exciting plans as we continue to develop our site, and we look forward to offering customers easy ways to achieve that designer look through a range of mix-and-match items that work together.

The store went live with a soft launch in early June, and customers found us as soon as the site was operational. We've now had thousands of visitors and the number continues to grow. It's early days, though, and our site will continue to evolve over the coming months. *EL*

Taylor B's bricks-and-mortar store is at 43 Keppel Road. To keep up to date with news, visit the website and create an online account.
9420 4000 | taylorbdesign.com



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Auctioneering RE-ENGINEERED

BY TIM COLMAN PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL BERNABE

British auctioneer and valuer CHRISTOPHER LANIGAN-O'KEEFFE lives and breathes antiques. Following a five-year stint in London, working for global art auction house, Christie's – and after the birth of his twin boys – he relocated to the English countryside and took a role at regional auction house Greenslade Taylor Hunt. The job, based in Somerset, had a smaller scope, but it was more hands-on, and it taught him another side to the antiques business.

Two years ago, Chris and his family made the move to Singapore. He's now one of the driving forces behind **HotLotz**, working with colleagues **Matthew Elton** and **Geoffrey Volpatti**. Specialising in contemporary and antique furnishings, the business runs a

combination of live and online auctions. We asked Chris about the new venture, selling online, the strangest items he's valued – and how he got his nickname, “the Ferret”.

How long have you been in the auctioneering and valuing business?

It's been my only career, to be honest. It was my father's career too. He worked for Christie's as well; then he had his own gallery. I grew up with that all around me, so it was quite natural for me to get into the business. I studied History of Art at university, but was always a little hesitant about following in my father's footsteps – then I realised it was actually what I wanted to do, so I went to work at Christie's as a salesroom assistant. And that was it.

So you worked your way up from the bottom?

Yeah, it's the best way to do it, actually. The Chairman when I was there had started as a porter, 25 years earlier. I worked in Christie's South Kensington for five years. When I left, I was specialising in silver in the interiors department, but I also spent a lot of time manning the valuations counter – it was just like *Antiques Roadshow*.

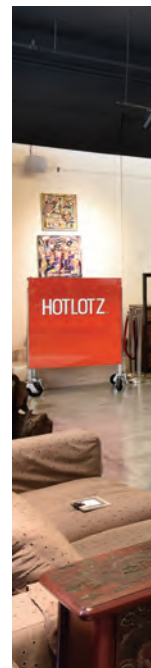
Tell us about the new Singapore business, HotLotz.

We wanted to create a traditional auction house for the Uber generation – traditional in what we sell, with different types of sales and different levels of sales; but we wanted to make it accessible to people who don't have a lot of time. So, they can sit in the back of a taxi on their way to work and flick through an auction catalogue on their phone – everything is just as visible online as it is in the salesroom. We have multiple images and detailed descriptions, and you can leave bids on the website – and, very soon, through the app.

How does the mix of online and offline auctions work?

We can run as many auctions at one time online as we want. We've built our own platform on the website, so it's up to us how many we put up. Our bread-and-butter, though, is a weekly interiors and antiques sale – a real home-furnishing sale. There's everything from modern dining tables to antique boxes, modern sofas, decorative items and paintings.

We hold one of these every Saturday, live in the showroom at 10am. That sale is also up and viewable online the week before, and you can place bids before the sale through the website. You put in your maximum and the computer will automatically bid for you up to that level. If no one else bids against you, you get it for the lowest price. We buy it for you as cheaply as we can, in effect.





What sort of services do you offer those who are leaving the country?

When you're moving country, or even house, there are a lot of things to deal with. Many of our clients love the fact we can go in as auctioneers, look at everything and then say, "These 50 things are interesting and have some value; these 50 things I'm afraid we can't do anything with." We help with the process of de-cluttering.

What are some of the strangest things you've found?

We've got a 1960s postcard-vending machine in the storeroom, and we sold a Victorian policeman's truncheon last week.

What advantages does an auction have over a private sale?

People who are selling things privately mightn't know what something is or how much it's worth; that's where we come in. A lot of the time, it's about identifying something and figuring out what it can fetch. Quite often, the valuable items are things people don't expect. I spent a lot of my time in the UK delving into people's attics – in fact, they used to call me "the Ferret". It's amazing what lurks in the corners of people's houses. Often, they will show you their lovely big dresser, but the Chinese vase sitting on the cabinet is worth 20 times more.



HotLotz is an auction marketplace for buying and selling contemporary or antique home furnishings and décor. It runs a live auction every Saturday at 10am (and has its own coffee shop in the hawker centre next door). If you can't make it there, check out the website to make a bid or enquire about an item. *EL*

HotLotz is at 120 Lower Delta Road, #01-15 Cendex Centre. 6254 7616 | hotlotz.com

Africa, Asia &



When Nevena and her family moved to Singapore three years ago, they were looking for a place that had its own garden and was close to the MRT system. Instead, they found themselves in a Bukit Timah cluster house, tucked away at the far end of Greenwood Avenue. They may not have their own garden, but with the newly extended Downtown Line, they do now have the MRT. She explains how the home turned out to be just the right fit.

Who lives here: Nevena and Daniel Hammer, five-year-old son Noa, eight-year-old cocker spaniel Nala and helper Rosalie

Time in Singapore: Three years

Type of home: Three-level cluster house with three bedrooms, an office, a helper's room and a basement

Style of home: An eclectic mix of personal memorabilia and natural elements

Art Nouveau





Swiss-born Nevena is no stranger to living away from her home country. She grew up as an expat child in Algiers, where she lived with her parents for 15 years, and since she met her husband, Daniel, the pair have also lived in South Africa and France. “When we got married, we knew we wanted to travel,” explains Nevena, “but more than just holidays. Living as an expat means you really experience a different culture and a different life.”

After three years in the north of France, they were ready for a new adventure, and when the call came to move to Singapore, they jumped at the chance. Daniel had been stationed here for a

three-month work stint about 14 years previously, and when Nevena had come to visit, she had loved the feel of it. Asia had clearly drawn them in: for their honeymoon a few years later, they travelled to Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and Singapore.

SETTLING IN SINGAPORE

Although they’d originally hoped to be close to an MRT station, their son goes to the Swiss School, and so Bukit Timah was a natural choice. Their other criterion, a garden, was as much for their dog Nala as it was for them; but with so much greenery in the area and both the Botanic Gardens and MacRitchie Reservoir Park nearby, Greenwood turned out to be perfect.

ABOVE On the right-hand wall hang Kabyle necklaces from Algeria. The Kabyle are a Berber ethnic group native to Kabylia in the north of Algeria. They represent the largest Berber-speaking population in Algeria and the second-largest in Africa.



Animal figurines crafted from wire and beads bring a fun taste of Africa to each step.



Nevena inherited these beautiful Art Nouveau Gallé lamps from her mother.

The green glass vase is a keepsake, handed down through generations.





ABOVE

These teapots were collected by Nevena's mother.

BELOW

Painted by a friend of the family, these shimmering necklaces could almost be real.

"It's not too far from town," says Nevena. "You have the Botanic Gardens, and Orchard and Tanglin are quite close. We take the dog to MacRitchie and Kranji. It's really in the middle." Plus, the nearby PIE motorway is convenient for her husband's commute to work.

As Nevena shows me around her home, it's clear that her creative eye is inspired by their family and the places where they've lived. "It reflects our history: where we've travelled, but also where we come from, and where we live now," she agrees. Her deep love for nature is another key element in the décor, with beaded animal statues from Africa lining the stairs, and a beautifully stylised protea print (the national flower of South Africa) adorning the sofa.

A large brass butterfly sits proudly on the doors of a Chinese-style cabinet that is one of the few pieces they've bought in Singapore. "We saw something similar on our honeymoon in Malaysia," she tells me. When they found this one in a furniture shop in Dempsey, they just had to have it.

The open kitchen, dining room and living room form the heart of the house. A colour scheme of orange, beige and green gives a warm, comfortable

feeling and the walls and surfaces are chock-full of personal touches, artworks and trinkets, each with its own story to tell. There are quirky teapots, old Nestlé ads, a didgeridoo, an ornate gilt mirror. It's a varied collection, yet it comes together seamlessly. The trick, it seems, is finding the right place for things. "When I buy something now," explains Nevena, "I first try to imagine where I can put it."

ART NOUVEAU FROM ALGIERS

A set of beautiful Gallé lamps inherited from her mother, are, unsurprisingly, Nevena's most prized possessions. Considered one of Art Nouveau's most influential artists, Emile Gallé's elegant glassware is distinctive for its delicate etchings of nature-inspired scenes. The lamps glow blue and orange, emblazoned with dancing dragonflies and flowers. Nevena remembers her mother buying them over the years in various antique markets and curio shops, some in Switzerland and others in Algiers. She points out another piece of special glassware: a soft-green vase, Art Deco this time, which belonged to her grandmother. "It's a little damaged," she notes sadly, "but my mother loved it, and now I do too."



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Noa's room has a maritime theme, with his mum's furniture and knick-knacks.

A lovely apricot-coloured glass light fitting hangs in the living room. It's a little later than Art Nouveau, Nevena explains. She has two more in the basement, but has nowhere to hang them. These, once again, were bought in Algiers and have become family heirlooms.

Africa is also present in more obvious ways. Kabyle jewellery from Tuareg and Algiers decorates one wall and a collection of pots bought on a trip to the Atlas Mountains sits at the bottom of the stairs. Kabyle jewellery makes another appearance in the stairwell, but this time it is delicately painted on silver foil. The result is so striking that for a moment I'm fooled into thinking there are real necklaces inside the frames. An African bead game has been repurposed as decoration, with more Kabyle pendants artfully lain amongst the beads. "Noa is always sneaking coins and things into it, so I had to check before you came," Nevena says with a laugh.

Moving upstairs to the master bedroom, we pass more souvenirs of her time in North Africa, such as framed wall tiles from Algiers and paintings of the casbah. "They remind me of my childhood," she says.

SETTING SAIL

In Noa's room are yet more reminders of Nevena's youth, these with a nautical twist. "My mother made that for me when I was a teenager," she says, pointing to a small chest of drawers, papered with pictures of boats sailing the high seas. "She used pictures from an old calendar." A lighthouse lamp and even the curtains are old keepsakes, passed on to a new generation.

Downstairs at the breakfast bar in the kitchen, there's a set of photographs taken on honeymoon. One shows them standing together in a bar on Orchard Road all those years ago. In a frame nearby there's another photo, showing the same bar, but this time, they are three. "It's closed down now, but we went back to the same place when we moved here with Noa and took that photo." It's a nice thought of a story come full circle, but their journey has by no means ended here.

So where's next for Nevena and her family? "Who knows?" she says. "For me, anywhere would be fine! Though now I have Noa, I would like to be somewhere that is safe."



NEVENA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Bollywood Veggies (“for nature walks, an educational farm, dog walks and lunch”)

100 Neo Tiew Road
6898 5001 | bollywoodveggies.com

Thow Kwang Pottery & Dragon Kiln
85 Lorong Tawas (via Clean Tech View)
6265 5808 | thowkwang.com.sg

Furniture shops

Taylor B Fine Designs
43 Keppel Road
9420 4000

Dempsey Hill (“for antique shops”)

Tan Boon Liat Building
315 Outram Road
6589 8494

Dining

Halia (“for dining outside in the Botanic Gardens”)
1 Cluny Road, Singapore Botanic Garden
8444 1148 | thehalia.com

Balanced Living (“for healthy, gluten-free food”)
779 Bukit Timah Road
6762 8029 | balancedlivingasia.com

Riders Café (“for horse-riding for kids, a playground, and breakfast or lunch”)
51 Fairways Drive
6466 9819 | riderscafe.sg

Children's entertainment

The Little Company at KC Arts Centre – Home of SRT
20 Merbau Road
6221 5585 | srt.com.sg **e**

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IN THE HOT SEAT!

We put three furniture retailers in the hot seat and ask what makes them tick.

BY AMY BROOK-PARTRIDGE
PHOTOGRAPHY KEN TAN



“I wish for happiness, which I can pass on to people I come into contact with, be they my staff or my customers”

Naseem Mimi Somjee,
WTP The Furniture Company

Tell us about your business, in a nutshell.

It's a place where your personality matches with our furniture. We believe every home and its interior says something about the person living in it. With our range of furniture, you are able to find the right pieces and the soft furnishings to help you accomplish the vision you set out for your home – whether you're leasing or buying your furniture, we can complete your home. Our custom-made offerings and 25 years of service complete the experience.

Where does your passion for furniture stem from?

My mother. Her sense of detail, her insistence on the merits of hard work and her love for people instilled this passion. She also taught me about the beautiful things, experiences and people in my life. Inheriting these qualities has been the genesis of the path I have undertaken to live and fulfil each day.

Which one piece of furniture have you sourced that you were loath to sell because you really wanted it yourself?

My very first piece, offered to me by a 75-year-old man. It was a 1920s Peranakan sideboard – his part of the “his and hers” set given as dowry at the time of his wedding in Penang. It was sold to a German lady who had a house built round this piece, so it really went to someone who would love it.

If your company were an animal, what would it be and why?

It would be my fourth child – the one my children tease me about, saying that I love her more than them because I spend a lot more time with her!

What advice would you give yourself if you were starting out again?

What goes around comes around; the world is small; work with passion and learn compassion.

Name one place in Singapore where you go to feel inspired.

Since childhood it has been the Botanic Gardens. It's getting a little too crowded nowadays, but there are still good times to go and places to visit in it that help me clear my mind and re-energise.

How do you switch off completely and relax?

Exercise, massages and reading.

If you could have three wishes, what would they be?

That I could do more for people at large and help with clean water and green energy. That I could be more innovative and continue the excitement of learning and sharing with the good people around me. Last but not least, I wish for happiness, which I can pass on to people I come into contact with, be they my staff or my customers.

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WTP can complete the vision you have for your home with its range of furniture

“We’re determined to build on the strong foundation Majella has laid and grow the business even further”



Sangeetha Narayanaswamy Edwards, Katie Harris and Stacy Skibsted, the new owners of Ni-Night

Tell us about the company in one sentence.

Ni-Night is a boutique store that offers distinctive, high-quality and long-lasting furnishings that can be used to create a stylish yet comfortable and safe living space for your children.

What spurred you to take on Ni-Night?

Katie: When I was 12, my dad built me a loft bed that had a secret passage underneath and a desk that pulled out, and my mum did all the upholstery and made

the bedding. I remember being so happy and proud of that bed, and I really want to give other kids that same sense of pride and joy. I'd been looking for an investment opportunity and when I saw that Ni-Night was up for sale, I already knew that I wanted to become the new owner and to continue to build on Majella's legacy.

Sangeetha: Ni-Night is an amalgamation of two things I'm very passionate about: children and interior design. As a new mum shopping for children's furniture, I came to realise that there is huge potential to improve the products available in the market here so as to fulfil both the practical and aesthetic needs of parents. Ni-Night provided the perfect investment opportunity and, more importantly, a platform to work on something I deeply care about.

Stacy: Majella has an exceptional business that fits my aim for a sound investment in a fun and challenging venture.

How do you all know each other?

We met at football WAGS about five years ago and went on to discover common interests and ambitions, paving the way for a wonderful friendship and business partnership.

Which one piece of Ni-Night furniture could your children not do without?

Stacy: The bunk bed. I have two young boys that luckily enjoy sleeping in the same room. The Ni-Night bunk bed is both fun and functional for them.

Katie: Definitely the slat bed! We have two girls aged two and three, so we will soon be converting it into a bunk bed, which they will love. The trundle is also a hit as it creates an ideal arrangement for a kids' sleepover, especially in a country where space is at a premium. The great thing about Ni-Night's furniture is that it grows with your children.

Where do you hope to be in two years' time?

We're determined to build on the strong foundation Majella has laid and grow the business even further. Our aim is to introduce new, innovative designs and a wider range of products, all of the highest quality in keeping with Ni-Night's philosophy. And we may even open a store near you, so stay tuned!

Stacy's two young boys couldn't do without their Ni-Night bunk bed – it has just the right mix of fun and function



Sangeetha loves the vibrancy of Chinatown and Little India

Name one place in Singapore where you go to feel inspired.

Katie: I go home. I believe in stepping into new and exciting things, and luckily my husband is the same. We've been together for around 20 years and he inspires me to be my best. He is definitely more pragmatic than me, thankfully, and always makes sure we don't do anything without thinking it through properly first!

Sangeetha: Singapore is such a melting pot of cultures that one only needs to look around to feel inspired. Walking through the streets of Chinatown or Little India, for example, sets my senses abuzz and my creative juices flowing. The vibrant colours, aromas, sounds and people are all distinctly individual and yet co-exist in perfect harmony.

Stacy: One of my favourite things about living in Singapore is the many friends I've made from all over the world. They're all so fun and inspiring – especially my two wonderful friends who are now my new business partners!

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

“Sometimes it’s not the end I look for, but just the process of being the best you can. From that you always get to a good place”



Geri Murphy,
Originals

Describe your business in 60 seconds or less.

The best way to describe Originals is to look at what excites us. We’re motivated by giving our customers the products to create homes that are not only beautiful, but also fun, comfortable and functional to live in. We want to spark people’s imaginations with our furniture collections so their choices will give them a sense of putting their own unique stamp on their home.

Where does your passion for your business come from?

Before coming to Singapore, I worked for 15 years for a dynamic and empowering retail company that was growing rapidly in Australia, and I was able to grow with it. I gained such valuable experience of working in retail and retail management – there was a huge focus on people, staff, customers and suppliers, and on giving customers the products they wanted, at the best quality we could. I didn’t question it – it worked.

Travelling to Asia gave me the opportunity to leap into furniture retailing. I literally fell in love with the furniture I saw when I came here, and the different ways to retail it. It was really the material – the original teakwood – I saw in Singapore that first caught my attention. Being free to travel, and taking a break from work, gave me the space to really look around and take in things I’d been too busy to notice.

The rest developed from that; it was a steep learning curve, but very creative. This really used what I had learnt and stretched me where I hadn’t.

What one piece of furniture have you sourced that you really wanted yourself?

I have a unique console that’s almost three metres long; I had it made by one of my suppliers who I’ve known for 20 years. It’s a single piece of recycled teakwood, with legs made from an old plough, and it’s really simple and slim-lined. I like the look of it and the personal history attached to it.

If your company were an animal, what would it be?

A chameleon, because you could take any of our pieces and make it work with your personal style.

Looking back, what one piece of advice would you give yourself when you were starting out?

Get an accountant; you’ll be able to afford it!

What inspires you?

My team and I travel to many places to meet with our suppliers and to be inspired.

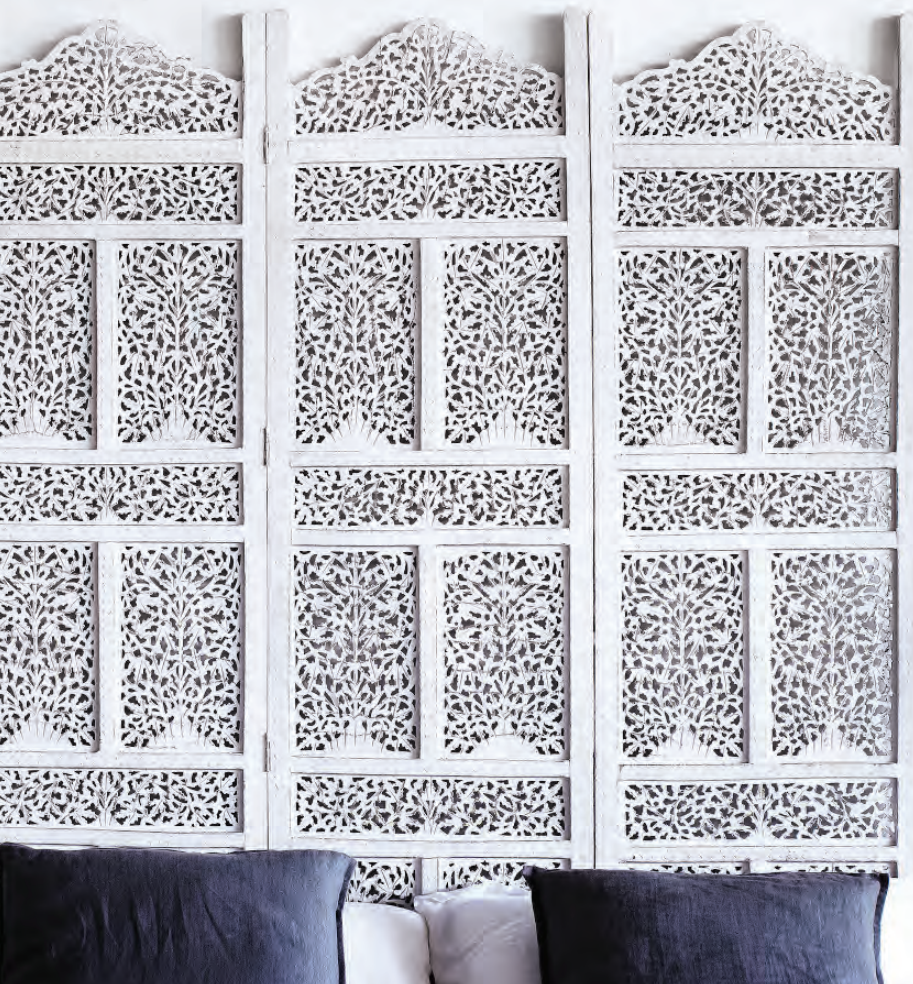




Nomad
India
cupboard



Gerri likens her furniture to a chameleon
– it can adapt to any style



From 21 years of travelling the globe, we developed our own line of furniture, and we branded it Nomad. This range is the sum of our discoveries from different sources, and our collaboration with the people we'd met in the process. Together with them we've produced the collections that are now unique to Originals: Nomad India, Nomad Java, Nomad Tribe and Nomad Home.

If you could have three wishes, what would they be?

To continue to find inspiration in life, to continue to work with my fantastic team, and to enable people to become the best they can be and make a difference in other people's lives.

Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

Sometimes it's not the end I look for, but just the process of being the best you can. From that you always get to a good place. *EL*

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

Collection
QUINSAI GARDEN



Fancy Florals

Celebrating almost one year in Asia since the launch of its Singapore flagship store, **Villeroy & Boch** has just rolled out its latest collection. We take a look at the story behind these pretty floral pieces.

This latest tableware collection, called **Quinsai Garden**, is inspired by Asian flora and made of high-quality bone porcelain. It's named after the ancient city of Quinsai in China, now known as Hangzhou. In the 13th century, Quinsai was home to the largest harbour in Asia, and the story goes that explorer Marco Polo described it as "the loveliest and greatest city in the world".

The patterns focus on Asian blooms, featuring four blossoms that Marco Polo may have spotted on his travels around China, including the peony, the camellia, the chrysanthemum and the magnolia. This pretty and delicate collection includes a variety of designs such as bread and butter plates, a salad bowl, serving plates, teapots, and tea and coffee cups and saucers.



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- The "milk in first" rule came about originally to protect the bone china it was served in. Now it's a very individual thing, as is lifting your little finger while drinking your tea!

* tips from *Twinings Tea* *el*



The Quinsai Garden collection includes six differently patterned plates, which can also be wall-mounted for decoration

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Working from Home

We've gleaned some tips from our readers on choosing the right office furniture.



Rob, Teresa and Alley McIntosh, American

"After we moved to Singapore from the US, we heard about Gallery 278 through word of mouth – it was a very easy decision to shop with them, because several of my friends had raved about them!

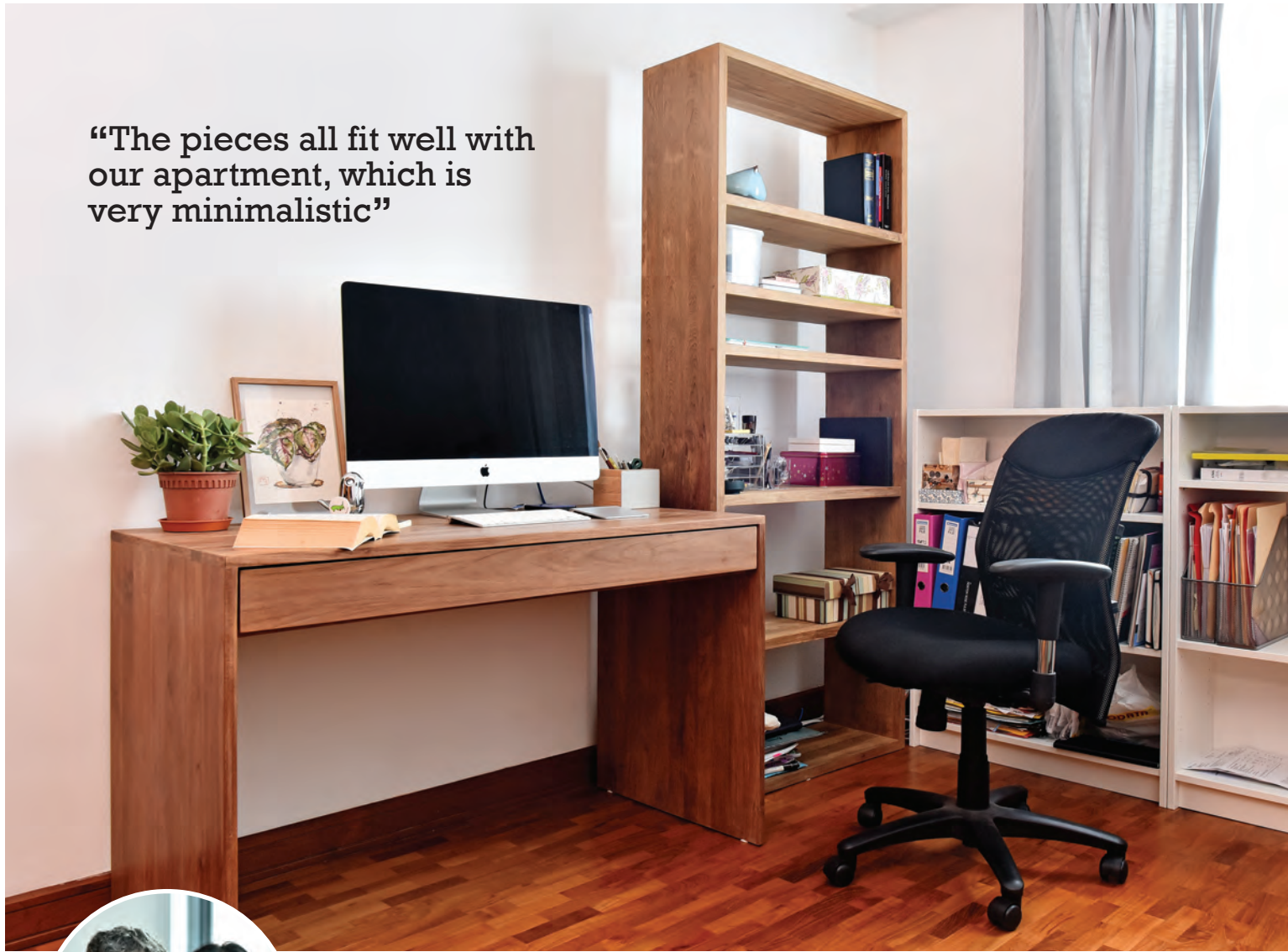
The experience was great, with high-quality products, friendly and professional staff, and prompt follow-ups. We got an entire condo setup with furniture, including artwork and pieces for the office. We think it looks fabulous – we absolutely love it and will definitely purchase from the store again.

Our tip is to be open-minded, and to allow Gallery 278 to do the work for you. It's amazing how much they know and remember about your preferences and past choices. They are really great people who have a relentless desire to ensure everything fits together as best as possible."

"We got an entire condo setup with furniture, including artwork and pieces for the office"

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

“The pieces all fit well with our apartment, which is very minimalistic”



Antony William Steel, Australian,
and Melissa Su Yin Tang, Malaysian

“After moving to Singapore, we needed to furnish our apartment. We wanted pieces that were modular, in case we had to move; and well made, with a preference for raw timber that would be suitable for the Singapore climate. A friend raved about Ethnicraft Online’s company philosophy, prices, service and quality, and we soon came to the same view!

Almost everything in our condo was purchased from them – the couch, armchair, ottoman, coffee table, entertainment unit, bookcases, sideboards, dining room table and benches, side table, dresser, bedside tables, office desks and a desk drawer. The pieces all fit well with our apartment, which is very minimalistic. We’ve had many compliments, and we’ve already shown quite a few people Ethnicraft’s catalogue. We’re now thinking of purchasing another desk lamp from the Universo Positivo range.

One tip we would like to pass on is to measure everything! We used spare packing paper and laid it out on the floor to estimate the size of each of the pieces we were planning on purchasing. You should even measure the lift to ensure your goods fit. Plan for the long term if you’re renting, because all apartments are different.

We also did a lot of research on furniture and design before we decided on Ethnicraft. To avoid hiccups, we checked the allocated delivery hours for Saturday and that the condo management had plenty of notice before delivery. A lot of this is probably basic knowledge for Singaporeans, but not something the average Australian would be aware of!” *EL*

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ABOVE
Make sure you have an airy and bright environment

LEFT
Try sitting at a point where the ceiling is at its highest

Feng Shui at Work

JOEY YAP, founder of the **Mastery Academy of Chinese Metaphysics**, passes on some simple tips to incorporate feng shui into your home office.



"If you're setting up a home office, there's quite a bit you can do to accommodate the practice of feng shui," explains Joey. "Foremost, it's important to find out your personal favourable Facing Direction, which you can find out either through my system online or by consulting a feng shui expert. You must also welcome in positive *qi* (energy) through the main door of the home office. Once you've completed those all-important steps, you're ready to run through these quick and easy feng shui fixes."

1 Spacious Workspace

The goal here is to tap into positive *qi* and let it collect. Ensure that your work room has a large holding space; it should also be airy and brightly lit, preferably by natural daylight. If you have windows in the work room, make a habit of opening them periodically to allow the *qi* to circulate.

FOR BIGGER SPACES

For a larger space, you may want to superimpose its floor plan on a Nine Palaces grid, which is typically used for houses. Depending on the Annual Flying Star or Natal charts, you would be able to narrow down a specific auspicious location for your workspace.

2 Facing Direction

Once you've found out your personal favourable Facing Direction, be sure to place your seat and desk facing this direction. If it's a shared space that you're setting up, avoid having too many desks clustered together.

3 Desk Orientation

You may be familiar with the taboo of sitting under ceiling beams, and it applies here too. If the ceiling slants downward around the workspace area, be sure to avoid sitting under it, as this has the same negative effects. Try sitting at a place where the ceiling is highest.

4 Office Door

If you do have a dedicated room as your workspace, avoid having to work with your back to the door. Also, you would do well to ensure that the door opens up to a space that is wide, not narrow or small. *EL*

To learn about more feng shui practices for everyday life, log on to masteryacademy.com.

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Home Work

If you want to turn your “working from home” capabilities from zero to hero, you could start by investing in some seriously stylish home office décor. Here are some ideas that should help turn things up a notch.



Lucas desk in old reclaimed teak, with Rossini rattan chairs and Shelly shelves, **Dreamweave**



Custom-made home office space, **E&A Interiors**



Pictures to help brighten a space, **Atelier Lane**



Solid suar wood desk and low cabinet, **EDD+**



Traditional desk rendered in luxe artisan metal, Caracole Modern collection, **Taylor B**



Leaf pattern bone-inlay desk, **Hacienda Blue**

Billy II Box side table in solid oak and metal, **Ethnicraft Online**





Verso desk in white, made with solid oak and metal,
Ethnicraft Online



Caracole Classic collection, **Taylor B**



Fatboy rechargeable LED light, **House of AnLi**

Weathered oak Rennes bookcase with ladder, **House of AnLi**



Tama bookshelf in raw oak and blackened steel by Square Roots, **Mountain Teak**

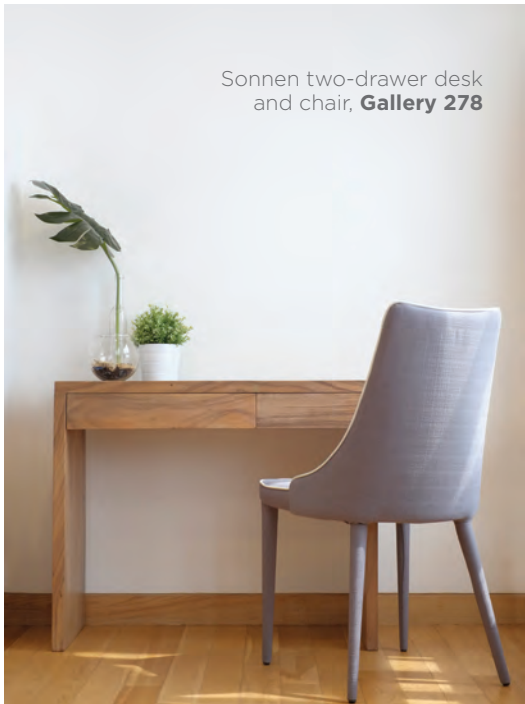


Shelly shelving unit, **Dreamweave**



Winnipeg desk, **House of AnLi**

Sonnen two-drawer desk and chair, **Gallery 278**



Teak frame PC console, **Originals**



Nomad Java Catalina office desk, **Originals**



KDesk by Karpenter,
Mountain Teak



SimplyCity ladder desk
and shelves by Karpenter,
Mountain Teak



Home office setup,
Teak & Mahogany



Teak ply and teak veneer
bookshelf, **Scanteak**



British
colonial
teakwood
partner's
desk, **The
Past Perfect
Collection**



Hikaru
bookcase,
WTP



Aan console in wood
and iron, **WTP**



Graham letter organiser with two and
four slots, **Gallery 278**



British colonial teakwood cylinder desk,
The Past Perfect Collection



Carved doorway bookshelf, **Artful House**



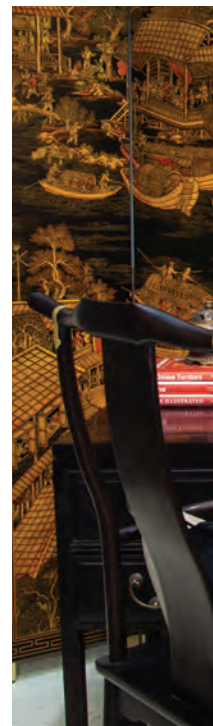
Distressed white bookshelf, **FairPrice Antique**



Children's white bookshelf, **Ni-Night**



Vintage carved desk, **Artful House**



Solid teak writing table with two drawers, **Scanteak**



Writing table and bookshelves in raw semi-matte finish, **Just Anthony**





Writing table, chair and tapered book cabinet in hardwood, **Just Anthony**



Antique desk with drawers, **Deeb Designs**



Dark wood desk, **FairPrice Antique**

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Property Focus: Living in Jervois

The Jervois area, on the edge of River Valley and a stone's throw from hipster haven Tiong Bahru, is a sought-after residential enclave. **CHANG HUI CHEW** of **Property Guru** explains why.

One of the main attractions of Jervois is its proximity to key areas like Queenstown and Alexandra Road, as well as the CBD, Marina Bay financial district and Orchard Road. Some of the most expensive real estate in Singapore can be found in the neighbouring prime landed estates of Bishopsgate and Chatsworth Park.

Shopping and schooling

Two large malls, Great World City and VivoCity, are minutes away, making it easy to shop for groceries, pick up some new clothes or enjoy a night out at the cinema. Daily conveniences can be found at nearby Valley Point Shopping Centre, which has a supermarket and a number of eateries. Chatsworth International School and the ISS International School are also just minutes away, and then there are the popular local schools such as Gan Eng Seng and Crescent Girls' School.

The area is currently served by Redhill and Tiong Bahru MRT stations, and by the end of 2019 a new station will have been built close to Great World City on the upcoming Thomson-East Coast line, connecting Jervois to Singapore's north. If the state's plans come to fruition, this line will one day run across the Causeway and terminate at JB Sentral, in Johor Bahru, Malaysia.

Property prices

This convenience comes at a price, however. Real estate costs in the area, for the most recent quarter, stand at around \$1,631 per square foot, which works out to be almost \$2.5 million for a 1,500-square-foot condo unit.

Rentals in the Jervois area are also higher than in less-central areas of the island. As of May, median rental prices for the second quarter stood just shy of \$6,000 per month for a 1,500-square-foot unit. However, this is about six percent lower than in 2014, reflecting the weaker sentiment in the real estate market.

Those looking to rent condos in Jervois should shop around and negotiate aggressively. There are a number of recently completed projects in the area, such as **Ascentia Sky**, **Echelon** and **Mon Jervois**. Competition for tenants among landlords is high, with many willing to make concessions.

Expats interested in investing in real estate should look at two projects in particular: **The Crest** and **Principal Garden**. In a weaker real estate market, developers have moderated their prices to move units, and it's definitely a good time to grab a bargain. *✎*

To find out more about properties available for rent or sale in this area and elsewhere in Singapore, go to propertyguru.com.sg.

ABOVE
New investment opportunity, Principal Garden

BELOW
Alexandra Canal, close to the Jervois area, is a nice place for an evening jog, or to or to walk the dogs.
(Photo: Christopher Chitty)



STREET TALK

AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO LIFE IN THEIR 'HOOD II

THE SPECIFICS

Where do you live?

Jervois Road.

Exact words you tell a taxi driver to get home?

"Jervois Road, off River Valley, near the Malaysian Embassy."

What's the name of your neighbourhood?

River Valley.

Closest MRT station?

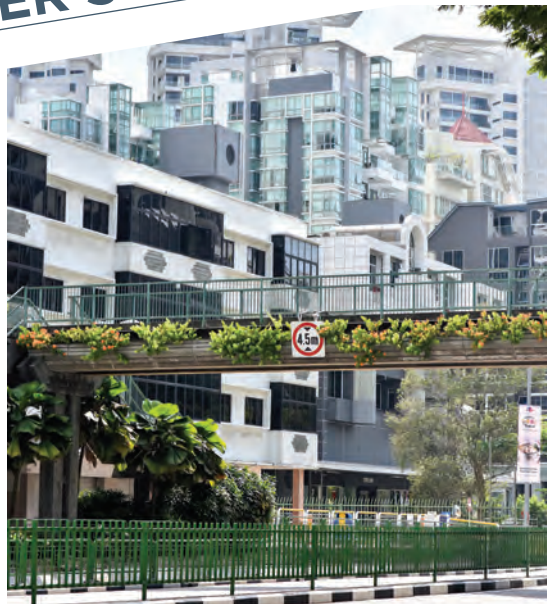
Tiong Bahru.

How long have you lived here?

Eight years.

Why here?

We managed to find a flat with an outdoor deck that was just great for kids and a dog. It's a great location near the river and also near the children's school; it's also central, but quiet.





Name: Tamy Ambarchi
From: Sydney, Australia
Occupation: Distributor, SMT Baby and Kids



THE SCENE



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

The Malaysian Embassy.

The closest store to your front door is:

Two petrol stations, which can be very handy for late-night ice-cream cravings!

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

The 90s US soap opera *Melrose Place*, because everyone living here has their own unique story.

The unofficial uniform of your street is:

Flip flops, like much of Singapore.

Which celebrity would be most likely to move in next door, and why?

Adam Levine from Maroon 5, just because I'm sure he would love to live next door to my family.

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

Head to Tiong Bahru, which is nearby – it's full of life and has a great market!

If you're missing home, you:

Eat a Caramello Koala. Luckily, they are available at Little Farms at Valley Point, just down the street.

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

Ting Heng Seafood Restaurant at Tiong Bahru.

You'd swap houses in a second with:

The owners of one of the black-and-white houses on Bishops Gate.

A common myth about your neighbourhood is:

The local rumour that the area was a cemetery.

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

The man across the street who occasionally yells.

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

Us, starting with a few wines and beers by the pool with the neighbours, and continuing on to karaoke.



THE SUPERLATIVES

Your favourite neighbourhood joints are:

2It is a nice local pizza place at Valley Point – great on a Sunday evening with the kids. Japanese restaurant **Ichigo** on River Valley Road is set behind wooden doors and has perfect Japanese atmosphere, food and of course sake. I also nominate **Five Star Chicken Rice**, because you just cannot beat driving past and picking up some takeaway chicken rice – just like a McDonald's drive-thru, but better!

Also on River Valley Road is **Century Cellars**, a great local bottle shop with a good stock of wine and beer.

You won't find better local food than at:

Henderson Road Hawker Centre – a good mix of local food plus a bit of a market to wander around.

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

A monitor lizard in our swimming pool!

The guiltiest pleasure in your area is:

Lots of little massage places at Valley Point and across the road that offer a 24-hour service for a sneaky foot massage with no happy ending.

One thing you'd never change is:

My neighbours!

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

The cranes and constant construction in the area.

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

Build a water park to send my kids to when they have energy to burn!

Why should your neighbourhood be featured in a guidebook?

This is a lovely little neighbourhood; very central, but quiet and full of trees and small condos. There are a lot of lovely heritage houses to walk past, and it also has easy access to the river.

WHAT'S THE WORD ON YOUR STREET?

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

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ARTS & LEISURE

106

On the Stage:
Theatre productions and concerts to catch



Annie, Marina Bay Sands

98

What's Hanging: New art exhibitions to check out this month

102

Screen Time: Movies and television shows to watch now

111

Performance Insights: Charlotte Nors of the Singapore Repertory Theatre

On The WALL

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

ART AND HOME COLLIDE

For its eighth edition, the **Art Apart Fair** has swapped its usual hotel suite location for Isetan Wisma Atria (Level 2, 435 Orchard Road), while sticking to its novel approach of presenting artworks in a homelike setting. Combining over 800 artworks by 60 emerging artists from the Philippines, Japan, China, Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Russia, Italy, Iceland and Singapore, with furniture and design in one room, the fair aims to show ways in which art merges with different living spaces. Contemporary artworks are matched with vintage and retro furniture to juxtapose old and new, while modern and pop art are displayed with industrial furnishings. See it until 28 August. Open from 11am to 9pm daily. For more details, visit artapartfair.com.



LOTS OF LAND

In his exhibition, **Plot**, photographer Caleb Ming explores aspects of urban planning and its ironies through documenting plots of open land in Singapore, many of which have already been developed. Marked for development into housing, hotels, consumer multiplexes and more, all these open spaces will be gone, if they're not already. See it until 25 September at Tunnel@Esplanade (which connects CityLink Mall and City Hall MRT station to Esplanade). Free admission. Don't miss an artist talk by Caleb on 13 August at 1pm. esplanade.com



ENRICHING STITCHING

The Peranakan Museum's latest exhibition, **Nyonya Needlework: Embroidery and Beadwork in the Peranakan World**, shows how the Peranakans (Straits Chinese community) created new needlework styles and techniques that displayed both innovation and tradition in an increasingly cosmopolitan world. Featuring around 200 intricate pieces – ranging from some of the earliest embroidered and beaded pieces to celebratory items like wedding slippers, bed and wall ornaments, and accessories such as belts, purses and handkerchiefs – the artworks not only represent untold hours of painstaking hand-stitching, but also tell stories of Peranakan daily life and ritual. See it until 26 March 2017. 39 Armenian Street. peranakanmuseum.org.sg



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The fact is, moving to a new country presents a lot of challenges - a car shouldn't be one. After all, you require a car to drive, not to worry over regular niggles like COE, monthly payment and reliability. At Hyundai, we provide Wear and Tear maintenance and a free replacement car when your car is being serviced. It's just some of the conveniences you'll enjoy when you choose Hyundai to partner your beautiful new journey in life.

Samsui Lady
by Muhammad
Azlan Ramlan,
Amoy Street
Food Centre

Once a frowned-upon act of delinquency, street art is now a legitimate and burgeoning art form in Singapore. PEIHUA GOH finds out more.



ARTFUL WAYS

WHERE TO FIND SINGAPORE'S STREET ART

The loosening of laws regulating street art and the emergence of specially designated areas set aside for people to paint legally has provided an exciting opportunity for a creative bunch of up-and-coming artists. Many of these artists also obtain permission from private estate owners to paint on designated walls, while others are commissioned to lend colour and character to otherwise monotonous walls.

Exhibitions and festivals, such as the well-known Singapore Street Art Festival, have sought to increase knowledge and appreciation of this alternative art form, and street artists were widely commissioned to commemorate Singapore's rich history as part of the SG50 project.

Can't wait to get started on the hunt for street art? From Kampong Glam to Little India, join us in a discovery of what's out there.

Along Victoria Street, between Jalan Klapa and Jalan Pisang

Even someone who doesn't love street art is likely to have spied these iconic murals by street-art sensation Ernest "Zach" Zacharevic (arguably Asia's Banksy, minus the anonymity). Initially rising to fame on account of his street art in Penang, the Lithuanian-born artist often depicts children engaged in innocent playtime activities. His work has a quirky and nostalgic appeal that adds colour to Singapore's urban landscape. Around

the corner, check out local artist Yip Yew Chong's remarkable work *Coffee Story* at Sultan Gate. Commissioned by Academy Roastery Café, it depicts the history of coffee-making in Singapore.

Haji Lane

Haji Lane has long been synonymous with quirky and eclectic murals that add to the quaint, old-world charm of its colourful and authentic shophouses. Here you'll find art by ZincNiteCrew, a collective of local and international artists, including a larger-than-life mural by Colombian-born artist Didier Jaba Mathieu, who also works as a digital painter and concept artist. To round out your visit, look for pieces by artistic duo Sheryo and The Yok. Sheryo is a Brooklyn-based Singaporean who explores the human psyche through surrealist imagery, while Australian-born Yok's work is heavily influenced by the comics and skateboarding graphics of his childhood.



Cricket and Classical
by TraseOne and
Regan Tamanui,
Little India

Light of Little India by Miles MacGregor, Little India

Girl with Lion Cub by Ernest Zacharevic, Victoria Street



40 Everton Road

Self-taught local artist Yip Yew Chong was inspired by stumbling upon the murals of Ernest Zacharevic. "I thought I could attempt to paint murals in my country too, Singapore-style," he says. Like Zach's art, Yip's sentimental works have captured many hearts with their nostalgic glimpses into the past. His first two murals, *Provision Shop* and *Amah and Barber*, were painted as symbols of the area's historic conservation. "Since then, almost all the requests I've received have been to paint heritage-themed murals," he says. Look around to see if you can spot another of Zach's pieces, *Style Wars*, in Everitt Road.

Coffee Story by Yip Yew Chong, Everton Road



Little India, Rowell Road

Bustling Little India is home to a striking mural, *Light in Little India*, by American artist Miles "Mac" MacGregor. His work is easily recognisable, with a distinct usage of ripple-like contour lines to depict lifelike human faces. Providing an interesting contrast is *Green Goblins* by Saigon-born artist Tyke Witnes, now based in California. Witnes grew up inspired by youth subcultures like skateboarding and graffiti.

Little India, Buffalo Road

Also in Little India, the Tekka Centre has undergone a colourful transformation thanks to collaborative works by one of Singapore's pioneering street artists, TraseOne, and Australian Regan Tamanui. Commissioned in conjunction with the Australian High Commission as part of the SG50 celebrations, the eye-catching murals of cricket and traditional Indian dance are as vibrant as the Indian culture and heritage that surrounds them.

Odeon by Yip Yew Chong, Waterloo



Amoy Street Food Centre

Much of the allure of Singapore's street art is its preservation of heritage and culture, as city walls are transformed into bright canvases. A brilliant fusion of the old and the new, Amoy Street is lined with nostalgic murals portraying the hawker centres, street food stalls and shophouses of yesteryear. Look out for the iconic *Samsui Lady* by local artist Muhammad Azlan Ramlan. His style, which combines graffiti spray paint with Western fine art techniques, is steadily expanding the boundaries of street art in Singapore.

Untitled by ZincNiteCrew, Haji Lane



222+51 Waterloo Street

This former site of the Catholic High School has been transformed into a buzzing art hub. Inspired by the colourful history of Bras Basah, a series of six door-panel murals depict nostalgic memories from the 1960s, incorporating scenes of daily life and national landmarks long lost to redevelopment. Given the current focus on heritage and culture, it's no surprise that the murals are by Yip Yew Chong and his friend and fellow local artist Yuen Kum Cheong.

Also: Check out a mural painted at Tiong Bahru wet market by Melbourne artist Makatron as part of the Australian High Commission's SG50 project, which saw Aussie street artists painting in heartland locations. (Photo: Australian High Commission) *EL*



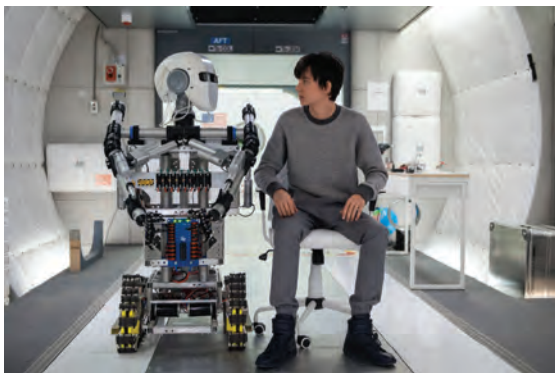
On The SCREEN

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

BIG SCREEN

THE SPACE BETWEEN US

Gardner (Asa Butterfield), a young man raised by scientists on Mars, travels to Earth for the first time to find his father, embarking on a journey with his new friend Tulsa (Britt Robertson) to unravel the mysteries of how he came to be and where he belongs in the universe. This sci-fi adventure film also stars Gary Oldman and Carla Gugino. Opens 18 August at Golden Village cinemas.



OPEN-AIR CINEMA

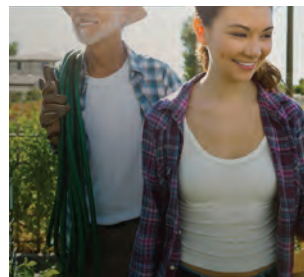
The always-popular annual event Films at the Fort is back from 11 to 21 August with a selection of diverse films, combined with gourmet food and wine from The Providore – including dinner, deli and dessert stations. (We're looking forward to the truffle and parmesan popcorn!) Set in the natural amphitheatre of Fort Canning Park, it's a great way to unwind with friends over drinks and nibbles, while catching up on comedy cult favourites like *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* and *Anchorman*, drama classics like *Forrest Gump*, recent releases such as *Brooklyn* and *A Hologram for the King*, and documentaries including *The Wolfpack* and *Amy*. Tickets cost from \$29.75 to \$33.20. filmsatthefort.com.sg



SMALL SCREEN

FINDING MY FATHER

This new series follows 14 men and women, each of whom, despite having successful careers and strong relationships, is in search of that one missing piece: their father. The show captures their journeys of healing and discovery as they search for their biological fathers. Premieres 16 August at 8pm on DIVA (StarHub Channel 513; SingTel TV Channel 303).



FOR TWEENS PROJECT MC2

Returning for a second season on 12 August is the Netflix original spy miniseries *Project Mc2*, which follows four smart and science-loving girls who join forces as secret agents and save the day using science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics.

Researcher

MAX, AGE 6

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

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On The PAGE

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

The Small Luxury Cookbook

Small Luxury Hotels of the World (SLH)

Spirithill Business Development | 480 pages

Most of us cook routinely to satisfy hunger, but on other occasions cooking can rekindle memories of an amazing holiday, or inspire us to visit a far-flung destination. This new cookbook can answer all these impulses in one hefty hit, with 221 recipes from a selection of chefs from SLH's collection of 500 properties worldwide.

I agree wholeheartedly with the company's CEO Filip Boyen, a former chef, who visited Singapore to launch the book in May and who said: "It serves as a reminder that small, independent hotels offer standout culinary offerings that can significantly add to the experience of staying there." There's no doubt that the food at a destination is just as important as the sights and the quality of the accommodation.

In this book you'll find culinary variety, from local favourites to regional stalwarts and modern creations that veer off-piste (think foams and so on). There are chapters devoted to vegetarian dishes, seafood, fish, red meat, desserts and baking, and one focused on *foie gras*, frogs' legs, chicken and duck; plus, a helpful index of the participating hotels and their respective contributions.

All recipes come with alternative suggestions for those hard-to-source ingredients. I'm looking forward to trying the simple recipe for Table's Pop (coconut and berry popsicles) as contributed by Singapore's Naumi Hotel and illustrated with a gorgeous photo.

– Katie Roberts



Living in Singapore – Fourteenth Edition Reference Guide

American Association of Singapore | 488 pages

It's little wonder this guide is nicknamed the "Bible" to Singapore, because it's as good (if not better) than having a wise local in your back pocket. *Living In Singapore* is also a testament to longevity, with the first edition published in 1976, years before the first section of MRT line opened (1987). The wisdom of over a dozen expatriate authors – who collectively have many decades' experience of living in this city – is compiled into user-friendly, easy-to-read chapters.

The guide borders on encyclopaedic as it navigates a range of topics from dog-friendly cafés and adoption to the Hungry Ghost Festival and the complexities of the health system; even the acceptability (or not) of public nudity is covered! Of particular usefulness are the websites listed at the end of every chapter, and the questions to ask yourself when faced with the difficult dilemma of choosing a home or a school. It's unquestionably a valuable addition to every bookcase (alongside your *Expat Living* collection, of course).

– Katie Roberts



What are you reading?



Danie Gitthens,
American

**The
Gracekeepers**
Kristy Logan

Genre? Fiction

How did you get hold of it? I saw it at Popular.

How far have you got? Finished.

What do you think of it so far?

This novel is... different. I'm not sure what I expected, given the description of the book; but it wasn't this. Set in a dystopian future where the earth has been deluged and is mostly underwater, the story follows two characters as they embark on different journeys, each trying to find their place. It's a story of home and belonging. It's sad and beautiful, new and familiar. I can't say that I loved this book, because I didn't. However, it's an easy read, and there is something about it that compelled me to finish it.



Rachel Ford,
British

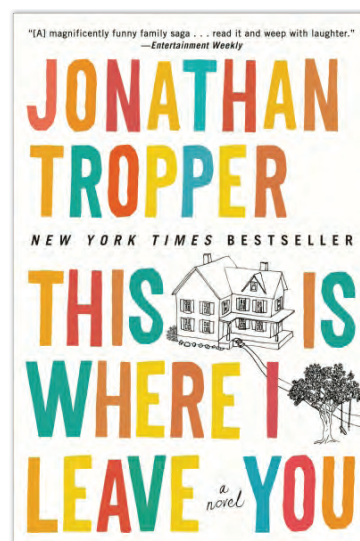
**This is Where
I Leave You**
Jonathan Tropper

Genre? Fiction

How did you get hold of it? I downloaded it to Kindle on a friend's recommendation.

How far have you got? Devoured and finished it!

What do you think of it so far? It's not a recent publication (2010), but it's my favourite book in a long time – I absolutely loved it. Funny and sad at the same time, and there is something about it that compelled me to finish it.



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

On The STAGE

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



ARTS EXTRAVAGANZA

Singapore International Festival of Arts (SIFA) returns from 11 August to 17 September with 20 diverse productions centring on the theme “Potentialities” – the potential to develop and transform society. Taking place at various venues island-wide, the productions range from contemporary dance, musical acts and documentary theatre to live painting and durational performances, outdoor multimedia installations and a variety of other interactive theatre experiences. In one of the performance pieces, *Everything By My Side*, 10 actresses lie side by side with individual audience members in beds, whispering memories to these silent listeners. Tickets from Sistic. For a full listing of shows, visit sifa.sg.

TWO NIGHTS OF DARK HUMOUR

British stand-up comedian **Jimmy Carr** performs in Singapore for the first time on 26 and 27 August, when he brings his show *Funny Business* to the University Cultural Centre (UCC) Hall stage at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Expect Jimmy's brand of signature one-liners, edgy stories and deadpan jokes – some clever, and some most definitely crude! Tickets from Sistic. la-comedylive.com



JUST DANCE

On 19 and 20 August, Singapore Dance Theatre (SDT) presents its annual, triple-bill, contemporary ballet production *Masterpiece in Motion* at Esplanade Theatre, featuring the premiere of *Symphony in Three Movements* by Nils Christie, *Schubert Symphony* by Singaporean choreographer Choo San Goh and *Age of Innocence* choreographed by Edwaard Liang. Tickets from Sistic.

Then, on 21 August, SDT collaborates with Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) for the first time on *A Celebration in Dance*, a one-night-only performance in which eight RAD school groups will perform alongside SDT on the Esplanade Theatre stage. Tickets from Sistic. singaporedancetheatre.com



POP PERFORMANCE

On 10 August, catch Grammy-nominated, pop and R&B singer-songwriter **Charlie Puth** perform live at The Coliseum at Hard Rock Hotel Singapore Resorts World Sentosa, as part of his *Nine Track Mind* tour. The American artist is known for hits like “One Call Away”, “Marvin Gaye” (featuring Meghan Trainor) and “We Don't Talk Anymore” (featuring Selena Gomez). Tickets from Sistic. midaspromotions.com





High School Drama production, *Cyrano de Bergerac*

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Applications for entry in August 2017 will open on 1 September 2016.

Visit www.uwcsea.edu.sg to find out more and to RSVP for our upcoming open days or call Admissions: Dover Campus +65 6774 2653 or East Campus +65 6305 5353.



Family fun



PIGGY TALE

Children aged three and up can look forward to embarking on a musical adventure with a trio of superstar piglets, their devoted single Mum and a misunderstood Big Bad Wolf when ***The Three Little Pigs*** hits the stage. Written for Singapore Repertory Theatre (SRT) by the Laurence Olivier Award-winning duo George Stiles and Anthony Drewe, this adaptation of the classic fairytale will have kiddos giggling away while they learn the value of hard work and perseverance. See it from 4 August to 16 September at KC Arts Centre – Home of SRT, 20 Merbau Road. Tickets from Sistic. srt.com.sg

SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT

This month, everyone's favourite redhead comes to Singapore for the US National Tour of ***Annie***, one of the most beloved family musicals of all



time. Look forward to songs like "It's a Hard Knock Life", "You're Never Fully Dressed Without a Smile", "Maybe", "Easy Street" and, of course, "Tomorrow", in the uplifting rags-to-riches story of Annie, and her journey from a New York orphanage to the home of billionaire businessman Oliver Warbucks. See it from 24 August to 4 September at The MasterCard Theatres at Marina Bay Sands. Tickets from Sistic. baseentertainmentasia.com

GANG'S ALL HERE

There's another piggy performance to enjoy this month. Join Peppa, George, Mummy and Daddy Pig, Danny Dog, Pedro Pony and Suzy Sheep in the latest Peppa adventure, ***Peppa Pig Live! Big Splash***, in which Peppa and her friends need to help fix a leaky nursery roof. Featuring puppets and a live cast, this interactive theatrical performance is full of singing, dancing, games and muddy puddles, too. See it from 6 to 9 August at Resorts World Theatre, Resorts World Sentosa. Tickets from Sistic.

TWINKLE, TWINKLE

Youngsters aged two to six will enjoy following Little Star through space, down to Earth and under the sea as she tries to find her place in the universe before the sun rises, in ***Little Star***. Presented at Alliance Française Theatre (1 Sarkies Road) from 17 August to 11 September, this interactive musical production explores the wonders of the universe and the joys of rediscovering home and family. itheatre.org

Next month

MUSICAL MAGIC

Relive the magic of the first six Harry Potter stories when the **SSO Concerts for Children: Symphonic Sorcery – The Music of Harry Potter** takes the Victoria Concert Hall stage. The Singapore Symphony Orchestra (SSO), conducted by Jason Lai, performs the cherished musical scores of John Williams and Nicholas Hooper on 3 and 4 September; tickets from Sistic. sso.org.sg



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CPE Registration No.: 201421721H Registration Period: 24 October 2015 to 23 October 2016



Join us at our Farmers Market at The Pantry where students of MSIS sell art items they have made as part of their entrepreneurship programme.

Saturday 20th August, 9am – 2pm



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Students of Melbourne Specialist International School gain work experience at The Pantry every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9am to 11am. Please come to support our vocational and life skills programme during these times.



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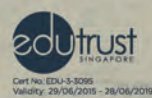
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SETTING THE STAGE

Helping create a culture-rich country through theatre

BY AMY GREENBURG



Charlotte with her son, Daniel

Founded in 1993, **Singapore Repertory Theatre (SRT)** is one of Asia's leading English-language theatre companies, known for staging high-quality productions at its Robertson Quay theatre and other venues island-wide, and collaborating with some of the best talent across the globe. For the past 15 years, Executive Director CHARLOTTE NORS has helped guide the company's growth in an ever-evolving performing arts scene. We spoke to the Danish expat about her covetable job and what we can look forward to from SRT.

How has the theatre scene here evolved over the years?

Where to start? Singapore and the arts scene – and SRT – have gotten a lot busier compared with 15 years ago. SRT is now producing up to ten productions a year and, with the development of the integrated resorts, new theatre venues and the growth of many other entertainment options, there are so many choices out there for your time and dollars. There are more players in the field in terms of local theatre companies, which is wonderful, but we still have a relatively small pool of actors, directors and designers. I'm very encouraged by SOTA, Lasalle and NAFA, and how they, over time, will help us build the industry.

How did you originally get involved with SRT?

The first play I watched in Singapore was SRT's *Oleanna* – little did I know that was only the start of my relationship with them. A wonderful friend introduced me to Gaurav Kripalani, our Artistic Director, and the rest is history. It's been a truly magical and amazing journey, and I'm so proud of what I have achieved with SRT.

What have been your proudest moments so far?

We're always working to develop more educational programmes and international partnerships to take our work abroad, and to collaborate with even more amazing theatre companies to give our audience here access to new theatre experiences.

Some of the things I'm most proud of at SRT include our wonderful team and how we, together, have created The Little Company – the biggest producer of theatre productions for children, new educational platforms and major projects like the annual Shakespeare in the Park.



Romeo & Juliet at Shakespeare in the Park



How are the productions picked?

Our Artistic Director sets the direction, but he is very inclusive in his decision-making process, so we all get to share our views and ideas.

What do you love most about what you do?

I love that, in a relatively small team, I'm involved in all aspects of the business – and that whatever I do makes a huge difference. We have a fantastic Board who support our ideas and have helped us get to where we are today. I love producing, seeing a project through from idea to final curtain call, and being involved in everything both on and off stage – from reading the script, planning marketing campaigns and meeting potential sponsors to greeting our audiences and chatting with them after the show. And, honestly, I think what we do matters; it makes Singapore a more culturally rich society – it's a great way to spend my day everyday.

But, honestly, the best part of my work life is when my son tells me he loves one of my productions and would like to come with me to watch it again. Or, when I receive mail from former students in our Young Company, thanking me for giving them their first stepping stone into theatre

– and that they are doing really well now as professional actors somewhere around the world.

What are your favourites of the shows staged by SRT to date?

So many! I love Dick Lee's *Forbidden City*. I still remember him playing the first songs for us at a dinner in the early stages of its development, and being part of making this the most successful Singaporean musical ever created. So, I'm thrilled we're producing it again next year. I'm also very proud of our works for young audiences. Seeing our production of *The Three Little Pigs* – a wonderful musical by award-winning team George Stiles and Anthony Drewe – open in London's West End last summer made me tremendously proud. (Singapore audiences can catch *The Three Little Pigs* from 4 August at KC Arts Centre; tickets from Sistic.) Additionally, I absolutely love our Shakespeare in the Park productions – this year's *Romeo &*

Juliet took my breath away. And, of course, it was very cool to work with Kevin Spacey on *Richard III* in 2011.

What upcoming productions are you most looking forward to?

I'm super-excited about Yasmina Reza's *Art*, which we are staging at National Gallery in September, and the Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Disgraced* in November – both are just insanely good pieces of theatre! *EL*

Singapore Repertory Theatre is at the KC Arts Centre – Home of SRT, 20 Merbau Road. 6221 5585 | srt.com.sg



Charlotte with SRT chairman Robin Tomlin (left) and Artistic Director Gaurav Kripalani (right)

ANZ AOTEAROA BALL

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Elementary School contact: admissions.es@sji-international.com.sg or phone 6871 5261.

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www.sji-international.com.sg

LIFE & FAMILY



126

Buying Guide: Toys to fire kids' imagination

Cuckoo Lifestyle Store

131

Expert Voice: Why reading to children really matters

133

Insurance Alert: Does your policy cover your possessions?

134

Expatriate Life: The reality of returning home

What's New



Hauck's versatile Twister 360° is an all-in-one, flexible stroller that meets German safety standards. 6384 2758 | hauck.de



Cool Wheels

Bulky buggies and strollers may be relegated to the storage cupboard once kids see the fun new **Micro Trike**, a compact and lightweight transport alternative for outings with toddlers. We think kids will love the snappy design and mums will love its portability, especially when shopping or using public transport. \$125; the first five readers to quote "Expat Living" will receive 20 percent off – be quick! whiteandblacktrading.com



Rugby FOR LIFE

All rugby players are welcome to attend **SCC Rugby Academy's Open Day** on 20 August, and on 21 August for the girls' touch team. SCC is the only youth rugby club in Singapore to offer training groups for all ages, from four-year-olds to under-16s, Colts and a progression into adult teams. Training is held at the SCC Dempsey fields on Saturday mornings; the girls' touch team trains on Sunday mornings. info@sccrugbyacademy.com ▲

Finding the Top Teacher

Many of us can identify a great teacher who has influenced who we are today. The Varkey Foundation's **Global Teacher Prize** celebrates the teaching profession by presenting a US\$1 million award to an exceptional teacher each year. With endorsements from the likes of Bill Clinton and the Pope, the prize is helping to change perceptions towards teaching. Apply or nominate at globalteacherprize.org.



Dr. Catherine Lee
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Stay and Play

New at **EtonHouse** is Stay & Play, a playgroup for children aged nine to 22 months, which offers engaging learning experiences within beautiful and safe learning environments. The adult-accompanied playgroup provides parents and caregivers the opportunity to develop many skills and strategies to engage effectively with young children and enhance their understanding of key developmental milestones, and how best to support them. The 1.5-hour morning sessions are offered at EtonHouse's Thomson, Newton, Claymore and Sentosa campuses. \$400 for eight sessions. etonhouse.com.sg/event/stayandplay ▶



Built on nearly 400 years of innovation, **Dulwich College (Singapore)** balances traditional academic rigour with a modern learning approach and state-of-the-art facilities. Just opened at the five-hectare site is the Senior School Campus, whose list of facilities is impressive: a 700-seat Performing Art Centre, science laboratories, art and technology areas, a double gymnasium, a dance studio, a fitness room and more, all within an environment designed to provide the best possible opportunities for teaching and learning. Check it out for yourself at the Open Morning on 31 August at 9.30am. Book a visit at dulwich-singapore.edu.sg, call **6890 1003** or email admissions@dulwich-singapore.edu.sg. 71 Bukit Batok West Avenue 8. ▲

Mooncakes and Mandarin

Many parents are keen for their children to capitalise on the opportunity to learn Mandarin while living in Singapore. **White Lodge** offers Mandarin as part of a rigorous curriculum catering to children aged 18 months to 6.5 years. Next month, the school will celebrate Mandarin Awareness Week to coincide with the Mid-Autumn Festival. The school's curriculum complements the Primary Years Programme and the UK, US and Australian frameworks, enabling an easy transition to British, Australian, American or International Baccalaureate schools in Singapore and abroad. It has eight centres island-wide. 6255 4230 | whitelodge.edu.sg ▼



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East Coast Clinic | 88 East Coast Road, Katong Square #02-07, S423371 | **6342 4440**

Jelita Clinic | 293 Holland Road, Jelita Cold Storage #02-04, S278628 | **6465 4440**

Paediatric Clinic | 1 Orchard Boulevard, Camden Medical Centre #11-06, S248649 | **6887 4440**

www.imc-healthcare.com



INTERNATIONAL
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Environment Focus

That Nosy Monkey

Meet Cyrano, one of Singapore Zoo's proboscis monkeys, and the 6,000th species photographed by Joel Sartore for the **National Geographic Photo Ark**. This particular photograph marks the halfway mark of the project, which seeks to portray threatened species that are thriving under human care. Singapore is one of only a few places in the world that houses proboscis monkeys; it has 13 in its care. nationalgeographic.org/projects/photo-ark



Parks at Mandai Set to Expand

Singapore Zoo, Night Safari and River Safari are set to get some new neighbours, as plans are afoot to develop Mandai into an integrated wildlife, education and nature experience. In the pipeline are a new Bird Park and Rainforest Park with a special focus on Southeast Asian bird species, an nature-themed indoor education centre, diverse public spaces and even eco-friendly accommodation. Development will commence from 2020, and anyone can comment on the plans at mandai.com. ▼



Monkey image: Joel Sartore/National Geographic Photo Ark

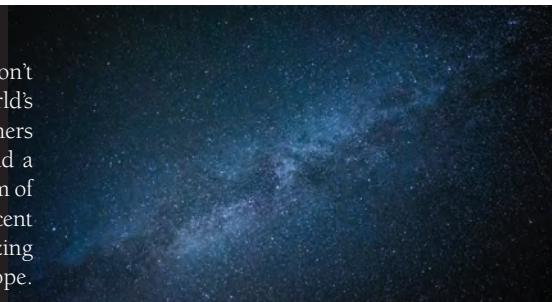
Did You Know?

Thousands of elephants around the world are killed every year for their ivory tusks, and Singapore is a key transport hub for the illegal ivory trade. In June, authorities here crushed almost eight tonnes of ivory, seized from shipments either bound for Singapore or in transit. Conducted by the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority, the process involved feeding the ivory into a rock crusher, incinerating the remains and taking them to a landfill site at Pulau Semakau. Singapore is the latest Asian country to publicly destroy its stockpiles of illegal ivory, following China, Thailand and Malaysia. Read more about what conservation organisations say at wwf.sg. ◀



Where are the Stars?

The Milky Way is definitely up there, but if you're having trouble seeing it, don't blame your eyes – blame the light. Singapore has been nominated as the world's most light-polluted country. But this seems to be a global affliction; researchers say 83 percent of the world's population is affected by light pollution, and a recently released atlas of light pollution around the world – the work of a team of international scientists – has revealed that 60 percent of Europeans and 80 percent of North Americans cannot see this galaxy. For the best planet- and star-gazing opportunities, our tip is to head to Africa, Australia or parts of northern Europe.





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FAMILY NEWS



Adam and Lynn Cutfield are thrilled at the arrival of Sienna Poppy, who arrived early on 26 April, joining her two big sisters Mya and Ella.



Anya and Jon Proctor are delighted to announce the birth of Hudson Webb on 14 April, joining big sister Harper.



Monika and Douglas Baigrie happily welcomed their baby girl, Skye Irena, to the world on 9 April.



Phoebe Lena arrived on 30 November to proud parents Alisdair and Hannah Semple, a little sister to Rory and Logan.



Fabien David Zian Farrer arrived on 16 October to the joy of parents Damien and Lena, and two-year-old sister Jasmine.

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 after prize-giving. 6440 7567 | tomato.sg

tomatophoto



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.



ANIMAL ADOPTION



Skinny lost his first eye to injuries from his abusive owner, and his second to glaucoma. Despite having lost his sight, he hasn't lost his zest for life.



Zu Zu was covered with ticks when she was rescued as a puppy. She has been in the shelter now for two years, waiting for her time to be picked.



Ba Bai was infected by a parasite and almost lifeless when he was rescued from a container depot. He has since made a full recovery and is ready for adoption.



Found abandoned at Turf Club Avenue, **Derby** has transformed from a skittish boy into a friendly and confident companion for an active family.

Project Canine started in 2013 as a non-registered voluntary group that seeks to find foster families and permanent homes for Singapore special stray dogs. It works with individual rescuers and feeders to re-home strays, and assists with shelter activities such as feeding and walking the dogs. Project Canine also organises regular outings to parks and dog runs to let the shelter animals socialise with other dogs and people.

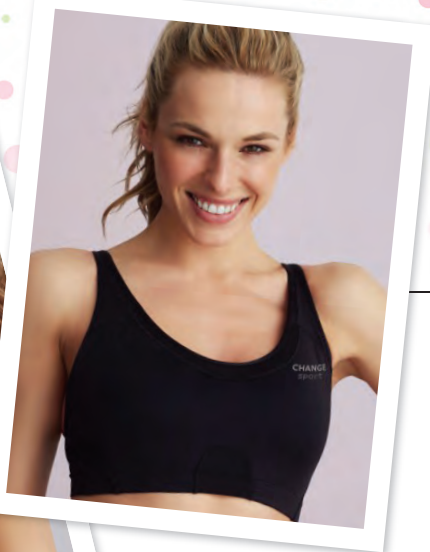
These dogs and more are up for adoption at [facebook.com/ProjectCanineSg](https://www.facebook.com/ProjectCanineSg). Head to the Facebook page to find out more, or email projectcaninesg@gmail.com to arrange a meeting.

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Top Picks at Cluny Court

There's no better place to head to for your next shopping fix than the Great Summer Sale at Cluny Court this month.



Wind down with essential oil-based scents from Lafco New York.

- 15 percent off all fragrance diffusers in hand-blown art glass, \$178.50 (usually \$210)
- 15 percent off all three-candle sets in hand-blown glass and with cotton wicks, \$141.10 (usually \$166)



Lemongrass & Aubergine, #02-26 | 6463 0752 | lemongrass-aubergine.com



If you're in need of a wardrobe revamp, head to Paperbag Princess for a 20 to 70 percent discount on end-of-season clothing ranges from Paperbag Princess, BuddhaWear and Elk.

Paperbag Princess, #03-18A
9117 4970 | paperbag-princess.com



Prunotto's preservative-free, traditional Italian jams are made with fruit from Piedmont in flavours including Strawberry Compote (\$14.90) and Blueberry Extra Jam (\$17.50). *Hot buy!* From 5 to 31 August, purchase any Prunotto jam and get a Da Paolo Country Bread Loaf free (while stocks last). While you're there, try the refreshing, fruity and herbal Citrus Summer Iced Tea (\$6).

Gastronomia, #01-01
6468 7010 | dapaulo.com.sg

Cluny Court is at 501 Bukit Timah Road.
[facebook.com/ClunyCourt](https://www.facebook.com/ClunyCourt)



Blue printed "Malibu" top from French brand Hartford, \$132.50 (usually \$265)
 Blue dress from French brand Sessùn, \$107.50 (usually \$215)
 Blue pants from French brand BA&SH, \$145 (usually \$290)

Rosalie Pompon,
#02-11
6463 5347
rosaliepompon.com



What's in the TOY BOX?

Unsure what toys to buy, especially with so many to choose from? Check out our selection, which is sure to have something to keep any little boy or girl happily occupied.

Maxi Micro Deluxe Scooter, \$225,
White & Black Trading



eeBoo paper dolls, \$36.80,
The Children's Showcase

Maileg baby vegetables, \$19.90 per piece, **The Children's Showcase**



Penny Skateboard in peppermint, \$175, **White & Black Trading**



Magna tiles, \$199,
The Children's Showcase



eeBoo dinosaur puzzle, \$32.80,
The Children's Showcase



Tanabata star dominoes, \$75, **Cuckoo**



Gatcha Gatcha pinball machine, \$75, **Cuckoo**



Swingball Junior Basketball Set, \$110, **Ni-Night**

el LIFE & FAMILY



Robotop, \$120, **Cuckoo**



Kuruma wooden cars, \$35, **Cuckoo**



Minikane Mitsi, \$130, **Cuckoo**

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cuckoolittlelifestyle.com

Ni-Night
7 Joo Chiat Place
ni-night.com

Piccolo House
#01-32B The Grandstand &
#01-63 Ubi Techpark Lobby D

The Children's Showcase
Tanglin Mall &
PasarBella at The Grandstand
showcase.com.sg

White & Black Trading
whiteandblacktrading.com



Sweet Pea play kitchen, \$440, **Piccolo House**



Egmont Toys Explorer Case, \$58.90, **The Children's Showcase**

Egmont Toys tea set, \$57.80, **The Children's Showcase**



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First Day

Tips for a happy and successful start to school



With a new academic year just around the corner, how can we help children embrace change and new experiences? DR VANESSA VON AUER, Principal at the **Integrated International School**, shares her advice.

Starting school for the first time, or commencing at a new school, is a big deal for both parents and children, and the unfamiliarity of the school setting – including new classrooms, teachers, responsibilities and challenges – can have a huge influence on a child's development. A positive start can build a child's resilience and, importantly, can help instil self-confidence and courage in the long term. Here are some practical and emotional steps you can take to prepare yourself and your child.

1 Most of us feel better about change and new experiences when we know what to expect. Before the first day, visit the school and go on a tour to familiarise your child and yourself with the new school or new class. If a physical visit is not possible, get to know the school and teachers by looking at the school's website.

2 Remind your children about the transition to school with enthusiasm, but don't "over-discuss" the topic as this could provoke more anxiety. Let your child approach you if they need to run their thoughts and feelings by you.

3 Set aside one day when you and your child can go on a special trip to purchase school essentials such as uniforms, stationery and lunch boxes. You could make it an adventure or even a treasure hunt with a special map and clues to the various shops.

4 Put aside weekly "chat time", especially during the first week of school, when your child can report their exciting experiences but also feel safe to discuss doubts or concerns. It's important not to force these kinds of chats. Sometimes, kids need a little time and space to process their experiences before they can verbalise them to their parents.

5 Troubleshoot any potential issues your child may be concerned about prior to starting the first day of school. For example, if they are nervous about getting lost, teach them to identify an adult at the school who can help with directions. It's important that your child discusses concerns independently and that these concerns aren't brought up by you.

6 Keep your own feelings, worries and anxieties in check. Children see their parents as pillars of strength, and they have a tendency to mirror their feelings, so if you cry on the first day of school, your child may become scared to leave you or may worry that they're not safe. Give them a hug and kiss (or the age-appropriate reassurance) and tell them when you will see them and pick them up. This gives a child certainty that you will be there at a specific time.

Tips!

- Acquaint young children with the idea of school by reading them books with characters who start school.
- Make sure your child can recognise their own written name. *u*

Integrated International School is at 41 Sunset Way, #02-03/04 Clementi Arcade.
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Bookworm

Why reading matters



With decades of experience in education and literacy, BRIAN CASWELL, Dean of Research and Programme Development at **MindChamps**, shares his expert view on a topic close to every parent's heart: children and reading.

We've heard differing advice on when parents should commence reading to their child; what's your recommendation?

Parents can start this from birth – even before the words they utter make sense to their child. In the early months, until the child begins to make sense of words, the purpose is to develop the neural networks that lay the foundation to “wire” their rapidly developing brains with the circuits essential to future reading. Young children learn by experiencing things (including language) through the senses, and literary language – which is different from spoken language – must be experienced early if it's to be mastered later.

Why is reading to children from a young age so important?

Developing effective and positive reading skills and habits in a child from a young age, and providing positive, engaging and comforting experiences related to the act of reading, especially during the pre-school years, lays the foundations for being an enthusiastic reader for life. It will accelerate a child's language and literacy development during the school years and pave the way for academic success.

How can parents entice reluctant or “busy” children to sit and listen?

In this instance, it's more important to get a child to start developing a love for learning first – by parents themselves getting involved. A good way to facilitate this is by reading not to the child, but with them. This creates a stimulating learning environment and makes the learning experience fun so that they will seek out such an experience again and again. There is absolutely no substitute for engagement. The key is to make the shared reading experience more engaging and more fun than anything else. Make reading an adventure to be shared, not a chore to be endured.

Do you recommend “teaching”, or simply reading to children for pleasure?

The two are not mutually exclusive, but we must be very careful to remember that the main purpose of reading with children is to experience the world of the story together – to connect with the magic of print and let it transport us where it will. A child who has fun reading with his or her parents will inevitably pick up the mechanics of reading. A child drilled only on the mechanics rarely makes the transition to actual enjoyment, and without enjoyment in the act of reading, there is little chance of that child becoming an enthusiastic life-long reader.

12 books that no children's reading list would be complete without

- 1 *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle
- 2 *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
- 3 *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr Seuss (or any other Dr Seuss book)
- 4 *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd
- 5 *Possum Magic or Where's the Green Sheep?* by Mem Fox
- 6 *Animalia* by Graeme Base
- 7 *Polar Express* by Chris van Allsburg
- 8 *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats
- 9 *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* by Mo Willems
- 10 *The Gruffalo* by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler
- 11 *I Love You to the Moon and Back* by Amelia Hepworth and Tim Warnes
- 12 *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney and Anita Jeram

Also, look up the International Youth Library's White Ravens list for some of the best kids' reads from different countries: childrenslibrary.org/servlet/WhiteRavens *el*

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8233 4400 | mindchampspreschool.org

"What I love about White Lodge is we paint and play with toys. I like stories like "Three Little Pigs" because it's fun. I like the concert when we dance on stage!"

Mila Balmelli from Nursery class, Loewen



Children from Loewen Gardens taking part in National Day Celebrations

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Whether your prized possessions are rare wines, a Lego collection, a special bicycle or a precious family heirloom, it's now possible to protect them with customised and comprehensive insurance coverage. FIONA XU, Head of Personal Property at AIG Singapore, explains why "passion insurance" might be for you.

"Insurers understand that unique collections and the contents of a home can be prized possessions that have sentimental value to policyholders. That's why we have created personalised policies that protect homes, people and their valuables," says Fiona. "The passion insurance category is not an entirely new one, but rather it is an extension which serves to protect people as their precious assets outgrow traditional insurance schemes.

"For expats, one of the key issues is to have adequate and specific cover for exclusive and expensive items. Regular homeowner insurance policies may not be able to provide this," adds Fiona.

AIG has responded to this need with a new policy called Premier Client Solutions (PCS). Not only does it protect high value homes and collections, but it also goes one step further to provide tailored solutions that minimise the disruption when mishaps occur. "The policy not only covers damage or loss after an incident, it also offers access to experts who can help to resolve any problems relating to the insured valuables," she says.

Is it affordable? "PCS offers a variety of plans, from a minimum premium of \$800, that are tailored to each client's personal collections and preferences, with the option to set the limits of their individual policy," says Fiona. Coupled with 24-hour claims assistance, and a team of experts on call, it's an attractive option worth investigating.

AIG's global network not only provides coverage for expats during their relocation to Singapore, but also for properties that they may own in other countries. "Our multinational approach aims to provide comprehensive, cross-border coverage and peace of mind for our clients with regard to their treasured home contents across the globe."

WHO CAN YOU TURN TO WHEN THINGS GO AWRY?

- A burst pipe caused significant water damage to the ceiling, walls, carpet and furniture in a policyholder's basement, which was to be the venue of her daughter's 15th birthday party. She was faced with the prospect of having to cancel or postpone, until AIG's insurance claims specialist solved the problem by finding an alternative location for the party and covered the additional venue costs.
- While on her boat, a policyholder's diamond bracelet slipped off her wrist and fell into the water. The bracelet had sentimental value for the policyholder, and thus, AIG's claims representative immediately hired a professional diver who successfully recovered the bracelet.

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HOME SWEET HOME

The reality of repatriating can be full of surprises – reverse culture shock is a very real experience. Here, we talk to four previous expats to find out how they really feel about having returned home, and ask them for any tips they can pass on to others who are about to jump into the same boat.

BY AMY BROOK-PARTRIDGE

Port
Stephens in
New South
Wales, where
the family
returned to

Reverse culture shock: what is it?

When we spend an extended amount of time abroad, our thoughts and memories of home tend to become rosier; it's easy to remember the good and forget the bad. It's also common to assume that while we continue with our lives overseas, time stands still back home, and that no one and nothing changes.

The reality is that life goes on without us, of course, and things change all the time. Readjusting to changed conditions, rather than just slipping back into our old lives, can be uncomfortable and unsettling.

Dealing with it

- Stay connected to the people you met abroad
- Talk about your experiences, but realise that not everyone wants to hear about them in detail;
- at the same time, do try to find people who are interested in and happy for you to talk about your adventures
- Get out and about, explore – many things will almost definitely have changed since you last lived in your hometown or city
- Move on and keep positive. Realise that this is yet another new experience for you to enjoy



Australian Lauren and British-Australian Andrew Budd, and their children Lara (6) and Amelie (3), had two spells in Singapore, the second ending in December 2015 after three years.

“Accept that things and people will be different from when you last lived in your home country”

Lauren, what were your expectations about returning home?

Relocating back to Australia as my eldest daughter was starting kindergarten, and for medical reasons regarding my youngest, I was expecting things to be easy. I thought it would be exactly the same as when I left 11 years ago, but of course it isn't. To get anything done takes a lot of time, and this can be frustrating. I was expecting the medical system to work like it does in Singapore, but I have realised we were very spoilt there when it came to medical issues.

I was worried about moving to a small town after being in big cities all my life and not knowing anyone, but I have met many lovely people. I was looking forward to the laidback beach lifestyle, less humidity, being close to family and friends, and being in our own house again. I was also worried about how I would cope without our wonderful helper, and it has been hard but you do adapt. It has been a big adjustment, but I love being back home.

What would be your advice to others moving home?

Keep an eye on your kids to see how they are settling in. It's a massive change for them as well, with new schools and making new friends. Do stay in touch with friends you have met overseas, as they understand everything you're going through and can be great sounding boards. Accept that things and people will be different from when you last lived in your home country.

What do you miss about your Singapore life?

The home help, public transport, social life, friends, restaurants, shops being open at night, the year-round warm weather and being able to eat alfresco year-round too. I also miss how child-friendly Singapore is.



Ashley and daughter Grace enjoying some colder weather back in the US



Americans Ashley and Ryan French, and daughter Grace, lived in Singapore for three-and-a-half years, until Ryan's assignment was complete and they relocated to Capitola, California, in December 2014.

“We’ve been back for a year and a half, and I can honestly say it took about a year to finally feel at home”

Ashley, what were your expectations and apprehensions?

It was quite hard moving back. We had created a lot of memories in Singapore; we had our daughter there and made some wonderful friendships that we will cherish forever. We didn’t actually move back to our hometown, so we had to find a place to live and essentially start over. I was, however, looking forward to delicious Mexican food, cheap groceries and good wine!

How was it in reality?

I found it was easier to move to Singapore than to move back. In Singapore, everyone is more open to meeting people because so many of us are in the same situation. Back home, people are not as open and keep to themselves. On the other hand, it’s great to be so close to our family and for Grace to grow up with her grandparents, aunts and uncles. We’ve been back for a year and a half, and I can honestly say it took about a year to finally feel at home.

What would you advise others who are moving back home?

Act as if you are moving abroad. Get involved with activities and groups so you have a network. I found a mothers’ exercise group called Stroller Strides that made the transition easier – it really helped me get to know the area and also find some playmates for Grace; I’ve made some great friends so far.

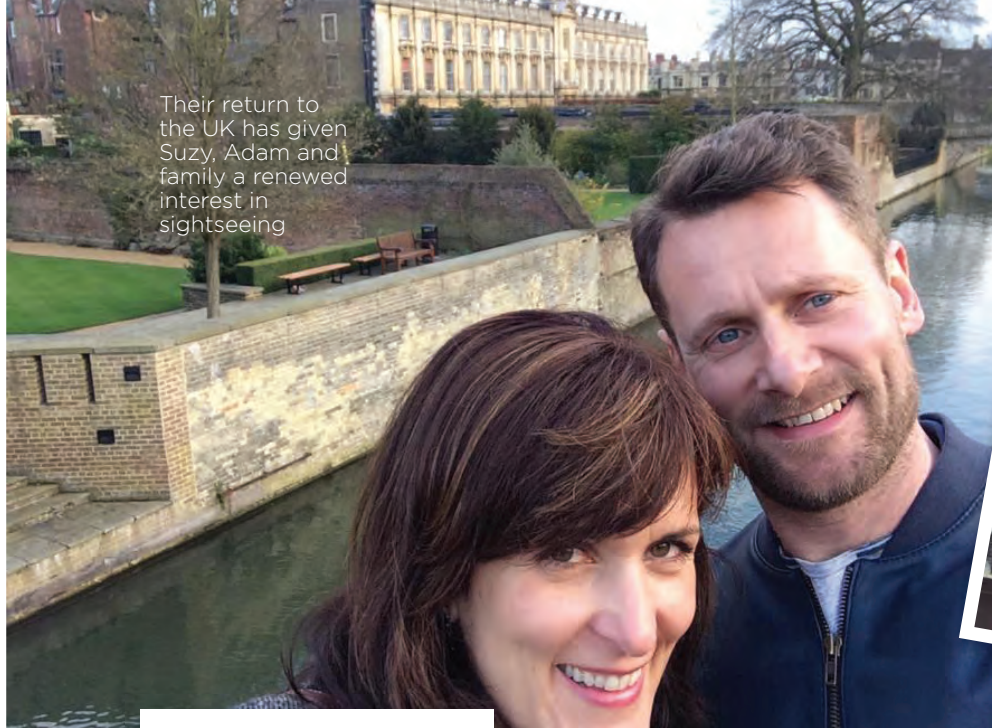
What do you miss about your Singapore life?

Living in a big city, being able to travel to so many amazing places, the food, our friends, and of course the Singapore Expat Wives Facebook group – you could get an answer for every question, and I wish we had something like that in Capitola!

Are you happy with your decision?

We knew Singapore was not forever, so yes, we are happy. We live in a beautiful place and my husband doesn’t travel as much as he did when we lived in Singapore.

Their return to the UK has given Suzy, Adam and family a renewed interest in sightseeing



Suzy Mellor, Adam Philpott, Gabriela (8) and Charlie (6), from the UK, lived in Singapore for nearly three years and were in Sydney for eight years before that.

“For both of us, the excitement about returning outweighed any misgivings”

Suzy, why did you relocate to the UK?

Adam and I met in Australia and had never lived in the UK as a family, so we moved back at the end of 2012 to be close to our extended family and our friends. We always intended to move back, but the relocation happened sooner than expected.

What were you looking forward to on your return?

We were looking forward to being closer to our families, particularly our children getting to know their grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. I was also looking forward to properly re-entering my circle of friends. I am still very close to a group of friends I grew up with and, having lived overseas for a long time, I had missed a lot of their major life events.

Neither of us felt we were escaping from the UK when we originally left and moved (separately) to Australia, so we were both really looking forward to moving back home. My only apprehension, apart from the weather, was a feeling that the adventure would be over, that moving back to the UK would mean settling there forever. For both of us, though, the excitement about returning outweighed any misgivings.

In reality, how is life back home?

Great, but busy! There are many more demands on our time here, particularly when it comes to catching up with our large families. Also, travelling to work and to visit people takes up a surprising amount of time. It feels like we fit here, though that can be good and bad. It's great to understand all the cultural references and history, but I liked a bit of culture shock and not knowing what was going on, and I miss that.

Also, since we came back we really appreciate the UK and Europe as though we were newly arrived. We seem to have renewed energy and enthusiasm for day trips, sightseeing, music and theatre.

What would you advise others who are moving back home?

Look at your location carefully. After 11 years of living in big cities, we thought it would be great to live in the Sussex countryside, but it wasn't right for us. Although it was beautiful, it was too far from work and family and, for me in particular, country living was a shock. We've since moved to East Molesey in outer London and love it, but it meant another upheaval for the children, which was actually much harder than when we moved them back from Singapore.

What do you miss about your Singapore life?

It's a long list! I miss the food an awful lot and am becoming quite the expert on where to get authentic Asian food around here. I miss my helper; she was absolutely fantastic and remains a good friend, and obviously I miss the luxury and freedom that having a helper gives you.

I miss being in Asia and my job, which gave me the opportunity to work with people from all over the region. Most of all I miss the lovely friends I met there, some of whom really became a surrogate family. My husband doesn't miss the humidity, but he'd give anything for a decent *nasi lemak*.

Although we had a great time in Singapore, we wouldn't change the decision to come home. The perfect arrangement would be if we got to spend a month or two in Singapore every year!



Olive and Leo
enjoying snow for
the first time



British publisher Philip Tatham* lived in Singapore for 20 years and is married to Malaysian Sandy. They have two children, Olive (8) and Leo (6); Philip returned to the UK with his family 18 months ago.

“I would encourage people to follow their dreams – and hire a good tax advisor! My wife, the kids and I are very happy with our decision to move”

Philip, after 20 years here, why did you return to the UK?

On learning of our decision to relocate, our friends in Singapore would joke that we were leaving “because we could”, as I’m fortunate that I can run Monsoon Books from anywhere. We left behind friends who were tied to jobs and extended family, many suffering an irrational fear of leaving safe Singapore. In reality, we left Singapore for more space, a rural environment in which to raise our children and, after two decades in Singapore, for a new adventure.

When I left England, there were only four channels on television, Pulp was yet to introduce Britpop to the common people, and I was young and single with a full head of hair. Twenty years is a long time to spend away from home; it had changed and so had I. It was in my adopted home of Singapore that I experienced many of the milestones of life that bring some form of self-actualisation: getting a dream job, falling in love, getting married, becoming a parent and, of course, losing said hair.

How have you found rural life?

After considering Melbourne and Canada, we settled on Rutland, a tiny, idyllic county in rural England. Rutland and Singapore are similar in size, and Rutland’s motto of *Multum in Parvo*, “Much in Little”, could well apply to Singapore. However, while five million people are squeezed into Singapore, a mere 35,000 people enjoy the tranquillity of Rutland, where a typical village accommodates fewer people than a large condo.

Eighteen months in and we are over the honeymoon period experienced by new repatriates, but thankfully village life is everything we had hoped it would be. We’re



only an hour from London by train, yet we are deep in the countryside and on the shores of Europe’s largest reservoir, Rutland Water. The kids ride horses and bikes, they sail, climb trees, birdwatch, play endless sport and basically just get dirty.

My wife and I entertain a lot more in the UK than we did in Singapore, and life is an endless round of dinner and drinks parties and multi-family outings and camping trips.

What do you miss about your life in Singapore?

We miss Singapore’s food, but my wife cooks Chinese, Malay and Peranakan dishes. She grows her own bok choy, choy sum, kailan and chillies, as well as potatoes, zucchini, lettuce, rocket, long beans, broad beans, spring onions, tomatoes, sweet corn and myriad herbs.

What would you advise readers considering moving home?

Subject to employment limitations, I would encourage people to follow their dreams – and hire a good tax advisor. My wife, the kids and I are very happy with our decision to move. It took several years to plan and execute, but it has brought us closer together. In another 20 years we’ll be ready for another adventure, but until then we are home. *el*

* Philip runs Monsoon Books, which specialises in publications on Southeast Asia, and is currently offering a free eBook with every paperback purchase from monsoonbooks.com.sg.



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Five Principles to Guide Long-Term Financial Security

The path to long-term financial security is strewn with uncertainty and complexity, says chief investment officer at St. James's Place Wealth Management, CHRIS RALPH. Here are five principles to help keep you on track.

#1 ENSURE YOU HAVE SUFFICIENT MONEY FOR YOUR SHORT-TERM NEEDS

All over the developed world, savers are enduring the lowest returns on cash for centuries; but many remain wary of stock markets, despite their recovery from 2009 lows. In such an interest rate environment, those who wish to achieve meaningful returns will need to reassess their savings on deposit. However, cash does still play a vital role in an investment strategy, and enough should be kept on deposit. As Chris Ralph says: "If you maintain adequate liquidity, you should not need to sell long-term investments at a bad time. As a guide, you should have enough to be able to sleep at night, and to cover both expected needs and unforeseen emergencies."

#2 GUARD AGAINST INFLATION

One persistent obstacle that an individual will need to overcome on the road to wealth creation is inflation. Even modest levels of inflation can erode cash in a low-interest-rate environment. While you should hold money on deposit for short-term needs, there is significant risk in trying to play it safe by putting all your money into cash-like investments. When investing for the long term, you should keep an eye on inflation.

#3 INVEST FOR THE LONGER TERM

"Investors cannot consistently and successfully time the markets, but those who hold assets for extended periods can reap the cumulative benefit of time's smoothing effect on market fluctuations and unforeseen events," says Ralph. No one knows what will happen to share prices in the short term, but those who invest over a longer period – say, five years or more – are likely to be better off than they are today.

#4 DIVERSIFY YOUR INVESTMENTS

Shares, bonds and commercial property are examples of assets that can provide growth. Investing in funds rather than individual investments also ensures that money is more widely spread. And by investing in a selection of funds that diversify across different shares, sectors and regions, as well as asset classes, investors will be better placed to withstand shifts in economic and financial conditions and achieve above-inflation returns over the long term.

#5 FIND THE VERY BEST MANAGERS

Different managers have different styles and assets, but many invest in the same way, so variety is no guarantee of diversity. There are a large number of fund managers to select from; some are excellent, some are very good, and some are not. "It's critical to have an investment approach that gives the best chance for your money to be with good managers," advises Ralph. "Understanding how your adviser researches, selects and monitors the fund managers should be high on your list of priorities."

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Lower the Curtain

How to remove drama from your life

BY KIM FORRESTER

Drama in daily life can be characterised as a situation that drains your attention, energy, wellbeing and often time, without progressing toward a definitive resolution. The danger with drama is that, like an emotional black hole, it can suck in all those around the epicentre; the conflict expands beyond its original participants to affect the wellbeing and contentment of those at a distance. Completely removing drama

from your life can be difficult, but there are some simple ways you can remain in the wings while the theatrics unfold.

Suzanne is a long-term resident of Singapore with a conscious and careful attitude toward her personal relationships. Within a year of her arrival here, she was surprised to find herself drawn into an escalating conflict in her social circle. “I had no opinion about the situation; it was none of my business,” she explains. “But, all of a sudden, my name was being injected into conversations about the situation and I felt like I was being pressured to take sides.”

A recently arrived expat, Amanda joined a choir as an outlet for her love of singing and to spend time with like-minded musicians. Instead, she soon found herself trying to defuse the personality clashes, conflicts and complaints of other members. “I kept pretending I could cope with the nonsense and just focus

“It’s not always going to be easy to hold your tongue, walk away or forgive a hurtful comment or slight.”

on the music,” she says. “But, in time, the constant conflict was consuming my time and attention. It had taken over my life.”

Conflict is a natural part of life; it’s inevitable that you will encounter incompatibility, disagreement or even targeted malice. But by choosing how to deal with these situations, you can determine whether they are a brief, unpleasant episode or become a soul-sapping saga. You can help eliminate drama from your life by consciously choosing to:

■ GIVE GOSSIP A WIDE BERTH

Be wary of injecting your opinion into any situation that does not involve you directly, or voicing judgement of someone without applying compassion and understanding. Idle talk is both destructive and harmful; gossiping not only fills your personal sphere with other people’s drama, it can make it more difficult for those involved to find a healthy resolution to the situation.

■ RESIST THE URGE TO RESCUE OR RESOLVE

Don’t buy into the storyline! The moment you try to pacify conflict or appease personalities, you have become a part of the drama. Avoid inserting yourself into conflicts, taking sides, or offering to help or mediate (unless there can be a definite resolution from you doing so).

■ TREAD LIGHTLY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a minefield of spontaneous ranting, unmitigated opinion and psychological power-play. Consciously choose what you want to bring into your personal space and put out to the world. Be aware that there are very real consequences when you share your opinion online, and be mindful of the opinions you allow to appear on your newsfeed.

■ RECOGNISE DRAMA EPICENTRES

It is important to realise that some people have a need (unconscious or conscious) to create drama in order to garner sympathy and attention, or simply to relieve boredom. Allow yourself to be aware of those who stimulate chaos, discord or conflict in their lives. It’s not always their fault, but neither is it healthy. Once you learn to recognise the people in your environment who have a need for drama, you can better distance yourself from their ongoing conflicts.

■ ADOPT THE HIGH ROAD

It’s not always going to be easy to hold your tongue, walk away or forgive a hurtful comment or slight. But it is always, *always* going to be the healthiest option and the swiftest path back to happiness and contentment. Taking the high road requires courage, resilience and self-love. You may not always be able to take it, but knowing that this option exists certainly helps. You have a *choice* how to respond to any situation.

■ TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Remember, drama cannot enter where you have not invited it in. We’re all human, and many of our habits and behaviours stem from deeply unconscious patterns and desires. Learn to discern any actions you have taken to invite or increase drama in your life. Congratulate yourself on recognising this behaviour, gently remind yourself of the consequences of repeating this pattern and choose otherwise whenever you have the awareness and courage to do so.

FIVE PHRASES THAT CAN REDUCE DRAMA IN YOUR LIFE:

- #1 “I wouldn’t like to comment on something that is none of my business.”
- #2 “I’m sorry you’re going through this. What’s the best way to resolve the situation, do you think?”
- #3 “I’m happy to hear your concerns, but I don’t feel it’s helpful that I get involved.”
- #4 “This situation is not what I’m looking for in my life right now, but I wish you all the best.”
- #5 “Unfollow” *u*

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WINE & DINE



161 | **Italian Indulgence:** Reviews, recipes, wine picks and more

Pan-seared Hokkaido scallops, Zafferano

152
News: The latest on Singapore's food scene

174
Rooftop Roundup: Your guide to some of the best rooftop spots in town

180
Chef Spotlight: A chat with Bread Street Kitchen Executive Chef, Sabrina Stillhart

What's New



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ALL ABOUT Amoy

Amoy Street is the new hot spot these days, with bars and restaurants flocking to the scene. Not only has Argentinian restaurant **Bochinche** moved from its Martin Road location to 115 Amoy Street, but hip **Ding Dong** – known for its Southeast Asian-inspired menu and quirky retro-chinoiserie décor – has also relocated to 115 Amoy from its previous Ann Siang Road digs. And, after much anticipation, speakeasy-style bar and restaurant **Employees Only** has set up shop at 112 Amoy Street. The original outlet, located in New York City's West Village, recently ranked number four in Drinks International's list of the world's 50 best bars in 2015. Expect Art Deco vibes, cool cocktails and a menu of taquería specialties, mixed with some local flair – oh, and cups of warm chicken soup served to the last-standing revellers at closing, which is a time-honoured tradition at the NYC original. *Stay tuned for our review of Employees Only in next month's issue.*



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New Bites

- The UK's favourite Italian chain, **PizzaExpress**, has finally arrived at the basement level of Scotts Square shopping mall, serving up its signature hand-tossed pizzas, as well as pasta dishes, salads and desserts. pizzaexpress.sg



PizzaExpress

- **Oso Grillery** has opened at 46 Bukit Pasoh Road, with a different menu from its sister eatery Oso Ristorante right next door. Expect grilled meat dishes, sustainable seafood, and a 1920s-inspired, mountain chalet-chic setting. singapore.oso.sg/oso-grillery

Revolving Doors

* After closing in April for a revamp, meat-centric restaurant 5th Quarter recently “reopened” at 12 Purvis Street, but as a brand new restaurant by the name of **Salted & Hung** – a more casual concept that retains many of the same nose-to-tail and cured meat specialties from its previous incarnation; the menu has kept its 5th Quarter fan favourites like salt and pepper tripe, and pork jowl, while adding some new Aussie-style dishes to the mix (kangaroo tartare, anyone?).

* Preserving the same family-friendly, casual indoor-outdoor atmosphere, Spruce @ Phoenix Park is now **Coyote** restaurant, offering a Tex-Mex menu of *quesadillas*, tacos, hot wings, soups and salads, as well as brunch specialties like *huevos rancheros*. 320 Tanglin Road.

Cheers to Ladies' Night

Always on the lookout for great girls'-night-out locations, we were happy to learn that **Atrium** at Pan Pacific Singapore has started a weekly ladies' night special. On Wednesdays from 6pm to 9pm, ladies get unlimited house wines, beers and house-pour spirits for \$48 – best enjoyed with Pan Pacific Singapore's cheese platters, signature gourmet sausages and charcuterie. We especially love the venue's intimate seating pods floating over a reflection pool – a great place to catch up over cocktails and swap stories with friends. For reservations, call 6826 8240 or email celebrate.sin@panpacific.com. Level 1 Marina Square, 7 Raffles Boulevard, panpacific.com/singapore ▼



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Sharing is CARING

Situated on the ground floor of Robertson Quay's new M Social Singapore hotel, **Beast & Butterflies** is all about sharing and socialising. The flamboyant Philippe Starck-designed space features communal tables, an extensive bar with table-top TV screens playing avant-garde performance art, tablet-lined walls (free for patrons to use), and books and lava lamps purposely placed as conversation starters – not to mention the conversation-worthy, bright-blue curaçao, vodka and rum-based **Aquarium** cocktail (\$49), served in a massive martini glass and designed to be shared; normal-sized cocktails range from \$20 to \$32.

The global-eclectic menu features all kinds of East-meets-West dishes (ordered via tablet) – think **rack of lamb in Szechuan pepper sauce** (\$36), **pork knuckles with Asian sauerkraut** (\$28/38) and **lamb and cheese** (Australian lamb loin with burratina cheese, orange oil infusion and pomegranate dressing, \$26) – plus locally inspired specialties like **mee tai mak laksa** (\$16) with shrimp and clams. Standouts include **cody mee** (\$28) – soy sauce-marinated cod with crispy egg noodles; carpaccio-style **Hokkaido scallops** (\$24) with yuzu, ginger and shallot oil; and **crab and leaves** – baby spinach, Alaskan crab and wasabi citrus dressing. Portions are big, so come hungry, and with a group – unless, of course, you plan on making new friends there. **6206 1888 | msocial.com.sg/restaurant** ▶



Ultimate Foodie Fair

Marina Bay Sands' culinary extravaganza **Epicurean Market** returns from 12 to 14 August, featuring all kinds of food-focused activities. Held at the Sands Expo Convention Centre, the three-day festival features masterclasses and demonstrations by bartenders and renowned chefs such as Daniel Boulud, David Thompson, Nancy Silverton and David Myers, as well as a farmers' market with fresh produce and gourmet goodies. (Don't miss pop-up stalls by CUT by Wolfgang Puck and db Bistro & Oyster Bar.) Three-day passes (\$35) are available at marinabaysands.com/epicurean-market. ◀



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AT THE BAR

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



SKINNY'S LOUNGE

82 Boat Quay
9653 8886 | [facebook.com/drinksinnys](https://www.facebook.com/drinksinnys)

First impressions: Tucked away at the end of Boat Quay, this super-casual and relaxed riverside bar is reminiscent of an American dive bar. An outdoor pool table and bar stools dominate the outside space; inside, there are cute candlelit tables, funky artwork and a cosy, intimate karaoke room (reservations start at \$200 per hour). The restrooms are covered in fluorescent graffiti (add your own!), the bar is well stocked and the music is 90s-fun.

The Chosen One: The Pimm's Cup Cocktail tower (\$200; serves eight to 12) will take you back to lounging in long English summer twilights. This classic summer cocktail is done well here, and consists of Pimm's No.1, cucumber and fruit, topped with ginger ale.

The Cheapskate: Basil-lovers will be in green herb heaven with the Gin Basil Smash (\$18). Zesty and flavoursome, this cocktail contains London dry gin shaken with fresh basil and a muddled lemon wedge.

Bite on this: The menu is lean; this place is all about classic cocktails. We

snacked on the piping hot jumbo soft pretzel (\$10), and the ruffles with sour cream and onion dip (\$8), but it's best to arrive with a full belly.

Last but not least: The cocktails are already well made, but we loved the option to "make it nice" with top-up spirits at only \$3. The Queen's Park Swizzle "made nice" with Plantation Original Dark Rum not only looked lovely, but tasted delicious too. Bonus: There's no service charge, and all menu prices are nett, leaving more money for cocktail towers!

— Amanda Broad

**GATTOPARDO
COURTYARD BAR**
34 Tras Street
6338 5498 | gattopardo.com.sg

First impressions: This little courtyard bar sits at the front of Gattopardo Ristorante di Mare on quaint Tras Street. Here, *aperitivo* (that's Italian for pre-dinner drinks and nibbles – an Italian social tradition!) is the name of the game. I never tire of a shophouse bar setting, and this one has an air of peace and calm about it, just perfect for a *tête-à-tête* with a good friend; or for a small group, for which you could take over the whole courtyard. It's open to the elements here, but don't worry – there are fans; and if it's raining, you'll just have to treat yourself to a table in the main restaurant instead!

The Chosen One: It's got to be the **Aperol Spritz** (\$18) – the trendy Aperol, Prosecco and soda mix; or the potent **Etna Soil** (\$18) – Monkey 47 gin, Averna, muddled basil and lime juice.

The Cheapskate: All their superb cocktails are \$16 during Happy Hour, from 6pm to 9pm, Monday to Saturday.

Bite on this: For every cocktail ordered, you receive three complimentary bites to accompany your drink, such as **ocean trout crepe with salmon roe**, **bread fritters with ricotta truffle mousse**, **wild mushroom arancini** and **pig trotter terrine**, to name a few delights. The canapé menu changes regularly, so you never quite know what you're going to get!

Last but not least: Gattopardo's Chef Lino Sauro was recently awarded Sia Huat Chef's Choice Award at the World Gourmet Summit Award of Excellence 2016, and, at the recent Savour competition, the dishes submitted by Gattopardo won first place. After all these awards, this pretty Italian spot with its sweet courtyard bar is likely to be *en vogue*, so be sure to book ahead.

– Emi Finch





KWEE ZEEN



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A vibrant collage of Italian ingredients surrounds the central text. In the top left, there are coils of yellow pasta and several red cherry tomatoes. To the top right is a glass bottle of golden olive oil. On the right side, a slice of salami with a red and white checkered cloth is visible. The bottom left features fresh basil leaves, a green pepper, and a wooden bowl containing a whole egg. The bottom right includes a slice of lemon, a green pepper, and a mushroom. The background is a clean, bright white.

Buon APPETITO!

Who doesn't love pizza, pasta, antipasto and risotto? Yet with such an array of Italian restaurants in Singapore it's hard to know exactly where to go to get authentic and quality cuisine. Luckily (for us *and* for you), we've tried and tested tons of dishes to bring you some of the best options on the island. So read on for loads of Italian restaurant reviews, recipes, wine picks and more.



Jamie's Italian

#1-165-167 VivoCity, 1 Harbourfront Walk
6733 5500 | jamieoliver.com/italian/singapore

Go for: The big serves: burgers so tall they defy gravity, and seemingly bottomless bowls of delicious linguine.

Entering Jamie's, you're transported to what feels like an edgy yet comfortable home – almost like a converted warehouse in NYC, with funky lighting, rustic wooden floors and tables with mismatched chairs. It's easy to relax and forget the busy shopping mall outside. The staff are very friendly and accommodating, and it's a great place to go with friends or with children (the kids' menu is good), especially before or after catching a movie at the cinema upstairs.

The portions are all generous in size; the famed **prawn linguine** (\$26) didn't disappoint, with loads of prawns and a nice level of spice. The **Italian burger** (\$28.50) was really tasty, the meat cooked to a juicy medium and accompanied by deliciously crunchy **rosemary chips**. For a starter, we shared a **cured meats plank** (\$15.50 per person) with coleslaw and pickles; the quirky presentation of the plank stacked on tomato cans was fun, but we could have done with more of the flavoursome prosciutto! Italian wine enthusiasts can also find nice bottles here to match the menu, and the prices aren't exorbitant.

Don't leave without trying: Dessert. I wanted one of everything on the menu! Chocolate-lovers will appreciate the **Epic Brownie** (\$12.50) with caramelised *amaretti* popcorn, or the divine **molten chocolate praline pudding** (\$12.50). The **creamy panna cotta** (\$10.50) was another winner, and there's a great selection of gelati and sorbets (\$11).

Tip: Try to grab a table outside on a Saturday evening to see the Universal Studios fireworks display across the water at Sentosa.

– Amanda Broad





Senso Ristorante & Bar

21 Club Street
6224 3534 | senso.sg

Go for: The setting – it's in a beautiful old building in Chinatown (a good place to take visitors to see the old architecture). The central courtyard has the real wow factor, but there's also a modern bar area and main dining room that are lovely as well.

I'd say Senso is definitely an adult venue, especially in the evenings, as the courtyard has little tables for two for romantic dinners. For groups, there's also a private dining room (where we had our *Expat Living* Christmas party), and the main dining room can hold larger groups as well – in fact, it's where we held my daughter's 21st birthday dinner.

The pastas are the real standouts here, and the chefs will make them vegetarian upon request; choose from dishes like **homemade taglierini with Boston lobster, tomato, basil and chilli flakes** (\$34) and **linguine with mixed seafood in a spicy Sardinian Vermentino white wine sauce** (\$30), among others. The girls said their pastas were absolutely delicious. My **carpaccio di manzo** (beef carpaccio with aged balsamic vinegar and shaved black truffle, \$32) and **filetto di merluzzo** (roasted cod fillet with pumpkin puree, mushrooms, leeks and Chianti reduction, \$38) were only average, but the desserts were good, and we finished everything off with some **caffè corretto** (coffee with a splash of Italian liqueur or *grappa*) – and *sambuca*!

Don't leave without trying: The Tiramisu Senso (\$14).

Tip: They have several free-flow options that include beer, spirits and wines that were really good value for money. There are also set menus if you want to simplify things with a group.

– Rebecca Bisset

Fratini La Trattoria

Hillcrest Park, 10 Greenwood Avenue
6468 2868 | fratinilatrattoria.com

Go for: Date night. It's a casual setting with first-class service, and something outside of the box.

What's unique about **Fratini La Trattoria** is that there's no menu – that's right, none! What's more, after finding out about any allergies or foods you don't like, to ensure an enjoyable evening, the staff enter into their system each item you have eaten to ensure that the next time you dine you have another wonderful experience. The tasting menu for dinner (\$90 per person) includes 12 items, some of the servings bite-sized and others rather generous; each dish is influenced by a different region of Italy.

The stewed **beef cheek**, served with veal jus, roast potato and broccoli, was not something I would normally order, but it was exceptionally tasty and melted in my mouth. The **truffle pasta** – tomato, cream



and crab pasta with *burrata* cheese – was another flavoursome dish that got the palate going. We ended with a nice selection of sweets: **chocolate salami**, **pandan panna cotta** and **tiramisu** – their tiramisu was quite different, containing a Kahlua jelly.

Don't leave without trying: The beef cheek is definitely worth requesting when you make your reservation. Make sure to book well in advance if you're planning a weekend date night.

– Valmai Dhir



InITALY

38 Craig Road
6423 0918 | intaly.asia

Go for: Simple yet sophisticated Italian fare. No flummery, frills or fads here; just quality produce, generous servings and a commitment to upholding Tuscan tradition. When your friends, your colleagues *and* your hairdresser recommend a dinner spot, you know you're in for the win. Going strong for three years and backed by the 30 years of experience under Chef Mario Balotelli's belt, InITALY's solid fan base is no surprise. A man of pride and candid charm, Mario's presence is a pleasant constant in this shophouse setup. Guests are quickly drawn in by his story and knowledge. Trust us; you won't regret heeding his recommendations. To tease the taste buds, we started with **The Real Raspadura** (\$14), freshly-shaven Lodigiano cheese flakes, and **crudo di pesce** (\$38, *pictured*), a raw seafood platter featuring red tuna tartare, Boston lobster and more. Such a refreshing and light appetiser set us up nicely for the indulgence to follow: **maialino da latte** (starting from \$70) – oven-baked suckling pig with crispy skin, served with balsamic-glazed shallots – and a **pumpkin, Robiola di Roccaverano cheese and truffle risotto** (\$32) from the summer truffle menu.

Don't leave without trying: A glass of wine from Mario's very own Eight Acres Vineyard in Brisbane's Granite Belt. We recommend **Girom**, a moreish shiraz that pairs perfectly with the suckling pig.

Tip: Round up your girls for ladies' night every Wednesday (6pm to 10pm) and enjoy prosecco, moscato or chardonnay at only \$5 a glass! If *burrata* is your guilty pleasure, book dinner on a Thursday evening to enjoy that day's fresh delivery.

– Leanda Rathmell

Zafferano

Ocean Financial Centre, Level 43, 10 Collyer Quay
6509 1488 | zafferano.sg

Go for: Classy, sky-high Sicilian

The lift in the super-slick Ocean Financial Centre whisks us up to the 43rd floor so quickly that it's a surprise to suddenly be overlooking the sparkling Marina Bay Sands and see Singapore laid out before us. Whether seated indoors or out, the view from Zafferano (Italian for "saffron") is a motivation to visit, as is the superb food of Italian head chef Marco Guccio, who moved to Singapore 10 years ago on the trail of the burgeoning restaurant scene. He earned his culinary credentials at the likes of Il Lido and Gattopardo before heading up Zafferano.

There's much to like on his menu of contemporary Italian dishes, so we go with the recommendations of the knowledgeable staff. The two starters – **carpaccio of eight-hour marinated fjord trout** (\$28) with green asparagus and trout roe, and **pan-seared Hokkaido scallops** (\$34) with green pea puree, beetroot and sun-dried tomatoes – are both served with the lightest of embellishments, because the flavoursome fresh ingredients are at their peak.

The handmade pastas are a must-try. We devoured the **spanner crab linguine** (\$40) served with

fresh tomato sauce, which was clearly made with the same diligence as Marco's Sicilian mother and grandmother who inspired his love of cooking. Wine recommendations come courtesy of the in-house sommelier, who suggests a light red from the 200-strong collection; it pairs nicely with the **12-hour slow-cooked beef short rib** (\$50), cooked in a rich veal reduction.

Zafferano's fine-dining ambience, attentive service and furnishings (did I mention the striking saffron-inspired art installation above the bar?) are as fitting for a special occasion as they are for signing a business deal. Don't forget to head outside, take in the view and toast the good life.

Don't leave without trying: Handcrafted *agnolotti* (\$28, *pictured*) filled with 12-hour marinated oxtail celeriac puree and sprinkled with Sicilian pistachios; this is a dish to savour and remember!

Tip: Check the daily business lunch specials, or – after work – sit back and savour a cocktail or Peroni on the large outdoor terrace. The private dining room is perfect for groups.

– Katie Roberts



Vita Italiana

38 Mosque Street

6220 0093 | facebook.com/vitalitanarestaurant

Go for: A genuine Italian feast, home-cooked the way Mamma would make it!

Ever wondered what it would be like to have dinner with an Italian family? Wonder no more. Chef Carmine and the team welcome you to Vita Italiana like a long-lost relation, then proceed to feed you authentic cuisine.

There are no menus; instead, tell the chef what you *don't* eat, and they'll tailor a regularly changing dinner of nine (\$68) or 13 (\$98) courses to your liking, or a three- or five-course lunch (\$28/\$38). Our nine-course dinner offered food from all corners of Italy, the chef narrating to us the origins and carefully sourced ingredients of each dish.

From **cured meats with focaccia and olives**, **steamed king prawn with a rocket mousse and red pepper sauce**, and melt-in-your-mouth **beef shin with mash**, to sublime **sea bass**, **tortellini pasta with porcini mushrooms**, and a trio of desserts, you won't leave hungry! For \$38, you can accompany your meal with wine and beer; we chose to start with the signature Collesi triple malt light beer, then continued with a



selection of wines. This is truly a different dining experience, and one we highly recommend.

Don't leave without trying: Pork neck with polenta and chickpeas. Not something I would usually order, but a surprise winner with us both.

Tip: It's a small venue, so be sure to book ahead – and let them know your dietary requirements in advance so they can tailor the menu accordingly.

– Katie Peace

Bella Pasta

#01-09 Riverside View, 30 Robertson Quay

6836 5692 | bellapasta.com.sg

Go for: Family-friendly dining.

Situated on the Singapore River, this indoor-outdoor Italian restaurant offers an exceptional range of authentic Italian pastas with wonderful view across the water.



First up, I sipped on a **limoncello mojito** (\$15) while I mulled over what to order – it's a nice drop to kick things off. To start, we shared the **insalata formaggi di capra con babarbietola** (\$17) – mixed spinach and arugula with roasted beetroot, fresh goat cheese crumble and candied walnuts. A wonderful combination of extremely fresh ingredients and gracefully presented, this salad was so scrumptious. The **calamari fritti** (\$20) – deep-fried calamari with marinara sauce – was a generous portion cooked to perfection. The al dente **linguine al gambero** (\$33) – linguine with king prawns and scallops in a seafood-tomato sauce – was very flavoursome. If you're gluten-intolerant, try the gluten-free spaghetti or the porcini seafood risotto; and soon they'll be introducing gluten-free gnocchi, along with a few other options. We ended the night with **tiramisu** (\$10) that melted in our mouths.

Don't leave without trying: The tiramisu was one of the best I've tried to date (and I've tried many over the years!).

– Valmai Dhir



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• **Katong Market Place** @ 112 Katong Basement 1

• **Paragon Market Place** @ Paragon Shopping Centre Basement 1
• **Raffles City Market Place** @ Raffles City Shopping Centre Basement 1

• **Tanglin Market Place** @ Tanglin Mall Basement 1

MARKET PLACE
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La Barca

#01-21 Block C, Goodman Arts Centre
90 Goodman Road
6346 5813 | labarca-sg.com

Go for: Hearty Tuscan cuisine with a modern flair. Upon entering the homey atmosphere of La Barca, we were warmly greeted by the friendly team and executive chef Michele Sorrentino, who hails from Calabria and has been working in the industry since 1979. Needless to say, we asked the Italian for his recommended dishes.

After settling in with a glass of prosecco, we were served *parmigiana di melanzane* (\$22), oven-baked eggplant in a rich mozzarella, parmesan and tomato sauce; and *tartara di vitellina* (\$28, pictured), a flavourful combination of grass-fed veal tartare, dehydrated egg yolk, seasonal truffles and shaved parmesan. Next up was the *risotto con asparagi*, *parmigiano a tartufo estivo* (\$32), an organic risotto served *al dente* with garden asparagus and seasonal truffles, and *spaghetti con cicale di mare* (\$26), an interesting combination of pasta with Mediterranean

slipper lobster, spicy anchovy sauce and ground prawns for a salty twist.

Though we were now getting full, a dish of line-caught steamed snapper fillet (*il filetto di dentice a vapore*, \$35) was too good to overlook; and, in any case, it was light and healthy, served in a broth of dried porcini and oyster mushrooms, and Italian broccoli – a beautiful mix of fresh, earthy flavours.

The cherry on the cake was the **traditional tiramisu** (\$14). La Barca's version is prepared without alcohol or cream, allowing the flavours of the coffee and mascarpone to develop better on the palate.

Don't leave without trying: The risotto – perfectly cooked with well-balanced flavours.

Tip: It's easier to reach Block C, where the restaurant is situated, by using the side entrance on Mountbatten Road, rather than the main entrance on Goodman Road.

– Susannah Jaffer

Where the Italians Go

We asked Italian expats where they go for great grub from their homeland.



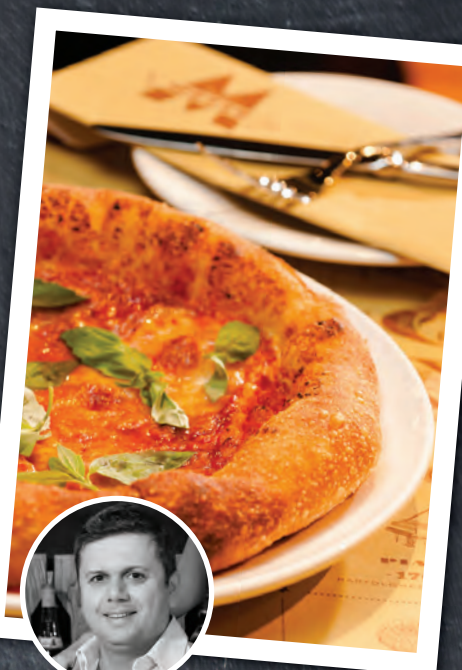
"I love the casual atmosphere and flexible service at **iO Italian Osteria** at HillV2. Though the location is a bit out of the way, the food tastes like a real *osteria* in Italy, and the prices are reasonable. I also love the environment, the service and the antipasti and entrée dishes at **Caruso Italian Restaurant** on Bukit Timah Road; they've got good wine, too, and their prices are OK. **Pietrasanta The Italian Restaurant** at Portsdown Road has great food across the menu, including its pizzas, plus good service, reasonable prices and a great wine menu – worth a visit to the small cellar! I also love **Fratini La Trattoria**, thanks to Chef Gabriel's creativity and hospitality – surprising dishes and good wine; prices are a bit steep for the location, but it's worth a visit."

– Enrico Pelillo



"I'd recommend **Trattoria Nonna Lina**, a little-known Italian restaurant on Cantonment Road. It has friendly but not entirely efficient service, no pizza on the menu and background music that I'm certain will not include your favourite songs. And this is precisely why you absolutely *must* pay it a visit. The service is not world class because it's a proper family-run restaurant, and most of the staff hardly speaks English; there's no pizza on the menu because the family hails from Porto Santo Stefano, a small coastal town in Tuscany almost 400km from Naples; and you won't be familiar with the music because it's cheesy Italian songs from the 70s and 80s – the kind I grew up listening to from my parents' tapes. If you want to impress your pretentious foodie friends and show them the real deal, take them here and order fried calamari and gnocchi done the way they should be, and pretty much everything else done the way it should be, including a rare seafood carbonara that will fill your stomach for the next two days – but you won't complain."

– Stefano Augello



"**Latteria** at Duxton Hill is a very pleasant alfresco dining experience, with a focus on quality ingredients. My favourite dish there is the *burratina*. For pizza, I go to **Pizzeria Mozza** – very light and innovative pizzas with top ingredients; it's got a real international atmosphere. I like to order the bacon, *salame*, fennel sausage, *guanciale*, tomato and mozzarella pizza. I also like *omakase*-style Italian restaurant **Fratini La Trattoria** – very good value for money and an elaborate tasting menu that showcases some of the very best Italian culinary combinations; I love their seafood appetiser."

– Luigi Russo

Classic CARBONARA

Feeling inspired to fix your own Italian feast? Stock up on ingredients at **Huber's Butchery** before trying your hand at this authentic carbonara recipe, courtesy of Chef LORENZA PAVAN at Oso Ristorante in Chinatown.



Ingredients (1 serve)

- 110g *guanciale*, diced
- 1 egg
- 50g Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, grated
- 50g Pecorino Romano cheese, grated
- 80g spaghetti
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Coarse sea salt and freshly cracked black pepper

Instructions

1. Boil water for the pasta; once the water starts to boil, add sea salt and spaghetti.
2. Meanwhile, break the egg in a large bowl and season with freshly cracked black pepper. Then, add the two grated cheeses. Mix with a fork or a pair of tongs just until the yolk breaks. Set aside.
3. Heat some oil in a pan on medium heat, then add the diced *guanciale* and fry until crispy.
4. When the pasta is ready, drain and quickly add it to the bowl containing the egg. Mix the pasta well with a pair of tongs. Meanwhile, keep the pasta water in the pot on low heat.
5. Add the hot *guanciale* to the pasta and mix well with a pair of tongs.
6. Place the bowl of pasta over the pot of water (a double-boiler, or *bain-marie*). Keep mixing until the sauce becomes creamy.



Huber's Butchery
22 Dempsey Road
6737 1588
hubers.com.sg

Special thanks to Oso
Ristorante (oso.sg) and
De Dietrich Singapore
(dedietrich-asia.com).



Cata 2011, \$42.30
(\$38 for members)

Winery: iGreco

This medium-bodied dry red is made from the Calabria region's Gaglioppo grape – an unusual grape that may be a relative of the Nebbiolo and has been likened to the prized Pinot Nero. In fact, the Gaglioppo grape is so rare that Italy's most famous winemaker, Riccardo Cotarella (who has his own highly respected winery in Lazio and is regularly asked to consult at other estates), personally requested a role in creating this special wine. Expect vanilla and some spices on the nose, with sweet tannins and a lingering finish. The wine pairs well with any red pasta dish or pizza.



Lugana Molin 2012, \$48.70
(\$44 for members)

Winery: Provenza

Made from a selection of Provenza's best Trebbiano grapes in Northern Italy's Lombardy region, this light-bodied dry white is elegant and fresh, and pairs nicely with soft cheese like *burratina*. Not eating Italian? It also goes well with dim sum or local chicken rice.



Lysipp 2009, \$79.30
(\$71 for members)

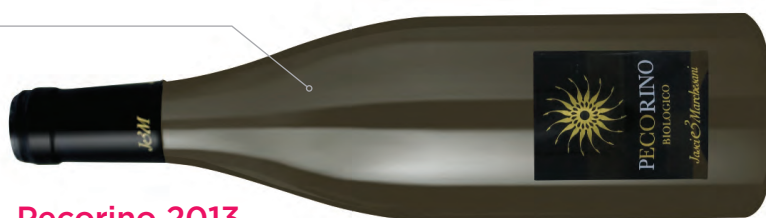
Winery: Serra San Martino

This red is made from Montepulciano grapes grown on the Serra San Martino estate in Central Italy's Marche region. The winery focuses on making high-quality, natural wines with minimal use of sulphurs, employing only traditional techniques so as to avoid altering the composition of the wine. In fact, they use the local system of growing beans in between the vines (every other row) to create a natural fertiliser, and the vines are tied by twine crafted from local grasses. Expect a complex and full-bodied wine, with an elegant tannin structure and a long finish. This wine pairs nicely with any red pasta dish or pizza, and is also a great choice for a barbecue.

Italian

WINE PICKS

We all know Italian food is fabulous, but it's even better with quality Italian wine. We asked boutique Italian wine specialist and online shop **Bacco** to share some prime picks from its extensive collection of organic and biodynamic wines, which are sourced only from artisanal winemakers who use little to no chemicals during the entire soil-to-bottle process.



Pecorino 2013, \$38.20
(\$34 for members)

Winery: Jasci & Marchesani

Made from the local Pecorello grape, this is a full-bodied white that manages to be both fruity and earthy, pairing nicely with chicken and seafood. The Abruzzo-based winery in Central Italy focuses on biological production, which means no chemicals are used, either in the field or in the cellar – and the absence of sulphites means less chance of a next-day headache.

To buy wine or to find out about upcoming wine-tasting events, visit baccowines.com.

#02-09 The Herencia, 46 Kim Yam Road | 6635 5747 | baccowines.com



A Taste of Tuscany



Originally from Lucca, Tuscany, Chef GABRIELE PIEGAIA has been in Singapore for 15 years now. He initially worked at fine-dining establishments like Senso and Alkaff Mansion, before opening his own Tuscan-inspired restaurant, **Burlamacco Ristorante**, an elegant and authentic favourite in Tanjong Pagar. (Fan favourites include potato gnocchi with scampi in pink sauce, beef tripe stew and lobster linguine.) Just last year, the Italian expat took over **Pepenero** at nearby Stanley Street, offering yet another menu of mouth-watering Italian fare. We spoke to Chef Gabriele about his latest restaurant and his all-time favourite foods – we even snagged a recipe!

Tell us about Pepenero.

It's our latest restaurant, and it has a redefined modern concept complemented by an alfresco dining area. Our signature dishes include *polpette di Eugenio* (baked pork meatball cooked in spicy tomato sauce and topped with mozzarella), *spaghetti neri* (squid ink pasta with crab meat in a spicy tomato and basil sauce) and tiramisu.

We've tried to retain traditional essences of Tuscan cuisine while adding a more contemporary style to our customers' favourites.

As a Tuscan chef, I try to incorporate as many dishes from my region, like *cacciucco*, *trippa* and *pappardelle*, but because Italy is such a beautiful country with so many culinary flavours, we decided to incorporate some other traditional dishes from other regions. Having said that, we don't do "fusion" in my kitchen; I'm a firm

believer in traditional food, just the way my chef taught me, and I will pass on what I have learned to my staff.

I have a strong respect for ingredients and take no shortcuts in cooking or in the method – and I'll make no secret of it. I like big, hearty portions and I don't want my customers ever to leave the restaurant hungry!

What are your favourite foods from home?

I love pasta – all pasta. But, penne with tuna is probably one of my favourites, and meat *ragu*, and fresh, thick, homemade pasta. I also love pizza – in fact, I love it so much that I'm making pizza my next venture. For me, good pizza is hard to find in Singapore, so our next project is to open a great pizzeria in the city, like those you'd find on the little streets of Lucca.



Chef Gabriele's Cacciucco

Here, Chef Gabriele reveals how he prepares one of his favourite dishes, *cacciucco*, a traditional seafood stew specialty that dates back at least 500 years and has its origins in Livorno. The popular *cacciucco alla Burlamacco* can be ordered at both Burlamacco Ristorante and Pepenero.



Ingredients


- 100g cuttlefish
- 100g calamari
- 2 lobster tails
- 2 scallops
- 4 prawns
- 50g crab meat
- 4 clams
- 200g white fish
- 750ml red wine
- 200g peeled tomatoes
- 100ml extra virgin olive oil
- 20g herbs
- 2 garlic cloves
- 200g carrots, celery and onion
- Salt and pepper

Instructions

1. Cut the cuttlefish and calamari into one-centimetre cubes.
2. Place these seafood cubes in a hot pot until they sweat; remove from the heat once the water has evaporated.
3. Cut the vegetables into one-centimetre cubes.
4. Fry the vegetables in a little oil.
5. Once the carrots start to shine, add the cuttlefish and calamari cubes and cook for 10 minutes; then add the wine and the tomatoes.
6. Cook for two hours – this will be the base of the dish.
7. Add the fish and other ingredients to the base, and cook for another 10 minutes.
8. Serve with garlic toast, a sprinkle of olive oil and fresh cracked pepper.

“This was one of the very first dishes I saw prepared when I started working at 14, during my summer holiday in Viareggio,” says Chef Gabriele. “I was surprised to see fish cooked in red wine – now it’s one of my favourites. I find it funny when people tell me that it’s wrong to cook fish in red wine. But I just let them try it and let the dish speak for itself – and I’m not surprised to hear that everyone who tries it thinks it’s delicious.”

Burlamacco Ristorante is at
77 Amoy Street.
6220 1763 | burlamacco.com.sg

Pepenero is at
14 Stanley Street.
6222 5808 | pepenero.sg 



VIEW FROM THE TOP

1-Altitude Gallery
and Bar

Here in Singapore, where it's alfresco weather year-round, we've got rooftop bars and restaurants aplenty, which means you've got to make all sorts of tough decisions – like, how high you want to hang out during Happy Hour, and what kinds of views you'd like to accompany your cocktail and canapés, from skyscraper scenery to Singapore River sights. To help you in your quest, we've rounded up some of our favourite rooftops across town.

LOWER-RISE LAIRS

Terra Rooftop Garden Bar

#03-308 Suntec City Sky
Garden, 3 Temasek Boulevard
6336 6009 | terrasingapore.com

Topping the recently revamped Suntec City Sky Garden, this spacious, stylishly designed open-air terrace bar offers a refreshing array of cocktails. Try the Viva Brasil (\$18), made with *cachaça* (distilled from sugarcane juice), pineapple, agave and house-made rosemary syrup, or a sangria (\$18); they've got a weekday happy hour, too. Accompany your cocktails with Latin American and Mexican-inspired bites like the marinated tenderloin beef cubes with sliced garlic, or the seafood *chimichanga* (both \$18). ►



SKY-HIGH STARS

**1-Altitude
Gallery and Bar**
Level 63, One Raffles Place
6438 0410 | 1-altitude.com

As one of the ultimate go-to's for entertaining out-of-town guests, this outdoor favourite never seems to disappoint, offering live music, fab drinks and a stunning, 360-degree look at Singapore – in fact, it's the city's highest bar, located on the 63rd level of One Raffles Place. Order one of their six pizzas (\$20 to \$22) to enjoy with a signature cocktail (\$20), or head one level down to dine at the award-winning restaurant Stellar by 1-Altitude; then, dance the night away at club Altimate on Level 61. ▼



LeVeL33
8 Marina Boulevard
#33-01 Marina Bay Financial Centre
Tower 1, 8 Marina Boulevard
6834 3133 | level33.com.sg

Sitting pretty in the penthouse of the Marina Bay Financial Centre, LeVeL33 has one of the best panoramic views in town. Wrapped around two sides of the building facade, a spacious outdoor terrace offers awesome, unobstructed views across Marina Bay and the CBD skyline. And it's not just the views that bring people flocking to this place. As the world's highest craft microbrewery, LeVeL33 brews craft beers on-site; made with authentic European recipes, the signatures include Blond Lager, India Pale Ale, House Porter, Stout and Wheat



Beer. And, if you're not a beer fan, not to worry – LeVeL33 offers Mouton Rothschild vintage wines and a selection of boutique wines sourced from a global selection of artisanal wine producers. Food-wise, there's an extensive and fabulous menu of contemporary European cuisine, as well as a fun, all-day “beer-dining” menu that includes suggested beer pairings and beer-infused dishes – the Celeriac Taco (\$18) for instance, consists of pork hock, India Pale Ale and hay reduction, butternut slaw, Blond Lager sweet chilli and more. *Don't miss LeVeL33's weekday and Saturday Happy Hour from 11.30am to 8pm (yes, over eight hours!) – on Sundays, Happy Hour starts from noon – and definitely stop by to try their Saturday Brunch and Sunday Roast lunch.* ▲



Loof
#03-07 Odeon Towers, 331 North Bridge Road
9773 9304 | loof.com.sg

At the top of Odeon Tower, this eclectic alfresco bar has an urban garden atmosphere, great skyline vistas (not to mention a front-row view of the Raffles Hotel), fun Southeast Asian-inspired cocktails (\$17 to \$24), great Happy Hour deals, and a selection of locally inspired snacks like sambal chicken wings (\$18) and chilli crab dip (\$14); it's a great place if you're looking for a rooftop setting with a bit of a twist. ▼



The Mad Men Attic Bar

#03-02, 11 North Canal Road
6222 3529 | madmenatticbar.com

Hidden in a Boat Quay shophouse right near Raffles Place, this is a popular spot among the working crowd. With its modern-industrial look laced with graffiti details, the casual, outdoor hangout is beloved for its daily line-up of live music, sweet Marina Bay views, naughty nibbles like truffle fries (\$10) and chilli cheese dogs (\$14), and after-work tipples including the infamous Black Forest mojito (\$16 to \$18). ▼



Oxwell & Co Rooftop Bar

5 Ann Siang Road
6438 3984 | oxwellandco.com

Set atop Club Street's British-inspired gastropub Oxwell & Co, this whimsical Hendrick's-exclusive bar (think *Alice in Wonderland* tea party-chic, but with gin) may be small, but there's a lot to take in: an organic herb garden from which the chef and bartenders collect herbs for the food and cocktails, a vintage phone booth, fairy lights and great Chinatown views. Signature botanical and tea-infused gin drinks come in teacups and small bathtubs (the Bathtime gin and tonic is for four to share, \$60), alongside nibbles like fried artichoke hearts with anchovy mayo (\$17), fish and chips (\$26) and pork scratchings (\$6). ►



Aria Roofbar

Level 4, The Scarlet, 33 Erskine Road
6836 4647 | ariarooftbar.com

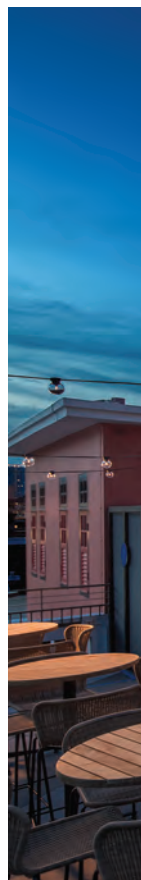
Serving Sicilian street food and a strong menu of cocktails, this discreet spot is a sort of hidden gem, tucked atop boutique hotel The Scarlet. Signature cocktails like the Nicoletta (white rum, lime juice, pistachio and rosemary syrups, and orange bitters) go for \$16 to \$19, while house wines by the glass start at \$14. Munch on eggplant *caponata* and beef meatballs (\$12 each) or tuck into seafood linguine (\$30) while catching up with pals over some serious CBD views. *Psst – this space would make a fab party setting!* ▼



Aqua Luna

Park Hotel Alexandra,
323 Alexandra Road
parkhotelgroup.com/alexandra

This spot offers prime views of the Southern Ridge by day, or Queenstown's twinkling lights by night, and makes the perfect spot for an intimate date night or a lazy lunch with friends. Sip on tropical tipples like the Alexandra Sunset (\$18) – Grand Marnier infused with flamed rosemary and shaken together with cherry liqueur, white rum, fresh lime, lemon and pineapple juice, and a dash of dark rum. Munch on a selection of wood-fired flat breads (\$18 to \$24) and other comfort foods, like truffle polenta fries (\$10) or a medium-rare tenderloin "dirty" steak (\$36) with anchovy butter. Oh, and if you're a hotel guest, you can park yourself at the infinity pool's swim-up bar. ▲



Potato Head Folk

**36 Keong Saik Road
6327 1939
pttheadfolk.com**

Located on the fourth level of Potato Head Folk's hip, multi-storey-concept shophouse, this charming, chequer-floored and fairy-light-strewn rooftop is a sweet escape from the bustling Keong Saik scene below. With hip-hop beats in the background and stylish vibes, it's a great place to catch the breeze with a tropical-inspired cocktail in one hand and a gourmet burger in the other. ►



Tiger's Milk

**The Club Hotel, 28 Ann Siang Road
theclub.com.sg**

Set on the fourth-floor rooftop of boutique hotel The Club, this indoor-outdoor Peruvian-inspired bar is fashioned after traditional pisco bars in Lima, featuring a variety of pisco concoctions and other Latin American-influenced rum- and tequila-based beverages. Sip on your Coco Con Pisco (\$24) and snack on some sea bass ceviche (\$14), while you take in the beats of Latin American music and enjoy a nice breeze.



Hi-So Rooftop Pool Bar

**Sofitel So Singapore, 35 Robinson Road
6701 6800 | sofitelssingapore.com**

Perched on the roof of the financial district's Sofitel So Singapore (a beautifully refurbished heritage building), this chic alfresco bar surrounds the hotel's golden-tiled infinity pool, with skyscrapers looming in the background. Grab a seat under one of the bar's black-and-white striped cabanas for after-work drinks, or Happy Hour and truffle fries (\$18) with the girls, while you groove to music under the stars. Though cocktails range from \$18 to \$24, Hi-So has special promotions every night of the week. There are \$10 martinis on Mondays, \$10 house pour wines on Tuesdays, and a ladies' night on Wednesdays – girls get their first glass of Taittinger for free; on "Industry Thursdays", you get one-for-one house pours, beer and wine when you provide your business card; and on "Foodie Fridays", you get 25 percent off your total food bill plus one-for-one house pours. ▼



MUSEUM HOTSPOTS

Smoke and Mirrors

#06-01 National Gallery Singapore, 1 St Andrews Road
9234 8122 | smokeandmirrors.com.sg

At the highest point of the National Gallery Singapore, this optimally located rooftop bar features both indoor seating and an alfresco terrace that looks across the Padang to the Theatres on the Bay and beyond. Sip on beautifully presented cocktails – the Tiger Blood Daisy (\$20), made with tequila, lime, sour plum grenadine and ginger beer, is a signature – and, if you're hungry, order food from Yan, the upscale Chinese restaurant one level below. There's also Aura restaurant and Aura Sky Lounge directly next door to Smoke and Mirrors, on the same level. ▶



Editors' Picks

"Me@OUE has amazing views of MBS and nice cocktails. It's relaxed and elegant, and a great place to take out-of-town visitors. For low-key, I like **Southbridge** – great view and location, being so close to the restaurants and nightlife of Boat Quay. Plus, the gin and tonics are bucket-sized and delicious."

– Amanda Broad,
Digital Media Manager





Mr Punch Public House

26 Seah Street | 6339 6266 | [mripunch.com](http://mrpunch.com)

This hidden bar in the City Hall-Bugis area sits above the Mint Museum of Toys, making it a special destination even before you throw in the quirky, retro décor and cocktails served alongside kitsch-American ad signs. Throw in CBD views, Happy Hour specials, and all kinds of meaty and cheesy nibbles, and you've got yourself a new go-to. Signature cocktails range from \$19 to \$36, while the "Punch Jars" (for four to share) go for \$52. ▲



"I like **Fry Rooftop Bistro & Bar** – it's the highest point on Club Street, so you always get a decent breeze, and it's a great vantage point from which to watch all that's going on along Ann Siang Hill and Club Street. The space is small, but never gets too busy. They've got great cocktails and moreish bar snacks – chicken popcorn for the win!"

– Leanda Rathmell, Production Manager

"**Smoke and Mirrors** has superb views across the green expanse of the Padang toward the iconic MBS and the gleaming CBD to your right. The pork belly sliders are insanely good, and the cocktails are stunning. It's a bit brutal on the wallet, so save it for a special occasion!"

– Emily Finch, Online Editor

"My favourite rooftop dining destination is **Our Village** in Boat Quay. It offers lovely, breezy balcony seating overlooking the Singapore River, and tasty North Indian and Sri Lankan cuisine."

– Katie Peace, Project Manager



"I love the laid-back 'country-garden-meets-colonial-style-bungalow' feel of **Spago's** terrace lounge at Marina Bay Sands – it's a great spot for sipping rosé on a nice day. If you're afraid of heights, like my husband is, just grab a seat far away from the edge; you'll still be able to enjoy the nice breeze from there. It doesn't come cheap, but it's nice for a fun weekend treat."

– Amy Greenburg, Health, Leisure and Dining Editor

SPOTLIGHT ON: Chef Sabrina

Last year, foodies and Gordon Ramsay fans rejoiced when **Bread Street Kitchen (BSK)** hit our shores with English classics like shepherd's pie and fish and chips. As the eatery celebrates its first birthday, we check in with Swiss-born Executive Chef **SABRINA STILLHART** to find out what it's like running BSK Singapore, her go-to food spots and what we can expect from BSK at this month's Epicurean Market 2016.



When did you know you wanted to become a chef? And how did you start working with Gordon Ramsay?

Growing up in the countryside in Switzerland was great, as I had the opportunity to interact with people from many crafts including butchery, baking and farming. My parents ran a distillery and drinks store, so customer service is in my blood. Because I knew from a young age that I wanted to work in the service industry, I tried many jobs – including florist and waitress – before I discovered my passion for cooking. In 2002, I started my three-year apprenticeship at restaurant Seelust, on Lake Constance, and it was a great experience. After that, I moved to London and was introduced by a friend to work for Chef Gordon Ramsay as a commis chef at Boxwood Café.

What do you think of the restaurant scene here?

Singapore is a fantastic city with a diverse culinary scene that has really blossomed over the past few years; there's now an exceptional selection of international cuisine from top chefs and restaurants around the world. When we were making plans to open BSK Singapore, we knew it would be a natural fit here.

What kinds of challenges have you faced since opening?

At the beginning, there was a bit of pressure, as we had to live up to and maintain the high standards of the Gordon Ramsay brand and Bread Street Kitchen. But it's been great so far and feedback has been very positive. I've also had to adapt to the environment because, unlike in the UK where we grow almost everything, we generally have to wait a few days for produce to reach us here in Singapore.

Has the menu changed much from last year?

As chefs, we're always encouraged to be creative, so the menu is always evolving as we try new things and take into account the feedback from our customers. We also see seasonal changes, as we bring in a fair amount of produce from Europe. But we will always maintain the classic English dishes that many diners specifically come to us for.

Can you tell us about the masterclass, "Bread Street Kitchen Family Dinner", that you're running at Epicurean Market this month, on 14 August?

It will feature classic dishes that are easy

to replicate at home for family and friends – scallops, black pudding and apple puree, for example, and cannon of lamb stuffed with wild garlic.

What kinds of dishes will you be offering at BSK's Epicurean Market booth?

We'll be selling dishes such as shepherd's pie, fish and chips, and pork belly sliders, alongside items that are usually available at our Sunday brunch, such as Scotch eggs, fluffy buttermilk pancakes and avocado wedges on pumpkin toast.

SABRINA'S GO-TO'S

"I like to try as many different places as possible, and two of my favourite restaurants are **Long Chim** and **Angeleno**. For a drink, I recommend **Spago**, **Anti:dote** and, of course, **Bread Street Kitchen**." *EL*

Head to marinabaysands.com/epicurean-market for more details of the masterclass on 14 August. Bread Street Kitchen is at Bay Level, #L1-81 The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands.

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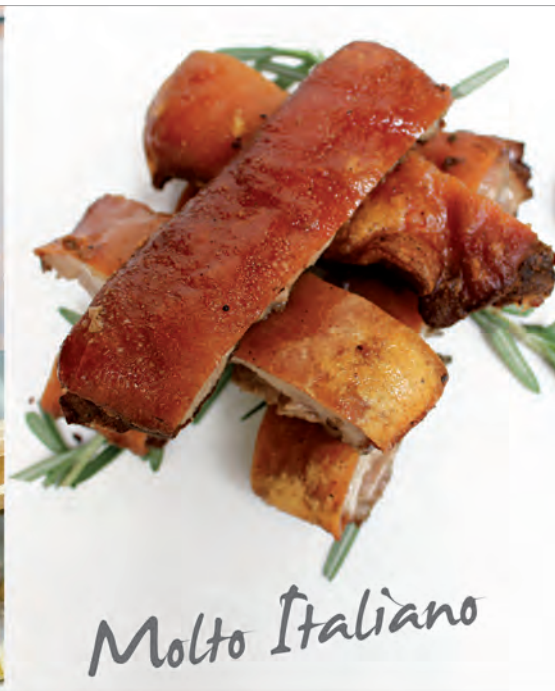
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
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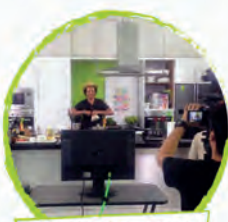
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TRAVEL



198

Vietnam Voyage:
From the city of Hanoi to Halong Bay on the coast

186

New & Notable: Travel hot-spots, hotel deals and more

192

Phu Quoc: Vietnam's up-and-coming island destination

206

Mauritius Moments: Five must-do things, plus accommodation ideas

What's New



Long Service

A hotel doorman, 71-year-old Mr Banda, has just clocked his 50th year of service at Sri Lanka's famous Galle Face Hotel.



Just a hop, a skip and a jump from Singapore, **Rawa Island Resort** on Malaysia's Pulau Rawa is reached by a 20-minute boat ride from Mersing, Johor. The beachfront resort features 77 rooms designed to blend in with the natural landscape, with a wide variety of accommodation catering for families, groups of friends, couples and single travellers. All rooms are equipped with en-suite bathrooms, freshwater showers and air conditioning, while Wi-Fi and cable television are available at the restaurant and bar. If you're an active traveller, you'll love the sea sport and dive centre facilities, which include snorkelling, kayaking, scuba-diving and hobie-cat sailing. Those seeking relaxation, meanwhile, can take advantage of the wide range of Thai body and facial massages on offer at the resort spa. rawaislandresort.com

SEMINYAK SPA Indulgence

Newly launched **Spa Alila** at Alila Seminyak is a luxury spa destination offering authentic Balinese massages and tailor-made treatments, with private rooms, a hair spa, a reflexology lounge and a dedicated nail salon. Recently featured in The Bali Bible website "Must-Spa" list for 2016, Alila boasts a 93-square-metre Signature Suite with Vichy shower and Vitality Silk bath hydrotherapy room, and a menu of treatments that incorporates lomilomi, acupressure, deep-tissue muscle movement and gentle stretching. **Special offer:** Enjoy 20 percent off treatments booked from 9am to 2pm, plus a complimentary 60-minute reflexology treatment with every Alila Seminyak 90-minute massage. **+62 361 302 1888 | alilahotels.com/seminyak**



Jakarta Newbie

The Four Seasons Hotel Jakarta has just opened in Capital Place, the Indonesian city's new, award-winning architectural landmark by César Pelli, located on Jalan Gatot Subroto within the Central Business District. The all-suite hotel has features to entice business and leisure travellers alike, including a range of dining options, a spa and event spaces. **Special offer:** Take advantage of an introductory deal at the hotel, featuring a daily credit against incidental charges of IDR 500,000 (around S\$50) until 30 September 2016. A special Bed and Breakfast package is also available. fourseasons.com/jakarta





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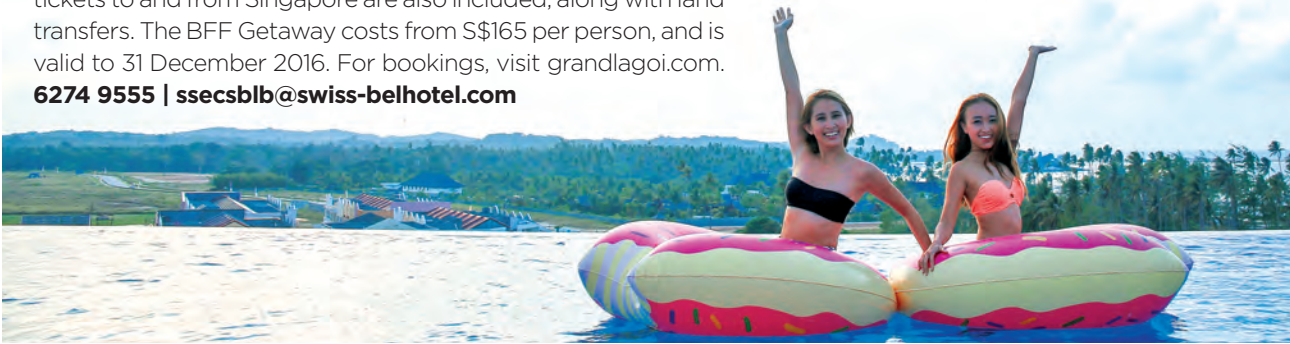
ASIA'S BOUTIQUE AIRLINE

Whether you're planning a bridal party or just keen for a much-needed weekend respite, now's the ideal time to set sail with your bestie for a getaway at Bintan's **Swiss-Belhotel Lagoi Bay**. The hotel's BFF Getaway package offers a one-night stay in an elegant deluxe room, an international breakfast buffet including live cooking stations, a soothing head and shoulder massage by V Spa, an Indonesian dinner at speciality restaurant Swiss-Café, and a complimentary gift for each room in the form of an eye-catching "Donut" swim-float for pool- and beach-lovers. Ferry tickets to and from Singapore are also included, along with land transfers. The BFF Getaway costs from S\$165 per person, and is valid to 31 December 2016. For bookings, visit grandlagoi.com.

6274 9555 | ssecsblb@swiss-belhotel.com

BFF

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Located just 50km south of Singapore, in the Riau Islands, are two overwater escapes aimed both at low-maintenance vacationers and those seeking something more. **Telunas Beach Resort** is ideal for families, with a pristine white sand beach, volleyball and soccer facilities, hammocks, a ropes course and other beach games; the various chalets (with or without balconies) and deluxe rooms start from IDR 750,000 (around S\$75) per night. Meanwhile, more refined **Telunas Private Island** has an infinity pool, private masseuses, a beach bar, daily complimentary kids' activities, sea kayaks and more; private sea villas start from IDR 2,000,000 (\$200) per night.

+62 811 771 0951 | telunasresorts.com ▲



Canberra Now Closer

Here's great news for anyone looking to visit the Australian capital: from 20 September, **Singapore Airlines** is commencing direct flights between Canberra and Singapore, four times a week, making it the first airline to operate regularly scheduled international services in and out of the city. Aside from being the seat of Australia's government, this is an affordable destination that won't break the budget – many museums, galleries and other attractions offer free entry; it's also the perfect base for exploring the region – from ski fields to countless bushwalking opportunities. singaporeair.com | visitcanberra.com.au



break the chain



HIV links over 33.4 million lives. The best protection is prevention through education. To see how you can save your employees' lives, visit www.bcas.org.sg



Activities Galore on a Bintan beach getaway

Not only are the beaches of **Bintan Resorts** only a short 60-minute catamaran ride away from Singapore, once you reach the island there are countless activities and options. Whether you're on a solo trip to recharge the batteries or "find yourself", or travelling with loved ones or a group of friends, there is something for everyone. Here are just a few of the latest highlights.

10 AWESOME THINGS TO DO IN BINTAN

1 Treasure Bay

The activities here are centred around the 6.3-hectare Crystal Lagoon – the largest recreational man-made sea water lagoon in Asia – where you can swim, kayak, paddleboard and more. There's also an inflatable water park, the new Bintan Wake Park and off-road ATV trails.

2 Air Adventures

The first ultralight seaplane facility in Southeast Asia has state-of-the-art light sport seaplanes that offer unparalleled views from thousands of feet up. The planes seat two people – a seaplane instructor in front, and you in the back of the open-air cockpit!

3 Adventure Scooter

Air Adventures has just launched Adventure Scooter, Bintan Resorts' first scooter rental business. Helmets, map and an emergency local cell phone are provided to all riders and passengers.

4 Golf

Bintan Resorts' four beautiful championship courses are designed by golf legends Ian Baker-Finch, Jack Nicklaus, Greg Norman and Gary Player. The courses feature undulating fairways meandering through the thick forests and wetlands, and foliage-framed greens.

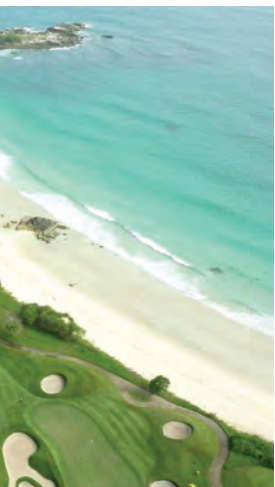
5 Spa & Massage

Most resorts here have their own in-house spa and massage facilities, but if you're on a romantic getaway, the award-winning spas at Banyan Tree Bintan or Angsana Bintan are particularly indulgent. Plaza Lagoi also offers a wide range of treatments.

6 Scuba Diving

If you want to try diving without taking the plunge into a certification course, Discover Scuba Diving is for you! Max's Dive Centre at Nirwana Gardens offers the programme in a pool, off the beach or from a dive boat, taught by experienced and PADI-certified diving instructors.





7 Cultural Attractions

Bintan is rich in heritage and history, which you can explore in specially crafted tours, from the sea gypsy village of Panglong, to Kwan Yin Temple, with one of the tallest Goddess of Mercy statues in Southeast Asia, and Penyengat Island, home of the last rulers of the Malay kingdom.

8 Mangrove Tour

This 90-minute eco tour takes you through the rich mangrove forests of quiet Sebung River. Keep an eye out for macaque and silver leaf monkeys, monitor lizards and other exotic wildlife. A highlight of the evening tour, meanwhile, is sighting fireflies, twinkling like lights on a Christmas tree.

9 Eco Farm

This 17-hectare haven of greenery, fruit trees and organically reared fish gives visitors the opportunity to discover nature's eco-cycles, interact with farmers, and learn about produce; you can even help harvest and plant crops.

10 Lagoi Beach

Lagoi Beach is a newly opened public beach located at the heart of Bintan Resorts, just behind the Swiss-Belhotel Lagoi Bay hotel and Plaza Lagoi. You can stay as relaxed or active as you want here, from strolling on the sand to getting involved in jetskiing or kayaking.

PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

Accommodation on Bintan: New & Notable



The Sanchaya: Guests can relive the romance and colonial elegance of a bygone era at luxurious beachfront estate, The Sanchaya. The resort's unique collection of 21 villas and nine suites are located on one of the region's most spectacular beaches and designed to reflect the exotic sights and sounds of Southeast Asia.



The Canopi: Set amongst Bintan's lush greenery, The Canopi boasts 41 Tent Suites that offer campers and adventure-seekers the best nature has to offer, yet with modern comforts and luxuries. Explore the sea, the private mangrove river or the spectacular 6.3-hectare sea water Crystal Lagoon.



Swiss-Belhotel Lagoi Bay:

This brand new four-star international hotel features 195 guestrooms in a modern contemporary design. It's ideally located along the prime tropical beach next to Plaza Lagoi, a centre of modern lifestyle with various culinary outlets and entertainment options.



Lagoi-Bay Villas: A newly opened and uniquely designed villa resort offering relaxed luxury in a tranquil and beautiful location, Lagoi-Bay is situated beside Plaza Lagoi and picturesque Lake Lagoi, and has spacious one- and two-bedroom guest villas with private pools and patios – a romantic and exclusive setting for an enchanting getaway. *✦*

For more information, visit bintan-resorts.com.

Phu Quoc: Vietnam's New Jewel



Looking for somewhere different to kick back at the beach, TIM COLMAN explores Vietnam's emerging tourist destination, Phu Quoc.



Singapore really is perfectly positioned for taking long weekend getaways. Yet, while Bali, Phuket and Bintan may be hassle-free destinations for beachside relaxation, they're not exactly hidden gems – it can be tricky finding a secluded section of beach and avoiding the tourist masses.

Now, for the seasoned traveller looking for something a little different, Vietnam's Phu Quoc is emerging as a holiday option where you won't spend a fortune, can escape the hordes, and can get back to nature without having to forgo resort-style luxury.

Lying to the south of Cambodia in the Gulf of Thailand, Phu Quoc's economy has traditionally been based on fish sauce and pepper. Plenty of anchovy is fished for creating this distinctive sauce, while pepper is harvested in the centre of the island. You'll also find these two condiments in any restaurant you visit. Today, though, it's the island's white-sand beaches and crystal-clear waters that are enticing most of the tourists.

Getting there

There are currently no direct flights from Singapore to Phu Quoc, but don't let this put you off. Just go to Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC); from there, you're only a 40-minute flight away from the island. This gives you two choices, depending on which connection you choose: a short layover in the airport at HCMC, or an overnight stay, which gives you some time to explore before leaving for your island retreat. You're unlikely to be bored in Vietnam's largest city, and you can catch the short flight to Phu Quoc first thing in the morning.



Things to do on a Saigon layover

So you've decided to overnight in Ho Chi Minh City. What to do?

- Check out the impressive French colonial architecture of the Notre Dame Cathedral and Saigon General Post Office.
- Haggle for coffee, dried fruit and other knick-knacks at the Ben Thanh Market. If shopping isn't your thing, exit at Gate 13, cross the road and drop into Pho 25 for some of the country's famed beef soup, washed down with a Beer 333.
- Watch a water puppet show at the Golden Dragon Theatre. (Yep, that's right: puppets on water.)
- Enjoy a dinner cruise on the Saigon River. (Pick the right one though, otherwise your peaceful meal will become a karaoke nightmare.)





Where to stay

The big resorts are on their way to Phu Quoc, but they haven't all arrived just yet. The island is actually one of Southeast Asia's least developed areas, meaning you can get a much better resort deal compared with equivalent accommodation at one of the more established beach destinations.

Global brand Novotel is one of the latest resorts to set up on the island. Located on Truong Beach (aka Long Beach), the **Novotel Phu Quoc Resort** caters for both families and couples, neither group spoiling the other's stay. As well as your standard guestrooms, it offers beachfront villas with private pools. The epic design

features several public pools and direct access to the beach, which stretches for a massive 20 kilometres. Make it to the beachfront and you'll find the Ocean Bar, the perfect spot for sunset drinks.

If you're looking for something at the opposite end of the scale, you can head further up Long Beach to the **Sea Star Resort**. At this series of small bungalows, you're within walking distance of **Duong Dong**, Phu Quoc's largest town. Head to **Tran Hung Dao Street** for restaurants and the local food market, and to **Cao Dai Temple** for panoramic views of the island. If you're after a good bar, Rory's is the spot to catch the sunset over a cheap beer.

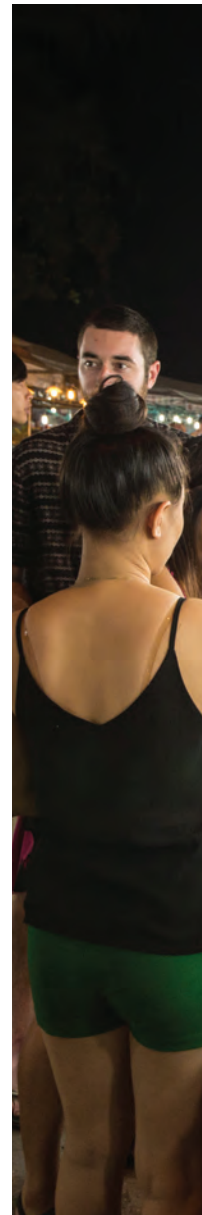




Getting wet

Even though you're staying on Truong Beach, it's worth making the trek to the other side of the island to **Sao Beach**. A taxi, or a motorbike taxi for the more adventurous, will get you to what many believe to be the best beach in Vietnam: jungle backdrop, powdery white sand and turquoise water. It's relatively underdeveloped but still has plenty of local restaurants and bars—though nothing that overpowers the natural green beauty surrounding the beach; the calm waters are perfect for kids, too.

If you find greenery enticing, take a visit to the **Tranh Waterfall**. A short hike through the forest, where you'll find many locals enjoying a picnic, will get you to the spot. You'll definitely appreciate the crisp, fresh water after the walk—just make sure it's not the dry season, otherwise there'll be no way to cool off.





Seafood feasts

Seafood is the island's staple, and the place to get it at its freshest is **Ham Ninh Fishing Village**. Head to the pier to see the fishing boats unloading their catch, then pick one of the restaurants along the water to enjoy the food. Steamed crab and whole fish are on offer here, as well as a variety of traditional Vietnamese dishes. Close at hand on your table will be the island's famous fish sauce and pepper.

The **Dinh Cau Night Market** offers barbecue seafood options – the squid, fresh off the hot coals, is a particular favourite; dip it into a delicious pepper and lime mix for the best taste. At the other end of street, you'll find vendors selling souvenirs as well as bags of the famous pepper, so you can take the flavour of Phu Quoc home with you.



A flying start

If you want to fly to Phu Quoc as directly as possible, **VietJet** (vietjetair.com) currently offers the quickest option. The complete journey is a little over four hours, including a two-hour stopover at Ho Chi Minh City Airport. There are around seven daily flights to the island, so you're bound to find a connection that works for you. The airline also flies to most destinations in Vietnam, so you can easily see the whole country at a bargain price. *El*



VIETNAM: *City to Coast*

Vietnam's Hanoi and Halong Bay prove to be the perfect destinations for a tenth-anniversary trip for AMY BROOK-PARTRIDGE and hubby James.



I'm not sure if it's to do with my age, being a parent, or my increasing reticence to flash the flesh in swimmers, but beach holidays hold little appeal for me nowadays – which brings me happily in line with James, who never really liked them in the first place. I'll admit that it was primarily my addiction to *pho*, rather than James's interest in history, that made me put a pin in Vietnam as the favoured destinations for our tenth wedding anniversary; and the pairing of a trip to the historic city of Hanoi with a cruise through the UNESCO World Heritage site of Halong Bay seemed an easy choice.

DAY 1

Arriving early evening, and feeling fresh after a breezy three-and-a-half-hour SilkAir flight from Singapore, we were delivered by taxi to our first hotel for the night. Having scoured TripAdvisor for a low-cost boutique hotel, I was overwhelmed by the number of two- and three-star hotels in the Old Quarter of Hanoi. Ultimately, I opted for La Beauté de Hanoi. Right in the middle of the action, it was clean, with helpful staff and some lovely hints of French architecture. We were, however, on the second floor, and with the benefit of hindsight I would have requested a much higher level. The constant noise and buzz of the city, which is all part of the appeal when you're awake, is in no way fun when you're trying to sleep!

Keen to get a taste of the city, we headed first to Avalon Café Lounge (avalon.vn), a rooftop bar within a five-minute walk. This in itself was an adventure, as traffic and pedestrians share the roads in a crazy, symbiotic way. We were given a sheet by our hotel that explained how to cross the road – make eye contact with the drivers, don't hesitate or step back – but it's easier said than done when you've come from a country where jaywalking is a serious offence.

Avalon is a fantastic place to sit and watch the mayhem below, and we enjoyed a cocktail or two before heading to New Day Restaurant (newdayrestaurant.com),

a cheap and cheerful Vietnamese eatery that comes highly recommended, and rightly so. With locals and tourists sharing tables, the place has a great vibe, and the delicious food comes quickly. We then headed off for a nearby foot massage before an early bedtime, in order to be ready for our 7am bus departure for Halong Bay.

DAY 2

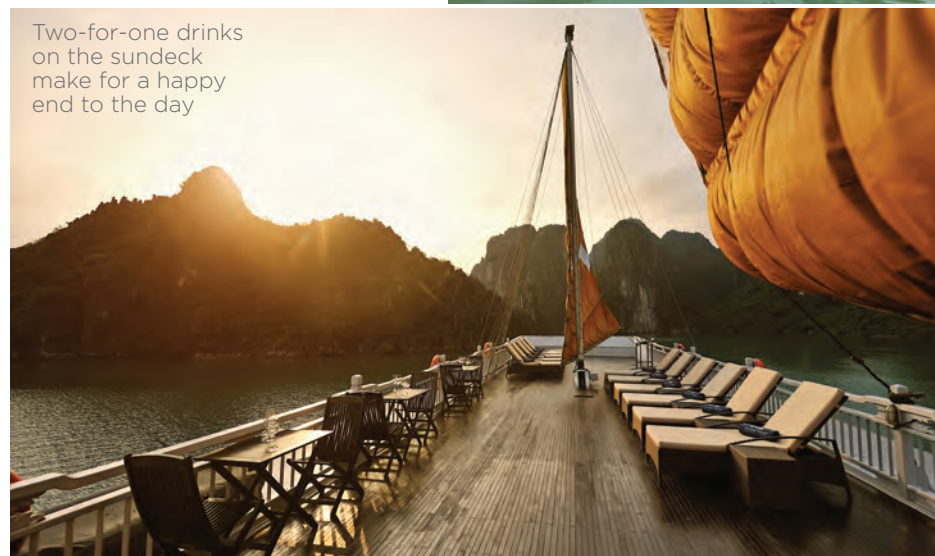
The journey from Hanoi to Halong Bay is four hours, and slightly tedious. Take something to read or download a good movie onto your iPad, and make yourself comfy. Halfway through the journey, you're dropped at a café-cum-tourist spot where it seems that every coach on its way to Halong Bay stops. Prices for the tat on offer are double what you would pay in Hanoi, so beware.

Our two-day, one-night trip was with Paradise Cruises, who arranged the transfer from city to coast. While waiting to be ushered to the boat, we helped ourselves to coffee and snacks in the relatively new Paradise Hotel at the port, all part of the service. Not really knowing what to expect, and having never been on a cruise before, when we did reach the boat – *Paradise Luxury 4* – we were glad it wasn't monstrous, and that it had a sweet, rustic style.

At first glance, our cruise itinerary looked like we wouldn't have much time to relax, but this truly wasn't the case. A delicious three-course lunch and bottle of rosé was followed by a kayak trip to Luon Cave – we were the only ones to actually capsize (perhaps something to do with the wine), but at least we got to have a swim.



James and Amy managed to kayak and take an unexpected dip in the bay



Two-for-one drinks on the sundeck make for a happy end to the day



View of Halong Bay from Titop Island

Cruise itinerary at a glance

1-2PM: Three-course lunch while passing sites such as Hoa Cuong fishing village and Soi Sim Beach.

2-3PM: Explore Luon Cave in bamboo boats or kayaks.

4-5PM: Visit Titop Island, hike up around 400 steps to get fantastic views of Halong Bay, or swim at the beach.

5-7PM: Two-for-one Happy Hour on the boat while anchored at Coconut Tree Island. During this, a cooking demonstration on making spring rolls.

7.30-11PM: Dinner is served, followed by spa services, a movie night or squid fishing.



ABOVE
The Apricot Hotel's glitzy lounge and bar

RIGHT
The hotel is just on the edge of Hoan Kiem Lake



DAY 3

The second day of our cruise saw us arrive at Sung Sot Cave, where we hiked up and down around 600 steps to see the magnificent limestone formations of the biggest cave in Halong Bay. Thankfully, ours was one of the first boats to arrive – the caves can fill up fast with tourists. Although our tour guide tried to talk us through the background of the caves, with the number of other visitors and the echoing acoustics, I'd recommend doing some research of your own before visiting, so you can take in the sights while you're there.

Breakfast followed, then we checked out and said goodbye to the very accommodating cruise staff and our fellow passengers. Lunch was provided back at the Paradise Hotel in the port; from there, we set off on our four-hour journey back to Hanoi.

We arrived at our next overnight stop, the Apricot Hotel, by mid-afternoon. Positioned as a luxury property, it's situated right opposite Hoan Kiem Lake. There are great views from the rooftop, where the pool and gym are situated; however, as the former was closed for routine cleaning, we were forced to use the latter instead – but that was probably a good thing!

The concierge recommended Porte D'Annam restaurant close to Hanoi's St Joseph's Cathedral; it was opened by Didier Corlou, a chef who previously worked at the Hotel Metropole, and who is behind as many as four restaurants in Hanoi. After enjoying a cocktail in the glitzy hotel lobby bar, we walked to the restaurant just around the corner. The tempting menu of Vietnamese cuisine, including fresh rolls of prawn and mango, and green papaya with crab, was reasonably priced, and we were seriously impressed with the food.

Back at the hotel, we propped up the beautiful bar for a while before sloping off to bed. We'd made the decision earlier to go to Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum the next morning, and to avoid the prospective crowds we wanted to get there nice and early.

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DAY 4

Our taxi got us to the mausoleum at 8am, and there were already a number of people queuing up. Be prepared to hand in any cameras or phones, as well as your handbag, and dress modestly (don't wear shorts, tank tops or hats). The queue moved quickly enough and we were soon at the entrance to the mausoleum – be prepared to walk at a slow and steady pace when inside; don't stop moving, and don't put your hands in your pockets or talk.

While the viewing is fast and efficient, there's plenty more to see in the palace grounds, including house number 54 where Ho Chi Minh lived and worked from 1954, plus his house on stilts and the presidential palace. There's also a museum, where we learnt that Ho Chi Minh had actually requested to be cremated, and his ashes scattered in South, North and Central Vietnam to signify harmony. Instead, his body was embalmed and housed in the mausoleum, a monumental marble edifice built for the purpose; and as our tour guide said with a shrug, he can't complain now.

Back at the hotel we devoured some delicious breakfast buffet food, before checking out and heading to our next and final stop, the Hotel Metropole Hanoi (part of the Sofitel hotel group). Today was also the day of our wedding anniversary, and after a busy few days we were looking forward to relaxing and doing very little. Unbeknownst to me, James had upgraded us to a suite – a very welcome touch. Our luxurious room came with access to the Club Lounge on the seventh floor, where afternoon tea and evening cocktails are all part of the deal.

After lunching buffet-style in the Spice Garden restaurant, we then retired to the pool, and at 5pm joined the complimentary Path of History tour of the hotel. This includes a visit to the hotel's bomb shelter, which had been sealed and remained so until its chance rediscovery by the engineering department during the renovation of the poolside Bamboo Bar in 2011. The shelter had served to protect guests, including singer Joan Baez and actress Jane Fonda, from the air raids during the American War (1964 to 1973).

That evening, and continuing our pledge to not step foot outside the hotel, we enjoyed a cocktail before dining at Le Beaulieu. The French restaurant's large windows overlook the streets outside, and with its opulent lighting and décor adding to the ambience, you could easily think you're in a restaurant in Paris.



Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum



The Hotel Metropole Hanoi is steeped in history



The Metropole's pool at night



La Terrasse du Metropole wraps around the outside of Le Beaulieu, where you feel like you're dining in a Parisian restaurant



Discover the bomb shelter during the Hotel Metropole's Path of History tour

DAY 5

Knowing it was our last day in Hanoi, we woke with a sense of sadness, and so relied heavily on our masseuses at the hotel spa to help relieve our increasing tension. Another lie by the pool, a session at the gym and a final relaxation in our luxurious room, and then we were whisked off back through the crazy streets of Hanoi and to our return flight home.

FACT FILE


FLIGHTS: We paid \$315 each for our SilkAir flights.

VISA: At the time of travel, and as British passport holders, we did not need a visa; however, entry requirements were scheduled to change on 30 June, so check with your embassy.

LA BEAUTÉ DE HANOI: One night in a superior room starts at \$80. la-beautehanoi.com

PARADISE CRUISE: A two-day, one-night cruise on *Paradise Luxury*, including food, starts at \$725 for two people; however, they do run seasonal price promotions. The shuttle bus is \$55 per person. paradisecruises.vn

APRICOT HOTEL: One night in a Sketch room, including breakfast, starts at \$210. apricothotels.com

HOTEL METROPOLE: A Prestige Suite costs around \$950 per night; a Grand Luxury room in the Metropole Wing is around \$550. sofitel-legend.com/hanoi 



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5 Things to Do in Mauritius

Whether you're a beach bum, an adventure seeker or travelling with the kids, Mauritius has something for everyone.

No trip to the island of Mauritius – synonymous with powdery white sand that gives way to the azure blue waters of the Indian Ocean – would be complete without time spent at the beach. But if you're looking for something more, Mauritius offers a range of activities that are sure to keep you happy, whether you're on a romantic getaway, on vacation with the family or on an adventure trip for one. Here's our list of five great things to do on the island.

BY SMITA DESOUZA

1 Explore the seabed in a submarine

If you're keen to explore the sea but don't want to get into a diving suit or breathe through apparatus, enjoy the underwater wonders in a Blue Safari Submarine instead. An easy yet exciting way to see the Indian Ocean seabed, this submarine is air-conditioned and seats nine people and the captain. It's also pressurised so you don't feel uncomfortable as you slowly descend to a depth of 35 metres. On the way down, you'll see schools of colourful fish, eels and even some turtles – so don't forget your camera. The guided tour visits a shipwreck, explores the coral reefs and makes a pit stop at the anchor of a 17th-century galleon. The entire trip takes two hours, of which you spend 45 minutes underwater. You can also book a submarine for a romantic underwater lunch for two.



Blue Safari Submarine, Coastal Road, Trou aux Biches, bluesaf@intnet.mu
mauritiusblue-safari.com



2 Interact with the big cats

Don't miss out on an opportunity to get up close and personal with the big cats at Casela World of Adventures. During this one-of-a-kind activity, you're allowed to get near enough to touch and take pictures with majestic big cats including lions, tigers, caracals and cheetah. Once you're done with the safety briefing, the handlers accompany you into the enclosure where you interact with your choice of cat. None of the animals are forced to interact with visitors, and in the extremely rare case that the cats don't like you, you're asked to leave. The more adventurous can also choose to walk with the younger lions and enjoy their playful nature as they climb trees and roll about on the ground.

If you're travelling with kids who don't meet the height or age requirement for this activity, you can still enjoy watching the cats as you drive through their 12-acre habitat or while seated atop the viewing platform. These are popular activities, so it's best to book in advance.



Casela World of Adventures, Henrietta, Vacoas-Phoenix
booking.casela@caselapark.com | caselapark.com

A brief history of Mauritius

First discovered by the Arabs, and then visited by the Portuguese, the island of Mauritius wasn't inhabited until a Dutch expedition settled there in 1638. They soon left, however, as the colony was constantly ravaged by droughts, cyclones and pests. The French occupied the island next, bringing in slaves from around the region to work on cultivation. The island, then called Isle de France, thrived under French governor Mahé de Labourdonnais, and trade flourished as Mauritius became a major exporter of sugar and rum. The British captured the island in 1810 and only gave up sovereignty in 1968, when Mauritius became independent. During this time, they maintained the island's laws, customs, religion and trade, and the French language. They abolished slavery, but allowed for indentured workers from India to work on sugarcane plantations. It is the gradual economic and political rise of this large population of Indians that has shaped the history of the country.

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New openings: Hanoi (2016) Yangon (2017) London (2019)



3 Ride a Seakart

No visit to Mauritius would be complete without sampling this adrenaline-packed activity. The Seakart will have you bouncing off the waves, wind in your hair, while you enjoy the breathtaking beauty of the natural lagoons along the southwest coast of the island. A cross between a jet ski and a speedboat, the Seakart is spacious, incredibly stable and easy to drive, eliminating the various safety issues associated with this kind of sea vehicle. It seats two adults and one child, so you can enjoy a day out at sea with your friends or family.

Fun Adventure Mauritius,
Grande Riviere Noire
contact@fun-adventure.mu
mauritiusfun-adventure.mu



4 Visit Port Louis

The capital of the country and its economic, cultural and political centre, Port Louis sits between the Indian Ocean and a mountainous background. It's a melting pot of cultures, where you'll notice Indian, African, Chinese, European and Middle Eastern influences and a blend of the old and the new. While there, make a stop at the Citadel Fort Adelaide for a bird's eye view of the city; and later make your way down to the central market, a colourful, bustling bazaar that will offer you a glimpse into local life. You can also pick up souvenirs and local delicacies here, but don't forget to bargain.





GETTING THERE

Award-winning national airline Air Mauritius offers direct flights from Singapore every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Through July and August this year, return tickets are available for just \$650 (plus taxes), so there's never been a better time to visit Mauritius.

5 Discover the country's sweet past

First introduced to the island by the Dutch settlers, sugarcane plays an integral part in the history and culture of the island. Get an insight into this fascinating heritage at L'Aventure du Sucre (Sugar World). Housed in an old sugar factory that still retains its machinery, this museum guides visitors through the process of sugar production, sugar routes, sugar markets and the commodity's inextricable links with slavery, the immigrant population, the rum trade and much more. Wrap up your visit with a meal at Le Fangourin, where they serve up delicious regional cuisine; and don't forget to pick up confectionery, special and unrefined sugars and a bottle of rum from the Village Boutik on the museum grounds.

L'Aventure du Sucre, Beau Plan, Pamplemousses
aventure.sucre@intnet.mu | mauritiusaventuredusucre.com

WHERE TO STAY

Westin Turtle Bay Resort & Spa

Situated on the island's northwest coast, this luxury resort gets its name from the idyllic Turtle Bay (also a protected marine park) that it faces. Ideal for those who like their vacations to be a balance of rest and recreation, the resort offers a plethora of activities such as diving, a running programme in association with New Balance, and in-room fitness equipment. After your workout, there's ample opportunity to relax by either of the two pools, or at the beach, while nibbling on nutrient-rich Super Food Rx dishes. Kids can be kept busy with their own activities at the kids' club.

The Residence

Inspired by plantation-era homes, The Residence is a colonial-style hotel that exudes old-world charm. Situated on the east coast and fringed by the white sandy beach of Belle Mare (one of the most beautiful in Mauritius), it's ideal for those looking for some downtime in the sun. Choose from Garden View, Ocean View and Ocean Front rooms that come complete with butlers who take care of everything, from unpacking to running a bath or doing the laundry and ironing. Travelling with kids? Drop them off at The Planters Kids' Club to make it an even more relaxing holiday.

Shangri-La's Le Touessrok Resort & Spa

Host to celebrities and royalty, this glamorous resort sits on the east coast of Mauritius in Trou d'Eau Douce Bay and boasts a secluded private island, Ilot Mangénie. Reopened in November 2015, it's spread across 34 acres of beachfront, so no matter which room you choose you're assured of a dazzling, postcard-perfect view of the Indian Ocean. The resort also has a kids' club and its own 18-hole championship golf course designed by legendary pro-golfer Bernhard Langer; green fees are complimentary for guests. *✎*

westinturtlebaymauritius.com | cenizaro.com/theresidence/mauritius | shangri-la.com/mauritius

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“Practising daily gratitude is important. It starts your day off on a nice note!”

Stephanie Dickson



Wedges of Wisdom

After deciding to break away from a fast-paced career in the fashion industry and start her own business a year ago, STEPHANIE DICKSON has learnt more about herself than she could ever have anticipated. The founder of **The Wedge Asia**, a company that organises talks, events and workshops to inspire and motivate, tells us about her journey.

WORDS SUSANNAH JAFFER
HAIR AND MAKEUP SMITA DESOUZA
PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL BERNABE
LOCATION WORKING CAPITOL





ith her grounded and rather philosophical attitude towards life and business, her calm voice and approachable demeanour, Stephanie seems wiser than her twenty-something years. Her accent is not easy to place – a product of her third-culture kid upbringing, perhaps.

I later discover that her mum is a holistic energy healer; is that perhaps where Stephanie gets her “zen” aura from? “I definitely owe a lot to her outlook and advice, especially since I began running a start-up!” she laughs.

Currently running The Wedge Asia with her small team out of a buzzing co-working space in the centre of town, she says her entrepreneurial journey hasn’t just been about finding and following a successful business model; she did a lot of honest soul-searching, too, in order to discover a cause that she felt truly passionate about. In the end, that calling turned out to be to provide a platform to promote other inspirational individuals and businesses to the public through events, talks and workshops.

Tell us more about your life before co-founding The Wedge Asia.

I was born in Australia and am the eldest of four. My parents have lived in various places; I went to high school here, and to university at Monash in Melbourne. My dad – who works in hydroponics and agriculture – has since moved back here to Singapore. Before founding The Wedge Asia, I worked in marketing and events for Fidé Fashion Weeks.

That sounds very exciting!

Yes, it was, but it was also very demanding and fast-paced. After starting off as a volunteer for Men’s Fashion Week, which was run by business mogul Frank Cintamani, I quickly progressed to a full-time position, and managing a team of volunteers. After four years of organising the company’s events around the world, I felt it was time to move on to the next chapter. I’d learnt a lot, really quickly – especially about setting

my own standards high – and gained a ton of valuable experience. I’m glad I went through it all in my early twenties; I don’t think I’d have the energy to do it now, even though it’s just a few years later! Jerald, my co-founder, was one of my colleagues from that time. When I made the decision to quit, he was enthusiastic to come along on the journey!

Where did the concept for The Wedge Asia spring from?

When I started to consider what my business would be, I felt quite overwhelmed. I loved organising events, of course, but what type of business was I going to create with that passion? During my research, I realised that there were lots of inspirational articles and videos online, where you could gain a lot of knowledge; but there seemed to be something missing – they didn’t quite engage me like I wanted them to.

As a newbie entrepreneur, I was seeking lessons. I wanted to learn from people who had been through the process, but I wanted more than just to watch people on a computer screen.

Something I’d come to really believe in was the value of human-to-human interaction, and the way you connect with others’ stories when you hear them speak in person. You’ll remember how it made you think, how it made you feel; and, hopefully, you actually decide to take action on it, so that you grow from that experience.

There’s just something about the empathy and the power of connection at group events – just think of TED talks – which is highly underestimated. That’s the reason why we started creating and running these workshops, talks and events for The Wedge, and it’s something we’re continually refining and working on.

Define what “living consciously” means to you.

To me, living consciously means being more present in the moment, and making a conscious effort to be kinder to yourself and those around you. If that cab driver wants to have a conversation with you on your morning commute, just put your phone down and talk! Living more consciously is not only something I preach, but something I try to live by in everything I do.

I used to look too much at the past and the future, rather than focusing on the present. Today, I make a concerted effort to be more conscious, and that’s where the idea of building a like-minded community of people through The Wedge came into play.



“To me, thinking consciously means being more present in the moment, and making a conscious effort to be kinder to yourself and those around you.”



It's quite a new concept in Asia, isn't it?

Yes. Funnily enough, people in Asia seem to be shy to ask questions after hearing a presentation, but that's exactly what we encourage! Sometimes, the questions can be even more powerful than the speaker's presentation. There are times when we'll plant the first question, so as to break the ice and make the atmosphere more comfortable.

We have also run several more technically based events, on tech or content marketing, for example; but I find both myself and other people really gravitating more towards real people's stories: their pains, their triumphs, their experiences and the adversities they have overcome.

Is it right to say that Green Is The New Black festival, which you've been organising annually, is an extension of that?

Yes. The whole basis of The Wedge is to organise events which make people more aware, more responsive, and more conscious of the way they're living their lives. Green Is The New Black festival really stemmed from this desire. It's a platform to promote some great emerging businesses and change makers who are doing great things out there: for example, a retail company that supports the livelihoods of artisans, or an independent technology or health company that's doing something innovative.

Which are your favourite "conscious" labels?

This necklace I'm wearing today is from Twin Within, produced by an Icelandic lady whose products help to support women in the Philippines. I'm also a big fan of beauty brand Ayelli's 100 percent pure Argan oil, hand-produced by a tribe of women in Morocco. I admire both of these labels and their passionate founders because they're very aware about the impact their businesses are having on others, are in the know about their supply chains, and live and breathe their brands.

It's a very authentic and honest way of doing business, and there's a big feel-good factor for the consumer. It's not just about buying a product. You can connect with the founder, their story and what they've built, and you know you're supporting a good cause.

These are the sorts of incredible stories we want to share, and I think it's a concept people are really catching on to. A trend of consciousness is permeating into different aspects of people's lives right now: handmade products, sustainable fashion, responsibly sourced raw materials and so on. More than ever before, there's a thirst for knowledge about products that do good, both socially and for the environment.

Do you think people can grow into entrepreneurship?


I'd always had a gut feeling that there was something more I should be doing. At the time I didn't know what, but I knew the idea would come to me one day. When I quit my last job, all I knew was that I wanted to do something more meaningful than working in fashion, which was too materialistic for me. Also, I was tired of dealing with the personalities that came along with the job, and felt I needed to break away from all that. I love being around and getting to know real people.

So, to answer your question, I definitely grew into entrepreneurship. When we started, I couldn't predict everything we would create, not even in my mind: I just kept putting one foot in front of the other. I'm so excited to see what our team can build in the next 12 months.

Do you have a mantra you live by?

I don't have a specific mantra, but I do make a conscious effort to be more present and to be kind to myself. Practising gratitude daily is really important. When I'm doing my teeth, that's when I tell my reflection that I love and accept myself – it's actually called "mirror work"; you can read more about it in *You Can Heal Your Life* by Louise Hay. It starts your day off on a nice note. Self-employment is not easy – I've had to feed those thoughts to myself every day, until I came to believe them. *✦*



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FASHION



COS

220

News: The latest style and retail updates

222

Shopping: Fashion ideas for tweens and teen years

What's New



VIP Treatment

What could make you feel more like a VIP than a customised shopping experience? **The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands** now offers a by-appointment-only, personal shopping service. Simply fill in a form online, providing your dress size and other information, and then a flurry of personal stylists will get working to select garments on the basis of your budget and style preferences. Priced at \$250 for a three-hour session. **Visit marinabaysands.com/shopping for more details.**



Editor's Pick

Simple to dress up or down, these leather metallic sliders will add a quirky edge to any outfit. **Zara**, \$89.90



Bold Baggage

Ever had one of those moments where you're trying to spot your suitcase at the airport among a sea of other drab, black luggage, and made a mental note to buy a different one as soon as possible? Don't put it off any longer. You won't miss one of these bright and stylish **Cyrah suitcase designs by Kipling** on the baggage belt. Prices range from \$399 to \$435. **Available at Kipling boutiques island-wide.** ▲

Smart Buy

If you're planning on heading to a colder climate later this year, don't wait to shop at your destination. Get organised and check out the **COS Autumn-Winter collection**, which features a strikingly sophisticated palette of rich navy, intense blue, ochre, burgundy and forest green inspired by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye's paintings. Classic feminine forms are given a playful twist with an eclectic combination of textures, while the menswear selection features modern prints and layered silhouettes inspired by Berlin-based artist Lev Khesin. **Available at COS.**



Cultural Collab

Marking its first fashion partnership in Singapore, Rimowa has joined up with local designer Ong Shunmugam to create a series of beautiful travel cabin cases. Entitled **Women on a Mission**, the collection consists of designs that represent travel destinations within Asia – including China, Indonesia, India, Japan, Malaysia and Mongolia. Each case is coated on the exterior with a traditional textile from the corresponding country, and lined inside with digitised illustrations by Singapore-based visual artist Rizibë. If you want to get your hands on one, you'd better be quick – only three of each design have been produced! rimowa.com



We're Lusting After...

... accessories by **Delvaux** (pronounced del-voh), a heritage leather-goods brand founded in Brussels that has been around since 1829. From shoulder bags to elegant totes and clutch bags, there's a style to suit virtually any taste, and they're all produced by hand in a workshop in either Belgium or France. Our favourites include the Simplissime Mini City bag, the Givry Mini Polo in Rose Candy, as well as the nude-coloured Brilliant Box Calf Leather Tote. #01-18/19 Scotts Square.

Chic Young Things

Struggling to find oh-so-stylish yet age-appropriate attire for your growing tweens or teens? A visit to these independent boutiques and stores will start you out right.

SHOPPING AT TIFFANY'S

Well known by both expats and locals for its fashion-forward designs in realistic size ranges, this boutique is a one-stop shop for dresses, jumpsuits, cute tops, shorts and accessories for both mums and teens. Owner Tiffany Maughan helps to curate her ranges for young adults with the help of her daughter Mackenzie on regular buying trips, and you'll find anything from gowns for prom to beach-appropriate maxis at affordable prices. Fresh designs arrive weekly, so if you see something you like, we advise snapping it up pronto!

#02-03 Tanglin Mall | 6468 6156
#01-17C Great World City | 6235 2250
shoppingattiffanys.com



THE WYLD SHOP

Founded by Aussie native Kara Bensley-Austin, this online boutique brings Australian high-street chic to Singapore's shores, with the majority of designs being exclusive to her store. There's plenty to browse through, including breezy dresses, cute bikinis, trousers, skirts and even sleepwear. Labels include Indikah, Minkpink, Liberty Lee and Paint it Red, to name a few. We also love the quirky sunglasses from Le Specs – the ideal finishing touch to any outfit! The team also holds frequent pop-up stores, trunk shows and shopping parties for keen young fashionistas.

thewyldshop.com



TWELVE BY ELLY

This multi-label boutique has made it its mission to cater for growing tweens! Here, you'll find trendy clothing designs and accessories for both girls and boys between the ages of six and twelve. Brands are sourced from the US, Europe and Scandinavia, including names such as Baggu bags, Salted Caramel, Bensimon sneakers and American Outfitters. What's more, some of the boutique's colourful prints and designs are even created by co-owners Audrey and Carol, with the help of a graphic artist.

#02-06 Cluny Court | 6468 6156
twelvebyelly.com



MATTER

This local and socially conscious brand first started out creating fun, printed trouser pants, shorts and scarves using artisan techniques and loomed fabric, all using sustainable techniques and transparent supply chains. Now, it's launched a fabulous range of jumpsuits and rompers in soft cotton, ideal for teens and adults alike, produced using azo-free dyes.

matterprints.com
twelvebyelly.com

TWEENAGE

This little home-grown boutique – founded by Erinna Khoo after she constantly struggled to find stylish and age-appropriate gear for her growing children – specialises in trendy yet sensible fashion for your teens and tweenagers ages seven to 14. You'll find plenty of Singapore-weather-friendly designs in store, from dresses to ballet shoes with sizing running from 9 to 14. Clothes and accessories are sourced from both Europe and Australia, including Animal Apparel and Timberland Kids.

#01-39A United Square | 6258 3001



KIDS 21

If it's designer threads you're after (perhaps for a special occasion!) Club 21's fashion and lifestyle stores dedicated to children are the place to head. There are tons of outfit ideas at these multi-label stores for boys and girls up to age 16, including names such as Kenzo Kids, Junior Gaultier, Paul Smith Junior and more. Our favourite picks from their latest releases are these quirky bags for him and her from Stella McCartney Kids.

#02-21 Forum The Shopping Mall | 6304 1340
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Level 4 Takashimaya Department Store | 6304 1379
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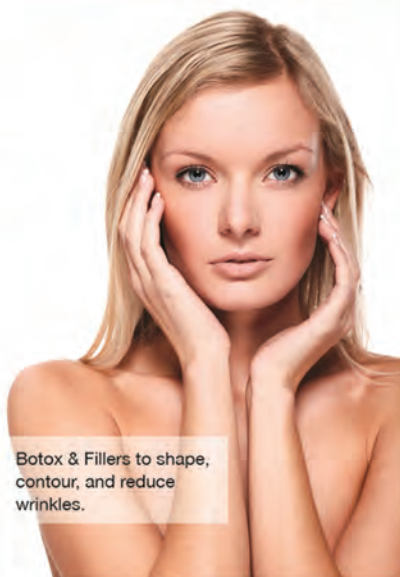


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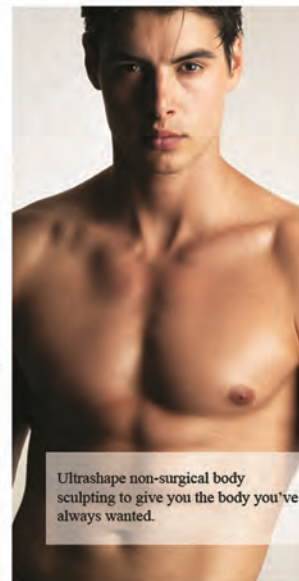


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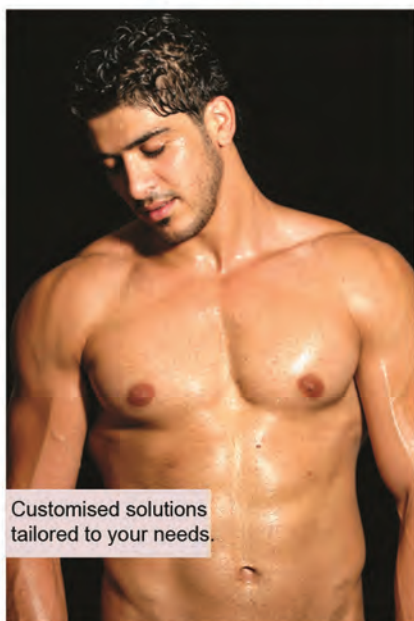
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BEAUTY



H&M

228

News: The latest style and grooming updates

232

Tried & Tested: Our panel puts a new serum to the test

235

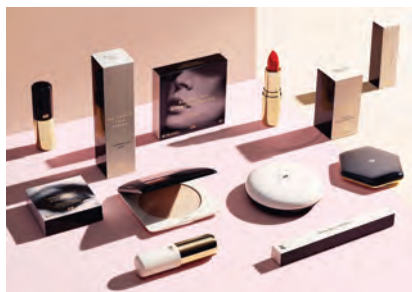
A Better Complexion: Expert advice for glowing, youthful skin

What's New



Editor's Pick

Urban Decay's "Naked" is our new favourite nude lippie. Easy for daily wear, the creamy formula is non-drying and stays put around the clock. \$36.



We're excited about ...

H&M is launching its beauty line in Asia later this year, and we lucky folk in Singapore will be the first to get our hands on it. Expect over 700 different cosmetics for skin, hair and nails – even beauty tools – available in chic, minimalist packaging. There will also be a premium body care line and a range of eco-friendly and sustainably produced goodies. There's no specific launch date yet, so keep an eye on social media for updates! **Available at H&M Orchard and H&M Raffles Place.** ▲



Skin Smoother

In need of a complexion overhaul? A microdermabrasion treatment could be your best bet. Not only does it work wonders on blemishes and acne, but it can help to improve the appearance of sun damage, stretch marks and scarring, too. Thankfully, the technology is now so sophisticated that there's virtually no skin dragging and it won't irritate even sensitive skin types. The **CACI Orbital Microdermabrasion** with LED light therapy uses an innovative, crystal-free method to gently exfoliate, while LED light soothes, cleanses skin of bacteria and promotes collagen production and tissue healing. **To book an appointment, call 6250 1326 or visit swukaesthetics.com.** ▲

This month, SWUK is running a special GSS promotion: Buy one CACI microdermabrasion session at \$85.60 and get another one free, to be redeemed within one month.

Heritage Buy

What started off in the seventies as a small family-run business producing fine soaps has certainly come a long way! Now, **Crabtree & Evelyn** has gone back to its roots with a repackaging of its Heritage soaps. Each bar is triple-milled, smells divine and produces a rich, creamy lather for shower-time pampering. We love the zingy, refreshing scent of the Citron, Honey and Coriander soap and the exotic fragrance of the Pomegranate, Argan and Grape. \$15 each, at Crabtree & Evelyn stores island-wide.



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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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www.thedermatologypractice.com



A Hit of Hydration

After cleansing, moisturising is one of the aspects of your skincare regime you just shouldn't skip, no matter how knackered you are. That's why the latest addition to Dior's Hydralife range, the **Jelly Sleeping Mask** (\$132), is every lazy girl's godsend. Simply apply the mask before bed, to let it be absorbed throughout the night while it coats your skin in a layer of skin-plumping hyaluronic acid. A bouncy, dewy complexion is just one sleep away!

Surprising Results

Although the idea of washing your hair with oil-infused products in this sweat-inducing humidity may make you feel squeamish, hear us out: this **French Rose Oil-infused** hair care range won't turn your locks into a greasy mess! Cleansing with oil actually rebalances sebum production from the scalp, meaning less-oily hair that looks shinier, more moisturised and less frizzy. **From \$16.90, available at Watsons, Guardian, leading supermarkets and selected departmental stores.** ▼



Korean Style

With its impressive formulations and results, it didn't take us long to get on board with Korean makeup and skincare – so when we heard about the new two-toned gradient lip being the new craze, we paid attention. For a foolproof way of achieving the look, use **Etude House's Twin Shot Lip Tints**, which conveniently dispense two tints of complementary colours and textures with just one click. First apply the matte mousse tint, and then follow with the highly pigmented tint shot for the inner contours. To blend, simply smack your lips together and ... **ta-da! \$23.90, available at Etude House stores island-wide.** ►



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TRIED AND TESTED

Our beauty panel put the new Nightly Refining Micro-Peel Concentrate from Kiehl's to the test for a two-week period. Read on for their verdict.



What does it do?

Formulated with sustainably sourced quinoa husk extract and gentle enough for daily use, this lightweight serum (\$99) claims to exfoliate the skin, accelerating cell turnover and smoothing out any rough texture to make your complexion more even and radiant.



I have a dry to normal skin type, and I look for anti-ageing products that are light in texture, contain organic ingredients and focus predominantly on evening out skin tone, reducing dullness and fine lines. So I was keen to try this overnight serum, which promises to do all of the above!



On first impressions, I liked that the packaging labelled clearly the serum's ingredients and directions for use – there's nothing pretentious about it. Opening the product for the first time, I noticed a faint scent, pleasant and not imposing.

Although I was sceptical at first, the serum did in fact deliver on its promises. I had quite a smooth skin texture to start off with, but even so was impressed with the change in my complexion after just a few days' use. My skin tone evened out and any dullness was replaced with a nice healthy glow, which usually happens only after a facial for me.

Overall, I think this is a wonderful serum that I'll keep using regularly. I did notice that it seems to make my skin more susceptible to sunburn, though, which is the only thing I didn't like. For that reason, I will continue using it, but just two to three times a week, and I'd definitely recommend a stronger sunscreen with it. Also, a few drops go a long way, so I predict the bottle will last a while!



MAIDA DE VEGA-PIERRET,
FILIPINO-AUSTRALIAN



I have dry, sensitive skin that is prone to redness and irritation, so I tend to look for products that are hydrating and calming – and with anti-ageing properties, as I'm in my mid-thirties and noticing the signs!

I've always liked Kiehl's packaging, and in particular I thought the glass bottle and dropper of the serum were a good touch. On first sniff, I found the serum's fragrance earthy and natural and not heavy, which was a plus. I also appreciate that the ingredients are mostly non-toxic – a quality that is becoming more and more essential to me in skincare these days.



Having sensitive skin, I usually steer clear of anything with the word "peel" in the title – they're usually too strong for me. Surprisingly though, this felt like it had a good effect on my skin without being very strong, or like it was stripping off layers. On application, it caused a slightly tingling sensation on my skin, but just enough to be doing something, and not like my skin was reacting (as it has done before when I used similar products).

I used it nightly after cleansing, followed by a moisturiser. It felt light and comfortable to wear. It promised to smooth out skin texture, refresh and even out the skin tone, and while it wasn't a magical overnight cure, I have definitely seen a positive effect in these areas. After two weeks, my skin feels noticeably firmer and smoother, redness has been reduced and it looks more even!

MICHAELA ANCHAN, NEW
ZEALANDER



Throughout my teens and adult life, my skin condition has generally been quite good, and I've not had problems with acne or any other major skin issues. However, I was experiencing some skin problems just before I started using Kiehl's overnight peel, due to an allergic reaction to some medication.

My skin was peeling and was extremely dry, and I was avoiding makeup because I was worried it would aggravate its condition. I was a little hesitant about introducing a new product to my skin at that time, but I read that it was suitable even for sensitive skin so I had a go anyway!

I was happy that I did not experience any adverse reaction to the product. It didn't feel oily; it was very lightweight. There was no burning, itch, irritation or stinging sensation at all. It didn't feel thick or heavy under my overnight moisturiser.

After a week and a half, my face felt slightly softer and the peeling problem I'd been experiencing before had started to abate a little; my skin did look slightly brighter as well.

However, I thought that it was a little pricy. The difference or improvements that I had experienced in the first week didn't feel significant, though I wasn't sure how soon I should expect to see improvements. Also, the product packaging was not clear on how many drops of the product I needed to use. On the flip side, I thought the pipette was useful because I could be quite exact about the amount of product I wanted to use. I also loved that it didn't require me to touch any of the remaining contents in the bottle, reducing the chances of bacterial contamination. *u*

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THE EXPERTS



Dr Yvonne Goh

Having completed her medical education in Dublin and Singapore, and trained under the mentorship of internationally renowned dermatologists and plastic surgeons, Dr Goh, brainchild behind Yvonne Goh Aesthetics, believes firmly in a non-invasive approach to beauty and in preventative aesthetic treatments.



Dr Sylvia Ramirez

Founder of Cutis Medical Laser Clinics, Dr Ramirez has over 20 years of international experience in aesthetic medicine, disease epidemiology, nephrology and transplantation. She practises research-proven services in the fields of aesthetics, age management medicine and skin treatments.



Dr Rohan Mendis

With over 15 years of experience in advanced medical aesthetics, the founder of Mendis Aesthetics specialises in minimally invasive procedures, skin rejuvenation and tightening, as well as face- and body-sculpting.

DR YVONNE GOH:

The “Prevention, Not Cure” Attitude

Tell us about your most popular facial treatment: the Collagen Boosting Stem Cell Facial.

First, the skin is prepped with ultrasonic cleansing for better penetration of the facial products. Next, both ultrasound and iontophoresis (micro-currents) are used to deliver the prescribed formulated cocktail into the deeper layers of the skin. This not only improves the benefits of the ingredients but prolongs the hydrating and plumping effects of the treatment, too. The facial is accompanied by a relaxing massage to further work the nutrients into the skin, and is finally topped off with a refreshing mask. This pampering lasts for one and a half hours, the final result is that you walk out of the clinic with a glowing complexion.

What key ingredient do you think is essential for great skin?

In my opinion, hyaluronic acid and a maintenance dose of retinol (another name for Vitamin A). It functions like an antioxidant to interrupt the free-radical damage process, which can cause wrinkles and fine lines.

Star Serum

Hydra-C Intense Serum is a real antioxidant treat for the skin. It's a lightweight, oil-free serum containing five percent stabilised Vitamin C that is readily absorbed to brighten the skin. Combined with the two other key ingredients, lactic acid and sodium hyaluronate (one of our body's natural hydrators), the result is skin with a brighter, more even appearance.

Her top skincare tip:

It's always better to prevent than try to reverse the signs of ageing. Investing in healthy skin makes much more sense than investing in makeup and concealers to mask a problem. Start by arming yourself with a good sunscreen for daily use, together with products containing vitamins and antioxidants to help neutralise havoc-causing free radicals.

#09-05 Camden Medical Centre
6462 2559 | dryvonnegoh.com

Q What's your most recommended product?

A Definitely our Retinol Illuminator, which improves skin texture and the appearance of fine lines, ageing and sun-damaged skin in one hit.

The Skincare

Yvonne Goh Aesthetics' skincare arsenal includes hero products for a radiant, glowing complexion. In high demand are: **Hydra-C Intense Serum**, which contains skin-plumping hyaluronic acid and vitamin C; **Retinol Illuminator**, which improves skin texture and diminishes wrinkles; and **Multivitamin Sunscreen** with SPF30, a handy moisturiser, multivitamin and sun protection cream all in one. What's more, the range is also ideal for aftercare following aesthetic treatments such as Botox, fillers and Ultherapy.



DR ROHAN MENDIS:

The “Enhancer of Natural Beauty”

Your most requested facial is Transdermal Therapy. How does it work?

It's an innovative two-step, non-invasive rejuvenating treatment that uses a combination of microdermabrasion and dermoelectroporation (DEP) techniques to safely and effectively introduce active retinol to revitalise the skin. First, microdermabrasion is performed to resurface the complexion, removing dead cells and diminishing any scar tissue. Next, we apply an ampoule of retinol to the face and massage this in using a transdermal hand-piece. The procedure has minimal downtime and results are immediately visible on the skin, with improvements in smoothness, firmness, clarity and brightness. It also has positive effects over pore size, fine lines and acne.

What key ingredient is essential for great skin?

I'd say hyaluronic acid. When you age, moisture levels in your skin drop significantly, which makes it lose its elasticity. Hyaluronic acid plays an important role in skin care with its ability to hold in moisture. Just one gram of the stuff is able to hold up to six litres of water! I'd say it's the number one thing you can add to your routine to help you achieve that youthful glow.

Q Which skincare product do you find yourself recommending time and time again?

A I continually recommend our Ageless Serum, which contains anti-inflammatory, protective and moisturising ingredients such as hyaluronic acid for the complexion. It helps to restore and maintain your skin's natural moisture barrier, keeping it velvety-soft and smooth around the clock.

Overnight Remedy

For remedial action while you sleep, Mendis Aesthetics' Intensive Night Repair Cream contains retinol and a revitalising formula that fights the first signs of ageing, leaving your visage looking toned and radiant.



The Skincare

Mendis Aesthetics carries a full range of skin treats, with everything from cleansers, toners and gel moisturisers to scrubs and sunblock. Hot items are the Multi-Action Cleanser, which contains papaya enzymes to gently slough away dead skin cells; and the Ageless Regenerative Serum, which contains hyaluronic acid Pro Vitamin B5 to soothe, protect and moisturise after treatments.

His top skincare tip:

Never forget to use sunblock to protect your complexion from harmful UV rays. Our version also contains whitening and moisturising properties. It's your first defence against wrinkles and pigmentation!



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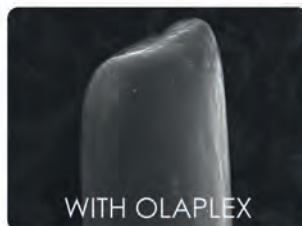
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DR SYLVIA RAMIREZ:

The “All-Round” Approach to Ageing

You offer both medical and non-medical facial treatments. What are the highlights?

Our most popular medical facials are the Crystal Peel, a skin-rejuvenating treatment formulated with various acids, hydroquinone for lightening freckles, age spots, pregnancy and stretch marks, acne scarring and more; and the brightening Vitality Peel, which improves skin tone, texture and clarity.

Our most popular non-medical facial is the Anti-Ageing Skin Rejuvenation treatment, which combines Trilipo – a pain-free, non-invasive solution for skin tightening – and Dr Sylvia’s Ascorbic C Firming Mask. It’s infused with 15 percent pure vitamin C, aloe and gentle multi-fruit acids that dramatically improve and refine the tone and texture of the face and neck.

What key ingredient is essential for great skin?

Vitamin C promotes collagen structure, fights free radicals and helps repair the skin. However, it needs to be well-formulated, otherwise it may oxidise and turn brown upon excessive exposure to air, moisture or light, which makes it useless for the skin.

Daily Dose

Dr Sylvia’s Vitamin C serum contains ferulic acid, an active ingredient with a pH of 3.2 that works to stabilise the vitamin and prevent oxidation. It can also be combined with other vitamins such as E and B to increase its hydrating and lightening benefits.



Q
A

What’s your most recommended skincare product?

According to recent studies, up to 80 percent of the appearance of ageing is from sun exposure! That’s why I always recommend a sunscreen with broad spectrum protection, like our lightweight Oil Free Sun Protection SPF 30, which shields the skin from both UVB and UVA rays.



The Skincare

Dr Sylvia’s skincare line has been shown to not only show results on the outer layer of the skin, but also at a deeper level. What’s more, most of the product’s ingredients are light, oil-free and suitable for a tropical climate.

Notable are the ELASTIfirm Eye Serum, a potent concoction which strengthens capillaries, reduces puffiness and gives a firmer appearance to the eye area within eight weeks, and the Needles No More with Neodermmyl and Voluform, a needle-free collagen and elastin filler which re-energises fibroblasts and triggers the skin to produce more collagen, resulting in a visible reduction of even deep-set wrinkles – clinical studies demonstrated a visible 15 percent reduction in wrinkles in just two weeks!

Her top skin tip:

Never underestimate the importance of exercise, a good diet and hydration. Exercising for 30 minutes every day, drinking enough water and getting enough beauty sleep, eating plenty of vegetables and avoiding oily foods will always improve your skin.

#08-07 Pacific Plaza
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More experts spill their trade secrets for a fresh, energised and youthful-looking complexion.



MANON ALLANO:
Director at Estheclinic

The Treatment

The Instant Youth programme at Estheclinic combines the latest anti-ageing technology with highly effective cosmeceuticals in a single treatment, to rejuvenate the skin without surgery. After three sessions – one a day over a three-day period – you'll notice a firmer, more toned skin with a reduction in fine lines and wrinkles, as well as a more refined skin tone and texture.

An essential ingredient for great skin is ...

Hydration. The best thing you can do to keep your skin balanced and in check is to moisturise it. Look out for products containing hyaluronic acid, a fabulous ingredient which retains over 1,000 times its weight in water within your skin's cells.

Star Buy

Estheclinic's DermaBooster is a micro-needling roller device inspired by Collagen Induction Therapy. Using 540 titanium micro-needles, it stimulates skin deep down to induce the production of collagen and elastin. It also helps smooth out uneven patches from your complexion, and promotes better absorption of skincare. Just 20 seconds of face-rolling each morning soon makes a visible difference!



Her top skincare tip:

Don't skimp on sunblock!

Her favourite ...

I always recommend our ElaDerm Global Anti-Ageing Serum. Its highly concentrated concoction of ingredients increases cell regeneration and skin renewal, while enhancing elasticity and radiance.

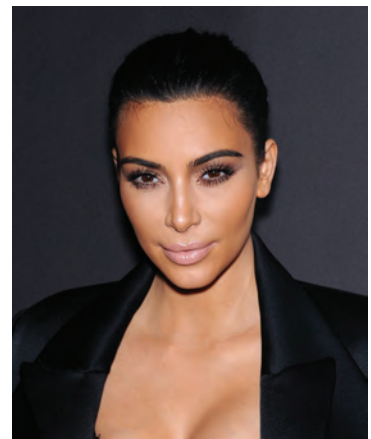
- 44 Rochester Park
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DR CHANDRA SANTOSO:
Medical Director at ARC Anti-aging Beauty Clinics

The Treatment

Our Vampire facial is highly requested, and it has a bit of reputation in Hollywood – it's the same one that Kim Kardashian swears by! It uses platelet-rich plasma from your own blood, containing a high concentration of human growth factor to stimulate new collagen production and fix existing collagen in the skin. The plasma, pushed into the skin by means of micro-needles, also acts a natural plumper, filling in fine lines.



The secret to great skin is ...

Taking preventative measures as early as possible to prevent skin ageing. Sun protection, collagen treatments and a home care regime for your skin type should be basic requirements.

Which treatment do you recommend time and time again?

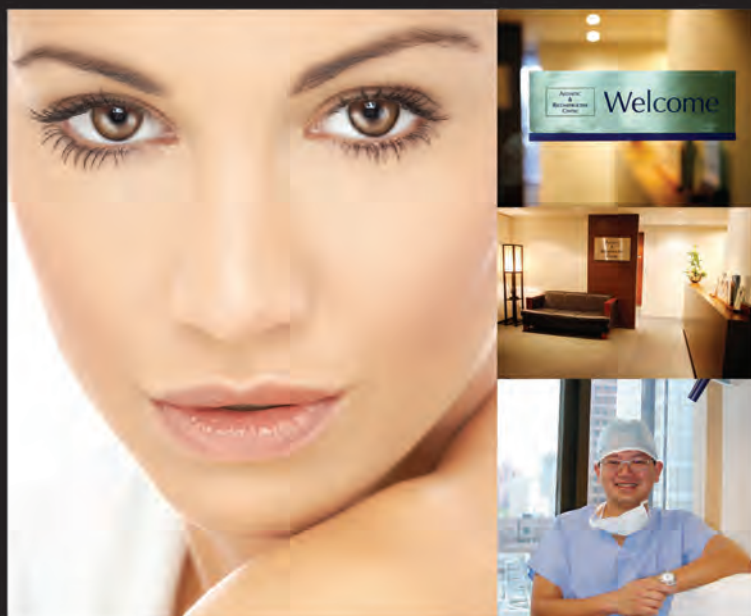
Our Vampire facial, customised with other ingredients for each client. For example, to treat sagging skin, we'll add in a dose of hyaluronic acid during the session, or a thread-lift. In my opinion, Botox is still the best treatment to prevent the dynamic, more deep-set lines which come from muscle expression.

Her top skincare tip:

Arm yourself daily with sun protection, a vitamin C serum and a moisturiser containing hyaluronic acid. You won't regret it! *el*

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MBBS (Hons) (UNSW), M.Med (Surg), FRCS Edin (Gen Surg)

- 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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HEALTH & FITNESS

246 | **What's New:** The latest in health and fitness news



252
Fertility Insights: Eight factors that can affect a couple's ability to conceive

254
Check, Please: Five ways you can screen for critical health issues

260
Sweat It Out: Four boutique gyms to try now

What's New



Take the Plunge

It's never too early or too late to learn how to swim, especially here in Singapore, where it's swim season all year round. Whether you want your six-month-old to be a water baby right from the start, or you'd like to brush up on some strokes yourself, swim teacher **Sarah Greateorex** has a class for every age and stage. In addition to 12 years of teaching swimming in Singapore, and a BA in sports management and business, Sarah is ASCTA-accredited (Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association) as a Swim Australia Teacher and Swim Australia Teacher of Babies and Toddlers, and she's also on the National Registry of Coaches in Singapore. We love that Sarah recently introduced swim classes for helpers – both group and private – so that parents can confidently leave their children in safe hands when around pools and during water play. Contact Sarah at **9069 0334** or visit **facebook.com/swimwithsarahsg** for more details.

Coming up: **Lace Up Against Racism**

Take a stand against intolerance by participating in the fourth annual **Orange Ribbon Run: Race Against Racism**, which aims to promote mutual respect and deeper understanding among the communities and individuals in our multicultural society. Held by OnePeople.sg on 10 September at Bayfront Event Space, this year's event categories include 5K and 10K competitive runs, and a 3.5K family walk. Register by 12 August at raceagainstracism.sg.



Sole Purpose

Habitat for Humanity Singapore's annual barefoot walkathon, **Bare Your Sole**, is back on 10 September, kicking off at 7.30am at OCBC Square (in front of Kallang Wave Mall). Funds raised from the 2.5K and 5K charity walkathon will go toward Project HomeWorks, a local initiative that aims to improve the living conditions of the elderly, the sick and people with disabilities across the island. Register by 12 August at bareyoursole.sg.



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New Space for Yogis

Best Yoga Centre for Health (BYCH) Yoga Hub has opened an enormous, light-filled studio space in the Orchard area, catering to serious yoga practitioners looking to explore a medley of yoga styles under the guidance of some of the island's most qualified and experienced teachers. Aimed at inspiring health, wellness and self-realisation, and advancing personal growth through the practice of yoga and meditation, BYCH Yoga Hub offers all kinds of classes, from hot yoga to ashtanga, vinyasa flow and yin – plus complimentary meditation classes once a week. In celebration of the studio's launch, BYCH Yoga Hub is selling seven-day unlimited class trial passes for just \$100 (trials must be utilised within 30 days of purchase, valid through September 2016). #04-13 Regency House, 123 Penang Road. For more details, call **6493 2967** or visit bychyogahub.com. ▲



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DID YOU KNOW...



Varicose veins are common during pregnancy, particularly in women with a family history of developing the not-so-lovely enlarged veins caused by faulty valves. We asked DR IMRAN NAWAZ of **The Vein Centre** for some explanation.

Why are pregnant women susceptible to developing varicose veins?

It's likely to be a combination of hormonal changes in pregnancy, coupled with increased intra-pelvic pressure – due to the growing foetus – that puts more strain on the veins of the lower limbs.

Should women wait until they're done having kids to remove varicose veins?

Although each pregnancy makes varicose veins worse, to delay treatment is not a good idea, as the veins may get significantly worse. Also, it's easier to treat them when they are less extensive. Additionally, the larger, more significant varicose veins should not recur with subsequent pregnancies once treated properly.

What are the most effective treatment options?

It depends on the location and the severity of the varicose veins. Some of the most effective treatments today are endovenous ablation (using either laser or radiofrequency), injection sclerotherapy and surgical removal of the veins. Each method is effective, and each one has different side effects and limitations. Your doctor will be able to explain each in detail, and help you choose the method best suited for you.

The Vein Centre is at #10-42 Mount Elizabeth Novena Specialist Centre, 38 Irrawaddy Road. To schedule an appointment, call **6733 0377** or visit tvc.sg.

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Health Matters

- Is Right the New Wrong?

Passionate student of healthy eating – whatever that may be –
VERNE MAREE ponders a new and very first-world condition:
orthorexia nervosa.

What constitutes a good diet? I've been able to answer that question with complete confidence at any time over the past 30 years and more. Nowadays, though, I'm sometimes less sure of the answer ... and for someone who really likes to be right, that can be a worry.

"Eating healthily" has meant different things to different people at different times and in different places. A "healthy appetite" has never meant a preference for muesli and acai berries; instead, it implies that you pack away rather too many of the groceries. And when friends or colleagues from the Indian community in Durban (where I grew up) remarked that you were looking "healthy", they were simply saying you looked fat.

So much for semantics. The problem is that we're so deluged with nutritional surveys, guidelines and opinions – many of them mutually conflicting – that it's difficult to keep your head above water. Which path to choose? Say you're already preparing your own wholefood organic meals from scratch; should you righteously cut out gluten, dairy, carbs, meat, fat, salt? Is vegan the purer way to go? Raw vegan? Fruitarian? How about a 30-day water-only fast? Enter the new problem child of nutrition: orthorexia nervosa.

Ortho-what?

Orthorexia nervosa is a full-blown eating disorder that can result from an extreme obsession with healthy eating. Based on two Greek words, *orthos* (correct) and *orexis* (appetite), the term was coined in the late seventies by American physician

Dr Steven Bratman and entered mainstream media only in the past year or so.

It can be difficult, they say, to distinguish between orthorexia and a normal preoccupation with healthy eating. I'm a case in point: looking back on some of my own experiments with water-fasting, for example, many would say I've crossed that particular line on occasion.

What's the benchmark, then? If your healthy or "clean" diet causes you anxiety or interferes with your daily life, including your social life, says Kris Gunnar from the website Authority Nutrition, the chances are that you're orthorexic.

For example

Here's an example from a recent article on the subject from *The Sunday Times Magazine* in the UK. Laura Wilson (28) embarked on a high-protein diet to lose weight. Encouraged by the praise and compliments and inspired by the new blogs on the subject, she entered the world of "clean eating".

Refined sugar and gluten were the first to go – so far, so good. Then Laura became vegetarian, then vegan, then excluded even fruit from her diet – "too much sugar". Niche superfoods became her staples: maca root powder, cacao nibs, spirulina and chia seeds. She exercised six times a week; she avoided social get-togethers that might tempt her off the path of righteousness.

No wonder she shed every scrap of fat from her frame, her periods stopped and she was cold all the time.

Though its roots may be similar to those of the most famous two eating disorders, anorexia nervosa and bulimia – being based on a desire for control – sufferers from orthorexia nervosa

may be harder to pin down and treat. For one, the behaviour of anorexics and bulimics is obviously self-destructive: they're either refusing to eat, or they're binging and purging. The orthorexic, however, will deny that it's really about losing weight. And her insistence that it's all about living healthily makes it difficult to challenge her behaviour.

A pinch of salt

(Himalayan and pink, preferably.) After scrolling through dozens of expert opinions on the dangers of orthorexia, the borderline hypochondriac in me was close to diagnosing a new branch of the condition: serial intermittent orthorexia, punctuated by Cedele chocolate cake and free-flow champagne brunches at The Ritz-Carlton.

So I breathed a sigh of relief when I found social traumologist Anngwyn St Just's entertaining and intelligent blog. In an article titled "Orthorexia: Really?" she dismisses the message that eating right is now wrong, calling it part of "a rising tide of Orwellian dis-info" in a dystopic trend.

It's just the latest in the American Psychiatric Association's "growing lexicon of dubious diagnoses", she says. Here's her amusing list of a few others that are already eligible for medication and other pricy treatment:

- Disruptive Mood Disorder (temper tantrums)
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (two-year-olds, adolescence, social activism, political dissidents, alternative media, most cats)
- Major Depressive Disorder (normal grief, Basset hounds)
- Adult Attention Deficit Disorder (boredom)
- Minor Neurocognitive Disorder (senior moments), and
- General Anxiety Disorder (everyday worries).

"Fortunes will soon be made," she writes, "with the advent of state-mandated compulsory vaccinations for these hypothetical, and other real or projected conditions."

So get back to your maca powder, goji berries, juice-fasting, meat-free Mondays, homemade almond milk or whatever floats your nutritional boat – and continue to feel good about your efforts. You're *not* sick! *ℵ*



8 Factors that Can Affect Your Fertility

It's no secret that a woman's fertility decreases with age; as women get older, the number of functioning follicles or eggs in her ovaries decreases. Yet even during the most fertile years, lifestyle choices, health issues and external factors can make conception more difficult. Here, DR KELLY LOI of the **Health & Fertility Centre for Women** shares some of the main issues affecting the ability of couples to conceive.

#1 Smoking

Smoking has an adverse impact on the fertility of both men and women. For women, smoking is harmful to the ovaries, accelerates egg loss and may reduce the age of menopause by several years. Studies indicate that smoking can predispose eggs to genetic abnormalities and increase the risk of miscarriage, and possibly of ectopic pregnancy. For men, smoking is associated with abnormalities in the quantity and quality of sperm production. Smoking can also lead to impotence by causing damage to blood vessels, resulting in weak and ineffective erections.

#2 Medications

For women, some medications can affect ovulation and cause periods to be irregular. For men, some medications may affect sperm quality.

#3 High cholesterol

High cholesterol levels may impair fertility in couples trying to achieve a pregnancy, according to a study by researchers at the National Institutes of Health, the University at Buffalo and Emory University in the US. In the study, couples in which each partner had high cholesterol took the longest time to conceive; couples in which the woman had high cholesterol and the man didn't also took longer to conceive when compared to couples in which both partners had cholesterol levels in the acceptable range.



#4 Stress

Stress is difficult to quantify, but we do know that too much stress is bad, as it can have an adverse effect on libido, menstrual cycles and ovulation.

#5 Alcohol intake

Heavy drinking can definitely affect fertility, increasing the length of time it takes to get pregnant and reducing the chances of having a healthy baby. In females, the likelihood of heavy or irregular menstrual periods, miscarriage and infertility is greater when alcohol is consumed above the guideline levels (no more than two standard drinks a day: Bradley et al, 1998). In fact, the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council's alcohol guidelines suggest that, for women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, not drinking is the safest option.

#6 Weight

A study from the Netherlands found that, for every BMI unit over 29, the chance of pregnancy was reduced by four percent when compared with women whose BMIs were between 21 to 29. Women who were severely obese, with BMIs between 35 and 40, had up to 43 percent less chance of achieving pregnancy compared with women whose BMI was below 29.

#7 Fibroids

Depending on the size and location of a uterine fibroid, it could affect fertility.

#8 Unhealthy gums

In one study, women with healthy gums conceived sooner than those with gum disease. The women with healthy gums became pregnant within five months, compared with just over seven months for women with gum disease. However, more research is needed in this area. *Ⓐ*

The Health & Fertility Centre for Women is at #18-06 Paragon Medical Suites, 290 Orchard Road.
6235 5066 | healthfertility.com.sg

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A close-up photograph of a doctor's hand holding a stethoscope. The doctor is wearing a white lab coat over a light blue shirt and a patterned tie. The stethoscope is black with a silver-colored chest piece. The background is a solid light blue.

CHECK, PLEASE!

Whether you've got symptoms or not, it never hurts to chat with your doctor about things you can do to stay up to date and in the know about your health. Here, we shine the light on five different ways you can get checked for critical health issues – with advice from the experts.

#1 BREAST INSPECTIONS

While a breast examination itself can't prevent breast cancer, early detection can mean earlier treatment, which also means a better chance of survival. Breast and general surgeon DR GEORGETTE CHAN fills us in on the importance of regular breast examinations, and the different types.

Self-checks

"A monthly self-check is very important because it allows us to detect even subtle changes – things like lumps, or nipple discharge," says Dr Chan. "Young women should ideally start doing this in their twenties to become familiar with how their own breasts feel. Seven to ten days after the start of your menses is the best time to do it, because that's when the breasts are least sensitive."

What to do if you find a lump

"Firstly, don't panic, because about 90 percent of lumps detected are benign," says Dr Chan. "If you find one while you're close to your menstrual period, it could be due to temporary hormonal changes. So, I suggest waiting until after your period to see if it's still there. If it is, go to see your GP."

Medical examinations

Dr Chan recommends that women should start going for medical breast examinations from the age of 40; however, she adds that if someone in your family has had breast cancer it's wise to come five to 10 years earlier than your relative was when her cancer was diagnosed. "Depending on the age of a patient and the density of the breast, I may recommend both a mammogram and an ultrasound," she says.

Mammography

According to Dr Chan, mammography has an accuracy rate as high as 90 to 95 percent, and has proven effective in detecting cancers early. Early detection is associated with a 20 percent drop in breast cancer mortality.

As for patients' concerns over radiation from the mammography machine, Dr Chan says there's nothing to be worried about. "Though mammography can be uncomfortable, it's limited to 15 seconds and is not harmful. As for the amount of radiation, it's a very low dose, akin to that of a couple of chest x-rays and much lower than a PET scan or a CT scan. So, the risk of harm is low, especially if done only yearly (from 40 to 50), and then every two years (from 50 onwards), as we recommend."

Ultrasound

Dr Chan says that, although ultrasound is not effective on its own as a screening tool, it's a good supplementary tool because it's better at detecting little, delineating nodules.



Georgette Chan Consultancy
#11-09 Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre
6386 5167 | georgettechan.com.sg



#2 MELANOMA SCREENING

General surgeon DR DENNIS LIM, whose subspecialties include head and back surgery, and surgical oncology, chats with us about melanoma, one of the most feared cancers, and the importance of screening for it.

What exactly is melanoma?

Melanomas are cancers that develop from pigment cells in our skin called melanocytes. There are quite a few different types of melanomas, but the most common type is called superficial spreading melanoma.

What causes it?

Excessive sun exposure is the biggest risk factor.

Who should be screened for melanoma, and how often?

Clearly, someone with a family history or their own history of melanoma should be screened, but any light-skinned individuals living in the tropics for the long term, and anyone who works outdoors, should also consider consulting a dermatologist.

What types of screening procedures are available?

A dermatologist usually does a visual inspection, or an inspection with the aid of a lighted magnifier called a dermatoscope.

Say a melanoma lesion is found; at what stage is it potentially fatal?

All cancers progress through stages. Unless it's treated, a Stage I melanoma will almost always progress to Stage II and so on.

What are the main treatment options, and how effective are they?

The treatment of melanoma is based on the stage it's at. Early stage melanomas are very effectively treated by surgery, while late stage melanomas are treated with increasingly effective immunotherapy. Stage III melanomas are treated with a combination of surgery and systemic therapy, and Stage IV with chemotherapy or immunotherapy, or both.

The earlier melanoma is detected, the better the outcome of treatment. That's survival greatly depends on the stage at which melanoma is identified. There's a 95 percent five-year survival rate for someone whose melanoma is picked up at Stage I; if identified at Stage II this drops to about 75 percent; the figure at Stage III is about 50 percent; and by Stage IV it's about 20 percent.

Are there any recent advances that have helped increase the accuracy of screenings and the effectiveness of treatments?

A diagnosis of melanoma is not as pessimistic as it was 10 years ago. That's because of the rapid progress we've made in accurately identifying the stage of the cancer. What's more, recent advances in the fields of sentinel lymph node localisation and immunotherapy for advanced disease have improved the outcome for patients.

Dennis Lim Surgery
#11-09 Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre
6386 5167 | dennislim.com.sg

#3 PROSTATE EXAMS

Apart from skin cancers, prostate cancer is the most common cancer among males. In fact, according to the American Cancer Society, about one in seven men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during his lifetime; the older a man is, the higher his risk, as prostate cancer is much more common after the age of 50, and is found in about six out of 10 men aged 65 or older. Luckily, this type of cancer can grow slowly, and most men diagnosed with prostate cancer do not die from it.



WHAT EXACTLY IS A PROSTATE?

The prostate, a walnut-sized gland located directly below the bladder and in front of the rectum, is part of the male reproductive system that produces secretions to protect sperm.

When it comes to screening for prostate cancer, DR COLIN KOH of **Complete Healthcare International (CHI)** says it's a very personal choice based on individual risks and concerns, especially for those who know a cancer sufferer or have a family history of the disease.

"There is much controversy regarding prostate cancer screening. The main issue is that prostate cancer is generally slow-growing and is often without symptoms. Hence it's possible for a man to die from other illnesses like a heart attack, a stroke or another cancer before he even develops symptoms of prostate cancer," says Dr Koh.

Many feel that screening for signs of cancer at an early stage, before any symptoms appear, prevents any possible risks or

discomfort – the "better safe than sorry" attitude.

"Advocates of screening for prostate cancer would do a digital rectal examination (DRE) and a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test. They believe that early detection is crucial to finding cancer confined within the gland, and reducing complications and mortality. When symptoms develop, or when DRE results become positive, such cases might have already advanced beyond the prostate," says Dr Koh.

Others, however, feel that screening for prostate cancer does more harm than good, since this type of cancer is usually not life-threatening. For example, men may go through unnecessary follow-up tests, biopsies and other treatments, and experience anxiety over a false-positive PSA test.

After all, raised PSA levels do not confirm prostate cancer. A prostate infection can raise PSA, for instance, and, in that case, your doctor would prescribe a course of antibiotics before rechecking the prostate. Dr Koh notes that further testing may include a prostate ultrasound to detect

any prostate enlargement or suspicious growths within the gland. He says specialised blood tests like the Prostate Health Index (PHI) may also be ordered to determine the likelihood of cancer before doing a biopsy, which can confirm whether or not cancer exists.

According to Dr Koh, if cancer is confirmed, treatment options are divided into early stage and advanced stage. If the cancer is small and contained within the prostate gland, it's usually managed either by "watchful waiting" (regular monitoring of PSA blood levels), radiation therapy (implanting radioactive seeds into the prostate, or radiotherapy involving radiation beams aimed close to the cancer) or surgery in which the prostate is removed. If the cancer is more aggressive or advanced, Dr Koh says the patient may require a combination of radiotherapy and hormone therapy.

Every case is unique and needs to be discussed with a doctor, notes Dr Koh. "All these treatment options have their advantages and disadvantages, and must be customised."

Complete Healthcare International
45 Rochester Park
6776 2288 | chi-health.com.sg



#4 CARDIOPULMONARY EXERCISE TEST

A Cardiopulmonary Exercise Test (CPET) is an advanced, non-invasive clinical test that allows a doctor to see how a patient's lungs, heart and muscles react together during exercise. The test, which is done while walking on a treadmill, measures the amount of air being breathed in during exercise, how much oxygen is needed, and how fast and efficiently the heart beats during exercise.

"Measuring the gases in breath during exercise allows us to estimate very accurately the health and fitness of an individual's entire heart, lung and circulatory system," says DR PETER TING, from **The Harley Street Heart & Cancer Centre**. "The VO2 (cardiorespiratory fitness) measurement gives us the oxygen consumption of the body, and is a very accurate measure of the intensity of the physical exercise being done; it's a very strong predictor of the longevity of a person, as well as the prognosticator of any underlying disease condition that he or she might have."

The CPET, which Dr Ting believes is the most precise gauge of cardiorespiratory fitness, is used for a variety of purposes, such as helping to determine the cause of unexplained exercise limitations or breathlessness. For instance, he says, breathlessness can result from being overweight, or from physical deconditioning through being sedentary, but it may also be a sign of serious underlying heart, lung or circulatory problems.

"Any deficiency in one of more of these systems may result in a sensation of shortness of breath on exertion. The CPET test helps us identify if there is a serious underlying medical problem, as well as pinpoint which system may be responsible," he explains.

Dr Ting also says the CPET can help assess a patient's maximum exercise capacity, and the degree to which he or she is limited by the disease. It can help in following disease progression over time, and in monitoring the effects of therapy in order to make decisions about treatment plans.

Another key way the CPET is used is measuring a patient's fitness to undergo surgery. "Gauging the performance of the person during the CPET is an extremely good way to evaluate their overall health and cardiorespiratory function. Hence a normal or better VO2 performance is indicative of a very low risk

of heart or lung complications, both during and after surgery," says Dr Ting. "In certain countries, if the surgery isn't urgent, some patients are even sent for 'pre-habilitation' to improve their VO2 before going for surgery."

In addition, Dr Ting says the test can be done to monitor the effects of training in highly conditioned athletes, and to guide decisions regarding training programmes.

As for any potential risks and complications, he says that the CPET is "generally safe and well tolerated". He explains: "Most complications are minor and include injuries sustained from falling from the treadmill machine. Some patients may develop chest discomfort or an abnormal heart rhythm as a result of their underlying condition, and may require urgent treatment as a result."

However, he says, patients are closely supervised by trained medical professionals throughout the testing process, which can be stopped at any time a patient feels unwell or experiences any chest pain or discomfort.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU GO FOR A CPET:

- You'll be asked about any symptoms you've had while exercising in the past. It's important to describe any chest discomfort, breathing problems, light-headedness, dizziness, fluttering in the chest, weakness, tiredness, or anything else you think may be relevant.
- An ECG (electrocardiogram) will monitor the rhythm and rate of your heart, using sticky patches called electrodes that are placed on your chest.
- An inflatable cuff on your upper arm will measure your blood pressure throughout the test, and a small peg on your finger will measure how much oxygen is in your blood.
- A soft facemask over your mouth and nose will help monitor your lungs.
- Once the treadmill begins, it will increase at a predetermined speed and incline. You'll need to keep walking until you're told to stop, or until you're unable to carry on.
- Your breathing, heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen level will continue to be monitored during the recovery period.

The Harley Street Heart & Cancer Centre
#02-38/41 Annexe Block, Gleneagles Hospital, 6A Napier Road
6472 3703 | harleystreet.sg

#5 ENDOSCOPY



In order to diagnose GI conditions, Dr Ganesh performs either a biopsy, depending on symptoms, or a nonsurgical procedure called an endoscopy, used to get direct visualisation of the digestive tract. Using an endoscope, a flexible tube with a light and camera attached to it, your doctor can view photos of your digestive tract on a monitor.

Gastroscopy and colonoscopy are two different types of endoscopy. During a gastroscopy, an endoscope is passed through the mouth and into the oesophagus, allowing the doctor to view the oesophagus, stomach and upper portion of the large intestine. For a colonoscopy, an endoscope

The gastrointestinal system is, of course, crucial to how our bodies function; and, if this system fails, there can be all sorts of unfavourable reactions. We asked DR GANESH RAMALINGAM, a gastroenterologist and general surgeon specialising in gastrointestinal, trauma, bariatric and laparoscopic surgery, about common gastrointestinal problems to be aware of, and how endoscopies can help diagnose these issues.

First, it's important to understand what exactly makes up the gastrointestinal (GI) system. The hollow organs that make up the GI tract are the mouth, the oesophagus, the stomach, the small intestine, the large intestine – which includes the rectum – and the anus. Food enters the mouth and passes to the anus through the hollow organs of the GI tract. The liver, the pancreas and the gallbladder are the solid organs of the digestive system.

So, what are some of the common symptoms or signs that the GI tract is malfunctioning? Dr Ganesh says to look out for a change in stool (loose stools, for example), abdominal pain and bloating, regurgitation and vomiting, or loss of appetite and weight. Abdominal pain and bloating, he says, are two of the most common gastrointestinal problems faced, along with rectal bleeding. Other gastrointestinal conditions include irritable bowel syndrome, constipation, chronic diarrhoea, gallstone pancreatitis, acid reflux, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and haemorrhoids, to name a few.

is passed into the large intestine through the rectum to examine the lower part of the GI tract.

Once the problem is found, treatment options can be decided upon. According to Dr Ganesh, these options include diet and lifestyle modification, medication and surgical intervention.

In a case of irritable bowel syndrome, for instance, he would help the patient identify any food and lifestyle triggers (like stress or irregular meals, for example) causing the bowel irritation, so that the patient can work to avoid those triggers on a daily basis. Dr Ganesh would also prescribe supplementation such as probiotics that can help ease digestion. At the same time, he would suggest investigating the bowel with an endoscopy to check for organic causes like inflammation or a growth.

"It's my belief that almost all GI issues are directly related to current diet and lifestyle. It's important that patients understand and identify these causes, and modify as many of them as possible," he says. "It's also very important to ensure that the GI tract is free of any disease before embarking on dietary and lifestyle modification." *E*

Dr Ganesh Ramalingham
#10-43/44 Mount Elizabeth Novena Specialist Centre, 38
Irrawaddy Road
9088 8313 | glsurgical.com.sg



Sweat Smarter

Forget long workouts in conventional gyms. With their innovative approach to fitness, these gyms will have you fit and trim in no time.

It's a little past mid-year, and that New Year's resolution to lose a few kilos and get stronger, fitter and healthier probably fizzled out under pressure to get the kids ready for school or meet presentation deadlines, or from plain boredom with your old workout routine. To help you revive your resolution (you still have four months till the year end) we've rounded up four boutique gyms with a fresh take on fitness.

UFIT

With outlets at Amoy Street, One-North, Tanjong Pagar and Bukit Timah, UFIT (or Urban Fitness) takes a 360-degree approach to fitness, offering personal training, nutrition, physiotherapy, sports massage and mixed martial arts (MMA), plus a UFIT Bootcamp, a UFIT Run Club and a UFIT Core in eight locations around the city – so it's virtually impossible to make an excuse not to go. Each session is different and equally challenging, with the element of surprise keeping you and your muscles in top form. To ensure each client gets the necessary attention, the closed gym allows only 25 participants in each session and a maximum of 10 for its HITFIT classes.

87 Amoy Street. 6225 5059 | ufit.com.sg

The PIT

Started in 2011 by personal trainer Irving Henson, The PIT is not your conventional gym. Here the focus is on strength, endurance and conditioning, and the fuss-free studio concentrates on making an athlete of anyone who walks through its doors. Choose from Muay Thai, metabolic conditioning classes and strength training sessions that are tailored to both beginners and experienced lifters, or sign up for personal training with its highly experienced instructors who are also seasoned athletes. The gym also offers dedicated sports training for triathletes and golfers.

123 Devonshire Road
6222 4860 | pitpersonaltrainer.com.sg

Ritual

If your hectic lifestyle gets in the way of your keeping fit, this is the gym for you. The founders of Ritual (professional MMA fighter Brad Robinson, TV personality Oli Pettigrew and fitness expert Ian Tan) believe that to get fit, and stay that way, all you need is a 20-minute High Intensity Interval Training, Progressive Overload or Functional Training workout. The trainers guide you through each specialised session and routines are changed daily to prevent plateauing. Workout clothes are provided and you can shower, grab a protein drink and be on your way within just 45 minutes of stepping in. Perfect for those who complain they never have the time to work out.

11 North Canal Road, #03-01
6536 7291 | ritual.sg

Move to Live

As its name suggests, this gym was opened to encourage clients to move better and to improve their fitness and strength levels. With this in mind, Move to Live offers circuit training, Muay Thai for kids, beginners and intermediates, yoga and boxing. Both the circuit training and Fight Fit sessions combine high-intensity cardio and conditioning work, using kettle bells and competitive team exercises. Classes are small and intimate, so instructors can help perfect your technique. Soft flooring makes exercising easier on the joints, and the vast area lit by streaming ensures you don't feel boxed in.

#01-20 Immunos Building, 8A Biomedical Grove
6464 2018 | movetolive.sg

HOW TO CHOOSE A GYM

Check it out on social media

Before you join a gym, check its Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts to get an idea of its daily workings as well as what its current and former members really like about it.

Does it have what you want?

If you prefer to vary your workouts and like to take different classes every week, pick a gym that offers a variety of workouts over one that focuses on free-style weight training.

Do a test run – at a time you would normally work out

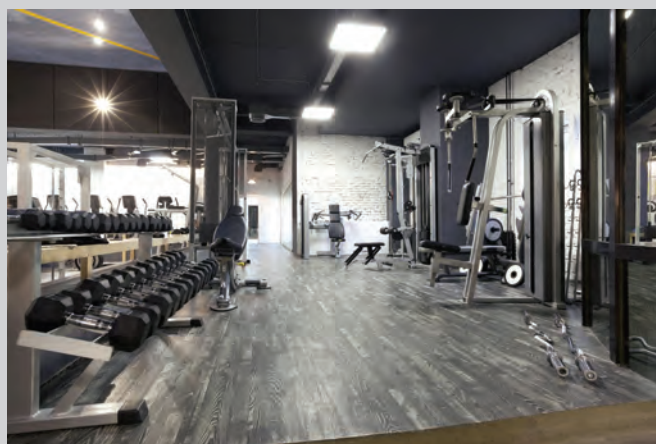
Prefer to work out after dropping the kids at school? Or is a post-work routine more your thing? Ask to try out the gym at the time you would normally work out. If it's too crowded during that period, chances are you won't be able to get an effective workout anyway. A trial workout will also give you an idea of the instructors' skills.

Is the location convenient?

Choose a gym that's located conveniently for the time of the day you prefer to work out. If you plan to work out after office hours, pick one that's close to the office. And if you like to work out first thing in the morning, choose one that's close to home. You're more likely to make excuses not to go when your gym is more than a five- to 10-minute walk or drive away from your home or workplace.

Details, details, details

Look for the small things that will matter in the long run: is it clean, are there enough showers, do they provide extras like shampoo, conditioner, shower gel and a blow dryer? Keep your pre- and post-workout routine in mind when choosing a gym to commit to. It's these minor details that are likely to become stumbling blocks in the long run. *el*



A comprehensive clinic for all breast health concerns.

Early diagnosis and treatment are key to dealing with serious conditions such as breast cancer. Breast problems are often ignored, as women feel shy or are hesitant to talk to someone about the discomfort or lumps they may be feeling.

Dr Georgette Chan has been managing breast cancer as well as benign breast conditions like breast lumps and pain for more than 15 years. She is well trained in all aspects of breast surgical oncology.

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For appointments, please contact:

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CLARITY

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- Liver Cirrhosis
- Liver Cancer (HCC)

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ENDOSCOPY PROCEDURES:

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- Hemorrhoids (Piles) ligation
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NON-ENDOSCOPY PROCEDURES:

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- Gastric Ulcer
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- Liver Cirrhosis

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• Samaritans of Singapore	6220 7758
• SOS Hotline	1 800 221 4444

PROPERTY

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WEBSITES

ENTERTAINMENT

- eventshub.sg — Information on cultural and entertainment events
- sistic.com.sg or ticketbooth.com.sg or showbizasia.com — Online bookings for events
- gv.com.sg or cathay.com.sg — Online movie bookings

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LEO JUL 23 - AUG 22



Worry and anxiety reach a peak this month, but you will manage to find your way out of a difficult or even nightmarish situation. The solution may be delivered to you by someone you feel a deep connection with, whether or not you already know this person in the physical sense. It will amaze you how you are understood on every level without having to convince anyone for a change. Achieving the art of balance is what will get you out of your crisis. Practise appreciating what you have instead of fretting about what you don't. It's crucial that you are able to accept your current situation before you can realise that there's a silver lining to the clouds.

VIRGO AUG 23 - SEP 22



This August is not a time to make rushed decisions. Even if your mind is awash with ideas, sit on them and mull them over if time permits; you need to "feel through" things as they come at you. While you should go with what feels instinctively right, you can only do this when you're relaxed and have the luxury of time. You'll be happy that you took your time in the end. Work with the tools you have, and don't feel inadequate because others aren't at your disposal. Perfecting your foundation will ensure a solid start to the next few months, and help you gain a deeper understanding of what you're getting yourself into. So, once again, take your time and don't rush!

LIBRA SEP 23 - OCT 22



Expect to go through a very emotional time during August. Previous disagreements, or thoughts about things that have upset you, must be put to rest in order for you to move forward. Letting go will be important if you're to keep your emotional self under control. It isn't wise to make any decisions with regard to finances this month. Leave the credit card at home to avoid emotional spending on things you don't really need. If you heed the advice above, you should in general have a fairly positive and smooth month ahead. Good luck!

SCORPIO OCT 23 - NOV 21



Scorpios are ambitious characters, so they'll be pleased to know that things are looking extremely positive on the financial front this month. You may find yourself closing the chapter on your mortgage repayments or receiving a nice inheritance. Or it may be as simple as a family heirloom being passed on to you. All in all, it's a relatively lucky August. If you find that eye twitching a little, there would be no harm in getting yourself a lottery ticket or two. And if you've been trying to overcome competition at work or business, then you could see success in that department.

SAGITTARIUS NOV 22 - DEC 21



A positive month awaits Sagittarius. You won't be sitting around waiting for things to fall into your lap. Businesses or careers will be flourishing this August, and it will feel like the perfect time to create opportunities for yourself and to make things happen. You've planted the seed, and now all you need to do is stand back and enjoy watching your masterpiece grow. There is also plenty of good news if you're planning to pursue the love of your life or have a baby. It will feel like you've finally achieved what you had set your sights on. Foundations feel solid and you are raring to move on to the next phase in life.

CAPRICORN DEC 22 - JAN 19



There isn't too much chaos in Capricorn's world this month; instead it will be a quiet and reflective period. A newfound love may be discovered in the form of an activity, an object or even a person. To turn your passion into something tangible, you'll need to work on letting go of events from your past that appear as blocks in your path – blocks that make you feel undeserving of goodness in your life. Start by facing whatever you need to face, whether it's a person who has hurt you, a negative experience or a destructive habit. It's time to heal and to let go, so you can make space for the new in your life.

AQUARIUS JAN 20 - FEB 18



Things are generally on your side this month, Aquarius. It seems you'll have the final say in any disagreements and emerge victorious in anything of a competitive nature. The experiences from this will lead you to a deeper understanding of your own strengths and weaknesses. With all of these lessons to get through, the month will go quickly, as you realise the importance of moving on – and how much energy is wasted by harping on something! Your mental and verbal energy levels are on a high this August, so learn and make happen as much as you can.

PISCES FEB 19 - MAR 20



A month of discovery awaits Pisces this August. The sun seems to be shining for you, so make the most of whatever happens. A newfound passion will be ignited – one that could be related to the creative side of things. You may wish to get your hands dirty in some way, or simply to create things with the power of your mind. Either way, a talent is unleashed that will surprise and impress others. The excitement around this talent seems to fuel your boundless energy this month. So, go on: get inspired and get creating!

ARIES MAR 21 - APR 19



August promises to be a highly productive month. It's your chance to shine in the workplace or in business, and you'll be amazed at how quickly issues are resolved. The feeling of being in complete control of everything around you is a rare thing, so make sure the most difficult tasks are taken care of during this time. With the help of Uranus, you may find yourself in a position to deliver your best ever! If it feels a bit overwhelming, feel no shame in asking for help or delegating; there's plenty to go around. With so much to learn this month that you can take forward with you, you'll need to be alert.

TAURUS APR 20 - MAY 20



A positive August awaits Taurus. If you're looking to make a change in your career or adopt a different business direction, this is the time. If you've been experiencing a brain fog in recent months, things will clearer – you will know exactly what direction to head in. And success will unfold as soon as you begin to work on your plans. It's amazing how things will just flow seamlessly. Enjoy and celebrate this month and your successes. As important as it is to work hard towards your destination, it's just as important to acknowledge your achievements as they come.

GEMINI MAY 21 - JUN 20



Having Mercury on your side this August means you'll be in top intellectual form. Make the most of your sharp mind as well as your luck to make changes in your life in those areas where you've most wanted to see a change. Pursue your passion – and don't be a sheep! Being different can certainly promise you a better future, whereas following the herd will mean constant struggle. So choose your steps wisely. You don't necessarily have to make plans to conquer the world. Start with small steps. If making jam is your thing, why not sign up for the next farmers' market and see how you go with selling your wares? Slowly but surely does it!

CANCER JUN 21 - JUL 22



It's a strange month for Cancer. Rather than moving in fast-forward like the other signs, you'll hit pause. It's a time for reflection, for questioning whether you're doing things for your own happiness or for that of others. Rather than charging forward, the advice is to slow down or, better yet, keep still. Just like a computer system, you find yourself reformatting your mind to seek an inner voice to guide you to your next step. Great challenges lie ahead, but to conquer them a clear mind is required. As Cancer is shrouded by the Moon this month, expect emotions to cloud your thinking. This may be your biggest challenge at this time!

ADVERTISER LIST

AESTHETICS & BEAUTY

Aesthetic & Reconstructive Centre	241
Chez Vous	242
Mendis Aesthetics & Surgery	228
Olaplex	238
SWUK Aesthetics	241
Sylvia's Secrets	242
The Aesthetics Centre	231
The Big Blow	243
The Dermatology Practice	229
The Hair Shop	242
Trimmings Salon & Spa	234
Visage The Salon	243

ART

Gnani Arts	4 & 5
REDSEA Gallery	IFC & 1

ARTS & LEISURE

Australian World Orchestra	113
New Zealand Chamber of Commerce — ANZ Aotearoa Ball	113
The Podium Lounge	6 & 7

CARPET

Hedger's Carpet Gallery	74
The Orientalist	8 & 9

FAMILY & EDUCATION

Australian International School	19
Baby Slings & Carrier	146
Brighton Montessori	142
Canadian International School	121
CUFA	128
Dulwich College	OBC
ISS International School	110
JSSL Arsenal Soccer School	131
L'Académie de Danse Singapore	149

Marlborough College Malaysia	139
Marsden Swim School	149
Melbourne Specialist International School	109
Odyssey	103
One World International School	140
Shaws	150
Singapore American School	11
St. Joseph's Institution International	114
Stamford American International School	21
Steinway Gallery Singapore	146
Swallows and Amazons	145
Tanglin Arts Studio	147
UWCSEA	107
White Lodge	132

FASHION

An Cee Chantelle	224
Cluny Court Shopping Centre	124 & 125
Mohan's Custom Tailors	218
Shopping at Tiffany's	224
Summer Moments	225
Taula Jewellery	225
White Ginger	224
Willow & Huxley	224

FINANCIAL, LEGAL & OTHER SERVICES

AIG Asia Pacific Insurance	133 & 147
Chartwell Associates	148
Consilium Law Corporation	148
First Immigrations	148
Gloria James-Civetta & Co.	146
Jenny Lai & Co.	149
Job Search Manpower Services	149
Expat Insurance	51

FOOD & BEVERAGES

Bacco Wines	181
Burlamacco Ristorante	157
Café Melba	183
Cook & Brew @ The Westin Singapore	182
Don Quijote	181
Expat Kitchen	184
inITALY	182
Jamie's Italian	153
La Barca Ristorante	183
Natural Springs, Australia	184
Raffles City Market Place	167
RedMart	155
Sofitel Singapore Resort & Spa	160

FURNITURE & HOME DÉCOR

Artful House	23
China Collection	17
Danish Design	IBC
DEEB Designs	94
EDD+	94
Ethnicraft Online Singapore	93
European Bedding	27
FairPrice Antique	95
Gallery 278 ^l	96
HotLotz	65
House of AnLi Interiors	80
Lorenzo	37
Ni-Night	95
OHMM	35
Originals	13
Scanteak	77
Sunleaf Shutters	53
Taylor B Fine Design Group	2 & 3
Teak & Mahogany	38
The Furniture Mall	45
The Past Perfect Collection	41

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Victorian Flair	88	The Counselling Place	265	TRAVEL & LEISURE	
Villeroy & Boch	72	The Harley Street Clinic Heart and		Bangkok Airways	187
Woody Antique House	79	Cancer Centre	249	Bintan Resorts	190 & 191, 205
		The Vein Centre	31	Culture Bites	211
		The Vein Clinic & Surgery	15	Flight Centre	211
HEALTH & FITNESS				KLM Royal Dutch Airlines	202
Andrea's Digestive, Colon, Liver And				Pan Pacific Serviced Suites	208
Gallblader Clinic	266	HOME SERVICES		Radisson Golf & Convention Center	
Clarity Eyecare	262	A-Team Amahs & Cleaners	95	Batam	189
Complete Healthcare International	25	Comfy Homes	95	Rawa Island	212
Core Synergy Studio	265			Telunas Resorts	212
Dr Catherine Lee Orthodontics	117	MOTORING SERVICES		The Racha, Phuket	211
Dr Georgette Chan Clinic	262	Evergreen Rent A Car	61		
EzFIT Singapore	263	Komoco Car Rentals ¹	99		
Family Dental Centre	247	Wearnes Leasing ¹	29		
Ganesh Surgery	253				
Health & Fertility Centre for Women	264	PHOTOGRAPHY & PRINTS			
International Medical Clinic	119	Brilliant Prints	149		
JH Kim Taekwondo	265	The Studio Loft	149		
Osteopathic Treatment Centre	266	Tomato Photo	145		
Pacific Vein & Endovascular Centre	244	White Room Studio	149		
Regional Hypnosis Center	266	Within Images	148		
Specialist Dental Group	263				
Tanglin Medical Clinic	264	PROPERTY			
		Sophie Carter Exclusive Properties	93		

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Work, Burn, Love

BY GEETA COLACO



Unless you're a fitness instructor of some type, or moonlighting as a pole dancer, it's unlikely your job is giving you much of a calorie burn. If you're a working parent, then between play time, homework time, story time and "If I catch you out of bed one more time!" there's almost no time left to do anything other than *imaginary* exercise – the kind you imagine yourself doing ... if you had the time.

Then, somewhere at the back of your mind, comes that feeling of envy – envy of the innocuous-looking colleague who can eat any size of burger she likes and the size of her dress doesn't move from zero.

While I can't say I've quite overcome that feeling, I can share with you the secrets to my new, fitter workday.

10,000 steps a day

That's the new mantra. I'm not sure about who picked this particular number or why, but I think it sounds sufficiently impressive. I purchased a step-counting gadget and now I walk five kilometres to and from work each way. (I also jump around, somewhat conspicuously, while my lunch is heating up in the microwave.)

Singapore is hot, of course, so there aren't walk-to-work options for everyone. If you do need transport, you could at least try to walk more during the course of your journey – park further away, for example, or get off at a station earlier. Then, when you're in the office, take the stairs, walk to the copier, walk over to chat to a colleague, walk while you're waiting.

Sit on a ball

This is a great conversation-starter – no one will pass by without making a comment. Bouncing up and down also definitely helps with those difficult work moments when you're thinking to yourself, "Is this an Excel sheet or a death sentence?" or "Why did I send that email?"

Roll back, twist, turn – whatever you do, you won't ever sit still ever again; a chair will be a thing of the past. And, if you bounce really intently, you will accrue more steps. Just don't fall off the ball.



Mini-dumbbells

Use these in your office space once every hour: bicep curls, side raises, overhead extensions, lunges... do anything that's possible within the space and time. It takes around two minutes a set, and if you can get six sets into an eight-hour workday, you've only taken up 16 minutes.



Packed lunch

Bring your meals from home. Sure, it's less exciting than ordering takeaway or hopping out with colleagues for a quick bite; but the problem with the quick bite is that you end up biting off more than you can chew, and it all goes from lips to hips. On the other hand, you always know what's in your lunch box; if it's not exciting enough, wait till you're really hungry to eat it.

Meditate

You can't get a long way with your physical health without attending to your mental health too. Enough happens in an average workday to frustrate, agitate, delight and drive you nuts. So, take a step back, breathe, feel your fingers, light a scented candle, crack a joke. Work is ultimately related to productivity, not time; you'll get more done, if there's a better you to do it.



And, if all of this doesn't work, say a silent prayer: "Please, God, if you can't make me thin... make my colleagues fat." *EL*

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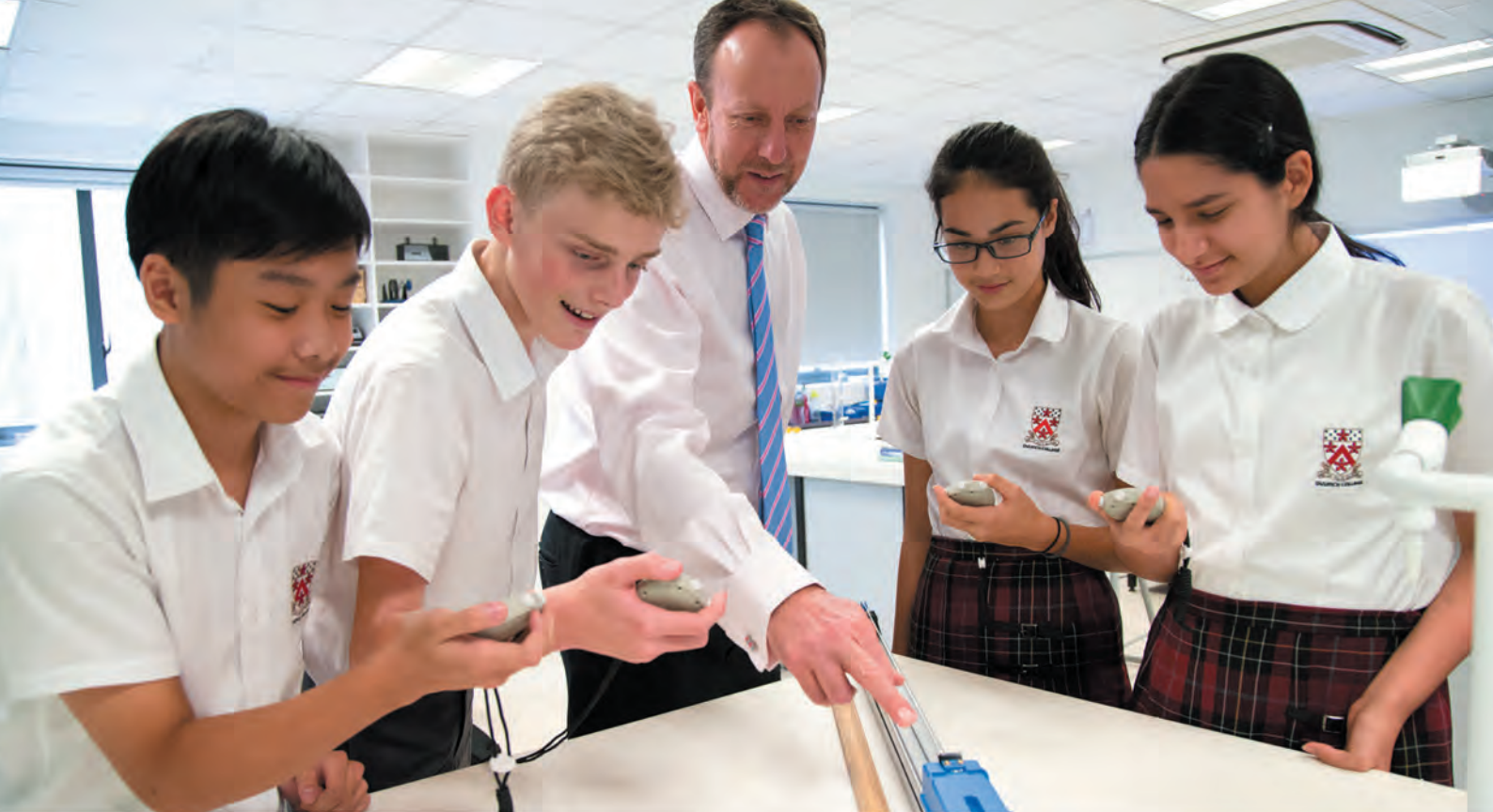
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