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SALVADOR DALI AND PIERRE ARGILLET: Thirty Years of Collaboration will be curated and presented by Christine Argillet, Pierre Argillet's daughter. Having spent much of her childhood in the presence of Salvador Dali, Ms Argillet offers first-hand accounts and personal insights into the collaboration between her father and Salvador Dali.





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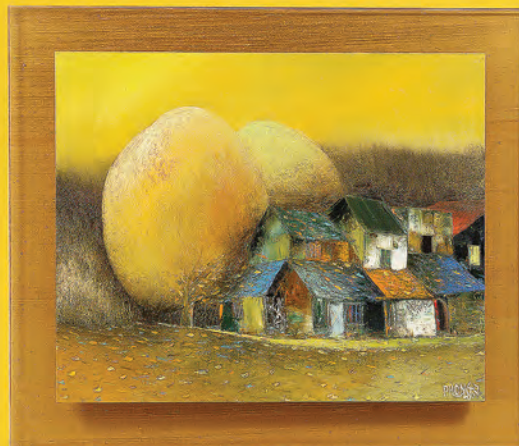


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GP Management presents The Podium Lounge A-List After-Parties over the 2016 FORMULA 1 SINGAPORE AIRLINES SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX on Friday 16, Saturday 17 & Sunday 18 September from 10pm.

In it's 8th consecutive year at The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore, this sell-out, celebrity packed event is returning to The Grand Ballroom of The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia, which will undergo a dramatic transformation into a glamorous ultra lounge featuring a dizzying overhead catwalk and VIP balconies offering a magical party experience with the racing community for up to 3,000 guests per night.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



“The moon is hanging in the purple sky” is the opening line of one of my favourite songs of all time, “Rich Folks Hoax” by Rodriguez. “So don’t tell me about your success, nor your recipes for my happiness,” his chorus implores.

In a politically sanctioned South Africa in the 1970s, Rodriguez was bigger than Elvis, while to the rest of the world (apart from New Zealand and Australia) he was practically unknown. For years he didn’t profit from any of this fame.

In a recent unearthing of my CD collection (those round, plastic, shiny things), I found lots of old favourites. They made me think about the people involved in them and what they did “post-fame”. How do you go back to normality? Can you go back to a day job, and to shopping at your local supermarket? How do you introduce yourself? “Hello, I’m Robbie; I used to play in a boy band but now I just ...”

I also pondered the question of why fame eludes some really talented people while others become famous overnight by doing ... not very much. One thing does seem a surety: you have to make the most out of what you have and not squander opportunities (or health and wealth).

We’ve turned the corner on the year, if that makes sense, so it’s time to find your groove if you haven’t already – whatever that might be for this moment in your life. Write that book, sing that song, help that cause.

For now, though, it’s time to read this magazine and find some stories to inspire you. Try Sean Boyle’s story on page 66 or Emma Femminile’s on page 237 for starters. Or travel vicariously with us to Bintan, Bali, Lombok or further afield, from page 208.

And, unlike Rodriguez, we *would* like to know about your successes (and recipes!), so get in touch at editorial@expatliving.sg.

Happy grooving.



Rebecca

REBECCA BISSET
Editor-in-Chief



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CONTENTS

NEWS

- 22 News Headlines**
- 24 Calendar Updates:**
Events happening around town
- 32 Readers' Letters**
- 34 EL Forum:**
What's online now

HOME & PROPERTY

- 44 News**
- 48 Home Showcase:**
Have a nose around this chic black-and-white
- 58 Shopping Guide:**
Where to buy the best faux flowers
- 66 Home Showcase:**
Chatting to British Club general manager Sean Boyle
- 77 Reader Recommendations:**
Antique furniture
- 82 Buyer's Guide:**
A roundup of antique and reproduction furniture
- 92 Street Talk:**
Living on Jalan Leban

48 We go inside a black-and-white house in Adam Drive




82 Antique furnishings and ideas for your home



ARTS & LEISURE

- 98 On the Wall:**
What's on in the art scene this month
- 101 Exhibition Spotlight:**
The works of Salvador Dali at REDSEA Gallery
- 104 On the Stage:**
The latest in live music, dance and theatre
- 112 On the Screen:**
Cinema and television highlights of the month
- 114 On the Page:**
Recent book releases



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CONTENTS

LIFE & FAMILY

- 120 News**
- 126 Noticeboard:**
New births and pets for adoption
- 128 Expert Voice:**
Top sleeping tips from “Supernanny”
Zoe Chu
- 135 Picnic Tips:**
Our top spots to lay down your
basket
- 139 Reader Recommendations:**
Choosing a dance or drama school
for your child
- 142 Graduating Stars**
Three Centre Stage students reflect
on their experiences
- 145 Earning His Stripes:**
Mike Baltzer fights to boost the
world’s tiger population
- 150 Charity Spotlight:**
Find out about SPCA’s new initiatives
- 153 Egg-cellent Advice:**
Why buying free-range eggs matters
- 161 Reader Tips:**
Which car should you choose?

WINE & DINE

- 172 News**
- 179 Bar Tab:**
New nightspots to check out now
- 183 Daytime Dining:**
Family-friendly brunching across
Singapore
- 194 Chef Spotlight:**
In conversation with chef Jason Tan
of Corner House



230

**Travels to
Turkey:**
Exploring
enchanted
Cappadocia

183

**Daytime
Dining:**
Family-friendly
brunching
across
Singapore



TRAVEL

- 204 News**
- 208 Indo Escapes:**
Great deals on nearby beach breaks
- 213 Magical Experience:**
A first-time visit to Lombok and Bali
- 220 Making Waves:**
Surfing southern Lombok
- 226 Kids Go Free:**
Discovering the highlights of Costa cruise
- 228 Diving Spotlight:**
Meet Simone Wirthmann from boutique dive
centre Orca Scuba
- 230 Travels to Turkey:**
Exploring enchanting Cappadocia

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Liv CONTENTS

- 238 All About Emma:**
Fashion label owner Emma
Femminile talks career and
inspiration

FASHION

- 244 News**
248 Shopping Edit:
Our latest fashion picks

BEAUTY

- 256 News**
260 Best Face Forward:
Facemasks for different skin
concerns
262 Viva Viveve:
A procedure to get your sexual
mojo back
265 Time to Relax:
Indulge in one of these
recommended spa treatments

- 260** Ways to combat
signs of skin ageing
and fatigue



HEALTH & FITNESS

- 280 News**
284 Health Matters:
Why we should be cooking from
scratch
286 Necessary Protection:
All about Meningitis B and
vaccinating your family
288 Tried & Tested Training:
Tips and tricks from Singapore's
top personal trainers
298 Call a Chiropractor:
How chiropractic care can do more
than just ease back pain

REGULARS

- 307 Numbers & Websites**
**308 Horoscopes for
September**
310 Advertiser List
312 Parting Shot:
5 Things I Wished I Knew Before
Having a Baby

238

We chat with
Emma Femminile
of White Ginger



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What's New

Calling All Tennis Lovers

Surely this counts as tennis heaven? The top eight women's singles and doubles players will compete in the **WTA Finals** in Singapore in October, with plenty of activities for tennis fans. The inaugural Family Day on 23 October includes player and mascot appearances and themed tennis activities on and off the courts – and you can save 50 percent off two adult and two children tickets by buying a Family Day bundle. Or for the premium tennis experience, join Racquet Club to enjoy premium buffet dining, exclusive meet-and-greets and the best seats in the house. 23 to 30 October, Kallang Indoor Stadium. For more information and tickets, visit wtafinals.com. ▼



Can You Go Barefoot?

Step out of your comfort zone at **Habitat for Humanity's** annual barefoot walkathon. Funds raised go to Project HomeWorks, a local initiative that aims to improve the living conditions of the sick, elderly and disabled who are living in poverty. A host of fun activities promise to keep your little ones entertained after the walk. 10 September, 7.30am to 12 noon at OCBC Square (in front of Kallang Wave Mall). bareyoursole.sg ▼



For One Day Only

We've got two shopping dates to pop in your diary that you won't want to miss. First up is the **Diwali Dazzle Fair** on 15 September, where you'll find Indian saris, Punjabi suits, handbags, beauty products, festive decorations, snacks and more. It's on at the Pan Pacific Orchard Hotel, from 10am to 7pm. A few weeks later, on 6 and 7 of October, visit **The Fair** for a head start on your Thanksgiving and pre-Christmas shopping. fairsandbazaars.com ▼



F1 Fever

How do you like to experience the F1 weekend? We love that there are choices for everyone, from walkabout passes to Pit Straight seats, awesome outdoor concerts and celebrity-packed events. Chief among the latter is **The Podium Lounge**, where you can find yourself grooving on the dance floor beside supermodels and F1 drivers, or mingling with Asia's jet-setting party elite, while *E! News* presenter Yvette King hosts performers including British singer Sophie Ellis-Bextor, Mark Doyle (creator of UK-based record label Hed Kandi) and Grammy Award winner Estelle. Don't miss it! 16 to 18 September, The Ritz-Carlton, 7 Raffles Avenue. For tickets and VIP tables, email vip@podiumlounge.com or visit podiumlounge.com/sg.



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This Month

SHOPPING & FAIRS

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**

Green Living (9-11 SEP)

Showcasing products and services with a clear sustainability focus and commitment, Green Living is a comprehensive one-stop platform for all to learn and explore a green lifestyle. Enjoy organic food at the Green Cafe or recycle an item at the Eco-Love Machine. **Marina Bay Sands Convention Centre. green-living.com.sg**

Wan Qing Weekend: Mid-Autumn Festival (10-11 SEP)

This event includes fun activities galore, from traditional lantern-making to storytelling and guided tours of this historic villa location. You can also enjoy music performances and admire life-size lantern installations in the garden. **Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall, 12 Tai Gin Road.**



Wan Qing Weekend: Mid-Autumn Festival



24

ASICS
City Relay

SPORTS & FITNESS

Mission Foods Nations Cup Netball (4-10 SEP)

Prepare yourself for an exciting battle of the netballing nations at the 11th Missions Foods Nations Cup this month. Don't miss the chance to catch our very own Singapore netball team in action. **Singapore Sports Hub. Tickets from Apactix.**

Bare Your Sole (10 SEP)

Be part of Singapore's barefoot charity walk this month. Choose between the 2.5km or 5km distance – either way, you'll be making the lives of marginalised and needy communities a little better, with all proceeds going to Habitat for Humanity Singapore. **OCBC Square. bareyoursole.sg**

ASICS City Relay (24 SEP)

The ASICS City Relay is back and bigger for its second year. Look forward to an unparalleled adrenaline mix of performance and team spirit all in one race. Runners will make up a four-person team to complete either a marathon or a half marathon. **Singapore Sports Hub. cityrelay.com.sg**



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DANCE, DRAMA & THEATRE

The Three Little Pigs (4 AUG - 16 SEP)

Bringing together three adorable piglets, their single-parent mum and a misunderstood Big Bad Wolf, this classic fairy tale teaches little ones that success can be achieved through hard work and perseverance. Tickets from Sistic. **KC Arts Centre Home of SRT**, 20 Merbau Road. srt.com.sg

Water Falls (10 SEP)

Connecting the environmental and social impact of water consumption with the arts, this experiential water awareness event aims to inspire individuals to action. Come with an open mind to learn and look forward to stimulating dance and musical performances. **Aliwal Arts Center**, 28 Aliwal Street. Tickets from Peatix.

Kings and Queen of Comedy Asia (30 SEP - 1 OCT)

Singapore's longest-running comedy festival returns, promising a giggle-inducing weekend where no topics are off limits. Six side-splitting acts from around the globe will join on the stage, in an event that has been the launching pad for many stand-up careers. **Esplanade Theatres by the Bay**. Tickets from Sistic.

FAMILY

Barney's Greatest Hits (9-11 SEP)

The world's favourite purple dinosaur is here! Bring your little ones on an imaginative journey as they sing and dance along with Barney in this exciting musical show. Together with Barney's friends, Baby Bop, BJ and Riff, you can look forward to a stimulating and fun time. **The Theatre at Mediacorp**, 1 Stars Avenue. Tickets from Sistic.

Australian International School Open House (16 SEP)

Explore the campus and observe classroom activities at the Australian International School's Open House. Learn more about their unique offering of both the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Australian curriculums for students aged 18 months to 18 years old. **1 Lorong Chuan**. ais.com.sg

The Gruffalo's Child (22-25 SEP)

Following hot on the heels of *The Gruffalo's* sell-out tour and his monstrous West End success comes *The Gruffalo's Child*. Bring your children on a magical journey and find out if the Big Bad Mouse really does exist. **Victoria Theatre**. Tickets from Sistic.

Annual Charity Art Exhibition and Auction (23 SEP)

Drop by Melbourne Specialist International School's Charity Art Exhibition and Auction at ReDot Fine Art Gallery this month, and pick up some new finds to help contribute to the development of the school's vocational centre. **ReDot Fine Art Gallery**, Old Hill Street Police Station, 140 Hill Street. msis.edu.sg



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The Podium Lounge A-List After-Parties

SOCIAL

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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

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, including British pop goddess Sophie Ellis-Bextor and Grammy winner Estelle. 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

New Zealand Chamber of Commerce AGM 2016 (29 SEP)

Spend an evening with the NZ Chamber of Commerce Singapore, 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

ARTS

More Than Monkeys Exhibition (UNTIL 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

A Splash of Color (1-30 SEP)

Showcasing the works of female artists Anu Malhotra and Noemi Safir, this exhibition features vibrant colours on large canvases. Appreciate the contrast between the styles of these two talented artists – one focusing on the organic spiritual nature of the world, and the other exuding a more urban interpretation. **Bruno Gallery, 91 Tanglin Road, Tanglin Place.** brunoartgroup.com

In Light of the Ephemeral Silence (16 SEP - 23 OCT)

Eric Chan's first solo exhibition features a new series of paintings inspired by elements of Western cinematic traditions. Take time to contemplate the transient qualities of light and silence captured in these unique works. **FOST Gallery, 1 Lock Road.** fostgallery.com

White on Black (UNTIL 30 SEP)

This exhibition features works by Italian sculptor and painter Oliviero Rainaldi. Focusing on human figures in simple style and flowing lines, Rainaldi's works were recently showcased at Petronas Gallery in Kuala Lumpur and at the Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai in 2015. **Partners & Mucciaccia, Blk 6 Lock Road, #02-10 Gillman Barracks.** partnersandmucciaccia.net

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Plan Ahead

Australian World Orchestra 2016 Singapore Tour (1 OCT)

Look forward to captivating music in this one-night-only event, as 94 of Australia's finest musicians from the greatest orchestras around the world, display their skills, under the baton of Australian conductor Alexander Briger. **Esplanade Theatres by the Bay.** Tickets from Sistic.

OCBC Cycle (1-2 OCT)

Singapore's largest cycling event is back for another instalment. Sweat it out as you take part in a series of unique cycling and cycling-related activities. **Singapore Sports Hub.** ocbccycle.com

Jeeves & Wooster in Perfect Nonsense (6-16 OCT)

Charmingly incompetent English gentleman Bertie Wooster and his unflappable valet Jeeves are coming to Singapore this October. Look forward to a hilarious evening of theatre absurdity with an endless line-up of jokes that will have you laughing all night long. **Capitol Theatre, 17 Stamford Road.** Tickets from Sistic.



Jeeves & Wooster in
Perfect Nonsense

Boutique Italian Wine Fair by Bacco (8 OCT)

Explore a variety of boutique vino from all over Italy at this exclusive fair. Get the opportunity to try rare grapes, discover unique wines and enjoy the benefits of choosing organic. **The APS Gallery, 9 Muthuraman Chetty Road, Robertson Quay.** baccowines.com

Singapore Rendezvous (21-23 OCT)

Featuring travel organisers, high-end property developers and specialists within the areas of art, watches, fashion and more, this inaugural event is a must for luxury lifestyle enthusiasts. A variety of performances, parties and dining options are also on offer. **Raffles Marina, 10 Tuas West Drive.** Tickets from Peatix.

All 'Bout Canines (22-23 OCT)

Look forward to the first-ever run of this premier lifestyle carnival for dogs and dog-lovers in Singapore. Buy something fancy for your precious pooch at independent retailers, paint a portrait of your dog with the help of professional artists or drop by the adoption drive to add a four-legged friend to your home. **Tan Quee Lan Field, Bugis.** allboutcanines.com

The Flying Dutchman (23-30 OCT)

Wagner's classic work tells the emotive story of the Flying Dutchman, who is cursed forever to wander the world's oceans. The production features home-grown talents and Asian leads; it's a must for anyone who appreciates the joys of the opera. **Victoria Theatre.** Tickets from Sistic.



Monkey
Goes West

BritCham Open House (27 OCT)

Learn more about the benefits of being a BritCham member at an Open House this October. You'll have the chance to speak to Chamber board members, business group heads and the management team at this annual event. **British Chamber of Commerce, 39 Robinson Road.**

Monkey Goes West (18 NOV - 17 DEC)

Join orphan Ah Tang as he goes on an epic adventure with Wukong, a cheeky monkey king, Pigsy, a brave but always hungry warrior, and Sandy, a stubborn but loyal ogre. The catchy songs, hilarious gags, wushu and magic will keep you and your family on the edge of your seats. **Drama Centre Theatre, 100 Victoria Street.** Tickets from Sistic.

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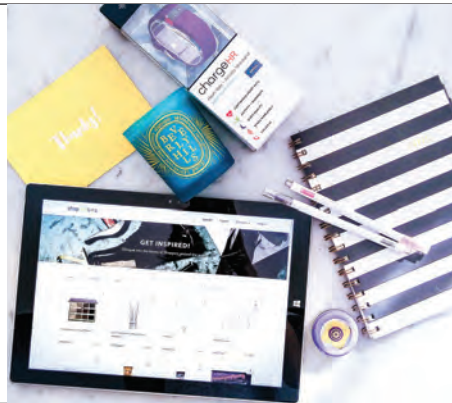
LETTERS

We want to hear from you!

Send us your thoughts on the magazine, or on any subject under the sun, and you could win a shopping experience from peer-to-peer personal shopping service **ShopandBox**.

The prize for Best Letter includes a \$200 shopping credit for items in the US, the UK, France, Italy, Australia, Japan or Korea, along with 3kg of free express international shipping.

To welcome her to Singapore, Angela Merrie wins this month's great ShopandBox prize.



SATISFIED SUBSCRIBER

To all the *Expat Living* team, I just wanted to say I have just received my first copy of the magazine and can't put it down! It is excellent! Thank you so much.

– Angela Merrie



HOME SEARCH

After three superb years in Hong Kong, I've taken promotion to Singapore with effect from this coming October. Though we've visited on holiday, I know it's not the same as living in a place. My wife and our 12-year-old son like the look of the East Coast, but I wonder if it would be better to start off more centrally, as I'll be working in the CBD? Any advice would be appreciated.

– Sam Anderson

Ed: We love the laid-back East Coast life, and you'll find it has excellent links to the CBD and central areas, including international schools. However, spending your first few months in a serviced apartment will give you time to get a feel for the island before deciding. For more on the different areas, check out our regular Neighbourhood Watch feature in back issues of EL (expatliving.sg), and speak to the experts at PropertyGuru (propertyguru.com.sg). Good luck!

BACK TO FRONT

Is it very weird that I tend to read magazines backwards? That's why I always start with your "Parting Shot", on the back page. I like that it's written by a different person

every time and often has something that expats can identify with. I especially enjoyed Geeta Colaco's humorous "Work, Burn, Love" in the August issue. Although I'm not an office rat anymore (too busy with our toddler and our six-year-old!), her health and fitness tips for busy women were timely and humorous.

– Marjorie Long



Ed: Nothing wrong with reading mags backwards, frontwards or sideways – they're designed to be dipped into at leisure!

Email us at info@expatliving.sg

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


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Reader photo of the month

Thanks @coffeeandchatsingapore!



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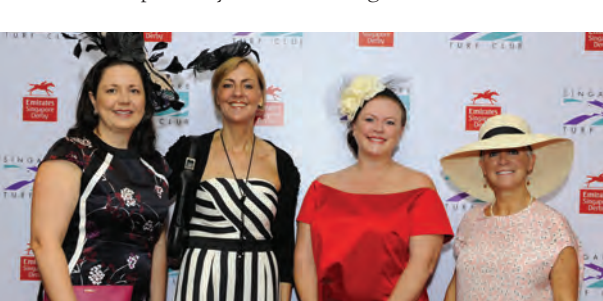
expat **LIVING**

Around Town



Feast for the Eyes

The Emirates Singapore Derby, Singapore's horse-racing highlight of the year, returned on 10 July, providing racing fans with a memorable experience yet again. Aside from the action on the track, there was plenty to admire in the stylish outfits and stand-out headpieces of the impeccably dressed race-goers.





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Homeware & Accessories Galore

Vanilla Home celebrated the opening of its new showroom on Club Street. Guests were welcomed by founder Stefanie Hauger (below, at left) to a delightful evening of canapés by My Awesome Café and Hatt et Söner Champagne. The space doubles as a gallery for upcoming and established artists.



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Quilting for Singapore

To express their appreciation towards their adopted home, Miranda Rowlands and a team of expat ladies have hand-sewn a patchwork quilt measuring more than two metres, showcasing an image of a bookcase with over 300 books, and using fabric from all over the world. The design was inspired by Miranda's daughter, an avid book lover, and took over seven months to complete. It was displayed at the launch of Singapore's inaugural National Reading Day on 30 July.



Dress to Impress

Covetella, Singapore's premier online dress rental company, held its 1st Anniversary Ball last month at New Asia Bar. The inaugural event drew over 350 guests to celebrate the success of the fashion start-up. Partygoers were treated to stunning exhibitions of local and international designer and couture gowns as well as complimentary beauty and wellness services by HairDreams, Urban Spa and more.

Support for Cancer

The Australian International School's Parent Association (AISPA) recently held its annual Biggest Morning Tea, featuring lots of fun and fashion, for an extremely worthy cause. The event raised \$22,612 for the Singapore Cancer Society to fund cancer screenings, and hospice and patient treatment support programmes.



Researcher

MAX, AGE 6

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HOME & PROPERTY



61

Custom Furniture:
Get the skinny on Arete Culture's offerings

Arete Culture

48

Home Showcase: Have a nose around this black-and-white bungalow

58

Best Buys: Where to purchase fantastic artificial flowers

64

Product News: Be inspired by a rainbow of furniture from FairPrice Antique

What's New



Danish Design has added two cool pieces to its Fredericia Spine Collection – the Spine Lounge Petit and the Spine Daybed. Both embody the functional and contemporary aesthetics of Scandinavian design; the Lounge Petit is a small and light easy chair, and the daybed is sleek, simple and multifunctional. The collection features eight models in total. **#06-03 Century Warehouse, 100E Pasir Panjang Road. danishdesignco.com.sg**

Bed Hopping

European Bedding has moved from its long-standing location at Grange Road to the hip neighbourhood of Tiong Bahru. Now on the second level of a shophouse, the company continues to offer customised mattress options, as well as its range of natural organic products. **32 Eng Hoon Street. 9654 3228**



Bargain Time!

Not only is **Scanteak** running a sale with up to 60 percent off selected items of furniture, but if you flash them this page you'll receive a teak tea-tray with any purchase at its Toh Guan showroom, while stocks last. The sale runs from 3 to 4 and 10 to 11 September. **6515 8622 | scanteak.com.sg**



Exclusive Oak

Keep it green with **Square Roots** furniture, which uses sustainably sourced French oak, available exclusively at **Mountain Teak**. Designs are kept simple and light, and use traditional craftsmanship, including butterfly joinery techniques. **6224 7176 | mountainteak.com**



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Takeover Time

British expat Chantal Travers has taken over the reins at **FairPrice Antique**. Nineteen years of experience living abroad, including posts in Beijing and Hong Kong, combined with 25 years working in retail and marketing, make her well equipped to build on the success of the Chinese furniture and home décor outlet. Chantal has a number of plans for the coming months, including growing FairPrice Antique's art component in support of expat artists. Read more about the store on page 64, or head to **#01-10 Tan Boon Liat Building, 315 Outram Road**.

Rug Relocation

Carpet retail stalwart **The Orientalist** has moved its showroom to the Sime Darby Centre in Bukit Timah. With a collection of over 10,000 carpets to choose from, this specialist store continues to offer its full range of carpet services, all under one roof. **896 Dunearn Road, #01-01. 6732 0880**



Style Concession

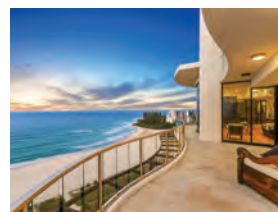
Not only has **Treasures of the Raj** received its new consignment of colonial furniture and rare Christian art and antiques, but it's also running a sale through the months of September and October, with discounts of between 20 to 50 percent across selected items. **#02-30 Tanglin Shopping Centre, 19 Tanglin Road. tot.rpw**



PROPERTY FOCUS

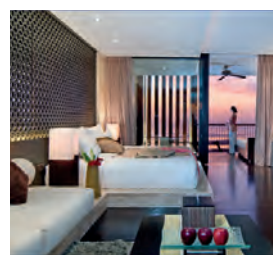
Australian Asset

If you've ever dreamed of owning your own two-level penthouse, with wrap-around balconies overlooking white sandy beaches and the sound of waves lulling you to sleep, then take a look at this property, on the market for A\$4.3 million (S\$4.4 million). The 632-square-metre home is an hour from Brisbane, with 360-degree views over Coolangatta Beach, the Tweed River and hinterland mountains. Go to **sophiecarter.com** for more information.



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All Things Nice and Neutral

BY AMY BROOK-PARTRIDGE
PHOTOGRAPHY KATE GRIFFITHS

We find out how CLAIRE WARREN has translated her fashion background into a passion for interiors, and why she and her family love living in a jungle setting.

Who lives here: Claire and Digby Warren, originally from the UK, and children Mia (6) and Sebastian (4).

How long in Singapore: Seven years; they moved into this house in September 2015.

Claire's favourite room: Although the house is relatively small, she says, its selling point was the deck looking over the pool and to the greenery beyond. "We fell in love with the uninterrupted view of the jungle with magical light streaming through. It's hard to believe you're in the centre of a bustling city."



The Warren home, a black-and-white bungalow in Adam Drive, is naturally stunning (like Claire herself), with a warm and welcoming feel that comes from her knack of combining natural materials in neutral colours, with plenty of cushions and rugs from her company, The Grey House, thrown in for good measure. Moving into the house in September last year, coupled with setting up her home styling and furniture business in the early part of this year, have meant it's been a busy time for Claire, and she's now going full-steam ahead finalising the online retail arm of her company. Her aim is for the website to be used as a kind of "look book" with an option to buy, and for now her home serves as her showroom.

London to Singapore

Digby's job in banking brought them from London to Singapore in 2009, while Claire was pregnant with Mia. They first lived in a condo in Holland Village: "A gorgeous little place with Balinese-inspired grounds; we loved it for just the two of us." Then Mia arrived and, as Claire puts it, "the plastic fantastic started to get out of control. Digby and I both agree that toys don't belong in the living areas and so we started looking for somewhere with more space."

There followed a 3,000-square-foot duplex on Kheam Hock Road, overlooking the jungle. Four years later and, with the arrival of Sebastian, they decided to move again. "The real reason we moved was for more outside space – boys need room to kick a football and run around, and Sebby is always exploring; so that was our main motivation to move to a home with a garden."

Claire wasn't originally sold on this particular black-and-white; it was Digby who pushed it, she says. "It felt small, being a bungalow, but now we absolutely love it. The kids are normally outdoors, running around and doing what they do – trampolining, swimming or scooting."



“You need to utilise what you have already. Who’s going to buy everything from scratch every time they move house? It’s unrealistic.”



BELOW
 “Bizarrely, artwork is the one thing we struggle with,” admits Claire. They picked up the piece on the left at their first Affordable Art Fair, and also purchased this work by Leo Poloniecki (*right*), a good friend of theirs. “We should have got some more!”





Add in the fact that two of Claire's close friends live down the road, one of whom she lived with at university, and the house was an easy choice.

Stylish beginnings

Having spent eight years working for Chanel in London, as well as for *InStyle* magazine, Claire's experience within the fashion world stood her in good stead for similarly desirable positions here. These included working at Singapore fashion giant, Club 21, and heading up Lulu Bare, the fashion brand she ran with her Dubai-based sister Louise.

At the same time, Claire was always on the lookout for unique, wallet-friendly furniture for her home. "While visiting a friend in India, I found a rug supplier and purchased some pieces from them. Then my friend Milly saw them and wanted quite a few, so I bought them for her as

well." When they moved to their current house, Claire needed furniture for the terrace, and knowing Bali well from visits to Digby's mother's home, she found a custom-made furniture supplier; the end products are the leather and rattan chairs you see dotted inside and outside the home. Her range now encompasses sofas, sideboards, lampshades and hand-carved chairs, and she'll source most other furnishings on request.

Her styling ethos is that you don't have to spend a fortune creating a new look for your home. "You need to be able to utilise what you have already. Who's going to buy everything from scratch every time they move house? It's unrealistic. Sometimes it's just a case of re-visualising, re-covering, removing or refreshing."

Look around her home and it quickly becomes clear that Claire loves a neutral palette. "Grey is

The custom-made cabinet on the right fits perfectly in the space Digby reworked. Andrew Martin-esque tables, such as the silver piece on the left, give the room a contemporary touch.



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Claire's products from The Grey House are seen throughout her home, including this rug.

my favourite colour, hence the name The Grey House, but Digby forces me to include colour in the home.” She says that he also has a hand in their home’s aesthetics, and definitely has an eye for working things out spatially.

“When we moved, we had a drinks cabinet that didn’t quite fit into the space I had earmarked. He knew that by removing some tiles from the wall on either side the cabinet would fit – it looks so much better now.” Digby has also taken on the garden as his pet project, says Claire. “Every weekend he goes to the garden centre, and he always comes back with something. I think he finds it really therapeutic.”

Future plans

Eventually, the couple would like to return to the UK for the children’s secondary schooling. With both Digby and Claire coming from expat families, they understand how moving from place to place can affect a child. Both attended boarding school, giving them some kind of grounding, and Claire is keen to ensure their children have a similar foundation. “I like the idea of a family home, having a little nest, so yes, eventually we will go back.”

For now, however, their life is in Singapore, particularly with Digby’s mother currently sharing her time between Bali and the UK, making it easier to have that close-knit family contact that is often missing from expat life. “Our life here is brilliant, and we have amazing friends, so we’re not going home anytime soon,” Claire says.



“ The kids are normally outdoors, running around and doing what they do – trampolining, swimming or scooting; we absolutely love it. ”





All of the furniture outside is custom-made.

Claire's Recommendations

TRAVEL

A trip to Raja Ampat, Indonesia ("Lightfoot Travel organised five magical nights on board the *Alila Purnama* for us: breathtaking scenery and a million underwater secret gardens – a must-do for divers and anyone who appreciates true tranquillity")
lightfoottravel.com

Maalifushi by Como, The Maldives ("We went on a family holiday last year for Digby's birthday – five days of utter bliss for just the four of us; amazing interiors, wonderful facilities and the most scrumptious food")
comohotels.com/maalifushi

EAT

Kilo Kitchen ("One of my favourite restaurants for delicious food that's perfect for sharing with the best of friends!")
kilokitchen.com

Esquina ("Delicious tapas and a glass of red; what more could you want for date night?")
16 Jiak Chuan Road
6222 1616 | esquina.com.sg

Culina ("The best crab spaghettini in Singapore")
8 Dempsey Road, #01-13
6474 7338 | culina.com.sg

Common Man ("The king of all breakfasts!")
22 Martin Road, #01-00
6836 4695 | commonmancoffeeroasters.com

SHOPPING

Edit Lifestyle ("A wonderfully curated selection of resort wear and lifestyle pieces by the talented Florence Lim; my shopping heaven!")
Tudor Court, 137-139 Tanglin Road
6836 5686 | editlifestyle.com

Aquariva ("The perfect Singapore wardrobe; stunning prints and easy-to-wear silhouettes that keep an eye on fashion, so you don't feel like you are slipping into a time warp")
aquariva.com

Club 21 ("Lust-worthy international designers; I love their British representation – Christopher Kane, Roksanda, Peter Pilotto and more")
club21global.com

Boutiques Fair ("Definitely the best shopping event in Singapore and The Grey House will be joining in November with some new brands")
The Pit Building
1 Republic Boulevard
boutiquefairssingapore.com

INTERIORS & ART

Walter G ("The Grey House stocks their beautiful cushions, and I can't stop piling them on every sofa, chair and bed in my house")
walter-g.com.au

Leo Poloniecki ("If you are looking for colourful, contemporary art that won't break the bank, then definitely pay him a visit")
poloniecki.com

1st Dibs ("Slightly ambitious in terms of price and shipping restrictions, but the most inspirational collection of interiors")
1stdibs.com

Bode Fabrics ("I love their Timorous Beasties and Liberty of London fabrics")
#05-10 Tan Boon Liat Building, 315 Outram Road
6635 3377 | bode.com.sg

House of Hackney ("Exquisite fashion and interiors in breathtaking prints; I'm earmarking some of their wallpapers for my forever home")
houseofhackney.com

The Grey House
9068 5209 | greyhouseonline.com

BEAUTY

Sole House ("At-home massages are the best, and they now also have a mani-pedi service that I mean to try out")
solehouse.com.sg *el*



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Païta flower,
\$16



Kilimanjaro
branch, \$44

Not only can you purchase some seriously cool furniture from **Originals**, but you can pick up a pretend posy or two as well – from classic and clean white, to pink, purple and more. Prices are competitive and definitely worth a look. originals.com.sg

If you love roses but hate the fact they die so quickly, check out **Christine's Corner**. The flowers here are fresh cut, dried and dyed, and can last up to six months without any watering. They're best suited to moderate environments or air-conditioned rooms, and kept out of direct sunlight. Prices on request. christinescorner.sg

Faking It!

BY AMY BROOK-PARTRIDGE

There's something about a gorgeous bloom on your console, or a lovely bunch of flowers on the table, that really lifts a room. Fresh flowers don't come cheap in Singapore, so here are some great places to buy artificial flowers instead.



IKEA flowers
from 90¢



Single potted orchids, from \$100

Also try ...

... the fifth floor of **The Verge**, 2 Serangoon Road. There are plenty of spots here that supply faux flowers, including **Daco** (daco.com.sg), **Vanda Win** (vandawin.com.sg), **Ming Sing Flowers**, and **Steve Florist** (steveflorist.com.sg).



KAREN FRENCH

– floral designer, consultant, stylist and author – gives us some advice on choosing and looking after faux flowers.

Both **Spotlight** and **IKEA** offer artificial flowers at reasonable prices. Okay, they may not fool many people, but they're a simple and affordable way to add an organic touch, or a blast of colour. Prices at Spotlight range from \$2.99 to \$29.99 (spotlight.com.sg), while IKEA has gerberas from 90c, up to \$19.90 for an artificial potted orchid (ikea.sg).



Blooms on a budget

British mum of two Becca de Saint Maur started **Silk Flowers Singapore** to move away from “plastic fantastic” artificial arrangements, and offer high quality and realistic artificial blooms. You can purchase Becca's pieces online at silkflowerssingapore.com, and she also offers a bespoke “at home” service.



“Thanks to advances in technology, some silk and other artificial flowers now look breathtakingly real. While we all love a fresh bloom, there are some situations and rooms where the real deal isn't as practical, and the faux variety comes into its own. Perhaps there's not enough light, or you're seeking a certain look but those specific flowers are out of season – artificial flowers to the rescue!”

Tips: Choose the best quality; it's worth the investment

- Choose flowers in realistic colours
- Mix the faux flowers between real foliage for a more believable look
- Avoid the word “fake”; instead, refer to them as “faux botanicals” or “permanent botanicals”
- They can be big dust collectors so it's important to keep them clean and free of dust

karenfrenchfloraldesigns.com



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Custom-made Creations



Fed up with a lead time of two or three months when ordering furniture, **Arete Culture's** CAROLINE CHIN-GEYLER and husband ERIC GEYLER have partnered with DALE HERZOG of **Zinteriors** to offer customers tailor-made pieces delivered much more quickly. We visited their carpentry studio to find out more, and to see for ourselves where the magic happens.

How can you turn around custom-made furniture within a month without compromising on quality, while remaining competitive on cost?

Dale: Everything we produce is done here in the studio, which allows us to have direct control over the process of how bespoke pieces are made. Many other companies don't actually manufacture in Singapore, which drives up transportation costs, and often results in more time being taken.

Caroline: Our pricing is competitive, but the true value-added service we offer that is hard to find in Singapore is the fact that we provide expert stylist advice from the get-go. Sometimes a customer comes in asking for a particular design, but once we've found out more about their home and decorating style, or seen pictures of their other furniture pieces, we get them to consider a different look – for example, a different wood finish, or a different height or shape. This specialised design input is offered at no extra cost.

Eric: We've been supplying furniture faster than the two to three weeks promised so far, so we're exceeding our own expectations!

What types of pieces do you produce?

Caroline: The Bespoke Boutique Collection covers two different types of customised furniture. The first consists of existing designs found in our showrooms that can be personalised by changing specifications, changing the materials used, or even adding or taking away certain features – adding tiling to a tabletop, for example, or changing table legs from wooden ones to a steel set.



The second kind is completely bespoke, such as a piece a customer may have in mind but which requires expertise putting the technical design together, or a piece built for a specific space and function. One example of this sort of project is a valet stand we built for a client's dressing room.

In terms of quality, both kinds of bespoke pieces are always made only with real wood – mostly teak – and never veneer. We never compromise speed or price for quality.

Tell us a little more about the studio's team.

Caroline: Dale has been in Singapore for a decade, and has over 20 years of carpentry experience. The other three carpenters are female and Singaporean – a rarity in this industry. Right now, our carpentry studio is used mainly

as a workshop where we build new pieces or even refurbish old ones, but we have plans to incorporate a shiny new showroom in the future so we can showcase more bespoke pieces.

Are there particular styles and designs that these bespoke pieces lean towards?

Caroline: We definitely build more contemporary, classic pieces that are streamlined and elegant, and we don't do round, intricate woodworking. The majority of our projects are primarily teak and nyatoh wood, and then we use supplementary materials such as stainless or mild steel, tiles, marble, capiz shells, leather and even mirrored surfaces.

9640 3829 | areteculture.com

How to order your customised item

- The first step is to visit an Arete Culture showroom (various locations; see the website listed below for details), where a form is available with customisation options for The Bespoke Boutique Collection.
- Once you've completed the form (with guidance from an available stylist, if desired) and submitted it with visual reference materials, it gets relayed to the studio for feedback. You'll then be notified within 24 hours about the relevant pricing and design options, and recommendations from both the carpenter and stylist.
- After deciding on your preferred option and putting down a 50 percent deposit on the item, the carpentry team will start work.
- The finished product is delivered to your door in three to four weeks. In the rare instance this is not achievable, a loan item is given until the finished product can be delivered. *el*

Choosing tiles to add to this coffee table



The studio offers a range of wood finishes



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I Can See a

RAINBOW

Inject some colour into your home with these fun and funky antiques and reproductions from FairPrice Antique.

BY AMY BROOK-PARTRIDGE
PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL BERNABE

Red resin and ceramic Fu dogs, \$120 to \$150 per pair; small painted box chests, \$90 each; antique Mongolian painted cabinet, \$1,600



Small orange chest box, \$100; lanterns in silk or cotton-linen mix, from \$25



Painted brush stand, from \$80; calligraphy brushes, from \$20 each; yellow cabinet, \$900



Wooden table with one drawer, \$120

OWN

Jade and silk tassels,
from \$50; elm-wood
stand, \$650

Large platter, \$200; TV
cabinet, \$1,400; hand-
painted ceramic stool, \$300

Antique
children's
chairs,
approximately
120 years old,
\$120

Vases, \$160 each; tea
jar with lid, \$120; marble
calligraphy scroll paper-
weights, \$50 each



Tips from FairPrice Antique owner Chantal

"Think about which country you'll ultimately end up living in. Some materials survive better than others in temperate climates, but if you're heading home to a country with seasonal contrasts it's a good idea to be mindful of which materials will transport and last longer."

"When you purchase a piece of furniture and get it home, or when you move house, let your furniture rest first, and don't fill it up straight away. It helps to let the piece settle into its new climate, and then slowly fill it up."

"Move around any accessories placed on your wood furniture periodically and use felt mats underneath heavy items."

"Don't be put off by the word 'reproduction'. If the item is hand-carpentered using traditional methods like ours are then it's still a quality piece that will one day be an antique itself."

FairPrice Antique is at
#01-10 Tan Boon Liat Building,
315 Outram Road.
6270 2544
fairpriceantique.com

Culture

Fusion





We didn't need to be asked twice when The British Club's charming general manager SEAN BOYLE invited us over to his Toa Payoh HDB apartment, which he shares with partner TK. We popped in to chat about what he's done with the club over the last five years and why, after 20 years of living in Singapore, he's contemplating his return to the UK, to spend more time with his two daughters Marie and Emma and his grandchildren.

BY AMY
BROOK-PARTRIDGE
PHOTOGRAPHY
MICHAEL BERNABE

Who lives here: Sean Boyle, originally from the UK, and Singaporean partner Tuan Khong Lee (TK)

Size and type of home: Three-bedroom, two-bathroom HDB apartment

Rent or own: Purchased in 2010, and subsequently fully renovated

Style of home: Traditional and colourful with Asian influences and paintings collected on the couple's travels

If you've been to The British Club in Bukit Timah you may well have spotted Sean Boyle meeting and greeting club members, or keeping a subtle but steely eye on the running of things behind the scenes. It's been five years since he took on the role of general manager. Drawing on 30 years of hospitality industry experience, he's driven membership growth within the club and put into place the annual Best of British event, now in its fourth and most successful year to date.

"People seem to think I've taken a semi-retirement job at the club," he jokes, "but that's certainly not the case. When I joined it needed a lot doing to it, and my aim was to turn it into a five-star club." During his first year, the club celebrated the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's wedding; then there was the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London 2012 Olympics, the following year; and, in 2013, with a lull in high-profile British events to commemorate, Sean created the Best of British celebrations.

The showcase of British culture sees the club host a variety of activities, with UK comedians, celebrity chefs, fashion designers and sportspeople coming to Singapore to help bolster the event. "This past celebration was truly tremendous," says Sean. "We had a grand finale dinner with a Downton Abbey theme, and we also honoured the Queen's 90th birthday."

HDB living

Arriving in Singapore on holiday 20 years ago, Sean liked it so much he decided to stay. "I found myself a job as food-and-beverage director at the Royal Plaza on Scotts, which at that time was the Royal Holiday Inn. The rest is history." His first home was in what is now the hipster haven of Tiong Bahru.

Having moved to Singapore from the UK, he left all of his furniture behind, so he had to purchase everything for his apartment. "Back then it was a very different area; I lived in a fourth-floor walk-up in a very basic place, and I bought all my furniture – apart from my bed – from the Salvation Army."





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LEFT “We bought these two ladies on a trip to Spain last year, and the very talented Framing Angie worked on them – I know her very well, and she does much of the work for The British Club. She got a local artist to do the addition and extended them. It was a beautiful painting to begin with, but it’s such a creative idea.”

BELOW “We bought this when we popped over to Cuba after attending the Skala World Congress in Mexico; we often buy artwork when we travel.”



Having lived in a variety of locations in Singapore, Sean and TK decided to purchase this Toa Payoh HDB apartment five-and-a-half years ago. The three-bedroom unit is on the 35th floor, and boasts clear views across to the Singapore Polo Club and even a glimpse of The British Club from the kitchen window.

The couple renovated the apartment, including ripping out false ceilings, putting in new flooring, upgrading the kitchen and the bathroom, and adding wardrobes. “I’ve lived in some really nice places but here we’ve got everything – the only thing we don’t have is the pool, but of course we have the British Club. The apartment is a good size for us, and only two minutes from the MRT. I’ve never driven in Singapore; I just get the train to Newton and then hop on the Club bus.”

Of all the places Sean’s lived in Singapore, he says he is happiest here. “I’m with my partner who I can’t imagine life without, and it’s our place together. It’s different living in an HDB, and it did take me a little while to adjust, but it’s the same for the neighbours –

they need to get used to the *ang moh* living here too!” Sean’s friendly and outgoing nature means he has quickly made friends, with his neighbours even cooking meals for the couple when they first moved in.

Sean’s job sees him heavily involved with the British community, and his social diary can be full to the brim with engagements, including those linked to the British High Commission, British Chamber and a variety of associations. “TK and I both enjoy good food, and I particularly love red wine, so we do enjoy going out, but we also like to take a walk to the local coffee shop, as we know everyone there. In fact, we’re the only couple who can ring down and reserve a table!”

When their diaries allow, Sean and TK enjoy being homebodies, and they love to entertain. “I’ll take the day off and spend some time doing the table up, and I’m not a bad cook either – I’ve been in the food and beverage game long enough!”



“Marie made this for me, for my 60th birthday, depicting happy memories and fun sayings that people associate with me.”



Sean's
Hawaiian
furniture is in
the master
bedroom,
including this
fun pineapple
lamp.

Sean's Recommendations

FOOD & DRINKS

Ming Kitchen
Blk 79C, Toa Payoh Central

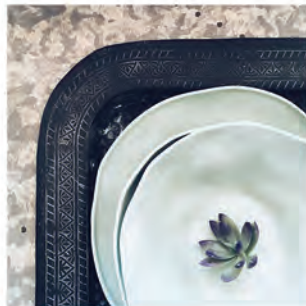
Aura Restaurant
1 St. Andrews Road, #06-02 National
Gallery Singapore

LEISURE & NETWORKING

The British Club ("Without a doubt you
should consider joining!")
73 Bukit Tinggi Road
6410 1100 | britishclub.org.sg

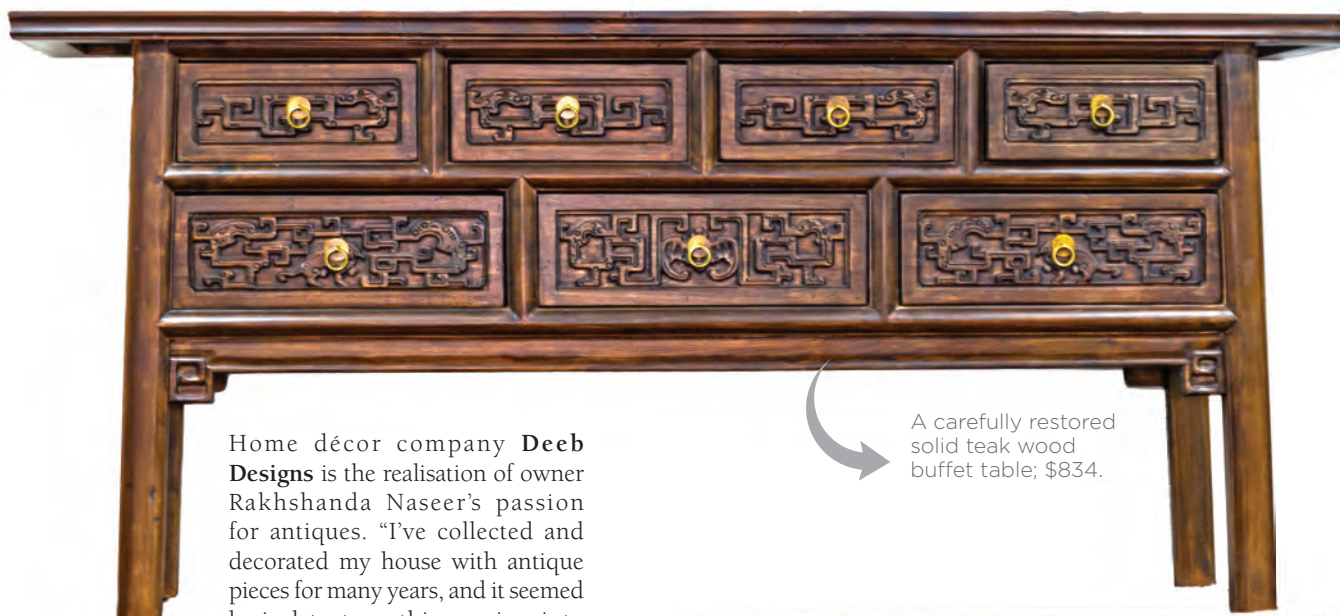
TRAVEL

Nirwana Gardens, Bintan ("We love going
there for the weekend; they have beautiful
villas")
nirwanagardens.com



Wooden Wonders

Sometimes all a room needs is one classic piece of antique or reproduction furniture to add some interest, and with many of the pieces at **Deeb Designs** marked down by up to 40 percent, it's a great time to pick up a bargain!

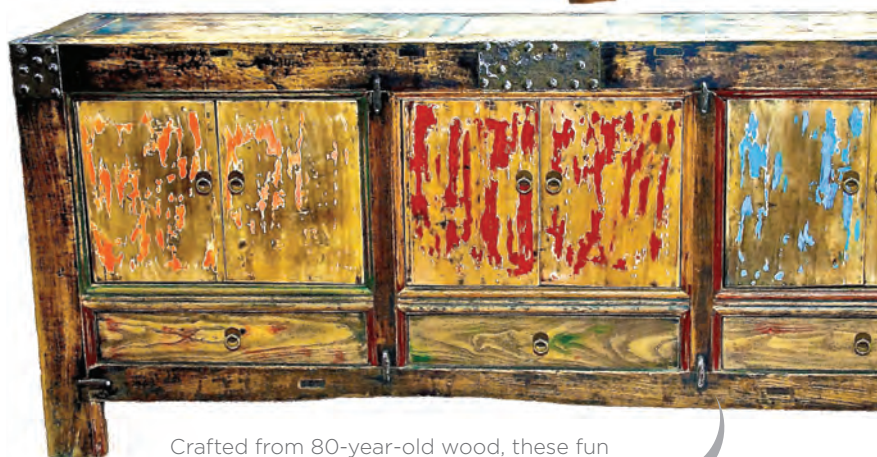


Home décor company **Deeb Designs** is the realisation of owner Rakhshanda Naseer's passion for antiques. "I've collected and decorated my house with antique pieces for many years, and it seemed logical to turn this passion into a business," she says. And that's exactly what she did last year.

The store is filled with a mix of traditional antique pieces, from drawers and chests to drums and coffee tables, some kept natural, and others brought back to their original state or painted. Then there are the reproduction pieces and other home accessories, including a plethora of indoor and outdoor lanterns.

Here is just a small selection of the distinctive antique and reproduction furniture you'll find at **Deeb Designs**, to give you some ideas for your own home.

A carefully restored solid teak wood buffet table; \$834.



Crafted from 80-year-old wood, these fun multi-coloured doors give little bursts of colour without being overbearing; \$1,680.



This buffet table is made with solid teak wood, and mixes antique design with contemporary white tones, perfect for both a modern or traditional environment; \$1,740.



This Chinese chest combines style with function, and can be used for storage, or as a table; \$480.



This five-drawer table has been carefully painted to maintain its unique colour; \$1,560.



Made with solid teak wood, this is a classic antique often chosen for alternative uses, including as a television console; \$720.

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(NRS Antique Home Deco)
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6482 1094
Deebdesigns.com.sg



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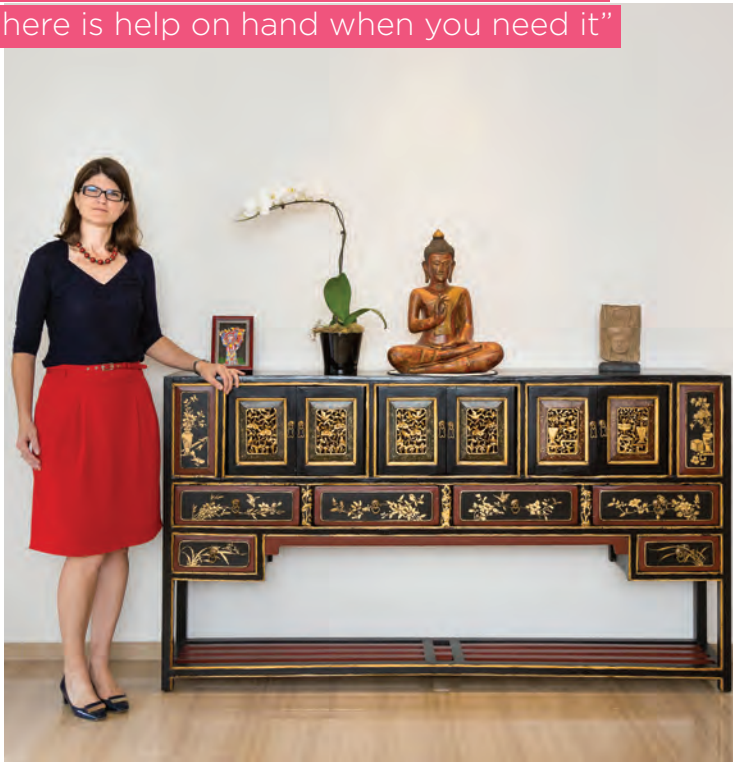
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PIECES from the PAST

Out with the new and in with the old! Find out where our readers purchased their antiques, which have since become much-loved features of their homes.

"You're left to browse on your own and there is help on hand when you need it"



Elisabeth Lebrecht, Austrian

We were looking for some furniture with Asian influence, something with a little flair and interest. This is our third year in Singapore and when we came here from Europe we left the Chinese furniture we had back home in storage. Sitting in our nice big apartment here, we felt that it made sense to add some pieces with Asian heritage.

I found Just Anthony on the internet, and our first visit about three months ago saw us buy a Fujian-style console. We've been back three times since that first visit, purchasing a bookshelf, a sideboard and a Tibetan coffee table, the latter of which was our wildest purchase as it's a little more out of the ordinary in terms of style. Our home is a mix of contemporary and traditional, with a few classic Chinese pieces that blend well in a modern setting.

What we really like about Just Anthony is that the place is so big. You're left to browse on your own and there is help on hand when you need it. We don't have a set style and we buy things if we like them. However, it really helps to keep the room in mind so that when you want to add new pieces, you will know what works.

Just Anthony
379 Upper Paya Lebar Road
6283 4722 | justanthony.com

Trang Phan, German

My husband Knut enjoys some personal space to relax in after work, so I transformed our spare room into a place where he can enjoy his whisky and cigars. I chose mainly modern furniture in dark leather, glass and chrome but was looking for some antique storage to complement the look.

My husband has been living in Singapore for 16 years, and so we have known Woody Antique House for a long time. The owner and staff are friendly, attentive and helpful, they give good recommendations and they don't push us to buy a particular piece. We bought a Chinese cabinet probably dating back to the late 19th century during the Qing Dynasty. It's made of a mix of elm and fir wood from Linhai in Zhejiang Province in China, and is a perfect addition to our home.

We're regular customers at Woody Antique House, not only for antiques but also for custom-made and outdoor furniture. The service is excellent and we've never had any issues with any of our purchases. It takes time to perfect the look of your home, so don't rush; find what you like and gain inspiration from your travels, or even browsing through a magazine.

"The service is excellent and we've never had any issues with any of our purchases"



Woody Antique House

Blk 13 and 15 Dempsey Road, #01-05 and 01-11/12
6471 1770 | woodyantique.com

"We're very happy with the table and the service we received from Chantal at FairPrice Antique"



Mike Wigent and Amanda Blair, American

We had spent the past four years searching for furniture with character in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and elsewhere in Asia. We started out looking for large pieces like a dining room buffet, entertainment console, display shelves and bedroom furniture. Despite that, we didn't buy very much as we have three young children, so we had to be careful to avoid purchasing non-child-friendly pieces. Since the children are now older, we have been purchasing small art and antique pieces, such as our silver bowl from Chiang Mai and antique water puppets from Vietnam; we know what styles we like and the pieces that will go well with what we already have.

We had read about the Tan Boon Liat Building and eventually found FairPrice Antique. Here we purchased our first piece of furniture since moving to Singapore, an antique Chinese console table. It has lovely carvings on the drawers and can complement both antique and modern furniture.

We're very happy with the table and the service we received from Chantal at FairPrice Antique. She was very friendly and accommodating and we'll definitely return to purchase more pieces.

FairPrice Antique

#01-10 Tan Boon Liat Building,
315 Outram Road
6270 2544 | fairpriceantique.com

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Divya Patel, Indian

During a trip to Sri Lanka in 2014, I fell in love with colonial chests and so started to look around for one for myself. I didn't want to ship one from India so I narrowed my search to Singapore. I wanted an original piece in good condition and was happy to wait for the right one.

I'd known about The Past Perfect Collection for some time and during my first visit I was very impressed with Marie-Hélène and her husband's knowledge of their products and passion to collect and restore pieces. They treated us like guests rather than customers, as they discussed and shared information about the different pieces in the store.

I bought a colonial chest because I loved the ornate brasswork and the fact that it had the original key; I also bought chairs to place on either side. My home is a mix of modern and traditional pieces from India as well as from other places that we've travelled to.

We love the overall look, quality and finish of the pieces and would definitely go back for more. I'd love to get an antique desk as well as some collectibles to place around the house. My advice would be to take your time when buying antiques as they are investments; be sure to examine the condition and think about maintenance, and do browse online for more selections and ideas.

"They treated us like guests rather than customers"



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



Sandra Johnson, Canadian, with Bart, British

We recently moved and, although our new place is larger than our previous place, some of our old furniture didn't fit well. We decided to get a large cabinet for our living area to display items we've collected over the years.

I was introduced to China Collection a few years ago through the Canadian Association of Singapore when they sponsored a prize for our annual charity ball; I've been a loyal customer ever since. Whether I'm interested in a large or small piece, Doug and his team are always helpful, patient and professional.

After considering a smaller reproduction piece made of recycled elm, we decided to buy a large antique display cabinet. The cabinet fits well in its allocated space and complements our other furniture. We're pleased with our purchase and we are still considering the smaller, lighter wood cabinet for another room in our home. *EL*

China Collection
20 Malcolm Road
6235 1905 | chinacollection.com.sg

"Whether I'm interested in a large or small piece, Doug and his team are always helpful, patient and professional"



Woody Antique House

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Pair of high-backed chairs from China's Shanxi Province, **Just Anthony**



Decorative square window shutter from Zhejiang Province, 130 years old, **China Collection**

Antiques & REPRODUCTIONS

Whether you're a seasoned collector of old furniture or simply looking for that little taste of Asian décor to take back with you when you relocate, get inspired with our guide to antique and reproduction pieces in stores now.



Shanxi Province coffer cabinet with carvings of floral patterns and fruits, approximately 100 years old, **Just Anthony**



Chest with drawers, **Deeb Designs**



Altar table and set of four carved door panels from Shanxi Province, **China Collection**

Tapered elm wood cabinet from Shandong Province, 120 years old, **China Collection**



Small two-door painted cabinet in elm wood from China's Dongbei region, approximately 180 years old, **FairPrice Antique**



Chinese concealed chamber-pot chair, **Taylor B**



Chinese fretwork console updated with light jade green colouring, **Taylor B**

Tianjin repainted sideboard in elm, **Woody Antique**



Large cabinet in elm, Jiangxi Province, **Woody Antique**



Green-blue dowry chest, **Artful House**



Teal cabinet from Shanxi Province, approximately 150 years old, **FairPrice Antique**



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Side table, **Deeb Designs**

British colonial campaign chest of drawers from the 19th century, **The Past Perfect Collection**



EL HOME & PROPERTY



Antique chess board in elephant bone and bison horn, circa 1880s, **Treasures of the Raj**



Two-tier red, gold and black cabinet from Fujian Province, approximately 100 years old, **Just Anthony**



Antique British colonial mahogany console table with marble top, **The Past Perfect Collection**



Chest of drawers, **Deeb Designs**



Cupboard with boxes and vases, **Treasures of the Raj**



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Pair of Portuguese colonial folding chairs, **The Past Perfect Collection**

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THE PAST PERFECT COLLECTION
timeless antiques

Inspiration & Choice

The **HomesToLife** flagship on Mohamed Sultan Road is gearing up to be an all-encompassing home lifestyle destination – everything you could want for your home, across four levels. REBECCA BISSET went along to explore the Artisan Sphere on level two, including impressive high-end brands, the Domicil Collection and the Domicil Designer Collection.

While some parts of this four-storey building are having finishing touches put to them, the Artisan Sphere on level two is ready for browsing and buying. Both collections offer the chance for customisation, from the upholstery to the finishing and colour. In fact, there's so much choice that it's easy to get carried away. There are reams of upholstery swatches to view, along with swathes of leather and numerous samples of wood and metal in various finishes. It's an inspirational space to explore, and the influence of both culture and history on the collections makes it even more appealing, with plenty of classic lines and modern touches.

The Alfred armchair, for example, is an all-time classic piece, and an über-comfortable one, embodying the feeling of a traditional country home. As with most of the Domicil Collection, you can customise the armchair to fit your personal style, from the backrest and armrest to the matching footstool. Mix and match it with your sofa in the living room or with your furnishings in the home office and bedroom – whichever room it goes in, it will stand out!

Everything on this level is laid out in curated settings to help you envisage how your home could look. For example, there is the nautically



ABOVE
The classic style of the iconic Alfred armchair



BELOW
Get that Hamptons feel at home with the Maritim range, and bring a breezy coastal elegance to your indoors

RIGHT

A sense of space, freedom and individualism reminiscent of the loft style

BELOW

Imagination meets aspiration in the Domicil Designer Collection that includes the Adore Sofa, combining striking aesthetics with luxurious leathers and textiles

inspired Maritim range, which evokes the feel of a house in the Hamptons, with its gorgeous lightwood panelling, coastal elegance and, again, a range of alternatives from finish and colour to upholstery. You'd rarely find the same combinations, which is all part of the Domicil experience.

The New Loft range has more of a modern industrial feel, with clean lines made from wood, and industrial metal and upholstery added into the mix. The pieces include dressers, accessories and expandable tables that are practical as well as beautiful.

The workmanship is traditional European at its best, and there's nothing missed in terms of both finishing and quality.



So, whatever range or piece you choose, you truly give it your own stamp, customising its size, and choosing from exclusive fabrics, leathers and colours; there's plenty to get your creativity flowing!

The Domicil Designer Collection links practical necessity with style. Showcasing furniture crafted by internationally renowned designers from around the world, it's the perfect place to find that statement piece for your home. The collection features pieces from hallmark furniture designers such as Teun Van Zanten and Ken Okuyama, encapsulating modern living and transforming familiar rooms into elegant personal lifestyle expressions. *u*

HomesToLife flagship:
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info@homestolife.com | homestolife.com

STREET TALK

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

THE SPECIFICS

Where do you live?

Jalan Leban.

Exact words you tell a taxi driver to get home?

"Jalan Leban. Either take Upper Thompson Road, or Ang Mio Kio Avenue 1."

What's the name of your neighbourhood?

Sembawang Hills Estate. It was formerly a papaya plantation.

Closest MRT station?

Yio Chu Kang.

How long have you lived here?

Eight months.

Why here?

We wanted to live in a house.





Name: Mary-Anne Vicente
From: Australia
Occupation: Director of operations at Jalan Leban and stay-at-home-mum



THE SCENE

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

A beautiful frangipani tree, and builders and workers; this neighbourhood is popular for the knocking down and rebuilding of older houses.

The closest store to your front door is:

The Indian mini-mart.

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

Traffic!

The unofficial uniform of your street is:

Shorts and T-shirts – and hard hats are commonly seen, too.

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

Go to Tiong Bahru – I love the market,

cafes, shops and bars, and having a chat to the Aunties and Uncles. Without fail, I learn something new from them: a recipe, a Chinese medicinal remedy or a piece of history, or I walk away with a great memory after a few laughs.

If you're missing home, you:

Cook, bake, eat! Alternately, I'll pick up the phone for a chat, and then cooking usually follows. We love pie in our house, of any variety: vegetable, meat, fish, fruit – and we all enjoy making them. It's a process: one is on pastry duty, one is on chopping duty, one is on cooking duty; and it's great fun.

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

I have a few regular stops, including Tiong Bahru Market, the Botanic Gardens, Gardens by the Bay, Sentosa and, in my neighbourhood, Lower Peirce

Reservoir – where monkeys can be seen, along with the occasional boar. Yes, wild boars!

You'd swap houses in a second with:

The new condo being built nearby, which has a view over Lower Peirce Reservoir and some amazing sunsets!

A common myth about your neighbourhood is:

That there is nothing out here, because it's seen as isolated. But, as I've just mentioned, there's plenty here!

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

The very noisy motorbike of the newspaper delivery dude.



THE SUPERLATIVES

Your hands-down favourite neighbourhood joints are:

Any of the following, which are all within walking distance: **Le Pizzaiola** for yummy pizza and gnocchi; **Casuarina's** for tasty and cheap Indian; Aussie coffee roasting house **Yahava** is a true coffee shop, meaning that it has a very limited food selection, so coffee is the highlight; **Blueberry Hill** is our local pub and provides us with many laughs; and **Pacamara** does fabulous coffee and breakfasts. We also like to cycle to **Canopy Garden Dining** in Bishan Park and have breakfast or lunch; it's a beautiful setting and has a great variety of food and wine.

You won't find better local food than at:

Yam's Kitchen for tasty, authentic Chinese food.

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

The Indian mini-mart that is close by, and also at Mayflower Market in Ang Mo Kio Avenue 4.

The guiltiest pleasure in your area is:

It's a toss-up between Blueberry Hill, Pacamara and Awfully Chocolate.

One thing you'd never change is:

The parks – we love how Singapore cherishes its green spaces.

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

The constant sound of hammer drills in the background. No matter where you go – *no matter* – a hammer drill is hammering away!

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



Kylie Minogue

104

On the Stage:
Theatre
productions,
concerts
and the F1
entertainment
line-up

98

On the Wall: New art exhibitions
to check out this month

101

Art of Surrealism: The iconic works of
Salvador Dali return to REDSEA Gallery

112

On the Screen: Movies and TV
shows to watch this month

On The WALL

What's on Singapore's art scene this month

A LOOK BEYOND THE BORDER

In her first solo exhibition, titled **North of the DMZ**, Singapore photojournalist and Associated Press photographer Wong Maye-E offers a look at the world's most isolated country, North Korea. Featuring photos from official rallies and parades alongside quiet moments from everyday life, Maye-E's work gives dimension to North Korea's carefully crafted national image through a selection of more than 70 photographs, raising questions about subjectivity and access, propaganda and reportage, and perception and reality. See it from 13 September to 15 October at Objectifs, Centre for Photography and Film, 155 Middle Road. objectifs.com.sg



SINGAPORE'S NEWEST GALLERY



We spoke to Australian expats **URSULA SULLIVAN** and **JOANNA STRUMPF** about their recently opened Sullivan+Strumpf gallery space, and what we can expect from this month's exhibition, *Home*.

When did you two meet, and how did you decide to start a business together?

Joanna: We met 20 years ago in Sydney. I had just started working for art dealer Eva Breuer at her tiny gallery in Woollahra, and Ursula was working there on the weekends while finishing her degree. Within months of meeting, we started buying contemporary art together – and had even decided on the business name! We went on to work in all aspects of the industry, from auction houses to contemporary galleries, learning from the bottom up, before finally taking the next big step – actually opening our own gallery in Sydney in 2004.

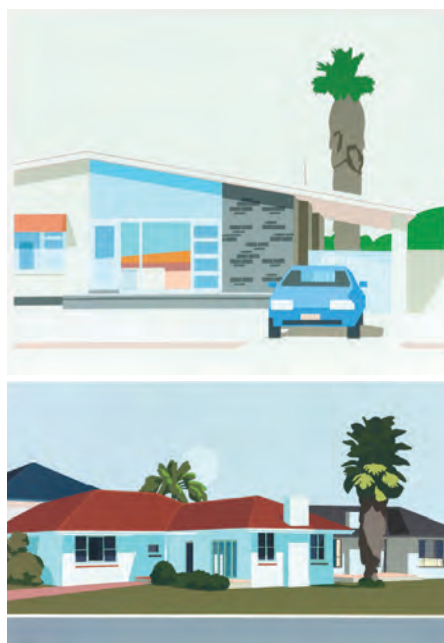
Ursula: We both come from families with businesses, so there was that foundation, and the ambition was there to have our own space, and to be our own bosses. Our friendship was always based around art and collecting art, so there was a lot of trust between us, as well as a desire to be working with living artists and exhibiting great contemporary art.

What inspired you to open a gallery in Singapore?

Joanna: We have been exhibiting at Art Stage Singapore since 2011. Over the years we have built up a good following, and we knew there was room for a gallery like ours, and a demand for our artists. Singapore is a hub for Southeast Asia – it's a friendly city with boundless potential and passionate collectors (as well as excellent food and good shopping!) – all essential ingredients when setting up a gallery.

Tell us about this month's solo exhibition, *Home*.

Joanna: In her exhibition, Perth-based artist Joanna Lamb presents the banality of urban life to us in a unique and considered way. Utilising an array of mediums, from traditional painting and collage, to neon wall sculpture and Laminex jigsaw puzzle paintings, Lamb's vibrant combinations make us more receptive to the repetition of daily existence.



See *Home* from 9 September to 9 October at Sullivan+Strumpf, #01-06 Gillman Barracks, 5 Lock Road. 6871 8753 | sullivanstrumpf.com

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There are times when you need to catch your breath and find a place to recharge, refocus, and unwind. And there's no where better than amidst the natural surroundings at Dempsey Hill and the charming new cluster Loewen by Dempsey Hill.

Start your day with breakfast or brunch at one of the many great restaurants here before taking a leisurely walk around the heritage buildings. Browse the wide range of eclectic modern furniture and gorgeous home furnishings from lifestyle brands like **CuriO Home**, **Timothy Oulton by Curio**, or **Asiatique Collections** – which offers a selection by Ceccotti Collezioni.

Bring home a historical artefact from **Shang Antique**, antique treasures from **Maywell Lifestyles**, or stunning textiles from **emgallery** to liven up your living space. There is also a dizzying array of exquisite handmade pieces from **Hedger's Carpet Gallery** or **Lotto Carpets Gallery** you must see. Art aficionados can transform your home with a conversation piece from **REDSEA Gallery** or **Linda Gallery**.

Lovers of Indonesian design, arts, and lifestyle will be tempted by the stylish collections at **Pasardina Fine Living**. If you prefer colonial-style reproductions or furniture made from environmentally friendly materials, **Asia Passion** has what you need. You might also like the wide range of quality indoor and outdoor wood furniture from **Woodfarm Lifestyle** or **Woody Antique House**.

Leave the kids to have fun at **Go-Go-Bambini**, so they can work off their energy. Meanwhile, you can refresh your wardrobe with stylish luxury pieces from **LaPrendo** or the fashionable men's and women's wear from **Lexington Company**.

Fitness warriors can get fit and fab with a rewarding workout at **Elyon Studios**. Or, make time for a luscious treat at **Beauty Emporium@House**.

No matter what your plans are, you will always find memorable ways to spend your time at Dempsey Hill. Visit www.dempseyhill.com to learn more.



Lexington Company



emgallery



Hedger's Carpet Gallery



Shang Antique

A Surreal World

The iconic works of Salvador Dali return to **REDSEA Gallery** this September, in the form of a selection of Dali's etchings and drawings from the Pierre Argillet Collection, as well as porcelain works and tapestries previously unseen in Singapore. Here, **CHRISTINE ARGILLET**, daughter of renowned art collector and Dali confidante Pierre Argillet, reveals what it was like knowing Dali, the impact he had on her and what we can expect from this exclusive exhibition.



You knew Salvador Dali from a young age. How would you describe him?

Salvador Dali was a charming and elegant man, and a most humble and genuinely sweet person. In public, he would create an eccentric persona to attract attention, but in private, he was very simple. He had a great sense of humour and would constantly address serious issues behind a caricatural mask. He had no children but yet had a kind of fascination towards children's candid and genuine views and reactions. He would entertain me by giving me cherry candies to throw behind

fishermen's backs at the shore, and show me how he could move the hairs of his moustache using chemical reactions.

In his daily life, Dali was a workaholic, very much immersed in his projects with my father. When he wasn't busy with his paintings, he spoke with many people from all walks of life – from discussions about DNA research with scientists to talks with bakers about preparing the longest baguette in the world to be carried along the streets of Paris. Often, these people would come together to mingle at his hotel. However, he still found time to meet us and we always had a fun time.



"Bullfight with Parrots" from the *Surrealist Bullfight* series

What attracted your father to Surrealist artworks, particularly Dali's pieces?

My father was captivated by the immense artistic talent of Dali and also by his ability to envision the world around him in a new way, every day. They had long discussions on literature and art, resulting in a collaboration of nearly 50 years. They created 200 etchings together – the largest collection of original etchings by Dali.

How did your father and Dali influence you, particularly in the way you view and collect art?

They were both able to make things happen, no matter how difficult. They had total freedom of thought, and had fun doing their work. This inspired me to be surprised by life, and look at the world differently as often as possible.

My father collected art as naturally as people walk in the morning. As a child, the paintings that came home were like foreign visitors that I would get to know by silently chatting with them. Today, I have continued this way of collecting art when the pieces silently speak to me. It has given me a sense of freedom that I consider to be very precious.

What are your favourite works exhibited in the collection?

My favourites would be those that remind me of the moments Dali used



Christine Argillet and Dali

unusual tools. He was capable of using any tool to create. There are several pieces that I like very much for their refreshing vision, but also for their humour. The *Surrealist Bullfight* series speaks to me particularly, as Dali did not like bullfights and, for this reason, transformed the bull into himself, and the audience into animals.

What are some of these unusual tools you've mentioned?

Dali was especially creative and would experiment with all kinds of tools and materials for his artwork – roulettes, scissors, nails, fire, diamond and ruby styluses and even a hairbrush. Once, I remember him asking my mother for her lipstick, and from that he created a magnificent drawing for *The Hippies* series. One day, he found a dead octopus on the Mediterranean shore in front of his home. He immersed it in acid and placed it on a copper plate to leave an imprint, creating the "Medusa" from the *Mythology* series that will be on display at the REDSEA Gallery exhibition.

Why do you think Dali remains such an icon in today's art world?

Dali had an exceptional imagination and was able to translate the Surrealist idea of "dream" in an extraordinary way. His techniques were as good as those of the Renaissance artists and he successfully paved the way for Warhol and many other artists who recognised that they would never have been what they had become without Dali.

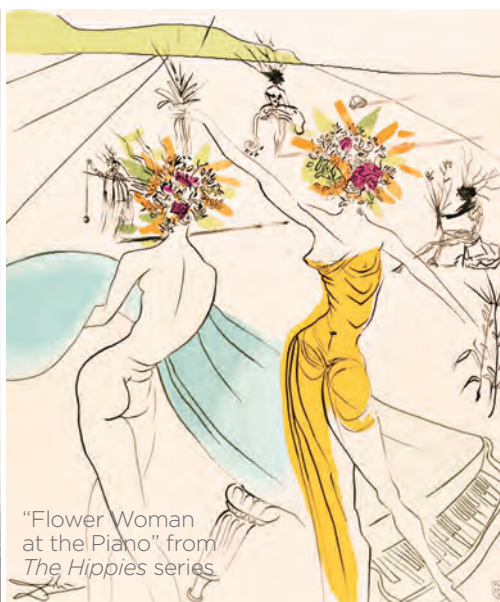
What should we look out for in the exhibition?

The etching techniques of Dali are fabulous, close to that of Rembrandt or Goya. For the first time ever, two of the actual copper plates Dali used to create the etchings will be on show. Also, look forward to a lot of humour in a renewed vision brought by the *Surrealist Dream*. There are also a few rare watercolours and Aubusson tapestries. I hope that viewers will love the works, the stories behind them, and their relationship to Dali's unusual daily life. *ea*

See Salvador Dali & Pierre Argillet: Thirty Years of Collaboration from 11 September to 5 October at REDSEA Gallery, #01-10 Dempsey Hill, Block 9 Dempsey Road. 6732 6711 | redseagallery.com



"Argus" from the *Mythology* series



"Flower Woman at the Piano" from *The Hippies* series



TANGLIN MALL

Tanglin Mall, a one-stop lifestyle mall, located at the junction of Tanglin Road & Grange Road, set in an eclectic background of colonial and tropical architecture, is a niche mall just for you. With anchor tenants include Tanglin Market Place (a gourmet supermarket cum bakery) and Tasty Food Court (a foodcourt offering no less than 15 varieties of local cuisine). Simply indulge in the numerous specialty & services that cater to your every whim & fancy. From fashion to home fashion, sports and leisure to hobbies, hairdressing to dental services, maternity to baby care, toys to edutainment, professional photo studio to laundry service, exciting F&B outlets and more.



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Mt. Sapola #B1-12



Tatty Marsh #02-07



Shopping at Tiffany's #02-03

Experience
TANGLIN MALL




Sea Apple x Minejima #03-06



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Tanglin Market Place #B1-01/04

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On The STAGE

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



COMEDIC CLASSIC

This month, Singapore Repertory Theatre (SRT) presents the Tony Award-winning play, *Art*, by Yasmina Reza, a comedy about three friends whose friendship is tested when Serge buys an expensive piece of modern art – a white canvas crossed by barely visible lines; Marc hates it, and Yan is caught in the middle. Staged at the iconic City Hall Chamber at National Gallery Singapore, audiences have the unique opportunity to watch this classic comedy about modern art while surrounded by Southeast Asia's largest collection. See it from 1 September to 1 October. Tickets from Sistic. srt.com.sg

RETROSPECTIVE RECITAL

On 11 September, Singapore audiences can catch acclaimed musician Elvis Costello as he presents his songs and life stories in *Detour*, a retrospective solo performance celebrating a musical career spanning more than 35 years. Aside from being a respected performer in his own right, Elvis is known for his work with The Attractions, with whom he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and for leading The Imposters. Esplanade Concert Hall; tickets at esplanade.com.



TALE OF TWO WITCHES

Wicked, one of Broadway's most celebrated musicals, hits our shores this month, giving Singapore audiences the opportunity to experience the story of two unlikely friends – blonde and popular Glinda, and green-skinned outcast Elphaba – told from the perspective of the witches of the Land of Oz. Fans can look forward to the Tony Award-winning show's unforgettable tunes including "Popular", "Defying Gravity" and "For Good", among others. See it from 29 September to 16 October at MasterCard Theatres at Marina Bay Sands. Tickets from Sistic. baseentertainmentasia.com

INVITATION

Melbourne Specialist International School Art Exhibition 2016

**You are invited to this very special charity auction of artwork
to raise money for Melbourne Specialist International School.
Everybody welcome!**

Date: Friday 23 September
Time: 6pm to 9pm
Where: ReDot Fine Art Gallery
Old Hill Street Police Station
140 Hill Street # 01-08, S179639
RSVP: rsvp@msis.edu.sg by 18 September





COVER-BAND CONCERT

Beatle-mania sweeps through Singapore from 22 to 24 September, when **The Bootleg Beatles** hit the MasterCard Theatres at Marina Bay Sands. Now in their 37th year, the tribute band has performed almost 6,000 shows across the globe, recreating the greatest pop group in history from top to toe, with costumes reflecting the Fab Four's evolution, and uncanny renditions of hits like "Across the Universe" and "She Loves You". Set against a video backdrop, the group is accompanied by an eight-piece orchestra to recreate many of the songs The Beatles never played live in concert, including "Eleanor Rigby", "Penny Lane" and "All You Need is Love". Tickets from Sistic. baseentertainmentasia.com

DYNAMIC DUO

American hip-hop duo Macklemore and Ryan Lewis are making their Singapore debut on 20 September, bringing their *This Unruly Mess I've Made* World Tour to the Star Theatre. Hailing from Seattle, Washington, the Grammy Award-winning pair made their mark on the music scene in 2012 with their single "Thrift Shop", followed by "Can't Hold Us". Most recently, they released their second album, *This Unruly Mess I've Made*, featuring "Downtown" and "Dance Off". Tickets from Sistic. karposmultimedia.com



ROCK-METAL MUSIC

British rockers **Bring Me the Horizon** are performing this month, bringing their brand of pop-metal sounds to Fort Gate at Fort Canning Park on 27 September. Fans can expect to hear songs from 2015 album, *That's the Spirit*, including "Drown", "Throne", "True Friends" and "Avalanche". Tickets from Sistic. lamecproductions.com

FOR KIDS

A MONSTROUS MUSICAL

As a musical adaptation of the award-winning sequel to Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's popular book *The Gruffalo*, *The Gruffalo's Child* tells the story of the Gruffalo's daughter, who, despite her father's warnings, tiptoes out into the deep, dark woods one night to see if the Big Bad Mouse really exists. Children aged three and up are sure to enjoy this 55-minute show at the Victoria Theatre from 22 to 25 September. Tickets from Sistic. [facebook.com/abasingapore](https://www.facebook.com/abasingapore)



A GIANT STORY FOR LITTLE ONES

From 6 to 18 September, catch *Jack and the Beanstalk* by UK-based children's theatre company, Lyngo. Kids three and up can look forward to a surprise-filled, interactive storytelling of the classic fairytale about Jack, who sells his cow for magic beans and finds himself in the land above the clouds. See it at Drama Centre Black Box. Tickets from Sistic. act3international.com.sg



COMING UP MAKE A PLAN TO MONKEY AROUND

Pantomime season will be here before we know it, which means it's time to start thinking about tickets for Wild Rice's annual holiday musical extravaganza. For the Year of the Monkey, they are bringing back the award-winning family-favourite, *Monkey Goes West*, a cheeky retelling of the cult Chinese fantasy classic. Playing from 18 November to 17 December, Wild Rice's adaptation – directed by Broadway Beng Sebastian Tan and written by Alfian Sa'at, with music by Elaine Chan – follows a fearless foursome – including orphan-on-the-run, Tripitaka, the mischievous Monkey King, Wukong, the brave but always hungry warrior, Pigsy, and stubborn but loyal river ogre, Sandy – as they embark on the adventure of a lifetime, fraught with trials and tribulations (and laughs) at every turn. See it at the Drama Centre Theatre. Tickets from Sistic. wildrice.com.sg



OFF-TRACK ENTERTAINMENT

Even if you're not big on racing, you'll still want to head to the Formula One to catch this year's all-star entertainment line-up. Here's a daily breakdown of who will be on stage, when and where, in Circuit Park.

FRIDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER KC AND THE SUNSHINE BAND

Catch the legendary Grammy Award-winning band, known for its disco and funk rhythms, at the Village Stage in Zone 1 before the F1 "Practice 2" session. Fans can look forward to the group's infectious, feel-good tunes including "That's the Way (I Like It)", "(Shake, Shake, Shake) Shake Your Booty", "Keep It Comin' Love" and "Get Down Tonight".



KYLIE MINOGUE

Pint-sized Aussie pop legend Kylie will kick off the F1 with a performance at the Zone 4 Padang Stage following Saturday's last track activity. With 13 studio albums and 69 international singles under her belt, Kylie holds the record as the most-played female artist on UK radio, and has appeared as a judge on *The Voice* in the UK and Australia. Some of her massive hits include "Can't Get You Out of My Head", "I Should Be So Lucky" and "Spinning Around".



SATURDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER KC AND THE SUNSHINE BAND

The "Boogie Shoes" crooners are back for a second performance on Saturday, at the Esplanade Outdoor Theatre in Zone 4 before the F1 Qualifying session.

PENTATONIX

Performing at the Village Stage in Zone 1 before the Formula 1 Qualifying session, American a cappella group Pentatonix is known for its Grammy-winning medley of Daft Punk songs, as well as covers including Imagine Dragon's "Radioactive", and original songs such as "Love Again".

BASTILLE

Known for polished synth pop tunes, this British indie band is set to perform at the Zone 4 Padang Stage before the F1 Qualifying session. Fans of the London-based band can sing along to hits like "Pompeii", "Of the Night", "Things We Lost in the Fire" and "Oblivion", plus tracks from the newly released album, *Wild World*.



QUEEN + ADAM LAMBERT

Since first sharing the stage at the 2009 finale of *American Idol*, British rock band Queen and American singer Adam Lambert have sold out dozens of shows worldwide. Together, they'll be belting out some of Queen's best-known songs, including "We Will Rock You", "We Are The Champions" and "Bohemian Rhapsody". Don't miss this collaboration at the Zone 4 Padang Stage following the last track activity – it's sure to be a kind of magic.

SUNDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER PENTATONIX

Pentatonix returns for another performance over the F1 weekend – this time, at the Esplanade Outdoor Theatre in Zone 4 before the official Formula 1 race.

HALSEY

Known for her dark, electro-pop sound and lyrics, American singer-songwriter Halsey began her career posting cover songs online and playing acoustic cover sets to YouTube before rocketing to fame with her self-penned single "Ghost" in 2014. Expect to hear that song and her others hits, including "New Americana", "Colors", and "Castle", when she takes the Padang Stage (Zone 4) before the Formula 1 race.



IMAGINE DRAGONS

American alternative rock band Imagine Dragons will headline the post-race concert on the Padang Stage (Zone 4), giving fans the chance to hear hits like "Radioactive", "Shots", "It's Time", "On Top Of The World", "I Bet My Life", "Demons" and "Gold" performed live.



For more details, visit singaporegp.sg.

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Pitch PERFECT

PHOTOGRAPHY KEN TAN

When IRENE ANG and Andy Tan wanted to buy their nine-year-old daughter Xinyi a piano, they headed straight to **Steinway Gallery Singapore**. We find out which piano they chose and why.

“ We were replacing a two-year-old YUS5 Yamaha piano and wanted a permanent piano, so we decided we needed an instrument from the best brand available in Singapore, Steinway & Sons. We wanted a grand piano with a computer-driven acoustic function so we could also listen to songs, as I cannot play – or, at least, not very well!

Last year we attended SING50 – a celebration concert of 50 years of Singapore music – and saw world renowned concert pianist Lang Lang performing using a red Steinway & Sons grand piano. We were very impressed and dreamed of owning one ourselves.

When Xinyi passed her Grade Four Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music exam, her father decided to reward her with a grand piano. We visited Steinway Gallery Singapore through the endorsement of trusted friends and were recommended the Steinway Spirio.

We are happy and satisfied with our purchase; the Spirio functions perfectly and looks majestic. The catalogue system has a wide selection of songs, so when guests come they can listen to it and so can we.

It can also demonstrate how professionals play, so that I'm able to learn too. It hasn't really changed the way I practice but it does allow us to listen to our



“This hand-crafted piano will be a family treasure to pass down to future generations”



favourite songs without needing to find them on YouTube, and of course it can play better than me so we have nicer songs to listen to!

Learning music should be done with passion and perseverance, and if possible I would recommend getting the best instrument to facilitate your journey in music. This hand-crafted piano will be a family treasure to pass down to future generations.

PLAYER TECHNOLOGY

The Steinway Spirio is a high-resolution player piano. On purchase, an iPad is also provided, giving access to a whole catalogue of music through the Steinway & Sons app. You can uncover performances from world renowned artists, with new music added to the library on a monthly basis. The player system is integrated seamlessly so its components don't affect the touch, sound or outward appearance of the piano. *el*

Find the Steinway Spirio and other pianos at Steinway Gallery Singapore, #01-01A Palais Renaissance, 390 Orchard Road. 6838 0525 | steinway-gallery.com.sg



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On The SCREEN

Here's our pick of this month's happenings in cinemas and on television

BIG SCREEN

PETE'S DRAGON

A reimagining of Disney's cherished family film, *Pete's Dragon*, starring Bryce Dallas Howard, Wes Bentley, Oakes Fegley, Oona Laurence and Robert Redford, tells the story of an orphaned boy named Pete and his best friend Elliott, who just so happens to be a dragon. Opens 1 September.



SULLY

Based on the 2009 "Miracle on the Hudson" – when Captain "Sully" Sullenberger (Tom Hanks) glided his disabled plane onto the frigid waters of the Hudson River in New York, saving the lives of all 155 aboard – this Clint Eastwood-directed biographical drama follows Sully's actions on the cold January day and the aftermath that followed; even as Sully was being heralded by the public and the media for his unprecedented feat of aviation skills, an investigation was unfolding that threatened to destroy his reputation and his career. Also starring Laura Linney, Aaron Eckhart and Anna Gunn, this film opens 8 September at Golden Village cinemas.



DEEPWATER HORIZON

Based on the 2010 explosion and oil spill at drilling rig Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico, this biographical disaster drama tells the story of the worst oil spill in US history. The film stars Mark Wahlberg, Kurt Russell, John Malkovich, Kate Hudson, Gina Rodriguez and Dylan O'Brien. Opens 29 September at Golden Village cinemas.

SMALL SCREEN

PLANET PRIMETIME

Host Karla Cavalli crosses the globe to explore some of the weirdest, wildest, funniest and most popular television shows on the planet – from Japanese game shows to India's Bollywood comedies. Premieres 7 September at 7.50pm on the Travel Channel (StarHub Channel 473; Singtel TV Channel 253).



BULL

Premiering at 9pm on 21 September (the same day as the US premiere), this drama starring Michael Weatherly is inspired by the career of Dr Phil McGraw, founder of one of the most successful trial consulting firms



of all time. Brilliant, brash and charming, Dr Bull is the ultimate puppet-master, combining psychology, human intuition and high-tech data to learn what makes jurors, attorneys, witnesses and the accused tick. Along with his top-notch team of experts, Dr Bull creates strategies that tip the scales of justice in his clients' favour. RTL CBS Entertainment HD (StarHub Channel 509; Singtel TV Channel 318).



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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.

Eyrie

Tim Winton

Penguin Australia | 448 pages

When writing a review, I usually like to have the book beside me, to skim the pages and remind myself of things that my tired brain has otherwise forgotten – the name of the main character, for instance.

This review, though, will be done from memory alone. The reason? When I recently loaned *Eyrie* to my brother to take on a surfing expedition to Indonesia, I figured I'd get it back – damp and sandy, perhaps, but readable. A Javanese macaque had other ideas, stealing the book from my brother's accommodation and tearing it to pieces.

So, here goes: a quick appraisal of famed Aussie author Tim Winton's latest novel, based only on vague recollection.

Eyrie's protagonist Keely is a 40-something boozier and pill-popper. When we first meet him, he's woken up on the floor of his dingy apartment in Fremantle, with a disconcerting stain in the carpet and no idea how it got there.

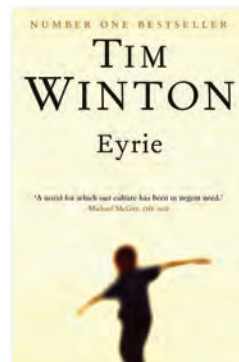
Keely, it turns out, is an environmentalist who has suffered some kind of career failure or disgrace – the details are obscure. Also treading a rocky path in life is Gemma, who lives a few doors down in the same tower block (the "eyrie" of the title, presumably). They share a common bond from the past, which opens the door for a relationship to develop, and for Keely to exhibit a display of fatherly care towards Kai, Gemma's young grandson (mum is in jail).

It's a path to redemption, though not necessarily a path to a happy ending. A persistent grimness hangs over the small forward steps taken by the characters, even up to the last page.

Lovers of Winton's amazing descriptions of rugged Aussie landscapes from novels like *Breath* and *Dirt Music* may be disappointed here. But I was completely engrossed by the dark humour and gritty lyricism of *Eyrie*.

Plus, the monkey liked how it tasted!

– Shamus Sillar



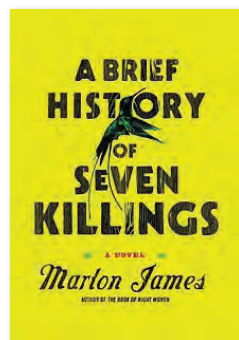
A Brief History of Seven Killings

Marlon James

Riverhead Books | 704 pages

Winner of last year's Man Booker Prize, *A Brief History of Seven Killings* is an epic novel with a premise woven around the attempted assassination of legendary reggae artist, Bob Marley. Referred to as "the singer" throughout the novel, Marley plays a partial, shadowy background role, the real story being the history of 1970s and 80s Jamaica. A time of CIA infiltration, drugs, guns and gang violence all propped up against poverty and desperation, the beauty of this novel comes through in the complex characters who are built up over the 700 pages and five distinct parts. While many readers may pause with frustration with the Jamaican patois used by author Marlon James, and the rapid stream of characters, plots and scenes introduced across each chapter, just hang in there, as it's a cleverly crafted ride. Dialect will slowly become clear, and key plot arcs will subtly be repeated and clarified, making this complex novel rich in its mixture of Jamaican history both real and imagined.

– Chloe Sasson



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What are you reading?



Caitlin McNeal,
American

Americanah
Chimamanda
Ngozi Adichie

Genre? It's so hard to narrow it down, as this book touches so many different genres; as one review said it's a "coming-of-age novel, romance, comic novel of social manners, up-to-the-minute meditation on race", as well as an "immigrant saga".

How did you get hold of it? I'm a 100 percent Kindle user now, and am able to borrow ebooks from libraries both in Singapore and in my hometown's local library in the US. I picked *Americanah* on a whim from a bestseller list and decided to download it.

How far have you got? Finished, in record time! It was that good!

So, you'd recommend it? This is definitely in my top five books of all time, so I highly recommend it. I decided to give it a try after seeing raves on the review site Goodreads, and I'm so glad I did. The storyline didn't really appeal to me at the time, but Adichie is such an amazing writer that the story came to life, even though the characters' stories are so far removed from my reality. If you loved *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, give this one a go! I can't wait to read more of Adichie's novels.



Suzanne Swiderski,
American

Into the Darkest Corner
Elizabeth Haynes



Genre? Thriller – super thrilling!

How did you get hold of it? Downloaded it to my Kindle.

How far have you got? Finished (in two and a half days)

What did you think of it? I loved this book. I couldn't put it down. It was the most suspenseful and thrilling book I've read in a long time. It's smart, well written and riveting from the get-go.

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!

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LIFE & FAMILY



Photography by Michael Bernabe

135

Great Outdoors:
Where to lay
your picnic

145

Inspiring Expat: Saving the
global tiger population

153

Out of Sight: Why buy free-
range eggs?

161

Hot Wheels: What our readers
are driving



Editor's Pick

Bugaboo's super-stylish and limited edition Cameleon3 Elements. Available this month at Motherswork, Mothercare and First Few Years.

What's New



DRYING in Style

While they originate from hammam baths, peshtemals – traditional Turkish towels – are equally useful in Singapore's endless summer, either as bath towels, sarong wraps, sofa throws or even baby blankets. They're lightweight, 100 percent cotton, quick-drying and less bulky than traditional towels, and we give them the thumbs up. Try a peshtemal for yourself with a 20 percent discount for *Expat Living* readers (coupon code "EXPAT20"), courtesy of Summer Moments. Offer ends 15 October. Sold online and in select stores. summer-moments.com

Dry & Comfortable

Tollyjoy Diaper Pull Up Pants have an ultra-absorbent core that locks away moisture, and a special layer that distributes liquid evenly for faster absorption. The light and breathable cotton prevents diaper-rash, too. \$9.90 per pack. tollyjoy.com.sg ▼



Look out for Stories, the next hands-on exhibition at **Playeum's Children's Centre for Creativity**, which features artist-led workshops exploring stories through drama, dance, puppetry, writing, music and art. Opening in November, the new programme is designed for kids aged one to 12 years, with opportunities to create their own stories and immerse themselves in stories from different cultures. Open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 6pm. 47 Malan Road, #01-23 Gillman Barracks. 6262 0750 | playeum.com ▲



Say No to Screens

What parent isn't concerned about the amount of screen time their child asks for? One Singapore mum, Ada Ee, has gone to great lengths to offer her son an interesting alternative by inventing **Dabber Dot Markers**, a more exciting variation on traditional colouring-in. These non-toxic, thick markers have one-inch sponge tips to make circle drawing easier for kids struggling with finger grip. A box of eight markers and an activity pad is \$39.90. Available at fiddleanddoodle.com and Amazon. ▲



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Making New Friends

Few of us can forget feeling lost during the first few months of arriving in Singapore. It can be worse if your children have flown the coup, and the social openings that a school offers are no longer there. Inspiring expat Linda Preece, an Australian photographer and artist, formed the casual meeting group



Coffee and Chat as a way of getting out and meeting new people. The group has grown from 10 women at the first catch-up to close to 1,000 members on the Facebook group – and it's still growing. The diverse group of women meets at Hotel Jen, behind Tanglin Mall, every Thursday at 10am. To join, search for Coffee and Chat Singapore on Facebook. ▲

All for Charity

Over the years, the funds raised at the Say No to the Oppression of Women (SNOW) Gala by **Singapore Committee for UN Women** have supported programmes that have benefitted tens of thousands of girls and women in ASEAN. You can help this worthy cause – and have fun! – by attending their annual glitzy gala to be held on 24 September at Capella Hotel. snow.org.sg

Another date to pop in your diary where you can show your support for gender equality is **AWARE's** World Ball planned for 17 October at The St. Regis Singapore.

aware.org.sg/worldball2016



Last year's SNOW gala goers



Village children cheer on cyclists

Cyclists of all shapes, sizes and nationalities will hit the dusty Cambodian back roads from 4 September to raise money and awareness for **Nokor Tep**, the country's first women's hospital, currently under construction in Phnom Penh. The annual five-day ride from Siem Reap to the capital attracts people from around the world to ride 700km in the name of a worthy charity. To donate or to sponsor riders, visit ridefornokortep.com. ▲

Giving Back

Welfare organisation **South Central Community Family Service Centre** provides financial, social and relationship support to low-income and vulnerable families. If you've got time to give, volunteers are needed to help in areas such as homework support for children, the community garden, Goodwill Store and fostering family partnerships. Contact Teresa at 6461 9200 or teresa@sccfsc.org.sg to find out more.



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Environmental Focus

Pat on the Back

Your voices were heard! Thanks to the sustained and very public uproar over 2015's crippling haze, five companies have joined forces to form the **Singapore Alliance for Sustainable Palm Oil**. The five founding members – Unilever, Danone, Ayam Brand, IKEA and Wildlife Reserves Singapore – will work together with the WWF towards promoting the production, trade and use of certified sustainable palm oil, so that it becomes the norm rather than the exception. Sustainable palm oil production has minimum environmental impact and does not contribute to haze pollution or deforestation. wwf.sg

Jean Genie

You may have heard of Prêt-à-Porter and Rent-a-Dress, but what about Lease-a-Jean? This is the blossoming achievement of **MUD Jeans**, a Netherlands-based enterprise that set out to make the timeless fashion classic more sustainable and ethical. To begin with, MUD Jeans are made of ethically grown organic cotton, without any of the less green elements like synthetic thread or leather branding. You can buy them outright, or join the lease “club”, updating your style once every 12 months. Each new pair you choose could be re-made from recycled materials, or directly recycled, coming to you complete with a story of where it has been and what it has seen. mudjeans.eu



Boo!

Speakers at the recent **Sustainable Brands** event in Sydney have confirmed the latest research that shows the 1990s model of companies scaring consumers into better consumption habits simply doesn't work. Marketers need to deliver a positive message and a rewarding outcome, even if it's simply the feel-good factor of knowing you're doing the right thing. In the sweetest example, America's TerraCycle found people's willingness to place a stray bottle in a bin increased from one to 25 percent if the bin said “Thanks!” Prepare to be wooed – you'll be doing the future a favour. ▼



DID YOU KNOW?

Rooftop and urban farming is a fledgling industry in Singapore that is rapidly attracting public interest for its environmentally friendly use of redundant urban space to grow food. You can visit one example, **ComCrop**, during monthly farm tours. Scape, 2 Orchard Link. For dates, check facebook.com/ComCrop. ▼





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FAMILY NEWS



Shelley and Hay Hazama are thrilled to announce the arrival of **Yarden**, born 27 April, a baby sister to Maayan and Tal



Jeff and Valerie Cheng are delighted to announce the birth of **Xander Liam**, born on 3 June, joining siblings Sophia Jae and Gavin Hugo



Kaylene Bong arrived 5 June, to excited parents Bong and Jenny, and sister Jolene

JUST HAD A BABY? NEWLY MARRIED? RECENTLY ENGAGED?

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



CONGRATULATIONS

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

littleones
Photography



ANIMAL ADOPTION



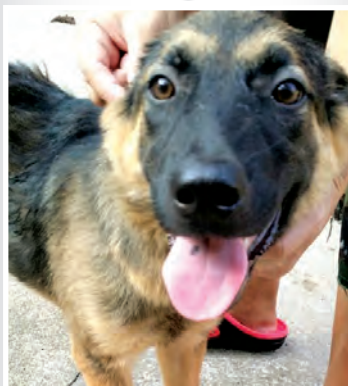
Trained by renowned dog whisperer Cesar Millan, **Felix** is a ball of energy and excitement. With an adventurous spirit and eagerness to try new things, he is the perfect companion for explorers.



Being the only male in his litter, **Jack** has learnt the art of being patient. His nature is affectionate, calm and curious – unlike that of many puppies of his age.



Despite her petite size, **Faith** has a big heart full of love. She will need some time to warm up to you, but once she has, be warned of endless face-licking.



Prince was rescued from a construction site and with his tame yet playful personality, he really stands out.

Animal Lovers League (ALL) is a registered charity and is home to more than 700 dogs and cats. Under their care are animals that have been abandoned, traumatised, abused and rescued. ALL is a strictly no-kill organisation, and aims to encourage the public to adopt animals instead of buying them, and to find loving and committed homes for their animals.

There are many ways to help the dogs and cats at ALL, including donating \$60 a month to ensure at least one animal is well fed. Contributing to the food package also enables ALL to buy special food for its sick animals and the necessary everyday food such as kibble and canned products.

For more information about their cause and how you can help, visit the website at animalloversleague.com.

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Sleeping Through

BY KATIE ROBERTS

It's undoubtedly one of the most discussed subjects when a group of mothers get together: How can I get my baby to sleep through the night? Here, self-described "Supernanny" ZOE CHU offers her advice for sleep-deprived parents everywhere.



Tell us a little about yourself.

I'm a mother of four, including a set of twins. We lived in Christchurch, New Zealand, for over 10 years before moving to Singapore to be closer to our family.

How did you get into this field?

From the time I brought my twins home from the hospital in 2006, I knew I needed serious help. At the suggestion of a helpful neighbour I started pouring over sleep training books to figure out how to get my twins not only to fall asleep on their own, but also to stay asleep and sleep through the night.

For the first few months I felt like a zombie enduring sleepless nights, but I finally figured out the perfect system. A few years later, along came my third baby, and with that experience I have developed a sixth sense for what babies need to learn to sleep successfully.

I slowly became the "sleep guru" among my friends and family who asked me for advice. And so I turned my passion – helping sleep-deprived parents – into my business, so that I can help more families get back that well-deserved rest and sleep.

As a baby sleep consultant, I have helped many babies get the sleep they need, during the day and night. I've developed an approach that combines popular techniques from sleep training



books and, most importantly, my unique experiences with my own three children who have very different personalities.

Why is it important for children to get enough sleep?

Sleep is a biological need, not a luxury. It's just as important to ensure that your children sleep as it is to feed them. Well-rested children are happier children and well-rested parents are happier and better parents. Sleep is not just rest for the body; it also assists in a child's brain development, including learning and socialising skills. Children who are overtired become more hyperactive, aggressive and easily upset, and tend to get sick more easily.

Why is it important for parents to get coaching?

Like it or not, parents set the tone for their children's routines and habits. Children thrive on structure, and when parents set proper boundaries, they can build and shape the foundation for their behaviour. Parents need to be well educated on how to manage their child's behaviour, whether it's sleep or other behavioural issues. If parents give in to a child's demands, the child will soon learn they are calling the shots.

FOUR COMMON SLEEP MYTHS

#1 *Your baby will outgrow their bad sleep habits as they get older.*

Studies show that more than 80 percent of babies having sleep difficulties will continue to do so up until three years old, and based on my own clients' experience some even up to seven years!

#2 *Putting your child to bed late won't make a difference.*

Some parents too often allow their work schedules, dinner plans or social arrangements to dictate their child's bedtime.

#3 *Inconsistent bedtime regimes don't matter.*

If some days you rock your child to sleep and some days you bring them to your bed out of desperation, try to find a consistent method that works for you and your baby and stick with it.

#4 *Mobles and gadgets help sleep.*

Banish cute colourful mobles, TV and gadgets before bedtime as they encourage stimulation. *EL*



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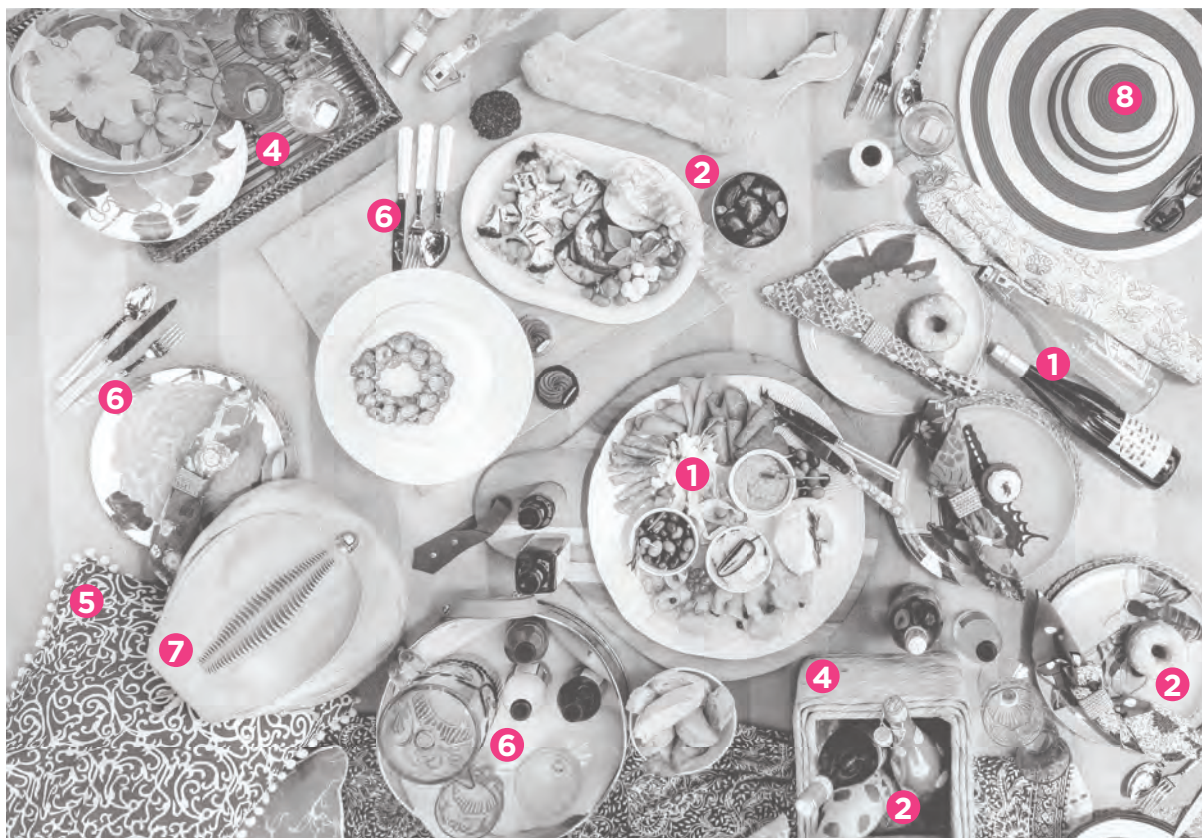
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- 4 BUNGALOW 55, #01-05A**
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 - Wicker basket with leather handle, \$150

- 5 GROOVY GIFTS, #02-03**
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Where to Picnic

15 places to lay your feast

“Hot and humid with a chance of rain” goes the daily Singapore weather report, but don’t let that put you off! Hit one of the following picnic spots for a fun afternoon in the great outdoors with friends and family.

1 Botanic Gardens

One of our all-time favourite spots in Singapore, the Gardens are especially great for a sophisticated picnic. You could throw down your blanket almost anywhere, but our favourite patch of grass is probably at Palm Valley or Symphony Lake, especially when one of the regular free classical music concerts is being staged.

2 MacRitchie Reservoir Park

A popular destination for nature lovers and exercise enthusiasts, MacRitchie has plenty of convenient amenities such as toilets, drinking fountains and showers, as well as great walking or running trails for those who want to move, and good

views across the reservoir for those who just want to sit. Beware of sneaky monkeys, though!

3 Marina Barrage

The Green Roof at Marina Barrage, approximately the size of four football fields, is open to the public for recreational activities. It’s best enjoyed in the twilight for panoramic city views.

4 Chinese and Japanese Gardens

For an Asian twist to your picnic, try the iconic Chinese and Japanese Gardens in Jurong. Among the attractions are a rainbow bridge and a pagoda, inspired by structures in China and modelled on the gardening techniques of Japan.

5 Fort Canning

Work up an appetite on the steepish paths and check out the Battle Box, the Spice Garden and the archaeological remains at Fort Canning Park before shaking out your picnic blanket.

6 Gardens by the Bay

There are lots of areas within Gardens by the Bay to picnic in, but we suggest Bay East Garden. This 2km waterfront stretch has sublime views of the Marina Bay skyline, plus open lawns, swaying palm

trees and waist-high flowering shrubs – and you may see the occasional otter too!

7 Jurong Hill Park

About a ten-minute walk from Jurong Bird Park is Jurong Hill Park and its Garden of Fame. Admire the 27 trees planted by foreign dignitaries such as Queen Elizabeth II, and enjoy the great views.

8 East Coast Park

With a scenic coastline that stretches more than 15km, the beach at East Coast Park is an excellent venue for a weekend picnic. Grab a spot under the shade of the casuarina trees, close your eyes, take in the breeze and just imagine you’re on holiday. And do check out the new Marine Cove kids’ outdoor play zone (by the new McDonald’s) with slides, seesaws and activities galore! We also like the spot in the far eastern reaches (access from Changi Coast Walk) where there are generally few people (and lots of planes to watch)

9 West Coast Park

Another great open space by the sea! There’s a bicycle obstacle course, a sand-play area, plus lots of swings and climbing structures that older kids will have fun on. Take frisbees and sand play equipment.

10 Pasir Ris Park

Great for the whole family, it has an adventure play area with a flying fox, swings, a sand area and climbing pyramids of rope. There's a mangrove walk, a horse-riding centre, cycling paths, a maze and a kitchen garden. Keep a lookout for the ice-cream uncle.

11 Bukit Timah Nature Reserve

Trek to Singapore's highest peak – 164m! – keeping an eye out for monkeys, lizards, flying foxes, birds and beautiful flowers on the way. Take good supportive walking shoes and plenty of mosquito repellent.

12 Kranji Reservoir Park

Grab one of the pavilions or benches and enjoy the panoramic view of the Straits of Johor. Pack your fishing rod – the park has two fishing grounds, so if you're feeling lucky, you can try catching your own lunch.

13 Labrador Park

This is a peaceful, scenic walk from hilly jungle down to the yachts at Keppel Bay. Plus, check out The Training Shed, an awesome, chilled-out event in Labrador Park that's staged once a month.

After even more ideas? Try ...

Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park
Coney Island
Dhoby Ghaut Green
Jurong Central Park
Lower Seletar Reservoir Park
Sembawang Park
Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve

14 St John's Island

Take the ferry from Marina South Pier for a picnic on Lazarus beach. Join a pre-picnic guided nature tour with the Tropical Marine Science Institute. The island's natural shores are ringed by coral reefs, so bring your snorkelling gear to swim in the lagoons after picnicking on the beach.

15 Pulau Ubin

Jump on a bumboat at Changi Point Ferry Terminal for the easy 15-minute journey across to sleepy Pulau Ubin. We suggest you bring a portable picnic, hire some bikes and take a ride before settling on your favourite picnic spot – there's a whole island to choose from! Bring hats and insect repellent.



Tips for a successful outdoor feast

- Pack hats and sunscreen to avoid sunburn, and lots of water to prevent dehydration. Insect repellent and wet wipes are handy too.
- For games, throw in a Frisbee, badminton set or cricket bat and ball, especially if there are more than six or so people coming along.
- If the ground is damp, lay a shower curtain under your picnic rug to avoid a wet bottom.
- Even if you don't have a large Esky or cooler, pick up soft-sided chiller bags at any supermarket and fill them with ice to keep food and drinks cool.
- Load everything into a trolley with wheels, and off you go! *a*



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Dancing Up a Storm

There are dance and drama schools aplenty in Singapore; each one is unique but all are dedicated to honing confidence and developing the performance gene in your child. We asked four expatriate parents to share their experiences.

Who: Athena Hoyes-Cock (age 2)

Nationality: British

Attending: Centre Stage School of the Arts

Time at the school: One year

Athena's father ROBBIE explains why Centre Stage School of the Arts works well for her.

We live in the Wessex Estate, which is literally a five-minute walk from Centre Stage, so the location is extremely convenient for us. It's also opposite Tanglin Trust School where our eldest daughter is in the Nursery.

Centre Stage was highly recommended to us. Their reputation is second to none and they are well regarded for their creativity as well as their

engaging and friendly teachers.

Athena attends three times a week for between one-and-a-half and three hours each time. This is split between "Out of The Box", which is a drop-off, and "Play Stage", which is an accompanied class and ideal for collaborative learning. It's also great fun for parents to observe the development, progress and journey that our little ones are making.

The improvement in Athena's confidence, speech and sociability has been striking. She has gone from being very nervous with strangers to now being fully comfortable with her teachers – every time we pass by Centre Stage Athena shouts out "My School! My School!" – which is heart-warming.

Athena loves her teachers, Ms Irene, Mr Peter and Ms Naki, and is always talking about them. She's also particularly excited about bringing home her daily creations to share with us. Our favourites were a hanging mobile for above her bed and a clay menagerie of animals.



Who: Miria Baek (8)

Nationality: Korean-Singapore

Attending: Luminous Dance Academy (LDA)

Time at the academy: Three months (LDA opened in July 2016); her teacher from the past four years is now at LDA, too

Miria's mother MIREI explains her daughter's experience at Luminous Dance Academy.

Ms Laura is an amazing teacher because she focuses on each student and makes them all feel special. Miria likes French-style ballet so it's the perfect place for her, and importantly they have a good Parisian opera teacher too. She takes ballet three times a week (90-minute session) and contemporary dance (60 minutes) once a week.

Initially, the academy asked about Miria's dance experience and they observed her at the first lesson to make sure the class would be suitable. They don't strictly group the kids by age, which means that if Miria is more serious, and has the focus, she will have the opportunity to participate in classes with older kids, which is very inspiring.

Miria is not interested in taking exams for ballet or dancing; however, she attends competitions and thinks this is an important way to gain confidence and also experience.

I have noticed a difference in her confidence. She has many opportunities to learn and dance with the older kids and the teachers. This gives her more confidence and the chance to improve because she has a good example to follow. She is eager to learn and be like them!

Miria tells me that she loves the studio because of its special bouncy floor, the big windows and, of course, the great teachers!

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Who: Jessica Cunningham (13)

Nationality: Australian

Attending: Tanglin Arts Studio

Time at the studio: Three years

MELISSA, Jessica's mother, describes their experience at Tanglin Arts Studio.

Jessica has been dancing since she was two-and-a-half years old so finding the right dance studio was very important when we moved to Singapore. I researched studios from Australia and from the outset Tanglin Arts just felt right. It reminded me of the studio in Sydney where Jessica had danced for six years.

Jessica attends ballet, jazz, tap, musical theatre and lyrical jazz and is a member of the performance team. With this schedule she is attending four times per week totalling about nine-and-a-half hours of classes.

On signing up, Jessica attended their Open Day to try a few different classes and this gave the teachers the opportunity to assess her level and suggest suitable classes. She started with just a couple of classes a week while we got used to Singapore life and she has added to the schedule as the years have progressed.

For the last two years, selected students have taken the Australian Teachers of Dance exams in jazz, ballet and tap. Jessica has taken the exams in these three dance disciplines for some time and I feel they do help dancers with their progress and, most importantly, technique.

Dance is great way for kids to gain confidence. Jessica has grown as a performer over the years and in particular the last 12 months. Being able to get out on a stage and portray a story through dance is a wonderful skill. Tanglin Arts Studio also competes in the "Get the Beat" dance competition that comes to Singapore once a year. Jessica danced two solos in the competition this year, placing second in Musical Theatre and equal fifth in Tap with another member of the team.

Without hesitation, Jessica says the thing she loves most about the studio are her friends. Dancers have a special bond, especially as they can spend lots of hours together rehearsing and performing. The teachers and staff at Tanglin are a huge support and are always willing to help with any concerns. They are passionate about dance and know how to get the best out of their performers, no matter what their age.

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Who: Salome Chauffaille (7)

Nationality: French

Attending: L'Academie de Danse

Time at the academy: Six years

Salome's mother ANNE answers our questions about L'Academie de Danse.

We've been in Singapore since 2008, and we started Salome at L'Academie when she was two-and-a-half years old; her sister has attended too. Salome is now in Junior Ballet and she attends twice a week – a total of two-and-a-half hours. I heard about L'Academie from other French mothers who praised the quality of the curriculum, so I took the girls for a trial and spoke with the

director, Maude Tolédano.

Maude was very helpful in explaining the curriculum and the philosophy of the school. Later, when I told her that Salome wanted to increase her number of classes, she recommended we move her to Junior Ballet. The progress Salome has made this year is just outstanding.

The classes are based on the French curriculum, which provides a sound technical foundation, but they are taught in a friendly and accessible way for the kids. I also love the fact that the kids and the parents can observe all the children across different age groups in order to give them an idea of what is possible at what age, and what progress to expect.

Salome has definitely gained from ballet. She is obviously more flexible but most importantly she is now very comfortable in her body, and has developed a positive self-esteem. She has also developed a very good "musical ear" that is helping her with her violin classes. She also appreciates the need for practice and has learnt the discipline required to perform a pose as it needs to be performed.

When I asked Salome what she loves about L'Academie, she answered: Maude, her friends, and the "big kids and what they can do"; she also said that she loves dancing! *a*



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All Grown Up

What's next for three Centre Stage graduates?

The curtain falls on studying in Singapore for three graduates from **Centre Stage School of the Arts** who are heading to the UK for further tuition. Here, they recall their memories and experiences.



Fame, performed earlier this year



MEGAN WILLIAMS started drama classes at the age of seven. Now 18, she's heading to York to study English and History, with a goal of pursuing a career in journalism.

“As a seven-year-old I didn't have any real ambition or interest in drama or dancing, but I joined with my best friend and I'm glad we did! Initially I was shy, but participating in classes at Centre Stage encouraged me to get involved in more activities and be willing to take risks.

During my recent A-level exams, my parents asked if I wanted to take a break from Centre Stage to focus on my studies, but it was never a question for me. It was important to keep going and to look forward to each Saturday as a chance to forget about school and exams. It helped rather than hindered, I think. I'll take away irreplaceable memories of my time at Centre Stage.

One thing I'll never forget is Pete's saying: 'Right or wrong, do it strong'.”

SORCHA YOUNG was just three when she started Creative Drama classes at Centre Stage. Now 19, she is leaving Singapore for Bristol to study psychology; she hopes to become a drama therapist.

“My earliest drama performance was *Little Red Riding Hood*, and one of my favourite presentations was *Harry Potter*, in which I was a jelly bean! Over the years I learned a lot through jazz, ballet, theatre workshop (acting) and Trinity Exam classes. Without a doubt, Centre Stage has taught me to be confident in who I am and to express myself. The teachers are talented in building that confidence in students.

Centre Stage really is a family; the students are all incredibly close and the teachers are fabulous. My last drama performance was *Anne Frank* and last ballet performance was *The Four Seasons* in which I performed a solo as the Autumn Fairy; it's always fun to do a solo.

My word of advice is to always have fun – and always learn your lines!”



RACHEL HUGHES is heading to London to do a musical theatre course and then audition for drama school. Now 18, she commenced classes at Centre Stage at just 18 months of age.

“My Mum initially enrolled me so I could develop more confidence, and I've definitely done that. At school I don't have a problem getting up and talking in front of people. Now I'm doing drama, musical theatre workshop, tap dancing and small group singing and I probably spend more time at Centre Stage than I do at home. On Saturdays I'm here from 8.30am until 5pm for classes and rehearsals, and we usually all go out for dinner afterwards.

My earliest show was *The Magic Clock*, in which I played a fairy, and most recently I played Carmen Diaz in the musical *Fame*. It was a big cast and wonderful to perform with the friends I've made over these years together.

My advice is to just keep trying, because you never know what will happen.”



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TIGERS

on the

RISE

BY KATIE ROBERTS



Think you've got a tough job? Here we speak with a man whose brief is to help double the global wild tiger population by 2022. Halfway into the initiative, MIKE BALTZER updates us on the progress, and tells us how wildlife spotting in Singapore can be surprisingly better than expected.

After dramatic scenes emerged of officers raiding Thailand's infamous Tiger Temple earlier this year, the deplorable living conditions of its captive bred tigers drew widespread condemnation, along with the whole questionable practice of tiger farming. The incident also called attention to the dramatic drop in global wild tiger numbers over the past 100 years, and in particular the spectacular collapse of populations in Southeast Asia – largely driven by consumer demand for traditional medicine derived from tiger parts.

Based in Singapore, Mike Baltzer is leader of the WWF's Tigers Alive Initiative. He moved here from Kuala Lumpur last year and, together with his regional team and global network, coordinates the WWF's efforts on the ground – and also at a policy level with government.

Concerted efforts to halt the decline of wild tiger numbers commenced in earnest in the 1960s, but Mike says poaching, habitat loss and the growth of Asia's human population saw numbers continue to fall. The catalyst for change came in 2008 when the World Bank (then CEO Robert Zoellick was a tiger fan) launched the Global Tiger Initiative, and then, in collaboration with Russian President Vladimir Putin (also a tiger fan), held a summit in 2010. The result was that governments and conservation organisations agreed to rethink tiger conservation, to meet annually, and to commit to an ambitious global goal to double the wild tiger population by 2022 (known as the TX2 Goal). In working towards the same goal, the WWF has radically transformed its approach to increasing tiger numbers.

This year marks the halfway point of the 12-year project. Mike says the global count is close to 3,900, up from the estimate of 3,200 in 2009. "This possible increase of 700 is an indication that the curve, which had been steadily careering downwards, is perhaps starting to go up. It can largely be attributed to tiger population increases in Bhutan, India, Russia and Nepal, as well as improvements in survey techniques. So while it doesn't sound like a big increase, if it is a true reflection of a positive change, then it's dramatic. Having said that, while things may be getting better in some places, the threats are still pretty intense wherever tigers survive."

Nepal is an example of best practice in action. "There is a special Prime Ministerial committee on tigers there, and they take poaching very seriously; the army is involved in protecting the National Parks and they have community-based management and effective human conflict programmes," says Mike.

It's obvious, then, that a positive outlook for tigers hinges on governments showing strong initiative. "We're not seeing the changes in numbers in some places such as Indonesia and Malaysia where we see less commitment," says Mike. Sumatra is the last bastion of tigers in Indonesia, but, as in other areas of Southeast Asia, the growing economy is fuelling road construction, infrastructure development, urbanisation and agricultural expansion. This competition for land is reducing forests and tiger habitats. "We've captured images of a tiger looking into one of our camera traps and the following day a bulldozer going through the area," says Mike. "The same tiger returns to the camera a few days later, but there's no forest. The change is very, very rapid in Sumatra."

Poaching is the number one threat to tigers and Mike says a tiger isn't completely safe anywhere. Illegal hunting and selling is driven by consumer demand, largely from China, but also Laos,

Vietnam and Malaysia. Commercial trade in wild caught tigers and breeding is illegal according to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Despite this, every part of a tiger is in demand: skin for display, and bones, meat and claws for traditional medicine and luxury goods as status symbols. Tiger wine made from bones and sold as a health tonic is a non-traditional product that has fuelled increased demand in the past few decades.

Tiger farms complicate the issue. Many operate as tourist attractions, as in the case of the aforementioned Tiger Temple outside Bangkok, but are generally perceived as a front for illegal breeding, smuggling and the sale of parts. There are international calls for the closure of similar operations in Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and particularly China.

What conditions, then, are needed for tiger numbers to bounce back? Mike says that three factors are most important



Rangers set a tiger camera in Bhutan

"Things may be getting better in some places, but the threats are still pretty intense wherever tigers survive."



for breeding: space, available prey and zero poaching; this has been shown in both India and Russia. “The big problem is that once numbers start improving, it can become an issue for people living in those areas. So we work intensely on resolving the conflict between local people and tigers. In places like India and Nepal, where they have a high tolerance level for tigers, they have lived in harmony with them for a long time; it’s considered a part of life and the animals are revered.”

While it’s unlikely tigers will ever appear in Singapore again, British-born Mike still gets excited when discussing wildlife sighting opportunities in Singapore. Having worked and lived in Malaysia, Laos and Vietnam, he is genuinely amazed to sight hornbills and cockatoos from his office window on Alexandra Road – not to mention a wild boar outside his condo. He has also started looking for otters in Bishan Park, and he sends photos of any snake sightings to colleagues. “I’ve seen things in Singapore that I could only dream of seeing in a regular city environment,” says Mike, who lives here with his wife and daughter.

Tropical conservation was Mike’s chief interest as a child, stemming from time spent in the Surrey countryside with his grandfather and the strong influence of a science teacher who had grown up in Malaysia and Singapore and instilled in him a fascination for the ecology and history of this region. “I was the kid with tiger posters on my walls,” he says with a smile. Mike’s specialty in large-scale, high-intensity conservation drew him to the WWF Tiger Initiative. “In previous projects I’ve worked on biodiversity in the lower Mekong River and, more recently, in Eastern Europe on the Danube River and in the Carpathian Mountains, some of the last wild areas of Europe.”

As for the chances of doubling the tiger population, Mike believes the target will be met – eventually. “Globally, we may not double it by 2022, but if we get there two or three years later, it will be fantastic. This initiative has become an inspiration for

others, with similar projects underway to protect certain species, like snow leopards and rhinos; the idea of intense action with high-level government commitment seems to make a difference.”

Mike spends much of his time working with governments of Tiger Range Countries (TRCs) – countries where tigers still roam free – and he has hopes that planning will pave the way for animals and humans to live together more cohesively in the future. He travels to India to see tigers as often as possible. “It only takes a day back in the forest to regenerate the energy.”

TIGERS BY COUNTRY

Bangladesh: 106

Bhutan: 103

China: > 7

India: 2,226

Indonesia: 371

Malaysia: 250

Myanmar: No current data available (estimated at 85 in 2010)

Nepal: 198

Russia: 433

Thailand: 189

Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam: Tigers are functionally extinct, and cannot naturally increase the population.

Source: WWF, Global wild tiger population status, 2016 *EL*

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A Friend For Life

Executive Director of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Singapore, DR JAIPAL SINGH GILL, answers our questions about the shelter's new Sungei Tengah premises, and how the public can help lower the stray animal population.

BY AMY BROOK-PARTRIDGE
PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL BERNABE



Dr Gill and Ida, who has since been adopted from the SPCA

Why did the SPCA move and what's new about these facilities?

Our lease at our previous site in Mount Vernon was expiring and so, after 32 years of operating there, we had to move. However, our new welfare centre can house even more animals and also includes dog runs and socialisation areas for prospective adopters and animals. We now have a physical shop front, too, and we're currently working to increase the range of our merchandise; thankfully, we have also been blessed with vendors who are supportive of our work. Then there are the dedicated areas such as our education pavilion and education centre that are specially designed for education programmes, training workshops and events.

Tell us more about these educational services on offer.

We believe education will change the future, and we have therefore dedicated two large spaces at our new premises to help promote a more compassionate society in Singapore. These areas will serve to educate the public about animal welfare issues and inform them on how they can help.

Why is animal overpopulation still an issue, and what can we do to help?

Healthy and treatable companion animals such as dogs, cats and rabbits are currently losing their lives because there aren't enough homes for them, but this is preventable. There are many factors that contribute to overpopulation, including the breeding of pets – there is currently no restriction on the breeding and importation of companion animals for sale in Singapore.

Then there's the sale of pets, which largely occurs with little regard for whether the buyer is prepared to care for the animal, leading to impulse purchases, which increases the risk of an animal being subsequently given up.

“Healthy and treatable companion animals such as dogs, cats and rabbits are currently losing their lives because there are not enough homes for them”



“It’s time we restricted the number of pets that can be bred and imported for sale in Singapore”



There are many underlying reasons why owners give up or abandon their pets. Some don’t realise the effort or cost that goes into keeping a pet, the novelty has worn off, there are too many animals to care for due to unwanted litters, there is frustration from behavioural problems, or an unwillingness or inability to pay high veterinary fees.

Finally, while the number of community (stray) dogs and cats has been significantly reduced after years of intensive sterilisation efforts, uncontrolled breeding is still adding to the numbers needing to be rehomed.

How is the SPCA addressing this problem?

The SPCA launched a new initiative, Getting to Zero, in June, with the goal of getting the euthanasia of healthy and treatable companion animals in Singapore down to zero. This will be achievable with the vital support of multiple partners we hope to collaborate with, such as veterinary practices, pet retailers, dog trainers, animal welfare groups, community animal caregivers, government agencies and pet owners.

We plan to get Singapore to zero by focusing on education, legislative change, support for pet owners and community effort. All of these components are necessary to address the complex problem of pet overpopulation.

How can the public help?

Individuals can certainly play their part by choosing to adopt a pet instead of buying – so spread the word to your family and friends. Be a responsible pet owner who keeps your pet for life, and do not let your pets produce unwanted litters that will add to the overpopulation.

While individual effort is very important, systemic change in our pet industry is also required. Animals are not products to be sold without regard for their welfare. It is time we restricted the number of pets that can be bred and imported for sale in Singapore. *et*

The Getting to Zero project will be rolled out in stages over the next two years. Progress updates will be available on the SPCA website, gettingtozero.sg. To find out more about how you can support the SPCA, go to spca.org.uk, or, to visit the shelter, head to 50 Sungei Tengah Road (check the website first for relevant opening hours).



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Shaping the future through education



Certified animal behaviour consultant BARBARA WRIGHT explains why happy chickens matter, and runs through the choices for people who want to buy free-range eggs.

As major food producers and restaurant chains around the world continue to commit to using exclusively free-range eggs, and authorities debate the tightening of free-range certification requirements, in Singapore the awareness about humane animal farming is only in its infancy.

When I moved here this year (leaving our four free-range, egg-laying chickens behind in Sydney) it was a shock to me that free-range eggs were not readily available. Supermarkets are stocked with world-class products from across the globe, which cater to almost every cuisine, but ethically produced eggs were, to use a fitting pun, like hen's teeth. It became my mission to understand this situation and discover the best options to buy eggs from happy chickens.

What are factory hens?

The bulk of commercially available eggs in Southeast Asia are sourced from battery or factory hens. Consumers do not see the incredible cruelty of the egg factories, where five or more hens may be crammed into a cage that wouldn't allow even one to comfortably stretch her wings. They live on slanted wire mesh covered with their own manure as well as manure that drips down on them from the cages above. Some farms prevent them pecking each other by chopping off their beaks. Sick, featherless and unable to stand on their brittle bones, they are nothing more than egg-laying machines. And, since only female chicks are of use for laying eggs, male chicks are disposed of.

Why are free-range chicken eggs and meat not easily available in Singapore?

Due to strict regulations here, the closest to “certified free range” one can currently buy are “cage free eggs”. This means the hens are in a barn, able to roam freely, and perform natural behaviours like scratching, bathing and pecking, as well as interacting with each other. This is a far cry from the cramped and inhumane conditions of caged hens.

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) only allows the importation of poultry from barn-type houses (that is, cage-free) as long as the facilities are fully enclosed, bird-proof and able to meet bio-security requirements. This closed environment is needed to mitigate the risk of disease – for example, to guard against poultry potentially coming into contact with wild birds and their droppings and being exposed to potential contamination such as avian influenza or salmonella.

Contrary to common belief, there is no evidence that “kampong eggs” sold in Singapore are in fact from free-roaming chickens. The term kampong is a designation of a chicken breed – chickens that are often kept in small-cage environments.

There is also not a high public demand for free-range eggs and chicken meat in Southeast Asia. This is partly due to a general lack of public information about the poor living conditions of caged chickens. Organisations like ACRES (Animal Concerns, Research and Education Society) make a big effort to work closely with industry bodies and businesses to improve the



“It’s personally rewarding to know that the eggs we consume have come from an ethical source.”

animal welfare of farm animals; this is invaluable, as are their public education programmes about animal welfare issues.

What are the benefits of free-range?

Choosing to support chicken products from farms that take care of the environment and raise animals in an ethical manner has numerous benefits. Firstly, it means you are supporting farming focused on animal welfare. There is also the general belief that free-range farming improves the taste of our food. Finally, it is personally rewarding to know that the eggs we consume have come from an ethical source.

The fact that the general public don’t readily demand cage-free eggs also stems from the lack of options on the shelves of our supermarkets. There are only a few brands available in Singapore, including Nature’s Best Barn Fresh Eggs and New Zealand Barn Fresh, both imported from New Zealand, and now the Freedom Range Company. Originally farmed in Singapore, the latter has recently moved to Malaysia, where they have maintained their tight guidelines for animal care and a commitment to quality produce. They also supply eggs to many restaurants around Singapore – check the website (*below*) for details.

It’s great news that businesses in Southeast Asia are starting to put animal welfare first. If we as consumers demand products and food from free-range farming, more and more options will become available and animal welfare will become a priority.

acres.org.sg
supernature.com.sg
freedom-range.com
coldstorage.com.sg

WHERE TO BUY FREE-RANGE CHICKEN

- SuperNature in Forum The Shopping Mall sells organic, free-range and AVA-accredited chickens from Inglewood Farms in Australia.
- Huber’s Butchery sells premium chickens that are barn-raised and cage-free.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

After many years working with pet dogs in Sydney, Barbara set up her own company, Positive Puppies. Since moving to Singapore she has volunteered at ACRES and is on the steering committee of The Pet Professional Guild Singapore. *EL*

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A Head Start on Learning

Why choose the Montessori model?



Choosing a curriculum for your child can get confusing. Here, KRISTAL KOH, Principal at **Brighton Montessori** at Lotus Avenue, offers advice on early childhood

What is a play-based curriculum and what is a structured curriculum?

Essentially, play-based programmes allow children to make a choice about the kind of activity they want to learn, rather than following a set agenda. Teachers incorporate academic skills through theme-based activities, and classrooms can include a kitchen area, a playhouse and a reading nook, for example. The teacher acts more as a facilitator rather than direct instructor.

In a structured programme, the teacher directs and leads the children through a series of prescribed lessons or activities and makes the decisions about what and how a child learns. It's routine oriented and follows an extensive plan of activities such as learning letters, colours, shapes and numbers through drills and projects.

Does a curriculum have to be one or the other, or can it offer elements of both?

There are many opinions, but it's generally argued that both styles have a role to play. While there is a greater understanding of the role of play in a child's learning, it doesn't discount the fact that direct instruction is needed, especially in areas of language, literacy and mathematics. Structure also helps children prepare for the transition to an orderly school environment.

Contrasting research has shown that purposeful play can support the development of academics, and, more importantly, skills like problem solving, resilience, curiosity and a love for learning. These are all fundamental to a child's success in life beyond the classroom.

What are the benefits of the third option, the well-rounded approach?

A well-rounded approach doesn't strictly adhere either to play or structure, instead it incorporates

both and seeks to develop different aspects of a child. One example is the Montessori programme. When Maria Montessori said, "Play is the child's work", she meant that they are capable of learning when given the freedom to explore an environment of carefully prepared and engaging activities. A child who has received a well-rounded education will eventually exhibit confidence not just in academics but also in daily life by being independent, disciplined and able to work well with others.

How will I know what suits my child best?

It's not easy to know which curriculum suits your child best, and often it's a matter of knowing which priorities you deem most important for your child. Most preschools offer a mix of both structure and play-based activities, with the balance determined by the curriculum model. We recommend that parents visit the centre with their child, speak to the principal about the curriculum, and ask how they manage the learning pace of the children in a class. More often than not, how you and your child feel at the centre will help you make a decision.

At Brighton, we believe in the child-centred approach: that every child learns in their own unique way and at their own pace. Our curriculum allows a child to gain a strong foundation for academics through hands-on, self-directed learning, while at the same time focusing on practical life skills and character building. It's our goal that every child will develop independence, confidence and the love of learning besides academic abilities, so that they will be prepared not just for school, but for life.



International Divorce

Choosing which country to have your case heard in

Divorce can be messy, distressing and hurtful, so it's no surprise that some people strive to bring divorce proceedings not in the place where they currently reside, but in their home countries, if they believe a favourable judgement is more likely there. We asked Managing Director FRANCA CIAMBELLA and Senior Legal Associate AISHAH WINTER of **Consilium Law Corporation** about the pros and cons of couples undergoing divorce proceedings in Singapore or abroad.

What is "forum shopping"?

It's a legal practice used by divorcing parties to commence divorce action in a jurisdiction where they will be most likely to obtain a favourable judgment. In a recent case, the Australian Court refused a husband's application to prevent his wife's court application for financial relief to be processed in Australia; the couple and their two children were residing in Singapore at the time.

Forum shopping is generally seen in many jurisdictions as inappropriate – and is not encouraged. Courts have the discretion to restrict parties from forum shopping.

So, even if I live in Singapore, my divorce can potentially be heard in another country?

Yes, an expatriate here may be able to file for divorce in multiple jurisdictions. For example, a UK citizen who has retained her residence status in her native country while residing in Singapore for three years, and who has dual citizenship in Italy, may be able to file for divorce in any of those three countries. The question for the spouse is, which country is best suited to handle the divorce? The general principle is that the court of the country in which a spouse has filed the divorce will hear the case first.

What about the division of assets?

Depending on the extent and location of the marital assets, the contributions of each spouse to the family and their assets, their nationalities and the country of residence of the children, one jurisdiction may offer better results for a particular spouse. For example, in the United Kingdom and in Hong Kong, the starting point with respect to the division of the matrimonial assets is that they may most likely be shared equally between the parties. In Singapore, there is no presumption of equal division and the assets will be divided in accordance to the parties' contributions (financial and/or non-financial) to the marriage.

What if children are involved?

Different jurisdictions have varying laws on child-related issues, such as custody and permanent relocation. In Singapore, the guiding principle is the welfare of the child, and there is no legal presumption in favour of relocation overseas, in contrast to more permissive jurisdictions such as some US states. Moreover, Singapore is one of the signatories of the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, a multi-lateral treaty that provides a quick method to return an internationally abducted child by a parent from one member country to that of the child's habitual residence. The Hague Convention was designed to prevent, amongst other things, international forum shopping in custody cases. As such, a country's acceptance and/or application of the Hague Convention will play a part in the spouse's decision-making process.

What else should divorcing couples consider?

While there may be advantages to commence divorce in a particular jurisdiction, it may also be more expensive and time-consuming in the long run, which may create more stress for the family. Beyond the differences in the laws of the countries in question, other factors to consider include logical constraints, timing, language barriers and, particularly, the recognition of the foreign divorce judgment in the couple's native country. *EL*

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PHOTOGRAPHY KEN TAN

Some people know exactly what they're after when it comes to searching for a car. Others wouldn't know where to start. Aside from aesthetics, factors to consider include whether you'll be using the vehicle for work or pleasure, the size of your family, your particular parking arrangements, and, of course, whether you want to lease or buy outright. To help with your decision, we asked three *Expat Living* readers how and why they chose their particular cars.

“We chose Wearnes for a number of reasons, including leasing consultant Alicia's swift response, and her offer to visit me and my wife – in different locations – so we could see the car we had selected before we signed a lease. She also provided us with a Garmin GPS to help us find our way around Singapore. In addition, I got to meet the head service manager and he went through the process for calling up if we encountered a problem.

We have a two-year lease on a Volvo V70 station wagon. It carries Pickles and Chutney, as well as three passengers, if required; my golf clubs fit easily into the wagon too. So it meets our needs very nicely.

Wearnes has continued to deliver great service since we signed our agreement in February this year. For example, when there were problems with our deposit reaching their bank account, Alicia found a solution that meant the car could be delivered to us prior to Wearnes receiving the deposit.

Secondly, when we had our first mechanical fault – a flat battery – an on-road service technician was at our house within 30 minutes of my call. Our second mechanical issue was a faulty tailgate – it wouldn't open, which was a problem as it's where Pickles and Chutney get in. They provided a replacement vehicle (Volvo XC90) that we could carry the dogs in.

I recommend Wearnes to anyone looking for a long-term car lease. For us, the major benefits of having a car are driving to dog-friendly areas, picking up and transporting friends who visit from Australia, and travelling to play golf anywhere in Singapore.”

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Who: Simon Tyndale-Biscoe, wife Melissa, and golden retrievers Pickles and Chutney
Nationality: Australian
Time in Singapore: Six months
Leasing company: Wearnes Leasing



Who: Neil and Nicky Bowyer, and children Josh (14) and Immi (13)
Nationality: British
Time in Singapore: 7.5 years
Leasing company: Komoco Motors

“The car arrived the day Nicky and the children joined me in Singapore, seven-and-a-half years ago. A work colleague recommended Komoco to me when I first arrived so I paid them a visit. We had an SUV in the UK and liked it, so we leased a Hyundai Santa Fe – a seven-seater. The children were young when we started leasing, and still dependent on us to ferry them and their friends around the island for school, sport clubs and play dates, so we thought: the bigger, the better. Also, we find it useful when

friends or family come to visit us, as we can often get everyone in the one car.

The service from Komoco has always been excellent. Manager Yunos explained everything – including the COE – and recommended leasing as a good option for us, because we didn’t want to make a large capital outlay, and we wanted certainty on the overall motoring costs.

I’m a very strong advocate of leasing. We have recommended other friends to Komoco and we trust the company implicitly. Their team is great when it comes to servicing, providing courtesy cars, keeping the car well maintained, arranging road service and so on. We are very happy, loyal customers.

What’s more, we still have the original car! When the COE increased we found it much better value to extend the lease on the current car, which we have now done three times. This year, we may lease a different car, as we don’t need such a large one anymore.

The car was a big advantage when the children were younger, but now that they’re old enough to use the MRT and cabs independently we admit that really it is a luxury. We know we could get away without a car but we like the convenience ours offers; and we’re lucky enough for the cost to still be within our budget.”

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“We have leased a vehicle from Evergreen Rent A Car for around two years, having initially contacted them based on a recommendation from one of my colleagues. We selected a Lexus IS250, which is not only a reliable car but also gives me real enjoyment when driving.

The Lexus meets my expectations perfectly. We use it for driving to work, to do the shopping and to visit parks and gardens for family leisure time. I really love the convenience of having a car in Singapore, especially when it rains!

During the initial decision-making process, Evergreen provided me with plenty of options within my budget range. Moreover, they were flexible when searching for the appropriate vehicle for me and they offered advice within a short timeline. I found the team professional and always quick to respond. I would absolutely recommend the services of Evergreen Rent A Car, and I have a very favourable opinion of their service and technical assistance.”



Who: Aummaruta (Anne) Sirichai, husband Torsak Tantaviwattana and son Napat (15)
Nationality: Thai
Time in Singapore: Two years
Leasing company: Evergreen Rent A Car

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WINE & DINE



183

A Family Affair: We round up kid-proof dining spots, including Long Chim (pictured)

When crayons meet mango sticky rice!

172

News: The latest on Singapore's food scene

179

Shake it! Meet American bartender Steve Schneider of Employees Only Singapore

194

Chef Spotlight: We chat with Chef Jason Tan of Michelin-starred Corner House

What's New



From 16 to 18 September, 1-Altitude is the place to eat, drink and watch fast cars, as it kicks off the Singapore Grand Prix revelry with its annual “party in the sky”, **The Circuit**. With spectacular 360-degree views, 1-Altitude’s multi-concept, tri-level space offers some of the best vantage points to view the F1 track. Expect three days jam-packed with activities, including the annual Altitude Circuit Party on Level 61 with music from guest DJs KimKat (16 September) and Kenneth G (17 September), the Williams Martini Racing Party at 1-Altitude Gallery and Bar on the roof (16 September) featuring DJ Katty Q. Don’t miss the three-day Farmer’s Market at Stellar on Level 62 featuring dessert art and an ice creamery by pastry chef Jasmin Chew, Jospers Grill smoked seafood and meat cuts, and artisanal gins, among other offerings available via purchase of food vouchers. Entry to the Farmer’s Market is complimentary on 17 and 18 September before 5pm, after which cover charges apply; tickets for The Circuit start from \$68, with a \$98 ticket granting you access to all three venues, plus two complimentary drinks, and more. For more details, visit 1-altitude.com. ▲

Straight from Scandinavia

From 16 to 25 September, Danish Chef Esben Holmboe Bang plays host to the third edition of the **Art at Curate** dining series at Resorts World Sentosa’s Curate, Asia’s first restaurant to be helmed by visiting Michelin chefs from around the globe. Chef Esben, whose Oslo-based restaurant Maaemo has three Michelin stars, is known for using seasonal, organic and biodynamic ingredients to create specialties like emulsion of raw Norwegian oysters with mussel and dill sauce, brown butter ice cream with molasses and roasted hazelnuts, and his famous *langoustine* (Norwegian lobster). Prices range from \$280 for a four-course, wine-paired lunch to \$480 for an eight-course dinner with wine and champagne.



From 28 September until November, diners can continue to enjoy Chef Esben’s signatures in a special menu co-created with Curate’s resident chef. For more details, visit guide.michelin.sg.





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Snap and Savour

For the entire month of September, *Expat Living* readers can enjoy one-for-one main courses at **Brewerkz Sentosa Boardwalk** – think homemade beer chilli with cheese, a juicy wagyu burger and other sandwiches, pizzas and mains – from Sunday to Thursday. Simply snap a picture of this page and show it to your server! (offer not valid with lunch set menu, or other discounts and promotions; other terms and conditions apply). #01-05 Sentosa Boardwalk, 6 Sentosa Gateway. 6221 0702 | brewerkz.com ▲

Foodie Festivities

From 9 to 11 September, the Savour Wines festival returns to Bayfront Avenue (next to Marina Bay Sands Exhibition Centre), giving foodies and wine-lovers the opportunity to taste over 400 varieties of vino at the Savour Global Wine Market, and gourmet grub from award-winning restaurants and bars at the Gourmet Village, complete with live music. With wine-tasting tickets as low as \$10 for 10 tastings, we'd say it's definitely worth a visit! For updates and tickets, visit savour.sg ▼



BRUNCH this Month



We've never doubted that sipping a glass of bubbly before noon is perfectly acceptable, and thankfully **Burlamacco Ristorante** shares our view. The eatery's Sunday Recovery Brunch starts out with a chilled glass of Bottega Prosecco before a procession of divine Italian dishes are delivered to your table. Four starters (like Caprese salad and beef carpaccio), four mains (think spaghetti with prawns, or risotto with porcini mushrooms, scented truffle and thyme) and two desserts arrive in quick succession. Not only is the food excellent, but the price is sensational, at \$58 per person without alcohol; or you can add \$20 for free-flow Prosecco, red and white wine (and a cheeky homemade limoncello if you're lucky). Sundays from 11.30am to 2.30pm. For reservations, call **6220 1763**. 77 Amoy Street. burlamacco.com.sg

For more brunch inspiration, turn to page 183.

New Bites

- **Undici Pizza Bar** (pictured) has opened at 39 Duxton Hill, serving eight different kinds of pizza (\$15 each), plus pasta and antipasti dishes like *arancini* and *burratina*. Meanwhile, sports fans can take in live telecasts of games including EuroCup, NBA and Wimbledon.



- **D.O.P. Mozzarella Bar** recently opened at The Quayside (60 Robertson Quay), giving riverside diners a casual spot to visit for Italian tapas (\$10-20), flatbreads (\$16-20), pastas (\$18-24) and, of course, mozzarella options. For \$27, choose a cheese (truffled *burrata* seems like a no-brainer, right?), a side dish like rocket salad or grilled veggies, and a cold cut.



BEER DINING AT ITS BEST

LeVeL33, the world's highest urban craft-brewery and contemporary European kitchen, has rolled out new à la carte dinner and beer dining menus courtesy of Executive Chef Jimi Tegerdine, featuring loads of creative and flavourful beer-infused dishes. Signatures of the à la carte menu include the oh-so-right **Wrong Gnocchi** (\$28) with ricotta, goat cheese, pistachios, raw mushrooms and 33.15 India Pale Ale mornay, and the **lamb biryani risotto**

(\$140 for three or four to share), a different spin on the classic Indian recipe, using Italian risotto with *masala chai* tea-infused rice cream, *sous-vide* lamb saddle, braised lamb shoulder and cutlet, lamb bacon and beer *paneer*. The beer dining menu, available from 2.30 to 10.30pm daily, includes standouts such as the **celeriac taco** (\$18) – pork hock, 33.15 India Pale Ale and hay reduction with butternut slaw, yoghurt curd, 33.1 Blond Lager sweet chilli and Neal's Yard Red Leicester – and **ox tongue and cheek croquettes** (\$17) with 33.1 Blond Lager pickles, fried Tomino cheese and fiery 33.3 Stout mustard. #33-01 Marina Bay Financial Centre Tower 1, 8 Marina Boulevard. **6834 3133 | level33.com.sg** ▲

Italian Sojourn on Sentosa



Looking for a new, modern Italian restaurant? Welcome to Fratelli at Festive Walk in Resorts World Sentosa. A partnership between three-star Michelin chefs and brothers Enrico and Roberto Cerea of the acclaimed Da Vittorio in Italy, Fratelli (“brothers” in Italian) offers an all-day pizzeria menu (pizzas start from \$30) and a refined, dinner-only trattoria menu of authentic dishes. For dinner, enjoy a four-course tasting menu for \$88 per person (five- and six-course menus are also available), which includes mouth-watering **cappucino di porcini e tartufo** (porcini mushroom soup with toasted brioche and black truffle, \$18) and the **baccalà mantecato** (\$32), a flavoursome cured codfish mousse. A highlight is the **12-hour-slow-cooked Spanish suckling pig belly**, served with the requisite crispy crackling and tangy spheres of green apple (\$42). The wine list is extensive, with a great selection of full-bodied French and Italian reds (when in Rome!). Finish with the delicate and delicious “modern” **tiramisu** (\$18). **6577 6555 | rwsentosa.com**

The Best of Land and Sea

Seafood fans and meat-lovers alike can enjoy Pan Pacific Singapore's new **Surf & Turf** dinner at award-winning restaurant, Edge. Available every Tuesday from 6.30 to 10.30pm, the \$78-per-adult (\$39 per child) all-you-can-eat buffet features an array of fusion dishes that mix ocean-fresh crustaceans with gourmet meat cuts – think spicy beef bulgogi pizza with shrimp, 24-hour braised wagyu beef short rib topped with seared Hokkaido scallops, and chicken and shrimp jambalaya. You can also enjoy unlimited wine with your dinner for just \$10! 7 Raffles Boulevard. **6826 8240 | edgefoodtheatre.com**



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First impressions: After passing a fortune-teller, you pull back the curtain to reveal a swanky, speakeasy-cool setting; its Art Deco interiors mirror that of the famed, original Employees Only (EO) in New York City's West Village. Even the EO bartenders sport the same handlebar moustaches and white chef's jackets as they do at the original.

The Chosen One: All of their potent cocktails are fabulous, many of them served in old-fashioned champagne coupes. I particularly loved the signature **Fraise Sauvage** (\$25) – Tanqueray gin shaken with strawberries and Tahitian vanilla, and finished with Mumm Cordon Rouge Champagne – while my whisky-loving husband enjoyed his Bullet bourbon-based **Billionaire Cocktail** (\$26), shaken with fresh lemon juice, grenadine and house-blended Absinthe bitters, served straight up.

The Cheapskate: If you're looking for inexpensive cocktails, this isn't the place. Though the bar's liberally poured cocktails are strong, they're \$25 to \$28 a pop; wines by the glass start from \$16.

Bite on this: Make a reservation for dinner (or come for late-night bites – a rarity in Singapore!), as the food is delicious – plus it'll guarantee you a table from where you can take in the entire scene. We especially loved the **fried skate with paprika** (\$34), **ricotta gnocchi** (\$14) and **steak tartare** with mixed greens (\$27). Save room for the delectable **salted caramel cheesecake** (\$12) – it's called "cheesecake" but it's more like panna cotta. Psst: if you're one of the revellers left standing at closing time, you'll get a serving of homemade chicken soup – a tradition at EO Manhattan.

Last but not least: If you've been to the original outpost, which was ranked number four on the World's 50 Best Bars list, you'll especially appreciate this place. It's clear that the EO guys, including legendary bartender Steve Schneider, are dedicated to giving Singapore-based bar-goers a very similar experience to that of the flagship; with them, they've brought great service, generous pours and an extra-cool confidence that the Singapore bar scene's been missing.

– Amy Greenburg



“It’s just you, me, the pour spout and the mixing glass – let’s rock and roll.”

BEHIND THE BAR

Earlier this year, **Employees Only**’s Principal Bartender STEVE SCHNEIDER left the Big Apple behind to launch the world-famous cocktail bar’s sister outlet on our very own Amoy Street this past June. Together with the rest of the EO team, the ex-US Marine and star of the 2013 documentary *Hey Bartender* has already shaken up Singapore’s bar scene for the better with his coveted craft cocktails and his fast, free-style pouring techniques. We spoke with the award-winning barman about his mixing style and his favourite local haunts.

What made you swap New York for Singapore?

I love Singapore. New York will always be there – it’s my home. The opportunity to be a part of my favourite company and create my interpretation of my favourite bar and ethos was something that I’ve been longing for. There have been many trailblazers out here who’ve paved the way for us to try and be a part of something special.

Tell us about your signature style of bartending.

I love the thrill and pressure of matching the cocktail to the guest and having their experience and destiny in my hands. Anyone can fill a cup to the top, pour it in another cup, add ice, stir or shake and strain. However, I feel that a true test of a bartender’s ability lies within what happens when the gloves are off and the hands are free to make or break a drink. No measuring cups or other gimmicks; it’s just you, me, the pour spout and the mixing glass – let’s rock and roll.

How did you decide what to include on the EO Singapore cocktail menu, and did you have to change any recipes in order to adapt to the local palate?

Phase one was all about teaching a new style of working to a market, from the bartenders to the guests. The recipes were tried and tested for years at EO NYC, all of them being unique and three-dimensional in their own ways, but fairly straightforward

with minimal – albeit very well made – easy-to-remember ingredients. Now that we are getting the hang of how fast this baby can drive, I’m looking to kick the flavours up a notch while remaining true to our style.

In different markets, cocktails might taste different depending on certain ingredients, like fresh fruit. I had to alter a recipe by a quarter ounce here or there, but overall, there are fewer variables behind the bar than there are in the kitchen. I wholeheartedly tip my cap to Chef Julia Jaksic on what she and her team have done, bringing our dishes to the next level here in Singapore. Seeing our food get passed out to our guests makes me feel like I’m home.

What’s your drink of choice?

The EO Gimlet – navy-strength gin with house-made lime cordial. But I drink just about everything.

STEVE’S PICKS

GO-TO BARS

“Our neighbours at **Jigger and Pony**, **Sugarhall**, **Bitters & Love**, and **Spiffy Dapper** are all great at what they do and are very inspiring – all-around class acts. **Operation Dagger** has some really cool stuff going on, and **28 Hong Kong Street** are true pioneers here. Late night, you might find me and other industry folks at **Skinny’s Lounge** in Boat Quay. There are a ton of great spots in this town.”

FOOD FAVOURITES

“I find myself getting a nice lunch at **Park Bench Deli** and **Meat Smith** on Telok Ayer, as well as **Club Street Social** and **Delicacy** on Gemmill Lane; **Neon Pigeon** on Keong Saik is fantastic, as is **Burnt Ends**. I’ve got my ‘chicken rice guy’ at **Maxwell Food Centre**, too.” *u*



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When it comes to brunching and lunching as a family, there are lots of things to consider – from opening hours and entertainment facilities to child-approved food and other kiddo-kind features. Luckily, there are loads of family-friendly spots to select from across the island for both weekday and weekend feasting. Here are some of our favourite tried-and-tested brunch and lunch places across Singapore, many of which offer more than just high chairs and kids' menus.



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Level 1, InterContinental Singapore, 80 Middle Road
6825 1008 | intercontinental.com/singapore

When: Sunday Brunch is served from noon to 3pm.

Like the hotel itself, Ash & Elm's atmosphere is elegant and chic, yet still relaxed. The newly refurbished restaurant oozes thoughtfulness in every aspect of the décor, from skylight lighting to the butcher-block worktops, making it a pleasure to just sit and take in the surroundings. The service was the best we've experienced in Singapore, with no request too big, and attended to immediately. Also helpful in making this brunch venue stand out was the well spaced-out tables, so we never felt too close to other diners; it gave us a chance to have what felt like an intimate lunch together, despite there being larger groups around us.

The starters set high standards for the rest of the meal, with my husband (the "foodie" out of us) declaring everything "delicious" – so I knew we were in for a treat. Not only did every dish taste great, but the presentation was perfect, too – from **tomato mozzarella skewers** served with balsamic to bite-sized portions of **beef tartare with baby romaine**.

Then came helpings of fresh seafood – good-sized portions of **lobster**, a selection of **caviar** and large **prawns**, as well as crisp salad and yummy **lobster bisque** – followed by selections from the carving station including **slow-baked Norwegian salmon**. We especially enjoyed the option to order items à la minute, our particular favourites being melt-in-

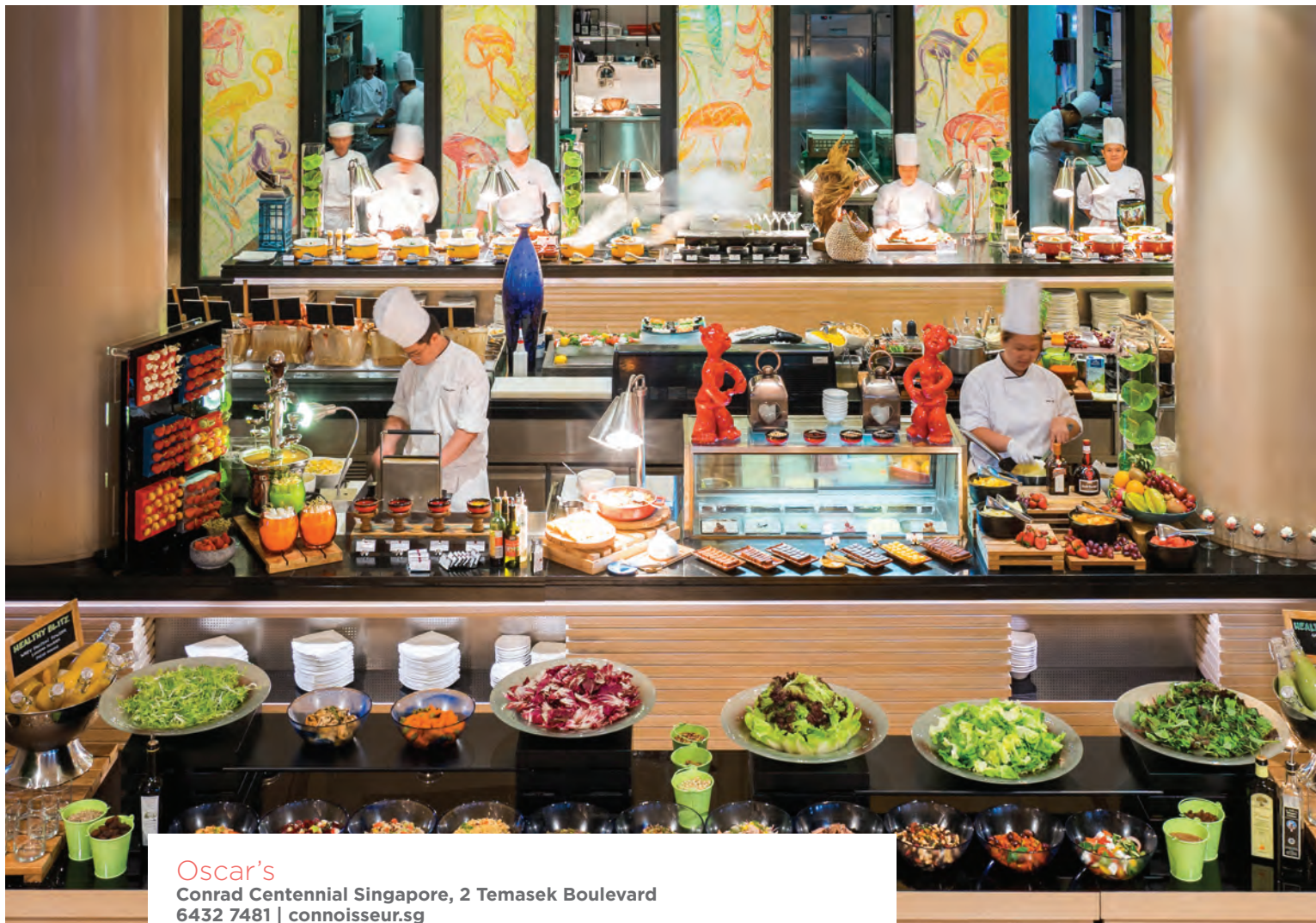
the-mouth **braised beef cheek** and **duck leg confit**.

Make sure to save space for dessert – a plentiful array of cakes, chocolates, and hot and cold desserts including **cherry bread and butter pudding**, **crispy banana strudel** and **mixed berries cheesecake** – plus a charcuterie and cheese room!

The all-you-can-eat brunch is \$98, inclusive of free-flow juices (which were as delicious as the food), soft drinks and Bloody Mary cocktails. It's \$138 for the free-flow **Perrier-Jouët Champagne** option, with wine and beer. Children aged six to 12 eat for \$38, inclusive of free-flow soft drinks and juice; kids five and below dine for free.

Kid-friendly features: While there's not a dedicated kids' menu, the **flatbreads**, **potato wedges** and **meat carving** options were enough to keep our three-year-old well fed. We didn't see much of her after she finished guzzling her food and disappeared into the kids' room, where she was more than happy to stay playing with toys, watching cartoons and making **cupcakes** with the dessert chef who even helped her pipe some icing on the cakes she lovingly made for us. With the kids' room being at the closed-off end of the restaurant, we didn't have to worry that she could wander out, and it really helped us to relax and enjoy our lunch in peace. That doesn't happen often with a child in tow!

– Katherine Allaway



Oscar's

Conrad Centennial Singapore, 2 Temasek Boulevard
6432 7481 | connoisseur.sg

When: The Supercharged Sunday Brunch is offered every Sunday from 12.30pm to 3.30pm.

There's a lot to love about Oscar's at the Conrad Centennial's new Supercharged Sunday Brunch. Served in the traditional buffet style, it's hard to find a cuisine that's not represented here. The seafood station is piled high with **fresh lobsters**, **clams** and shucked-to-order **oysters** (the chefs are knowledgeable on the oysters' origins and flavours, which makes for interesting conversation).

There are three roasts on rotation; I indulged in the famed **London duck** and the tender **whole suckling pig**, which came with satisfyingly crispy crackling. Add to this the range of chef stations serving **fresh pasta** and **risotto** (careful of the chilli!), local street-style delicacies such as **wok-fried noodles** and stir-fries, and the indulgent **flambéed crepes with Grand Marnier or Cointreau**, and it's difficult not to be impressed. Dessert is an endless array of beautifully decorated cakes and sweet treats; **Oscar's black forest cake** is a winner.

All of this is just \$98 per adult, or top up by \$20 for bottomless rounds of sparkling wine, house wines and cocktails, or \$60 for free-flow Laurent-Perrier Champagne. Children from six to 12 years of age eat for \$40, while kids under five dine free.

Tip: From now until 30 November, one adult dines free with every three paying adults. Simply quote "OscarsEL" when making the reservation via phone or email (sinci.oscars@conradhotels.com).

Kid-friendly features: While there isn't much room for the kids to roam here, the food on offer is sure to satisfy even the fussiest of eaters. There's also a chef's station serving liquid-nitrogen ice cream made before your eyes in a mysterious flurry of vapour, which captured the kids' attention. The dessert bar is every little one's fantasy, with huge bowls of gummy bears, jelly beans, a chocolate fountain and rainbow lollipops!

— Amanda Broad

Also in the CBD

THE BANK BISTRO + BAR

This spot may be mega popular for after-work drinks but on weekends the restaurant converts into a family-friendly venue, complete with a playroom and a special kids' menu. All-day breakfast items include eggs benedict (\$12), and mushroom and spinach frittata (\$15), but they've also got pasta, pizza, burgers and salads. Oh, and kids eat free with each adult main ordered on weekends from 9am to 6pm! #01-01 One Shenton, 1 Shenton Way. thebankbar.com





Seasonal Tastes

The Westin, Asia Square Tower 2, 12 Marina View
6922 6968 | thewestin singapore.com

When: The Neptune's Table brunch is available on Sundays from noon to 3pm.

If you're looking to impress visitors with a great view of Batam, Neptune's Table – presumably named after the Roman god of the sea – has it covered; we lucked out on the day, as the weather was beautifully clear.

This is not a free-flow brunch, although we did have a few glasses of bubbles. Rather, the focus is on the amazing array of food. As you would expect from a top-notch hotel, there was everything from **fresh seafood** and **sushi and sashimi** to **homemade pasta** and **noodles** cooked with a **sauce of your choice**, along with **meats, cheeses** and sides galore. Being a Brit, and this being a Sunday, I was craving “a roast”; refreshingly, no carvery here – instead, I was presented with a massive **raw rib-eye joint** and asked how much I would like, and how I'd like it cooked. It arrived in all its medium-rare glory to the table, along with my chosen **mushroom sauce** accompanied by soft and creamy **dauphinoise potatoes**, and blanched **broccoli**.

The dessert station was undoubtedly one of the best I've seen, with the usual suspects like the **chocolate fountain**; I wish I had tried the **homemade ricotta** from the chef's trolley, but there simply wasn't room!

Adults dine for \$88, inclusive of a glass of champagne, wine, beer or soft drink; additional drinks can be ordered à la carte. Kids can dine at the buffet for \$44, although the kids' menu offers à la carte options for \$14.

Kid-friendly features: There's a real commitment here to inspiring kids to eat healthily. In fact, a group of doctors, dentists and dieticians have collaborated to form the kids' menu, which includes the healthy **Dr Greg's Deconstructed Caesar Salad**, the reliable **chicken fingers**, **turkey sliders** and a few **fresh fish** options. Menus act as colouring sheets, and crayons are provided to keep the little ones busy while you attack the buffet!

– Emi Finch

Also in Marina Bay

LONG CHIM

We love visiting this place for Bangkok-inspired street-food dishes, so we were super excited to hear about Long Chim's recently launched kids' menu (and a colour-in menu at that!). Now, adults can bring their little ones along to enjoy the same scrumptious signatures they know and love (think charred rice noodles with soy and chicken, and Chinese broccoli with pork) in \$15 kid-sized portions (inclusive of a dessert and beverage). Open from noon daily. #02-02 The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands. 6688 7299 | longchim.com.sg





Mitzo Restaurant & Bar
Level 4, Grand Park Orchard, 270 Orchard Road
6603 8855 | mitzo.sg

When: Brunch is available on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays from 11.30am to 2.30pm.

Shopping on busy Orchard Road on the weekend and looking for a haven to relax, chat and entertain the kids? Mitzo is perfectly located next to Paragon, serving an impressive range of cocktails while redefining the *yum cha* experience. There's a menu of over 40 Cantonese-style delicacies, including "supreme specials" such as prettily presented **bamboo clams**, **abalone**, and **live lobster**; try the latter prepared in the style of Singapore chilli crab, complete with buns.

Adults and kids alike (there is no kids menu *per se*) are invited to indulge in unlimited servings of traditional favourites such as the firm yet juicy **steamed shrimp and pork dumplings**, or the ultra tasty **braised duck with pulled noodles** (the kids' favourite!).

The brunch is \$68 per adult, and half price for six- to 12-year-olds; kids under six eat for free; this is definitely a cost-effective family brunch option. Top up \$60 per person to enjoy free-flow Veuve Clicquot, wines, beer and select cocktails; I can recommend the **Nojito**, a twist on the old favourite, with a refreshing burst of house-crafted burnt orange and cinnamon.

Kid-friendly features: There is a fabulous, carpeted kids' play room with colouring-in activities at cute round tables, and a big screen showing cartoons and movies – *Frozen* bought us a full kid-free hour!

Tip: While walk-ins may try their luck, for a family brunch I'd book a table in the section closest to the kids' play area, so you can relax over the food while still keeping the kids in view.

– Amanda Broad

Also at Orchard

JAMIE'S ITALIAN

Located on the first floor of Orchard Road's Forum Shopping Mall, Jamie's Italian (open daily from 11.30am) is a great place to bring kiddos for a fun Italian meal. It's designed to entice youngsters with bright colours and fun presentation, with children's meals for \$9.50 or \$13.80, depending on portion size. Options include Jamie's Proper Picnic Box – a chicken wrap, rainbow veggie crisps, seedless grapes and cherry tomatoes served in a lunch box – and the mini spaghetti and meatballs. Each dish also comes with a Shake-Me Salad, encouraging kids to have fun eating their greens. For dessert, order a brownie, scoop of ice cream or fruit for \$3.50. Kids can also keep busy with goodie bags and games while grown-ups tuck into their own delicious meals. Head to the VivoCity branch for kids' pizza-making parties. jamieoliver.com/italian/singapore





Coyote Tex-Mex Grill & Bar

320 Tanglin Road, Phoenix Park
6836 5528 | coyote.com.sg

When: Brunch is served on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays from 9am to 3.45pm; you can get lunch from the all-day dining menu Tuesday through Friday from 11am.

Still under the same Spruce ownership, newly opened Coyote offers fan-cooled outdoor seating and air-conditioned, indoor seating. The space can easily cater to bigger family groups, although we'd recommend booking if you want an indoor table. The casual atmosphere made us feel very much at home when we visited for brunch, with friendly staff ensuring that our son had a blue high chair he'd spotted, and matching blue cutlery, plate and cup!

The "Coyote Puppies Menu" offers a good range of healthy and kid-friendly options, from a **Little Chicken Chopped Salad** (\$10) to **Tony Tacos** (\$12) and **Quincy Quesadillas** (\$13), to a relatively "safe" **Pedro Pasta** with chicken or beef options (\$15). All come with a complimentary juice, and some also come with a small fruit salad. From the extensive brunch menu, we adults started with the **Coyote Nachos** (\$15) with pulled chicken (an extra \$2), which had an abundance of toppings and just the right level of spice. Then we tucked into the **Huevos Carnitas Benedictinos** (\$19), a clever twist on eggs benedict, with a corn waffle base and barbecue pulled pork, and the **Coyote Hangover Breakfast** (\$26) offering chorizo sausage, guacamole, *frijoles* rice and a tortilla, spicing up a usual full English! The **Coyote Burger** with herbed wedges (\$20), which also features on the dinner menu, was another firm favourite. There's a great range of margaritas (one-for-one at \$16), wines by the glass (from \$10) and soft drinks, coffees and teas.

Kid-friendly features: Besides the relaxed ambience and child-friendly staff, who made us feel that a whining toddler and squawking baby were normal, the play facilities are hard to beat, with a bouncy castle complete with slide, and a kids' playground with plenty of room for ages two and up to roam. Plus, if you sit outside (and ask for a table overlooking the play area) you have the option to watch from your table while they have fun. Bliss!

– Katie Peace



Also in Tanglin

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Head over here from 8am daily for that much needed caffeine fix and some fuel (it's got great all-day breakfast items, salads, mains and pastries – you name it – as well as a nice kids' menu, which includes chocolate pancakes for \$7, among other favourites) while your active youngsters play within view at the outdoor playground, complete with a slide-and-climbing structure. #B1-00 Botanic Gardens (Tanglin Gate), 1 Cluny Road. foodforthought.com.sg



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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



Nearby at Dempsey Hill, try:

Huber's Bistro

22 Dempsey Road
6737 1488 | hubers.com.sg

Situated on the ground floor of the new, two-storey Huber's Butchery at Dempsey Hill, this bistro has a lot to offer when it comes to delicious food and family-friendliness. Not only is it a great spot for weekend family dining, but also the perfect place for mummy meet-ups and weekday lunches, too. Kiddos can play in the enclosed outdoor playground while their grown-ups catch up over a glass of wine and quality food from an extensive menu of **charcuterie**, **sausages** and meaty mains – some of our favourites include the **Australian pasture-fed lamb chops** (\$24), **warm roast beef sandwich** (\$12.80) and **beef burger with bacon and gruyere cheese** (\$15.50). You'll also find soups, salads and desserts, not to mention a great selection of reasonably priced beers, cider, wines and cocktails.

Afterwards, be sure to stock-up on gourmet goodies inside so you'll be all set for meals the rest of the week. Huber's Bistro is open from 11am to 10pm Tuesday to Friday, and from 9.30am to 10pm on weekends and public holidays.



Au Petit Salut

40C Harding Road
6475 1976 | thesalutgroup.com

Served from 10.30am to 3pm, Au Petit Salut's Sunday brunch is a great treat for families looking to indulge in an authentic French spread, and in beautiful lush surroundings. Adults can opt for signature mains like **tartare de boeuf**, **crispy duck leg confit** and **red wine-braised beef cheeks** as part of the three-course lunch set (\$39), inclusive of coffee or tea, freshly baked Viennoiseries and fresh fruits, or opt for the "create your own" main course set with eggs and two sides; à la carte items include **Belgian waffles** (\$24) and **steak and frites** (\$32), among other favourites. Little ones can munch on eggs with gammon ham or bacon, toast and salad with a glass of juice for \$22, or the mini **croque monsieur** or **braised beef pasta** (\$18 each), before playing in the spacious courtyard while grown-ups unwind after the leisurely (and filling) meal. A customised buffet brunch can be arranged for gatherings of 30 or more guests.



Shelter in the Woods
22 Greenwood Avenue
6466 6225 | shelterinthewoods.com

When: Brunch is served Saturdays and Sundays from 11am to 2.30pm.

Rustic and charming, this unassuming little French restaurant offers a small à la carte brunch menu alongside a larger menu of rotisserie, charcuterie and homemade desserts. The restaurant is welcoming for small families, although I think big groups would struggle for space. There is a kids' menu offering four child-friendly favourites including tomato pasta, roast chicken and a beef burger, along with **fish and chips** (\$13), that our son wolfed down with some gusto; a nice touch was the little pot of chopped carrots and peas to entice him to eat his veggies. The adults chose to start with **escargot in garlic herb butter** (\$12.50) and the **Shelter Charcuterie Board** (\$37), which features homemade pork *rilette* and *pâté en croûte*, alongside *foie gras* served with brioche and baguette – divine! For the main event, we sampled two of the rotisserie selections the restaurant is known for: **rack of lamb** (\$45) served pink, and, from the brunch menu, **baby French poulet** (\$28) – both melt-in-the-mouth and perfectly cooked. The kids' dessert options included a **homemade ice cream** (\$4.80 per scoop), while we opted for a tasty homemade **caramelised apple crumble tart** (\$12) and the unusual **pineapple crumble with lemongrass jelly** (\$14).

Shelter takes wine very seriously (as you can see by the cask-adorned walls), offering a huge list of French wines, as well as beers, cocktails and spirits. We supped on a Chateau Grand Village 2013 (\$16 per glass) and Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon Mâcon-Prissé 2014 (\$19). It's worth noting the special offer on Mondays and Tuesdays of one-for-one wines, cocktails, Prosecco and beers.

Kid-friendly features: The restaurant offers high chairs, cutlery and plates for children, plus a good kids' menu. The atmosphere and staff were friendly and welcoming so we felt relaxed despite brunching with an active toddler and a young baby.

– Katie Peace

*Also in
Bukit Timah*



PICOTIN EXPRESS

Overlooking the Champions Golf Course, this alfresco-deck restaurant has a kids' menu (choice of pizza, pasta or fish and chips, a juice or soft drink, and a scoop of ice cream or small chocolate mousse, for \$15), and a more mature Western-fare menu including a dozen kinds of pizza (\$22). Keeping with the golf theme, there's a mini-golf course available, along with a play area featuring a swing set, slide and mini-train. Pancakes (\$12) and other breakfast items are served from 8am to 11.30am on weekends and public holidays, and lunch from noon. 60 Fairways Drive. picotin.com.sg

Also try...

West

Café Melba at Mediapolis
#03-01 Mediapolis, 1 Stars Avenue
6352 2721 | cafemelba.com.sg/mediapolis



Tucked within the media hub at One-North (and right next to Tanglin Trust School), laid-back Australasian eatery Café Melba offers an oasis from business park surroundings and an escape between hectic school-

runs. Famous for its status as one of the best family-friendly cafes on the East Coast, this recently opened location in the West follows suit with outdoor scooting space and two different kids' menus – one with purees (\$6) and yoghurt (\$6), among other items, for one- to two-year-olds, and another with strawberry pancakes (\$16), pizza (\$16) and other appealing foods for the over-three set, inclusive of juice or milk, and a choice of ice cream – though there's no bouncy castle at this branch. Meanwhile, adults can enjoy all-day breakfast items, and signatures like the famous Melba Burger (\$25) and thin-crust pizzas (from \$18). Little ones can get a Kids' Club Gold Card that will entitle them to a free meal at every visit. Ask the staff for more details. Happy hour is 4pm to 8pm during the week, so you can sip an \$11 glass of wine while the kids run amok after school.

La Barca Ristorante
#01-21 Goodman Arts Centre, 90 Goodman Road
6346 5813 | labarca-sg.com

Serving up a menu of Tuscan food, this lovely spot is a great weekend brunch pick for your entire crew, with a "Kiddiewinks" menu of homemade and non-GMO pastas (\$12-16), and meat and seafood dishes (\$16). Complete with a bouncy castle, trampoline and a playroom filled with toys, and a TV with cartoons, plus a water slide (and dry towels!) on weekends, this place takes family-friendly dining to a whole new level – a fabulous choice if you'd like to linger over your free-flow Prosecco (\$45, available on weekends from 11am to 3pm) and Fiorentina steak in peace.

East



South

Tanjong Beach Club
120 Tanjong Beach Walk
9750 5323 | tanjongbeachclub.com



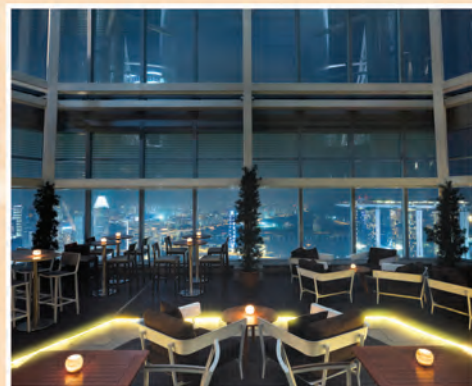
This Sentosa spot is always a fun favourite. Parents can enjoy Bloody Marys and weekend brunch specialities like The Weekender Fry-up (eggs, bacon, chipolata, mushrooms, smashed potato, baked beans and toast, \$29), while kids build sandcastles and take a swim in the infinity pool after finishing their fish and chips (\$14). The beach area is dog-friendly if you want to bring along the entire brood. *Tip:* Call ahead and book a poolside cabana or daybed if you plan on making a day of it; from there, you can order your weekend brunch (between 10am and 3pm) or lunch.

North

Jungle Breakfast with Wildlife at Singapore Zoo
80 Mandai Lake Road
6269 3411 | zoo.com.sg



Offered daily from 9am to 10.30am at Singapore Zoo's Ah Meng Restaurant, this buffet offers Western and Asian fare – think pastries, cheeses, yoghurts, cereal, fruit, dim sum and *roti prata* – with enough options to suit even the pickiest child. The real draw here, of course, is the orangutans, who entertain the youngsters simply by showing up to eat their own breakfast of sugar cane and sunflower seeds, not to mention dangling upside down and chasing each other. It's definitely a fun way for the family to start a day at the zoo. Tickets are \$35 for adults and \$25 for children aged six to 12 (kids below six are free). *Tip:* Get there early for the best seats! *W*



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Edible Art



Having just earned a Michelin star and debuted at number 17 on the S. Pellegrino Asia's 50 Best Restaurants 2016 list, **Corner House** has been lauded in many circles as one of the best restaurants in

Singapore since its opening in 2015. We caught up with Chef JASON TAN to hear about his signature cuisine style and some of the French dishes we can expect at the buzz-worthy, not to mention gorgeous, restaurant.

Located in a tranquil setting in the Botanic Gardens, Corner House occupies the two-storey, black-and-white heritage house in which British botanist EJH Corner lived from 1929 to 1945 when he served as Assistant Director of the Gardens. Though the house has been modernised to accommodate the restaurant, the main elements of its original architecture remain intact, making it an extra-special venue, matched by equally special menus of "Gastro-Botanica" fare; there are four different set dinner menus starting from \$148, plus three set lunch menus starting from \$58, and a four-course brunch menu for \$78.

As the name suggests, Gastro-Botanica – a contemporary cuisine inspired by Jason's own world travels and EJH Corner's life – accentuates botanical elements like fruits and vegetables, giving equal weight to them and to proteins on the same plate. "My cuisine is based on French cooking techniques with global flavour influences," says Jason. "More importantly, vegetables are given a much fuller elaboration in terms of range and preparation."

Yet, by no means are the menus at Corner House vegetarian (though the restaurant is very vegetarian-friendly). Proteins include everything from Maine lobster and cod to wagyu beef and free-range chicken.

The Gastro-Botanica cuisine style also involves turning single ingredients into intricate dishes by using diverse culinary techniques – a tomato done multiple ways, for instance, as seen in Jason's signature Carabinero Prawn dish (included in the eight-course Discovery Menu Experience, \$258). The result? A cloud of soft tomato mousse with pearls of suspended olive oil, tomatoes marinated and poached two ways, a super-soft tomato skin swirl, and tomato sorbet – gastronomic artwork and multi-textural dishes with a real "wow" factor. Meanwhile, in the *Oignon doux*



Chef Jason's Botanica



Oignon doux des cévennes



The verandah

des cévennes, a sweet onion is also given unique textural interpretations – from an onion tart, onion chip and onion broth to a roasted hollow onion shell filled with a *sous vide* egg covered in black truffle.

When it comes to dessert, Jason's interpretation of Singaporean *kaya* toast – his "favourite childhood food memory" – is his speciality, made with *pandan*, coconut, *gula melaka*, *muscovado sablé* and pineapple. (The dessert is featured on the three-, four- and five-course lunch menus and, for dinner, as part of the five-course, \$168 Menu Botanica, and the aforementioned Discovery menu.)

Add in the restaurant's massive wine list of over 600 labels – not to mention the largest restaurant collection of half-bottle choices in Singapore – and you've got yourself a special occasion-worthy spot. With such an innovative approach to cooking with herbs and other botanicals, and such a passion for his signature cuisine creation, it's no wonder Jason was minted with a Michelin star this past July. "I feel extremely honoured and happy that the hard work has paid off," he says. "It's also a huge encouragement to the team." *æ*

Corner House
EJH Corner House, Singapore Botanic Gardens
1 Cluny Road
6469 1000 | cornerhouse.com.sg

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RECIPE SWAP

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

Chicken Curry Night

Nothing says lazy Sunday like staying in with a movie and a curry. You'll never need to order takeaway again with these two delicious make-ahead recipes, representing two cuisines that are famous for curries.

Thai

Green Chicken Curry

Ingredients:

Paste (makes 2 portions)

- 4 long green chillies (more or fewer to taste), seeded and chopped
- 3cm piece of ginger, peeled
- 2 stalks of lemongrass
- 2 stalks of coriander, chopped
- 4 kaffir lime leaves, roughly chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 shallots, chopped
- ¼ cup chopped Thai basil
- ½ teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 tablespoon peanut oil

Curry

- 1 tablespoon peanut oil
- 750g chicken breast (or thigh), 3cm cubes
- 300ml coconut cream
- 175g green beans, trimmed and halved
- 4 kaffir lime leaves
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 1 teaspoon caster sugar
- Garnish: coriander sprigs, Thai basil leaves, lime wedges

Directions:

- 1 To make the curry paste, place all ingredients into a food processor with two tablespoons of water. Blend to a smooth paste.
- 2 Heat oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat. Add half the curry paste, stirring for one minute or until fragrant. (The remaining curry paste will last in the fridge for a week.)
- 3 Add the chicken, stirring, until almost cooked through. Stir in the coconut cream, beans and lime leaves, and simmer until the chicken is cooked through, then mix in the fish sauce and sugar.
- 4 Garnish with chopped coriander and Thai basil leaves and serve with Thai jasmine steamed rice.

Mary-Anne Vicente

Australia

"This is one of our family faves; mention curry and the kids say yum! It has to be one of the few dishes where they never complain about the heat of the chilli. It's full of flavour and punch – and now we refuse to order green curry when we're out."





Indian

Butter Chicken

Serves 6



Rachel Massey,

New Zealand

"Indian is my husband's favourite cuisine, so I have tried several butter chicken recipes. This recipe was passed on by my brother-in-law, a chef, and it's a clear winner: it uses less cream but doesn't compromise on flavour."

Ingredients:

Paste

- 2 teaspoons garam masala
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon (or more) chilli powder
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- ½ cup yoghurt

Curry

- 1kg chicken breast, cut into chunks
- 80g butter
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 4 cardamom pods, bruised
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 teaspoons sweet paprika
- 425g can tomato puree
- ¾ cup chicken stock
- 1 cup cream

Directions:

- 1 Mix together curry paste ingredients then marinate the chicken overnight.
- 2 To make the curry, heat butter in a large saucepan, then fry the onion, cinnamon and cardamom until the onion has turned golden brown. Add chicken and marinade and cook for five minutes.
- 3 Next, add paprika, tomato puree, salt and stock and simmer for 10 minutes, uncovered. Then add the cream and cook until the chicken is tender.
- 4 Serve with basmati rice and naan bread.

BE PART OF THE GREAT RECIPE SWAP!

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



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TRAVEL

220

Tube Time:

Exploring a surfing hotspot in laidback Southern Lombok



204

Travel Tips: Great deals and destination advice for your next getaway

208

Bintan Bound: Everything you need to know to visit Singapore's beachy neighbour

230

Flying High: Hot-air ballooning over the captivating Cappadocian landscape

What's New



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Family Fun at Penang

Add a stretch of beach to a host of children's activities and you've got the formula for a great holiday for parents and kids alike. **Golden Sands Resort, Penang by Shangri-La**, located on Penang's popular Batu Feringgi beach, is currently offering a value-added Family Fun Package to make things even better. With starting rates from MYR 550 (S\$183) valid now until 31 December 2016, the package includes daily buffet breakfast and daily dinner for two adults and two children below 12 years at Garden Café, and unlimited complimentary access for children to the resort's Adventure Zone and Cool Zone Kids' Club (ages five to 12). There's also a free daily shuttle to and from George Town, and other additions. New waterslides and other kid-friendly amenities are an added bonus. **+604 888 8888 | shangri-la.com** ►



Walks among Wildlife

African Safari Walks is a new safari outfit based in Zimbabwe, owned and managed by well-known guide, Kaz Dube. It offers walking safaris and luxury tented-camp accommodation for guests in Hwange National Park, the largest wildlife habitat in Western Zimbabwe. The 14,000-square-kilometre park includes savanna woodland with over 400 species of birds and 100 species of mammals, including 27 carnivores. Safaris are tailored to wildlife enthusiasts, adventure seekers, photography fans and families alike. **info@africansafariwalks.com | africansafariwalks.com**



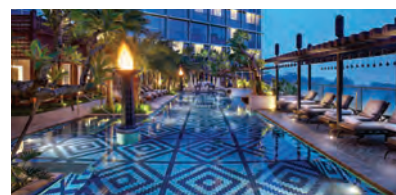
Doing Things Differently

If you're seeking something extra from your travels, a **Chōsen experience** could be up your alley. Chōsen has been offering weeklong luxury, adventure and wellness getaways in Bali since 2013, but has recently added Guatemala, Iceland and New Zealand to its destination list. The seven-day packages combine five-star accommodation with expert training from life coaches and former Olympic athletes, activities ranging from massage and mindfulness to surfing and canyoning, and nourishing food prepared by private chefs. Visit **experiencechosen.com** for details of upcoming trips. ▼



New in Indo

The **Four Seasons Hotel Jakarta** has just opened in Capital Place, the Indonesian city's new award-winning architectural landmark by César Pelli, located in the CBD. The all-suite hotel boasts features for business and leisure travellers alike, including a range of dining options and a lavishly appointed spa. *Special offer:* Take advantage of an introductory deal at the hotel, featuring a daily credit of IDR 500,000 (just over S\$50) until 30 September 2016. A special Bed and Breakfast package is also available. **fourseasons.com/jakarta** ▼



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Samui Getaway

While the panoramic views from the **InterContinental Samui Baan Taling Ngam Resort** on the southwest coast of Thailand's Koh Samui are stunning enough on their own, the food is just as impressive. Now you can make the most of both, through the resort's Stay & Dine offer. The package includes luxury accommodation for two adults, daily breakfast for two at award-winning restaurant Amber, free meals for children, a drinks and dining credit of 3,200 Thai baht (approximately S\$120) for every two nights of the stay, and free Wi-Fi. Book and stay up until December 2016 (valid for two- to four-night stays only). For reservations, call **+66 77 429 100** or email **icsamui.rsvn@ihg.com**, or book directly through **ihg.com** to enjoy a "Best Price Guarantee".



A Book for Budgets

Famous travel publisher Lonely Planet has just released *The Best Things in Life are Free*, a new guide full of money-saving advice, tricks and recommendations for the best-value sights and experiences around the world. More than 60 major cities are featured, including Singapore; and while the Lion City is rarely considered a budget-friendly destination, there are plenty of tips in these pages for going easy on the wallet while here. Other highlights range from chomping on a *choripán* (chorizo sandwich) in Buenos Aires to doing a Boston brewery tour. Available for US\$22.99 from lonelyplanet.com/free. ◀



Better Smartphone Photos

The folks at Adobe have come up with a handy checklist of ways to make the most of your mobile's camera.

1 Find your focus: When taking planned action shots (e.g., someone jumping, or fireworks going off), lock the point of focus before you take the photo. Then you can shoot the picture without worrying about finding clarity.

2 Blur it out: Getting a shallow depth of field with a phone's small sensor is hard – but not impossible. To see a nice blur in the background, be sure to keep your subject at the minimum focusing distance of your phone.

3 Go where the bigger cameras can't: Smartphones can fit in tight spaces where bigger cameras can't go. Make use of this size advantage to get some interesting perspectives.

4 Approaching people: Some subjects get self-conscious around big cameras, and that's where smartphones come in handy – they allow you to more easily take photos of people going about their daily lives.

5 Go manual: The idea of phone photography is to "keep it simple", but when you have extra options, you might as well take advantage of them! Many newer smartphones let you control shutter speed or ISO manually.

6 Image processing: Some advanced smartphones also shoot RAW images, and apps such as Adobe Photoshop Express and Adobe Lightroom for Mobile allow you to process your pics on your phone.

For more information, visit adobe.com/sea.

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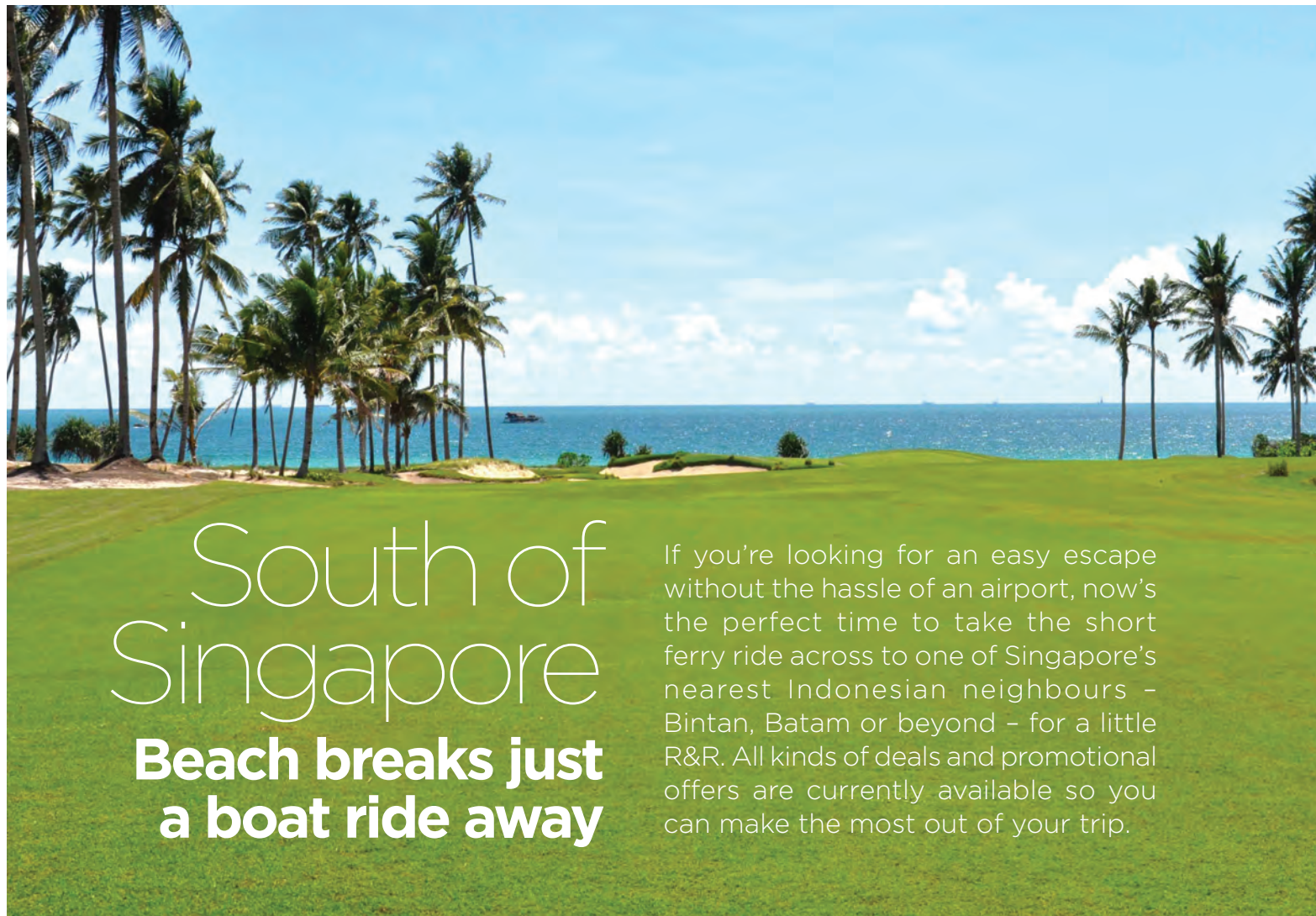
Villa Ombak is a brand-new beachfront 5000sqft Bintan villa, sleeping up to 12 guests – ideal for families or groups of friends. With a giant open plan living/dining room, fully equipped kitchen, media room, large private pool and activity room (climbing wall, ping-pong and foosball), there really is something for everyone. And it's all only steps away from an unspoilt and uncrowded gentle beach, where you'll enjoy paddling around the bay (kayak & 2 SUPs), exploring neighboring islands, spotting flying fish, snorkeling and searching for crabs, starfish and shells at low tide.



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South of Singapore

Beach breaks just a boat ride away

If you're looking for an easy escape without the hassle of an airport, now's the perfect time to take the short ferry ride across to one of Singapore's nearest Indonesian neighbours – Bintan, Batam or beyond – for a little R&R. All kinds of deals and promotional offers are currently available so you can make the most out of your trip.

BINTAN LAGOON RESORT

Aside from boasting the largest convention centre in Bintan, a private international ferry terminal, and two helipads that enable guests to arrive directly at the resort by either ferry or helicopter, this 470-room resort has over 50 land and sea activities available for guests. Of particular note is the **Bintan Lagoon Golf Club** (BLGC), with its two world-class 18-hole golf courses. The Jack Nicklaus Sea View course and Ian Baker-Finch Woodlands course both offer spectacular signature holes, fast greens, undulating fairways and scenic water hazards.

Special offer: Female golfers can currently enjoy a round of golf at the attractive rate of IDR500,000 (approximately S\$52) per person, courtesy of the BLGC Ladies Golf Day Package. The deal includes direct ferry service between Singapore and the Bintan Lagoon Resort Ferry Terminal, and each round includes a caddy and a buggy on a twin-share basis. Book by 30 September 2016 for travel until 30 November 2016.

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BANYAN TREE BINTAN

New things are afoot at the 18-hole **Laguna Golf Bintan** course, with extensive upgrades to the course layout completed in July, along with refurbishments to the clubhouse and the introduction of a fleet of new golf carts. In addition to forestland, lagoons, coconut groves and age-old rock formations, the par-72 course is the only one on Bintan to feature stunning beachfront holes on both the front and back nine.

Special offer: The all-villa Banyan Tree Bintan resort has launched an exclusive Stay and Play golf package, available from now until 30 September 2016, to take advantage of the new-look course. The package includes land transfers between the ferry terminal and the resort, express immigration, accommodation, breakfast, unlimited free golf at Laguna Golf on the day of check-in and before check-out,

use of a golf cart, use of the driving range before play, and more. Prices start from S\$450. Contact +62 770 693 100 or reservations-bintan@banyantree.com for information and bookings.

banyantree.com
lagunagolf.com



BINTAN RESORTS

To celebrate twenty years of operations, Bintan Resorts is offering a range of awesome deals for visitors, until the end of 2016. Among the highlights:

- Banyan Tree and Angsana Bintan are both offering 20 percent off food and non-alcoholic beverages and spa massages, and The Canopi also has 20 percent off F&B (after 6pm).
- Enjoy 25 percent off activities at Nirwana Gardens, including everything from kayaking and banana boating, to archery, horse riding and fishing; the same discount is available for à la carte lunches at two resort restaurants.
- At Swiss-Belhotel Lagoi Bay Bintan, discounts range from activities (for instance, 50 percent off Segway rental) to food (20 percent off at Swiss-Café from Sunday to Thursday).
- BRC Tours has discounts on all of its tours, including the popular day and night Mangrove Discovery Tours, the South Bintan Heritage Tour, and the Eco Farm Trek.
- Other great discounts are available through Ria Bintan Golf Club, Asmara Lifestyle, Air Adventures Flying Club, Bintan Wake Park and elsewhere. All promotions are valid until either 30 or 31 December 2016.

bintan-resorts.com



SWISS-BELHOTEL LAGOI BAY

Surrounded by a freshwater fishing lake and white sandy beaches, the four-star Swiss-Belhotel Lagoi Bay is an ideal island getaway from Singapore. There's an array of services and facilities at the hotel, including an outdoor rooftop infinity pool, entertainment centre, kids' club, spa, fully equipped gym and 24-hour room service. The Swiss-Café serves cuisine from an à la carte menu and daily international buffet breakfast. The Chadis Rooftop Bar – the hotel's signature restaurant and the only venue of its kind in Bintan with sea and lake views – offers Western cuisine, succulent grills and weekend themed buffets, including Authentic Balinese and BBQ Seafood.

Special offer: The hotel's current promotion is the Mad Mid-Year Deal, with prices starting from just S\$160, and 50 percent discounts for a second person. The offer includes return ferry tickets from Singapore and land transfers on Bintan, a one-night stay in a Deluxe Room, buffet breakfast at Swiss-Café, and an Activity Pass for kayaking, buggy riding, cycling and fishing. Valid until 31 October 2016.

+65 6274 9555 | ssecsblb@swiss-belhotel.com



TELUNAS RESORTS

Not all ferries heading south from Singapore have Bintan in their sights; another wonderful holiday option within easy reach (just 50km away) is Telunas Resorts, jointly managed by a team of Indonesians and expats who for over a decade have worked to make a positive social impact in their little corner of the world.

The property is divided into two parts. Telunas Private Island has 15 overwater villas, an infinity pool, private masseuses, a "Sand Beach" bar, daily kids' activity, sea kayaks, and other amenities. Accommodation starts from IDR 2,000,000 per night (S\$205). Telunas Beach Resort, meanwhile, is a staple for families and those seeking a simple, overwater escape; it boasts a pristine white sand beach, volleyball court, soccer pitch, hammocks, low ropes course, and other beach games. There are Chalets (with or without balconies) and Deluxes available, with prices starting from IDR 750,000 (S\$77) per night. *el*

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Despite their reputations for natural beauty and for being prime spots for self-discovery, I'd never made a trip to Lombok or Bali, even though both are situated only a few hours from Singapore.

That's why, when feeling a bit rundown and in need of some inspiration recently, I enthusiastically said yes to a trip to both. My stay was with **Sudamala Resorts**, which has properties in both locations, and after a pleasant flight from Changi to Lombok International Airport, I was picked up promptly by Sudamala's private car and host, for the start of my adventure.

Traditional artisans

On the way to the resort we stopped at a traditional weaving village called Sukarara. Weaving cloth is one of the most traditional forms of art in Lombok, and women in this village are required to learn the skill from an early age to honour and upkeep the custom and livelihood. Commonly produced here is the *songket* fabric, distinguished by the inclusion of gold and silver metallic threads.

Each thread is woven together using hand-operated wooden and metal machines, and we watched on as they were expertly handled by the local female

artisans, all deft hands and strong arms. I was allowed to try my hand at using the machine (under the watchful eye of one of the seamstresses!); it's reasonably heavy, and requires more power from the arms than I expected. Depending on the size of a design and intricacy of the pattern, one hand-woven piece can take anything from a week to months to finish.

As someone who works in fashion, I was so inspired by all the vibrant colours, patterns and fabrics – which included cotton yarns and naturally dyed silks – and I marvelled at being able to closely observe the use of a traditional loom.



Waking up to a sea view every morning is a real treat

GETTING THERE

Book a flight to Lombok either via SilkAir or Garuda Indonesia; the latter includes a short stopover in Jakarta. Depending on where you're travelling from, a visa on arrival costs US\$35. Singapore citizens can get a 30-day visa on arrival for free.

Beach at your doorstep

We soon arrived at stunning **Sudamala Senggigi**, which is comprised of Balinese-style villa suites with private balconies or terraces. The surroundings are lush, green and hilly, with a cool breeze blowing in from the seafloor.

One thing that struck me was how well the resort was woven into the landscape. According to Ben and Emily Subrata, the father-daughter duo overseeing Sudamala's hotel portfolio, there is a good feng shui aura surrounding the resort; its positive positioning between the sea front and the mountain behind indicates that luck can flow in and stay in the area. Only a few other hotels are situated along the shoreline, which adds to the feeling of exclusivity and peacefulness.

I stayed in a beachfront Narmada Sunset View suite, an expansive room with its own outdoor shower and a traditional sunken stone bathtub so huge that it took nearly half an hour to fill! The walls are peppered with traditional art and handiwork, which is a nice touch. What struck me the most as I settled into the my room and explored the



Trying my hand at weaving – no mean feat!

A Sense of Wonder

As a first-time visitor to Lombok and Bali, SUSANNAH JAFFER was looking forward to finally joining the club of those who've experienced what these verdant Indonesian isles have to offer. However, she didn't expect a trip filled with magical and spiritual experiences that would make a lasting impression.

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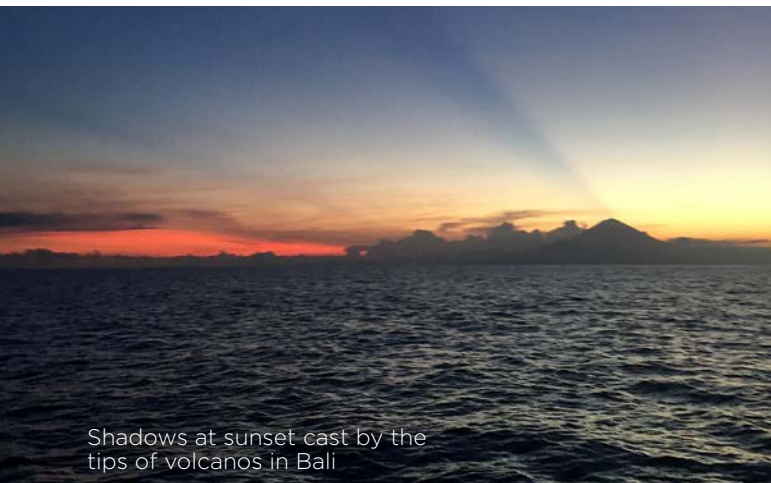
Welcome to the world of Radisson

Newly-opened near downtown Nagoya, the Radisson Golf & Convention Center Batam overlooks the lush rolling hills of Sukajadi Padang Golf Course. With 240 modern rooms, a slew of exciting bars and restaurants, comprehensive wellness facilities and flexible event spaces, the hotel makes an exciting venue to meet, stay and relax.

Book now at [Radisson.com/batamid](https://www.radisson.com/batamid)

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Shadows at sunset cast by the tips of volcanos in Bali

resort grounds – which also consist of a spa, infinity pool, library and outdoor deck for yoga and entertainment – was the lack of pretentiousness, despite the obvious luxuries.

Rides at sunset

We'd arrived just before evening, and we were taken on a long boat ride to see the resort from the water and to watch the sunset. As the sky turned flame red, I could pick out a line of shadow cast through the sky by the tip of the majestic Mount Agung across the water in Bali, like a beacon. Sipping on a fresh coconut and watching this otherworldly scene unfold in front of me, I couldn't think of a better way to be introduced to the beauty of the island.

A traditional feast

Dinner at the hotel's Olah Olah restaurant consisted of *begibung*, a Lombok-style feast based on the traditional Balinese *megibung*, which simply means that food is served communally, and is meant for sharing. We devoured small bowls of skewered meats, seafood, spicy vegetables and various curries with coconut rice scooped up from the middle of the platter – all delicious and filling. Afterwards, full and sleepy, I went back to my room and fell asleep to the sound of the ocean, a stone's throw from my doorstep.

A day of snorkelling

Various day trips can be arranged by the Sudamala team; one is a trip to the Gili Islands for an active day of snorkelling. Although it takes just under two hours to drive there, it's worth the wait. The charming Gilis are fringed with white sandy beaches, and surrounded by clear waters full of colourful fish, and it's easy enough to hop from one island to another by boat. We were blessed with great weather too – suffering only a minor rain shower, which happened conveniently during lunchtime while we were under shelter.

FUN FACT

Locals say that in Lombok you can see Bali, but you can't see Lombok from Bali, which I found to be quite true!






Our primary mode of transport during our visit to the Gili islands

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TRAVELLER'S TIP!

Boating to Bali:

Sudamala's drivers can arrange your journey to the boat port, where you can pick up a Gili Cat catamaran boat straight to Bali. The journey time takes around one and a half hours, factoring in a few short stops in between while the company picks up passengers from neighbouring islands.

Lombok To Bali

Hidden respite

It took around an hour to get from the boat dock in Bali to the village of Sanur. Driving through the landscape, I immediately noticed how much more developed and fast-paced Bali seemed. I also had my first glimpse of rice paddy fields, which was a real thrill.

Stepping into **Sudamala Sanur** resort, my first impression was how, despite its position only slightly set back from the street front, it still felt like such a welcome retreat. Situated on the other side of the entrance is a beautiful courtyard, with walkways to each suite. Following that, an arch opens out onto the ample facilities – a large spa, swimming pool and café area. Although it's not situated on the beachfront, like some neighbouring resorts, the shore is just a few minutes walk away, and there's a reserved private area for Sudamala guests.

An unusual blessing

One of the highlights of my Bali stay was visiting Pura Tirta Sudamala (which means "purifying water" in ancient Sanskrit), a traditional temple surrounded by water from a spring, located in an area called Bangli where the Balinese come to cleanse and purify body and mind. Only guests of Sudamala Sanur are able to be taken on a tour to the area, which involves driving down a narrow slope into a valley surrounded by dense jungle (talented, these Balinese drivers!), parking, and then walking down a long sloping path to reach the ancient architecture.

At the base of the temple, there are underwater caves in different areas, as well as eleven showers of differing heights and pressures, which, according to the ritual, you need to bathe and shower yourself under in a specific order. The Sudamala team are on hand to take you through the process, and the ritual is finished off by a blessing from the priest with holy water and rice kernels. It was such a privilege to experience this



One of the spacious rooms at Sudamala Sanur



The final steps down to the water temple





Saying a little prayer before we start the ritual



Wayan Suklu talking us through our scribbles



Getting creative!

enchanting and tranquil place of prayer and spirituality, and I came away feeling more at peace.

After drying off and changing in the facilities, we travelled for lunch at Indus restaurant in the bustling town of Ubud (which boasts stunning views over a canyon) and had a go at haggling in the nearby market for trinkets and souvenirs, before heading off on the final leg of our day trip.

Magic in art

Our final stop was to an art workshop, owned by local artist Wayan Suklu, well known in the region for his work on canvas in various media. He took us on a tour of his workshop and property, full of artwork, installations and sculptures in various stages of completion.

After some refreshments, we were then given our own art task, which involved taking an old book from his collection and freestyle scrawling on every alternate page as fast as we could, with minimal thinking involved. It felt like a bit of an odd exercise, but we played along without much expectation.

When we'd finished defacing each of our books in about ten minutes, none of us expected Mr Suklu to pick up each one in turn and psychoanalyse our scrawls, telling us about our characters and desires (the Sudamala hosts were on hand to translate). I was quite dumbfounded with what he told me (which, for privacy's sake, I won't write here!) but it was quite specific and accurate. I think a few others in the group felt the same, and we were told afterwards that he is known for being quite "spiritually connected".

As you can imagine, my last day in Bali gave me a lot to think about. I returned to Singapore the next day feeling invigorated and, as philosophical as it sounds, with a renewed sense of wonder about life – which is just what I needed. *EL*

For bookings and more information about the properties in Lombok and Bali, visit sudamalaresorts.com.



The Other Kuta

SURFING SOUTHERN LOMBOK

Well away from Senggigi and the popular Gili Islands, the southern side of Lombok is a surf hotspot with a wave for everyone, as CAROLYN BEASLEY discovers.



“It’s like Bali 30 years ago,” I’ve heard declared several times about Lombok, Bali’s eastern neighbour, and I’m here to say: “No, it’s not.”

Although the two are only separated by around 20 kilometres of water, Lombok is not like Bali, past or present. While Bali is green and lush, Lombok tends to be dry and rugged. The culture, religion and even the animals of Lombok are different to those of Bali, and – most obviously – tourism is far less developed.

One thing Bali and Lombok *do* have in common, though, is pumping surf, with Lombok offering clean and relatively uncrowded waves.

With these differences in mind, southern Lombok seemed a great destination for a 40th birthday surf trip. We were eight surfers, with abilities ranging from first-timer and OK-but-rusty to legendary. With the hope of accommodating all of our surf requirements, we proceeded to **Kuta Beach**.

Only 25 minutes’ drive from the airport, Kuta presents a dusty collection of roadside *warungs* (open-air restaurants) and a few makeshift shops all selling the same souvenirs. Cries of “Mister, you make me bankrupt!” can be heard as local kids haggle with tourists over homemade bracelets, followed by their mothers touting sarongs. Despite a few hassles, Kuta is a handy base in close proximity to many surf spots.

The closest surf break, **Segar Beach**, is at the front of our resort. After check-in, I stroll towards the beach, only to be puzzled by the sound of distant thunder. Only, it’s not thunder; transfixed, I watch in goosebumped terror as mountains of water pound the rocks just beyond the lagoon.

Mercifully, the thunder is gone by the time our first full day of surfing rolls around. Nine surfboards are strapped directly on the roof of one small SUV and we bump along for 15 minutes, passing farmers, coconuts and water buffalo on our way to the village of **Gerupuk**. Not to be messed with, Gerupuk’s boom-gate keeper leans in and collects a one-dollar tourist tax from the driver. We are directed to the shady trees, where fishermen-turned-surf guides mend nets while waiting for customers. Scrambling into a wooden outrigger fishing boat, we commence our trip to the Gerupuk surf breaks.

Starting with **Don Don** break is a great idea. Although the waves sometimes seem big, they are “fat” and they peel slowly – the only down side is that glorious long rides mean a long paddle back. Outside Gerupuk, things are less friendly. Fast, big, waves with erratic peaks greet our advanced surfers as the rest of us stare in slack-jawed wonder. Further into the bay, the less advanced surfers take on a right-hander



Water buffalo being herded around Kuta





The best fried chicken in Kuta



Fishing boats at Ekas village



Footbridge, Segar Beach



Mangrove, Novotel lagoon

close to menacing white cliffs. The waves initially appear suitable, until one rogue wall of water looms and crashes down on our heads, snapping a leg rope and creating carnage; four rusty surfers are taught a lesson about the unpredictability of the ocean.

Further afield are the breaks of spectacular **Ekas Bay**. The new and bizarrely deserted port at the village of **Awang** is the starting point for a 20-minute boat trip to the first of the Ekas breaks. At **Inside Ekas**, fat lumps of water roll over the shallow coral reefs below, but the famous, long wave doesn't perform on our low-swell day. Next stop is **Outside Ekas** near the bay's headland, where many large triangular waves approach. They tease us into paddling desperately, but often do not break. Eventually the tide changes and Outside Ekas delights our group with glimpses of its potential. Meanwhile, under the water, fish of every colour dart between corals and sponges, and provide snorkelling entertainment for surfers needing a break.

Snorkelling is out of the question at the formidable reef break of **Mawi**. Lurking down a bumpy side-track to the west of Kuta, on big days, this wave is massive and barrelling. Our surf legends carve it up here, but those of intermediate standard find the hollow wave slightly scary.

Just minutes away, the superb beach of **Selong Belanak** is the opposite, with small waves and a sandy bottom. The cluster of beachfront *warungs* rent foam surfboards, great for our first-timer. Shrieks of laughter and friendly encouragement soon translate into something that resembles surfing. Each *warung* has bamboo beach loungers for rent, perfect for lying back on to chomp chargrilled corn on the cob.

For the non-surfers, there are enough activities around Kuta to occupy a few days. **Tanjung A'an** is widely regarded as the prettiest beach near Kuta. At **Turtle Warung** on the western end of the strip, travellers join locals to devour *nasi campur* (mixed rice) and recline on the beach chairs drinking ice-cold Bintang beer.

If snorkelling is more your scene, the lagoon at the front of the **Novotel** resort has sparkling clear water on a high tide. Day trips are easily arranged to **Gili Nanggu**, and the southern coast hosts pristine dive sites (scubafroggy.com). For total relaxation, visit the mountain-top **Ashtari Restaurant and Lounge**, where you can find inner peace in one of the daily yoga classes and drink in the views of the dramatic Kuta coastline (ashtarilombok.com).

Although our ageing surf party aches from days of paddling and too much sun, we decide that this destination has exactly met the brief. With stunning surf breaks for everyone and a distinct lack of tourists, southern Lombok being unlike Bali may just be its greatest asset.



“
Your
boatman
will join
you in the
waves,
asking,
‘Stay for
just one
more?’
”

FACT FILE

Getting there

SilkAir flies direct from Singapore to Lombok in just under three hours. Several airlines provide connections from other parts of Indonesia.

Getting around

- Many surfers rent a motorcycle with a surfboard rack.
- Hotels can organise a car and driver.
- Boat transport is easy to find at Ekas and Gerupuk. The boat will wait for you while you surf, and your boatman will join you in the waves, asking, “Stay for just one more?”

Eating

Dulang Restaurant: One theory about Lombok is that the name translates as “chilli”, and this is the place to try it. Local specialties including *ayam taliwang* (spicy grilled chicken) and fresh charcoal-grilled seafood are served with *sambal* in an outdoor courtyard.

Gulas Garden: This restaurant in a candle-lit tropical garden includes private cabanas with floor cushions. The grilled *mahi mahi* fish and cocktails are a treat.

KFC cart: Throw caution to the wind and try the tastiest deep-fried chicken in Kuta from the “KFC” cart. It’s parked most nights on the corner of Jalan Raya Kuta and Jalan Pariwisata Pantai.

Sleeping

Novotel Lombok Resort and Villas: Highly recommended and the only upmarket option near Kuta. It has a clean beach, friendly staff and excellent food. novotel.com

Heaven On The Planet: Occupying a breathtaking location on the cliff-top above the surf break of Inside Ekas, this resort represents total isolation. sanctuaryinlombok.com

Ekas Breaks: Set about one kilometre back from the ocean at Ekas Bay, this newly built hotel offers traditional-style rooms and a pool. ekasbreaks.com *u*



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With the *Costa Victoria* celebrating 20 years on the water, REBECCA BISSET steps aboard to discover the highlights of its short cruises from Singapore to Malaysia, Thailand and beyond.

Going on a cruise has its advantages, and not having to pay for kids (they're free on *Costa Victoria* if they're under 13 and sharing your cabin) is just an additional one. There's plenty for them to do on the ship, and with the buffet-style eating being all-inclusive, you don't have the drama of meals not getting finished when you've paid a lot of money for them. It's also a good way for young ones to get a taste of new types of foods without the waste. There are five restaurants, some à la carte and some buffet, and ten bars.

Most of the onboard entertainment is suitable for all family members, so it's a good way to spend time, and you can't really lose them anywhere – well, only if you try hard! (If your children are old enough to have a smart phone there's a MyCosta Mobile app that lets you and them stay connected while aboard.) Every evening there is a different show, from a Michael Jackson tribute show to a very clever comedy show, and all sorts in between.

Costa is an Italian cruise line, and *Costa Victoria* has an authentic Italian theme throughout: the floors are all named after Italian operas and there's heaps of good Italian cuisine. Also, a Pavarotti lookalike sings in the foyer – he's brilliant! It's all rather musical, actually – even the waiters in the fine-dining restaurants will suddenly break into song and dance. And the big event on board is the Venetian Ball.

The ship's kids' club is known as Squok Club, and it offers everything from making Venetian masks and costumes, to mural, necklace and t-shirt making. Meeting the Captain is always exciting for littlies (and biggies, too!), and there are sports tournaments for kids and sport facilities like a fitness centre, jogging track, and tennis and volleyball court.

If you want to take older family members or those with disabilities, there are six cabins that can cope with wheelchairs and it's a very easy way to travel. The ship employs around 760 crewmembers, so there are plenty of people around to help. For our Ocean View with Balcony cabin, we had our own butler, William – he was lovely. And there's also a Medical Centre on board. The first night there is a compulsory fire drill; getting youngsters and old ones to that could be a bit painful.



There is a spa but the massages seemed quite expensive; however, there are some great deals in the on-ship stores. I bought a couple of Guess handbags at a steal and stacked up on some Christmas presents too.

Cruising is a great way to see the region without flights and tours. The three-night cruise from Singapore includes day tours to Malacca and Penang, and there are four- and five-night cruises that include destinations such as Phuket and Langkawi. Various day-tour options are offered at each place, though unless there's enough interest not all of them will run. I wanted to do a kayaking one at Phang Nga off Phuket but because no one else had subscribed to it, I ended up doing a really dodgy animal park, labelled as a "wildlife park". It was awful and they had monkeys and elephants doing tricks; I don't understand why these places are allowed to function or are promoted. The Penang day tour was also disappointing, so, if you're a family, I think just do your research before and organise a *tuk tuk* or taxi to take you where you want to go. Or just spend the day on the beach or in the nearby shops.

I've been on a few cruises from Singapore and the quality of the experience does depend on the time of year – travelling in regional school holiday periods means you're going to get more of the mass market, so bear that in mind.

"It's all rather musical – even the waiters in the fine-dining restaurants will suddenly break into song and dance."

Costa Victoria is a stunning ship and I think cruising is definitely the easiest and most relaxing way to travel and see some of Southeast Asia's highlights. You can start the cruise from Penang too, if you prefer, with an option of flying and cruising for one night only. *EL*

For more information about destinations, itineraries and bookings, visit costaasia.com.



SIMONE WIRTHMANN always loved being in the water as a child in Germany, but she started diving relatively late, after graduating and travelling to Koh Lanta, Thailand, in 2004. Since then, she hasn't looked back, becoming a dive instructor in 2008, and subsequently joining Singapore-based boutique professional PADI dive centre, **Orca Scuba**. Here she tells us more about the centre and its focus on diving for families.



What's your favourite dive spot on the planet?

There are loads of great places – most of the diving I've done has been in Southeast Asia (in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia) but I've also dived in Mexico and Germany. I would say my favourite so far is Mushimasgili Thila, better known as Fish Head, in Ari Atoll in the Maldives.

Who typically signs up for programmes with Orca Scuba?

Since we're headquartered in Singapore, most of our students and divers come from here, and it's where a lot of our theory and swimming pool training takes place.

Our dive centre at Rawa Island, Malaysia, is well equipped for families, and many come on weekend trips from Singapore. (It's just a few hours by car and ferry.) However, we also welcome families from Europe, and from Malaysia itself.

Often we get parents and kids wanting to dive as a group, and because the dives at Rawa are fairly easy and the depth is generally quite shallow, we can easily take out more advanced divers together with those who are less experienced.

More experienced divers can also appreciate long

dives alongside beautiful coral formations; they can bring their cameras, and dive without feeling rushed by big groups or a rigid time schedule.

Can anyone get involved?

In general, anyone can dive, as long as they are fit and healthy. Kids as young as five can enjoy their first experience with us by participating in the Surface Air Supplied Snorkelling for Youth programme; snorkelling on the surface using a mini tank and a regulator set, instead of the usual snorkel set.

Once they turn eight or nine, they can join the PADI Bubblemaker programme. This involves going to a depth of no more than two metres in the ocean or four metres in a pool; they'll take their first real breath under the water, practice some basic skills, play with buoyancy in shallow water or even go on an underwater exploration looking for fish and coral with their instructor.

Kids can start their first certification course from age 10. Those aged from 10 to 14 can earn a Junior Open Water certification, while ages 15 and above earn a standard Open Water Diver certification, which entitles them to go to a depth of 18 metres.

People who aren't so interested in earning a certification right away can do the Discover Scuba Dive programme, which includes a theory session covering basic safe diving practices, how to use the equipment and how to swim and behave under water; this can be followed by fun dives with an instructor to a maximum depth of 12 metres.

Do guests need to bring their own equipment?

For all activities we offer, you don't have to bring your own equipment – we provide everything necessary. However, if you choose to go for a diving certification and you plan to do more diving in the future, basic



equipment such as mask, snorkel, fins, a wetsuit or rash guard and maybe a dive computer are good items to own.

Tell us about the Orca Scuba facilities.

Our shop is located inside Queensway Shopping Centre, with a wide range of diving and snorkelling equipment (including everything I mentioned earlier) and dive staff who can give you all the information you need about learning to dive with us.

We also complete a lot of swimming pool training in Singapore, which can save time on your holiday when you go to complete the dives in the ocean.

Our dive centre at Rawa is located at the northern tip of the island, a five-minute walk from Rawa Island Resort. It has a big classroom area with loads of space and modern amenities such as flat-screen TVs to watch videos in the various courses we teach. The kit room has new, up-to-date gear, and there's a compressor room with a silent Bauer compressor to fill our tanks. Besides standard-sized tanks, we have smaller tanks especially for kids as well as some with a higher volume to accommodate people that can do with that little bit more air.

Is there any ocean diving off Singapore or do you need to go further afield?

You *can* dive in Singapore, but due to the amount of boat traffic and industry off the coast here (both of which have an effect on the visibility of the water and the health of the corals and marine life), Rawa is much better.

What are the highlights of diving at Rawa?

The dives we do around the island are generally relaxed and at a fairly shallow depth. All the sites on the western side are easy to reach and can be done as shore dives. In the north, just outside our dive centre, is an area called Northern Gardens, with a multitude of bigger and smaller rocks and coral formations spread out across the sand. Here you can find blue spotted stingrays, a variety of nudibranchs and flatworms, and many common reef fish.

One of my two favourite places around the island is Dragon Rock, on the southern side, which has impressive coral structures, including healthy staghorn coral, huge table corals, fields of whip and harp coral and even some colourful soft coral. You'll also see fish, rays, moray eels, cuttlefish and sometimes nurse sharks and turtles.

The other place, Bat Cave, can only be reached by boat; it's a big channel that leads into the rock at a maximum depth of around five metres and ends up in a small cavern. If the water is calm, you can come up and see bats hanging from the ceiling. In the morning, when visibility is good, the sun illuminates the water and the views are stunning. *a*

Orca Scuba's Singapore headquarters is at #02-06 Queensway Shopping Centre. For more information about courses, call 8339 5001, email dive@orcascuba.com or visit the website, orcascuba.com.



TAKING OFF IN TURKEY

SARAH RICHARD travels to the other end of Asia to find out if the rumour is true – that Cappadocia is Turkey's most beautiful asset.



Turkey is my “country crush”. It all started some years ago when I booked myself a one-way ticket to Fethiye in Southern Turkey to complete my Divemaster qualification. I basically knew nothing about the region, other than Google telling me it was one of the cheapest places in which to do this kind of course.

Naively, I thought I would complete my training and leave, continuing on to my dream career of diving around the world. But Turkey had a different idea – it captured me on the first day and I have

since spent years going back and forth, each time the love affair deepening.

Despite this, I always knew the best was yet to come after being told of a magical place called Cappadocia, described as “the land of the fairy chimneys” (for its stunning rock formations) where hot air balloons cover the sky from 5am each day. I’d seen the pictures: not just of the balloons, but also of the houses that looked like caves, and of Turkish feasts set on balconies overlooking it all. None of it looked real.

It was only when I arrived there myself and held my camera up to the view from my

hotel that I could confirm that Cappadocia was, in fact, even more beautiful in the flesh. The pictures did it absolutely no justice.

Still, we all know that something worth having doesn’t come easily. In my case, it was the seemingly easy flight from Istanbul to Kayseri, which was only supposed to take one hour; mine took seven. Our hotel receptionist smiled when we rushed into the lobby so many hours late, apologising that we hadn’t been there at the arranged time for our driver to pick us up. “Don’t worry,” came the reply. “No one has ever arrived in Cappadocia on time; we knew you wouldn’t either.”



Ballooning at breakfast

There's no denying that my main reason for visiting this part of Turkey was to take my first ride in a hot air balloon. While the balloon companies try to fly every day, flights are cancelled if weather conditions aren't right – so it's as hit-and-miss as the domestic flights. With only three mornings available, I had very limited time, but high hopes. I set my alarm for 4am, wondering if it was worth even going to bed; but this sleepy town has a way of relaxing you, and the cosy rooms of Aydinli Cave Hotel lulled me into at least a few hours slumber.

Once up, we were whisked away via minibus to ButterFly Balloons HQ, and given a light breakfast and coffee as we patiently waited to learn whether conditions were safe enough for ballooning. Happily, the pilot nodded his head in agreement – all systems go – and we piled back into the vans to head out to the valley from where we would lift off. While zooming through the mountains and chasing the morning sun, we passed hundreds of balloons getting set up, excitement in overdrive at what the next few hours would hold.

Our balloon carried 10 people – small compared with the vessels that hold up to 40, and one of the reasons I chose ButterFly Balloons over other companies. The pilot took the middle portion of the basket and the guests stood around the edges. He fired up the gas and our balloon started to rise; it was incredible to think that we were floating in a basket held up by just a canopy powered by heat. We floated above the Cappadocian valleys, along with the pigeons and in line with the sun. Hundreds of other balloons followed us, and as a group we dominated the sky in the most spectacular way.

We flew for around an hour, reaching dizzying heights above the clouds, until it was time to return to earth. Expecting a bumpy landing, we all applauded the driver as he softly placed the basket straight into the open trunk of the truck. As if the experience could be any more perfect, a table of chocolate, strawberries





and champagne awaited us at the bottom to “cheers” the awakening of a new day.

Paths less travelled

While seeing Cappadocia from a hot air balloon is a must, there are so many other things to do on sturdier ground. The town of Goreme itself is stunning, home to the “fairy chimneys”, cave hotels and an open-air museum; four days was just not enough time. This may also have been because I spent many of my hours searching for baklava, a new hobby of mine that included eating as many varieties of the nutty, honey-soaked pastry as I could and rating them from one to ten.

On another day, we took a private tour organised through the hotel, as it was the same price as the over-crowded group tours and we got to set our own itinerary. (This also fitted in very well with my baklava hunt.) Our private guide took us to Derinkuyu, a 5,000-year-old underground city that was once home to 20,000 people. While this was mind-blowing enough, we found it a bit too touristy, and asked if we could go slightly off the beaten track. The rest of the day was spent taking pictures from viewpoints with not another person in sight, drinking coffee on a balcony all to ourselves and wandering around forgotten and rarely visited parts of the different towns of Cappadocia.

My final morning's sunrise was, by all accounts, one of the best of the whole year. I took my camera and climbed up onto a hotel rooftop to wait for the magic. And magic it certainly was. First the sun appeared over the chimneys, and then came dozens of hot air balloons, soon swelling to hundreds, perfectly covering the golden sky as far as the eye could see. It was even better than you can imagine from the photos. On that morning, at 5am, thousands of miles from my home on the other side of Asia, I saw the most beautiful sight of my life, and discovered that Cappadocia was definitely the golden jewel of Turkey.





“I’d seen the pictures of the balloons, of the houses that looked like caves, and of Turkish feasts set on balconies overlooking it all; none of it looked real.”

FACT FILE

WHERE TO STAY

Aydinli Cave Hotel
+90 384 271 2263
thecavehotel.com

WHAT TO DO

ButterFly Balloons
+90 384 271 3010
butterflyballoons.com

HOW TO GET THERE

Turkish Airlines and Singapore Airlines both fly to Istanbul once a day from Singapore (11 hours). Connecting flights (as many as 18 per day) take you from Istanbul to Kayseri in 75 minutes. *el*



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learning from failure and
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From Asia with *Love*

We finally catch up with EMMA FEMMINILE just before she finishes her expat stint in Singapore to move back to the UK (via a stop-off in Bali!). As it turns out, the busy mum of four and owner of hit resort label White Ginger is already planning a future return to the tropics.

WORDS & DIRECTION SUSANNAH JAFFER
HAIR & MAKEUP SMITA DESOUZA
PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL BERNABE



If I try to think of a fashion label that best epitomises the mood of island living, White Ginger ticks all the boxes. Prints influenced by travels around Asia? Check. Bold colours and patterns? Check. Woven fabrics constructed into loose silhouettes?

Check, check, check!

It's also clear that British-born owner Emma Femminile is a walking, talking advertisement for her designs – all of her clothes hang picture-perfect on her leggy, slim figure. While we're sitting down for this interview inside her cosy Tanglin Mall store, two women come in and buy the top she's wearing, while another toys with the same idea in the dressing room, all in the space of an hour. Not only that, she acknowledges each of them fondly; I can tell they are regulars.

And, although on the surface it might seem like yet another expat resort label, there are other style influences at work that set White Ginger apart. "I'm not inspired by fads and trends," says Emma, "but rather by classic shapes – the shift, tunic and shirt dress, for example – mixed with a bit of a seventies influence. It adds sophistication. I think that's what keeps women coming back, because the designs don't date." I'm inclined to agree. I've spotted a black-and-white printed shift number that I could just as easily wear to a CBD work meeting with heels and a structured leather bag, as I could dressed down with sandals for beach cocktails at sunset.

Emma injects her own style requirements into her designs too. "I always wear White Ginger myself, so if I'm going somewhere and I can't find anything suitable from my collections, I'll figure out how I can incorporate that look into my next range," she says. "You could say the brand is definitely driven by my personal needs and wants, but if I find an element that's lacking, I imagine my customers are missing out too!"

Tropical ambitions

Originally from a small town in the English county of Cambridgeshire, Emma's Singapore adventure started after she fell in love with the city while en route to Bali for a friend's 40th birthday. "My husband and I thought it looked like such a fun place. His company had a small office here too, so we put steps in motion and everything just fell into place after that. The birthday was in May, and we'd moved out here by the August."

That was six years ago, and she's been lapping up life in Asia ever since. "I love the culture and climate, especially the heat," she says. So much so that, even though the family has made the decision to move back to the UK for the kids' secondary school education, Emma already has dreams to come back and live here. "I meet so many customers who come back a second time around without the kids and have a blast!"

To ease the blow of leaving – and to satisfy her obvious sense of adventure – Emma and her husband are going to live in Bali for six months on the way home. "I'm looking forward to being close to our factory in Seminyak to really get stuck into designing, as well as working more closely with an orphanage there. I'll be back and forth to Singapore between now and Christmas for a few events too. Lots of people will probably say 'I thought she'd already left!' But you can't get rid of me that easily," she laughs.

Although she's moving back to her country abode, Emma hopes to establish an outlet in London too, to be in the hub of the fashion industry. "I've got lots of repat customers based there who are often asking me when White Ginger will be coming to the UK!"

A stylish solution

Emma's journey to setting up the label was sparked by discovering a lack of affordable and fashion-forward clothing suited for the tropics. Although she originally started out in the sleepwear market, selling at fairs and pop-up events, she soon moved onto designing the resort wear she's now known for. "I brought all my summer clothes from the UK with me to Singapore, and they still felt too hot! The materials were just all wrong. I came to realise there was a real gap in the market, and being in Asia I was so close to lots of fantastic manufacturing

options. It was a natural direction for me."

That was four years ago, and since then she's held more pop-up events and has had clothes stocked at concession stores, including the now closed Chillax Market at The Grandstand, Bukit Timah, before opening up her own bricks-and-mortar space a year ago.

In turn, it's resulted in an even greater demand for her easy-wearing designs, which does come with its challenges. "To be honest, I sometimes find it hard to juggle all the business requests, as there are times when stock just flies off the shelf! That's another reason I'm looking forward to getting a manager to look after the shop while I'm gone. It means I'll be able to maximise my time designing and building our collections, rather than spending too much time on the admin side."

"I'm not inspired by fads and trends, but rather by classic shapes – the shift, tunic and shirt dress, for example – mixed with a bit of a seventies influence."



A woman with blonde hair, smiling, stands on a sidewalk. She is wearing a blue long-sleeved top with a white pattern, white shorts, and grey wedge sandals. Her hands are in her pockets. To her left is a road with a yellow curb and a silver car parked. In the background, there are buildings and a large green bush to her right.

“I’m going to
be running
ten of our
bestselling
styles on our
new site to
start off with,
and we’ll see
how it goes
from there!”

Despite having to satisfy the demands of a larger customer base, Emma keeps her lines exclusive, ordering only small runs at a time. “Thankfully, now that we have a shop, our customers are more varied. I remember back when I produced one of my first collections for a fair in town, I sold twelve tops in the same style, and the next day four mums at my daughter’s school wore them for the school run! It was hilarious – and, of course, flattering!”

The design process

The fact that White Ginger’s designs aren’t led by trends means the label has kept its strong aesthetic – one that has built momentum over the years. “I love halter necks, shirt dresses, off-the-shoulder details; I always want to give my own spin on classic styles.”

Emma is obviously very colour-driven – the store is peppered with blues, reds, greens and more in between. “I often start off with a combination of shades that have caught my eye, such as cobalt and tangerine, or navy and lime, and then I figure out the best prints to break up the colours,” she explains, while showing me pieces from off the racks. Some of her fabrics come pre-printed, but the rest are designed exclusively for White Ginger, created through traditional screen-printing techniques. “There’s nothing high-tech about it, which means there can be some slight variations in the fabric; but that’s what makes a piece unique, right?”

Thanks to her own sourcing trips, and her discovery of a fantastic leather supplier, Emma has an array of beautiful jewellery, bags and accessories in store too. I notice a pair of snakeskin sandals with a leather strap that winds up the ankle: it’s a beautiful, sensual and unique design. “This is yet another reason why I’m looking forward to the move to Bali, even though it’s temporary. It’s always important to develop a good working relationship with your suppliers, as it only improves the manufacturing experience.”

Learning from failure

Though she’s now well-established, Emma’s journey as a fashion retail entrepreneur hasn’t been easy. Her greatest lesson? Failure. There’s an Einstein quote that she likes to live by: “Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new”. “Thankfully, I’m ordering clothing in small quantities,” she says, “so if I make a mistake I’ve only lost the cost of twenty rather than 2,000 pieces!” That hasn’t happened too often, happily, and she has learnt to trust her instincts.

Einstein aside, Emma draws inspiration from her customers, and from the fact that White Ginger is worn all over the world. “I always get such a thrill from seeing

people wearing my designs, and social media makes brand visibility that much easier to attain!”

Future plans

A simple “#whiteginger” search on social media shows that Emma has women wearing her clothes on their holidays not just in Asia, but everywhere from Oslo to Brazil. Now she wants to take her plans for world domination that much further by relaunching her website later this year, including international shipping for the available products. “I’m halfway there, I promise!” she laughs. “There’s so much involved, it’s starting to feel like a separate job. I’ve found a great logistics centre here, so Singapore will be the shipping hub,” she says. “It’s such an efficient way to operate as import duties are low.

I’m going to be running ten of our bestselling styles on our new site to start off with, and we’ll see how it goes from there!”

Doubtless the site will open up a whole new world of customers to Emma, and she’ll probably be busier than ever. Still, considering her energy levels and zest for business, I can tell she’s up for the next challenge. *a*





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FASHION



In Good Company

244

News: The latest style updates to know

248

Shopping Edit: Our favourite picks from the new season

What's New

Shop for a Cause

Here's a heads up on how you can shop for a cause: the Glamorous Giving clearance sale is back, organised again by independent jewellery brand Stones that Rock in support of the Singapore Committee for UN Women. Now in its sixth year, the event will feature over 35 indie brands, designers and boutiques, all selling beautiful threads, accessories and homeware at clearance prices. Don't miss out! **Hollandse Club, 22 Camden Park, 10am to 4pm, 6 and 7 September. For more information, email str@stonesthatrock.com.** ▼



Comfort First

Danish footwear and leather goods brand ECCO has launched its new **Shape** range, as part of its Autumn/Winter 2016 Collection. Think well-constructed heels (yes, please!) with a light and flexible sole, as well as soft leather interiors for maximum comfort. Coupled with beautiful designs and patterns, these styles can effortlessly take you from day to night. **Available at all ECCO stores and online at ecco.com.** ►



Sleek, sophisticated and ultra flattering, Fendi's EyeShine sunglasses are the specs of the season, as seen on style maven Olivia Palermo.




Stress-free Shopping

Need an outfit in a jiffy? Kick back, relax and let the style team at Robinsons The Heeren do the work for you with their re-launched **Personal Shopper Service**. With a newly revamped website and an experienced team of personal shoppers, this free-of-charge service is available to all customers, and without any minimum spend requirement. What's more, OCBC Robinsons Group Visa Card members get to enjoy a range of exclusive treats, such as complimentary bubbly and dining vouchers. **Find out more at robinsons.com.sg.** ▲



Crystal Craze

Add a touch of sophistication to your outfit with the **Crystaldust Bangle** by Swarovski. Available in a variety of crystal colours, the bangle can be worn as a statement piece or stacked together for a dazzling effect. Choose from eight on-trend shades in both single open cuff and spiral styles – there are endless ways of wearing them! **\$150 to \$190, swarovski.com**

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Elevated Essentials

Exude casual chic with **In Good Company's** newest collection. With an aim to redefine formal dress codes, the local label's latest capsule collection release features block colours, midi dresses and jumpsuits in relaxed yet smart styles. Casual silhouettes are elevated by good tailoring and beautiful fabrics, so the pieces work in the office, or as smart-casual options for weekend wear.

ingoodcompany.asia



Local Flavour

New local jewellery label **State Property** has just launched Substate II, its latest collection of seven beautiful pieces crafted in sterling silver. Look forward to elegant, simple shapes that stand out from the crowd. The use of acrylic and bauxite ore makes each piece a sophisticated accessory, suitable for both day and night. \$390 to \$650, thisisstateproperty.com. ▲

We Love ...

... this chic little number from **Lacoste's** Fall/Winter 2016 collection. It's a classic shift dress shape, in a modern colour palette of blues, greys and whites, topped off with a smart collar. Pair it with sporty sandals for a nod to the athleisure look, or with block heels for an evening do. \$219 ▼





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Warrior Bomber,
Chi Chi von
Tang, \$595



Positano Allegra bag, Nannacay, \$285, available at Edit Lifestyle

Park Slope
watch,
DKNY,
\$478



Elba necklace,
Twin Within,
\$110



Fashion Forward

Good things should be shared, so
here are our favourite shopping
picks of the month!



Friend bangle, Swarovski, \$210



Cropped jumpsuit, Zara, \$59.90



Printed shirt,
Mango, \$49.90

Editor's pick

Dress, \$250,
Willow &
Huxley



liv FASHION



Polo shirt,
Lacoste,
\$149

Croco cross body bag,
Longchamp, \$885



Anette
Double ring,
Trish Van N,
\$108

Lemon quartz
ring, Taula,
\$189



Sunglasses,
Visual Mass, \$145

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LABEL LUST

“

A beautiful shape addition to Longchamp's Heritage collection, this shoulder bag is perfect for those who prefer to go hands-free while on the go. Made from sturdy cow leather, featuring golden or gunmetal hardware and available in three colours, its compact, streamlined silhouette makes it an instant wardrobe classic.

”
- Susannah Jaffer, Fashion Editor



Le Pliage Heritage Hobo bag
by Longchamp, \$1,355

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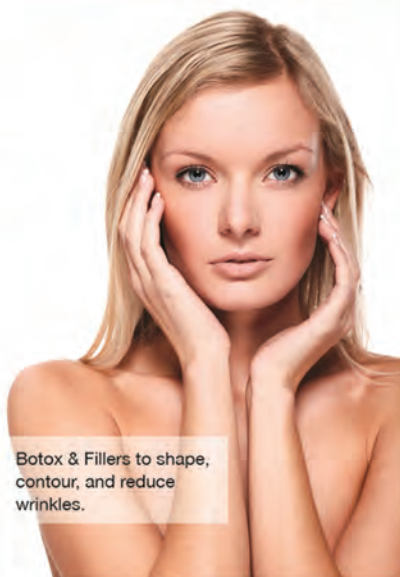


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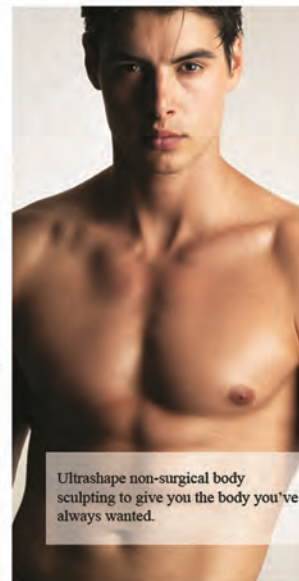


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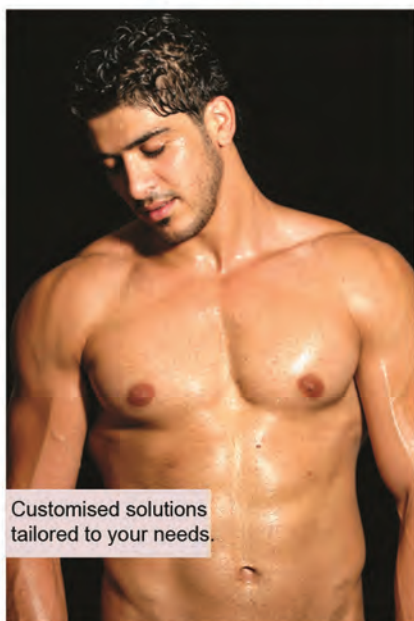
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BEAUTY



Auriga Spa, Capella Hotel

256

News: The latest in style and grooming updates

260

Mask It: There's a mask to suit every skin condition

265

Take a Break: Indulge in one of these luxe spa treatments

What's New



Beauty Break

Everyone's favourite beauty chain **Sephora** has reopened its flagship store in ION Orchard (Basement 2), featuring a bigger selection with hot brands like Cover FX and Zoeva. We're really excited about the new Kat Von D shop-in-shop concept (the first in the world!) where you can explore the American artist's full makeup range, known for its longwearing, highly pigmented and full-coverage products. (We recommend the Shade and Light Contour Palette, \$73.) **ION Orchard, #B2-09-15** ▲



Click Happy

New online lifestyle and wellness boutique **An Uplifted Day** wants to brighten up your day with its range of gorgeous goods. It's a multi-label store that selects unique and useful brands that aren't easily available in Singapore, such as all-natural skincare brand S.W. Basics (try the exfoliant made out of organic oat and almond flours and sea salt!) and minimalist jewellery brand Upper Metal Class. **anuplifteday.com** ◀



EDITOR'S PICK

Keep one of these ultra-moisturising hand creams in your handbag or at your desk, because air-conditioning doesn't just dry out our faces! \$13, Crabtree & Evelyn

Youth Booster

Say hello to youthful skin with the new **Estée Lauder Revitalizing Supreme and Global Anti-Aging Wake Up Balm**, a peppy balm that contains complexion-energising extracts of sea lavender flower and other sea-based plants. It can be used morning or at night, alone or layered over other creams – whenever your skin feels in need of a pick-me-up. Available at the **Estée Lauder Boutique at ION Orchard**, and counters. ▼



Moisturising Mist

Cool off during humid afternoons with Kiehl's new **Cactus Flower & Tibetan Ginseng Hydrating Mist**. It's a fast-absorbing spray that soothes and hydrates your complexion thanks to the moisturising properties of the cactus flower and Tibetan ginseng root. What's more, the bottled spray reportedly keeps your skin feeling supple and hydrated for up to eight hours. \$25 for 75ml, or \$40 for 125ml. ▶



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Fine Fragrance

We love a homegrown success story, so here's a beauty local you need to check out. Singaporean artisanal perfume label **SIX** recently launched three of its six-variant collection, inspired by travel destinations. Available in sleek and handy travel-size black bottles, these make for great gifts or on-the-go touch-ups. **\$66 for 20ml or \$26 for three 3ml bottles. scentbysix.com** ◀

Make it Matte

If you find that your makeup slides off your face throughout the day, pick up the new **Mat Magique** foundation from L'Oréal. It has a non pore-clogging formula, infused with volcanic perlite minerals to absorb sebum and oil on the skin, and promises a twelve-hour natural matte finish. Let's face it, no one has the energy for midday touch-ups – plus, it's a recipe for clogged pores! **\$28.90** ▼



Hair Hope

Don't you just love products that do the hard work? Looking fab in the morning is made easier with **Percy & Reed's Perfectly Perfecting Wonder Overnight Recovery**, a fuss-free, fast-absorbing hair treatment for smoother, more nourished-looking locks. Simply apply it to dry hair, get some shut-eye, wash it out the next morning and ... *voilà*: silky smooth tresses ready for styling. Keep your eyes peeled for when it launches in Sephora later this year. **\$42** ▶





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For... Exfoliating and Purifying

Dr Sylvia Skincare Complete Purifying Mask, \$78

For normal-to-combination skin that tends to oiliness in humid climates, this product comes highly recommended. An ultra-conditioning mineral mask formulated by Singapore-based aesthetics expert Dr Sylvia Ramirez, it contains detoxifying kaolin and bentonite clays to draw out any nasty impurities lurking below the skin's surface. Colloidal silver, aloe vera and seaweed extracts also nourish the complexion and restore moisture.

Origins Gin-Zing Mask, \$50

This tingly-fresh treatment contains acids derived naturally from lemons, oranges and apples to exfoliate dead surface skin cells. Left on for ten minutes, it peels off to reveal a more glowing complexion, while refining and reducing the look of pores.

For... a Boost of Hydration

Splash Algenist Absolute Hydration Replenishing Sleeping Pack, \$48

This overnight sleeping mask combines aluronic acid and algalyte complex (extracted from algae) to intensely hydrate, bringing you a refreshed and energised complexion by morning.

Karin Herzog Essential Mask, \$92 (available at Haute Swiss Cosmetics)

Ideal to perk up your skin before a special event or after air travel, this rinse-off mask is an instant beauty booster. Left on for just ten minutes, it nourishes intensely for visibly brighter and more even skin tone.



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For... Lifting and Toning

Glamglow Gravity Mud Firming Treatment, \$92

Suitable for all skin types and formulated without parabens, this twice-weekly innovative peel-off mud treatment gives your skin a lift. With key ingredients such as marine algae plasma, hyaluronic acid and mineral-rich glacial clay, it helps to firm up and define your facial contours for a more toned look.

Peter Thomas Roth Pure Luxury 24k Gold Mask, \$159

This lavish treatment (containing both colloidal and 24-carat gold extracts) improves the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles while imparting a golden glow to the skin. Caffeine helps to tighten and firm the skin's surface while peridot, an exquisite gemstone rich in magnesium, re-energises it and helps fight the ageing effects of stress. *EL*

Can't Get

N

After giving birth to two kids naturally and sailing past 40, FRANCESCA THOMPSON started wondering if her mind and body were playing tricks on her. Her previously healthy libido seemed to be deserting her, affecting not only her sense of self but also her relationship with her husband.

Satisfaction?

I'd always had what I regarded as a pretty normal libido, but something had definitely changed for the worse. Why had my interest in sex and sexual satisfaction waned so badly? Could it be to do with the vaginal laxity that seemed an inevitable part of giving birth to two children? Was my marriage in jeopardy? Was this condition just an unavoidable part of motherhood and impending middle age? And – most importantly – was there anything at all I could do about it?

With the lyrics of the famous Rolling Stones song in my head, I went along for a consultation with Dr Sylvia Ramirez from **Cutis Medical Laser Clinic**, who offers a ground-breaking medical procedure called Viveve that is designed to fix vaginal laxity. Here's what she told me.

What is vaginal laxity?

Not unlike facial laxity, vaginal laxity is caused by a decline in the tissue collagen of the skin. A natural part of the ageing process, it is further compounded by the unavoidable stretching of the vagina during natural childbirth. The common result of this stretching and looseness is a loss of friction during sexual intercourse, which can lead to the loss of sexual sensation and pleasure – both for the man and for the woman.

Why have I not heard of it until recently?

Even if women are aware of vaginal laxity, the chances of them feeling comfortable enough to discuss it with a friend, let alone a medical professional, are relatively slim. Women are embarrassed

about it, so it's just not something that comes up in conversation. So the majority of women, whether or not they know about the condition, simply live with it and its damaging consequences – relationship issues, a loss of self-confidence and a growing unhappiness.

It's high time women did start talking about the personal and social ramifications of vaginal laxity, if not to their sisters, mothers and friends, then at least to their medical service providers. There is certainly plenty of interest in the subject! If a production called *The Vagina Monologues* could sell out twice in Singapore, it is clear that there's a lot of scope for more open discussion about vaginal laxity as a serious issue.



- In US surveys, half of all women expressed concern about laxity, yet 83 percent of physicians say that it is not discussed during medical appointments.
- Vaginal laxity is the most-noted physical change after a vaginal delivery reported by obstetricians and gynaecologists in the US.



How does Viveve work?

Developed from the radiofrequency (RF) technology used in the Thermage skin-tightening facial treatment, Viveve is a one-off, painless procedure. During the treatment, low-level RF energy is directed to the tissue located at the immediate opening to the vagina. This energy stimulates the growth of the collagen cushion and the tightening of the vaginal opening. It is recommended for women aged up to 55 who have had at least one vaginal delivery.

What happens during the procedure?

Plan on scheduling around one hour of your time at Cutis; the procedure itself takes around 30 minutes. No anaesthesia or prior preparation is necessary. It is as simple as removing your underwear, cleaning the vaginal area thoroughly and donning a gown.

Once you're seated in a big comfortable chair, a towel is placed over your lap. A treatment tip, about the size of a thumb, is guided carefully into the opening of the vagina. This treatment tip emits a warm pulse of energy, following by a cooling sensation; and the alternate heating and cooling continues as the tip is rotated around the vaginal opening.

We find that having a relaxed conversation is a pleasant distraction from the procedure, helping patients feel at ease despite the intimacy of the situation.

What's the effect, and how much does the treatment cost?

It takes up to a month for the treatment impact to be noticeable, and several months to achieve the full tightening effect. Improved friction translates to greater sexual sensation, with the flow-on effect being more enjoyment of sex and a better relationship. It's a one-off treatment that costs from \$4,200 upwards.

Any downtime?

Avoid using tampons and sexual intercourse for the first two days after treatment, during which the area may feel tender. *u*

Cutis Medical Clinic
cutislaserclinics.com

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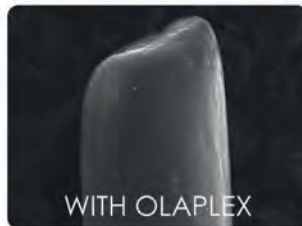
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A woman is lying on her back on a bamboo mat, receiving a back massage. Her eyes are closed, and she has a relaxed expression. Her arms are bent with her hands resting near her head. Two hands are visible, one on her upper back and another on her lower back. To her right, there are several spa-related items: a small vase with white orchids and yellow buds, a large red candle, and a dark wooden box containing massage tools. The background is a bamboo screen.

Say Ahhh!

Overdue for some much-needed “me time?” One of these luxe massages, treatments and facials could be just the ticket.

Seviin Spa

TANGS at TANG Plaza
310 Orchard Road
6738 6618 | tangs.com

The treatment: Dior Prestige Regenerating Ceremonial facial (\$250 for 90 minutes, or \$350 for 120 minutes).

The experience: Stepping into Seviin at TANG Plaza feels like finding a hidden getaway right in the heart of the city hubbub. The relaxed atmosphere and stylish interior of the spa, coupled with the friendly and helpful staff (both reception and service), reminded me of checking into a luxe resort.

As with all other Dior treatments, my appointment started with a short session of massage to knead away tension and stimulate energy flow. The lights were dimmed and I closed my eyes to enjoy every minute of the back and shoulder massage, which I really needed after long hours at the computer.

Next came the facial, which started with cleansing and toning, followed by a skin analysis and evaluation. As someone new to facials, I was quite worried about the pain of extraction, but my fears were quickly overturned – it turned out to be nothing but a tingling sensation, all thanks to my beautician's nifty hands.

What really stole my heart, however, was the mask, a unique liquid-activated concoction exclusively used in Dior facial treatments. It had the magical effect of making my jawline look slimmer and my cheeks less puffy immediately after. The session ended with a nice cup of tea and a couple of quality biscuits – just how I think every pampering session should end, really!

Winding down: I left the spa feeling relaxed, happy and light, as if I'd just been through a skin detox session. The next morning I was welcomed with visibly clearer skin without any extraction marks. It also looked more radiant and smooth, with my makeup applying like a dream.

– Anthia Chng



Heavenly Spa

The Westin Hotel
12 Marina View, Asia Square Tower 2
6922 6888 | westin.com/singapore

The treatment: Revitalize Massage (\$160 for 60 minutes, \$220 for 90).

The experience: First-world problems such as too many nights out on the Rosé and jet-lag from a long trip home had taken their toll on my body: enter the Revitalize.

Given a cup of warm, detoxifying apple and cinnamon tea on arrival, I donned my exceptionally snuggly robe and slippers and was invited by my therapist (Riza) into the spacious and calming treatment room. This was after an hour spent road-testing the hot tub with its fabulous view, and the tropical rain shower and steam room, available to all spa guests. After choosing my body balm scent of orange blossom and jasmine, while having my feet gently but thoroughly exfoliated, I slid into position on a comfortable bed. Even before the actual massage started, I must admit, I already felt super relaxed.



It's amazing how just an hour of "me time" can help rebalance the mind.

This unique treatment combines three cultures: Oriental, focusing on the back, using Gun Fa, a special rolling device; Malay, focusing on the abdomen, aimed at aiding digestion; and Indian, for the feet and legs, and using a Kansu bowl – a little metal bowl with properties that dispel body heat and boost energy.

I don't want to be as cheesy as to use the term "cleansing the aura", but the sweeping movements used in this massage, notably during the Oriental segment, really did leave the mind and body feeling cleansed.

The treatment was like nothing I'd tried before: relaxing while at the same time energising. The body balm has kept my

skin supple and hydrated for a few days now, so it's got staying power (and yes, I have showered!). And the combination of three techniques used in the massage means you don't get bored during your treatment. (It sounds funny to think one would ever be bored in a massage, but you know what I mean!)

Winding down: Riza rang the little bell and spritzed some scent over me to signal the end of my treatment and I was led to the peaceful ladies' lounge. The curtains had been drawn (when open there's an incredible view over to Chinatown!) and some hot green tea and superfoods were waiting for me. Guests can remain here for as long as they like and then go and use the spa facilities again if they wish.

– Emi Finch



St Gregory Spa

Level 4, Pan Pacific Singapore
7 Raffles Boulevard, Marina Square
6826 8140 | panpacific.com

The treatment: CACI (pronounced "KC") non-surgical facelift (\$220 for 60 minutes).

The experience: An initial cleanse with Elemis products relaxed me, and

was followed by the application of a cooling collagen gel to moisturise. Then the procedure began. Looking disconcertingly like jumper leads for a stalled car battery, the metal roller balls on the end of the CACI "wand" deliver a fine electric current to the skin. It was moved from my décolletage and up to the neck in repeated motions, along the neckline, then along the lines from mouth to nose.

Next, my therapist focused on the area around the eyes (a safe enough motion, even though I could see occasional flashes of light through closed eyes), then finally the forehead, along the hairline and into the hair (where I imagine they cut and lift during real surgical facelifts.)

The experience wasn't calming, with slightly more uncomfortable pressure to start, which I then relaxed into; it felt like a workout for my skin, or a firm massage.

Winding down: My skin was slightly red and puffy, but firmer and definitely brighter. It felt warm and somehow "activated", and the pleasant tingling feeling continued for a few hours. The skin on my neck was tighter, and the finer lines significantly plumped up. Dark circles under my eyes were a little reduced and my combination skin felt smoother and evenly moisturised.

– Danielle Rossetti

ESPA

Equarius Hotel, Resorts World Sentosa
6577 8880 | rwsentosa.com

The treatment: Hammam Ritual (\$225 for 60 minutes).

The experience: When I recounted my previous unforgettable hammam episode – in a centuries-old Damascus bath house at the hands of a hairy, rotund and assertive Syrian man who spoke no English – the staff at ESPA assured me that their signature experience would be quite the opposite: relaxing and yielding no surprises.

Feeling relieved, I wallowed for half an hour in the outdoor vitality pool and soothing onsen pool before therapist Fanny beckoned me into the enormous marble-tiled hammam room, heated to around 40 degrees. Dressed in a black swimsuit and sarong, she thoroughly explained what was ahead.

The majority of the hour was spent lying on the heated marble bed enjoying a sequence of treatments interspersed with buckets and buckets of hot water: a wonderful body scrub with a traditional mitt and black olive soap; a full-body foam massage; a marine mud mask; and a divine hair cleanse, treatment and scalp massage with ESPA products. Every pore of my body felt spotless, so I was surprised when Fanny suggested I sit in the adjoining sauna for a few minutes, to sweat, as a conclusion to the treatment. This is a total body experience encompassing a bit of everything, which will leave you feeling clean and pleasantly weary.

Winding down: After the sauna it took a while for the redness and heat to subside from my face, so I chilled out in the tea lounge with a refreshing drink until I felt ready to go. I could have had a bite to eat at the spa restaurant, Tangerine, or napped in the dedicated sleeping room, but I thought I was alert enough to head home and carry on with work. Unsurprisingly, I fell asleep within 10 minutes of getting home – and felt amazing when I woke up an hour later.

– Katie Roberts



Willow Stream Spa

Fairmont Hotel
80 Bras Basah Road
6339 7777 | fairmont.com/singapore/willow-stream

The treatment: Dream Time Ritual (from \$268 for 90 minutes).

The experience: There 's something very relaxing about being at a luxury hotel spa, and the Fairmont has that international vibe, with quite a few tourists here too. It feels like a mini holiday break!

The back massage lasted for half an hour, and the bed was slightly heated and very comfortable. The oil felt rich and luxurious, and the massage, which was mostly effleurage (circular stroking movements) was relaxing; at the same time, my masseur seemed to know which areas to focus on and was firm when needed. Next came a hot stone massage, which felt a little more intense, like it was working the muscles more deeply below the surface; but it wasn't uncomfortable, and the sensation felt good on the skin.

The rejuvenating facial portion of the ritual uses Australia's premium skincare line, Gaylia Kristensen, which contains state-of-the-art molecular polypeptide and protein ingredients.

What I loved most about the session was the feeling of being wrapped up in a luxurious and light duvet during the facial – it was like going back to being a baby. Then, while the facemask was on, my arms, hands, calves and feet were massaged. It was glorious.

Winding down: My complexion looked very good for days afterwards. The natural botanicals in the skincare definitely managed to brighten my skin – quite a few people commented on it. I felt calm afterwards and enjoyed sitting in the relaxation area with my cup of tea. The spa pools looked very inviting, but I did have to get back to work!

– Rebecca Bisset

Damai Spa

10 Scotts Road, Grand Hyatt Hotel
6416 7156
singapore.grand.hyatt.com/hyatt/pure/spas

The treatment: ESPA Deep Muscle Massage with Hot Stone (90 minutes, \$250).

The experience: The word *damai* means “peace” in the Malay and Indonesian languages, and this is reflected in the feeling of tranquillity that envelops you on entering the Grand Hyatt’s very elegant spa. There are eleven spacious spa rooms, each equipped with a private bathroom. Already relaxing as I’m wrapped in a soft robe, I’m seated in the massage area where my feet are bathed in warm water. After breathing in a range of signature scents from the ESPA range, I select the “energising” scent, which is citrusy and refreshing.

My therapist is from Thailand, and very experienced in hot stone massage. I lie face down and she offers my chosen scent for me to breathe in deeply, while the warm river stones are heating. Beginning with a calming back massage using her hands, she then

introduces the stones, which are instantly soothing. The long massage strokes allow the muscles to absorb the heat of the stones and the effect is deeply penetrating.

The treatment is tailored to focus on the areas where I carry the most tension, across my neck and shoulders. The whole body is massaged; I find the stones particularly effective on my legs and shin area, and the back of my neck, where the stones are left to rest while I’m treated to a scalp massage using a Pink Hair and Scalp Mud.

Winding down: Post-treatment I feel relaxed and refreshed. After enjoying a cup of hot ginger tea in the treatment room, I leave carrying that sense of *damai* with me. In the days that follow, my shoulder muscles are tender to begin with, but the sensation soon subsides!

– Amanda Broad



Auriga Spa

Capella Singapore
1 The Knolls, Sentosa Island
65915023 | auriga-spa.com

The treatment: Auriga Signature Massage. I chose the New Moon treatment, based on Swedish Massage techniques, which promised a deep and stimulating full-body muscle massage to revitalise and invigorate body and spirit (\$180 for 60 minutes).

The experience: Auriga offers the chance to luxuriate in the facilities for 45 minutes to unwind and get into relaxation mode before your treatment begins. Go early to fully appreciate the steam room, ice bath, vitality pool – a hot bath with therapeutic bubbles, which I could have stayed in forever – and the experience showers.

Clothed in the provided bathrobe and slippers, I was then accompanied from the cosy salon to a restful treatment room. My massage therapist Lala asked me some basic questions about my preferences for pressure and areas to avoid. She took my request for complete relaxation seriously and did all she could to make me comfortable, offering an eye mask and eucalyptus to breathe, and even raising my ankles on a bolster. During the massage, she applied pressure where needed, but never made me flinch – in fact, I fell asleep twice during one of the most relaxing massages of my life. To finish my spa experience, Lala applied a hot towel to my feet – a lovely way to revive me – and led me to a salon to “recover”!

Good to know: The spa uses 100 percent natural products from the Organics Pharmacy; my massage included a lovely, lightly scented rose and jasmine oil. Since the signature treatments are dedicated to a particular phase of the moon, they are best experienced when they correspond to the moon’s particular stage – in my case, the new moon.

Winding down: At the end of the hour, I was so relaxed that I needed 20 minutes on a vibrating lounger with a ginger tea to come back to earth. Bliss!

– Katie Peace



Chi, The Spa

The Shangri-La Hotel, Level 1 Garden Wing
22 Orange Grove Road
6213 4818 | shangri-la.com

The treatment: Singapore Heritage Massage (\$185 for 60 minutes).

The experience: The Shangri-La Hotel is only a stone’s throw away from the noise and crowds of Orchard Road. A grandiose lobby leads to the sprawling swimming pool on the floor below; Chi, The Spa, is tucked away in the Garden Wing just past this.

When I informed the therapist that I was in need of some sleep, she forewarned me that the Singapore Heritage Massage uses a lot of Asian techniques, including kneading with the elbows and a focus on specific acupressure points. I also asked for particular attention to be paid to my back, shoulders and head, and for her to avoid the three toes I’d managed to stub the day before.

The treatment was invigorating and relaxing in equal measure, with much time spent on kneading out the knots in my back, and then a more sweeping and relaxing massage on my legs and arms.

It ended with my favourite part, a head massage. The therapist had also remembered to ignore the three injured toes, which I was grateful for!

Winding down: After the treatment I was escorted to the relaxation room, settled onto a comfy couch and tucked in by my therapist with a warm blanket. Sipping tea while reading a magazine, I could easily have stayed a lot longer, if only I could afford the time!

– Amy Brook-Partridge



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One Farrer Hotel & Spa

1 Farrer Park Station Road
6363 0101 | onefarrer.com

The treatment: Spa Indulgence for two, with an Ultimate Body Massage and Relaxing Aromatic facial (120 minutes, from \$219).

The experience: Located just above Farrer Park MRT (and round the corner from Mustafa Shopping Centre), One Farrer Hotel & Spa really feels a world away from the busy, hectic streets of nearby Little India. One of the first things that always hits me when walking into the hotel is the wonderful scent in the air – it's a really nice touch and gives an almost immediate sense of calm.

Situated on the fifth floor, the spa is located next to a large gym and grand outdoor Olympic-sized swimming pool on a roof terrace with views of the city. After being introduced to our therapists, my partner and I were led into our changing



areas (there are separate areas and spa facilities for men and women), and then along an expansive corridor, dimly lit with treatment rooms on either side. We were then settled into a treatment room, on a heated bed to warm up the muscles.

First came the massage, which focused on kneading out knots in every part of the body. My therapist was evidently very experienced, finding the most tense parts of my body (without my guidance!), such as my upper back, and paying particular attention to them. It was a soothing and effective hour that passed way too quickly!

Next came the facial, which uses the heavenly-scented products from French aromatherapy brand Decleor. After finishing a course of medication a few months back, I'm still suffering from

sensitive and reactive skin, so my therapist adapted my facial to include products to hydrate and soothe rather than exfoliate and renew. After the treatment, my skin felt clarified and supple, and my skin tone was much more even.

Once the treatment was finished, we were then free to pass the time using the spa area's various facilities, which include a sauna, steam room, whirlpool, plunge pool and hot pools.

Winding down: After spending the next hour or two indulging in all these, it was time for a spot of sweet herbal tea to revive the senses. Stepping out into the hustle and bustle of the city, my partner and I both felt like we'd enjoyed an escape at a private little oasis.

– Susannah Jaffer

So SPA

Sofitel Singapore Sentosa
Resort & Spa
30 Allanbrooke Road
6708 8358 | sospasentosa.com



The treatment: So Glowing experience, a three-hour-and-15-minute, five-course spa extravaganza for \$395.

The experience: The friendly spa staff held an umbrella overhead as I was whisked away to my own private villa – it actually felt like I'd stepped right into Bali. After selecting my preferred oils and scrubs (coconut and vanilla for me!), and receiving a quick foot soak, I started my experience with the super-relaxing body scrub.

Following my full-body exfoliation was a tropical body wrap, during which I drifted in and out of consciousness, thanks to the soothing scalp massage (what else to do when you're waiting for your body to hydrate beneath layers of plastic wrap and blankets?) – it was glorious. And that was just the beginning! I rinsed off in my private bathroom and excitedly got back on the table for my one-hour So Relaxing Massage, a full body rubdown with a focus on my back, as requested. This was followed by an

express facial, which included a cleanse, scrub and mask.

Winding down: Feeling blissed out and smooth-skinned, I relaxed in the steam room and Jacuzzi before emerging to snack on a fresh fruit platter (included in the spa package) by the pool. If it were sunny, I would have stayed all day to lounge by the main pool, lie on a raft in the “floating” pool and indulge in the mud pool – there's even a meditation area in the Outdoor Spa Garden. But, since it was raining, that'll just have to wait until next time; in fact, I was kindly provided with a complimentary pass to use the facilities on a rain-free day – something they give to spa guests when the weather isn't ideal for taking advantage of everything So SPA has to offer.

With such a fabulous selection of spa packages and treatments, not to mention a Bali-esque escape feel, you can bet I'll be back very soon – whether it be with a group of girlfriends or my husband. *æ*

– Amy Greenburg



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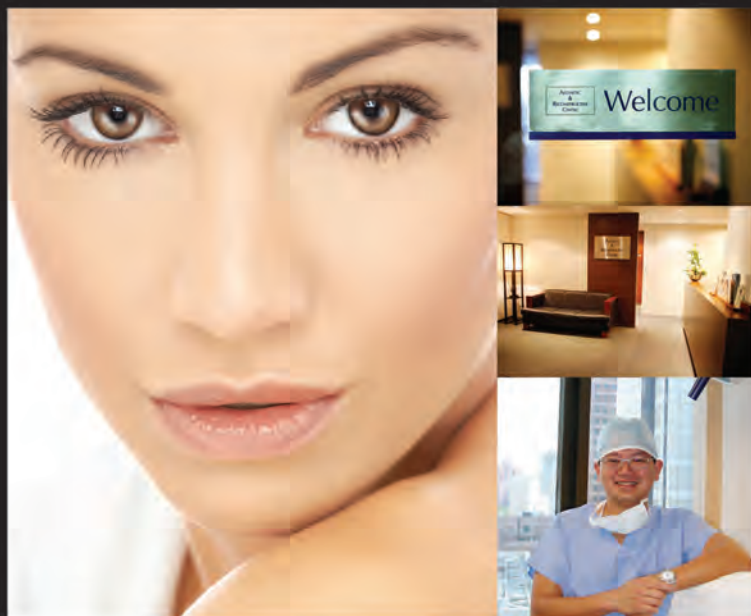
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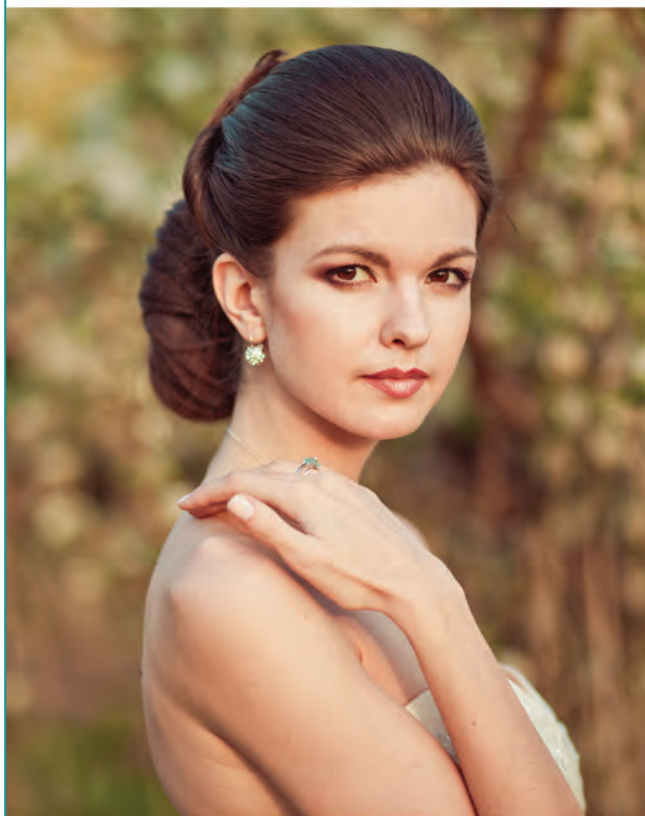
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- No bleaching is used
- All highlights come with a 10-day free touch-up
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Visage specialises in Caucasian hair.

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- Graduated from the University of New South Wales, Australia (1998)
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- Registered as a Medical Practitioner with the Medical Board of Australia
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HEALTH & FITNESS

288

Work it!

Different types of training reviewed, plus expert tips on getting more out of your workout



280

News: The latest on Singapore's health and fitness scene

284

Give It a Shot: Bacterial meningitis, and the importance of the Meningitis B vaccination

298

Call the Chiro: How chiropractic care can do more than ease back pain

What's New



SIGHT CHECK

Though you may not realise it, even small vision changes can affect your work performance – contributing to eye fatigue, headaches and blurred vision, which can be super-distracting and lead to loss of concentration. So, what better time to check your eyesight than returning to work and school after the summer holidays? Currently offering 50 percent off its Comprehensive Eye Exams, Bukit Timah-based **Clarity Eyecare** will not only check your prescription but also the overall health of your eyes, and provide consultation on lens selection and eyewear options – choose from brands like Gucci, Dita, MCQ and Kate Spade, among other designer labels. Be sure to ask Clarity's optometrists about Blue Protect lenses for computer work, Drivesafe lenses for better driving vision at night and Transition lenses for UV protection. As a designated Acuvue Experience Centre, Clarity also provides guidance for contact lens wearers. #01-22A, The Grandstand, 2002 Turf Club Road. **6463 0878 | clarityeyecare.com.sg** ▲

New Doc on Duty

The **Counselling Place** has welcomed Dr Marthe van der Donk to its team of international therapists. With specialised training in CogMed coaching, Marthe works with children, adolescents and adults experiencing cognitive problems such as working memory failure, and strategies for staying focused,

as well as time-management and organisation skills. The Counselling Place offers in-person and



Skype counselling, life coaching and psychological assessment in English, German, Spanish, Dutch, Polish, Mandarin and Cantonese. #04-323 The Plaza, 7500A Beach Road. thecounsellingplace.com

Fierce Foursome

This month, team up with three of your running buddies for the second edition of the **ASICS City Relay**, returning to the Singapore Sports Hub on 24 September. Choose from the full marathon, in which each team member runs 10.5 kilometres, or the half marathon race, in which each teammate runs 5.25 kilometres – both routes will have you running along the Kallang River. Flag off is at 6pm. Register by 12 September at cityrelay.com.sg. ▼



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Yoga, Anywhere

In addition to having just launched a new studio at Asia Square Tower 2, **Pure Yoga** has also unveiled **MyPureYoga.com**, a free online video platform offering a range of classes at different levels, an *asana* library ("how-to" poses), and a selection of other yoga videos featuring certified Pure Yoga teachers. From beginners starting their yoga journey to experienced practitioners, this complimentary resource aims to supplement practice outside of regular classes. Simply select your preferred language and follow the videos wherever you are. ▼



A Class for **EVERY BODY**

Better Bodies Boot Camp, which has been a fixture on the Singapore boot camp scene for years, has expanded its offerings to include **Better Bodies Group Fitness** classes for clients of all fitness levels and ages. With over 30 years of experience combined, Kayla, Sanem and Toni – who were all previously at recently closed California Fitness – are dedicated to making their clients sweat with indoor and outdoor classes that include ABT (abs, butt, thighs), boot camp, Booty Camp, Pilates and TRX at various locations such as Singapore Botanic Gardens, NUS at Evans Road and United Square. For more information and class schedules, call **9691 5883** or visit **bootcamp.com.sg**. *Expat Living* readers can enjoy their first session for free! ▲

Coming up **Walk for a Cause**

Every bit counts when you're raising money for cancer – do your part by signing up for this year's Pink Ribbon Walk, flagging off at 5pm on 1 October at Event Square at Waterfront Promenade (next to the Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands). Participation in the 4km "fun walk" will help boost breast cancer awareness, show support for survivors and raise funds for the Breast Cancer Foundation's support group programmes and awareness outreach. Register at **pinkribbonsingapore.org**.



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Health Matters

– Get Cooking



Life is not too short to cook from scratch, says VERNE MAREE. But it is certainly too short to eat bad food.

Get into the kitchen and cook, urges American food writer and philosopher Michael Pollan in *Cooked*, his latest and perhaps most brilliant bestseller. It may be the the most important thing that you as an ordinary person can do to improve your and your family's health and wellbeing, connect better with your children, reform the food system, achieve a greater degree of self-sufficiency – and even acquire a deeper understanding of the natural world and our role in it.

Out of balance

To his credit, Pollan is not trying to bully women back into the kitchen; and he fairly acknowledges that the demise of cooking from scratch has helped liberate women from the drudgery of housework. Instead, he says: “Cooking is too important to be left to any one generation or member of the family; men and children need to be in the kitchen, too, and not just for reasons of fairness and equity, but because they have so much to gain by being there.”

Britain's most famous French chef, Michel Roux, would agree with him. According to him, children are not learning to cook and eat properly, and that's because their parents are failing to teach them. Their reliance on supermarket convenience foods is partly to blame, he says.

No doubt I'm biased towards this book: Though she worked full-time, my own mother cooked a lovely, healthy meal from scratch every night of my childhood – and she taught me to do the same.

The Cooking Paradox

In his introduction to *Cooked*, headed “Why Cook?”, Pollan highlights what he calls the Cooking Paradox: The less time people devote to cooking – and Americans spend an average of only 27 minutes per day, only half what they spent in the mid-sixties – the more time they spend thinking about cooking, reading about cooking and watching *other* people cooking. In fact, most people spend more time watching cooking programmes than they do in their own kitchens.

The reason for this, he postulates, is that there are things about cooking that people really miss. After all, anthropologists like Claude Lévi Strauss have identified cooking as “a defining human activity” – no other species cooks its food. It should be no surprise, then, that watching *MasterChef* or *Cupcake Wars* strikes a deep emotional chord in those of us who have “handed over the preparation of most of our meals to the food industry”.

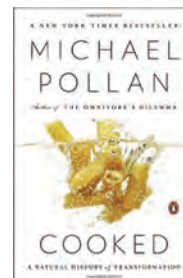
The Temptation

I picked up Pollan's remarkable *Cooked* at Kinokuniya, just before leaving to spend three months on a boat on the river Thames, in England. The timing was serendipitous: Supermarket ready meals are not a big thing in Singapore, but they are in the UK; my devotion to cooking from scratch was going to be tested.

Our Dutch-style barge has a full kitchen, and I've had great fun shopping at the local supermarkets – not only are they bursting with fabulous British and European fresh produce and other ingredients, but everything is so much cheaper than in Singapore.

But I was also genuinely impressed by the range of ready meals, either chilled or frozen. Not just the pizza, lasagne or cottage pie I remembered, but gourmet-like Western meals and representations of just about any ethnic cuisine you can think of.

It seems that each of the chains sells a version of the “Indian Meal for 2”: Tesco's, for example, is a 1.5kg package of chicken tikka plus chicken korma, complete with onion bhajis, pilau rice and naan, and goes for around £6 – less than S\$12 at the current post-Brexit exchange rate. I had to try it.



The Disillusionment

Though the stuff smelt pretty enticing to begin with, the various tastes, flavours and textures simply did not live up to the promise of the colourful packaging. Life is too short to eat bad food; and so it was that I stocked my new pantry with ghee, whole spices, masala and the rest from wonderful Waitrose, and went straight back to cooking my own favourite veg curry from scratch. (Cue husband Roy, breathing a noisy sigh of relief.)

Plenty has been written about what's wrong with ready meals, including a recent article by the British Dr Richard Hoffman. Apart from generally high levels of calories, salt, sugar and bad fats, he notes, there's a lot else that you might not find on the label. Just for starters:

- **Nutrients lost** to mass-production cooking processes. Remember, vitamin contents listed on labels refers to what was in the raw ingredients, not in the final product.
- **Substitution of unhealthy ingredients** for healthy ones – rapeseed oil in pizzas and hummus, for example, instead of the olive oil traditionally used; another example is cheap black olives, nutritionally depleted by the addition of ferrous gluconate (for colour stabilising).
- **Carcinogens** (cancer-promoting compounds) in meats roasted or grilled at high temperatures; **AGEs** (advanced glycation end-products) in stuff like chicken nuggets and kebabs, linked to diabetes and dementia.

When you cook for yourself, on the other hand, you know exactly what's going into your mouth; you can choose the best ingredients you can afford, and you can prepare them so as to retain or even enhance their goodness.

Not Your Problem?

Though Pollan writes mainly about Americans, the decline in cooking is a global problem – and Singapore is no exception. Supermarket ready meals are not at issue here; what is, is that most Singaporeans can't cook. In a 2014 survey, though 93 percent described themselves as “passionate about food”, 65 percent admitted to having “limited” or “disastrous” cooking skills. The solution, of course, is to rely on delicious, cheap hawker fare with dubious nutritional content.

Most expats love the local food, too – after all, what's not to love about roti prata with curry gravy, creamy-spicy laksa and Old Chang Kee's chilli crab puffs? – and indulge in it frequently. And, for many families who do eat home-cooked meals, those meals are often prepared by a live-in helper.

Cooking is no longer mandatory, as Pollan points out; it has become elective. The time saved by not having to cook could go towards following our careers and pursuing our dreams. There's no doubt that cooking from scratch takes a lot of time, planning, energy and creativity.

But as far as I'm concerned, it's well worth the effort, and one of the best possible legacies you can hand down to your children. No pressure, then! *el*



Protection Against Infection

An infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord, bacterial meningitis is a very serious health concern, particularly for babies and young children. We asked DR LEO HAMILTON of **International Paediatric Clinic** (IPC) to explain the illness, and to tell us why protecting our families with the Meningitis B inoculation is so crucial.

What exactly is Meningitis B and who is most at risk?

Meningitis B is a strain of bacteria that causes meningococcal infection, a type of bacterial meningitis that can cause a serious bacterial infection of the blood.

While several different types of bacteria can cause bacterial meningitis, in most of the world – especially in the UK, Ireland, and Australia – meningitis B is the most common cause. It's frequently seen in children under five years of age, though there is a secondary peak in adolescence; babies under five months are most at risk.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of meningococcal disease typically include a fever and bruising; most suffering from the disease look rapidly unwell. Some may have a stiff neck, but sometimes the infection is just in the blood and doesn't cause classic meningitis symptoms. The bacteria that can cause meningitis is spread by coughing, but most people exposed never develop symptoms.

How serious is bacterial meningitis and how can it be avoided?

Meningitis B is an aggressive illness that can rapidly lead to death if not identified or treated early. Even in those that are treated early, a high number will be left with long-term problems such as hearing loss, seizures and learning difficulties, and if there's a bloodstream infection, it can lead to loss of limbs. Vaccines are the only way to prevent meningitis, and they have almost eliminated some types of meningitis.

Tell us about the meningitis vaccine. Are there any side effects?

The meningitis vaccine was developed by Bexsero and is available in our clinic. For the UK schedule, the first dose is offered to all babies at two months old, followed by two later doses. There is a catch-up schedule for all older children. The jab is given in the arm for children over a year in age; for babies less than a year, it's given in the thigh.

Clinical trials were tested on around 8,000 children and adults, and studies showed that the vaccine has the same side effect profile as most of the other childhood vaccinations: mild fever, swelling, irritability, discomfort and rashes. By the end of 2013, over 640,000 doses were administered to adults and children throughout 19 countries, and no serious adverse effects were reported. *a*

If you'd like your child to be vaccinated against meningitis B, contact IPC to make an appointment. The clinic's doctors can discuss the vaccine in more detail, and give you a schedule of doses required, dependent on your child's age.

International Paediatric Clinic is at #11-06 Camden Medical Centre, 1 Orchard Boulevard. 6887 4440 ipc-healthcare.com.sg





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EzFit



The workout: One-on-one training with a focus on HIIT (high-intensity interval training) circuits and fat burning.

Best for: Those looking to blast fat and do some serious toning!

Time check: A one-hour session that included a warm-up and stretching to finish.

Recap: I let Vanan know my core problem areas (hips and legs) and that I wanted to try exercises that would help with fat blasting, toning and sculpting. First, he began by taking down details of my medical history and running through a few health-related questions. He also asked me about my past exercise history: what I'd liked in the past, what I thought had worked for me, and how I felt about my current state of fitness. He then took my blood pressure, and explained exactly what the heart readings meant – something I was shocked to realise I'd never understood before! He also used a portable machine to measure my height and weight against my body-fat percentage (needless to say, I wasn't happy with the reading!), as well as the optimum amount of calories I should be eating to maintain my current weight.

Then it was time to warm up, and I started on the cross-trainer for five minutes to increase my heart rate. Next, Vanan created a routine that incorporated working my targeted muscle groups, mixing up a simple jab-cross boxing exercise with sprints, followed by boxing with jumping squats. All the exercises lasted one minute and were then repeated continually. I definitely felt the burn!

The aftermath: Although the workout was extremely tiring, especially as I hadn't done such an intense burst of exercise for a while, I felt surprisingly energised and refreshed after the session, with only minimum soreness the next day. At the very end of my session, Vanan also gave me tips on improving my posture, examining how I stood up straight and observing that I slouch the tops of my shoulders slightly. My session was peppered with lots of little facts and insider tips like this; I can tell he's very enthusiastic and knowledgeable about what he does. It has reignited my passion for circuit training and I've been incorporating some of his tips into my own home workout routine.

Good to know: EzFit trainers are all mobile, meaning they come to you in your home, studio or condo gym – whatever is most convenient.

– Susannah Jaffer



Ultimate Performance

The workout: One-on-one personal training with an emphasis on weights and resistance for fat loss.

Best for: Those who benefit from the extra motivation from personal training and additional attention on maintaining the correct form. Programmes can be designed to help people who are looking for anything from major transformations with fat loss to maintaining or building muscle mass.

Time check: My session was an hour long. Potential clients are encouraged to sign up for a 12-week programme, with three one-hour sessions a week.

Recap: After signing up, clients are given an assessment, which includes “before” photos, as well as a 14-site skinfold test, which measures where you store fat. Luckily, my face fared pretty well, but the test also highlighted problem areas such as triceps, stomach and thighs. These measurements help the trainer determine the exercises that best suit your body type to reach your goals. I also filled out a detailed three-day food diary, and was encouraged to take pictures of portion sizes. This helped me keep a mental track of my diet, and stay in control of what I was eating.

My trainer (and General Manager of UP Singapore), Chris Richards, then assessed my form during various exercises, and advised me on how to improve them and ultimately work harder.

During my session, I carried out a series of lunges and squats, along with hamstring, arm and shoulder work, and a little cardio using the prowler on the gym’s 30-metre track.

The aftermath: I really benefited from the form advice, and my squats and lunges have definitely improved since my session. I felt sore in my quads and hamstrings, but nothing that stopped me from working out the next day.

Good to know: While UP is primarily based on one-on-one personal training, it does also offer a small selection of group sessions. Don’t expect to walk into a gym with tons of the usual cardio equipment – from what I could see, their focus is primarily weights-based with attentive one-on-one service.

– Amy Brook-Partridge

Level 21, The Octagon, 105 Cecil Street
6536 8649 | upfitness.com.sg



Ooberfit

The workout: One-on-one training with a focus on the diastasis recti (DR) – abdominal separation as a result of pregnancy.

Best for: Me! Sam customises all of her personal training sessions to meet the exact needs of each client – from workouts with a running or spinning focus to boxing and postnatal training, Sam does it all. For me, we focused on “safe” exercises to do with my DR. Exercising with Sam gave me the chance to work on getting toned while weaving in some cardio under her watchful eye. Training regularly with postnatal clients, Sam is knowledgeable about what should and shouldn’t be done, and the extent to which each client can be pushed.

Time check: One-hour session.

Recap: First Sam measured the width and depth of my abdominal separation by placing her fingers into the gap (mine was three-fingers wide) and having me lift my head as if I were doing a crunch. Seeing how my muscles engaged allowed her to better determine the appropriate exercises with which to proceed.

Taking into account my physical limitations, and engaging my pelvic floor in every movement, we worked my entire body. While crunches and planks are normally no-nos for someone in my situation, if done properly, they can actually help. I wouldn’t have been

comfortable doing either movement on my own, so I was happy to have Sam keep an eye on things every step of the way; she even placed her finger in my abdominal gap during crunches (sounds gross but, trust me, it’s worth the peace of mind!) to make sure it was working as it should, and without any bulging of the muscles.

Among other exercises, we used an elastic band for “clams” – a Pilates move for the inner thighs and glutes – and tricep and bicep curls, and used the exercise ball for squats. Sure, these exercises may sound super-easy, but for my DR, they’re about as “hardcore” as I can manage, at least for now. We also did about 15 minutes of cardio: walking on the treadmill on an incline, while I engaged my abdominals correctly.

The aftermath: I was relieved to know I worked out safely, without making my DR worse. My arms were a little sore the next day, which was a nice reminder that I’d done some exercise other than lifting my son!

Good to know: Sam can travel to most locations throughout Singapore for personal training sessions, though some clients choose to come to her condo in the West. She also offers 15 bootcamp sessions a week at various locations.

– Amy Greenburg

8218 8513 | ooberfit.com



Donna O'Shea Fitness

The workout: Personal training with an emphasis on safe prenatal and postnatal workouts.

Best for: Anyone. Donna tailors her fitness programmes to each individual, although she specialises in getting mums back in shape and helping them to lose their “mummy-tummies”.

Time check: One hour.

Recap: Donna suggested concentrating on my core and upper body. As with many new mums, it was my tummy and lack of tone that were bothering me. We started with some light cardio to get my heart rate up: knee raises and curls, followed by bending to touch the floor on alternate sides, with a focus on engaging my core. This was followed by rotating an exercise ball in my arms – it sounds simple, but I was amazed at how tired I got doing this, and how much it worked my core. After each set we did tricep dips. The final round of activity was boxing, which had the dual effect of working my upper body and being great for the core. After each set of punches, I did lunges and arm rotations. The combination of upper body, core engagement and cardio was amazingly tiring and I felt fully done in after the session – but happy, too,

as I knew that we'd focused on my “problem” areas. I also felt that the exercises she'd taught me were things I could repeat at home, even with two kids!

The aftermath: I was shattered after the workout, and convinced I would be stiff the next day. However, to my surprise I felt achy but not too sore. I think it shows the benefits of working out with a professional who knows how far to push you (and ensures you stretch afterwards!). I'd definitely recommend this one-to-one training, especially for mums trying to get back into exercising.

Good to know: Donna can come to you (depending on the location) for indoor or outdoor sessions. She also offers online training programmes if you can't get out (ideal for new mums), and classes at the Botanic Gardens specifically designed for mums, plus a beginners' running class for women looking to improve their running skills and build up stamina and endurance. (Babies, buggies and dogs are welcome!)

– Katie Peace

donnaosheafitness.com



Physique360

The workout: Introductory one-on-one personal training session, with a focus on muscle building, toning and strengthening the core.

Best for: Beginners wanting to tone and build muscle but not looking for major weight loss.

Time check: Private sessions are one hour and include ten or so minutes of stretching at the end, which in itself is like a mini physio session. You're encouraged to warm-up before the trainer gets there so you can maximise your slot.

Recap: This was a full-body strengthening and toning session, working the core, back, arms and legs. The session began with a quick warm-up. We moved straight into 2kg weight lifts (reps of 10) to tone and sculpt the upper arms, shoulders and back, followed by classic lunges to firm the glutes. Caroline then took me through the classic plank pose. Flattening the tummy and tightening my core was one of my concerns and Caroline addressed this by showing me an amazing tummy-tuck exercise – I could feel the burn in my stomach muscles. I've had a suspected labral tear in my right hip joint, so she addressed this too by suggesting a holding pose: lying on my back with knees drawn toward my bottom, and lifting up my core while resting on my shoulders. She stressed the importance of keeping my back firmly on the floor, almost pulling

it into my bottom and tightening the butt cheeks at the same time.

The aftermath: Having never worked out like this before, I thought I was going to be incapable of moving for a few days. Day one was actually okay but, by day two, I was in full-body pain. It made me realise just how unfit I must be, working muscles that hadn't been used since my days of childhood ballet! By day four, my body was feeling normal again and I felt ready to continue the exercises shown.

Good to know: Caroline offered a really personal service. As I was a new client, she called me the day before to go through my medical history and experience, and to ask what I wanted to achieve from the session so that she could come armed with the correct equipment. While Physique360 has a studio in Bukit Timah, where group fitness classes are held, half of the clients opt for personal training sessions at home. The focus is on wellness in addition to the training, so there are tips on healthy eating, vitamins and minerals, plus an amazing stretching session at the end that really adds to the overall effect.

– Emily Finch

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Work It, the Right Way



SAM BLAKEY of **Ooberfit** shares her five top dos and don'ts for working out successfully (and safely!).



#1 Watch your form, not your iPad

Using the iPad to read or watch a movie while working out on an elliptical or cross-trainer means we might just as well go home and put our feet up on the couch! In fact, we'll probably be displaying poor form, our abs will be half-heartedly switched on (if at all) and our heartbeat will be not much above normal. So, we need to lose the device and focus on breathing, intensity and the muscles we're using.

#2 Mix it to max it

Awesome results don't just come solely from doing cardio; mixing up routines to include strength and conditioning is essential for an all-round workout. We begin losing muscle as we leave our 20s behind, so we need to keep building lean muscle tissue to burn more calories and increase our metabolism. We also need to make sure we add strength and conditioning programmes to our workouts at least twice a week.

#3 Don't skip the warm up or cool down

We warm up to increase our heart rate and blood flow to the muscles; so, the better warmed up we are, the more productive and safer the workout. Failure to cool down adequately triggers a sudden drop in our heart rate, which allows blood to pool in the lower extremities causing dizziness and fainting. Stretching out properly is also important as it can help reduce stiffness.

#4 Where's the water?

Why is it that we happily run outdoors with no means of rehydration, but religiously carry water bottles into our classes and the gym? I'm convinced it mostly boils down to laziness. With no handy stand or slot for the bottle, we just can't be bothered. Sure, it may slightly affect our running style when it's full, but we don't need a huge bottle for a short run and in this heat and humidity we really should be hydrating regularly throughout. To not do so is frankly dangerous.

#5 Are you inclined to adjust the treadmill?

There are a dozen different viewpoints on how to get the best out of a treadmill run, and plenty of experts fall out on this point. Run on zero percent and the leg muscles work like they're running outdoors on the flat. So, if you're training for an outdoor race, an incline of one or 1.5 percent will help emulate outdoor conditions. Running on variable inclines also means the muscles work harder as more power is required to move the body forward and against gravity, thus burning more calories and building more muscle. Steeper isn't always better, though. If you're holding onto the rails it means the incline is too high! We should always be able to walk or run with hands free and our body in a straight line. Keeping the workout varied is key, but we don't need to climb a mountain when our challenge is a small hill!

8218 8513 | oobefit.com

Five

FUN WORKOUTS TO TRY NOW

Looking for something different to get your heart revving? Here are five workouts so fun you'll be smiling while you sweat.

#1 Overcoming obstacles

Developed in France, Parkour, which uses movements from military obstacle course training, is a relatively new type of workout that's gaining popularity. The whole idea is to navigate from one point to another without using any assistive equipment – just the body – and in the fastest and most efficient way possible. It involves running, crawling, balancing, climbing, vaulting, swinging, jumping, rolling and other calorie-busting movements. **GymKraft** (gymkraft.com) in Geylang offers a weekly “AdultPark” class, and **A2 Parkour** (a2movements.com) offers kids’ and adult classes (including ladies’ only sessions) in Kallang, plus once-weekly sessions at Raffles Place and Scape.



#2 For kicks

Originally invented by the Korean army to develop strength, speed and survival skills through unarmed combat, taekwondo isn't just a useful self-defence tactic, but a major calorie-buster as well. A full-body workout with kicks, punches, hand and foot blocks, sweeps, joint locks, grappling and throws, this type of training builds strong hip and core muscles, and promotes flexibility, strength, cardio and balance. Offering over 200 classes per week at its Millenia Walk, Katong and Siglap branches, **JH Kim Taekwondo** has beginner, intermediate and advanced level classes for kids, teens and adults looking to practise the art in both group and private, one-on-one settings. jhkim-singapore.com



#4 What's SUP?

If you enjoy stand-up paddle boarding *and* yoga, this one's for you. Incorporating yoga with the movement of the ocean, SUP Yoga (stand-up paddle yoga) is both a challenging and relaxing workout, as you'll get to zen out but also enjoy some major cardio (you'll have to paddle out about 25 metres) and core engagement (balancing is harder than you'd think!). Two-to four-person classes range from \$55 to \$65 per person. Ohana Beach House, 131 Pasir Ris Beach Park. suppyogasingapore.com



#3 At the barre

Bringing together ballet techniques, yoga, Pilates and strength training, a workout at **WeBarre** is designed to transform the entire body by strengthening the core, sculpting and toning muscles and improving posture. The studio offers private and group classes, including the signature multi-level barre class, a pre-natal version and a post-natal Mums and Bubs class (mamas can work out with their infants in carriers!). There's also a HIIT (high intensity interval training) class, which uses props and participants' own bodyweight, in addition to the barre. 86B Tanjong Pagar Road, Level 3. webarre.com



#5 Ice, ice baby

Whether you're a newbie or an old pro, there's lots of fun to be had – and calories to be burned – on the ice. **The Rink** offers group and individual lessons for both kids and adults, including a Core Blades class for beginners, figure- and speed-skating, and ice hockey, or you can opt for some freestyle skating during public skating hours. Level 3, JCube, 2 Jurong East Central 1. For schedules or to book a class, visit therink.sg.



Pre and Post-sweat Sustenance

We all know water is important for staying hydrated before, during and after a workout. But what else can be consumed to help maximise your sweat sesh? CHRIS RICHARDS, General Manager of **Ultimate Performance** (UP) Singapore, reveals his six key tips to workout nutrition.



Pay attention to daily calorie and macronutrient needs first

Your workout nutrition must take into account your daily calorie and macronutrient demands (protein, fat and carbs, for instance) – these should be worked out first, and then distributed throughout the day according to your needs. There's no point in consuming optimal workout nutrition if it means that you don't have enough food left to see you through the remainder of the day – you might end up cheating on your diet at night when hunger strikes. It's far better to compromise on optimal nutrition if it means that the plan is more realistic and enables you to remain compliant.

What's your goal?

Are you trying to build muscle, burn fat or both? Total calories will dictate whether you're gaining or losing weight. However, there are certain strategies you can follow to ensure you're priming the body's internal environment to achieve the desired end result. If fat loss is the primary goal, then you might consider removing carbohydrates from your pre-workout meals, while the opposite is true for building muscle.

For most trainees, the pre-workout meal should contain a source of protein and fat, with carbohydrates added depending on the individual. The leaner the individual, the better they'll handle carbohydrates. However, some people find that, despite being relatively lean, carbs make them feel lethargic. In this case they should be used intra- and post-workout instead.



Carbohydrates

There are a number of things to consider when it comes to carb intake around and during a workout.

Pre-workout carbs

Whether it's throughout the preceding day or in the hours prior to working out, an intake of carbs can help ensure you have glycogen stores available in your muscle, which helps you to train harder, and facilitate the "pump" you may experience while training; this is beneficial if hypertrophy (increasing muscle) is your goal. If you're looking to reduce body fat, pre-workout carbs may also help to ensure some, if not all, of these carbs consumed are used as workout fuel rather than resulting in fat gain.

Intra-workout carbs

A main benefit would be the enhanced "pump" experienced during training, along with an addition to the energy that's available to enhance or extend your training capacity. While this may be useful for those with more experience and more muscle mass, for individuals on a fat-loss-specific programme, it generally wouldn't be necessary.

Post-workout carbs

Depending on how frequently you're training, an intake of post-workout carbs can help speed up the recovery process by replenishing depleted glycogen stores. If fat loss is your primary goal, though, it could be argued that you don't need to replenish these stores after exercise, as the aim is to utilise as many fat stores as energy.

Whey protein and pea protein

Whey protein is absorbed and digested more easily post-workout than solid protein sources. Training places the body under a great deal of stress and directs blood flow away from the digestive system toward the muscles. Many people therefore find it more convenient to consume a protein shake post-workout than to eat an equivalent amount of protein from food. If you've been consuming whey protein for years there's a possibility you may have built

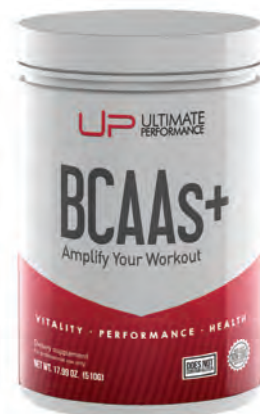
up some resistance or intolerance, which could be limiting your lean gains. If so, a switch from whey protein to a pea protein may result in improved energy and focus, digestion and, ultimately, fat loss.

BCAAs and glutamine

BCAAs (branched chain amino acids) and glutamine can also be used for energy in the absence of carbohydrate. These should be consumed, with water, before and during your workout. Powder is preferable, as capsules can become counterproductive due to the amount you may require. Many brands add excessive sweeteners to make the solutions palatable, but this can lead to possible negative effects, with endocrine disruption potentially affecting gut health. Therefore, a more balanced product with additional glutamine such as UP's BCAAs would be desirable.

Coffee

Coffee is ideally consumed pre-workout as it's well established that caffeine confers a tremendous performance-enhancing benefit to users. Additionally, it can help break down fat tissue and elevate metabolism. We would advise against excessive consumption post-workout, as this will increase stress levels when the aim is to lower them. *EL*



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CHIROPRACTIC & PHYSIOTHERAPY

Three more reasons to get treatment

BY SMITA DESOUZA

Recurring headaches? Can't touch your toes? It may be time to make that call to your chiropractor or physiotherapist.

It's common knowledge that chiropractors and physiotherapists can remedy injuries and backaches, as well as neck and joint pains. But you wouldn't necessarily consider visiting a chiropractor or physiotherapist for a headache. Think again! In addition to headaches, these forms of treatment can ease a number of health conditions such as loss of flexibility and painful symptoms of the chronic condition, fibromyalgia.

#1 HEADACHES: IT'S NOT JUST IN YOUR HEAD

If you've been suffering from persistent headaches, you might want to have your spine looked at.

According to DR TRAVIS FISHER at **Genesis Chiropractic**, headaches are the body's way of signalling that there's a problem that needs to be addressed. Most often they are an indication of a hidden condition called vertebral subluxation, caused by displaced vertebrae, which result in pressure on the nerves that carry information from the brain to the rest of the body. This communication is vital to the proper functioning of your entire body and, if the cause of the headaches is left untreated, it can lead to disrupted communication between the brain and the body, and significant degeneration of correlating body parts.

Unfortunately, given our hectic lifestyles, most people seek to remedy the symptom (the headache) rather than the cause by reaching for quick fixes like painkillers and other short-term solutions like massages.

"In this day and age, you cannot ignore your body biomechanics and expect to live to your potential," says Dr Fisher. "Abnormal spinal health will deteriorate your body from the inside out. This is not even controversial, yet arguably chiropractors are the only predominant health professionals doing anything about it for the health of the public."

How chiropractic care can help

Chiropractic care is a drug-free and surgery-free path to natural healing, and doctors of chiropractic are the only doctors trained to specialise in the detection and correction of the aforementioned vertebrae displacements. Studies have found that chiropractic care is not only the most effective treatment for neck pain and headaches, but also had no unwanted side effects. In 2001, researchers at the US-based Duke University



found that spinal manipulation resulted in almost immediate improvement for those headaches that originate in the neck, and had significantly fewer side effects and longer-lasting relief from tension-type headaches than commonly prescribed medication.

Chiropractors can assess the causes of headaches and provide appropriate treatments including chiropractic adjustments and advice on nutrition, posture, ergonomics, exercises and lifestyle as remedies for many kinds of headaches. They are trained to determine and diagnose the cause of your headache and, if that cause happens to fall outside their scope of practice, they can refer you to the appropriate healthcare provider.

Genesis Chiropractic
#03-02 Thong Teck Building, 15 Scotts Road
genesischiropractic.sg | 9810 9909



#2 FLEXIBILITY: USE IT OR LOSE IT

How a visit to a physiotherapist can help with movement and mobility

It's natural to lose some of your flexibility as you grow older. In the absence of regular exercise, muscles and joints stiffen, and range of mobility is reduced. Over time, daily wear and tear, injuries, and a variety of health conditions can lead to loss of flexibility – so that even the simple act of touching your toes or tying your shoelaces turns into a challenge, and you may begin to experience stiffness or even joint pain.

Spending long hours sitting – whether it be at the office, on the bus, in the car or at home – can adversely affect the body, and contribute to loss of flexibility. Human bodies were designed to move, and regular activity helps keep our bodies healthy. Movement ensures that the joints and bones are strong, the muscles are supple and flexible, and the nervous system is stimulated. Sore shoulders, poor spinal mobility, limited range of motion (due to shortened hip flexors), herniated discs, hardened collagen around tendons and ligaments, and unaligned posture while walking, running or jumping (due to weak gluteal muscles) are just some of the painful conditions that signal the loss of flexibility creeping in.

How physiotherapy can help

Flexibility is an important feature of general health and wellbeing. Being flexible plays a big part in staying active and ensuring increased mobility – both of which are important to staying healthy and pain-free. It's imperative to take short walks during the day, use the stairs and stretch to maximise movement and stay mobile. In advanced cases of loss of flexibility, visiting a physiotherapist can also help.

Taking into account your physical characteristics and expectations in terms of activity levels, the specialist team at **Urbanrehab** helps realign bones and joints with spinal adjustments, and suggests ways to modify your lifestyle. These lifestyle changes could include ergonomic strategies for your workstation, exercises that stretch the muscles and improve mobility, ways to introduce more movement into your daily routine and appropriate sports activities that can help. Ultimately, the aim is to ensure increased flexibility through more movement and mobility.

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#3 FIBROMYALGIA: HOW CHIROPRACTIC CAN HELP

DR WILLIAM CHOI of the **Academy of Chiropractic Clinic** explains how spinal manipulation can ease the pain.

Why is chiropractic care essential for those suffering from fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia is a medical condition characterised by the misalignment of the spine and joints that lead to nerve irritation and pain. Chiropractic care is essential for fibromyalgia as it reduces pain levels, and increases cervical and lumbar ranges of motion.

How can spinal manipulation help relieve symptoms related to fibromyalgia?

Spinal adjustments increase the mobility between spinal vertebrae, which have become tight, restricted or misaligned. Using gentle pressure, stretching, multiple gentle movements of one area or specific high-velocity thrusts, the adjustments aim to realign the bones to their normal position or motion. All these help to relieve pain in the joints, which translates to better sleep and increased mobility.

Is adjustment of the spine sufficient in these cases?

In general, the spine will be the first point of treatment. However, it is a case-by-case basis, depending on the severity. If need be, a full body alignment will be more appropriate in extreme cases. Otherwise, treatment of a specific area will suffice.

Along with chiropractic care, how can lifestyle changes reduce symptoms of fibromyalgia?

The patient should look into these three aspects:

1. Sleep

Cultivate healthy sleeping habits by getting at least eight hours of sleep, and remembering to go to bed early. It helps to have a sleep schedule – go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, and avoid napping. If you don't sleep well the night before, plan your day accordingly – with fewer activities – to avoid aggravating the spine further.

2. Exercise

Exercise is essential, even if it's only for a minute or two at a time. Regular, gentle exercise like walking, swimming and stretching can help ease pain, stress and other fibromyalgia symptoms.

3. Diet

A patient has to make a conscious effort to watch his or her dietary intake. Avoid foods with additives like MSG and aspartame that can increase sensitivity to pain. Increase intake of fruits and vegetables, as most of these are packed with important antioxidants and vitamins A, C, and E, which fight free radicals to keep the body normalised. *a*

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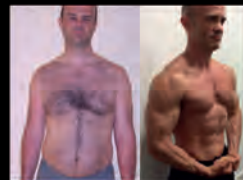
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VIRGO AUG 23 - SEP 22



You may discover a new passion or have to make a choice between two things that you love this month. It could be a confusing September if you're not balanced. However, since Virgos are known for their organised minds and lives, your calm demeanour in analysing the situation will kick into action. Using your instincts and positivity, you're able to look past your restlessness and make the best of the situation. You bring harmony to your circumstances and – *voila* – by the end of month you are crystal clear about where you want to be.

LIBRA SEP 23 - OCT 22



It's time to get out of your thoughts and into your present to make things happen. Be honest and true to yourself regarding what you really desire. There should be no shame or guilt in this. It's the perfect time this month to go and grab opportunities or just get things started for yourself. Gather up that courage and strength to manifest your desires. Put your mind and determination to it and you'll be amazed at how you can turn things around for yourself.

SCORPIO OCT 23 - NOV 21



It's a test of your inner strength this September. You may find that the same people that supported you in the past have now turned against you. Whatever the reason may be, you'll need to stand your ground – something these people won't be expecting you to do. Stick to your cause and don't budge. Let your inner light and belief shine and you'll be surprised at how they retreat. There is never a problem without a solution, and in this case you'll be pleased to know that you'll be granted two equally good paths to tackle the issue at hand. It's a process you must go through, as there is a lesson to be learned from it.

SAGITTARIUS NOV 22 - DEC 21



You'll be doing lots of fine-tuning this month. You may find that competition is stiff when it comes to winning that contest, or getting that grade or promotion, or even a new client for your business. Opportunities are granted to you to make those necessary improvements in the form of help from a more experienced source. Accept all the assistance you can get if you do want to make it through the month with success. However, do expect things to get sluggish at times – we are, after all, in the month of a Mercury Retrograde.

PISCES FEB 19 - MAR 20



A decision needs to be made, but you really aren't in the mood to make it. You're not seeing the lure of any of the options. So you'd rather sit tight and wait things out. Under normal circumstances, it wouldn't be right to procrastinate like this, but since it's a Mercury Retrograde I don't blame you for taking such a stance. The old and familiar feels comforting and you'd rather bask in it while you can. But be warned: it won't be long until the Mercury Retrograde passes and these issues will be staring you in the face again. So, use this time to weigh things up for yourself.

GEMINI MAY 21 - JUN 20



Balance is your key for the month of September. There seem to be two equally attractive options that will surface. This is a Mercury Retrograde month, and it would be ideal if the decision could be delayed to next month. This would give you plenty of time to digest and make sense of the information before you. It's also important during this time to read over any fine print; communication is crucial, so be as clear as possible when dealing with others – when in doubt, ask and ask again until you're crystal clear. And don't forget to weigh your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to making this decision. Good luck!

CAPRICORN DEC 22 - JAN 19



September is the perfect month for initiating a second source of income. If you have always felt like you wanted to start a blog or sell those knitted scarves online then waste no time! You'll find that there seems to be no end to the flow of creative juices, so milk it while it lasts. You just never know where this venture might lead you; it could be that there won't be a need for the day job anymore, or it might just end up being a nice little nest egg for you and your loved ones.

ARIES MAR 21 - APR 19



No grass is greener, trust me. Rather, it's all about what you make out of your situation. The best advice is to take everything in life in moderation. Discontent will set upon you when you set yourself expectations that are too high. Plod on, and don't give up. You're most likely near the end of this particular path, and small but sure steps will win the day. Don't let the Mercury Retrograde irk you. It's part and parcel of your learning journey. If the going gets tough, take time out and rest. There will be times this month when your body may feel very weary so do listen to it.

CANCER JUN 21 - JUL 22



It's an interesting month ahead for Cancer. You'll make a discovery about someone or something that may be a hard pill to swallow. What you believed to be true all along has turned out to be false. It's a shock, but you quickly calm down and mollycoddle yourself into believing that hope still exists. The best way to manoeuvre through the month is to trust your instincts – you'll never go wrong this way. There is a good chance of meeting a soul mate this September, someone who could end up being a life partner if you're single, or someone who simply understands and connects with you.

AQUARIUS JAN 20 - FEB 18



Aquarius is most likely going to be the star sign that will feel the effects of the Mercury Retrograde in the least fortunate way. But it's not all doom and gloom. On the contrary, it might be viewed as a time to slow down and analyse rather than charge ahead without strategising. However, since this doesn't sit well with Aquarius, a feeling of restlessness will arise. You'll probably realise what a waste of energy it was to brew up unwanted emotions as the Mercury Retrograde passes. But on the whole, luck and change surrounds you this September so use this to your advantage.

TAURUS APR 20 - MAY 20



It's an emotionally transforming month for Taurus. You will grow as you try to make sense of the chaos around you. You'll apply a different and definitely more mature perspective to relationships, be they familial, friendly or professional, and you'll try to understand why someone would react in a certain way. Your instincts are very much sharpened as they have a large part to play in this transformation. A positive thing to note for the month of September is your improved luck; so if there is something that you would like to make happen, I would say go for it!

LEO JUL 23 - AUG 22



You seem to have understood the don'ts of a Mercury Retrograde very well and put them into practice this month. Keeping still is your game plan, although decisions need to be made. While you do realise you'll need to cut your losses at some point and focus on one thing, whether it concerns your job, business, finances or responsibilities, you also feel the need to sit and mull over things. Action will be taken when you see fit. As for now, you can buy some time, so make the most of September to ensure you put yourself on the right path.

ADVERTISER LIST

AESTHETICS & BEAUTY

Aesthetic & Reconstructive Centre	273
ARC Dental Bali	274
Chez Vous	275
Cutis Medical Laser Clinics	259
Estheclinic	274
GloAesthetics	273
Mendis Aesthetics & Surgery	254
Nila Baby	167
Olaplex	264
SWUK Aesthetics	275
Sylvia's Secrets	276
The Aesthetics Centre	257
The Belle Clinic	277
The Big Blow	276
The Vein Centre	37
The Vein Clinic & Surgery Pte Ltd	17
Visage The Salon	276 & 277

ART

Framing Angie	2 & 3
The Gallery of Gnani Arts	6 & 7

ARTS & LEISURE

BASE Entertainment	
– <i>The Bootleg Beatles and Orchestra</i>	115
Lagardère Sports	
– <i>BNP Paribas WTA Finals Singapore</i>	111
Lunchbox Theatrical Productions	
– <i>Jeeves & Wooster in Perfect Nonsense</i>	99
Melbourne Specialist International School	
– <i>Art Exhibition 2016</i>	105
The Podium Lounge 2016	8 & 9
Wild Rice – <i>Monkey Goes West</i>	137

FAMILY & EDUCATION

Alphabet Playhouse	129
ARThaus	118
Aureus Academy	166
Australian International School Singapore	23
Avondale Grammar School	138
Brighton Montessori	157
Cabaleiro Atelier & Art School	170
Canadian International School	159

Centre Stage School of the Arts	141
Cosmo United Football Academy	118
EtonHouse International School	152
Integrated International School	143
International Medical Clinic	155
JSSL Arsenal Soccer Schools	156
KidZania	117
L'Académie de Danse Singapore	170
Little Mandarins Language Centre	148
Marlborough College Malaysia	151
Marsden Swim School	167
Odyssey — The Global Preschool	41
One World International School	147
Playeum	169
Retract-A-Gate	168
Shaws	123
Singapore American School	13
Stamford American International School	21
Steinway Gallery	167
Swallows and Amazons	164
Tanglin Trust School	125
The Children's Showcase	133
UWC South East Asia	163
White Lodge	160

FASHION

An Cee Chantelle	253
Mohan's Custom Tailors	245
Polysemy	253
Shopping at Tiffany's	251
Stones that Rock	202
Summer Moments	253
Taula Jewellery	251
The Bespoke Club	242
The Shoe. Co.	165
White Ginger	203
Willow & Huxley	252

FINANCIAL, LEGAL & OTHER SERVICES

Chartwell Associates	169
Consilium Law Corporation	169
Engelin Teh Practice	168
First Immigrations	169

Jenny Lai & Co	170
Job Search	170
St. James's Place Wealth Management	113

FOOD & BEVERAGES

Au Petit Salut	200
Bacco Wines	199
Burlamacco Ristorante	178
Colony @ The Ritz-Carlton, Singapore	201
Don Quijote	200
Expat Kitchen	199
Huber's Butchery	198
Kaiserhaus	181
Market Place	189
mezza9 @ Grand Hyatt Singapore	182
Natural Springs	200
Ryan's Grocery	173
Sakurazaka	195
Stellar @ 1-Altitude	177
The S Bar	198
The Westin, Singapore	201
Verre	195
Zafferano	193

FURNITURE & HOME DÉCOR

Arete Culture	57
Artful House	25
China Collection	19
DEEB Designs	95
Dempsey Hill	100
E&A Interiors	69
European Bedding	31
Expat Insurance	53
Finn Avenue	45
Galanga Living	73
Gallery 278 ^L	79
Hacienda Blue	96
HomesToLife	91
HotLotz	70
Just Anthony ^L	27
Lorenzo	63
Mountain Teak Furniture Gallery	76
Ni-Night	95

Legend: (*) IFC - Inside Front Cover IBC - Inside Back Cover OBC - Outside Back Cover (L) Also has leasing options

OHMM	47	Regional Hypnosis Center	306	Tomato Photo	165
Originals	15	smilefocus	302	White Room Studio	170
Sunleaf Shutters	42	Tanglin Medical Clinic	283	Within Images	170
Taylor B Fine Design Group	4 & 5	The Counselling Place	306		
Teak & Mahogany	60	UPFitness	301	SHOPPING & LEISURE	
The Orientalist	10 & 11	Urbanrehab	305	Cluny Court	130 & 131
The Past Perfect Collection	89			Tanglin Mall	103
Treasures of the Raj	85	HOME SERVICES		TANGS	247
Woody Antique House	81	A-Team Amahs & Cleaners	96	White & Black Trading	164
Yellow Cabinet Design Studio	95	Comfy Homes	96		
				TRAVEL	
HEALTH & FITNESS		MOTORING SERVICES		Aliya Seminyak, Bali	211
Academy of Chiropractic Clinic	306	ComfortDelGro Rent-A-Car	39	Bangkok Airways	225
Body Temple	306	Evergreen Rent A Car ^L	69	Banyan Tree Bintan	212
Complete Healthcare International	29	Komoco Car Rentals ^L	134	Bintan Lagoon Resort	205
Core Synergy Studio	305	Wearnes ^L	33	Bintan Resorts	202
Dennis Lim Surgery	304			Golden Sands Resort, Penang	235
Dr Catherine Lee Orthodontics	121	MOVING & RELOCATION SERVICES		Nuala Retreats	235
Dr Ruth Manasseh Psychology Services	305	Allied Pickfords	96	Ombak Lagoi Bay	207
eMenders	293	Asian Tigers Mobility	109	PARKROYAL Serviced Suites	271
Family Dental Centre	281	UniGroup Relocation	87	Radisson Golf & Convention Center Batam	215
G & L Surgical	287			Rawa Island Resort	236
Genesis Chiropractic	303	PHOTOGRAPHY & PRINTS		Seminyak Bali Villa	236
Health & Fertility Centre for Women	303	Brilliant Prints	168	Swiss-Belhotel Lagoi Bay	217
J H Kim Taekwondo	302	Gronow Photography	168	Telunas Private Island & Beach Resort	235
Osteopathic Treatment Centre	305	Littleones Photography	170	The Racha, Phuket	236
Pacific Vein & Endovascular Centre	278	The Studio Loft	170		

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5 Things I Wished I Knew before having a baby

BY MARIA MAI

During my four years living in Singapore, I have met and befriended fantastic women of different ages and from different backgrounds and ethnicities – some with children, some without.

So, when I fell pregnant, I instinctually turned to them to hear their wisdom regarding all things baby. But I got ... nothing. A big *omertà*-style silence.

Here are just a few of the things I wish they might have broken that silence about.

#1 The giving birth

To this day I could not tell you about the birth experience since I ended up having a C-section. But after so many failed attempts to gather information, I realised that the reason why my friends would rather disclose the location of the Holy Grail than talk about birth is because of how painful it is. And, since most women want more than one child, I guess this is where the ancient notion of “selective memory” comes in handy.

#2 The One-Flew-Over-the-Cuckoo's-Nest hormones

Saying that the first week after giving birth I was not myself would be the understatement of the century. Put it this way: I took “changing my mind” to a whole new level. Luckily, my husband had read or been warned about it beforehand, so he just hugged me reassuringly and told me this too would pass. Which – spoiler alert – it did.

#3 The breast. The pump. The formula.

When you're pregnant – and probably because nobody tells you otherwise (no matter how frantically your note-taking is at the prenatal class) – you have this idea in your head about how breastfeeding will go. Something along the lines of: 1. Baby is born. 2. Infant is lifted to breast. 3. He/she latches. *Wrong!* Whoever created this particular vision of the universe is definitely a dude.

#4 The growth spurts – or growth leaps

These are periods that last between a week and a month in which your baby will turn from an adorable little cherub into a gremlin! He/she will kick and scream non-stop for most of the day and nothing – *nothing* – you do will calm them down. I used to joke with my friends that I was going to be the one making the leap – out of the window, that is; but apparently dark humour and babies isn't a good mix ...

#5 The Mary Poppins Complex

When you're a first-timer, you have the impression that everybody else knows exactly what they are doing except for you. But they don't. Don't believe me? Just casually mention to a friend something that your baby (or husband) does that drives you bonkers, and in a matter of seconds she will – hesitatingly at first, but in a full-on rant later – complain about the very same thing.

In the end, no baby book, magazine or well-intended piece of advice could have ever prepared us for the arrival of our little one. Luckily, there is no right or wrong, and trying everything under the sun is part of the fun. And since Little K smiles every time either my husband or I enter the room, I think we're doing a pretty great job ... at least for now. *æ*

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