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Editor's Letter

It takes me a while with some songs to hear certain lyrics correctly. For example, with Taylor Swift's "22", there were a few weeks when I would sing gaily that it was a "perfect night to dress up like hamsters".

For those familiar with the song, you'll know it's supposed to be "hipsters". It's not the only song I've done it to, but luckily most of my singing is done in my car, and the only people that can hear me are my daughters. They think it's very amusing and they generally wait a few weeks before they correct me.

Just the other day I was stopped at a red traffic light having a lovely sing when I realised that the man in a van to the right of me was watching me and laughing. I stopped and smiled sheepishly at him – luckily the light changed to green so I could escape. It's supposed to be good to make people laugh, though, right?

It's definitely my mother's genes; she once shouted out quite loudly at a quiz that the galaxy in question was "the Milky Tray". She calls Boat Quay "Bank Quay"; and it's always "Clarks Quay".

We can all get the wrong end of the stick and misinterpret things, so for us at Expat Living it's that time of year when we want to make sure that we're hearing you loudly and clearly – we want to know who you are and what you like. Yes, it's our Readers' Survey time, and once again we've got some great prizes to entice you; see page 34 for the details.

Unbelievably, it's nearly halfway through the year – it feels like only yesterday we were doing the Christmas card photo. Are you planning a nice holiday? If you haven't organised anything yet, remember there's a heap of travel advice in the mag, and even more online at expatliving.sg.

And while you're there at the website, don't forget to fill in the Readers' Survey form!



Rebecca

REBECCA BISSET
Editor-in-Chief

STAY UPDATED ONLINE @
www.expatliving.sg

NEWS

Keeping you up to date with the latest news and promotions around town, plus heaps of online-only content.

Tip: For fabulous EL travel deals, go to expatliving.sg/travel.

EVENTS CALENDAR

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WHERE TO BUY A COPY

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HOW TO SELL YOUR OLD STUFF

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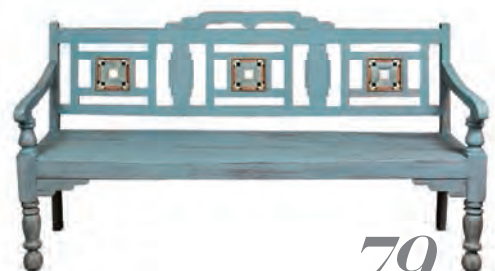
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UPFRONT

New choices and things to do, buy and try



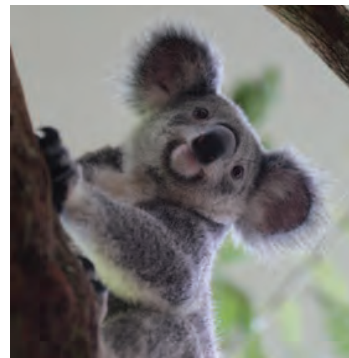
A second cable-car line on Sentosa opens this month, crossing the island from Merlion Station to Imbiah Lookout Station and over to Siloso Point. Not only does the line link Sentosa's attractions, but the views of jungle, sea and sand are pretty special too. Buy a Sky Pass for rides on both the Mount Faber and the new Sentosa lines.

TRIO OF DINOS



Three sauropod dinosaurs are the gargantuan headline fossils at Singapore's latest museum, which opened in April. These beasts roamed the earth 150 million years ago, and their remains are among the thousands of artefacts displayed in the cavernous **Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum**, which is devoted to biodiversity and natural heritage. It's brilliant for a day out with the kids, but do remember to buy tickets in advance

from Sistic (and select a 90-minute slot for your visit); tickets aren't available at the door. National University of Singapore, 2 Conservatory Drive. lkcnhm.nus.edu.sg/nus ◀



KOALA FEVER

In case you were on the moon when they arrived, you may have missed the news that not one, but *four* cuddly koalas are holidaying at Singapore Zoo for six months. The foursome jetted in from their home at Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary in Brisbane, Australia, and will no doubt charm thousands of visitors with their celebrated cuteness. Chan, Idalia, Paddle and Pellita are a 50th birthday gift to Singapore, marking 50 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries. ▲

CAN, LAH!

One of the highlights on the **Singapore Memory Project's** monthly calendar of activities is Lingo Lingo Where You Go. This session explores the origins of Singlish with a talk by Shawn Tan and a screening of J Team Productions' humorous jaunt down memory lane. Events continue through to August in celebration of Singapore's 50 years. 25 July from 1pm to 3pm. Level 5, Imagination Room, National Library Building. iremember.sg

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CALENDAR

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EDGE OF THE WORLD

(UNTIL 14 JUNE)

Contemporary Russian artist Anna Berezovskaya presents her latest exhibition "Edge of the World", featuring works that harmonise romantic narratives with humour and optimism. **REDSEA Gallery, 9 Dempsey Road. For more information, visit redseagallery.com.**

GEMS PLAYGROUP

(UNTIL 15 JUNE)

Parents and helpers are invited to an adult-accompanied playgroup hosted at GEMS World Academy for children up to three years old. **GEMS World Academy Indoor Playroom. For more information, visit gwa.edu.sg.**

METHOD ACTING

(UNTIL 23 JUNE)

Recommended for both actors and non-actors, this eight-week, intermediate-level workshop is the second of a two-part series on Lee Strasberg's Method of Acting. It goes deeper into the concept and process of relaxation and sense memory. **Haque Centre of Acting & Creativity, 22 Dickson Road. For registration and more information, visit methodactingasia.com.**



Charles Fazzino

COLOURS OF SINGAPORE

(UNTIL 27 JUNE)

World-renowned New York pop artist Charles Fazzino presents a 3D solo exhibition that features a specially curated set titled "Celebrating the Enchanted Island of Singapore" as a tribute to the country turning 50. **Bruno Gallery Singapore, 91 Tanglin Road.**

SINGAPURA: THE MUSICAL

(UNTIL 28 JUNE)

Singapura: The Musical takes audiences on a journey of love, hope and new beginnings while exploring the strength of the human spirit displayed

during the country's formative decade, 1955 to 1965. **Capitol Theatre Singapore, 17 Stamford Road. For tickets and more information, visit singapurathemusical.com.**

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

(UNTIL 30 JUNE)

This major exhibition on the poet William Butler Yeats – based on material in the National Library of Ireland – celebrates his life, work and contribution to the great debates of his age. **The Ngee Ann Kongsi Library, Block F Level 4, LASALLE College of the Arts.**

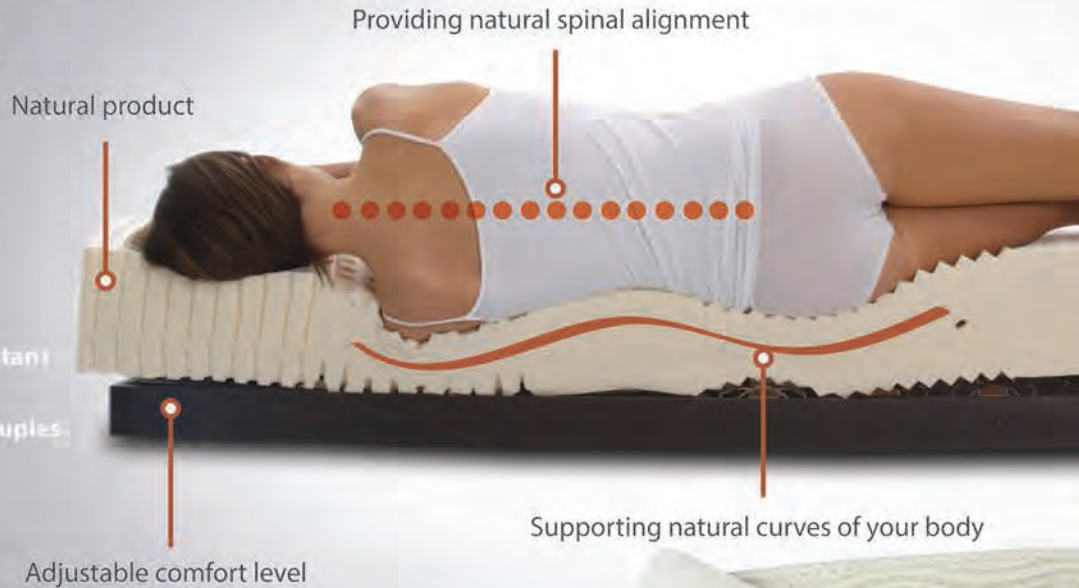


Painting by Anna Berezovskaya

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YOGALICIOUS
(2 JUNE)

Boutique yoga studio Saakalya Yoga invites you to a session of blissful meditation, followed by a cooking demonstration and a nutritious three-course meal courtesy of Chef Elizabeth. **Saakalya Yoga, 44 Jalan Merah Saga. For registration and more information, visit yoga.saakalya.com.**

HOLIDAY WORKSHOPS
(2 JUNE - 1 AUGUST)

Act 3 Drama Academy presents its Mid-Year Holiday Workshops for kids, comprising six segments: Grow, Garden, Rainbow Fish, Come and Play with Us, It's Bedtime Little Dino, and Buzz Off Mozzie. **ACT 3 International, 126 Cairnhill Road. For registration and more information, visit act3international.com.sg.**

SCENT WALK
(3-10 JUNE)

AllSense presents Singapore's first ever Scent Walk, a guided tour around the city where the "scent scape", or smells of the landscape, are documented to create an olfactory picture of the physical spaces you visit. **Various venues. For registration and more information, visit allsense.com.sg.**

BEST OF BRITISH GALA DINNER
(5 JUNE)

The Best of British celebrations kick off with an opening gala dinner where Chef Paul Askew will be preparing a five-course dinner paired with fine wines. Amongst those in attendance will be the guest-of-honour, British High Commissioner designate Scott Wightman. **The British Club, 73 Bukit Tinggi Road. For tickets and more information, visit britishclub.org.sg.**

SEA GAMES
(5-16 JUNE)

After 22 years, Singapore once again has the honour of hosting the Southeast Asian Games. Sports fans can watch enthralling tournaments across 36 different sports, from hockey to taekwondo. **Various venues. For tickets and more information, visit seagames2015.com.**

THE DEEP
(6 JUNE - 18 OCTOBER)

This captivating photo exhibition offers a glimpse into the secret lives of more than 40 strange and fascinating creatures lurking in the deep sea, some of which have been captured on camera for the first time. **The ArtScience Museum, 6 Bayfront Avenue. Tickets from marinabaysands.com/museum.**



Scent Walk

NILA SWIM & AQUATHLON
(6 JUNE)

Participating in the Nila Swim & Aquathlon is probably the closest you'll get to feeling like an official triathlete at the 28th SEA Games. There are race categories for experienced open-water swimmers, as well as for kids and amateurs. **Angsana Green, East Coast Park. For tickets and more information, visit nilacommunityevents.sg.**

NILA RUN
(7 JUNE)

If open-water swimming is not your cup of tea, consider taking part in the 10K Nila Run, which lets you run part of the route covered by elite marathoners at the 28th SEA Games. You'll be rewarded with a commemorative event T-shirt and medal for your effort. **Singapore Sports Hub, 2 Stadium Walk. For tickets and more information, visit nilacommunityevents.sg.**



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BROWNIES OVERLOAD!
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Asia's largest kitchen wonderland, Tools of The Trade (ToTT), presents four Holiday Cooking Classes designed for kids who aspire to be the next Junior Master Chef. This includes a Brownies Overload! class where they can learn to make decadent chocolate brownies with honey chocolate topping. **ToTT, 896 Dunearn Road. For registration and more information, visit ToTTstore.com.**

BALLET UNDER THE STARS
(12-21 JUNE)

Singapore Dance Theatre presents an enchanting evening of ballet under the evening skies, with classic works like George Balanchine's *Rubies*, Val Caniparoli's *Lambarena* and local choreographer Choo-San Goh's *Schubert Symphony*. Bring along a picnic mat and a bottle of wine. **Fort Canning Green. Tickets from Sistic.**

PINK DOT SG
(13 JUNE)

Pink Dot SG, the annual rally to support the freedom to love regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, enters its seventh year with new celebrity ambassadors, corporate sponsors and a fresh line-

up for the Pink Dot Concert. **Hong Lim Park. For more information, visit pinkdot.sg.**

MALAYSIA PROPERTY SHOW
(13-14 JUNE)

Whether you're looking for favourable returns or for a second home, the Malaysia Property Show by PropertyGuru.com is all about property investment across the causeway. **Marina Bay Sands Convention Centre, Begonia Ballroom. For registration and more information, visit propertyguru.com.sg/Malaysia_show.**

HARI RAYA LIGHT-UP
(13 JUNE - 16 JULY)

Visit the iconic district of Geylang Serai to see the spectacular month-long Hari Raya light-up that marks the holy fasting month for Muslims in Singapore. **Geylang Serai area (Sims Avenue and Geylang Road).**

THE O.P.E.N.
(17 JUNE - 4 JULY)

A warm-up to the annual Singapore International Festival of Arts, The O.P.E.N. is a series of concerts, performances, film screenings, talks and exhibitions that explore this year's theme, "POST-Empires". **Various venues. For more information, visit sifa.sg.**

MEMOIR POETRY
(20 JUNE)

This workshop by Nilanjana Sengupta for kids aged 10 to 12 will equip them with the necessary tools for appreciating and writing memoir poetry, a powerful tool of self-expression. **Heritage Place, 21 Tan Quee Lan Street. For registration and more information, visit alap.bookcouncil.sg.**

SUMMER CAMP
(22 JUNE - 31 JULY)

Mixing learning with lots of play, Canadian International School's summer camp will have your children creating art, playing sport, creating nifty gadgets, making movies, enjoying outdoor escapades and more. **Canadian International School's Lakeside Campus and Tanjong Katong Campus. For registration and more information, visit cis.edu.sg.**

ANOTHER COUNTRY
(25 JUNE - 11 JULY)

Directed by Singapore's Ivan Heng and Malaysia's Jo Kukathas, *Another Country* is a Wild Rice production about the unique relationship between neighbouring countries Singapore and Malaysia, which separated 50 years ago. **Drama Centre Theatre, National Library, 100 Victoria Street. For more information, visit wildrice.com.sg.**



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PLAN AHEAD

JULY 2015

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Wrestling fans on this side of the globe can celebrate as WWE comes to Singapore for its one and only Southeast Asian 2015 show. See superstars like John Cena and Chris Jericho talk the talk and walk the walk. Talent line-up is subject to change. **Singapore Indoor Stadium. Tickets from Singapore Sports Hub.**

VISION MAGIC SHOW (3-12 JULY)

VISION returns to Singapore after a successful run in China, and the nation's only professional illusionist duo, Lawrence and Priscilla Khong, promises to put up a world-class performance that's bigger and grander than ever before. **Esplanade Theatre, 1 Esplanade Drive. Tickets from Sistic.**



VISION

SUNDOWN MARATHON (4-5 JULY)

Singapore's largest night marathon returns for its eighth edition, challenging those who dare to run its 10K, half marathon and full marathon routes. There's also a brand new 5K fun run for children aged six to 16. **F1 Pit Building, 1 Republic Boulevard. For tickets and more information visit sundownmarathon.com.**

enthrall kids and adults alike with beloved Disney tunes. **The Star Performing Arts Centre, 1 Vista Exchange Green. For tickets and more information, visit disneyonclassic.sg.**

JOHNNY MARR LIVE (30 JULY)

British guitarist, singer and songwriter Johnny Marr will be performing his first-ever concert in Singapore. The founding member of The Smiths will entertain fans with songs from his solo albums *The Messenger* and *Playland*. **University Cultural Centre Hall, National University of Singapore. Tickets from Sistic.**



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
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LETTERS



Readers' thoughts and comments about EL

Best Letter

We want to hear from you! Send us your thoughts on the magazine, or on any subject under the sun. To help her toast her recent holiday in Bali, **Sarah Robinson** wins a bottle of champagne.



Happy Travels

Through your magazine we were lucky enough to win a two-night stay at FC Residence in Bali – and it was wonderful!

In keeping with the very relaxed atmosphere, we were able to have breakfast when and where we wanted. One evening, we dined under the stars, with the chef catering for the kids and a vegetarian. Our affable hosts Sally and Pierre were always on hand to recommend a place to visit or eat, arrange a taxi ride, or simply pass the time of day. In fact, everyone went the extra mile to make our stay special.

Thank you, *Expat Living*. And thank you FC Residence Bali: We hope to visit you again!

Sarah Robinson



Here to Stay?

Could some room be made in your magazine for more of a realistic, “warts and all” take on Singapore life, please? Most expats are here for career and income maximisation reasons, not because they love living in Singapore.

It works really well if you are on an employment pass, relatively young and childless. But if you are educated, used to being economically active and are here as a trailing spouse, Singapore eventually bores you witless.

It also does not work so well if you are older and married with children, having to live in relatively cramped living conditions with expensive education and health bills to pay. Many families we have known have left while we have been here (since 2008), usually after three to five years. Those who stay longer tend to be singles or couples with no children, or those who have married locals.

Don't get me wrong, I think Singapore is ideal as a shorter-term stint, but my doubt is whether it stacks up for any longer for most people. For some, I'm sure it does, but for us, and I wonder for how many others, it doesn't. *(Extract from email.)*

J. Sentance

Ed: See page 126 for our article on the trend for localised employment packages, and those who come to stay not only because there are jobs to be found here, but also because it's safe, clean, warm and well located for travel. In our April issue, too, we interviewed expats who live in HDB flats and talked openly about their issues.

Many of our own expat staff (mostly on dependant passes) have been here for 10 years or more. Most need to work to pay for school fees and other expenses: they have interesting careers, enjoy affordable home help and make the most of it.

As for not being able to work, we've published many inspirational stories of those who've taken this opportunity to follow their dreams: embarking on further education, joining associations or volunteering, which often leads to a new career. We feel we have to make the most of wherever we are!



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SCANDINAVIAN STYLE

If you lean towards a rustic, natural style, take a look at the new range of **Hübsch** accessories available at **Proof Living**. Wicker baskets, wooden trays, lanterns and more are available in the store now. Go to proof.com.sg for location details. ▲

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COOL KIDS' CARPETS

Interior designers will tell you that one of the easiest ways to style up a room is with a rug, so if you're looking for something to jazz up your child's room, check out Ni-Night's new Scout rugs. They come in a variety of colours including sunshine yellow and teal in a honeycomb pattern, in grey, in orange or in navy-and-white stripes. **Ni-Night, 7 Joo Chiat Place, ni-night.com.**



SCIENCE OF SLEEP

OM's new SleepLab has a "testing area" complete with an air-pressure bed, which aims to determine the firmness and resistance of your ideal mattress. A good night's sleep is essential for health, so to find out more or check out the recently launched **Restonic** mattress collection, go to **16 Tai Seng Street, Level 7.** ▲

MEMORABLE MIRRORS

Bespoke photographic mirror company **Dementiel** has recently launched, offering customers the chance to customise a mirror with photographs and words using a unique inscription technology. Go to **dementiel.net** for more information.



Reader Offer!

Prakalyam Gallery, purveyor of fine colonial antiques, is offering a 20 percent discount on all jewellery boxes and chests in the store, valid throughout June. To see them, head to **The Vertex #01-09, 33 Ubi Avenue 3,** or call 6635 4741.



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CLUNY COLLECTION

Patine has recently set up in **Cluny Court**, offering hand-selected European antiques from the 18th to the 20th century. Email contact@patineinteriors.com for an appointment to view. ▶



JOHN LEWIS IN SINGAPORE

British department store John Lewis will have a “shop-in-shop” in three branches of Robinsons, selling a range of homeware including bed linen, picture frames, duvets, cushions and towels. Find it at Robinsons The Heeren, JEM and Raffles City. Go to robinsons.com.sg for store locations. ▲

KATONG POP-UP

Furniture store **HomesToLife** has a pop-up shop at **112 Katong**, with pieces ranging from doormats, rugs and lights to tableware and sofas. The pop-up will give customers a taste of what’s to come when its huge Mohamed Sultan Road flagship showroom opens later in the year. Head to **112 Katong, #03-04/5**. ▲



EAST COAST OPENING

Just a few doors down the road, in the heart of Katong, is the new location of **Haus of Egg3**. The shophouse store has plenty of fun and funky home, fashion and gift ideas. For a nose around go to **164 East Coast Road**, or check it out online at eggthree.com.



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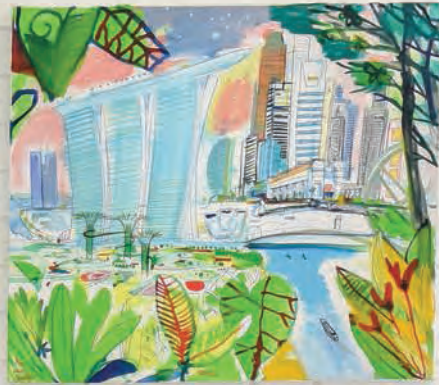
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Sunset style

As President of the Hollandse Club and mother of three young children, Dutch expat NIENKE NAUTA-KUIPERS has her hands full, but she still finds time to welcome us to her light-filled home in Sunset Way.

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







Clockwise from left:
Lamp from House of AnLi Interiors.

The only piece of Chinese furniture in the house is this cabinet, and the old school desk is from South Africa.

The artwork includes pieces of "junk" from South Africa, which Nienke and Martijn were given by friends for their fifth wedding anniversary.



The hide rugs and ottomans are from South Africa, the coffee table from Holland, the white three-seater from Bungalow 55, and the television console from Originals.

Nienke's four-bedroom family abode in the Sunset Way estate area of Clementi is a wonderful example of the individual style and design of many Singapore homes. The exterior may look familiar, with its high gates and iron gridwork, but inside it's a fun, split-level mix of open and airy living spaces enhanced with Nienke's own clean, natural and rustic style. Standing on the top-floor landing, off of which are three bedrooms, you can see almost all of the inside of the house, from the first-floor living room and kids' play area to the dining room on the lower ground floor, where there's also a fourth bedroom.

Making the move

The Sunset Way area is a popular residential choice among both locals and expats. It's conveniently close to the PIE and other arterial roads, yet set back enough to have a rural, community feel. "I love this area," confirms Nienke.

"In 2010, we moved to Singapore from a huge property in Johannesburg, initially to a smaller cluster house near Sixth Avenue, and it drove me crazy. Our next place was a bungalow; it was small with a big garden, but it was such a relief to be in a house again. Then finally we moved in here." Location is an important factor in where they live, as Nienke's husband Martijn works in Clementi and cycles there and back every day.

Making the move from Johannesburg to Singapore were Nienke, Martijn, Tom (10), Cato (short for Catherine, 8), and Donald the dog (11). Nienke was also pregnant with Nout (now 4), adding an extra element of stress to the relocation.

But after seven years in Johannesburg, the move to Singapore was a welcome one.

"Our first thoughts about being here were regarding safety. I remember seeing a lady walking on the street here on her own at 10pm, and I was shocked. In South Africa you just wouldn't do that. I remember trying not to do groceries there with the kids in case something happened, and although we did live very safely, in a gated community, as soon as I went outside I had to be alert."

Fitting in

Moving from a sizeable property in Johannesburg to their initial smaller place near Sixth Avenue naturally created issues regarding what home furniture and furnishings to keep. "I had to get rid of some of my pieces, including some large L-shaped couches, as they would never have fitted into the property here."

Furniture such as the dining chairs did make the journey, and have been with Nienke since she lived in Holland. "I'm not going to replace them until the kids are older, because they always spill stuff over everything!"

For Nienke this isn't a negative, however, as she says that her style is quite personal. "I like items with a story, things that are natural and rustic." The family have picked up much of their furniture along the way, and Nienke still misses the bargains she found in South Africa. "There were also so many fabrics and antiques. I can't seem to find that here."

Nienke doesn't see her family returning to Holland anytime soon. "I don't hanker for home, and our next move will probably be to another continent," she says. But for now, she and the family are happily ensconced in their Sunset Way home.

The light fitting above the table is from the House of AnLi; the table was bought in South Africa for the equivalent of about \$360.





Cato is a girly girl, says Nienke, and there's plenty of pink in her room.



The two brothers share a room, but according to Nienke they all often end up sleeping in the same bed.

HOME

The pool was already there when they moved in, and the hanging outdoor lights were supplied by Nienke's friend's company, Knots by Frankie. Nienke also asked for the black-and-white blinds to be installed.



Recommendations


House of AnLi Interiors
Tanglin Mall
#03-13
6251 0410 | houseofanli.com

Bungalow 55
510 Bukit Timah Road

Cluny Court
#01-05A
6463 3831 | thebungalow55.com

Painting of Singapore by Guus van Eck
guusvaneck.nl
Represented by Elise Molenaar-Kristiansen
ejkristiansen@me.com | 9350 9906

Knots by Frankie (by Peronne Wendrich)
67 Kheam Hock Road
9181 4381 | knotsbyfrankie.com

Hollandse Club ("where the kids and I spend most of our time during the week")
22 Camden Park
6464 5225 | hollandseclub.org.sg 



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5 *Key* QUESTIONS

Fascinated by the exotic rugs shimmering from the walls and piled up high on the floors of Singapore's expansive carpet showrooms, but hesitant to go in? Unless you're one of the tiny few for whom cost is no object, these places – like high-end fashion designer stores – can be intimidating for the uninitiated, and so can the prices.

And then, while strolling through IKEA (mostly to stock up on the world's best tea-lights and paper napkins before succumbing to a \$1 chicken hotdog) you spot an amazing selection of jolly good-looking rugs from a ridiculously low \$129. When it comes to floor-coverings, muses **Verne Maree**, there's evidently more than meets the eye – so she asked three of our favourite carpet guys five key carpet questions.

#1

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT PERSIAN CARPETS

PETER HEDGER of **Hedger's Carpet Gallery** in Dempsey points out that ancient Persian techniques, designs and colour palettes have been retained though centuries of revolution and wars, largely surviving modernisation, too.

"The Persian people realised early on the importance of their ancestry and their culture," he adds. "So even today, a Persian carpet is untouched by current fashions or market trends and is immediately identifiable with the particular town where it was made, be it Kum, Esfahan, Kashan, Tabreze or Nain, for example. And they still use vegetable dyes wherever possible, as opposed to modern chrome dyes."

Also, Persian carpets are made to exacting standards from the natural fibres: wool, silk and cotton; so they're investment pieces that should last for a hundred years and more. As they age, the irreproducible patina they develop because of their fading vegetable dyes adds value – and that's at least partly why older Persian carpets are so sought-after, says Peter.

CARPET HISTORY 101

- Carpets date back to the earliest times: forms of woven floor-covering were already in use as far back as 7,000 BC, the Neolithic Age.
- It's thought that nomadic populations started producing thickly knotted carpets to insulate their dwellings from extreme climatic conditions, instead of having to kill valuable animals for their hides.
- Woven on vertical looms, they were easily dismantled and packed up. As populations settled down in one place, horizontal looms became the norm, carpets continuing to serve both utilitarian and beautification purposes.
- The oldest surviving example is the Pazyryk Carpet: dating from the 5th century BC, it was discovered by archaeologists, preserved in the tomb of a Shiite chief in the Pazyryk Valley in what is now Siberia.
- It wasn't until the 18th century that carpets were used to cover floors – in the Western world, anyway. Generally, you'd find them on walls or on tables.

What is a Persian carpet?

A Persian carpet can come from only one country, Iran. Don't allow anyone to confuse you with the argument that the old Persian Empire stretched from Turkey in the west, including some parts of Egypt, India, Pakistan and even southern Russia. A carpet made outside modern-day Iran might qualify as Persian only if it were 600 or more years old – and that's highly unlikely!



2

HOW DO I CHOOSE A CARPET FOR INVESTMENT?

ABI BAGHERI from **The Orientalist** in Orchard describes two types of would-be collectors: those who go for already collectible items such as antiques, mainly Persian; and those who want to buy carpets they'll enjoy during their own lifetime and that will then become collectors' items in time. "That's a long shot, though," he points out.

Changes in the market over the past 10 or 20 years have seen a move to modern carpets, he explains. "Most people don't care about the knots or the density, only that the carpet be in the colour they want and as simple in design as possible." As a result, many traditional weavers have gone for the easier workmanship and the quicker turnaround.

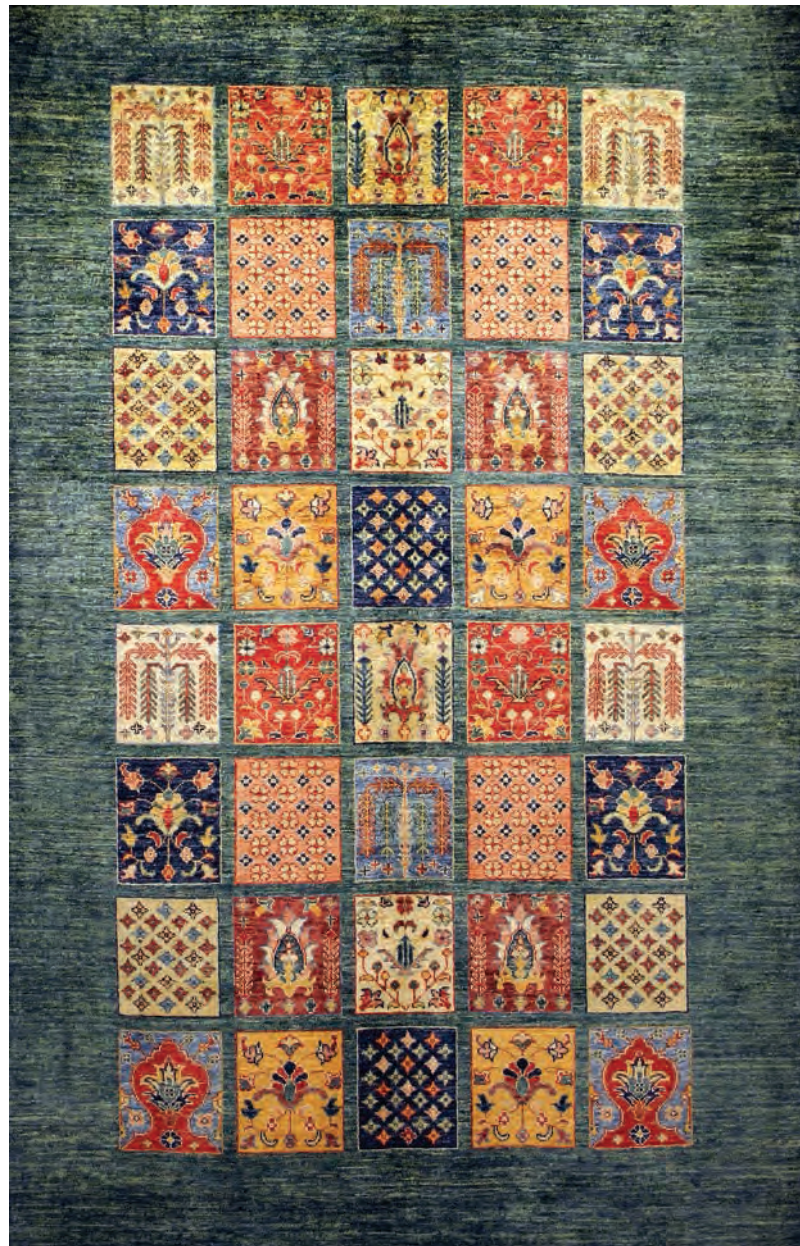
That's not the case in Iran, says Abi, where the traditional ways continue; but there has been a huge reduction in production. "These are people who have thousands of years of involvement and a passion for what they do; regardless of what happens in the outside market, they carry on." The upside of this is that the real carpet artists, the ones for whom the industry is a passion, are the ones who stay in the business – and they are the ones who produce the best quality.

"Although I see less in Iran nowadays," says Abi, "the quality is outstanding. And with lower production and higher quality, prices have shot up. What's being made now will, I believe, substantially increase in value in as little as 30 to 40 years and become rare collector's items."

CHOOSE A PERSIAN

According to Peter Hedger, an investment carpet should not be modern or commercially made. "Choose a Persian, or even a tribal carpet from a remote area," he advises.

As a dealer and investor, he's keeping a keen watch on both currency exchange rates and politics, particularly the possibility of the US lifting its trade embargo on Iran as early as this month,



June. As Americans have always loved carpets, he says, demand is likely to soar. By early next year, 2016, he expects prices to rise.

"Be clear about your reason for buying a carpet," he says. "Is it to enjoy its beauty and revel in the feeling of its pile underfoot, or is it totally as an investment with the hope of a high return? For pure investment, it must be a Persian."

Finally, when you're contemplating spending thousands on a carpet you need to be confident that you're getting

what you're paying for. Check out the dealer, what kind of warranty they give, how accurate their information is and what kind of redress you'll have in the case of a dispute.

Here in Singapore, luckily, you're pretty safe buying from a dealer who belongs to the Handknotted Carpet Association, which imposes strict guidelines to ensure fair, honest and transparent dealing. Both Hedger's Carpet Gallery and The Orientalist are members, as are a good number of others.

#3

WHY WOULD I BUY A CARPET ON AUCTION?

If you find carpet stores intimidating, and especially if you have no idea what you're looking for, an auction can be a wonderful thing, says Peter Hedger. You just pick up the catalogue and walk around the room with it at your own pace.

Peter believes that attending an auction – even if just as an observer – is a great way to learn more about carpets: not only what styles, colours and designs are available, but also how they're made and what prices they go for. "We'll always present a range of carpets of different types and calibres, from small to big, from the more affordable to the utterly luxurious – so that there's something for everyone."

And yes, he says, there are bargains to be won. To get through 80 to a hundred carpets in three hours, an auctioneer like himself has to keep the excitement going, to be flexible, and sometimes to accept less than he wants for a carpet: that sometimes even means letting it go for under cost.

His advice for the first-timer is to come in for the pre-auction viewing, take a catalogue and a pencil and circle the ones you fancy. "That will help you discover where your personal tastes lie – especially if you keep on circling ones of a particular type."

A final piece of advice: if you love the carpet and it's in your price range, go for it! If you miss out on it, you'll probably spend frustrating years trying to find another like it. So buy it; at a Hedger's auction, you always have the option to

bring your purchase back later if for some reason you decide it wasn't the right one, and exchange it for another of equal value, or for a credit to the same value – and if you got a real bargain on auction, your exchange carpet will be one too, promises Peter.

What's in it for the carpet dealer? "It's a great way to showcase our carpets and to reassure people that they'll be safe dealing with us," says Peter. It's also a way to sell a higher volume of carpets each month, which – with expenses like staff and rental being fixed – means they can be sold for less.

LEARNING MORE

Aside from auctions, you can learn more at one of Hedger's two-hour carpet appreciation classes, held either as a

morning coffee talk or an evening event. You'll be shown the weaving process on a small loom, examples of good carpets and bad carpets, examples of different types of carpets – including City carpets and Tribal carpets, say, and examples of carpets from different areas. "You won't just sit," says Peter, "you'll be going on your hands and knees to feel and experience the carpets and discover what they're all about."

He's frank about why he bothers to offer these free lessons. "Through them, people often develop a real passion for carpets; and it's easier to sell anything to someone who understands what they're buying."

To find out when the next auction is, book your own group carpet session or put your name down for the next one, just give the gallery a call.





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4

I'M INTO CONTEMPORARY CARPETS, NOT TRADITIONAL ONES. IS THAT OK?

If that's the case, you're not alone, says The Orientalist's Abi Bagheri. As far back as 1999, these previously dyed-in-the-wool traditionalists (yes, pun intended) spotted a growing demand for modern and contemporary carpets. In response, they were the first here to start introducing ranges from top contemporary American and European designers; and by 2006 they were also offering a bespoke carpet service.

Today, almost half of The Orientalist's carpets are contemporary, and Abi says their latest collections are the best movers. "Our customers love Haynes Robinson's bold, simple designs, Jan Kath's exquisite workmanship, and Mischioff's radically minimalist interpretations of 18th and 19th century motifs."

Contemporary does not have to mean soulless. Amongst the many other styles of rug it produces, Haynes Robinson, for example, is renowned for its variety of high quality, authentic carpets from Iran, Pakistan, India and Turkey, designed in collaboration with the local artisans there who hand-knot or hand-weave them from local wool treated with locally harvested vegetable dyes.

Abi likes the contemporary trend. "It's simple, it's bright, and, frankly, it's more affordable. As a result of that, it has brought us a whole new wave of customers."



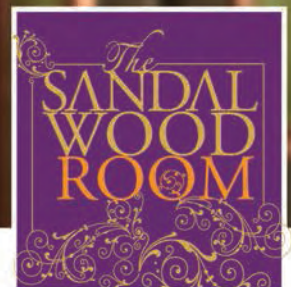
Above: *Beige Cloud* in-house design by The Orientalist

Below: *Transition* by Haynes Robinson

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#5

CAN I DESIGN MY OWN CARPET?

Yes, you can – and having total control over the design is the best way to ensure your rug will make the most of the space it's intended for, says MELVYN KHONG of The Rug Maker. For one thing, you can order exactly the right size and shape for the space. Secondly, you can choose your ideal colour-way.

His clients include both homeowners and interior designers who are looking for something special, or something to fit a particular set of requirements.

“We sit down for a chat to find out their needs, the kind of home they have and what their lifestyle is like – does it include children, pets? You don't want to spend thousands of dollars on a pale silk living-room carpet if you have a toddler or a puppy running around.”

Wool is always a good choice – and The Rug Maker uses only New Zealand wool – as much for its beauty and wonderful durability as for its safety: being both non-allergenic and non-combustible, it has an excellent fire-rating.

Pure silk from either Thailand or China is, as you'd expect, the most expensive. However, says Melvyn, a similar sheen can be achieved with “bamboo silk”, an increasingly popular, natural material that costs no more than synthetic “viscose silk” and is far more environmentally friendly.

SIZE GUIDE

Whether you're buying a readymade carpet or ordering a bespoke one, expert advice will make sure it's the right size.

“It can be hard to find a readymade rug to fit a dining room,” Melvyn points out. “We normally take the size of the table, plus the depth of the chair (usually about 60cm), then add another 10 or 20 centimetres so the chair remains on the rug when pulled out.

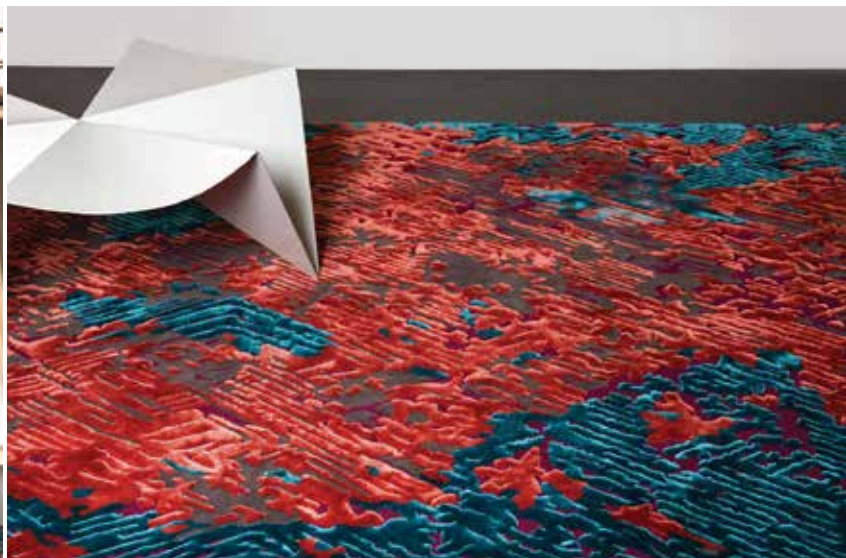
For a living room, he says, the larger the rug the better it will look – and the larger the room will look, too. But this



also depends on the size of the room. For a large, open space, you could use the rug to demarcate the seating area, all the furniture sitting within its borders. In a medium-sized room, the rug might be placed halfway through the depth of

the sofa; for a smaller room, maybe just in front of the sofa.

“One hard and fast rule, though, is that your rug should extend beyond the edges of the sofa; otherwise, it looks awkward.”



DESIGN

Though The Rug Maker's niche is customisation, its team has recently come up with two collections: in 2013, the first, *Into the Rabbit Hole* (abstract designs inspired by *Alice in Wonderland*), was initially aimed at new home-owners who might want something readymade in smaller sizes. To Melvyn's surprise, however, many customers have ordered versions of these evocative designs not only in different colours, but also in much larger sizes.

"Working in this way with the creative ideas of homeowners and interior designers helps our own design team experiment with and enhance our current designs," he says. "It's a wonderful process."

Encouraged by this, the owner of the business, Freddy Khong (Melvyn's father), who is himself Peranakan, initiated a new in-house collection – the Peranakan range. Inspired by the

Straits Chinese cultural expression that's found in its detailed beadwork, colourful ceramics, batik work, intricate embroidery and more, the varied range of distinctive designs features not only abstracted cultural and geographic concepts but also more directly graphic elements: flowers and birds such as the lotus, the peony, the swallow and the mythical phoenix; and gorgeously rich colour palettes that include bold golds, deep pinks and brilliant turquoise.

And of course, if you love a design but fancy something more muted, there's nothing to stop you experimenting with different colour-ways. As the design process is digitalised, the computer screen shows exactly what your idea will look like.

PRODUCTION

The finalised design is made up in either of two factories, one in Thailand and the other in China. "We work very closely with them," explains Melvyn,

"as they have to be able to do special one-off pieces that can call for extremely intricate workmanship."

The lead-time is from six to eight weeks. Prices vary, of course, on the basis of fabric choice and other considerations. Just to give you an idea, though, a two-by-three-metre rug from the new Peranakan collection would range from \$4,400 to \$5,200. 📦

Hedger's Carpet Gallery
Block 15 Dempsey Road
6462 0028
hedgerscarpetgallery.com.sg

The Orientalist
#01-17/18/19 Triple One Somerset
111 Somerset Road
6732 0880 | theorientalist.com

The Rug Maker
#02-20 Mapletree Industrial
1093 Lower Delta Road
6270 2823 | therugmaker.com.sg



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Living in the Valley

Recently married GRACE, Singaporean, and Irish expat PAUL have just settled in to their new home off River Valley Road. They tell us why their condo suits them, and how *Expat Living* helped them style their home.

The console, sofa and sideboard in the dining area are from Originals. The oak coffee table came with Paul and Grace. The rug was from a New York store.

By Amy Brook-Partridge,
photography by Hart Tan

HOME

It's always nice to get a thank-you note from someone, so when Grace's email landed in my inbox, thanking the magazine for providing furniture and styling ideas that helped her do up her own apartment, I jumped at the chance of meeting her in person to find out more (and to thank her profusely in return!).

Waiting for the couple to open their door on a Saturday morning, it did dawn on me that they probably had far better things to do than meet an over-keen journalist who was also hoping to have a nose around their home. Still, they went above and beyond, plying me with fruit and coffee, while telling me how they ended up furnishing their apartment in The Cosmopolitan condominium.

Right:

The small chair is from the UK, and the nest of tables is from John Lewis.

Below:

The light fittings above the dining table and this standing lamp are from Ovas.





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THE APARTMENT

Returning from the UK where they met, Grace and Paul initially rented a condo in Newton, before deciding to buy a home together. They initially looked towards the Bukit Timah area, close to where Grace's parents live, as well as searching around River Valley.

Though they viewed a lot of places, the couple knew that this particular apartment was for them from the first time they saw it. Its location is ideal, with Great World City mall on the doorstep, as well as buses from both River Valley and Kim Seng Roads, and taxis readily available. "The level of convenience here is ridiculous; I definitely don't miss getting the tube to work in London," Paul jokes.

Another thing that ticks the boxes for them is the proximity to Robertson Quay. "You can walk down the road and within ten minutes you're there, with all its restaurants and bars; you can't knock that."

The building itself is about six years old, and will benefit from an MRT station close by (named Great World and part of the new Thomson East Coast line), expected to open in 2021. Because of this, there's heavy construction around the condo at the moment, but that's a small price to pay for what will ultimately add even more convenience and increase the property's value.

Right: The world map on the wall has pins showing where the couple has travelled. The yellow ones are places they've been together; the silver ones are where they've travelled to on their own.

Opposite page: The dining table is from Arthur Zaaro. "Aaron from Arthur Zaaro is amazing. We've met him many times, and we bump into him in Great World City too. The chairs and bench are also from Arthur Zaaro; the suar wood is beautiful – it was the first thing we bought."





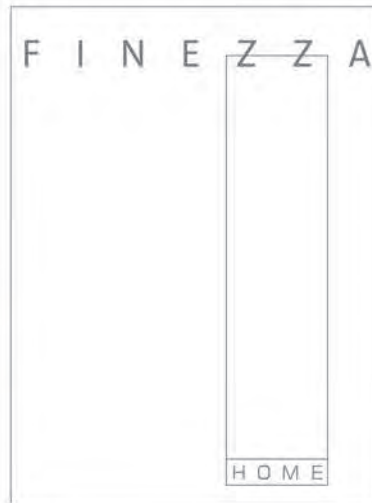
Zoe Bed



Polar Dresser



Ying Desk



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residential

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custom-made



The couple moved into their apartment in April 2014, and had to furnish it almost from scratch. “We were constantly getting good ideas and inspiration from the magazine,” says Grace, “and now we’re settled in and absolutely loving our new home.” With that I ask them to show me around their pretty apartment to see for myself, and before taking up too much of their weekend.

Above and left: The outdoor furniture is from Teak and Mahogany and the small mosaic table and dining room table are from Arthur Zaaro.



Paul & Grace's Foodie RECOMMENDATIONS

Breakfast and brunch

Toby's Estate
8 Rodyk Street,
#01-03/04
6636 7629 | tobysestate.com.sg

Common Man Roasters
22 Martin Road,
#01-00
6836 4695 | commonmancofeeroasters.com

Killiney Kaya Toast
67 Killiney Road
6734 9648 | killiney-kopitiam.com

Dinner

Long Beach Seafood
25 Dempsey Road
6323 2222 | longbeachseafood.com.sg

PS Café
28b Harding Road
9070 8782 | pscafe.com


Newton Food Centre
Newton Circus

Da Luca
1 Goldhill Plaza Novena,
#01-19/21
6258 4846 | daluca.com.sg

Drinks

Ice Cold Beer
9 Emerald Hill Road
6735 9929 | ice-cold-beer.com

Pump Room
3B River Valley Road, #01-09/10
The Foundry, Clarke Quay
9627 4403 | pumproomasia.com.sg

Manhattan Bar
The Regent Hotel,
1 Cuscaden Road
6725 3377 | regenthotels.com 





TORINO Center Large



TORINO Center Small



TORINO Corner



TORINO Ottoman
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With Cushion or Glass



TORINO Coffee Table
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110 x 120 cm



TORINO Large Corner Right



TORINO Chaise Right



TORINO Chaise Left



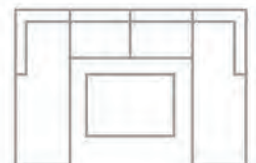
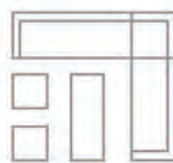
TORINO Large Corner Left

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Environment-friendly **FURNITURE**

Style and price are usually the deciding factors when it comes to choosing furniture for your home, but its environmental impact is an increasingly important consideration. We speak to TIFFANY NG, **Ethnicraft Online**'s marketing and sales executive, about the sustainability of its teak furniture, and about the journey from tree to final product.

By Amy Brook-Partridge

Ethnicraft's furniture products are currently distributed by more than 1,200 furniture retailers in 50 countries around the world. With such a wide network, the company places a great deal of importance on addressing the issue of rapid deforestation by using sustainable teak as one of its primary materials.

But what does this actually mean? Firstly, the only teak the company uses is fast-growing Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified wood from sustainably harvested forests. Ethnicraft works closely with the Indonesian government to ensure tree-replanting policies are enforced, and to restrict the number of trees cut down each year. "This also means that we are safe in the assurance that no foreign chemicals have been used, as the logs are supplied straight to our factory in Indonesia and processed from scratch," explains Tiffany.

For some of the furniture, they use recycled teak sourced from residential and warehouse buildings. "With recycled teak, you can see more of the grain; this adds character to the wood and gives a more rustic look that some customers really like." Even the sawdust from the factory is gathered up and used. "We first compress it, and then we add it to the packaging for the containers," says Tiffany. Small pieces of wood are also put to good use, for patching up pieces, finger-jointing or fuel for the drying ovens.





The FSC-certified teak wood comes in solid logs with no chemical additives



The logs are cut in Ethnicraft's Indonesian factory



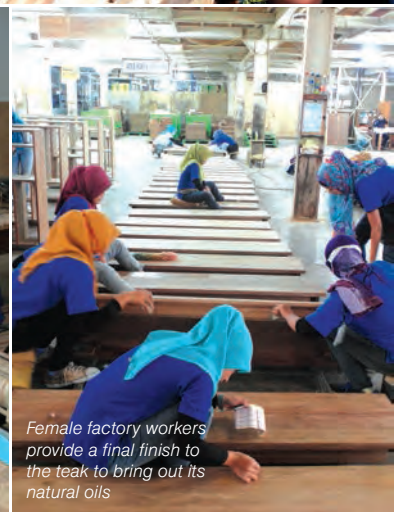
Male and female factory workers making finger joints from recycled wood



Recycled wood is also used in the kiln during the drying process



The sustainable teak pieces start to take shape



Female factory workers provide a final finish to the teak to bring out its natural oils

Then there's the fact that Ethnicraft's teak furniture is made in Indonesia, keeping the company's carbon footprint small. This supports the local community, providing jobs in an area where unemployment is high, particularly among the young. "We need a lot of manpower, and we try to hire a fairly even balance of men and women. Often, the men do the heavier

work, while the women are very good at providing a final finish to the teak, which requires meticulous attention." Of the 7.5 billion acres of virgin forest that once blanketed the globe, only half now remains, and logging threatens over 70 percent of that. Every year, at least 40 million acres disappear. Ten percent of the world's tree species are now endangered. It's hard to imagine a

world stripped of the forests we rely on, and by purchasing sustainable wood products you can help keep this from becoming a reality. [🌱](#)

To book an appointment at Ethnicraft's showroom in Eunos, call 9272 1545, or visit their website, ethnicraft-online.com.sg.



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Whether you need to decorate your bedroom, living space or home office, Lian Huat's Furniture Rental showroom will have a look you'll love.

Considering rental furniture for your stay in Singapore? It's likely that you will once you check out Lian Huat Furniture Rental's stylish schemes for the bedroom, living room, dining room and home office. From classic to contemporary and Oriental style, their showroom has a huge selection of furniture.

There are heaps of benefits to leasing furniture, but knowing that you can decorate your new home by whizzing around a single showroom is by far the biggest pull. It's all about fuss-free fabulousness!

So, have a look at this room scheme for a taster and then pop along to Lian Huat to find solid wooden beds, dining tables, desks and cabinets, sofas and dining chairs upholstered in leather, fabric or PVC, plus wall art, antiques, appliances, linen, kitchenware and rugs.

LUXE LIVING ROOMS

Sink into a few sofas at Lian Huat's showroom before deciding on the perfect one. Then build up the scheme from there by adding a coffee table, a rug, storage items, cushions, and perhaps a lamp or two – that's the living room sorted!

For more ideas on how to use Lian Huat's furniture in the different rooms in your home, visit expatliving.sg/homes.

Lian Huat
53 Kaki Bukit View
6844 1711
furniturerental.com.sg



Outdoor Options

Our readers spill the beans on their go-to places for outdoor-friendly furniture.



Sandra Pineda, Mexican

“We recently moved to Singapore and were looking for a comfortable and modern outdoor sofa that required little care. As our existing outdoor furniture had to be kept indoors during the rainy season, we wanted something that needed less maintenance and was of high quality as well.

After visiting several furniture shops, we kept returning to Danish Design because we liked its range, quality and style. Although we loved the Grid

model, it was too big for our balcony, so we decided to shop from the Tray collection, which is gorgeous too. This cosy furniture is modular in design, so it can be arranged in many different ways.

Apart from the three-seater sofa, we're eyeing up the ottoman and the television console – and the new coffee tables Danish Design has in are also lovely! We're thinking of getting a white leather table with two chairs to add to our balcony, too.

The standard of service at Danish Design is excellent. The staff enthusiastically offers us lots of different ideas on how to mix the colours and cushion types. Every time we go there, they are very kind and patient, even when we have with us our two active boys who go around sitting on all the sofas in the showroom.”

Danish Design
100E Pasir Panjang Road, #08-01
6270 8483 | danishdesignco.com

Anne-Louise Minter, Australian

“After relocating, we wanted to find new outdoor furniture that was durable, comfortable and space-efficient. We had two spaces to fill: one was a large terrace area with a tricky shape, the other a smaller space on the other side of the house.

The furniture at Teak & Mahogany definitely fit the brief. They have a wide selection of designs and materials to choose from, so you can always find something to suit your requirements. About eight years ago, we had a pleasant first experience purchasing furniture from there, and the outstanding service we received this time was no different. The staff listened to our needs and recommended pieces that enhanced our outdoor area. Suzan and Kris were professional and knowledgeable; they constantly updated us by email and phone.

We will surely return to Teak & Mahogany to look at some of their larger modular furniture for our family room.



I am also looking forward to visiting their showroom to select a few of their beautiful accessories to complement the furniture we have chosen.

When choosing outdoor furniture, I feel, one key question to ask is whether the pieces can really withstand the weather. It's also important to measure

your space beforehand and draw a rough plan of the area to ensure that your choices are suitable and feasible.”

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

Angela van Nielen-Janus, with mother-in-law Asta Björnsson, Dutch

“Our first experience with Woody Antique House was when we lived in Singapore 12 years ago and we bought an antique Chinese cabinet, a red wedding cabinet, a bench and a chair. Since then, we have moved to several countries and taken Woody's furniture along with us.

After returning to Singapore last August, we were looking for an outdoor lounge set for our terrace. We have a medium-size terrace, and the lounge sofa has to fit



right under the balcony so that it doesn't catch too much rain. We also wanted something that would not block the sliding doors.

After shopping around, we found that Woody Antique House was the only store that had the Domus Ventures pieces that we wanted. We like the rattan look of the set we chose, as well as how comfortable it is. On our next visit, we may get one of the Gongfu benches or the Lucky 8 console tables. I also like the ladders used for hanging towels – they seem like a convenient and handy way to dry towels after a swim in the pool.

The service provided by Woody Antique House is professional, fast and friendly.

One piece of advice I have for those looking for outdoor furniture is to be sure to check if the pillows are weatherproof.”

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 6471 1770 | woodyantique.com

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Outdoor Living

From tea for two on a small balcony to cocktails at dusk in an expansive garden, check out our spread of outdoor furniture in stores now to suit any style.

1 Chair and table from the Amalfi Collection, **Teak & Mahogany**, 100E Pasir Panjang Road, #07-02/03/04 Century Warehouse, 6273 8116, teakandmahogany.com **2** La Boheme stools, Kartell, **Lifestorey**, 1 Kim Seng Promenade #02-15 Great World City, 6732 7362, lifestorey.com **3** Various products from **Arete Culture**, 63 Hillview Avenue, #09-08 Lam Soon Building (by appointment only), 9878 8154, areteculture.com **4** Drop chair by Infiniti, **Lifestorey** **5** Polart plastic chair and side table in matt yellow, **HC Lifestyle**, 21 Tampines Street 92, #01-00, 6227 2000, hclifestyle.com **6** Various products from **Arete Culture**





7



8



9



10



11



13



12

7 Indoor and outdoor lamps, **In Situ**, 238 River Valley Road, 6733 7307, insitu-sg.com **8** Floor lanterns, **Arete Culture**, 63 Hillview Avenue, #09-08 Lam Soon Building (by appointment only), 9878 8154, areteculture.com **9** Crackled ball outdoor lamp, **ED Design Group**, 994 Bendemeer Road, #01-07B Central, 6291 0990, eddplus.com **10** Birdnest sofa, **Galanga Living**, 211 Henderson Road, #01-02, 6475 2633, galangaliving.com **11** White daybed, **ED Design Group** **12** Large stone boy and girl, **Just Anthony**, 379 Upper Paya Lebar Road, 6283 4782, justanthony.com **13** Bronze cooking vessel, early 20th century, **Prakalyam Gallery**, #01-09 The Vertex, 33 Ubi Avenue 3, 6635 4741, prakalyamgallery.com **14** Moon Island outdoor collection, **Danish Design**, 100E Pasir Panjang Road, #08-01 Century Warehouse, 6270 8483, danishdesignco.com



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17

15 Vintage tiled bench, **Artful House**, 315 Outram Road, #08-04 Tan Boon Liat Building, 8112 6127, artful-house.com **16** Raffia chaise, **In Situ**, 238 River Valley Road, 6733 7307, insitu-sg.com **17** Boracay sun lounger with side table, **Teak & Mahogany**, 100E Pasir Panjang Road, #07-02/03/04 Century Warehouse, 6273 8116, teakandmahogany.com **18** Seascape-themed products, **Arete Culture**, 63 Hillview Avenue, #09-08 Lam Soon Building (by appointment only), 9878 8154, areteculture.com **19** Colonial-style chair in teal, **Singapore Trading Post**, 315 Outram Road, #07-01 Tan Boon Liat Building, 6221 4619, singaporetradingpost.com



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20 Vintage outdoor furniture by Karpenter, **Mountain Teak Furniture Gallery**, 315 Outram Road, #07-02 Tan Boon Liat Building, 6224 7176, mountainteak.com **21** Madrid three-seater bench, **Gallery 278**, 278 River Valley Road, 6737 2322, gallery278.com **22** Nicola armchair, **Gallery 278** **23** Table and chairs, **Lian Huat Furniture Rental**, 53 Kaki Bukit View, 6844 1711, furniturerental.com.sg **24** Egg-shaped lamp table, **HC Lifestyle**, 21 Tampines Street 92, #01-00, 6227 2000, hclifestyle.com **25** Grid outdoor lounge set, **Danish Design**, 100E Pasir Panjang Road, #08-01 Century Warehouse, 6270 8483, danishdesignco.com **26** Zezo planters in rattan, **Galanga Living**, 211 Henderson Road, #01-02, 6475 2633, galangaliving.com

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26



25



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27 Ceramic stools in various colours, **FairPrice Antique**, 315 Outram Road, #01-10, Tan Boon Liat Building, 6270 2544, fairpriceantique.com **28** Antique glazed cane outdoor set, **Expat Auctions**, 102F Pasir Panjang, Citilink Warehouse #02-04 & #01-01, 6278 0511, expatauctions.com.sg **29** Doggy daybed, **Taylor B. Fine Design**, 43 Keppel Road, #04-02 (under the AYE on-ramp), 9420 4000 **30** Outdoor set for rent, **Lian Huat Furniture Rental**, 53 Kaki Bukit View, 6844 1711, furniturere.com.sg **31** Three-seater Yuri sofa, **Window to the Past**, 3 Kung Chong Road, 6235 2760, wtpstyle.com **32** Verandah raffia armchair, **In Situ**, 238 River Valley Road, 6733 7307, insitu-sg.com





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33 Table and chairs for rent, **Lian Huat Furniture Rental**, 53 Kaki Bukit View, 6844 1711, furniturerental.com.sg **34** Daybed with canopy, **Taylor B. Fine Design**, 43 Keppel Road, #04-02 (under the AYE on-ramp), 9420 4000 **35** Java recycled teak carved two-seater bench, **Originals**, 896 Dunearn Road, #02-03 Sime Darby Centre, 6471 9918, originals.com.sg **36** Java recycled teak carved three-seater bench, **Originals** **37** Black-and-white picnic blankets, **Ni-Night**, 7 Joo Chiat Place, 6440 7567, ni-night.com **38** Skyler dining chair, **Window to the Past**, 3 Kung Chong Road, 6235 2760, wtpstyle.com **39** Minotti Lifescape's Aston Cord outdoor set, **Minotti by Marquis Interior**, 30 Hill Street, 6338 2822, marquis.com.sg **40** Delmar modular sofa set, Domus Ventures, **Woody Antique House**, #01-05 Block 13 Dempsey Road, 6471 1770, woodyantique.com **41** Vintage Chinese porcelain table and stools, **Red Saga Seeds**, 21 Ubi Road 1, #01-01 Cambridge Industrial Trust Building, 6744 8682, redsagaseeds.com **42** Bench, **OHMM**, Riverside Point, 30 Merchant Road #03-09, 6836 2747, ohmm.sg **43** Paola Alum dining set, **Woody Antique House**



42



43

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HITTING HER STRIDE

Devon Reagan has loved riding horses ever since she was a little girl, but it was a course at Singapore American School that turned the pastime into an academic passion. The SAS Catalyst Project – designed to give high school students the guidance, resources, and flexible scheduling they need to pursue their interests – gave Devon the opportunity to get certified by British Horse Society, one of the most respected equestrian qualifications in the world. She also volunteered with Riding for the Disabled Association of Singapore and studied therapeutic horse riding for children with special needs. Now, Devon is a student in Colorado State University's Equine Science program and, at such a young age, is already hitting her stride.



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DEBORAH LAW
*Executive Director,
 Expat Realtor*

MARKET UPDATE

In search of higher yields and lower prices, many buyers are now looking at overseas properties, and yet there have been more cases of Singaporeans losing large sums of money over dodgy overseas transactions. Unfamiliar foreign markets also hold high risks; for example, a developing country might change the rules and restrict foreign investment without notice. If that happened, would you be able to sell the property and get your money out?

Here are some other questions worth considering: does the developer have a good reputation and the financial strength for the project you're interested in? Does the infrastructure support the brand-new state-of-the-art building? Also, is the property correctly valued?

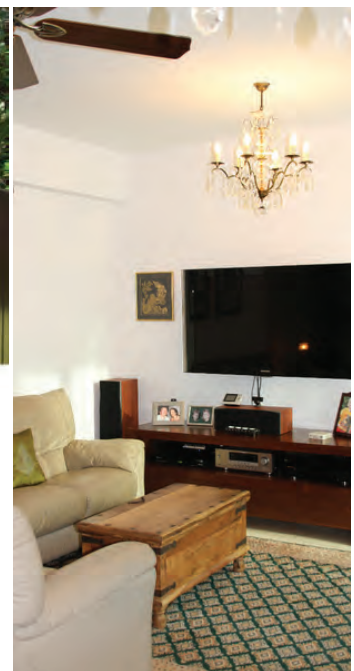
Remember to check out the stamp duties, legal fees and property gain taxes involved, and know who to pursue if the development doesn't have a valid presence in Singapore. If in doubt – don't. Staying with the tried-and-tested countries will limit your risk, as will doing your research and not succumbing to the selling agent's high-pressure tactics. All developments have units that are better and worse, so do make sure you're buying one that will have a good resale appeal.

On the local front, sales are still depressed, with investors not stepping in just yet, and rentals are seeing a decline from a lower number of expatriates and a higher supply of properties.

Hot Properties

This ground-floor corner patio apartment has been fitted out to ensure all needs are met. With ample storage, a perfect ambience for entertaining and good-sized rooms, this is a prime unit at Savannah Condo Park.

The patio is approximately 500 square feet, but it doesn't steal too much size from the unit, and there is an additional outdoor space. This popular condo enjoys full facilities, including a bowling alley, making it ideal for families. It's located near Changi Airport, Changi Business Park, One World International School and United World College. There's a shuttle bus service to Simei MRT every 20 minutes and the various highways are easy to access, too. Nearby shopping malls include Eastpoint Mall, Changi City Point and Tampines.



Patio Perfection

\$1,490,000 SALE
 \$4,300 RENT
 Size: 1,770 sq. ft
 Bedrooms: 3 + 1
 Type: Condominium
 District: 18

PROPERTY



Central Chic

\$4,200 RENT
Size: 1,300 sq. ft
Bedrooms: 3+1
Type: Apartment
District: 10

With scenic views from the living room and the balcony, this sixth-floor unit is sought after for its location in a quiet and exclusive neighbourhood near Stevens and Orchard Road. The apartment has three good-sized bedrooms and three bathrooms, a large kitchen, a helper's room and plenty of extra storage cabinets.

Close to the Botanic Gardens, the American Club, the Overseas Family School and Tanglin Trust School, this condo is very popular among families. A Cold Storage supermarket, a McDonald's, a Subway and Al Borgo Pizzeria are all within a two-minute walk.

Beautifully renovated by the owners, this ground-floor, two-storey maisonette has everything: a small front garden and patio, master bedroom upstairs, two bedrooms and a storeroom on the ground floor, as well as a large under-stairs storage area. Conveniently located at Lorong Chuan, the condo is a walk from the Australian International School and a three-minute walk from the nearest MRT station. Facilities include a convenience store and a restaurant.



Commuter Choice

\$6,000 RENT
Size: 2,045 sq. ft
Bedrooms: 3+1
Type: Condominium
District: 19



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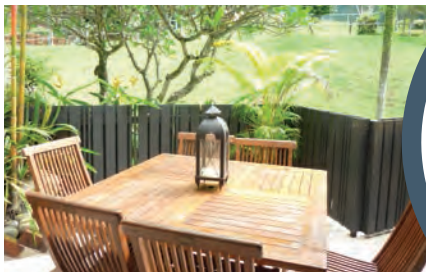
ASIAN TIGERS
MOBILITY

PROPERTY

This renovated home in the Mount Sinai area offers the best of both worlds: a townhouse with your own driveway and a back garden patio area, plus access to full condo facilities.

Apart from a spacious, open-plan kitchen, lounge and dining area towards the back of the house, the front has a large family lounge area. The master bedroom has been renovated to include a walk-in wardrobe and a bathroom.

Ridgewood Condo is popular among expats for its pool, gym, tennis and squash courts, minimarts, restaurants and other facilities. Feeder buses take you to Holland Village and Orchard, while it's a five-minute walk to Nexus International School. For grocery shopping, Jelita Cold Storage supermarket and Ghim Moh market are close by.



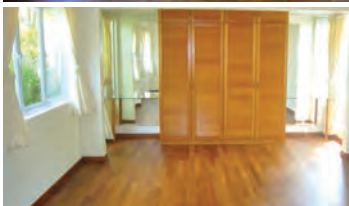
Rarity at Ridgewood

\$8,500 RENT
Size: 2800 sq. ft
Bedrooms: 4+1
Type: Semi-detached townhouse
District: 10

Perfect Bungalow

\$14,000 RENT
Size: 7,000 sq. ft land,
4,000 sq. ft built
Bedrooms: 4+1
Type: Landed bungalow
District: 10

This family bungalow is located on a quiet road near Jelita Cold Storage supermarket and looks onto a park with a children's playground. It's close to several international schools and Holland Village. A front patio overlooks the small pool deck and front garden, leading into the large, open lounge and dining areas. On the right is a study or guest bedroom, and on the left a guest bathroom, a dining area and a kitchen with a breakfast area. With plenty of windows and patio doors, this house is bright and spacious. The three bedrooms upstairs include a huge master bedroom with ensuite bath and shower, and two other bedrooms attached to a Jack and Jill bathroom.



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Overseas Investment



BROOKE HOUSE, LONDON

Situated in a typical English village in the London Borough of Merton, Brooke House is only 17 minutes by train from central London. It's set in a lush green area made up of numerous historic parks, buildings and designed landscapes.

A major regeneration project is underway and the whole area is experiencing a phenomenal growing demand from young professionals who are looking for a more value-for-money option than the more affluent neighbourhoods nearby. With prices starting from less than S\$450,000 for a one-bedroomed apartment with a 999-year lease, it's easy to see why these units are becoming increasingly popular.

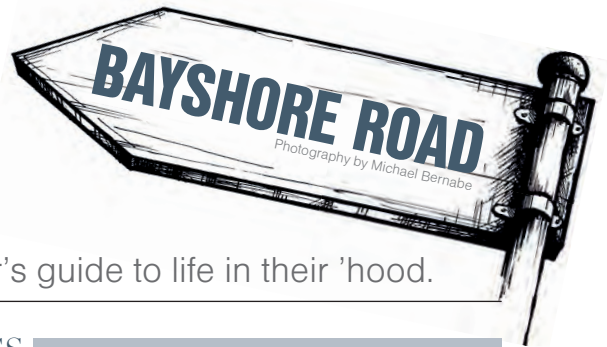
The Mitcham district of Merton was featured on property search site Zoopla as one of the UK's top 20 growth spots over the past five years.

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STREET TALK

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

THE SPECIFICS



NAME: SAM MORISON
FROM: Sydney, Australia
OCCUPATION: Mum, and importer of sports nutritional products

What street do you live on?
Bayshore Road.

Exact words you tell a taxi driver to get home?
Returning home from the children's school I sound like a rapper: "Please take me down the CTE, PIE, KPE then onto the ECP." Seriously. The kids think it's hilarious.

What's the name of your neighbourhood?
Bayshore, Upper East Coast, Bedok, Lucky Heights – I keep listing them until I have a winner.

Closest MRT station?
Bedok.

How long have you lived here?
Three-and-a-half years.

Why here?
We moved from a Sydney beachside suburb – with our dog Bear – and we love the ocean. The openness, the breeze and morning swims for Bear are a huge winner, along with being minutes from the airport, which is a major plus as my husband travels weekly.



THE SCENE

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

The ships in the strait between the East Coast and Indonesia. Each and every day the view changes based on the weather; blue skies with ships in a neat straight line or grey, windy skies, a curtain of rain and the ships swinging in every direction.

The closest store to your front door is:

Not one, but several, in an amazing strip of shops, including a convenience store stuffed with everything you can imagine; a dry cleaner who offers great-priced liquor; and a highly recommended dentist and beautician.

Your street would make the perfect backdrop for a remake of: An Indian reality show.

The unofficial uniform of your street is:

Lycra: from runners to cyclists, gym-goers, boot-camp regulars, tennis

players, swimmers, Zumba dancers and yoga followers.

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

A wealthy mainland Chinese businessman who lives here one weekend a month, guessing by the high-end cars in the car park.

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

Take a walk down Arab Street and Haji Lane with friends.

If you're missing home, you:

Visit Kinki Rooftop Bar. In the early evenings it has a holiday feel – surrounded by Singapore's amazing skyline, it reminds me that life is grand. (Then I usually focus on recruiting a friend or family member to holiday here.)

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

Jumbo's at Seafood Centre East Coast for chilli crab. Book for 6.30pm, and

watch as the sun goes down and the ship lights turn the watery view into a fairylane: outdoor, waterfront dining and seafood – all out-of-towners love it, even those only stopping by for a few hours.

You'd swap houses in a second with:

An Emerald Hill shophouse, for a completely different neighbourhood, lifestyle and floor plan – and Orchard Road convenience.

A common myth about your neighbourhood is:

That it's too far away. Announcement: this island is not big; *nothing* is too far away.

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

A weather change, and I race around to shut the windows.

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

Our English friends who seem to never run out of energy.



THE SUPERLATIVES

Your favourite neighbourhood joints are:

Cheap and cheerful hawker meals at East Coast Lagoon Food Village; an early morning wet market shopping trip to Bedok 217 where the kids are treated to roast pork belly for breakfast; Hua Yu Wee at 246 Upper East Coast Road, an old black-and-white house (with a beer garden) that serves Chinese seafood – this ticks every box.

You won't find better local food than at:

The chicken rice stall from Soy Eu Tua (corner of Jalan Tua Kong), Malay food at Mas Ayu, and Jamal Restaurant for cheap Indian food, all on Upper East Coast Road at Siglap; it's a five-minute drive.

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

A drag queen dressed as Wonder Woman. Her perspiration was so intense that her PVC outfit was disintegrating!

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

East Coast Lagoon Food Village, which we know as "the hawker centre". There's something for everyone, from prawns to roast duck, rojak, popiah and satay; linger while the kids scooter up and down the coastal paths or play in the sand.

The guiltiest pleasure in your area is:

Our condo pool. It is barely used throughout the day, so after a few beers we feel like it's our own exclusive club.

One thing you'd never change is:

My appreciation for living comfortably and harmoniously among so many cultures.

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

The lack of tolerance that some people display. Embrace and enjoy this unique experience!

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

Build a dog park with a swimming pond, somewhere along the East Coast. (Near the skateboard park would be handy!)



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 that of your street, and we'll be in touch.



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Upper Bukit Timah 1 Jalan Siap, Tel: 6314 5481
Upper East Coast 36 Toh Drive, Tel: 6543 1802
West Coast 9 South Buona Vista Road, Tel: 6779 8465

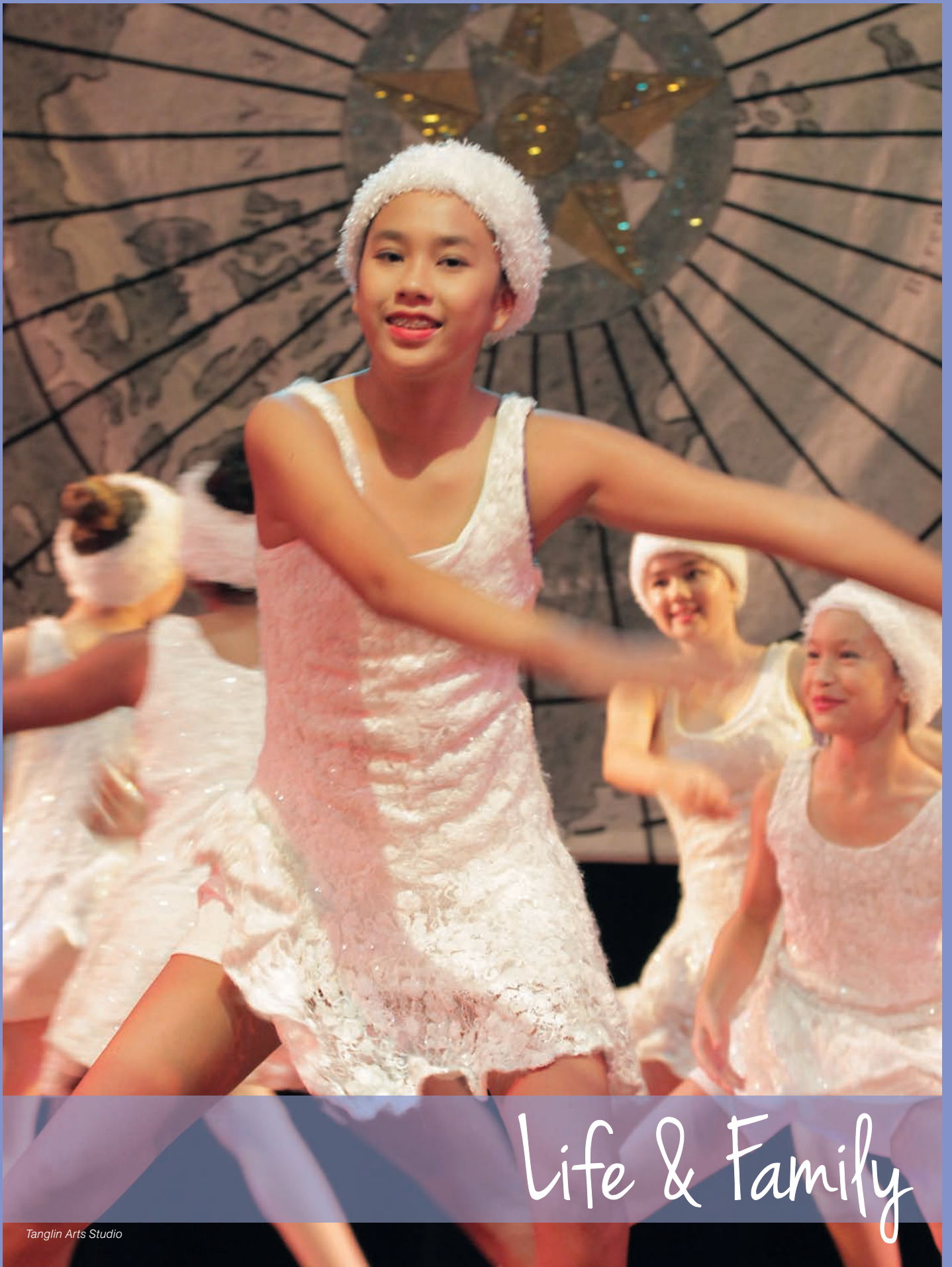


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Life & Family

WHAT'S NEW

Latest updates for parents & children

CHILDREN IN NEED

Foster parents make a difference to children's lives by providing stability, nurturing and love. The Ministry of Social and Family Development administers the Fostering Scheme for children under 18, an alternative care arrangement for children whose families are unable to look after them due to ill health, incarceration, abandonment, neglect or abuse. If you can offer a child a home and encouragement for a brighter future, call 6354 8799. Visit msf.gov.sg/fostering for more information. ▼



JUNIOR EXPLORERS

Junior Explorers is a new educational experience for children aged six to 11, teaching them about wildlife and the environment, across both online and offline worlds. Every month, Junior Explorers go on missions to explore different ecosystems, such as the Arctic to find a missing polar bear, or Africa's Serengeti to observe the great animal migration. Each mission starts at home, with a kit arriving by post that includes collectibles, activities and information. Kids then go online to complete their mission, playing games and solving mysteries along the way. Subscriptions start at \$24.99 for one month. juniorexplorers.com ▼



Secure Surfing

Safer Internet Day came and went in February, but no matter what day it is, it's essential to remember some important internet security habits. Most hijackers



get into accounts through phishing, which is sending emails that appear to come from a genuine source (such as your bank) but are really created to steal passwords or credit card details. Hijackers can break into an account in as little as 30 minutes. So remember to check the address bar for the URL prefix "https"; this means the site is secure. Also, be alert to scare tactics, and scan a sender's email address and email content for spelling mistakes and other irregularities that might indicate an email is not genuine. saferinternet.org

HOLIDAY IDEAS

Visitors in town for the holidays? Take advantage of a special family deal at **Gardens by the Bay**. The \$50 family package (normally \$64), allows entry to the cooled Flower Dome and Cloud Forest conservatories for two adults and two kids. Don't forget to bring along proof of residency when purchasing tickets. Offer valid until 28 June. gardensbythebay.com.sg



WIN AN IPAD MINI

Expatriate insurance specialist the **International Protection Group (IPG)** is continually seeking to improve its services. Clients are the heart of IPG's business, and the team is looking for input into delivering the insurance solutions that you're looking for. If you can help, complete a five-minute confidential survey for a chance to win an iPad Mini. Visit the "What's On" page at ipg.sg to enter. IPG is at 27/F Prudential Tower, 30 Cecil Street. **6631 2862 | ipg.sg** ▲

The Referral Guide for SINGAPORE

JUNE 2015

expat LIVING

Mini-Guide

29 PRESCHOOLS
AND KINDERGARTENS

We talk to the
parents

LOCATION
MAP



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OUT
AND
KEEP!**

If your copy is missing, please contact
circulation@expatliving.sg

DIGITAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

Little Mandarins has launched online lessons to reinforce classroom tuition, part of a stimulating curriculum that was created to engage kids in learning. Research has repeatedly shown that repetition, practice and a reduction in the interval between lessons all have important learning benefits. *Expat Living* readers can take advantage of a special offer, the first 10 callers receiving one free trial group lesson at the Loewen school, plus one free online lesson within that same week. Little Mandarins, #01-03 Block 71, Loewen Road.

6473 8377 | little-mandarins.com ▼



JUST DANCE

Did you know that **Tanglin Arts Studio** now has three locations? There's the main studio at Horsecity for regular classes, Sentosa Cove for classes on Mondays, and Dance On Us at Claymore Hill on Thursdays. Dancing is well known for developing creativity and music appreciation and improving fitness and coordination, and it can widen your circle of friends! Tanglin Arts Studio offers a range of dance classes for everyone from kids aged two-and-a-half to adults. 100 Turf Club Road, #01-02 Horsecity Block M. 6479 0304, 8123 6770 | tanglinartsdancestudio.com

Oh, Behave!

Minding your Ps and Qs, even when others don't. Kristen Graff, founder of *Manners in Mind*, answers your sticky social questions.

One of the guests I invited to a recent party at my home asked to bring along a friend of hers who was in town at the time. Although I already had a full guest list, I said it would be fine, assuming that her friend would fit in with my friends. Unfortunately, they made no effort to mingle, choosing instead to sit on the balcony outdoors and smoke – without even asking permission! This has left me irritated, and inclined to strike my guest off the list for future parties. Two questions arise: (a) how to handle requests to bring along additional guests; and (b) what to do when people light up in a smoke-free home, albeit on the balcony.

This is a great question, as so often in Singapore guests are in town for long stays that can affect our social plans.

If you have the space, invite the additional guest to the party. Otherwise, your friend may not be able to attend since she won't want to abandon her own guest. Any time you have guests that aren't mixing and mingling with the crowd, try to engage them by asking questions. Here, you could ask how the two guests met or what plans they've made during the out-of-town guest's stay. Any questions of common ground should help to keep the group more connected and involved. If you are the one bringing an extra guest, do your best to introduce them to friends at the party. Also, don't forget a hostess gift.

With regard to the smoking, this is up to you and your own house rules. Guests should never presume it's acceptable to smoke in another's home, even on the balcony. Some folks have a real sensitivity to smoke or have health issues. If smoking doesn't bother you, set out an ashtray and let the smokers know where you put it. If you don't want people to smoke on your balcony, let them know. "I'm sorry, my daughter has asthma, so we can't have smoking anywhere near our house. You can go to the garden off the main lobby though." If you are a smoker, speak with the hostess before lighting up.

Manners in Mind provides modern-day advice, and classes for children and adults on cultural, social and corporate etiquette. 8157 3365 | mannersinmind.com



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A one-of-a-kind hybrid carrier, the **Emeibaby** takes the complexity out of baby wraps with its innovative design. With just two buckles and a novel diagonal stretch, it's an ergonomic option for parents looking for a woven wrap that can be adjusted for a precise fit and comfort. From \$249.90 at **Baby Slings and Carriers**. 9 Jalan Pemimpin, #06-01 Tai Lee Building. **6397 6691** | babyslingsandcarriers.com ▼



NECK COMFORT

No more mid-flight insomnia! The super-cute **Necknapperz** is an ergonomic neck pillow disguised as a huggable pet, and it might be just the thing to get your little ones off to sleep on a long flight. Choose from eight plush characters to cushion and support your child's head and prevent it from wobbling around. \$24.90. Available in department stores. ▼



CLEAN CONSCIENCE

We know **Method** cleaning products have environmental cred, as the company has taken a stand against bleach and phosphates. Its latest Ginger Yuzu range goes one step further, with ingredients that are biodegradable and safe for the body. Now we can do the washing up without wearing those pesky plastic gloves, and it's easy on the nose too. methodhome.com.sg ▲

WONDER KIDS

New to the extensive class programme at children's fitness and development centre **The Little Gym of Singapore East** is **The WonderKids Club**. The Club offers a three-hour interactive learning experience, where children engage in structured play and an exploration of their innate sense of wonder. All classes are suitable for three- to four-year-olds. 6 Raffles Boulevard, #03-163/164 Marina Square. **6336 9734** | thelittlegym.com.sg



Pretty Party

Looking for classy, stylish tableware and party-ware for your next soirée or celebration? Newly opened store **Dreams and Confetti** stocks exclusive brands including luxe gourmet candy Sugarfina, gorgeous cake stands by Jeanette Zeis and Mosser Glass, and tableware by Rosanna. Great World City #02-20. **6733 0320** | dreamsandconfetti.com ▲

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Canadian International School Pte. Ltd. CPE Registration Number: 199002243H Period of Registration: 8 June 2011 to 7 June 2015



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1



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3

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4

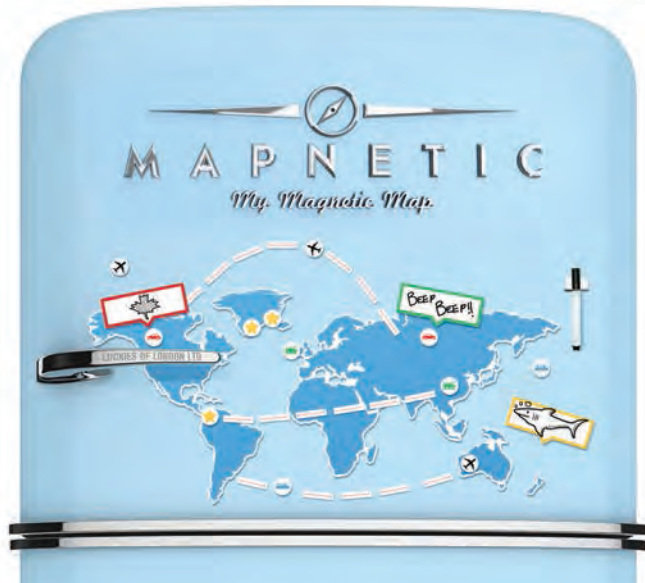


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6



7



1 Melissa & Doug Classic ABC Block Cart, \$27.90, Motherswork, five locations, motherswork.com.sg **2** Penny classic 22-inch skateboard, \$175, whiteandblacktrading.com **3** OSIT evolutive baby chair, \$229, First Few Years, 290 Orchard Road, #05-40/41 Paragon, 6836 3693, firstfewyears.com.sg **4** The Things I Love About Me book, \$11.60, agapebabies.com **5** Tiger Tribe "Magna Carry" fold-out play activity book, \$31.40, agapebabies.com **6** Green Toys 100-percent recycled plastic rocket, dishwasher-safe, \$38.90, Motherswork **7** Magnetic map, \$39, tickety-boo.com **1**

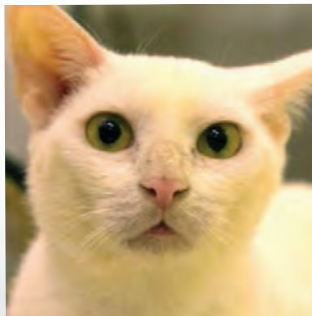
NOTICEBOARD

Births, engagements and weddings, plus items for sale

ANIMAL ADOPTION



3-year old **Misu** is an incredibly affectionate and playful Siamese lady looking for a home. Originally adopted from the SPCA, she comes sterilised, vaccinated and chipped with litter tray, travel bag and toys provided. If you think you can provide a loving home for Misu, please contact Leanda at leanda.rathmell@expatliving.sg or 8354 7964



Snow White was found malnourished and covered in roach bites. Now fully recovered, she is a playful six-year-old and has recently been spayed.



Eight-month old **Chocolate Chip** has a distinctive nose and light blue eyes. She has a good temperament and will be sterilised, de-wormed and vaccinated prior to adoption.



This four-year-old shorthaired black cat has a nice temperament and is sterilised, vaccinated and ready to go to a good loving home.



Daniel is approximately five years old and is a lovely, affectionate cat. He has semi-long fur, is fluffy and knows how to enjoy life. He likes air-conditioning, and clearly doesn't mind wearing the occasional comedy lion's mane.

The Cat Welfare Society (CWS) is a charity that aims to promote a humane, responsible and informed society where cats are cared for responsibly as pets and treated with kindness within the community. CWS works closely with town councils and governmental organisations to resolve cat issues in communities effectively and sustainably.

It also functions as a network of caregivers and fosterers who actively re-home, sterilise and rehabilitate thousands of cats each year. To further resolve community issues, CWS works ground up by making human connections and creating a culture where positive attitudes towards cats are fostered and encouraged.

For more information about the animals available for adoption, go to catwelfare.org/adoptions, or follow CWS on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

For more, go to www.expatliving.sg and click Noticeboard.

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READY TO GO

This year, of the class of 159 students graduating from Tanglin Trust School, 20 have attended the school since Nursery. Against the backdrop of practical jokes and celebration of camaraderie on Leavers' Day, it's pertinent to ask whether children raised in a so-called expat bubble are adequately prepared for their step into the real world. It's a given that they are academically prepared for university, but what about everything else? As the parent of one graduating student and another who's now at university, JULIE BARLOW, Assistant Head of Upper School, has seen her own expatriate children flourish. Here she explains Tanglin Trust School's (TTS) approach to a well-rounded graduate.

Instilling values and finding a moral compass. During the Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education programme (PSHCE), students from Year 7 meet weekly with their tutor group and cover a wide range of issues. For example, Information Literacy is currently a hot topic. All students have iPads from Year 5, so they're taught to think carefully about cyber issues, and their digital "tattoos".

School trips are carefully designed to challenge the students. From the early years, most school trips have a service element built in, and generally foster a bond with the local community. Ahead of the recent Sixth Form trip to Ladakh, India, students were trained to assist hands-on with optometry. During the trip they were able to assist hundreds of people suffering from cataracts or needing spectacles. They also raised \$55,000 to fund equipment for the clinics, including a van to facilitate mobile outreach.

We bring the world in. From alumni to elite inspirational speakers, Tanglin's speaker series gives students access to

a wide range of role models who motivate and inspire while also encouraging students to think and question. A female executive from Google particularly inspired our girls in Years 9 and 11; and a group of recent graduates recounted their university experiences.

University preparation is important in Year 13. Practical information and open discussion equip students with the ability to make the right decisions. Our philosophy is to be open and honest, and to talk to students like adults, about issues they will face at university. This ranges from drugs and alcohol to nutrition, budgeting and basic cooking. The first week at university, when students need to be street-wise and adjust to living in a different and new environment, is an important aspect of this preparation too.

Independence awards and grants recognise initiative. Thanks to TTS Foundation funding, our 14- and 15-year-old students are eligible for a \$500 contribution towards a self-funded, fully independent service project. Year 13 students are also

eligible for an alumni grant to match their own fundraising for a self-organised trip or project.

Mindfulness techniques are taught and practised throughout the school as part of Tanglin's focus on wellbeing. In Year 13, this is a particularly useful strategy and important in helping students cope with stress during exams. Mindfulness can also be a valuable practice for students to take with them as they transition to university and find themselves on their own without a support network.

Through the Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) programme, our students become aware of their privilege. Working through community outreach programmes, for example, with autistic children, children with learning difficulties or whose parents are not supportive can provide a setting for quite powerful interactions. The challenge lies in our students finding the resilience and commitment to continue for six to eight months, despite being outside their comfort zone.

Generally, expat kids have learned to be culturally sensitive, tolerant, welcoming, accustomed to transition, open-minded, and to have a strong sense of justice. At Tanglin, we prepare our students to leave home confidently, despite a few inevitable nerves, and to know that they are going out into the world prepared and as good people. We know that they are ready to fly!

95 Portsdown Road
6778 0771 | tts.edu.sg

Tanglin Trust School - CPE Registration No: 196100114C
Period of Registration: 7th June 2011 to 6th June 2017



As the Overseas Family School (OFS) prepares to move to a new \$300 million campus, we asked its Academic Director, PAT KEENAN, what teachers and students can look forward to at the Pasir Ris location.

NEW HORIZONS

Why did OFS decide to build a new school?

Our Paterson Road campus has always been a temporary site, and we had been negotiating with the government for a permanent site. We are absolutely delighted with the new facilities, as many of the design features are world-firsts.

When do you open the doors?

First day is 11 August 2015, when our population of around 3,500 students will move in.

The new school has amazing facilities; what can students expect?

- 20 classrooms dedicated to 14 different languages taught in the mother tongue programme, all located together on one floor;
- a 10-lane, 50-metre swimming pool;
- five full-sized, covered basketball courts;
- large numbers of specialist rooms, including two science laboratories in Elementary School (we intend to increase our science focus as we transition to the International Primary Curriculum A 2,000-seat auditorium), plus numerous studios and activity rooms dedicated to the performing arts;
- 12 escalators and 27 elevators;
- spacious hallways and classrooms, plus more specialist rooms, including a chess suite and coding labs.

What about the teachers; what are they looking forward to?

We are focusing intensively on utilising the new facilities to enhance student learning across the entire educational spectrum. For example, the performing arts have always been emphasised at OFS, and the new auditorium and expanded teaching spaces greatly expand the scope for this. Our

physical education and sporting facilities have also been expanded, with an extra sports field, and the pool is quadruple the size of our previous one.

The extra space offers exciting potential for collaboration and large group-learning activities; the huge activity room available for each grade level in the Elementary School is just one example.

We've planned for the physical school environment too, installing full-spectrum LED lights in all rooms, and CO2 sensors linked to the air-conditioning system that pump in fresh sea air at pre-set thresholds. Importantly, all teachers will have individual offices, providing them with a more professional working environment.

What about travel to and from school?

Student drop-off and pick-up will be streamlined, with underground parking for 500 cars and 120 buses; this will be particularly advantageous on wet days. And rather than congested inner-city roads, there are quick exits to the school on and off the TPE expressway, via a four-lane road that leads straight to the front gate.

Overseas Family School is at 25F Paterson Road until 11 August, and thereafter at the junction of 81 Pasir Ris Heights. 6738 0211 | ofs.edu.sg

Other school developments

- A new **German European School Singapore** in Dairy Farm is slated for completion in 2017.
- **Sir Manasseh Meyer International School's** new campus at Sembawang is expected to open in early 2016. 🇸🇬



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Safe & Secure

PRACTICAL TRAVEL TIPS FOR WOMEN

Whether on a business trip or on holiday, there is a lot all of us, particularly women, can do to safeguard our security. Beyond petty thefts are violent and invasive dangers that no one wants

to think about, yet it's vital to guard against them. We asked Australian FELY BOWEN, Regional Security Manager, Consulting and Training, Asia-Pacific at International SOS and Control Risks for her practical advice.



What troubles do travellers encounter in general?

By far the most common risks for both men and women are opportunistic crime and traffic accidents, rather than the well-reported incidents of kidnapping or plane crashes. Bag-snatching is a particularly big problem for women, followed by theft and sexual assault. Women tend to be targeted more than men, and this happens all over the world.

Obviously clothing choices are important, right?

Yes, this is part of the preparation for travel, and we ask people to research acceptable clothing in the country they are visiting – business colleagues can usually help. Err on the side of caution and dress more rather than less conservatively. Generally, anywhere in the world, a skirt to the knee and a jacket is acceptable business attire.



Be aware of cultural differences. In Ghana, for example, revealing cleavage is not considered sexual, but the thigh area is. A shawl is handy for covering up, especially in Asia, where you may visit temples and should show respect.

What do you advise women who are preparing to travel?

These five rules are applicable to men too:

1. *Know your personal profile:* Understand that if you are a Caucasian visiting China, you will stand out, no matter how you dress. As a female you will stand out more in some countries, especially in business environments.



DID YOU KNOW?

Recent global statistics show that nearly 50 percent of all business travellers are female.

2. *Research the destination ahead of time:* How are women treated and perceived in a business sense? Understand the culture of the place you're visiting; for example, in Malaysia, men seldom shake hands with women. Knowing this means you won't insult them or feel uncomfortable yourself.

3. *Be a hard target:* Know how to conduct yourself. Know exactly who is picking you up from the airport. Carry your bag on your side that is away from the road, especially in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam where bag-snatching from motorbikes is rife. Wear a wedding ring, or have a made-up boyfriend story ready.
4. *Be confident and assertive:* Ward off unwanted attention by radiating a self-assured demeanour.
5. *Stay calm:* If something untoward happens – verbal or sexual advances, for example – it's better to walk away, maintaining a confident assertive persona.



TIPS FOR AVOIDING TRAVEL HORROR STORIES

Be careful with alcohol

A woman visiting London on a business trip had a few drinks with colleagues after work and left the pub on her own. A guy ran by and tried to grab her bag. She fought back, but he persisted and took the bag. She hurt her shoulder badly and still ended up with no money and no phone.

Advice: Avoid drinking in a place you don't know, and ask friends to wait with you until you get a taxi. Fighting back is *not* recommended.

Double-lock the hotel door

An Australian woman visiting Kuala Lumpur on business neglected to double-lock her hotel door. A male member of the hotel staff came in with a key card and sexually assaulted her.

Advice: Double-lock the door if possible, and travel with a rubber doorstop to wedge a door shut from the inside, so even if someone does get in, you may have time to call reception for help first.

Keep room numbers private

A flight crew chatted in the lobby of their Milan hotel after check-in, swapping room numbers and making dinner arrangements. A bystander overheard the conversation and went to one woman's room, pretending to be a crew member with a message. The woman opened the door because his words sounded legitimate, and was sexually assaulted.

Advice: It's likely we've all had innocent conversations such as this and thought nothing of it. In a case like this, you should either ring reception to confirm that the visitor is legitimate, or ask the person to slide a message under the door. Unless you have ordered room service, you should not open the door.

What's the best way for a woman to safely catch a taxi alone?

Get a taxi from the hotel, where the porter is not only likely to hail one from a reputable company but will often record the number plate. Text the taxi number to a friend. Ask the hotel ahead of time how long to expect the journey to take. Have the hotel business card (with its address in the local language) with you, and have the number of someone that you can call along the way; especially in



countries where people don't speak English. If you feel unsafe, get out of the taxi and get into another one. Always sit in the back!


What about airport pick-ups?

One traveller was collected by an imposter at an airport, did not check their credentials and was robbed. It's not enough that a person has your name written on a placard: check that they know where you are staying and who made the travel arrangements. Get their phone number in advance, so you can call them to verify their identity.

Any suggestions for safety in hotels?

- Stay on women-only floors, if they're available; these are common in Japan, and increasing in number elsewhere.
- Stay in international business hotels where access to rooms and lifts is usually by key-card only.
- If you're checking-in late at night and feel uncomfortable, ask someone to walk to the room with you and wait while you check that the peephole is covered, any inter-connecting door is secured and the windows are locked. Ask to move to another room if you have any concerns.
- At check-in, ask the receptionist to write down your room number rather than saying it out loud. If they announce your room number in a loud voice and there are people around, ask for another room.

Any final tip?

Frequent business travellers in particular, should guard against a false sense of security in places they know well. Though bad things happen to both men and women, women can be viewed as softer targets, and the impact of crime on them can be horribly worse. 



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Tel: 6440 7813

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The New Expatriate

Research confirms the anecdotes: the times are changing



It's often thought that an expat in Singapore is someone living on a generous company package in an expansive black-and-white home, with driver, gardener and nanny. This might have been case in 1995, but the reality in 2015 is that more and more expats are now employed on local contracts. What does this mean, and how do they manage life in the world's most expensive city? DR YVONNE McNULTY from **Expat Research** takes an honest look at real life for Singapore's *new* expats who don't receive the big packages, and debunks the myth that all expats here are living it large.

Twenty years ago, being an expat was seen as a quick way to get rich fast, with most employees receiving full compensation and benefits packages that covered everything from housing, schools, and cars, to tax equalisation, home leave, and even cold-weather clothing allowances! While some expats are still fortunate to be living on full packages, most of us don't.

Industry research shows that "localising" (*see box, right*) expatriates has been the dominant compensation approach in Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai since 2004, in contrast to the predominantly full-package approach of 20 years ago. This change means that more expat families are relocating to Singapore, or remaining

Localisation describes the company practice of replacing an expat compensation package with something comparable to that offered to locals. It often includes reducing base salary, and almost always involves eliminating incentives, allowances, home country social security and retirement plans. Localised expats are viewed and treated like local employees and offered few or no special benefits in recognition of their "special" status as foreigners.

here, on local terms and conditions, and forgoing many of the benefits and allowances they once might have received.

Why do expats agree to localise? For many, it's a deliberate decision taken in the best interests of the family, especially when faced with a company policy that requires the localisation of an expat who wishes to stay on in Singapore at the end of an assignment contract. KPMG's *2013 Global Assignment Policies and Practices Report* estimates that approximately 30 percent of companies have such policies in place.

Localisation often makes sense for families who appreciate Singapore as a safe environment to raise children, and a convenient base for expats in a regional role requiring constant business travel. Others have no choice. As the international labour market heats up, and the need for international work experience becomes essential for "lifetime employability" and "external marketability", many expats and their families are here on local terms because one or both spouses need Singapore or Asia on their CV.

Whatever the reasons, localised expats live a different life to their full-package peers. For starters, they fund everything out of their own pockets: school fees, rent, car, utilities, and trips home to see family and friends. This often means forgoing the luxuries other expats may easily afford, including expensive restaurants, flashy holidays, and even drycleaning and imported groceries. Their savings may take a dip, their children may attend local schools, or they may decide to rent a more affordable home further from the city. Many localised families also have two parents working in paid employment, often more out of necessity than desire.

The norm rather than the exception

Not surprisingly, more than three-quarters of companies globally (including those with Singapore subsidiary offices) have some form of localisation policy. In 2014, more than half were transferring employees to localised conditions, up from 46 percent in 2013, according to a study of mobility trends by Brookfield Global Relocation Services. The main driver is the need to reduce expenses for international assignments in response to difficult economic conditions.

But this doesn't mean that all expats go willingly into localisation, or that companies necessarily reap the benefits. A recent study published in *Journal of World Business* found that localisation has many unforeseen opportunity costs for companies, the biggest being the loss of talent to competitors. Localised expats are free to job-hop and look for better employment deals, because of reduced financial ties binding them to their employers.

To counter the avalanche of lost talent and employee resistance to localisation, about 27 per cent of companies use "local-plus" packages over a transfer period of up to two years. This softens the blow of localisation, giving expats time to manage their finances and adjust their spending habits.

Companies are also savvy in knowing whom they can localise. Typically, younger employees climbing the corporate ladder need less enticement than senior employees in their

late 40s and early 50s who are more likely to be drawn to a large package with benefits.

International HR Journal defines a local-plus package as one that compensates an employee according to the salary levels, structure and administrative guidelines of the host location, as well as providing them with limited "expatriate-type" benefits such as transportation, housing and dependants' education, in recognition of the employee's "foreign" status.

What to consider

1. Localisation is viewed as a permanent one-way transfer, where the company has no obligation to provide or to assist with repatriation to a home country or to re-assign an expat to another international location. It is entirely the employee's responsibility to organise and fund any such move.

2. Localisation means that expats are not supported or valued by a company in the same way as full-package expats, typically receiving no training and fewer perks, and having a lower status overall. This can leave an expat feeling in limbo, neither a true local nor a real expat. A hierarchical pecking order tends to exist too, and many localised expats feel like lower-order employees, especially in cases where their expat colleagues are more handsomely rewarded for doing exactly the same job.

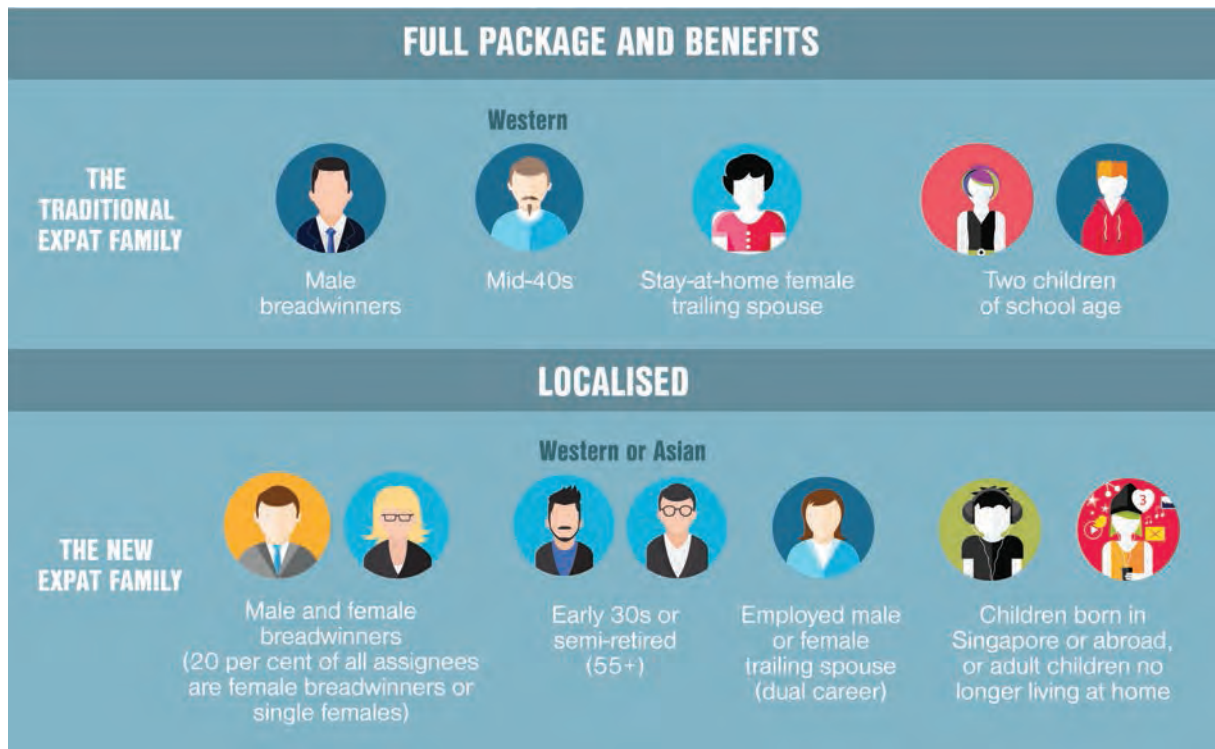
3. Localisation occurs in two ways. An increasing number of expats relocate to Singapore as localised employees from the start, with just a base salary and no perks or benefits. Others arrive on a full package and later switch to localised employment. Some companies do this by winding back benefits incrementally over a one- or two-year period as outlined in the employment contract, but the majority of companies tend to localise almost immediately, giving their expat employees little time to plan and budget ahead.

The big picture

An obvious downside of localisation is the negative impact on the household budget. Conversely, many localised expats love this way of life. The biggest benefit is the freedom to own their careers, to relocate when it suits them rather than the company, to job-hop into better opportunities at will, and to decide when and how to spend their salary.

Either way, it's clear that localisation is here to stay. It helps companies maximise talent management while containing costs – a strategy that is likely to dominate the expat employment scene for years to come. What remains important for expats is to leverage the opportunities that localised employment brings, and to keep in mind that short-term financial pain can often bring long-term international career gain.

Profile of an expat in 2015



How the package is changing

	THE NEW EXPAT FAMILY	THE TRADITIONAL EXPAT FAMILY
VISA AND WORK PERMIT APPLICATIONS	✓	✓
RELOCATION OF HOUSEHOLD GOODS	✓	✓
TEMPORARY HOUSING (AVERAGE 15 TO 30 DAYS)	✓	✓
TEMPORARY LIVING EXPENSES	✓	✓
PRE-ASSIGNMENT VISIT	✓	✓
HOUSING/RENT ALLOWANCE	✗	✓
CAR ALLOWANCE	✗	✓
SCHOOL FEES (FULL OR PARTIAL)	✗	✓
HOME LEAVE FLIGHTS AND EXPENSES	✗	✓
CLUB MEMBERSHIP	✗	✓
TAX EQUALISATION	✗	✓
UTILITIES REIMBURSEMENT	✗	✓
TAX BRIEFINGS AND TAX PREPARATION ASSISTANCE	✗	✓
SPOUSE ALLOWANCE (REIMBURSEMENT FOR LOSS OF SECOND INCOME, EDUCATION/COURSE ASSISTANCE)	✗	✓
RETIREMENT BENEFITS	✓ (CPF/LOCAL)	✓ (HOME COUNTRY ENTITLEMENTS)
MEDICAL AND DENTAL COVERAGE	✓ (LOCAL \$)	✓ (FULL INTERNATIONAL \$\$\$)
COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE	✗	✓
MOBILITY PREMIUM (BONUS FOR RELOCATING)	✗	✓
HARDSHIP/DANGER ALLOWANCE	✗	✓
STORAGE OF HOUSEHOLD GOODS IN HOME COUNTRY	✗	✓
REPATRIATION COSTS	✗	✓



Expat Living's Editor-in-Chief REBECCA BISSET offers her thoughts on how times have changed for expats, and whether it's worth living here even without the expat package.


During and after the last two major global recessions, Singapore offered opportunities that simply weren't available in other countries. The outlook for graduates in the UK, for example, was bleak, which meant that many were happy to take a localised package here, or indeed any salary, to start them on their career path. At the same time, some people made the move without realising how expensive it would be, but they ultimately decided that having less spending money was still better than the alternative in their home country.

For those facing the end of an international role, career options back home can be limited. They may have to compromise and move back to live in a different city, rather than the place they were born or grew up in. Staying here on a localised package means they do have to watch what they spend, but knowing that they can at least have more choice in where the money gets spent is still a preferable option.

The concept of the expat package was initially developed to compensate for the "hardship" of life on foreign postings. Yet many countries are no longer considered hardship postings, and Singapore is a prime example: it's a modern and safe option with the best of everything.

I have friends who lived here in the 60s and hated it. There was no air-conditioning, spouses couldn't drive or work, shopping options were limited; the list goes on. Now Singapore is a first-world country that is, in many ways, easier to live in than our "homes".

We arrived here over 17 years ago on a local package, though we did get \$2,500 for rent (when the property market was very high). We always knew that I would have to work when the time came for the kids to go to school. But it was still a much better option to live in Singapore with home help and childcare, warm weather and easy access to much of the world.

It has been difficult sometimes, especially when you have people around you that never have to think about a school payment or finding the cheapest airfares home – but it's a lot more normal and grounding. I think living in this international hub with low tax and very little bureaucracy is worth it even without the perks of an expatriate package. 



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Finance First



If, like many people, you find yourself worrying about particular issues relating to insurance or money – whether it’s the prospect of a looming transition from an expat package to localisation, or planning ahead to afford your children’s education – then it might be time to consider enlisting the help of a financial planner. We asked two *Expat Living* readers to share their experiences of trusted companies in Singapore.

Maxime Vanderhaeghe, Belgian

“We chose Globaleye through a good friend’s referral and have been using their life insurance services for almost a year.

We are very happy with their excellent services. I used to be a private banker, and I truly appreciate the approach taken by them; they asked us the important questions that ensured they could offer us the right package. Andrew Talbot was very professional and not pushy; this was something I really liked.

I’ll definitely continue to use Globaleye. They were friendly, efficient and professional. On top of all that, they conducted an excellent advisory approach tailored to fit our requirements and needs.

As a young father, I highly recommend Globaleye to anyone who wants to feel reassured when it comes to protecting their family members with the right insurance. I have not made use of their other services yet, but that might change.”



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Ed Ansett, British

“I have been using Chartwell Associates’ personal financial planning service for two years. This was based on my friend’s referral.

Of all the financial advisors I have dealt with, Chartwell Associates stands out head and shoulders above the rest. My dealings at the company have been with David Hood, whose attention to detail, diligence, research and extent of advice were exceptional. The advice he provided has proven to be very valuable.

I will continue to use Chartwell Associates’ services, as they went the extra mile to provide financial solutions that were genuinely tailored to my needs. I’ll definitely recommend them to my friends too.”



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Recent events, openings & parties

Tee Off!

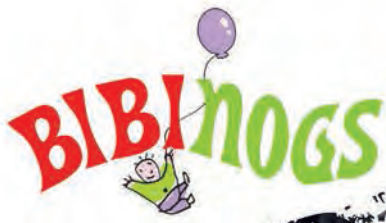
Hosted by The American Club and the American Association of Singapore, the 2015 Ambassador's Cup Golf Tournament was held at Palm Resort Golf & Country Club in Senai Johor, Malaysia. The fantastic resort-style golf course, along with the delicious food, cocktails and prizes, made the weekend a memorable one.



Best in the Biz

The Dutch Chamber of Commerce Singapore held its first Business Awards dinner, featuring guest speakers Prof Dr Pieter Winsemius and his sister Ankie Winsemius; their father is the late Dr Albert Winsemius, who was the chief economic advisor to Singapore from 1961 to 1984. Dr Vivian Balakrishnan also gave a much-appreciated speech at the event.





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Putting Theo in Bibinogs is no doubt, in my mind, one of the best decisions I've made. I love how the school has created and nurtured in him a passion for learning and how he simply enjoys school and the activities. I am definitely looking forward to the next school activity where parents can participate!

Aiwei (Theo's Mom)
Nursery, Bibinogs @ Kings Arcade



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S (258748)

Bibinogs Play School
81 Clemenceau Avenue
#02-11, UE Square Mall
S (239917)



Delizioso!

To celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations between Italy and Singapore, the Italian ambassadorial couple, HE Paolo and Sara Crudele, hosted an event at the Italian Residence in Sime Road. The Accademia Italiana della Cucina arranged for The Fullerton Hotel's Executive Chef Sandro Falbo, Chef Carlo Marengoni and Chef Richard Ng to cook up an amazing culinary adventure in honour of both countries.



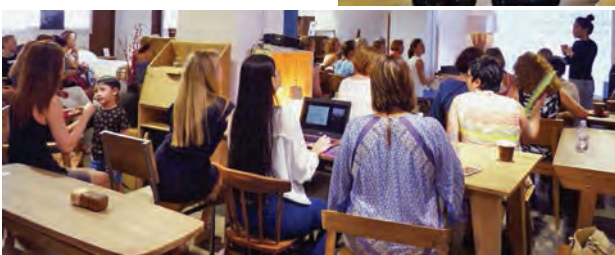
Challenge Accepted!

Everyone was a winner at the twelfth JP Morgan Corporate Challenge on 23 April, when 14,264 entrants in teams representing 297 companies sprinted, jogged or walked the 5.6K route.



EL Coffee Morning

This month's Coffee Morning, held at Mountain Teak Furniture Gallery, was a cosy one. Arete Culture hosted a home-dressing session and offered tips on giving your home a stylish edge, while the team from Mountain Teak showcased its beautiful furniture and answered questions on choosing the right piece for different interiors.





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Email: admissions@ofs.edu.sg You may also visit us at <http://www.ofs.edu.sg>



Wild Rice Friends

Lucky guests mingled over post-show drinks and snacks at the gala evening of Wild Rice's hugely successful interpretation of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's controversial 1882 play, *Public Enemy*. If you haven't visited the atmospheric Victoria Concert Theatre since its immaculate restoration, you're in for a treat!



Familiar Faces

Local celebrity chef Willin Low, MediaCorp actress Rebecca Lim and popular food blogger Dr Leslie Tay were among the many well-known guests at the launch of Australian multivitamin brand Swisse. The Australian High Commissioner to Singapore, His Excellency Philip Green, hosted the celebration at his beautiful residence.



Happy 21st, to a free South Africa

We celebrated the 21st South African Freedom Day on 28 April with HE Hazel Ngubeni, the SA Ambassador, at the Sheraton Towers Ballroom, toasting freedom with appropriately South African wines – Nederburg, Fleur du Cap and more – sponsored by Distill.





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The Dream Comes to Life

NEWS FLASH

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



Albert Einstein Visits Singapore to meet Sir Manasseh Meyer



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

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

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

not tied together. His belief that "God doesn't play dice with the universe" meant there was a basic connectedness with all knowledge.

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

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

Under the leadership of the current Trustees, Sir Manasseh Meyer's dream has come to life. The Trustees have commissioned the

building of a **state-of-the-art school for 500 students** in Sembawang to serve both the Jewish community as well as the entire International community.

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

CONTINUED PAGE 13

Cutting Edge Campus Opens in Sembawang

BREAKING NEWS

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

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

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

CONTINUED PAGE 8



Sir Manasseh Meyer
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Arts & Leisure

Drawing Out **EMOTION**

By Amy Greenburg

When we think of disaster relief, it's usually first-aid tents and water stations that come to mind rather than booths with crayons and coloured pencils. However, when Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines in 2013, sure enough, art therapists from **The Red Pencil** organisation were on hand with art materials to help put traumatised children on the road to healing through creative expression. We spoke to Belgian expat and The Red Pencil founder, LAURENCE VANDENBORRE, about the benefits of art therapy, the humanitarian project's goals and its upcoming missions.

A way to help people manage their physical and emotional problems by using creative activities to express emotions, art therapy provides a way to come to terms with emotional conflicts, increase self-awareness, and articulate unspoken and often unconscious concerns about their illnesses or traumatic experiences.

Though she has long had a love for art, Laurence, who moved to Singapore in 1997, didn't become interested in art therapy until a psychologist friend introduced her to the idea in a four-night awareness workshop about the practice.

"I attended those evening workshops and was immediately convinced of the power of art therapy, not only to help express and release what needed to be 'said', but also to gently reveal the part of ourselves we may not be aware of, and to empower us towards a happier, more joyful, more hopeful future," Laurence says.

From there, she went on to take classes at Lasalle College of the Arts, training in the use of arts and media, as well as psychological and therapeutic approaches, before earning her master's degree in 2006.

"This type of therapy is important because it gives people an alternative way to express what they need to without words; art therapy is particularly appropriate in any situation where people find it difficult to verbalise what they are



Laurence with kids in the Philippines



A young Sri Lankan mother with her very first drawing

going through and how they feel about it," Laurence says.

How long does it normally take for children to respond to this type of therapy? According to Laurence, no time at all.

"All too often, children don't have the vocabulary to express how they feel and what they're going through. On the contrary, drawing is such a natural way of expression for children," she says. "Sometimes, when parents struggle with their little ones' issues, they bravely go from one professional to the other, unable to find a way to understand what's going on – much less find a solution. But, as art therapy puts the creative act of drawing at the centre of the therapeutic process, very often the issue manifests itself quite rapidly, which then gives the art therapist a chance to address it verbally with the child through the drawing. This indirect way of discussing the problem is much more comfortable for the child, as he or she can talk about what's going on in the drawing, and not in his or her own life, which may feel a bit threatening."

She adds, "Often, for an art therapist, it's more of a challenge to work with adults, who are more guarded. Bringing the adult back into the spontaneity of drawing like a child, without any aesthetic purpose and without any judgement, is often part of the early art therapeutic work."

The Red Pencil

Though Laurence soon became passionate about starting her own humanitarian project, it took about eight years for her dream to finally come to fruition.

"After the tsunami in 2004, having worked at Raffles Hospital with French-speaking patients who had been caught in the waves, I wished to find a way to reach out to many more than just those I could see myself. It was then that the seed idea of a foundation was sown," she says. "However, I was still fulfilling some professional duties that didn't allow me time to pursue the dream. It wasn't until 2010, when I established a



Mission in India



Mission in Sri Lanka

private practice in my studio and could more easily organise my own schedule that I decided to dedicate some of my time to this project. I had no idea, at the time, where it would bring me."

In 2011, Laurence officially founded The Red Pencil, with the key mission of bringing the benefits of art therapy to children, adults and families in overwhelming situations for which they have no words to convey their pain – particularly those afflicted by long-term hospitalisation, disability and trauma.

"We use art as a means to bring individuals joy, creativity, relaxation, fun and hope, and as a way for communities to bond and find new resources," Laurence says. "This is all the more powerful when individuals or groups have been challenged by difficult life circumstances, like natural disasters or conflicts."

Today, The Red Pencil Singapore has not only a full-time art therapy service at KK Hospital, but also over 150 registered art therapists doing clinical work with children, families and the elderly – particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. In

fact, The Red Pencil is partnered with more than 45 local organisations, plus a number of overseas programmes.

“One of our main partners is the Singapore Red Cross (SRC). When a disaster happens in the region, the SRC sends intervention teams, and The Red Pencil art therapists join their rescue missions to give psychosocial support to children and their families,” says Laurence. “Overseas, we have individual projects in many countries, including Japan, China, Myanmar, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand. We have relationships with Doctors without Borders/Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), Caritas Humanitarian Aid & Relief Initiatives, and Art in All of Us, with whom we organise exchanges of drawings by children all over the world, allowing them not only to find joy and a positive distraction in the creative process, but also giving them a chance to make new friendships with children elsewhere in the world. In doing so, their minds are able to travel beyond the walls of their hospital wards, or whatever they are going through.”

Additionally, the organisation regularly sets up creative workshops at museums, art fairs and community events to promote its objectives; the canvases created by participants at these creative workshops are auctioned off on The Red Pencil’s website, with 100 percent of the proceeds benefiting the foundation, which also works to provide scholarships, overseas training, research opportunities and financial support for art therapy students.

International Missions

In 2015 already, art therapy teams have travelled to Sri Lanka to work with underprivileged kids, teens and adults, and to West Bengal in India to work with disadvantaged children; for this month, missions are planned to a Burmese orphanage, a Nepalese shelter and other projects in Thailand and New Zealand.

When planning foreign assignments, The Red Pencil tries, where possible, to split each mission into three ten-day visits over the course of nine to twelve months – sending the same team each time in order to provide maximal long-term and meaningful support. Central to each of these missions is the encouragement of “visual journaling – an art diary with sketches or mixed media that captures inner thoughts visually rather than verbally.

“When we rescue the child, we save the adult”

“We encourage ‘visual journaling’ as a way of continuing to take care of oneself when The Red Pencil art therapists head to other missions,” says Laurence. “Our hope and intention is to make visual journaling a norm in family centres, schools, corporate organisations, prisons and even at home.”

Also fundamental to each mission is the implementation of The Red Pencil’s “train the trainer” programme, which educates caregivers in the benefits of art therapy; a thorough understanding helps to ensure that therapeutic art can continue long after the therapists have left, thus creating what Laurence calls “a multiplier effect”.


When it comes to choosing overseas missions, Laurence says that while it may be tough to turn down an assignment, it ultimately comes down to the safety of her team.

“The Red Pencil is rapidly expanding, which is great. We were recently approached to intervene in refugee camps in Lebanon, and we are working there in partnership with one of the big humanitarian organisations. But, of course, the safety of our art therapists is of utmost importance,” she explains. “Therefore, our team carefully reviews each mission before embarking on it.”

Missions planned for this year include visits to a women and children’s refugee camp in Kurdistan, a women’s shelter in Cambodia, a school in Lebanon and a hospital in Haiti, along with many other assignments in Australia, Indonesia, Africa and the Middle East. A team of therapists is also continually travelling to Nepal to work with earthquake survivors.

“In view of the dramatic circumstances in Nepal, The Red Pencil is committed to being there for the long term to help those affected find relief through artistic expression,” Laurence says. “We’re confident that it will bring them healing and empowerment.”

To learn more about upcoming projects, both local and abroad, visit facebook.com/theredpencilfoundation.

In 2013, The Red Pencil (Singapore) became an official charity and was granted Institute of Public Character status by the Ministry of Family and Social development, which allows a 300 percent tax rebate for any donations made in Singapore. 

redpencil.org/sg





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The Arrival of Vasco da Gama by Pushpamala N



The Imagination of the Future

OPEN Sesame

By Amy Greenburg

The O.P.E.N. (Open, Participate, Enrich, Negotiate) is the “pre-festival of ideas” for the Singapore Festival of the Arts (SIFA). It was created as a public engagement initiative aimed at connecting audiences with themes and issues of the main festival in a more casual, intimate setting. This year, the 18-day event, held over June and July – two months prior to the main festival – will dig deep into the heart of SIFA’s theme, “POST-Empires”, exploring it through a selection of screenings, talks and exhibitions, together with concerts and other performances. We asked The O.P.E.N. Director, NOORLINAH MOHAMED, for a sneak peek.

What can we expect from this year’s The O.P.E.N.?

The arts have become the main conduit through which we present ideas affecting the world today. Framed around a central theme, The O.P.E.N. is a wonderful platform where audiences are encouraged and enabled to engage with ideas through the arts.

Last year, participants and attendees, mingled and had lively exchanges. The 2014 pre-festival was held in one venue, which created a congenial and convivial atmosphere where many chose to stay from morning until night – attending talks, screenings and performances all in one day. A community grew from it – its members present because of their shared interest in talking about issues and ideas.

While that same vision continues, for 2015 we are introducing five different O.P.E.N. platforms – film, concert, exhibition, salon and performance – held at different venues. So, though we will be in varied places, we hope the spirit of the venue-hopping and interest in other platforms will still generate a community – a “nomadic” one. There will be more than 30 events, including a variety of international speakers and artists from South America, Asia and Europe.

What is the importance of the POST-Empires theme?

For me, it’s the excitement of perspectives that POST-Empires offers us. From the ideological and political, to the economic and commercial, this hyphenated word directs me to reflect how the past affects the present, and the need for a change in the status quo; nothing remains the same, except the desire to find alternatives. Note the plural in “POST-Empires”; the idea is to open pathways of engagement from different perspectives and through different lenses.



Which highlights are you most excited about?

Two Asian premieres: *The Imagination of the Future* (Chile), and the dances by Cristian Duarte from Brazil. Also on my to-attend list is architect Toyo Ito’s keynote speech for the O.P.E.N. Salon, and the two photographic exhibitions by Lu Guang and Pushpamala N. There’s also an augmented reality project I’m working on called *15 Stations* at Tanjong Pagar Railway Station; that’s going to be an interesting platform to engage in with archival and historical material through app development and digital technology.

What are you hoping the public comes away with?

Just be open and immersive, and dare to cross platforms. If you’re keen on concerts, then get an O.P.E.N. Pass (\$45) and attend both concerts – but don’t stop there; venture beyond concerts and attend a talk. Try to attend all the events, and soak in the atmosphere; come have a cuppa, exchange ideas and simply enjoy. We created the O.P.E.N. Pass to be an affordable means of enjoying everything The O.P.E.N. has to offer. 🍵

The O.P.E.N. runs from 16 June to 4 July. For schedules and tickets, visit sifa.sg/theopen.

ON THE STAGE

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

Celebrating the King of Pop

If you're a Michael Jackson fan, you definitely won't want to miss *The Ultimate Tribute to Michael Jackson*, a live concert experience that journeys through Michael's massive catalogue of work, from his beginnings as a member of the Jackson 5 to his groundbreaking theatrics in the 80s and beyond. Audiences can expect all of the King of Pop's greatest hits, including "Man in the Mirror", "Bad", "Rock with You", "Beat It" and, of course, "Thriller", performed by an international band and choreographed dancers, complete with special effects and fun costumes. See it 5 and 6 June at MasterCard Theatres at Marina Bay Sands. Tickets from Sistic. baseentertainmentasia.com.



Clowning Around

As part of Esplanade's celebration of Singapore's 50th, the **Flipside** festival invites you to discover the arts from a more quirky perspective, featuring a host of whimsical and whacky performances (some ticketed and some free), by both Singaporean and international artists. Highlights include *The Cheerleaders*, a physical comedy act about three over-the-top cheerleaders, a mime show by Thailand's famous clown trio, Babymime, and *TICKET* – featuring world-famous sketch comedy scenes from the likes of Charlie Chaplin, the Marx Brothers and Rowan Atkinson, performed by Spanish mime-comedian group Clownic. 29 May to 7 June at Esplanade. Tickets from Sistic. For schedules, visit esplanade.com/flipside.

Picnic and Pirouettes

As the 20th edition of Singapore Dance Theatre's **Ballet Under the Stars**, this year's line-up is sure to be better than ever, featuring a selection of works by renowned international choreographers George Balanchine, Choo-San Goh and Val Caniparoli. Expect a range of dance numbers divided between two consecutive weekends, with contemporary dance taking centre stage from 12 to 14 June, and classic-contemporary fusion from 19 to 21 June – all performed outdoors at Fort Canning Green. So, pack your picnic basket and a bottle of wine, and get ready to take in the timeless art of ballet. Tickets from Sistic. For performance schedules, visit singaporedance theatre.com.



Need a hand with your picnic basket? **Cocotte** has created a special Ballet Under the Stars menu for two, featuring a French potato salad, a Parisian ham and brie cheese sandwich, a rocket pistou chicken and apple slaw sandwich with citrus aioli, and a raspberry-lemon almond cake – all packed in a wicker basket with a disposable dining mat, cutlery and two bottles of water, for \$59.90. Simply place your order (call 6298 1188 or email info@restaurantcocotte.com) and pick it up at Fort Canning Park just before show-time.



Outdoor Opera

Pack your picnic basket and find a spot on the lawn – it's time for Singapore Lyric Opera's (SLO) seventh annual **Opera in the Park** at the Botanic Gardens. This year's lineup includes music from favourite classics such as Puccini's *Tosca* and Bizet's *Carmen*, performed by various talented vocalists and accompanied by the Singapore Lyric Opera Orchestra. You can also look forward to pieces such as "The Little Mermaid" and "Edelweiss" (from *The Sound of Music*) performed by the SLO Children's Choir. See it 7 June at 6pm at Shaw Foundation Symphony Stage, Singapore Botanic Gardens; admission is free. singaporeopera.com.sg



FOR KIDS

Spring Fever

Youngsters will love joining Papa Smurf, Clumsy, Brainy and Smurfette for some sing-along fun in ***The Smurfs Live on Stage – Smurfs Save Spring***, a musical production complete with mushroom-shaped forest houses and vibrant backdrops. It's springtime – every Smurf's favourite time of year – and the wicked Gargamel has conjured up a plan to trick Mother Nature and bring an end to all spring festivities, forcing the Smurfs to work together to transform the wintry breeze into a warm and colourful spring. See it from 12 to 14 June at Resorts World Sentosa. Tickets from Sistic. rwsentosa.com



Countryside Creatures

This month, little ones aged five and up can join Mole, Ratty, Badger and Mr Toad in a stage adaptation of *The Wind in the Willows*, the beloved children's literary classic by Kenneth Grahame. Direct from the UK, this production follows the foursome from one exploit to the next – including countryside picnics and boat rides – culminating in a battle not only to save Toad Hall, but also their very way of life, teaching values of friendship and dedication along the way. See it from 12 to 14 June at Drama Theatre at School of the Arts (SOTA). Tickets from Sistic. aba-productions.com

A Cause(way) for Celebration

In honour of Singapore's 50th anniversary, theatre company Wild Rice is presenting five exciting new productions – collectively known as the imagiNATION series – inspired by democracy, peace, progress, equality and justice. Hot on the heels of their acclaimed production of *Public Enemy* comes **Another Country**, a Singapore-Malaysia co-production that brings together writers and ten performers from both sides of the Causeway to reflect on the history, culture and peace shared by two countries separated by birth. Directors IVAN HENG of Singapore and JO KUKATHAS of Malaysia gave us a sneak peek of what we can expect from *Another Country*, which plays in Kuala Lumpur before coming to the Singapore stage.

By Amy Greenburg



Tell us about *Another Country*. What can we look forward to?

Jo: For this play, two writers have chosen words from the literature of our countries – fragments of plays, poems, pantuns (a Malaysian poetic form), letters, songs, interviews, exhortations and news reports; words that sing, words that incite, words that long for something lost, and words that conjure landscapes and minds. The past is another country – and literature gives us a different lens through which to see ourselves; it is kaleidoscopic, fragmented and beautiful.

The Singapore actors will perform texts curated by Leow Puay Tin, one of Malaysia's most renowned playwrights. They'll try to understand our untidy, chaotic country by performing texts *tikam-tikam* style – a Russian roulette of texts that celebrates disorder, the random and the beautiful. The Malaysian company will perform texts curated by Alifian Sa'at, poet, playwright and provocateur. The Malaysians will attempt to understand the rapidly shifting history of the nation state of Singapore by taking us on a journey into the past, through hidden doors, open windows and down the occasional rabbit hole.

How were the featured texts chosen?

Ivan: Writers write. Writers record. Writers shine a light on our nation. Writers express the zeitgeist. I think that's what has guided Puay Tin and Alifian in their selection of the insightful, thought-provoking texts in *Another Country*, which will inform us about ourselves as well as our Malaysian counterparts.

This production uniquely celebrates both Singapore and Malaysia, as part of Singapore's 50-year milestone. Why did you choose to focus on both sides of the Causeway rather than just Singapore?

Ivan: As we celebrate Singapore's Golden Jubilee, we thought it would be interesting to explore the concept of independence in a different way. Fifty years later, what does Singapore's separation from Malaysia mean, especially when the two countries still share such a wealth of history, culture, language and stories? In order to be able to perform the texts selected for this production, everyone involved – from the directors to the cast members – must really work hard to understand and empathise with our neighbours. I think this act of stepping into one another's shoes is very meaningful. It's a celebration of the abiding peace between our two countries.

Jo: The production was always conceived as a kind of "bridge project" – a way for us to look and wave at each other; hence the title, *Another Country*. This production is about bridge-building; we have straight bridges and crooked bridges, and bridges we are still trying to build. I think building bridges is an act of peace, though, sometimes, it's an act of war – I think in this case it's not.

Did you face any challenges while planning and directing this production?

Ivan: One of the challenges is collaborating across long distances. Another is the act of performing across cultures:



how do we remain true to ourselves, while also achieving a genuine understanding of another country and its people? The authorities in Singapore and Malaysia have also been a little nervous about this production. So we've spent some time engaging with them to address any concerns they might have.

Jo: Since the structure and style are unconventional, we wanted to start exploring the texts very early on, which is why we ran a workshop earlier in the year, long before starting to direct the Malaysian actors.

What are you hoping audiences come away with?

Ivan: *Another Country* is a funny, poignant, exhilarating production comprised of texts that will thrill, surprise and entertain. I think audiences will gain a deeper appreciation of our nearest and dearest neighbour, but they will also learn more about themselves. After all, isn't it often the case that you gain a better knowledge and understanding of who you are when you're living, travelling or working in another country?

Jo: I think literature is a wonderful way to understand a land, a people and a culture. Words elevate – they give us wings. So I hope our audiences will fly. 🇸🇬

See *Another Country* from 25 June to 11 July at Drama Centre Theatre, 100 Victoria Street, Level 3 National Library Building. Tickets from Sistic. wildrice.com.sg

ON THE SCREEN

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

BIG SCREEN

DARK PLACES

Twenty-five years after the brutal massacre of her family, Libby (Charlize Theron) is forced by a secret society obsessed with solving notorious murders to confront the events of that horrific day, only to learn that her past may not be what it seems. Based on the popular drama-mystery novel by *Gone Girl* author, Gillian Flynn, *Dark Places* also stars Chloë Grace Moretz, Nicholas Hoult and Christina Hendricks. Opens 18 June at Cathay Cineplexes.



BARELY LETHAL

A teenage special operations agent (Hailee Steinfeld) coveting a "normal" adolescence fakes her own death and enrolls as an exchange student in a suburban American high school, only to learn that surviving the treacherous waters of high school is more challenging than international espionage any day. This action comedy also features Jessica Alba, Samuel L. Jackson and *Game of Thrones*' Sophie Turner. Opens 18 June at Golden Village cinemas.



LOVE AND MERCY

This biographical drama follows the life of reclusive Beach Boys songwriter and musician Brian Wilson – played by both Paul Dano and John Cusack – from his successes with highly influential orchestral pop albums to his nervous breakdown and subsequent encounter with controversial therapist Dr Eugene Landy (Paul Giamatti) and his relationship with his second wife, Melinda (Elizabeth Banks). Opens 11 June at Cathay Cineplexes.

SMALL SCREEN

SUITS, SEASON FIVE

Suit up for a brand new season of the popular, fast-paced legal drama starring Gabriel Macht, Patrick J. Adams, Sarah Rafferty and Meghan Markle. Season Five will see Harvey dealing with not having Donna around, his relationship with new psychiatrist Paula, and the trials and tribulations of Rachel and Mike's impending nuptials. Premieres 25 June at 11.05am (with an encore at 8.50pm) on DIVA (StarHub Channel 513, Singtel Channel 303).



ORPHAN BLACK, SEASON THREE

Season Three of the acclaimed science-fiction series – which raises issues about the moral and ethical implications of human cloning and personal identity – plunges the clone sisterhood into unexpected territory with the realisation that they're not alone. Just when they thought they knew their enemies and allies, Season Three reveals that the clones are more vulnerable than ever before, while highly trained, identical male soldiers raise more questions than answers. Premieres 4 June at 10pm on Lifetime (StarHub Channel 514).



NEW

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www.singexpat.tv



ON THE WALL

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

STORYTELLING IN THE DARK

Inspired by the original watercolour illustrations of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's internationally renowned novella, *The Little Prince*, French visual artist Arnaud Nazare-Aga, in collaboration with the Antoine de Saint-Exupéry Youth Foundation, has created an exhibition, titled **The Little Prince in the Dark**, that brings the illustrations to life through the senses of touch and hearing.

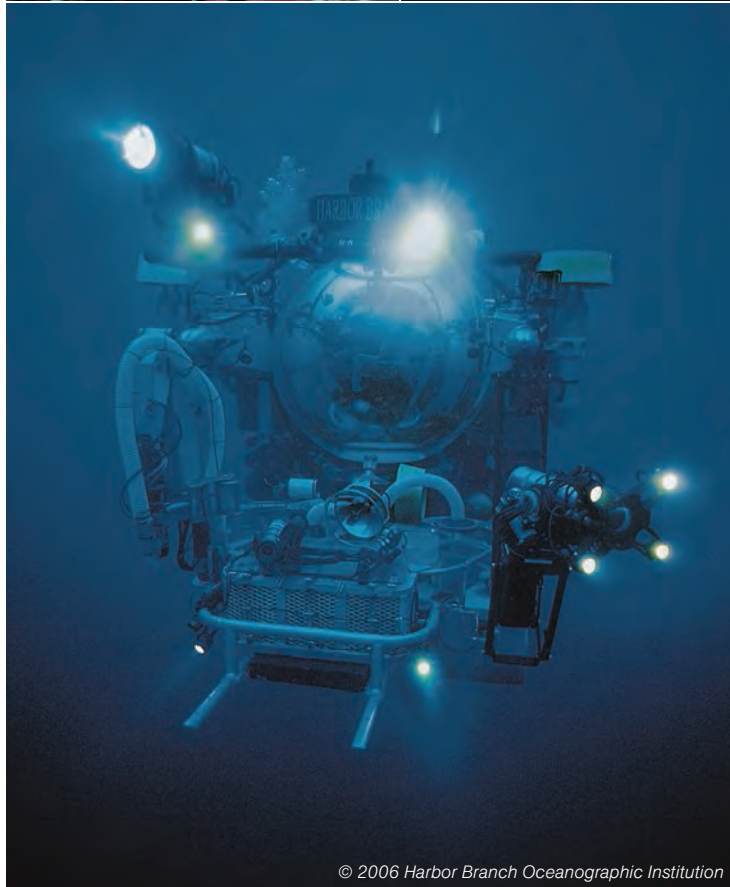
The 12 all-white sculptures are presented in the dark. Visitors are encouraged to immerse themselves in the world of *The Little Prince* by touching the art pieces while audio excerpts from the book are played. (Several languages will be available including English, French and Chinese).

First published in 1943, *The Little Prince* is the most-read and third-most-translated book in the world, and was voted the best book of the 20th century in France; available in more than 250 languages and dialects, and selling around two million copies annually, it has become one of the best-selling books ever published – a sweet yet somewhat sombre fable meant for children and adults alike.

Presented as part of the Voilah! French festival, *The Little Prince in the Dark* exhibition will run until 20 June at Alliance Française de Singapour, 1 Sarkies Road. alliancefrancaise.org.sg



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DEEP-SEA ADVENTURES

Though the deep sea is Earth's largest reservoir of life, it remains mostly uncharted by humans, with only five percent of the sea-floor having been explored thus far – that's less than the surface of the moon!

In the ArtScience Museum's latest exhibition, **The Deep**, visitors can see one of the largest collections of deep-sea animals ever displayed, made possible by French explorer, Claire Nouvian, who spent the past 11 years working on it.

The exhibition features more than 40 preserved, rare specimens, accompanied by film footage and images of sea fauna, living fossils and bioluminescent creatures, many of which have been photographed recently for the very first time. Whether you're a dive fanatic or simply interested in sea life and nature, you'll surely love this journey through the oceanic depths to learn about the complexities of deep-sea life, and the need to protect the fragile and largely unknown world underwater.

See it from 6 June to 18 October at ArtScience Museum, 6 Bayfront Avenue. marinabaysands.com/museum.html



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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.

I'M NOT PERFECT. I'M A MOM

Jasmine Han & Shelly Holly
Epigram Books | 183 pages

This is no *The Baby Whisperer* and no *The New Contented Little Baby Book* – instead, it's a highly informal and generally humorous account of pregnancy and early motherhood. Apart from some genuinely alarming descriptions of the aftermath of natural childbirth (witness, “my vagina was



swollen to the size of a small pig”), expect dozens of anecdotes of scatological and other mishaps, the funny and embarrassing things that kids do, and what happens to your sex-life when you become parents.

Singaporean Jasmine Han, sometime bodybuilder and now full-time mother (*without a helper!*) of a three-year-old and a one-year-old, is currently the co-owner of SLAP Dance Studio in Telok Ayer Street, where she teaches pole-dancing and striptease. BFF Shelly, who describes herself as an EWSAHMWSACHAC – an “expat wife stay-at-home mom who sucks at cleaning house and cooking” – met Jasmine at the condo pool after relocating to Singapore from her native Houston a little over a year ago. They've clearly been there, got the T-shirt, and now written the book.

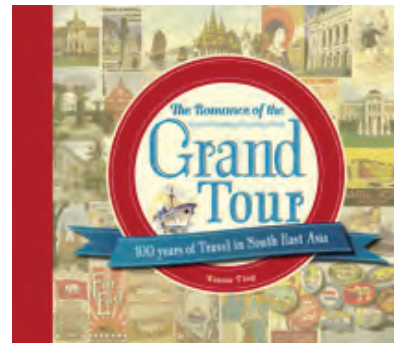
Essential reading for parents-to-be? Maybe yes, but at the risk of being put off the whole business of babies for life.

Verne Maree

THE ROMANCE OF THE GRAND TOUR – 100 YEARS OF TRAVEL IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Kennie Ting
Talisman | 208 pages

The subject of this handsome, gorgeously illustrated coffee-table book is travel-worthy destinations that lie “east of Suez” – a phrase that appears in a popular poem by Rudyard Kipling and which refers to the colonial dominions of the European powers that lay east of the Suez Canal. It was only after the Canal's opening in 1869 that leisure travel became possible to some of the destinations so gloriously covered in this tome: Rangoon (Yangon), Penang, Malacca, Batavia (Jakarta), Surabaya, Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Hanoi, Manila, Hong Kong – and, of course, Singapore. Leafing through the faintly retro pages with their evocative period photographs, etchings and drawings would be a lovely way to find out more about the history, geography and cultural context of your next Southeast Asian destination – or even decide which one it is to be.



For a chance to win one of three signed copies of *The Romance of the Grand Tour*, just send your name and postal address to verne.maree@expatliving.sg, with Book Giveaway in the subject line.

JUST FOR KIDS

SEUSS-ISMS!

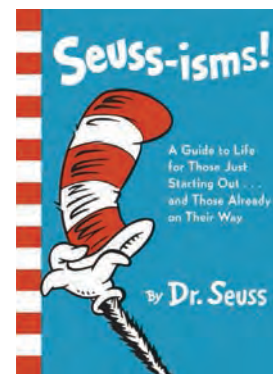
Dr Seuss
Random House | 70 pages

Subtitled “A Guide to Life for Those Just Starting Out... and Those Already On Their Way”, this delightful compilation of verse from a variety of Seuss titles – *Green Eggs and Ham*, *McElligot's Pool*, *The Lorax*, *The Cat in the Hat* and many more – is designed to motivate and inspire young readers and listeners.

Each is colourfully illustrated in true Seuss style, and titled according to its uplifting theme, from Be True to Yourself, Surround Yourself with Good People, and Think Before You Speak, to Focus!, Face Up to Adversity, Don't Obsess, Try New Things, and Expand Your Horizons.

Grownups, too, could take a leaf from this book. How about this little gem, Be Proud of Who You Are:

Of all
The shapes
We MIGHT have been,
I say, “HOORAY
For the shapes we're in.”
– *The Shape of Me and Other Stuff*



WHAT ARE YOU READING?



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



Raelee Chapman
Australian

AS THE HEART BONES BREAK, BY SINGAPOREAN AUTHOR AUDREY CHIN

Genre?

Literary/War/Historical

How did you get hold of it?

I was sitting by the coffee cart at the Singapore Writers Festival last year when I met Audrey by chance. I was so embarrassed to learn that not only was she an author I had never heard of, but that she was shortlisted for the Singapore Literature Prize! I rushed straight over to the Popular stand and bought her book. Many months later I contacted her and asked her to attend my book club as a special guest, which she did!

How far have you got with it?

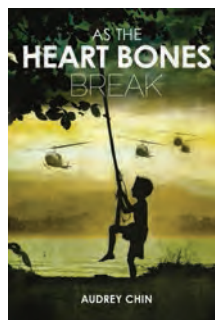
Just finished.

What do you think of it?

I have never read another book like it. It has a second person "you" narrative placing the reader in the shoes of Thong Tran and following his life in Vietnam before, during and after America's involvement in the war. The novel is about divided loyalties and a crisis of identity as Thong is influenced by three key male mentors in his life: his adopted bourgeois father, his swamp-fighter biological father, and his English teacher: a journalist and communist spy.

Would you recommend it?

Yes! Forty years after the Vietnam War ended, it is amazing to read about how the characters' lives were shaped by the war; even those in the diaspora, like Thong's wife, who wasn't there but was nevertheless intricately linked to in so many ways.



Check out Raelee's book club at meetup.com/singaporeladiesasianliterarybookgroup.

QUOTABLE QUOTES



In honour of World Book Day, Madanmohan Rao sent us a host of lovely quotes on the joy of reading. Here are our 10 favourites:

1. A writer only begins a book. A reader finishes it. – *Samuel Johnson*
2. Always read something that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it. – *P. J. O'Rourke*
3. Books are the plane, and the train, and the road. They are the destination, and the journey. They are home. – *Anna Quindlen*
4. Good friends, good books, and a sleepy conscience: this is the ideal life. – *Mark Twain*
5. I find television to be very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go in the other room and read a book. – *Groucho Marx*
6. If you only read the books that everyone else is reading, you can only think what everyone else is thinking. – *Haruki Murakami*
7. My test of a good novel is dreading to begin the last chapter. – *Thomas Helm*
8. Never judge a book by its movie. – *J.W. Eagan*
9. No person who can read is ever successful at cleaning out an attic. – *Ann Landers*
10. So many books, so little time. – *Frank Zappa*

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Shelley Kenigsberg
16 July 2015, 9.30am to 5.30pm, \$288.25

Fiction Writing (Advanced)

Samantha de Silva, author, Director of Firebird Communication
25 July 2015, 9.30am to 5.30pm, \$73

Register at eventbrite.sg.

SCENE AROUND TOWN

Recent events, openings & parties



Opening Party

Popular art gallery Art Blue Studio moved to a great new space in the heart of the vibrant Tiong Bahru neighbourhood, and celebrated its grand opening with a big party.

Luxury Collection

Marquis Interiors welcomed guests to its Hill Street showroom to launch Minotti's Lifescape In/Outdoor collection of furniture. Guests were introduced to the collection by the brand's representative to Asia, Antonio Marelli, while enjoying canapés and Prosecco. The collection ranges from sofas and rugs to tables, made in luxurious weatherproof materials.



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Anniversary Celebration

Home décor and furniture company In Situ celebrated its second year in Singapore with a party at its River Valley showroom. A Wine Affair provided wines for tasting.



Oh What a Night!

At the launch of McGettigan's Clarke Quay, Group CEO Dennis McGettigan officially opened the bar, before musicians such as Mike Ross and The Classic Beatles rocked the stage all night long.



Charming Contemporary

At the opening of Indonesian artist Entang Wiharso's exhibition, Never Say No, at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute, STPI's collaborative efforts with Platform Projects were also celebrated.

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Wine & Dine

WHAT'S NEW

The latest trends in food and wine



Home Cooking Made Easy

There are many reasons why we love Redmart, from its vast selection of household and grocery items (including fresh produce and frozen meat) to its user-friendly website and mobile app to its super-convenient delivery system (seven days a week from 10am to 10pm in the time slot of your choice, with free next-day delivery when you hit \$75 on your order). Now there's more good news from the online grocer: the launch of **Homemade by Redmart meal kits** – an affordable and healthy alternative to eating out. Simply choose a recipe from Redmart's regularly updated menu selection (choices include Teriyaki Salmon Fillet with Lemony Wild Rice, and Sweet Potato and Zucchini Rosti with Tzatziki), add it to your grocery cart, and get all the ingredients, prepped and pre-portioned, along with a step-by-step recipe card (complete with photos!), delivered to your door. During the month of June, *Expat Living* readers can get 20 percent off a meal kit by using the code MKJUNE15 at checkout. redmart.com ▲

FRENCH FEST

Don't miss the **Voilah! French Food Festival**, featuring special menus and promotions at more than 60 French restaurants, bars and bakeries across the island through 7 June. Visit voilah.sg for more details.

SLICE OF NEW YORK

There's a new pizza joint in town, and it's one to get excited about. Direct from New York City, Chef Mathieu Palombino's **Motorino** has set up shop in Clarke Quay, serving up classic Neapolitan-style pies so authentic you'll be taking a bite out of Brooklyn with every mouthful. Choose from eight different gourmet pizzas, with the option to load up on extra toppings like Brussels sprouts, sweet sausage, smoked pancetta, clams, prosciutto, meatballs and more. Also, expect a selection of delicious antipasti options, plus wines and beers to wash it all down. 3A River Valley Road, #01-01A. motorinopizza.com ▼





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NEW BITES

- Internationally acclaimed chef and restaurateur David Thompson (of award-winning Nahm in Bangkok) recently opened **Long Chim** at The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands (#L2-02 Atrium 2) – his first casual dining endeavour – featuring a mix of traditional street food reminiscent of the streets of Bangkok and contemporary flavours, all cooked right in front of you with. Signatures include beef skewers with cumin, prawns roasted with vermicelli, grilled lamb curry, all kinds of noodles, plus banana roti and durian ice cream for dessert. longchim.com.sg
- Brazilian steakhouse **Braseiro** has opened its doors, offering affordable, churrasco-style meat in a cosy indoor-outdoor setting. Choose from beefsteak, beef skewers, chicken and the monthly special – all of which come with unlimited handmade fries and salad at a pocket-friendly price of \$19.90. 333 Joo Chiat Road. braseiro-sg.com



BEER BONANZA

The popular annual three-day **Beerfest** is back, with over 500 different commercial and craft beers and ciders to sample – plus a special whiskey section as an added bonus. Along with all the beverage testing is a selection of culinary offerings to enjoy, plus live music from Australian tribute bands AbbaFab, The Australian Blues Brothers and Soul Sisters; there's also a stand-up comedy show, beer pong and other fringe activities. And, on Sunday, 28 June, beer-loving parents can bring their kiddos along to play in The Brew Kids Playard – complete with an indoor bouncing castle, ball pools, arts and crafts activities, all supervised by festival staff – while they kick back and relax with a brewsky or two, or three. 25 to 28 June at Marina Promenade. For tickets, exhibitor listings and more details, visit beerfestasia.com ▲

THE KITCHEN'S CALLING

Whether your teen is going off to university, or he or she simply wants to learn how to cook, Expat Kitchen's survival guide series for teens, **Cooking for College**, is the answer. Perfect for young adults aged 14 and up, the crash course offers the basics of cooking, along with fuss-free, easy-to-prepare meals and snacks to get teens on the right track in the kitchen – think hummus dip, non-bake granola bars, pasta bolognese, easy marinades, salads and chicken fajitas, among other fool-proof recipes. This month's classes take place on 13, 18, 25 and 27 June from 2.30pm to 5.30pm – so sign up now; it's \$425 for four sessions, or \$125 per class. **6299 4221 | expat-kitchen.com**





HERITAGE FEAST

In honour of Singapore's 50th birthday, Edge at Pan Pacific Singapore has introduced "Makan Makan", a special lunch buffet featuring an array of Singapore heritage dishes and Peranakan favourites like **homemade laksa**, **fried carrot cake** and **kaya toast** – so now's your chance to try all local delicacies in one spot, minus the hawker heat. Every Saturday from 12 noon to 2.30pm, diners can enjoy traditional specialties such as **babi ponteh** (braised pork belly), **satay**, **Penang prawn noodle soup**, **fried oyster omelette**, **roti prata**, **fish head curry** and **teochew yam rice**, plus a selection of desserts like durian puffs, **Portuguese egg tarts** and **ice kachang**; there's also a selection of Japanese and Thai favourites. It's \$48 per adult with unlimited local beverages, coffee and tea, and \$24 for children below 12. And, if you simply can't get enough of the restaurant's five different sambals, you can purchase the special sambal gift set at Pacific Marketplace on Level 1 (available until 31 August for \$50). 7 Raffles Boulevard. panpacific.com ▲

REVOLVING DOORS

- The Shangri-La Hotel's Mediterranean-inspired Waterfall Café has been converted to **Waterfall Ristorante Italiano**, a Southern Italian trattoria featuring handmade pastas and fresh seafood dishes, under the direction of new chef de cuisine, Marco De Vincentis. 22 Orange Grove Road, 1/F Garden Wing, Shangri-La Hotel.
- The former Checkers Brasserie space at Hilton Singapore (581 Orchard Road) has been transformed into **Opus Grill**, a sophisticated new steakhouse decked out in mahogany wood. Here, the meat starts with 14 to 36 days of dry ageing in a Himalayan salt-tiled cabinet, leaving the cuts extra juicy and flavourful. Menu highlights include the Rangers Valley Angus Rib Marble Score 4 and the Beef Ribeye Skewer, plus a selection of sustainable seafood.
- Pork-centric restaurant **WOLF**, known for its nose-to-tail dining concept, has closed its doors; no word yet on what will open in its 18 Gemmill Lane space.



FREE-STYLE FUN

When we got wind that the team behind popular small-plates spot, Lolla, was opening a sleek new spot on Keong Saik, we couldn't wait to get our tummies over there for some taste-testing – and, proving equally as stylish as its sister restaurant, **Lollapalooza** definitely didn't disappoint. With a farm-to-table “free-style” concept centred on sharing plates (both small and large) – including plenty of meat and seafood options prepared in the open kitchen's wood-fired oven – the menu doesn't conform to any specific type of cuisine. Rather, it changes daily based on the chef's creative whims and the freshest seasonal ingredients available.

So, though we can't tell you exactly what to expect, you can safely look forward to delicacies along the lines of **roasted lamb hearts** (yeah, you read that right; \$18) and **dog cockle tartare** (don't worry, it's a type of clam; \$30), alongside less unusual choices like **roasted kingfish loin** (\$38) and **crab and avocado salad** (\$28). We especially loved the generously portioned, delectably salty **crab and sun-dried tomato flatbread** (\$18) and a heaping serving of scrumptious **hand-torn pasta with pancetta and garlic greens** (\$30) – we just couldn't get enough of either.

Enjoy it all with a glass or bottle of wine from the well-curated selection – the house red was one of the best we've had in Singapore – and finish things off with one of the fun dessert choices; **white peach sorbet** (\$9) tickled our fancy, and the **Tasmanian leatherwood honey ice cream** (\$9) sounded interesting, as did the **treacle tart with cinnamon whipped cream** (\$19). And, since the whole lineup of dishes changes daily, there's all the more reason to return for more flavourful surprises. We can't wait. 1A Keong Saik Road. lollapalooza.sg ►



FIRE UP YOUR APPETITE

Recently opened, modern-European eatery **FYR Cycene and Drinc** (pronounced “Fire Kitchen and Drink”) sets itself apart with an affordable menu of grilled meat and seafood, all expertly prepared in a special Jospier charcoal oven using lychee wood. Expect a fun, casual vibe (we couldn't get enough of the Justin Timberlake tunes pumping through the speakers); the rustic décor is playfully complemented with cheeky wall murals depicting the caveman's discovery of fire – essential, obviously, to the meat's preparation). And, while it's clear that these folks have a great sense of humour, they're also super-serious about their food, and this shows in every single dish, right down to the smoky-sweet tastes and perfectly paired spices.

To start, we opted for the vegetarian **baked aubergine and chickpea ragout** (\$10) – delicious eggplant topped with chickpea stew and gooey, melted Parmesan cheese; the **baked half bone marrow** (\$15) is another popular choice. For mains, we loved the **five-spice half chicken, striploin and Asian-spiced tiger prawns** sharing platter (\$55), which comes with a choice of dipping sauces (black truffle, tomato cilantro salsa and foie gras), a salad with a wonderfully spiced java curry dressing and a choice of buttered cassava or mashed potatoes (both equally delish). You also can't go wrong with the **spiced red snapper with sambal belacan** (\$25), a perfectly prepared, deboned whole fish paired flawlessly with its accompanying sauce.

Wash it down with house-made sodas and teas (\$4.50), like **apple rosemary** and **hibiscus mint** or **grilled fresh fruit juice** (\$4.50), which has an unusual, caramelised flavour that comes from grilling the fruit before juicing it.

Even if you're beyond full, you definitely should order the **baked pistachio melt and pandan ice cream** (\$10), a pistachio-flavoured lava cake that melts in your mouth. Either that, or consider coming back just for dessert. 19 Boon Tat Street.

facebook.com/FYRBTS ▲

BAR TAB

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

McGettigan's Clarke Quay

3A River Valley Road, #01-01 C/D
6694 6911 | [facebook.com/mcgettigansclarkequay](https://www.facebook.com/mcgettigansclarkequay)

First impressions: The new kid on the Clarke Quay block is very impressive – a mixture of cool and grand, with cosy little areas, funky sections and a traditional wine vault. There's a live band area where you can dance, but also quieter areas to sit and chat – the best of both worlds. They have really invested in the décor, with some unusual block ceiling panels, lighting panels and bookshelf-adorned walls resembling an old library.

The Chosen One: **Guinness draft** (\$15.50 pint; \$12 half pint) and **Magners Original Cider** (\$14).

The Cheapskate: There's a happy hour every night from 5pm to 8pm (\$10 nett for house beer and wine, and selected spirits), and a ladies' night every Wednesday from 8pm to 10pm, including five free drinks and party music by a DJ. For \$99 you can have a Saturday lunchtime brunch from 12 noon to 3pm (giving you all of Sunday to recover!) with free-flow beverages and à la carte dishes, plus live music.

Bite on this: There are lunch, dinner and snack menus with comfort food favourites including **crab cakes**, **signature chicken wings**, **pork bangers and mash** and **fish and chips** – all ranging from \$18 to \$28. While we found the fish really good, the chips were just okay; however, the **classic wagyu beef burger** was absolutely delicious and done to perfection. Apparently, the **Guinness pie** is set to be a "must have", so we look forward to trying that and the full **Irish breakfast** soon.

Last but not least: There's live music five nights a week, plus an iPaddy Quiz Night every Monday at 8pm, with prizes up for grabs.

Rebecca Bisset



Draft and Craft

31 Circular Road
6532 0604 | [draftandcraft.sg](https://www.draftandcraft.sg)

First impressions: A simple, narrow den with a stripped back industrial feel that lets the draft beers do the talking! Its unpretentious air makes it ideal for whiling away an afternoon while trying out each of the different beers. They also have a delicious range of cocktails and wines handpicked by owner Keira, who buzzes around chatting with customers, recommending tipples.

The Chosen One: You can't come to Draft and Craft without trying out the beers; my favourite was the light and floral **Birra Saison**, **Prairie Artisan Ale** (\$16). There are five set beers on tap every month, and a rotating tap that features a different beer each month. However, if beer's not your thing, the cocktails are also worth a try. Made from the freshest ingredients, the **Mojito** (\$16) includes basil and mint to give it a smooth finish – and, it has to be said, my boyfriend proclaimed it to be the best mojito he'd ever tried (a bold statement!).

The Cheapskate: Happy hour extends to 9pm every day (starting from noon on weekdays and 4pm on Saturdays) with \$2 or \$3 off most drinks – ideal for an after-work drink that won't break the bank. The bar bites are also extremely reasonable and come in good-sized portions.

Bite on this: Inspired by Southern Californian comfort food, the bar bites are simple but effective. Try the delectable **grilled cheese sandwiches** (\$14), mouth-watering **homemade tortilla chips and salsa** (\$8) and scrumptious **tacos** (\$16); we loved everything.

Natalie Whittell

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Girls'

Night Out

By Amy Greenburg

Sure, there are endless ladies' night possibilities throughout the island, but that doesn't mean we're not stumped every time it's our turn to organise the next girly get-together. So here's our go-to guide for planning the perfect ladies-only evening to suit any mood – from low-key dinners to dance party extravaganzas. Now, you'll have no excuse not to round up your gal pals for a night on the town.

GIRLS DINNER DO'S

There are heaps of hip eateries perfect for hosting your next girls' group gathering. Here are some of our favourite.

Beaujolais

Located in a heritage shophouse, this charming restaurant serves up classic European fare – think pan-seared salmon (\$25), quiche Lorraine (\$18), prawn pasta (\$25) and beef tartar (\$32) – in the heart of one of the most happening neighbourhoods, Club Street. Dine alfresco for some great people-watching with the girls, while catching up over wine from the bar's great selection. 1 Ann Siang Hill | beaujolais.com.sg ▼



Kilo

Situated right on the Kallang River, this industrial-chic restaurant is laid out like a living room, completely open on one side for a great view over the water. Expect Japanese and Italian comfort food with a twist – raw items and sides range from \$10 to \$22, while mains run from \$15 to \$36 – and creative cocktails in a space filled with stylish crowds every evening. There's also a funky lounge where DJs spin on the weekends. 66 Kampong Bugis | kilokitchen.com ▲

Blu Kouzina

This always-packed Greek eatery is casual, laid-back and serves up delicious food, making it a prime place to chat over a big Greek salad (\$21.80) and other Mediterranean favourites like tzatziki (\$14.80), keftedes (beef meatballs; \$17.80), grilled octopus with lemon and olive oil (\$29.80) and various meat sharing platters (from \$89.80), plus baklava (\$15.80) for dessert. 893 Bukit Timah Road | blukouzina.com ▼



PS Café

This charming mainstay is always a hit, no matter which location you visit – and the perfect spot for catching up with your best mates over large salads, pasta dishes and grilled mains (all in the \$20 to \$30 range), and, of course, truffle shoestring fries – not to mention a delicious array of desserts. Various locations | pscafe.com ▲

LADIES' WEEKNIGHT DEALS

Need some mid-week tittle time with the girls? Luckily, there are countless ladies' night specials islandwide, with Wednesdays and Thursdays being the most popular weeknights for booze-infused, girly get-togethers. Here are some of our top picks.

The Exchange

One of the most famous ladies' nights in town, The Exchange offers four hours of free-flow martinis, margaritas and Hoegaarden Rosée every Wednesday from 5 to 9pm, as well as decadent dessert platters, DJ-spun tunes and goody bags for 100 lucky guests. 8 Marina View, Asia Square Tower 1 | theexchange.com.sg ▶

Zafferano

Every Thursday from 5.30 to 8.30pm, females can relish free-flow Prosecco at \$20, a stunning view of Singapore's skyline, and 70s and 80s dance tunes courtesy of guest DJ, Malcom X. It's an especially convenient spot for ladies coming from the CBD to let loose after a long day's work. 10 Collyer Quay, Level 43 Ocean Financial Centre | zafferano.sg

O'Batignolles

On Wednesdays from 7pm to 9pm, each group of four girls receives one complimentary bottle of champagne – and, from 6pm to midnight, champagne by the glass is \$10 and \$55 by the bottle for everyone. Soak it up with a cheese platter (\$29) to share, or a penne pasta (\$18), chicken breast (\$24) or tartine (\$14). Sister restaurant Ô Comptoir in Boat Quay also has a great ladies' night deal, so check it out if you're in the mood for rosé. *Oui, s'il vous plaît!* 2 Gemmill Lane | obatignolles.com ▼



Catalunya

Pop over Monday through Saturday from 5pm to 8pm to enjoy a selection of one-for-one cocktails like the Flamenco Martini (\$22) and Catalunya Mojito (\$20); and, all night from 5pm on Wednesdays, ladies can order one-for-one cocktails at the bar to go along with their tapas. There's also a DJ on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 9pm.



The Green Door

Situated in lush Dempsey Hill, this is the perfect setting for a quiet catch-up with the gals. On Wednesdays, women can enjoy one-for-one Prosecco by the glass (\$16) all night long, or opt for daily happy hour specials including wines and spirits by the glass (\$9 and \$11, respectively). And, though you'll have to pay full price, the fruity bellinis and champagne cocktails (all \$19) are delicious and worth it, as are the yummy \$13 mocktails. 13A Dempsey Road | theprivegroup.com.sg/thegreendoor

KPO

Every Wednesday from 5pm to 1am, KPO offers a ladies' night high-tea special priced at \$88, inclusive of six Strongbow Apple Ciders, six jelly shooters and a selection of sweet and savoury treats from Nassim Hill café, including mini brioche chicken sliders with sriracha, Earl Grey crème brûlée and mini passion-fruit tarts. There's also a one-for-one deal on ciders (\$14) all night long for ladies and a live band and DJ from 7pm and 9pm respectively. 1 Killiney Road | facebook.com/kpo.sg



Copper

Although this new spot specialises in gin, ladies can enjoy free-flow Bottega Prosecco every Wednesday from 6 to 9pm – no purchase necessary. And, if you're feeling hungry, order some bar bites like lamb kaftas and babi guling tacos (\$18 each), or something from the supper menu – available from midnight to 3am. 10 Jiak Chuan Road | coppersingapore.com ▲

Stylish Keong Saik

Make a reservation at **Vida Vino** for some tapas sharing and paella (\$65 for a three-person serving), and a great (and affordable) selection of wines and Prosecco, before nipping over to **The Library** for some fancy cocktails.

Or, fully commit to putting your diet on hold for the night, and snag a spot at **Potato Head Folk's** charming, fairy light-strewn shophouse rooftop – a fun atmosphere with hip-hop music – to indulge in burgers (around \$20 each) and fries, and all kinds of tropical beverages. But, since it's walk-in only, you'll have to get there early to put your name in; have a cocktail on the third level at Studio 1939 Lounge while you wait, or head down there for some post-dinner drinks.

Another option in the area is **Wine Mansion**, a neighbourhood gem that offers ladies free-flow red, white and



sparkling wine for \$25 on Wednesdays from 7.30 to 10.30pm, and a "wine and beer buffet" open to all genders for \$35 from 5pm to 9pm every day except Wednesday and Friday, complete with a complimentary Wine Mansion mini food platter. Soak it up with snacks (\$7 to \$9) like hummus, falafel and roasted eggplant, or bigger bites (\$16 to \$28) like Mediterranean chicken, pasta or filet mignon.

GIRLS ON TOP

The only thing better than quality time with your gal pals is quality time set against a stunning city skyline. Here are some top hangout venues with a view.



Altitude

Part of 1-Altitude's popular multi-venue concept, this posh nightclub on the 61st level of One Raffles Place boasts one of the best views in town. Here, you can sip cocktails in luxe leather booths and dance the night away to tunes by The Funkman; the venue's state-of-the-art LED projections and laser beams make this a really fun dance-party experience. And, if you're in need of some air, head up two floors to **1-Altitude's** rooftop bar for some live music and an open-air, 360-degree look at Singapore. On Wednesdays, ladies can enjoy \$10 martinis all night long at 1-Altitude, plus one-for-one premium house-pours all night at Altitude; and, don't miss trying your hand at mixing a cocktail or two at Altitude's Mixology Capsule.

There's also the triangular glass-domed **A.L.T. café.bar** on the ground level, offering a selection of wine, beer, cocktails, tacos and gourmet bites, if you're keen on starting there for some intimate chit-chat before getting your dance on upstairs.

1 Raffles Place. 6438 0410 | 1-altitude.com

Summer Soirée

This month, 1-Altitude is holding a special Summer Madness series, with summer-themed parties and all kinds of promotions happening on party nights throughout June – the first 50 ladies to the rooftop on Wednesday ladies' night will receive a complimentary Summer Madness cocktail, for example – all leading up to the **Super Moon Party** taking place on 27 June from 5.30pm. The rooftop beach party extravaganza will feature real sand, samba dancers, body painting and special summer cocktails – just don't forget your sunnies, flip-flops, bright bikinis and other beachy get-up. Pssst – ladies can get free entry by emailing chesca@1-altitude.com in advance.

Southbridge

At this swanky Boat Quay rooftop spot, you can take in the view over oysters, raw seafood specialties, wagyu sliders, grilled bikini sandwiches and more. There's also a great cocktail menu with loads of fun concoctions to choose from, like the Rosemary's Baby – gin, blackberry vodka, honey and rosemary – and the Southern Belle – wild berries and chamomile-infused whiskey with strawberry, caramel and lemon; get a glass of bubbly for \$15 during happy hour – weekdays until 8pm – along with other beverage deals. 80 Boat Quay | southbridge.sg ▶



Lantern

This stylish rooftop bar atop The Fullerton Bay Hotel offers fabulous views of Marina Bay, along with a selection of champagne and chic, signature cocktails. The bar's "Bubbles and Heels" Ladies Night happens every Wednesday from 8 to 9pm, with free-flow Absolut Elyx for all female guests. 80 Collyer Quay | fulltertonbayhotel.com ▼



Hi-So

Perched on the rooftop of the CBD's Sofitel So Singapore hotel (a beautifully refurbished heritage building), this chic, open-air terrace bar holds ladies' night on Wednesdays from 6pm to 9pm – get a free glass of Ruinart Champagne with your first drink purchased, then it's \$15 for all subsequent champagne purchases – and happy hour on Thursdays from 6 to 9pm: all classic cocktails for \$10. 35 Robinson Road, Level 6 | facebook.com/sofitelsosingapore ▼



Not-so-low-key Clarke Quay

Start out by lining your stomachs with some Mexican grub at **Café Iguana**, before throwing back a few margaritas (they've always got great specials, here); book a table on the terrace for a riverside view of Clarke Quay. Or, grab a bite at recently opened New York-style pizza joint, **Motorino** – with a range of gourmet pizzas to choose from and a selection of antipasti, plus wine, beer and cider, every girl in your group is sure to find something she likes here.

Then, let loose with some dancing at **The Highlander** – it has a live band Tuesday to Sunday from 9pm – or **Attica**, where you can dance the night away to R&B, Top 40 hits and electronic dance music, or simply chill out at Bar Rose, Attica's outdoor champagne and martini bar. Snag one of the six VIP sections inside – including the Moët Rosé area or an exclusive table near the DJ console – for a special occasion (say a hen party?) or one of those going-all-out kind of nights. The club offers ladies free entry and five drink coupons every Wednesday night, and features an "Eat Me, Drink Me" bar with interesting dessert pairings (Gin and Tonic sorbet, Jägermeister ice cream and candy floss, anyone?); and, on the first Wednesday of the month, Attica gives out goody bags to the first 150 ladies to walk through the door.

Or, if you and the girls are in the mood to belt your hearts out to the likes of Britney and Madonna, head on over to nearby **Party World KTV** for some crooning and debauchery; it's \$28 per person for four hours on weekdays from 2pm to 6pm, and \$39.80 per person for four hours on weekends.



MORE FUN IDEAS

BEAUTY AND BOOZE

Jekyll and Hyde

At this hotspot, you can get beautifully crafted cocktails and a manicure – all in the one place; in fact, you can do both at the same time between 6pm and 8pm, after which the nail salon Manicurious closes shop and lets the creative drink concoctions take centre stage. 49 Tras Street | 49tras.st ▼



FRIENDLY COMPETITION

Kallang Bowl

Book a lane or two and get your game on! A great way to bond with your gal pals, bowling (a too-often overlooked treat, if you ask us) always makes for a fun time. A game starts at just \$3 per person, depending on the day and time, and you can order snacks from the bar, or walk over to Brewerks for post-game drinks and dinner. 5 Stadium Walk | leisurepark.com.sg ▼



SHISHA AND SHIMMYING

Blu Jaz Café

This colourful Kampong Glam mainstay is always a good time, thanks to its live music, dance parties and funky décor. Covering three floors of a shophouse, it has a relaxed café and shisha bar on the ground floor, and live music – everything from jazz and pop to old school, hip-hop and reggae – playing from top to bottom, plus a selection of Western and Mediterranean food to go along with the liquor. 11 Bali Lane | blujazcafe.net ▲

SWEET-TOOTH SOCIAL

2am Dessert Bar

Sure, you can order the pork-belly burger, prawn wraps and mac'n'cheese (\$15 each), but the real fun here is the restaurant's unique selection of creative, splurge-worthy sweets. Grab your girlfriends for some decadent dessert-sharing fun, with items like Basil White Chocolate (\$17), Chocolate Praline Poprocks Cake (\$17) and Hot Chocolate with Churros (\$19), plus wine pairing options for each. 21A Lorong Liput | 2amdessertbar.com ▼



POLE PARTY

Slap Dance

For something out of the ordinary, try an hour-and-a-half session at Slap Dance. Giggle with the girls as you learn to strip and pole-dance like professionals, complete with props and costumes and a bottle of bubbly; \$300 for five to 10 girls; \$400 for 11 to 20 girls. It's a fabulous cardio workout and the perfect way to kick-start your night. Head to dinner at nearby Amoy Street or Club Street for some post-pole dining. 155A/157A Telok Ayer Street | slap.sg ▲

GIRLS' NIGHT IN

If you simply can't be bothered to go out, stay at home, invite the girls over, order some food and indulge in a bottle of wine, or two, or three. Though we can't guarantee low-key, we can guarantee a good time no matter what you decide to do. Here are some tried and tested ideas that go beyond the good ol' chick flick.

Clothing Swap

Gather up those gently worn clothing items you don't wear and, instead of selling them on an expat classifieds forum, swap them with your best buds, making a night of it with some bubbly and snacks. Just because you can't stand the thought of wearing that printed playsuit one more time, doesn't mean one of your friends won't want dibs on it; you can even take it beyond clothes and bring household items you'd like to trade. It's a great way to "go shopping" without spending cash, and an excuse to clean out your closet – a win-win, if you ask us. ➔

DIY Party

Steal some craft ideas from Pinterest and rally the troops for a night of do-it-yourself fun. Your inner Martha Stewarts will love it, and you're sure to have a ball, even if your mason jar candle creations don't turn out as beautifully as expected.

Game Night

Sure, the idea of a game night is nothing new, but why not switch it up with something other than Scrabble and Pictionary? Cards Against Humanity is always a sure-fire hit, making for a solid few hours of laughs. Or try Apples to Apples, Rotten Apples or Say Anything (all available at Amazon). Again, be prepared with a couple of bottles of red or white, and you're golden.



Wine Tasting

A wine tasting is always a good idea, if you ask us. So, gather your girls and test out a range of reds, whites, rosés and bubbly – you don't have to be an expert to do it, you just need an appetite for wine. Simply order a selection of varietals from EWineAsia.com – one of the region's leading fine wine wholesalers and online retailers – and pick up some *hors d'oeuvres*, and you've got yourself a party; ask everyone to bring a bottle, too. *Tip:* Jazz things up further by making it a blind tasting – have everyone write down their favourite picks and give a little prize to whichever guest's wine selection gets the most votes.

Need some help choosing what to buy? The Nino Franco Rustico Prosecco (\$43) and Champagne Boizel Brut (\$80) are nice choices if you're looking for some bubbly options, while the crisp, berry-tinged Celler Piñol Portal Rosat (rosé; \$46) is always a hit with the ladies; other great picks include Pieropan Soave Classico (\$43), a fruity white, and the peppery Rivera Rupicolo Red Blend (\$36). And, during the entire month of June, get 10 percent off when you purchase a combination of any three bottles from the aforementioned wine and bubbly picks from ewineasia.com. 🍷



edge

Pamper Daddy dearest this Father's Day with an epicurean indulgence complemented with unlimited wines and beers for dinner at **Edge**. Relish an extensive selection of a *la* minute culinary delights enhanced with premium Wagyu beef in a medley of presentations. Highlights at the seven live kitchens include Wagyu Beef Meatball Pizza, Mini Wagyu Beef Tartlet, Braised Wagyu Cheek Ravioli with Beef Jus and Truffle, and Nonya Wagyu Beef Rendang. Conclude the meal on a sweet note with an extensive array of delectable desserts. Father's Day at Edge promises to be a multi-sensorial experience fit for the king of your heart.

19 to 21 June 2015, 6:30pm to 10:30pm

For dining reservations or enquiries, please speak with us at **6826 8240**, email celebrate.sin@panpacific.com, or visit edgefoodtheatre.com.

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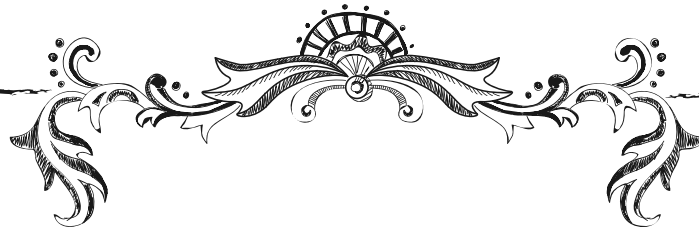
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A Family Affair

Kid-friendly brunches and lunches across town

When it comes to brunching and lunching – favourite pastimes here in Singapore – there are lots of decisions to be made, from the type of cuisine you're in the mood for to how far you're willing to travel – and most importantly, whether or not to bring your little ones along; after all, you've got to consider opening hours and entertainment facilities, and whether or not the menu will keep the entire brood happy. But, with so many child-friendly spots to choose from these days, why not make it a family affair? Here are some tried-and-tested daytime dining destinations around the island, many of which offer much more than just high chairs and kids' meals.

Privé Café

2 Keppel Bay Vista, Marina at Keppel Bay
6776 0777 | theprivigroup.com.sg

When: Brunch is served from 8am on weekends and 9am on weekdays; all-day breakfast is available too, and lunch items are offered from 11.30am.

With kids outnumbering adults, it's obvious this place is an excellent weekend catch-up spot for families. Here, the best place to enjoy the water views and up-beat atmosphere is in the alfresco area and, rest assured, there are plenty of umbrellas for shade.

The children's menu is solid value with two brunch options (\$12 each): pancake stacks or the "Breakfast of Champions", followed by a choice of dessert and a milkshake or fresh juice. Bigger kids, over the age of 10, will probably prefer to choose from the à la carte menu; our two polished off a stack of **home-style pancakes** (\$13) with banana and strawberries, and a **Plain Jane Wagyu Burger** (\$21), available after 11.30am. Hangover or not, the **Ultimate Brekkie** (\$20) will fill a hungry belly, and it's hard to beat the **eggs Benedict** (\$16) with smoked leg ham. Do save room for something sweet – there's a stunning collection of cakes, and we reckon the **red velvet** (\$6) was among the best we've tasted; the **sticky date pudding** (\$12) is another favourite.



Special features: Colouring pencils and sheets are supplied, kids' books are available in the mini-library and free popcorn is available upon request. Young ones can also burn off energy in the activity play centre. Children's entertainer, Mr Egg, performs on the first and third Sunday of the month, from 1pm to 3pm.

Words to the wise: With views like this, Privé is super-popular, so it's best to book. Also, do keep a close eye on your children, as the outdoor area isn't totally enclosed.

– Katie Roberts



Café Melba

90 Goodman Road, Block N#01-56
Goodman Arts Centre
6440 6068 | cafemelba.com.sg

When: All-day breakfast is served on weekdays from 10am to 10pm; brunch is available from 8.30am to 4pm on weekends and public holidays; à la carte all-day breakfast items are available from 4pm; and pizza is served from 11am. You can order from the kids' menu all day, every day.

There aren't many places where you can relax with the perfect latte knowing the kids are playing safely on the huge lawn in front; but at Café Melba, you can. With its lovely alfresco patio, this place makes for a relaxing family brunch; it has a cool vibe, friendly staff and lush green surroundings.

The food has a mix of influences from Australia and Asia, with a menu of everything from sandwiches and light bites to pizza and pastas, plus an All Day Brekkie menu that includes to-die-for **free-range eggs Benedict** (\$20) with lemon hollandaise sauce, and the **Full Melba Cooked Breakfast** (\$25), your choice of eggs, pork sausages, house-cured bacon, baked beans, mushrooms, hash browns and toast; this can be upsized to a "mega" version (\$36, or \$44 with a bottle of beer).

The kids' menu offers five options – **pizza, fish and chips, spaghetti Bolognese, macaroni and cheese** and **chicken schnitzel** – each can be ordered with a juice and a scoop of ice cream for \$15.

Special features: In addition to colouring sheets to keep kids occupied, there's a bouncy castle just outside the patio where they can jump to their hearts' content. The huge lawn is great for running around and playing ball games – in fact, there are football goals set up on the grass. Older kids who want to explore can scooter around the safe pathways of the Arts Centre.



Words to the wise: This place is great for groups, but get there early, as they don't take reservations on weekends or public holidays. They also maintain a "no pets" policy, so leave the pups at home.

– Jacqui Young

Also on the East Coast



La Barca

Here, mums and dads can relax over hearty Tuscan food and some bubbly (free-flow Prosecco is available for \$45 with the brunch menu from 11am to 2.30pm on weekends), while kids are occupied with the indoor playroom's slide, crawling tunnel, toys, books and TV; outside, they can ride

their scooters or play foosball in the alfresco section. 90 Goodman Road, Goodman Arts Centre. labarca-sg.com

Brussels Sprouts

Adults can linger over giant beers and Belgian fare – homemade waffles, sausage and eggs Florentine – and watch as the kids work up a sweat on the large grassy area outside. Sunday brunch is available from 10am to 12 noon, but, from 12 to 5pm on Saturdays and Sundays, kids 10 and below can choose from complimentary fish sticks or sausages when an adult order is placed from the "Big Eat" or "Main-sized Moules" section of the menu. 902 East Coast Parkway, Block F #01-27, Big Splash. brusselsprouts.com.sg



Spruce

320 Tanglin Road
6836 5528 | spruce.com.sg

When: Weekends and public holidays from 9am to 3.30pm.

Whoever said “Kids should be seen but not heard” would be a fan of brunch here. The restaurant’s playground equipment is located one level down from the restaurant, letting you monitor the kids while enjoying adult conversation and food above. Take the **Garden Brekkie** (\$30) with eggs, avocado, tomato, goat cheese, toast and salad; or the **Cajun Prawns Benny** (\$25), a poached egg atop a toasted bagel and a mountain of spicy diced shrimp. The **Brioche French Toast** (\$14) has one of the lightest batters I’ve ever tasted (an egg wash rather than dip, perhaps?); it’s served with mascarpone cheese and sweet apricot jam. The tots will no doubt love the kids’ menu, but if you tend to trend healthy, skip it in favour of the beautifully layered **Greek yoghurt** (\$7) and a side of **smoked salmon** (\$6) or **eggs** (\$4).

Space for the desserts here should be made days ahead of time. Crowd favourites include the towering **carrot cake** (\$12) and the **ginger date pudding** (\$15), though the humble **chocolate chip cookie** (\$3) steals the show; it’s no wonder

the restaurant sells nearly 200 every three days. Take note: with Genoan chef Mauro Scotto freshly on board, the menu will be shifting slightly towards Italian very soon.

Opened in 2009, Spruce has been around Singapore longer than most of you reading this, which says something in a city of constant change. The food is consistent; the deck is covered and enclosed by greenery, and the setting is peaceful and historic without a mall or major road in sight.

Special features: Playground equipment, a bouncy castle (no swimming, mind you) and a kids’ menu will keep little ones satisfied here.

Words to the wise: If you want to supervise your kids while they play, make sure to snag one of the tables on the deck’s outer edge. And, though there’s space to park your stroller next to your table, both restaurant entrances require some climbing (one up and one down); leave your wheels in the car if you don’t like steps.

– Monica Pitrelli

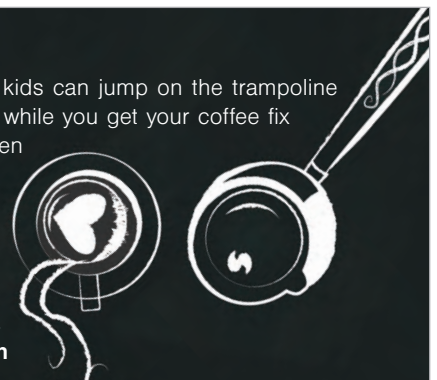
Also in Tanglin

Food for Thought

Head over here (from 8am) for that much-needed caffeine and some sustenance (they’ve got big breakfasts, lunch and pastries) while your energetic offspring play within view in the outdoor playground, complete with a slide and climbing structure. 1 Cluny Road, Botanic Gardens, Tanglin Gate, #B1-00. foodforthought.com.sg

The Pantry

At this casual outdoor café, kids can jump on the trampoline and use the small swing set while you get your coffee fix and a bite to eat – maybe even a slice of one of The Pantry’s delicious cakes. Breakfast and lunch are served on Saturdays from 8.30am to 11.30am, and 11.30am to 3pm. 75 Loewen Road. thepantrycookeryschool.com





Picotin Express

60 Fairways Drive
6877 1191 | picotin.com.sg

When: Breakfast is served from 8am to 11am every day; then the kitchen closes for an hour before lunch is served from noon onwards.

When Picotin left its large and handy spot on the corner of the entrance to The Grandstand (formerly Turf City), we were sad. It was a convenient location for us that served good food and had plenty of things to keep kids entertained. This new spot, however, is even better, and as the menu is remained the same, it's once again an easy restaurant choice for us. The kids' menu offers a choice of a small pizza, pasta or fish and chips, one juice or soft drink, plus a scoop of ice cream or a small chocolate mousse, all for the bargain price of \$15. Meanwhile, I opted for the seared **tuna Niçoise salad** (\$29), while James had the **classic rib-eye steak frites** (\$35) with béarnaise sauce.

Special features: The alfresco restaurant overlooks the Champions Public Golf Course and, in keeping with this sporting theme, there's also a mini-golf course available to the public and restaurant guests. As it's not within eyeshot, smaller children need to be supervised by an adult. My two, aged four and seven, had a wonderful time, and unlimited play for them cost \$10 each. There's also a handy little play area, with a swing set, slide and mini-train, which is enough to keep them occupied for a short while.

Words to the wise: Don't turn up hungry at 11am, as the kitchen doesn't reopen after breakfast until midday. Be prepared to sweat, particularly if you play mini-golf in the midday sun like we did – and bring bug spray.

– Amy Brook-Partridge



Also in Bukit Timah

Treehouse Café

This place isn't great just for kids' parties, but also for a casual, quick play on the indoor equipment while Mum and Dad grab some coffee at the café (there's food as well, but we'd suggest finding a bite somewhere else at The Grandstand after playtime). Little ones under seven will love the staircase covered in faux grass, which takes them up to a mezzanine level with protective netting; there's also a selection of toys, games and colouring to keep them entertained. In addition, there's face-painting and balloon-sculpting on every second and fourth Sunday of the month (12.30pm to 2.30pm), and arts and crafts activities on the first and third Sunday of the month (11.30am to 2.30pm). 200 Turf Club Road, #01-17 The Grandstand. treehousecafe.com.sg



Also on Sentosa

Tanjong Beach Club

Parents can enjoy Bloody Marys and brunch specialties (blueberry pancakes and breakfast quesadillas, among others) on the beach, while youngsters build sandcastles and take a swim in the infinity pool. Need we say more? Oh yeah, and the beach area is dog-friendly if you want to bring along the entire gang. *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 brunch between 10am and 4pm. tanjongbeachclub.com



The Sunday Garden Party at Atmosphere by the Sea

101 Siloso Road, Shangri-La's Rasa Sentosa Resort & Spa
6371 1966 | shangri-la.com/singapore/rasasentosaresort

When: Sundays from 12 noon to 3pm, with children's entertainment from 1pm

The first thing that struck us when we entered the indoor-outdoor seaside restaurant was what a pleasant and calm atmosphere it had. The table count could have been doubled, but the lovely team at Shangri-La wants to keep it a relaxing venue for patrons. It's a great option for a quiet family Sunday afternoon, or just as easily a great place to get together to eat with a group of friends and while the day away.

The food selection was excellent, including **salads, cold cuts, soups**, a big choice of **seafood and sushi** – among the highlights were oysters flown in from France – and that's just the entrées. The main courses offer something for everyone, ranging from hearty **roast beef** to Asian and Indian selections. For dessert, there's a small but delicious **ice cream bar** (with sprinkles and sauce), **cheese with biscuits and jam**, and several cakes and macaroons.

There's a separate buffet to suit the palate of most children (and adults – I have to admit nibbling from this selection too): **nuggets, chips, Bolognese** and my particular favourite (which took me back to my youth), **jellybeans** for dessert.

The brunch buffet is \$138 per adult (without alcoholic beverages, which can be ordered à la carte), while each child below 12 dines free with every paying adult; it's \$28 for each additional child (inclusive of free-flow soft drinks and juices).

Special features: The balloon and magic show kept most of the children glued to their seats for at least an hour (while the parents sat back and relaxed), followed by free-of-charge access to the hotel's very kid-friendly pool all afternoon.

Words to the wise: Invest in one of those body-shaping swimming costumes before coming along, for courage to get into the pool after a minimum of five courses at this yummy venue.

– Katherine Alloway



Pan Pacific Orchard
10 Claymore Road
6831 6686 | panpacific.com

When: Sundays from 12 noon to 3pm.

Located on the ground floor of the Pan Pacific Orchard hotel, 10 Claymore offers a casual Sunday brunch that seems more geared towards lunch as it starts at noon – perfect after a bout of shopping on Orchard Road.

The hot tickets here were the cooked **cold seafood spread** (Boston lobster, Alaskan crab, prawns and clams), the **sushi and sashimi** counter (sliced to order) and the **live oyster shucking station**. Our hands-down favourite was the tender USA **Black Angus beef 1855**, cooked à la minute before you and served with gravy and mustard. There's also a hot buffet with **Asian dishes** like noodles, Cantonese herbal prawns and five-spice roasted duck, and a **European spread** of gammon and roast potatoes, pork belly, lamb with Burgundy mint sauce, salads and a small array of cheeses; a selection of petite portions are also up for grabs à la carte (New Zealand lamb rib chop or *char koay*

teow), which is handy when you just want to sit and have a conversation.

If your kids can't find anything from the buffet that tickles their fancy, they can order a pasta dish (**spaghetti and meatballs** or **mac and cheese**) or **fish and chips** from the children's menu.

Dessert is sure to be a hit with kids and the young at heart – a retro **chocolate fountain** with skewers of marshmallows and fruit kept our toddler in high spirits. There are **crepes** made to order (the durian paste had people queuing), peppermint chocolate-chip ice cream, which youngsters will love topping with rainbow sprinkles (or more chocolate chips!), and a dessert buffet of mini cheesecakes, brownies, mango puddings and lemon meringue tarts.

The brunch buffet is \$98 including unlimited wine and beer, or \$88 without alcohol (but including brewed coffee and Gryphon teas); children aged five to 12 eat for \$44.

Special features: Although there's no dedicated space for kids to run around, children are very welcome at 10 Claymore and, on request, little ones will get an activity kit to take home, including a book, a toy and their very own Pan Pacific teddy. High chairs and kids' cutlery are also available.

– Beate Baldry



Jungle Breakfast with Wildlife at Singapore Zoo

80 Mandai Lake Road
6269 3411 | zoo.com.sg

When: Every day from 9am to 10.30am.

The **Jungle Breakfast with Wildlife** takes place at Singapore Zoo's **Ah Meng Restaurant**, a large alfresco timber lodge. The buffet offers a selection of pastries, breads, cheeses and yoghurts, cereal, fresh fruit and a range of hot food – both Western and Asian – along with fruit juice, pre-brewed tea and coffee; the roti prata and vegetable curry, the bee hoon and the selection of dim sum were a firm favourite at our table. There's no kids' menu, but the variety on offer should suit even the fussiest child – plus, they offer child-friendly cutlery and plates. The breakfast is \$33 for adults and \$23 for children over six, and free for kids under six.

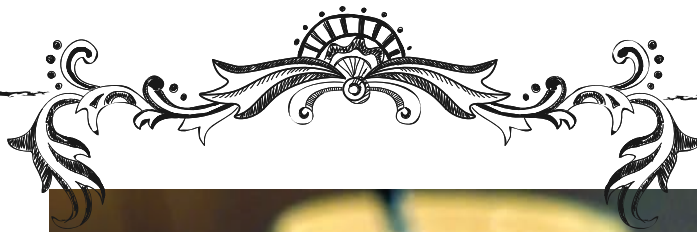
The two adult and three baby orangutans made their appearance at 9.30am to have their breakfast (sugar cane and sunflower seeds), with the baby orangutans entertaining

the children by dangling upside down and chasing each other. The view from our table was amazing, as we were about two metres away, while most tables had a decent view. The orangutans had departed by 10am, giving us time to finish our forgotten breakfast before heading out to visit the rest of the zoo – a lovely start to the day!

Special features: In addition to entertainment from the orangutans, you have the chance to be photographed standing right in front of the orangutans, either with your own camera or the official zoo photographer's.

Words to the wise: Get there early – you'll get the best seats. Also, the restaurant is open-ended, so watch any escapologist children!

– Katie Peace



Also Try

Rochester Café

Here, mums and dads can enjoy a long, leisurely lunch in the alfresco café as their kiddos play the afternoon away; there's an outdoor area with toys, playhouses, cars, slides and a trampoline, and an indoor playroom with a dress-up station, an arts and crafts table, wooden blocks and a ball pit – plus, there's a special kids' food menu. It's \$8 for a one-hour play-pass, \$10 for two hours, and \$15 for unlimited playtime. 7 Rochester Park. rochesterhouse.com.sg

The Marmalade Pantry (Novena)

On Saturdays and Sundays, parents can munch on scrumptious all-day (until 6pm!) brunch items like French toast, chorizo frittatas and banana pancakes, while little ones keep busy with colouring books and crayons. 8 Sinaran Drive, Oasia Hotel. themarmaladepantry.com.sg/oasia

Kith Café (Robertson Quay)

Located on the river (7 Rodyk Street, #01-28), Kith is a haven where parents enjoy delicious egg dishes, toasties, coffee and fresh-squeezed juices as their toddlers run amok in the outdoor grassy area and older children ride scooters beside the river; it's also dog-friendly, and it opens at 7am. kith.com.sg



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THE GREAT RECIPE SWAP

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

BON APPÉTIT!

BREAKFAST

BREAKFAST LETTUCE TACOS

(SERVES 1-2)



**AIMEE BARNES, NEW YORK, AND
RYAN PESTANO, SINGAPORE**

"When it comes to food, my husband and I have two entirely different agendas! As a health coach and figure competitor, I focus on fresh, whole ingredients and track my macros carefully – palatability is secondary. My husband is a total foodie and amazing cook, so taste is paramount to him! This protein-packed, super-easy breakfast dish meets both of our criteria"

INGREDIENTS:

- 8 egg whites and 1 egg yolk, scrambled
- ½ teaspoon flax oil
- 4 tablespoons of fresh salsa (see below)
- Freshly ground pepper
- 4 tablespoons cooked quinoa
- 4 butter lettuce cups

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cook eggs in flax oil with pepper over medium to low heat.
2. Place in butter lettuce cups with quinoa and top with fresh salsa to serve

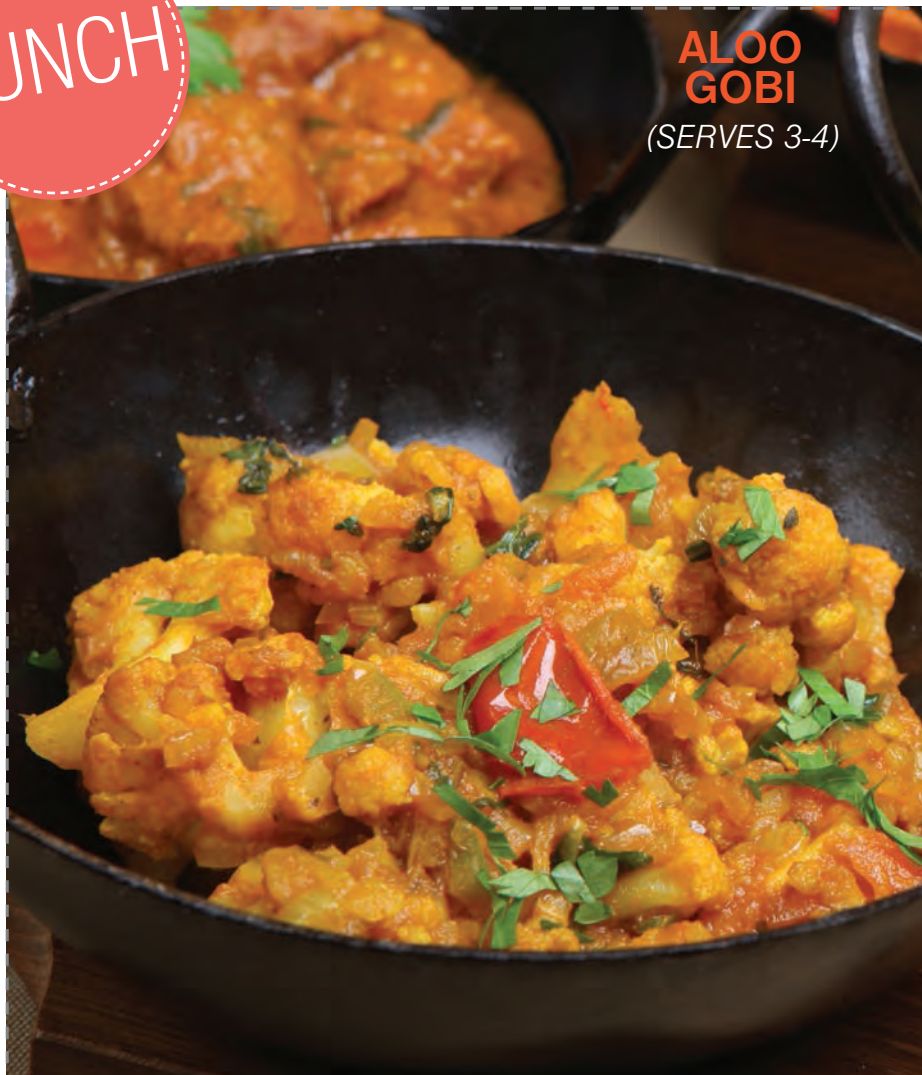
FRESH SALSA (3 CUPS):

"We reuse this salsa throughout the week as a dip and a topping for chicken and fish."

Mix two cups of fresh tomatoes (cubed with seeds removed) with half a chopped red onion, half a cup of chopped coriander, a quarter of a cup of chopped jalapeños, the juice of half a lime, two cloves of minced garlic, plus sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Let stand for 30 minutes before serving.



LUNCH



**ALOO
GOBI**
(SERVES 3-4)



**SHILPA GADODIA,
INDIA**

"I run vegetarian cooking classes in Singapore, where I help students appreciate the joys of fresh and tasty vegetarian food. Here is a simple but extremely popular North Indian vegetable dish, aloo gobi, a yummy combination of potatoes and cauliflower, best served with Indian naan or roti."

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 medium potatoes, peeled and thickly sliced
- ½ small cauliflower, separated into big florets
- 1½ tablespoons of any vegetable oil
- 3 sliced red chillies
- salt to taste
- ¼ teaspoon turmeric powder
- 2 teaspoons coriander powder
- ½ teaspoon red chilli powder
- ¼ teaspoon garam masala powder
- 500ml vegetable oil for deep-frying vegetables
- 2-inch piece of ginger, cut into thin strips for garnish
- a handful of coriander leaves for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS:


1. Heat oil in frying pan, fry first the potatoes and then the cauliflower separately until golden brown, then remove from pan.
2. Heat oil and sauté red chillies. Add potato slices, cauliflower florets, salt and turmeric powder and mix well.
3. Add coriander powder, red chilli powder and garam masala powder. Mix well for two to three minutes over medium heat.
4. Garnish with ginger strips and coriander and serve hot with any Indian bread.

PLUS



If we publish your recipe, you'll be adding a great cookbook to your bookshelf. This month it's *Truffles* by Dede Wilson, 50 delectable recipes for classic and contemporary chocolate truffles using simple techniques that anyone can master and featuring a wide variety of decorating options and flavours, from cranberry and white chocolate to tiramisu. **Cookbook sponsored by Lemon Zest Culinary Lifestyle.**

**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

Fundu Lagoon, Zanzibar (photo: Scott Dunn)

WHAT'S NEW

Hot destinations & great places to stay



LAOS WITHOUT THE CROWDS

While it's still one of Asia's best-kept secrets, the languid Laotian town of Luang Prabang is seeing more and more visitors each year. A good way to avoid the crowds is to travel out of the peak winter season and go in summer instead. From now until 30 September 2015, *EL* readers can stay at selected Luang Prabang hotels and enjoy a "stay 4 nights, pay for 3" deal through Singapore-based travel experts, **Country Holidays**. Catch a glimpse into the age-old traditions and authentic ways of life of the local people, observe the characteristic sloped roofs of the buildings, and offer morning alms to monks; there's even the opportunity to take a walk with a UNESCO Specialist and get first-hand information on the preservation and management of this beautiful town's heritage sites. **6334 6120 | countryholidays.com.sg** ▲

BIRTHDAY RETREAT

Here's a great offer. To celebrate **Telunas Private Island's** first birthday, Telunas Resorts is covering the domestic transportation fee for one *Expat Living* reader per Sea Villa booking, provided the stay begins on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday during the month of July. With its private massages, à la carte menus and outdoor freshwater infinity pool, just three hours from Singapore, Telunas Private Island is definitely worth exploring. To take advantage of the offer, type "HAPPYBDAY" as a booking note when reserving a room at telunasresorts.com.

Telunas offers two destinations: the Private Island, with stand-alone overwater duplex Sea Villas for couples, starting at S\$200 per weeknight (excluding dining, transport and taxes); and the Beach Resort, with overwater deluxe rooms starting at S\$75 and stand-alone chalets at S\$115 per weeknight (excluding dining, transport, and taxes). **+62 811 771 0951 | telunasresorts.com** ▼



LAGOI BAY AWAITS

Bintan Resorts now comprises seven independently owned and operated



beach resorts, up from five in recent years, thanks to the opening of two new holiday resorts on Lagoi Bay: **The Sanchaya** and **Grand Lagoi Swiss-Belhotel**. The master-planned development at Lagoi, which is in its opening phases as this magazine goes to press, will also encompass residential villas, outdoor activities, and Lagoi Beach Village with its new shopping mall, Plaza Lagoi. A shuttle service operates to and from all Bintan Resorts, as well as Bandar Bentan Telani Ferry Terminal, for the easy 50-minute trip to and from Singapore. **+65 6389 3535 | bintan-resorts.com** ▲

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JAPANESE INSPIRATION

If you're keen to sail away for a while, the newly refurbished **Diamond Princess** (sister ship of the Sapphire Princess featured elsewhere in this issue of *Expat Living*), which can carry 2,700 guests and 1,000 crew, has added a Japanese-inspired bath and specialty restaurant, Kai Sushi Bar. The Japanese experience available on board also includes an array of cultural activities such as traditional storytelling and tea-sampling ceremonies. While this Princess Cruises ship is currently based in Yokohama, it is set to call in Singapore this coming September during its voyage from Tokyo to Sydney. princess.com ▲



NEW IN THE MALDIVES

Recently opened in the UNESCO biosphere of Baa Atoll is **Amilla Fushi**, a resort that aims to do away with the "bill shock" that can come at the end of a Maldives holiday. So, all water sports are complimentary, there's a 50-minute spa treatment included in the rate, and all childcare is also free, from the Kids Club' to au pairs. Accommodation ranges from one-bedroom houses to three- to six-bedroom residences, and the island's restaurateur is acclaimed Aussie chef Luke Mangan, whose emphasis is on barbecue flavours, zingy ceviches and tropical ingredients (and even UK-style fish and chips!). amilla.mv

MUMBAI OPENING

A new Marriott hotel has opened in Mumbai, India. The 585-room **JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar** is just a kilometre from the airport, so it's useful for business travellers or people with onward flights. But you might also want to stay a while, judging by the 15 acres of luxury grounds, the range of dining options (including an Italian eatery, a bakery and a cocktail bar), and the presence of Spa by JW, only the second signature spa of JW Marriott worldwide. marriott.com | facebook.com/JWSahar



VIETNAM MARATHON

Sister resorts on the Central Vietnam coast, Banyan Tree Lăng Cô and Angsana Lăng Cô are hosting their first marathon this year, over the weekend of 24 and 25 October. The **Laguna Lang Cô Marathon** will be held in an area of pristine coastlines, lush green jungles and rugged mountain peaks, providing a memorable experience for athletes, their families and spectators. The event comprises a full marathon, a half marathon and a variety of fun runs (from 2K to 10K); early bird rates for entry are available until 31 August. Also, book accommodation at Angsana Lăng Cô and Banyan Tree Lăng Cô before the end of June 2015 and receive 15 percent off the best available rates (reservations-langco@angsana.com). lagunalangcomarathon.com/home

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Lukula Selous camp, Tanzania;
photo by Dana Allen

PLAN A
*Romantic
Getaway*

If you're looking to elevate your love to new heights, whether it's on a relaxing weekend away or a full-scale wedding in an exotic location, here's a range of destinations that should fit the bill very nicely.



MALAYSIA

What: The Lakehouse

Where: Cameron Highlands

Close enough for even a weekend away, The Lakehouse is an idyllic country house sitting atop a hill, overlooking rolling hills and verdant woodlands – an area dubbed “The Valley of Eternal Spring”. As destinations go, it’s an interesting blend of boutique and outdoorsy, with a 19-room Tudor-style cottage featuring exemplary tea plantation views, and plenty of activities on offer. All this in a climate that has been giving guests a welcome respite from the Malaysian heat since Sir William Cameron gave it its name in 1885. *Expat Living* readers can enjoy complimentary afternoon tea for two during their stay by quoting “Expatliving” when booking; email info@lakehouse-cameron.com.

lakehouse-cameron.com





THAILAND



What: The Racha

Where: Phuket

Fronting the soft sand and azure waters of Racha Yai, a pristine island 20km south of Phuket, The Racha boasts 85 eco-villas stretched across 20 acres – a great setup for couples wanting to spend uninterrupted quality time with each other. Honeymoon discounts are readily available, including a great deal for *Expat Living* readers that features an aromatherapy spa experience and a romantic candlelight dinner on the beach, valid for any stay of two nights or more until 31 October. Contact reservation@theracha.com for more details.

theracha.com



What: Pimalai Resort & Spa

Where: Krabi

Tired of city life right about now? Run away with your significant other to Krabi's Pimalai for a good dose of unrestrained nature. The resort sits on 100 acres of pure greenery, and with abundant wildlife and mountains surrounding the villas and suites, you'll feel like you're getting away from it all while still enjoying the trappings of a traditional vacation. Make the most of Krabi's sapphire waters by heading to the island's top snorkelling and diving spots close to the hotel, or take a romantic hike in Pimalai's secluded grounds. A 10 percent discount on room rates currently applies for bookings made through the website.

pimalai.com





What: Bay Villas

Where: Koh Phangan

Dreaming of relaxing in a seemingly endless stretch of water while sipping cocktails with your loved one by your side? Koh Phangan's Bay Villas, with private infinity pools and stunning sea views, is an ideal spot to turn dreams into reality. On-site wedding planners can help couples decide between a wedding by the beach or one in a sacred Buddhist temple – or anything in between. And if you're looking to entertain a larger wedding party, it's possible to hire several of the villas close together. *Expat Living* readers can enjoy an upgrade to the best available villa and champagne on arrival by quoting "EL honeymoon/wedding offer" when booking.

bayvillas-phangan.com



BALI, INDONESIA

What: Semara Luxury Villa Resort

Where: Bali

Don't settle for a date night in Singapore; up the ante by flying your partner to Bali for dinner at the Semara Luxury Villa Resort. Starting from US\$45 per person, Semara's new banquet menu by Chef Benoît Larochelle suits any kind of occasion, from casual meals to full-on weddings. There's also a range of gourmet cocktail menus available from just US\$18 per person per hour. And aside from all that delicious wining and dining, Semara boasts brilliant ocean views from Bali's famous Uluwatu cliffs.

semarauluwatu.com



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What: Hanging Gardens Ubud

Where: Bali

Located above the Ayung River in the Balinese highlands, Hanging Gardens fulfills any expectations newlyweds might have of a honeymoon, with private villas, a beautiful swimming pool, a traditional Balinese spa, and international and local dishes created by an award-winning chef. Two different Honeymoon Getaway Packages are available, starting from US\$1,500, and including a two-night stay in a luxurious villa with private infinity pool, daily breakfast, a three-course lunch, a three-course candlelit dinner, a honeymoon photo session, honeymoon gifts and more. Visit the website for more information.

hanginggardensubud.com

What: Villa Infinity

Where: Bali

Exclusive and chic, Villa Infinity in Canggu knows a thing or two about pampering guests. Not only do you have a staff of 18 at your disposal around the clock (including kitchen crew, security and your very own butler), but there are eight bedrooms in the villa – ideal for housing a wedding party – including a romantic riverside cabin, and a bunk room for any children. The property's massive 6,100-square-metre area encompasses lush gardens, a 40-metre pool, an air-conditioned media room with cinema and more. Villa Infinity is offering a fifth night for free on bookings of four nights, until the end of 2015.

villainfinitybali.com



FURTHER AFIELD

What: Aitken Spence Hotels

Where: Sri Lanka, Oman, Maldives

Whether you're planning a stylish wedding, tranquil honeymoon or romantic getaway, Aitken Spence Hotels – a chain of 24 hotels and resorts in South and West Asia – promises to provide authentic cultural experiences while spoiling its guests silly at the same time. There are countless possibilities, from saying “I do” on a sun-kissed beach overlooking the turquoise waters of the Maldives (where Aitken Spence Hotels operates five Adaaran resorts), to honeymooning in Sri Lanka's majestic hill capital, Kandy, with its the rich heritage and hotels that smack of a bygone era. Each property has a team of wedding coordinators who can relieve any stress and ensure that the story of your big day is seamless from start to finish.

aitkenspencehotels.com



What: A Southern African Honeymoon

Where: Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique

Travel operator Scott Dunn has specialists who can help tailor-make a honeymoon of a lifetime, taking into account your budget, timing and the kind of things you'd like to experience. One unforgettable itinerary is the Southern African Honeymoon, which combines the inspiring Victoria Falls, the big game of Botswana's Savute – including getting up close with the wildlife from a luxury mobile camp – and the deserted beaches and warm Indian Ocean of Southern Mozambique, where incredible fishing and world-class diving are just a couple of activities you can add to your agenda. The itinerary even includes a night at one of Johannesburg's top hotels, The Saxon, and dinner at one of the best restaurants in the country.

scottdunn.com 

Celebrate picture perfect moments
over romantic waters and fascinating
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SAY "I Do" IN BINTAN!

Celebrate love, life and romance at Bintan Resorts, against the azure backdrop of the South China Sea. Not only do the island's breathtaking coastal views and verdant tropical surrounds provide a heavenly backdrop for a wedding (and for wedding photography!), but it also means that there's no need to travel to your honeymoon destination – you're already there!

A wide range of wedding packages is available at the various resorts on Bintan, or, if you've already tied the knot, choose one of the many romance packages instead. Here's a selection of just a few of both.



THE SANCHAYA

This unique collection of 30 villas and suites, located on one of the most spectacular beaches in the region, is the first luxury property to open on Bintan in more than 10 years.

The Sanchaya's **Romance Package** (available Sundays to Thursdays) comprises a one-night stay in a Thai-style Lawan Village Suite or a Junior Sea View Suite, with extras such as express immigration and transfers, welcome drinks, breakfast in your suite or by the pool and beach, and a romantic, beachside three-course dinner for two, with a glass of champagne per person. From US\$882 per night, until 31 December 2015 (subject to availability and excluding public holidays).

For happy couples tying the knot, the **Wedding Package** offers everything for the big day, from accommodation in a luxurious One-Bedroom Villa, to round-trip private limousine service in Singapore, a ceremonial wedding celebrant, floral decorations for the ceremonial area and aisle, a wedding cake, bride and groom bouquets, massage treatments, a romantic dinner, a traditional gamelan music performance, breakfast in bed, and more.

Additional options include dining for up to 72 guests, a wedding coordinator, makeup and hair services, sunset cruise with canapés and Prosecco, photo and video services, and even fireworks.

+62 770 692 200
reservations@thesanchaya.com
thesanchaya.com

ANGSANA BINTAN

Nestled on the white sands of Tanjung Said Bay, overlooking the South China Sea, Angsana Bintan is a wonderful wedding location. The resort offers a range of wedding themes to choose from, including:

- "Charming Elegance"; white-and-gold weddings are extremely elegant and well suited to all hues and textures, from the gold bands in the ring box to the sparkling white wine against the sunlight.
- "Timeless Classic"; celebrate your union with a white-and-red theme that never goes out of style. Red roses say love better than anything else, and they contrast perfectly with all shades of white, from ivory to cream.
- "Whimsical Magic"; transform your wedding into a magical fairyland, with flowers in pink, purple, lilac and all shades in between, and with a glass-craddled matrimonial candle as a floral centrepiece.

Both the **Beachfront Wedding Package** and the **Santai Deck Wedding Package** are priced from US\$2,688 per couple, including two nights' accommodation in a One-Bedroom Suite, a wedding cake, breakfasts, a special dining experience, spa treatments, transfers, gifts and certificates, and much more.

+62 770 693 111
reservations-bintan@angsana.com
angsana.com



NIRWANA GARDENS

The Wedding Consultants at Nirwana Gardens focus on the intricate details of your wedding, leaving you to enjoy the ceremony and celebrations. And with Nirwana's variety of outdoor spaces and adventure facilities, you can customise the experience to make it even more memorable. Keen on an intimate sunset solemnisation on the beach, for example, or a grander affair in the Nirwana Villa? How about a bridal entrance on horseback, or a groom's entrance by jet ski? All are possible – even timing your wedding weekend with the release of baby turtles into the sea.

Regular inclusions in wedding packages at Nirwana, starting from S\$2,138, include:

- Round-trip private land transfers on Bintan
- Two nights in a Nirwana Suite or Indra Maya Pool Villa
- Romantic floral turn-down service and one-hour massage for the wedding couple
- Wedding carriage for the arrival of the bride
- Themed wedding ceremony, bridal bouquet and three-tiered wedding cake
- Intimate sunrise breakfast and romantic dinner
- Complimentary bottle of champagne and wishing lanterns
- Complimentary room for wedding helpers.

What's more, Nirwana's culinary team can prepare a feast for any number of guests, based on your selection from carefully curated menus. Complimentary flow of soft drinks and beer (minimum 30 guests) is included for the luncheon or dinner reception, too.

The only thing left is to wake in the privacy of your own villa and lounge in the morning sun by your private pool.

+65 6323 6636
wedding@nirwanagardens.com
nirwanagardens.com



BANYAN TREE

Banyan Tree Bintan, the island's only all-villa establishment, offers beautifully decorated villas in traditional Balinese style, each raised on stilts and set on a hillside overlooking the sea – an ideal setting for reciting your vows.

Banyan Tree's **Villa Wedding Package** and **Hole 8 Wedding Package** are available from US\$3,688 per couple, and both packages include the following:

- Two nights' accommodation in a Banyan Pool Villa – One Bedroom
- Breakfast for two in the privacy of your villa or at Tree Tops restaurant
- Elegant floral decoration for ceremony setup, bridal bouquet and groom buttonhole
- One-tier wedding cake
- A framed wedding certificate by Banyan Tree Gallery, and a special wedding gift
- Romantic "Intimate Moments" villa decoration
- An atmospheric dining experience in a private location by the sea, with a bottle of wine
- Land transfers and express immigration clearance on Bintan
- 60-minute spa massage and 30-minute calm time session for the newlyweds.

The same wedding themes on offer at sister resort Angsana Bintan (see *opposite*) are available at Banyan Tree, for you to customise the look and feel of your big day.

+62 770 693 100
bintan@banyantree.com
banyantree.com



BINTAN LAGOON RESORT

Bintan Lagoon Resort is an Indonesian-style, 470-room resort set on 310 hectares of manicured gardens (and two 18-hole championship golf courses), with a private, golden sand beach that stretches nearly 1.5km. It's the perfect backdrop for a spa-themed getaway for a couple, and you'll find a range of romance packages available from the resort.

The "Rejuvenate & Stay" package (from S\$128 per person), for instance, includes a signature Javanese massage at the Kedaton Spa, and one night's accommodation in a Deluxe Room; you'll also enjoy transfers on Bintan, and buffet breakfasts at Flavours Café.

Keep an eye out for other packages and promotions, along with romance-themed "challenges" that the resort offers from time to time, including a Cupid's Arrow Challenge and a Romantic Poem Challenge.

+65 6223 3223
reservations@bintanlagoon.com
bintanlagoon.com



Explore Europe

8 Great Cruise Ideas

Thinking about revisiting Europe, one of the world's classic destinations? This new programme of sailing itineraries should appeal to anyone who is keen for a different type of travel experience.

After many seasons' sailing across the seas of Indonesia, the South Pacific and Australia, the exploring partnership of **Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic** has set its sights on Europe. Its expedition ship, the *National Geographic Orion*, will embark on a maiden voyage of Portugal, Spain, France, England, Ireland, Holland, Belgium, the Baltic Republics and Scandinavia by land and sea next year. The smaller size of the ship (102 guests) makes it well suited to navigating European waters.

The 11 one-week itineraries, across 22 sailings, in the inaugural 2016 European programme aim to take travellers beyond the usual tourist experience, combining expert voices on everything from ancient history, art, viniculture and photography to active options such as hiking, biking and kayaking, and a range of authentic food experiences through menus prepared by international chef Serge Dansereau, of Sydney's The Bathers' Pavilion.

Here are eight sample itineraries that showcase the breadth of options available aboard the Orion.

#1 Scandinavia by Sea: Denmark, Sweden and Norway
Kayak through the Weather Islands off the west coast of Sweden and get up close to colonies of Scandinavian seals.

#2 Best of the Baltics: Cities and Islands from Tallinn to Copenhagen
Discover the Latvian town of Riga by bicycle, crossing the mighty Daugava River to the Island of Kpsala, known for its distinctive wooden houses.



#3 Wild and Windswept: Exploring the Coasts of England and Wales

On the island of Sark, join a local astronomer from the Astronomical Society for a night of stargazing.

#4 Norway and Scotland: From Fjordlands to the Inner Hebrides
Hike to the lighthouse at Sumburgh Head, and get the chance to dive the historic wrecks of Scapa Flow.

#5 Culture and Cuisine from Oporto to the Basque Country
Spend the day discovering Galicia, collect mussels with local fishermen and listen to traditional music.

#6 Bordeaux to London: The French Atlantic Coast
Explore the history and culinary traditions of St Malo, visiting a local oyster farm and gathering oysters for the *National Geographic Orion's* chefs.

#7 The North Sea: London to Copenhagen
Work alongside local culinary artisans to make Belgian chocolates in Brugge and sculpt marzipan in Lubeck.



#8 Hidden Ireland: Loughs and Isles off the Beaten Path

Experience the true Irish culture of Aran Island, discovering how goat cheese is made on a working goat farm.

FACT FILE

- The first European deployment commences with *Portugal and Spain: From the Algarve to Catalonia*, departing 24 April 2016; the final cruise departs on 18 September 2016.
- The lead-in price for each of the 22 voyages is \$9,990 per person, Category One, and includes the bar tab and staff gratuities.
- Itineraries have been designed to allow for hopping on and off across two or more itineraries (bookings of more than one voyage attract a 10 percent discount).

For more information, visit expeditions.com or call 1300 361 012.

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Five-Foot Ways

EXPLORING GEORGETOWN'S ATMOSPHERIC STREETS

by Katie Roberts

The E & O Hotel in Georgetown on Penang Island, in Malaysia's far northwest, is one of those hotels – so refined, relaxed and amiable that it's tempting to spend the entire trip holed up inside its hallowed, 130-year-old halls. But you will want to venture out – especially as Georgetown is a charming, ramshackle city with fascinating people, culture and cuisine.

Best explored at a leisurely walking pace, Penang's largest city, Georgetown, is saturated with the kind of nostalgic charisma that many Asian cities have lost in the race to modernise. Thankfully, its recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site has helped Penang preserve a large chunk of the city for all to enjoy.

An ideal weekend break from Singapore, for couples and families alike, this quirky Malaysian city has much to offer: fantastic food, street art, culture galore, historical temples, Chinese and British colonial architecture, and unique accommodation.

Our family of four, including an energetic nine-year-old boy and laid-back 11-year-old girl, recently returned for a second visit, and spent three days exploring the new things, plus the bits we missed first time round.



Stay: The Eastern & Oriental Hotel

Best described as Malaysia's answer to Singapore's Raffles Hotel, but without the hefty price tag, this property is simply known as "the E & O". We stayed to experience the colonial luxury evocative of a bygone era, and the acclaimed service that guests throughout its 130-year history have enjoyed.

The enterprising Sarkies brothers, who hailed from Armenia, are often credited with creating Asia's first hotel chain. Their legacy includes The E & O in Penang, Raffles Hotel in Singapore, The Strand Hotel in Yangon, Myanmar, and two hotels in Indonesia.

Today, the E & O Hotel offers graceful and elegant rooms across two wings; 100 in the **Heritage Wing** and 122 in the new **Victory Annexe**. Both wings have their own distinct charm, with separate entrance and foyer. We stayed in a deluxe suite in the Heritage Wing, in a 58-square-metre room with separate living area, walk-in dressing room, enormous marble bathroom and bedroom with two double beds, more than large enough for two adults and two children. In the Heritage Wing, a butler is on call at the flick of a switch.

Rooms in the Annexe, opened in 2013, naturally lean towards a more modern décor, but the style in both is classic and elegant. Guests from both wings have access to two pools, the first on ground level in front of **Farquhar's Bar**, the second in the new wing on the sixth floor. We spent our late afternoons swimming and resting weary feet after a lot of walking.

Though we didn't have time to take advantage of it, a shuttle service operates to sister property **Lone Pine Hotel** at Batu Ferringhi; and a new water limousine, the *Lady Martina*, tootles across to the **Straits Quay** shopping and dining complex regularly. Both are complimentary for E & O guests.





Breakfast at **Sarkies** is the full buffet affair, with numerous stations offering a global selection of cuisines, including local favourite *roti canai*; to the kids' dismay – and their parents' approval! – there's no chocolate fountain. (For more on E & O's restaurants, see the next page.) Hotel chefs offer Malaysian **culinary courses** on Wednesday lunchtimes, and complimentary **yoga** classes are offered poolside on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

The E & O was undoubtedly the highlight of our stay in Penang, and we can't recommend it highly enough.



History of a grand old dame

With a reference befitting the age of travel by ocean liners, advertisements in 1927 proclaimed the E & O Hotel as "The Premier Hotel East of The Suez". In a nod to the long journey from England through the canal, the ads boasted of baths with hot and cold running water, individual telephones and 842 metres of sea frontage, "the longest of any hotel in the world". Today, the claw-foot baths and colonial heritage features co-exist seamlessly with modern-day necessities: rainforest showers, speedy Wi-Fi and the stunning **Panpuri Organic Spa**.

An account of the hotel's development, plus memorabilia and memories of its glory days as the preferred location in Penang for weddings, celebrations and social occasions, is recorded in the **History Gallery**. We whiled away a pleasant half-hour chatting to the enthusiastic Merlene, who has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the hotel.

Food Frenzy

Penang has a formidable reputation for food, from hawker classics to value-for-money Western fusion, and top-notch local cuisine in fine-dining restaurants. After check-in, we made a beeline to the yellow-and-green shophouse eatery **Hameediyah** for a late lunch of cheap and delicious Indian fusion food, *murtabak*. We'd eaten there previously, on the recommendation of British chef Rick Stein, and were not disappointed with the large buttery *roti* stuffed with a choice of meat or vegetables, and fiery curry sauce as accompaniment.

Sharing the limelight with *char koay teow* as Penang's signature noodle dish is *assam laksa*. Substantially different to the coconut-milk version served in Singapore, this iteration is based on a tamarind and fish broth, with mint, cucumber and chilli for zing and sweetness. Hawkers all over Georgetown sell the dish for about four ringgit (S\$1.50), and we recommend enjoying it with a traditional nutmeg juice – the spice is grown locally.

I'll confess that the kids were not keen on these spicy delights, so they fell back on ever-reliable Hainanese chicken rice, which is ubiquitous too. Pick up the handy *Penang Street Food* brochure, which lists the outlets

where many popular hawker dishes are sold. A word of caution: Red Garden Food Paradise is a large, evening-only hawker centre that's popular with tourists, but we found the quality not up to scratch.

Want to take it easy? Dine in at the E & O Hotel for an all-inclusive family buffet lunch or dinner at **Sarkies**, or, for something special, at **1885**, the fine-dining restaurant. Guests staying in the Victory Annexe receive one hour of complimentary drinks and small bites at **Planters Lounge** every night. Sitting outdoors overlooking the straits and catching a breeze as the sun goes down is highly recommended.

A unique all-rounder, offering something for everyone, is **China House**. This building occupies a shophouse the length of an entire block, with access from Victoria Street or Lebu Pantai (Beach Road), and is absolutely worth a visit as much to check out the multi-restaurant building as for the 40 varieties of cake that the bakery section offers each day (yes, 40 – daily) and the excellent coffee (made with beans from Singapore roaster, Nylon and Toby's Estate). Breakfast, lunch and dinner are taken care of with top-notch fare, and kids are well catered for.



Our three favourite street murals:
 Kungfu Girl, Lebuh Muntri
 The Indian Boatman, Lorong Stewart
 Kids on Bicycle, Gat Le Armenian
 Old Motorcycle, Lebuh Ah Quee



Art: Marking Georgetown

Street art has flourished in Penang since artist Ernest Zacharevic was commissioned in 2012 to liven up the streets with a few larger-than-life murals. Other artists have since joined the trend, with more than 20 scenes adding character to external walls. Armed with only a map, my nine-year-old son joined the dots between murals and led us on a walking tour to discover them all, with a few stops for food, temples, the Clan Jetties, mosques, and shopping along the way.

There are also 52 black iron sculptures dotted against the building walls, each one relaying a tale of Penang history or culture. This one (*above*) tells the story of the local noodle dish known as *tok tok mee*, which took its name from the hawkers' habit in days gone by of knocking bamboo sticks together to draw attention to their stall.

Walk: Cool breeze

At 800 metres, **Penang Hill** is an escape from the tropical heat. A half-day trip to the hill combines a swift funicular ride with sweeping views, and a welcome cooling breeze. Prior to its opening in 1924 (the newest train came into service in 2011), the British reached the hill station via horses and sedan chairs.

Aside from city views, a mosque, an Indian temple and short buggy rides, there's little to keep tourists for long at the top. Some stop for a cool drink and a meal at the hawkers, or at **David Brown's Restaurant and Tea Terrace**. Keen to work up an appetite, we chose to walk the roughly five kilometres down hill on a combination of sealed road, paved residential thoroughfares and a rough dirt mountain-bike track. In the lush forests we were rewarded for our efforts with the sighting of the very cute spectacled langur (or dusky leaf monkey), named for the white rings around its eyes.

Unsurprisingly, given the absence of signage, there were few people walking on our route, although several spritely 60-somethings (and that's a conservative estimate) did pass us in the other direction, making the steep, calf-burning ascent.

Shop: Heritage traders

Much of the pleasure of a visit to Georgetown is the aimless wandering and casual observation of the city's diverse and industrious people. It's always been a trading port, with a harmonious confluence of Malay, European, Chinese and Indian cultures.

Many traditional businesses remain in shophouses in varying stages of decay or restoration – rattan weavers, flower garland makers, bookbinders and perfumers. A metal forger, complete with massive ship anchors, sits alongside a pastry-maker famed for egg tarts, and across from a bike hire shop. This jumbled chaos has its own charm, especially when contrasted with Singapore's orderliness and modernity. Shoppers will find 18-ringgit knockoff Fedora hats, kitsch souvenirs, old-school enamelware trays, art and high-end street photography.

Georgetown has so much to discover, and I'm looking forward to another visit soon.





Make it happen

Penang is a one-hour flight from Singapore and well serviced by budget airlines. Our family of four flew with Jetstar for around S\$500 return. Georgetown and the E & O Hotel are a 30-minute taxi ride from the airport, around 40 to 50 ringgit, paid in advance at the taxi counter just outside the terminal. The hotel is a Georgetown landmark, so there's no need to give the driver directions. Rooms at the E & O can be found on accommodation search websites for under \$250 a night. Walking is the recommended way to get around the historic city, but taxis are reasonable and plentiful, and there is a free hop-on hop-off bus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Bon Ton The Shop

(for Malaysian textiles, homeware, arts and crafts)
86 Armenia Street
straitscollection.com.my

China House

(fusion food, Asian and Western)
183B Victoria Street and
153 Beach Street
chinahouse.com.my

Eastern & Oriental Hotel

10 Lebuhr Farquhar
eohotels.com

Hameediyah

(Indian Muslim food)
Campbell Street

Penang Hill

penanghill.gov.my

Sam's Collections

(Indian textiles; be prepared to bargain hard)
159 and 161 Penang Road

Shop Howard

(handmade arts and crafts by local artisans and photographers)
154 Pitt Street



Want to explore more?

If you like Georgetown, you'll love these similarly atmospheric UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the region:

- Galle, Sri Lanka
- Hoi An, Vietnam
- Luang Prabang, Laos 🇱🇵

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BORNEO WITH THE BROOD

JESS SMIT and family head to Malaysia's Gaya Island off the coast of Kota Kinabalu in search of the ultimate effortless getaway from Singapore.





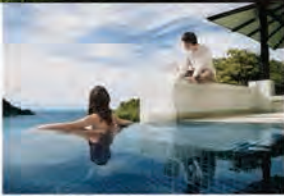
We're at that precarious stage where we could ask nicely and squeeze the whole crowd into a single room when we travel, but the downsides of this with three children are many – including having to spend Happy Hour navigating our way around cots, pull-out beds and play mats while we're supposedly on holiday.

And so, having decided that only two bedrooms would do, we hit “Book” straight away on spotting Bunga Raya Island Resort & Spa on Gaya Island, just off the coast of Sabah’s capital city Kota Kinabalu in Malaysian Borneo.

The spaciousness of the family suites means no having to read by bathroom light once all the kids are tucked up for the night – and the short-haul flight from Changi is a clincher!



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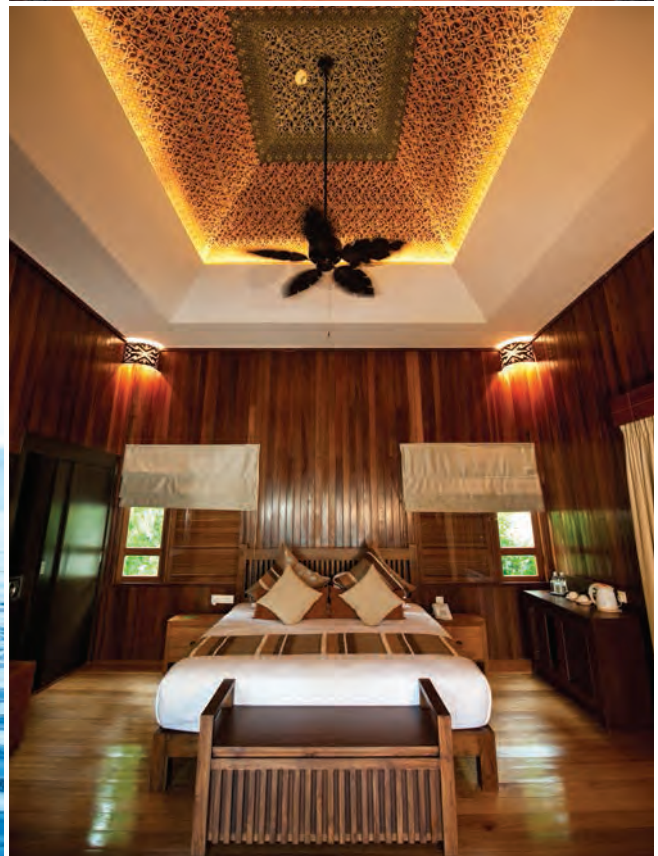
*as awarded by the Thai Ministry of Natural Resource & Environment and the Ministry of Energy 2014 **2014 World Luxury Hotel Awards - Continent Winner: Luxury Private Pool Villa ***terms & conditions apply

Bunga Raya Island Resort & Spa

Bunga what? Named after the Malay word for hibiscus, the country's national flower, Bunga Raya is located in Polish Bay on Gaya Island, the biggest of the five islands in the Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park. Expect an exquisite stretch of white-sand beach with centuries-old rainforest behind it, and a coral reef that'll have you grabbing your snorkel before the speedboat from Kota Kinabalu's Jesselton Point has even moored on the jetty.

The laid-back boutique hotel has 48 timbered villas built in traditional Bornean-style, either set into the sloping hillside or right on the beach – think one-bedrooms with plunge pools, two- and three-bedroom suites with outdoor balcony living spaces and awesome views of the South China Sea, and a royal villa with a designated butler, chef and housekeeper (oh, and a private beach!)

We got settled into a sleek two-bedroom deluxe suite with separate king and twin bedrooms within a single villa, boasting a cool dark-wood interior, Frette linen, Thann toiletries, stunning batik-printed ceilings and a complimentary mini-bar (in no order of importance).





Fortunately, we had plenty to fill our days, even with 6am starts (ahem). Ours roped the staff into building them an epic sandcastle complete with drawbridge, swam themselves silly (a perfectly positioned tree over the infinity pool providing a lovely shady spot for little dippers), and then there was the nature walk to the sky-bridge. Circling around four huge dipterocarp trees, it's basically a super-scale version of the Jacob Ballas Children Garden's wibbly-wobbly bridge, but with phenomenal ocean views and sightings of piqued hornbills, long-tailed macaques and monkeys. On the way back down, our four-year-old son Benjamin spotted the zip-line, and that was that. Our guide Hedros called in support, kitted him up and off went the little guy, now known as "Batman" (self-proclaimed), sailing solo high over the Bornean jungle without a moment's hesitation!

Of course, tropical islands and spa treatments go together swimmingly, so Paul and I snuck off post-bedtime one evening to Bunga Raya's Solace Spa, crossing the suspension bridge into a sanctuary of spa suites and all the Asian and Western

massages, scrubs, facials and more that you could wish for. Add a jungle soundtrack and natural products from Kerstin Florian, and I reckon we would've booked them up every evening of our stay if we didn't think at the same time our offspring were giving the babysitters a run for their money!

Back to reality (tropical island reality, that is), our stay revolved around mealtimes, so we very quickly made friends with the dining staff. Good job we did, as they were amazingly flexible at pandering to our children's rather interesting requests – "rice and cheese, please".

We were always the first ones to hit up the waffle station and smoothies at The Longhouse's buffet breakfast each morning, where this mama would filch a load of house-made custard and choc-chip biscuits for later (that's allowed, isn't it?). With a few snacks thrown in, this would almost keep us going till happy hour at Pantai Grill. You couldn't get a restaurant closer to the beach if you tried, and the children would tear around on the sand, leaving us free to enjoy as quiet a cocktail as we ever get. Cheers to that!



Gayana Eco Resort and MERC

Another day, another coastal resort – this time the gorgeous Gayana Eco Resort, Bunga Raya's sister property on the other side of the island in Malohom Bay. Our speedboat arrived just in time for the daily feeding of resident groupers from the jetty: chumming them with fish-heads was a touch more dramatic than chucking crumbs at the catfish in the Botanic Gardens!

Then Paul headed off to explore pristine dive sites with Gayana's PADI-certified dive masters, while I took the children for a tour of the Marine Ecology Research Centre (MERC), the resort's marine conservation facility that's raised over 3,000 endangered giant clams from seven different species since it opened in 2007. It's no mean feat for the team of marine biologists considering they need to clean, nurture and feed the young clams for up to three years before they're able to survive on their own in wild coral reefs.

MERC is fantastic for families: older kids can become marine biologists for a day, while the younger ones get a kick out of touring the aquarium, holding the sea creatures in the touch tank – the blue starfish were a big hit with ours – and planting coral (which little guests can even snap up a personalised certificate for doing). These planted coral fragments would then spend a year in the ocean nursery before being transferred to the seabed – though we of course just had to check on Benjamin and Rosie's contributions the very next day!

We had big plans to get in some snorkelling and mangrove kayaking during our day trip, but the pool and the fare from Macac's pizza oven kept our team more than content, so we'll just have to return and maybe check into one of Gayana's stunning overwater villas while we're at it – next time sans children, perhaps?

Fact File

AirAsia and SilkAir fly direct from Changi to Kota Kinabalu in under two-and-a-half hours – then it's just 20 minutes or so by taxi to Jesselton Point and a speedy 15-minute speedboat ride from there. Visit bungarayaresort.com or gayana-eco-resort.com for details on accommodation. 📍



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Sail Away ON THE SAPPHIRE PRINCESS

In our last issue, we looked at the pros and cons of the various cruise routes out of Singapore. Here, VERNE MAREE gives her verdict on one of the more popular ones, the four-night round trip to Penang, Langkawi and Port Klang on the super *Sapphire Princess*.

They say you can divide the world into people who love cruising, and people who hate it. It's also been said that the latter are simply those who chose the wrong ship for their particular needs the first time they tried it. And everyone's needs are different, of course, depending on factors such as age, budget, tastes and so on.

With so many options to choose from (see Heidi Sarna's overview in our May 2015 issue), why did Roy and I choose this ship and this route?

Firstly, to take advantage of Singapore being a cruising hub: with the new Marina Bay Cruise Centre just a short taxi-ride from home, sailing round-trip is not only convenient but also saves the time, hassle and expense of air transfers. Secondly, I get miserably travel-sick, and the stability of bigger ships – this one takes 2,700 passengers – helps me to keep all that delicious food down. Thirdly, at around S\$800 per person sharing a

balcony stateroom – that's about \$200 a day, all in – the *Sapphire Princess* is more affordable than some others that ply these waters.

It's not just about the price, however: this is a truly gorgeous ship. Though the Princess line is in the "deluxe" rather than the "luxury" category, its beautifully designed *Sapphire* is in mint condition, with expansive decks, lovely public spaces and excellent facilities, including numerous pools, both indoor and out.



Sailing Away

Boarding is a straightforward and fairly quick exercise. Also departing today is a Celebrity ship, rather dwarfed by the floating behemoth that's going to be our playground for the next four nights.

Our 4pm departure is celebrated with the mandatory sail-away party in the main pool area, featuring vigorous line-dancing led by a red and perhaps unnecessarily furry Mr Octopus, together with a no doubt equally sweaty Mr Pelican. As Roy surprisingly refuses to join in, we watch the fun from the outdoor bar while I cheer myself up from a menu of no less than six different varieties of margarita.

Sleeping

We recommend our own cabin unreservedly: on Deck 12, and aft, its balcony is shaded – ideal for travel in the tropics – and it's not overlooked by any of the other cabins, which is the case with the lower decks.

Though not as big as in some other ships, our stateroom is quite large enough for comfort; but I certainly wouldn't recommend the option of sharing it with one or more of those short, noisy people.

The queen-sized bed is super-comfortable, and that's so important. Plenty of storage room is provided, including hanging space with lots of hangers (which makes my day); there's a safe, a big television and a mini-bar. Though the shower-room is very small indeed, as is the shower, it's well designed, with excellent water pressure that puts a smile on my husband's face. And though we never need to call on the services of the steward assigned to us, it's nice to know he's available at the other end of a phone line.

Demographics and Drinking

Sapphire Princess has been plying this and other routes in the region since November 2014, and I'd estimate a more than 90 percent Asian passenger list: mainly Chinese-Indonesian, Chinese-Malaysian, Chinese-Singaporean, other Southeast Asians, Japanese, Koreans and so on.



But with so many passengers, there is still a good smattering of Aussies, Europeans, Americans and other Westerners. It's easy to find them, too: they'll be at the bar – one of the many bars, usually one that's outdoors – or on a sun-lounger at one of half-a-dozen pools. As it's term-time, there are relatively few children on board; it's a good idea to check that aspect of things before booking.

A predominantly Asian passenger list means that many of the bars are conspicuously empty and the wine waiters sadly under-employed, though Roy and I are doing our level best to remedy that. Finding ourselves the only customers at the lovely Wheelhouse Lounge on several occasions, we spend hours chatting up manager Alex from Bulgaria. He's been in the cruise business for 21 years and is a mine of information (and gossip) about shipboard life.

The basic cruise price includes food, soft drinks and everyday coffee and tea – but not proper coffee and not alcohol. Happily, just US\$50 per person per day buys you the all-inclusive beverages option.





Dining

When you book your cruise, you're asked to choose between Anytime dining and Traditional dining. The Traditional option means you dine in the International restaurant at the same table at the same time with the same people for the duration of your journey: perhaps more convenient for families or larger groups. Most couples, though, might prefer to dine Anytime and wherever they like.

They suggest booking your dinner table ahead, but we never find that necessary on this cruise, except in the two fine-dining restaurants – Sabatini's and Sterling Steakhouse – for which you pay an extra US\$25.

On a short cruise like this, the same menu is served up at all five main restaurants: the International, the Savoy, the Vivaldi, the Pacific Moon and the Santa Fe; but the themed menu is different each night. For example, our first dinner is at the Savoy (supposedly British in décor and ambience), and the theme is Italian. The standard, by the way, is generally very good.

Speaking of Italian, top-notch thin-crust pizzas are served all day in Alfredo's Pizzeria, and at no extra charge. And on the last night, we enjoy a marvellous four-course meal at Sabatini's: a cone of crispy calamari for me and a perfectly creamy burrata for Roy; impeccably light manicotti stuffed with spinach and ricotta; a veal chop for Roy and lobster three ways for me. (A month later, I'm still racked with regret that I was too full to try the zabaglione.)

A stupefying amount of food is put away at the vast Horizon Court buffet, open from 5am to 11pm, and the standard is fairly good. We far prefer the more intimate International Café in the buzzy Piazza, however, where they serve great cappuccinos along with toasted sandwiches, patisserie and more.

We find the service fine on the whole, sometimes excellent, but unfortunately – perhaps due to the on-job training that's going on – decidedly inconsistent. That said, it must be a huge challenge to provide a uniformly good service experience for passengers from such a wide variety of cultures, especially given



the language constraints between them and a service crew representing dozens of different nationalities.

Entertainment

Shows tend to be better on bigger ships like this one, and here they offer a 35-minute performance twice-nightly. We manage to catch only two of them: *Pianoman*, and then a great performance from young Asian-Aussie duo Heart of Spades on “acoustic” violin and guitar.

The plethora of **activities** organised by the cruise director and his enthusiastic young team seem to go down well, though sometimes evoking shades of Butlin’s holiday camp with over-jolly exhortations to join in. A Latin music party held one evening on the huge Neptune Pool Deck is a huge success, however – everyone turns up. (Once again, Roy refuses to join the conga line, so I console myself with a couple of first-class caiparinhas.)

The Neptune Pool Deck also has a massive **outdoor movie screen**, where films are screened at advertised times: we catch bits of *Mary Poppins* and *The*

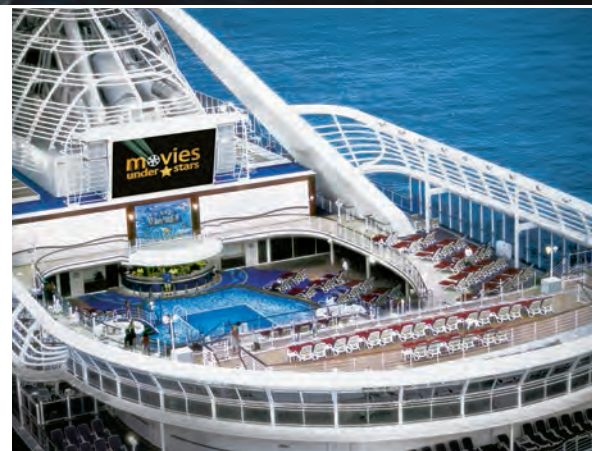
Judge, and concerts by the likes of Paul Simon and James Taylor.

But we have our best fun at the **Skywalker’s** lounge, where a good DJ operates from 10.30pm into the small hours. If you want to dance, a cruise ship has to be the best place to do it; no need for a taxi to get you home, and when the crew finishes for the night around 1.30am, they just leave you to it. We haven’t danced so much in years.

As for the **casino**, if gambling is one of your things, smoking had better be another. The one time we walk through the place, it reeks like an old ashtray.


Excursions

For both local Singaporeans and expats, this cruise is likely to be more about the ship than the ports. After all, to do Penang or Langkawi justice – and they’re both great destinations in their own right – you need far longer than the few hours allowed. Far better to take a few days to see them properly on some other occasion. We did our own thing in both Penang and Langkawi, being familiar with both places, but a first-timer might want to opt for one of the variety



of excursions offered at an extra fee.

As for the unattractive Port Klang, which is quite a distance from Kuala Lumpur, we see it as a good opportunity to stay on board and enjoy the ship’s facilities.

All this, of course, just underscores how lucky we are to live in Singapore and have so many travel options to choose from. Cruising is just one way to go, and it seems that the more of it I do, the more I like it. 

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MBBS (Hons) (UNSW), M.Med (Surg), FRCS Edin (Gen Surg)

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

Good news for fish lovers (but not so good news for hard-core carnivores): according to a new study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, avoiding red meat and sticking to a plant-based diet that incorporates fish may be the key to preventing colorectal cancers. And, while evidence shows the health benefits of reducing red meat consumption (lower blood pressure and weight loss, for instance), the recent study, which followed nearly 78,000 people over the course of seven years, also highlights the differences between a fully vegetarian diet and a **pescatarian diet**. Within the sample group, there was a 27 percent drop in the risk of contracting colorectal cancer if a diet was switched from being fully vegetarian to including fish, the authors of the study suggesting the omega-3 acids found in fish act as extra protection against the cancers. And, though there's still more research to be done, it's exciting to know that, in addition to regular screenings, a diet rich in fish may play an important role in thwarting colorectal cancer. For more details on the study, visit jamanetwork.com. ▼



PREPARING FOR CHANGE

A diagnosis of cancer is a life-changing event that arouses feelings of shock, fear, anger, anxiety and sadness – which is why Parkway Cancer Centre is offering a special **“Adjusting to Changes”** session to help patients and their caregivers understand what they may experience during cancer treatment, the physical and psychological changes, and how to prepare for their treatment journey. The session features talks from nurses, dieticians and counsellors offering insight on what to expect from chemotherapy (including the management of symptoms and side effects), the importance of food safety in relation to chemotherapy and radiation, how to deal with loss of appetite and nausea, and plenty of other helpful information. The complimentary session is offered on the last Saturday of each month, at either Mount Elizabeth Hospital or Gleneagles Hospital. To register, contact CanHOPE at 6738 9333 or enquiry@canhope.org.



OFF-ROAD EXCURSION

This month, MSIG presents a brand new addition to its established ultramarathon series – the **MSIG Singapore Action Asia 50**, a flat, urban trail race through the Green Corridor and historic railway stations along the way. In addition to the 50K category, the event, which takes place on 25 July, also offers 10K and 21K distances, making it ideal for both experienced runners and those just starting out in trail running; 90 percent of the course is off-road. To register, and for more information, visit actionasiaevents.com.

SWEAT FOR A CAUSE

Returning this year with two competitive race categories (5K and 10K), the **Pocari Sweat Run** aims to raise funds for financially disadvantaged medical students and for students from the Singapore Sports School. Over 10,000 runners are expected to take part this year, including a good number of doctors and other healthcare staff. Flag-off is at 6.30am on 12 July at Kallang Practice Track, 52 Stadium Road. Register by 21 June at pocarisweatrun.com.

TEAM SPIRIT

Grab your running buddies and form a team of four to compete in Singapore's very first **Mizuno Ekiden** relay race, an experience that focuses on Japanese values such as teamwork, performance and perseverance. Participants have the option of signing up for either the full marathon (42.2K) or the half marathon (21.1K), with each member running a different section of the same course before finishing at a Japanese-themed matsuri (or festival) race village. Flag off at 7am on 18 July at The Meadow at Gardens by the Bay. Register by 15 June at mizunoekiden.sg.

GIVE IT A TRI

If you're looking for your next, or even your very first, run, the **Tri-Factor Run** is a great bet, no matter your age or fitness level. Taking place on 26 July, it offers four different distances: 1K, 5K, 12K and 24K. Even children aged six to 12 can participate in the 1K non-competitive run,



while teens aged 13 and above can compete in the 5K race. Register by 5 July at trifactor.sg.

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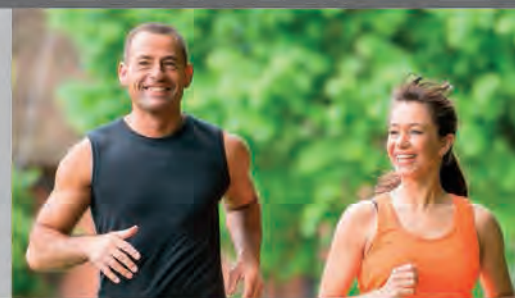
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RUNNING COMMENTARY:

Avoiding Injury

Too much, too soon – that's what gets you injured. But when your heart is set on something, it can be hard to heed the messages your body is sending. For some expert local advice, **Verne Maree** chats to two elite athletes – Aussie **SUZY WALSHAM** and Kiwi **BEN PULHAM** – and, for good measure, also gets a couple of pointers from Sydneysider physiotherapist **SIMON RAFTERY**.

When I ask Suzy to tell me about her injuries, she laughs and says, “How much time do you have?” She describes herself as a very “fragile” athlete who was usually injured for at least three months of every year that she spent racing on the track. “It’s better now that I’m focused on stair-racing,” she says – Suzy is the current world champion stair-racer – “but I still get injured if I do too much running.”

For those who want the gory details, her litany of injury woes includes: “14 stress fractures (femur, fibula and tibia), a broken foot (it broke during a race), a dropped metatarsal, two or three calf strains or pulls per year, several hamstring strains and an achilles injury.”

Is injury inevitable?

According to Suzy – and she should know! – injuries are generally due to a combination of overtraining, incorrect technique or biomechanics, inadequate rest and recovery, poor diet, and not dealing properly with niggles when they first appear.

“I’ve never met an elite athlete who hasn’t been injured at some point in their career,” says Suzy. “When you’re pushing your body to the maximum, it’s not surprising that things break down from time to time.”

Though Ben believes there are a number of things that runners of all levels can do to lower their chances of injury – especially those who run purely for fitness or pleasure – he agrees that it’s pretty inevitable that an elite runner will suffer injury at some point. In his own ten years as an elite triathlete, he says, he suffered from typically overuse-related injuries like runner’s knee and iliotibial-band syndrome.

“But I always took a conservative approach to injury: I figured it was better to take a day off in order to avoid a week off, or a week off to avoid a month off. This approach served me well and for the most part, I was able to train very consistently for 10 years.”



Common injuries

Simon reckons that runner's knee and shin splints are the two most common problems. Correct diagnosis from a sports doctor or physiotherapist is extremely important, he says.

"With shin splints, for instance, if you have a full-blown stress fracture – which is an actual crack in the lower leg bone – you need at least 12 weeks of complete rest. But if it's purely a muscle irritation, it should recover well within four to six weeks of conservative physiotherapy treatment and strengthening."

Suzy agrees that it's necessary to seek professional help to identify not only the nature of the injury, but also the cause; that will help you avoid injury in the future, too. And to maintain fitness while you're resting your injury, she recommends continuing low-impact cross-training activities: on a bike, on a cross-trainer machine or on the stairs.

"Keeping up your base fitness while injured makes it easier to return to running when you are able to," she promises.

Avoiding injury

To avoid getting hurt or sick, Ben has four useful pointers:

TRAINING: "Train following a plan that's suitable for your current ability and that is progressive. Start at a lower volume and at a lower intensity, and gradually build these up across the weeks as your fitness and conditioning improve."

FOAM ROLLING: "Use a foam roller daily to keep your muscles and fascia loose and supple, increase blood flow, improve range of motion and speed recovery from training."

NUTRITION: "Eat a nutrient-dense diet rich in fruit and vegetables for essential vitamins and minerals that help to keep the immune system strong."

SLEEP: "Aim for a minimum of eight to nine hours a night."

Apart from echoing Ben's recommendation for a gradual build-up of volume and intensity, and minimising impact through incorporating cross-training, Suzy seriously recommends

doing some core stability work and weight or strength training. "That's because a stronger core will help improve your running form and efficiency, while stronger muscles are better able to handle the impact of running."

Simon stresses the importance of building appropriate **muscle strength** of the calves, glutes (buttocks) and quadriceps (thighs). "This is easily tested for," he says, "and if you're found lacking in any area, you can ask to be shown effective ways of strengthening it."

A good **running gait** will also help guard against injury, because it's associated with better shock absorption through the calf muscles. Scheduling a **recovery day** every three or four days is a good idea, he says; instead of running, hit the pool or get onto a stationary bike. And **taper** before you race a 10K, a half-marathon, a marathon or longer; schedule a week or more of active rest.

Stay safe, stay injury-free, and see you on the road!

journeyfitnesscompany.com
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COMING UP

JUNE

7

No Frills Run

7.30am, 5/10K, Kallang Riverside Park

7

Nila Run

6am, 10K, Sports Hub

13

The Great Relay Singapore

50/100K

14

Buen Momento: Run for Fun:D

4pm, 2.7K loop, Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park

21

Mileage Father's Day Run

7am, 1/3/5K, Pasir Ris Park

25

Salomon MR25 Cross-country Marathon

7am, 42.2K, MacRitchie

JULY

4

OSIM Sundown Marathon

5pm, 5/10/21/42, F1 Pit Building

12

Pocari Sweat Run

6.30am, 10K, Kallang Practice Track

18

Mizuno Ekiden

7am, relay, 21/42K, Gardens By The Bay

26

Shape Run

6am, 1.8/5/10/15K, Kallang Practice Track

26

Compressport TRI-Factor Run

1/5/12/24K

AUGUST

1

ASICS City Relay

6pm, Sports Hub

2

2XU Compression Run

4.30am, 5/10/21.1K, Gardens By The Bay

22

Frost & Sullivan Corporate Challenge Charity Run

5/10K, MacRitchie

23

RunNUS

10K, Kent Ridge

29

Orange Ribbon Run: Race Against Racism

4pm, 3.5/5/10K, MBS

30

DC Justice League Run

5K, Sentosa

To ask a question, make a point or contribute to this page, send an email to verne.maree@expatliving.sg. 



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Wise Counsel

By Verne Maree

Here you are, perhaps having got just what you wanted: an exciting new adventure. You've risen from out of your rut and moved to the city with one of the highest per-capita income levels in the world, where there's an endless summer, and two new restaurants open *every day!* How could anyone be anything but happy in this brave new world?

Even if it wasn't easy leaving friends and family behind – elderly parents, especially – you made the right choice, didn't you? Career prospects seemed so rosy, tax rates so low; you'd have affordable home help – maybe even try for another baby. Wouldn't your family benefit from mind-broadening exposure to different cultures and languages? And in due course, other opportunities, other cities might beckon. In time, you'd all become wise and successful global citizens, and the world would be your oyster.

Though there *are* plenty of success stories and a rainbow of happy endings, it's not always an easy journey. They may not tell you, and you may not always see it, many of us are suffering from disappointment, insecurity, loneliness, fear, depression and more, just like the rest of humanity.

In talking with hundreds of EL readers over the past 10 years, I can truly say that no two have the same story with similar problems. There are common elements, however, that can be extrapolated to a whole range of situations.

So I asked three psychologists and a life coach what their advice would be to the unhappy expats caught up in the following four fictional but only-too-common scenarios: firstly Florence, a lonely executive; secondly Hilde, who suddenly finds she's a dependant without a career; thirdly Malcolm and Susie, a couple whose relationship is under strain; and finally 13-year-old Jake, who's desperately missing his friends and his dog.

SINGLE AND LONELY - FLORENCE (41), DUTCH

THE SCENARIO:

Florence was excited by the opportunity to head up the Singapore branch of the shipping company she works for. But she's finding it hard, despite her best efforts. As the only woman at the office, and the boss at that, she is surrounded by men who hardly bother to pass the time of day with her. Outside of work, she is finding it difficult to make friends, partly because her English is not very fluent. She finds herself unexpectedly bursting into tears at odd moments, spending the weekends at home watching television TV in her condo and Skypeing her old friends in the wee hours of the morning.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST:

DR SHRIMATHI SWAMINATHAN runs her practice, Psynaptica, at Body with Soul Total Healthcare Network. As a clinical psychologist who often helps people who are under stress from multiple changes happening all at once – divorce, change of job, relocation and so on – here's her advice for someone in Florence's position.

THE QUESTIONS:

Florence chose to move. Why, then, is she unhappy?

It is not uncommon for a new job to cause stress, even though it's what we want. Even if stressors are limited to one area of life, the problems spill over into other areas too. Problems or challenges at work can make a person angry, intolerant or withdrawn socially or at home, while problems at home can affect concentration, problem-solving and resilience at the workplace.

Is she depressed?

Florence certainly sounds like she could be depressed; and, perhaps due to low self-esteem or anxiety about her worth and capabilities, her efforts to connect are probably not effective at this time. If Florence can be helped to break the cycle of negative thoughts and feelings and ineffective coping behaviours,



she can slowly begin to take charge of her life and her wellbeing and begin a positive cycle of experiences.

What should she do?

There are many things Florence could try. Different things work for different people. She could start by consulting a **psychologist**, who will help her articulate her problems, change negative thinking habits and enhance positive feelings and behaviours.

Physical **exercise** is an important way to relieve stress, enhance positive mood and regulate sleep. If Florence doesn't feel like doing any exercise, she could motivate and reward herself for short workouts – perhaps at the condo pool or gym, or in a fitness group. She could even just switch on music and dance!

Social interactions are as important to our wellbeing as nutrition and exercise. Late-night Skypeing is messing up her sleep cycle, and is less rewarding than actual social interaction.

I'd suggest she explore an **interest or hobby** through a class or activity group. This brings many benefits, from the pleasure and pride in learning something new to the fulfilment of meeting likeminded people. In fact,

Florence should consider taking up English classes: language classes are often fun and bring together people from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Keeping a **journal** of her thoughts and feelings would help pinpoint negative thoughts with a view to challenging and changing them. What's more, writing can be therapeutic in itself, allowing us to articulate our experiences just like talking to a friend would. Also, this material can be extremely useful for therapy sessions.

Could medication help Florence?

If her depressed mood and poor sleep patterns continue, she could talk to her general practitioner or a psychiatrist, who might prescribe medication. Medicines do not teach new behaviours or skills, but they can be useful to provide quick relief, boost energy and mood to enable her to do the necessary psychological work. Furthermore, her doctor would be able to check for hormonal imbalances or nutritional deficiencies that may be contributing to her low mood and irregular emotions.

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2 THE COUPLE - MALCOLM (38) AND SUSIE (36), ZIMBABWEAN

THE SCENARIO:

Brought here by his job in the tobacco industry, Zimbabweans Malcolm and Susie are into their third year in Singapore. All was fine until Susie found herself pregnant with a third and unplanned baby, right around the time Malcolm was given more regional responsibility. Susie is now struggling with a croupy infant and postpartum depression, and feeling inadequate because her helper seems better at calming her baby. Malcolm spends more than half the month travelling for work, and when he's home, she finds him distant, pre-occupied and unloving. She's terrified that he's having an affair. He, on the other hand, feels overwhelmed by responsibilities and expenses.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST:

To HO SHEE WAI, registered psychologist and the director of The Counselling Place, this is a familiar scenario: the expat couple with a newborn baby, without the support of the extended family.

THE QUESTIONS:

Why can't Susie cope? After all, this is her third baby.

No, but it's her first experience of mothering a baby in a foreign country without the normal support networks. Like many expat wives, she feels uncomfortable about her helper taking on a parenting role, although she might happily have accepted the same sort of help from family and friends.

From the baby's perspective, the helper is family, just another adult person who cares for them. What's more, the helper may genuinely love and care for the baby and have excellent childcare skills. It would be far better for Susie to accept and utilise this precious resource, one of the few that she and her family have here.

What's going wrong with Malcolm and Susie's relationship?

Many expat breadwinners take on a regional role when they come to Singapore, putting a strain on the family and leaving the stay-at-home partner – usually but not always the mother – to fulfil a dual parenting role while they are away.

Some at-homers try to cope by running the household with a system that doesn't include the





travelling spouse. As a result, the spouse at home might resent the disruption caused when the traveller comes home; he, then, feels left out and isolated, as if his only function was to be a bank.

Add to this the additional stress of a newborn baby – difficult enough with two fully co-parenting parents! – and there's every potential for disaster.

This couple are clearly having issues with intimacy and trust. Many couples fall into the roles of mum and dad, forgetting that they are a couple first. Some women struggle with self-esteem and body image issues after giving birth, and this is further exacerbated when their husband seems not to be attracted to them and the couple are not having sex.

They're both struggling with exhaustion and lack of sleep. There also seem to be not enough time in the day for everything they need to do. Malcolm misses Susie's attention and feels he's being blamed for his lack of support. Family life is no longer pleasant and enjoyable; he doesn't look forward to coming home.

Though they feel stressed by finances and responsibilities, men like Malcolm are unwilling to ask for help; instead, they may blame their wives. Often, the outside world seems to offer a lot more fun, excitement and women who appreciate them. If the tendency for infidelity is there, this could be a trigger point.

What sort of counselling is needed here?

For Susie, we would recommend individual counselling for her postnatal depression. We also need to build up her self-esteem, not only as a mother but in her own right. We would support her in being a more effective parent.

Malcolm needs individual counselling for stress and achieving a better work-life balance, and possibly also for depression, which is common for the partner of a mother suffering from that condition. We help him to understand postnatal depression as an illness, and the support he needs to be giving.

We'd also recommend couple counselling for any issues of infidelity, intimacy, co-parenting and communication.

BABY BLUES

- Around 10 to 20 percent of new mothers experience postpartum depression, but as many as 80 percent suffer from "baby blues".
- The blues are caused by hormonal upheaval related to pregnancy and birth.
- Options for treating postpartum depression include medication prescribed by a psychiatrist, counselling from a professional psychologist or therapist, and hormone therapy from a doctor or specialist.
- Sleep is key, says Dr Ho. Her first step in treating postnatal depression is to send her client for a 24-hour sleep break away from the baby and the family, and then to set up a structure for sleeping and night-feeding.

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3 THE RELOCATED TEENAGER - JAKE (13), NEW ZEALANDER

THE SCENARIO:

Jake came to Singapore with his parents and his younger sister six months ago. He didn't want to come, and he doesn't like it here. He used to be the best runner and the best rugby player in his rural primary school; he was popular, top of his class and he even had a girlfriend. From being a big fish in a tiny Kiwi pond,

Jake is now one of the youngest and smallest pupils at one of Singapore's biggest international schools. He misses his friends, his old school and the dog he had to leave behind. Once confident and outgoing, he now shows little interest in schoolwork, making friends or going on family outings. Instead, he spends hours playing video games on Xbox.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST:

Clinical psychologist GISELA GUTTMAN and registered psychologist KAROLINA ISBERG of Alliance Professional Counselling feel that Jake would benefit from counselling. Often, in their experience, teenagers feel more comfortable talking to someone neutral rather than to their own parents.

THE QUESTIONS:

What could Jake's parents be doing to help him?

It's important for the family to do things together and to talk about the new situation – both looking for familiar places and activities and discovering the new city together. Instead of avoiding difficult topics, they should talk about what they all miss about New Zealand and be open about how difficult a relocation process can be for everyone.

Why are teenagers sometimes more likely to open up to a third party?

Some don't want to add more burden and stress to their parents' own adaptation difficulties. Others feel so angry with their parent that they need an external outlet. If Jake and his parents agree on counselling, however, it's important that they choose a counsellor that he feels comfortable and safe with.

Are some children less suited to the challenges associated with relocating? What can parents do in advance and during the process to ease the transition?

We are all different when it comes to relocation. But shy children, children with learning disabilities and children

from non-English speaking backgrounds tend to have a stronger reaction to the change. That said, outgoing children such as Jake can struggle with it, too.

Though adults of course make the big decisions, it's a good idea to keep the children feeling involved and to allow them to show any anger, nervousness and insecurity as well as happiness and excitement. Give them the opportunity to say goodbye to friends and relatives before they go. And as soon as possible, try to establish a daily structure that feels familiar and where home feels like a safe place despite the changes.

Should Jake's parents consider moving him to a smaller school?

After a small local school, a big international one can be daunting. But before considering another school move, his parents should find out from Jake himself what his specific worries are and what he would like to change. Then, for example, they could talk to the school about possible solutions, perhaps extra tuition in a particular subject: this is often necessary when changing from one education system to another. A teacher he has formed a good relationship with might be helpful here.

On the positive side, the transitional difficulties associated with relocation should be seen as an opportunity for personal growth, and the process of adjusting to a new environment, difficult as it may be, encourages the development of flexibility and resilience.



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THE TRAILING SPOUSE - HILDE (28)

THE SCENARIO:

Hilde was an optician in Norway, and moved to Singapore six months ago for her husband's career in banking. Her professional qualifications are not accepted here. Deprived of her own career, she feels completely lost as to what to do next.

THE COUNSELLOR:

Transformative and transcendental coach NANCY HO, who is also a clinical hypnotherapist, offers an all-encompassing physical, mental, emotional and spiritual approach.

What options are open to Hilde?

Many options are swirling around her head. Should she redo her medical degree? (That would take years!) Should she retrain for a different career? (What would *that* be?) Should she write a novel? (She's always wanted to...) Should she join a club and perfect her tennis? (That wouldn't help pay the rent, though.) Should she start a family? The options are endless, but it's up to Hilde to decide her own path.

Do you think hypnotherapy might help?

For someone who feels confused or stuck and unable to move on, hypnosis might help to uncover or recover any rooted subconscious events that may be causing their present inertia or confusion. It can also help to identify any self-limiting beliefs, which can then be addressed accordingly. The most important issue here is to help you to feel good about yourself and have positive thoughts that enable you to move on, regardless of the choice you make.

Would life-coaching be a useful approach for someone in Hilde's position?

I have spent 25 years using and teaching a system that produces an immediate rise in the confidence, clarity and effectiveness of people just like Hilde. I have no doubt that coaching would help her to clear her thinking and decide on a path forward. Importantly, it would teach her how to rise above obsessive thinking patterns and to stay in the "now". Feelings of helplessness, uncertainty and stress do not come from outside factors: they generally come from our unconsciously obsessive thinking, and awakening to this truth empowers us to live our lives to the full.

ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY

MAUREEN HUANG, who has a master's degree in social work from the University of Denver, is the founder and executive director of **Pawsibility**, an animal-assisted counselling and socio-emotional development programme.

Tell us about your “co-therapist”, Telly.
Telly is a three-year-old Labrador retriever mix.

What are the benefits of Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT)?

Having a friendly therapy dog in the counselling room motivates youngsters to come for sessions and to open up and talk. The presence of the therapy dog has been shown to calm people down: it brings down heart rate, blood pressure and the stress hormone cortisol, while raising levels of the hormone oxytocin, which is associated with positive social interaction. I have found that in interacting and working with dogs, children learn to be kind, patient, compassionate and empathetic.

How does an AAT session play out?

I often combine AAT with traditional evidence-based intervention techniques such as cognitive behavioural therapy or solution-focused therapy. While I am facilitating a conversation with the child, Telly engages them and provides them with silent support and unconditional love. Often, they will be patting Telly or tossing a ball for her to fetch while they tell her how they are feeling. Sometimes, we play games or do activities that teach the child or teen social-emotional skills.

What kinds of psychological issues can be addressed in this way?

We have had good success in addressing all sorts of issues, from anger management, anxiety and stress, abuse and trauma, behavioural issues and bullying to dealing with disabilities or special needs such as autism spectrum disorder, ADHD and so on. It can also be of help in cases of depression, grief, loss and parental divorce; and with issues of self-esteem, relationships and social or school problems.


Can you give us an example?

I worked with a 14-year-old girl from the UK, who struggled with anger management issues. Her short temper affected the way she interacted with her peers. She absolutely loved Telly, however, and treated her kindly. I got her to do some



positive reinforcement dog training with Telly, which models how to treat others with kindness and respect. Dog training can be a real test of patience, and it was a great opportunity for her to work on managing frustrations, building patience and developing empathy. In time, she was able to apply those newfound skills to her interactions with her peers in everyday life.

We have also worked with quite a number of expat children and teens who found the move to Singapore difficult. As you'd expect, those who could not bring their dogs with them seem particularly drawn to Telly. They find they're able to identify with Telly, who had to leave Colorado to come with me to Singapore 18 months ago. Her story resonates with them and they feel that she understands what they are going through. When I ask them to come up with ways that Telly can make friends here, it helps them to figure out how they can do the same for themselves. The kids think, "If Telly can do it, so can I."

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Our Location

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Our Doctors



Dr Lim Kar Seng

MBBS (Singapore), MRCP (UK),
FAMS (Dermatology)

A consultant dermatologist with The Dermatology Practice, Dr Lim Kar Seng has more than 14 years of medical experience both locally and internationally including centres such as St Vincent's Hospital and The Skin and Cancer Foundation Australia. His subspecialties are in skin cancers, phototherapy and psoriasis.



Dr Lynn Teo

MBBS (London), MRCP (UK),
FAMS (Dermatology)

Dr Lynn Teo is a consultant dermatologist at The Dermatology Practice with more than 14 years of medical experience, having trained and worked in London and Singapore. Her clinical interests are in hair loss and scalp disorders, and in immune system conditions affecting the skin. She has trained in hair transplant procedures and dermatosurgery at Mount Sinai Medical Centre, New York.

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MAN, OH MAN!

We all know that men suffer far, far more from everyday aches and pains – man-flu is one particularly vicious example – and to make things worse, they're less than half as likely as women are to seek medical help when things go wrong. VERNE MAREE speaks to several health professionals and learns a whole lot she didn't know about men's health.

#1 GRUMP ALERT

Given their general reluctance to admit weakness by going to the doctor, plus how embarrassing it can be to talk about such things, it's little wonder that when low levels of testosterone cause depression, a lack of energy, a flagging sex drive and erectile dysfunction, the men afflicted do nothing about it. Possibly, they resign themselves to growing progressively plumper and grumpier as the years go by.

But wives and partners didn't sign up to spend the rest of their lives with Mr Grumpy, did they? (I know I didn't.) There's every chance of damage or even disaster to key relationships. What's more, testosterone drives muscle metabolism and helps prevent insulin resistance, and low levels are associated with heart disease and prostate cancer. More about that later.

Fortunately, together with a growing understanding of the health benefits of an active lifestyle together with a

sound diet, there are plenty of medical treatment options available from a variety of doctors and specialists.

So don't let matters go too far; it's in everyone's best interest for the man concerned to get tested, to get treated and to get well again, says endocrinologist DR BEN NG of Arden Endocrinology Specialist Clinic. His services, by the way, include the assessment of testosterone status, including andropause; the treatment of low testosterone; and the management and treatment of problems related to low testosterone, such as erectile dysfunction, osteoporosis, diabetes and obesity.

Interestingly, it's very often their wives who drive men to come in for assessment. While men usually don't realise the extent of their problem, their partners often do, he says. "They'll say: 'Over the past five years, my husband has been losing interest in sex; he doesn't want to do anything – and he's putting on weight.'

"One of the problems with andropause is that it's generally a gradual decline that you can sort of get used to, slowly slipping into a state of weakness, fatigue and obesity. It's very different from a woman's menopause experience, where hot flushes, sleeplessness and other unpleasant symptoms tend to come on suddenly."

When you start these men on testosterone replacement in the right way, he goes on, it's a life-restoring treatment that makes both them and their wives so happy.

"On the other hand, though, we do need to counsel the wife as to what to expect. Not only will she see a change in her husband's libido, but as his youthful aggression comes back, he may not be as docile as he has recently been." The effect of this on a relationship can even break up a marriage, he adds. (Be careful what you wish for, as the adage goes.)



The Right Test

The only test that's required is a simple blood test done in the morning on an empty stomach. But Dr Ben Ng stresses the importance of testing the level of what's called "free" (or bio-available) testosterone; "total" testosterone is a poor indicator of actual levels.

One example is an Indonesian patient of his who recently came in for testing. Though previous tests (done elsewhere) had showed a normal level, both the patient and his wife believed his testosterone was low: over the past year, he'd lost muscle bulk, gained midsection weight, suffered from hot flashes and even developed diabetes, despite his exercise regimen.

"Our questionnaire already showed him to be at high risk: he drank rather a lot, which made his liver a bit inflamed, resulting in the excretion of huge amounts of protein that attached to his testosterone, making much of it unavailable. So – although his total testosterone tested normal, his free testosterone was very low indeed."

After a shot of testosterone, says Dr Ng, the patient did extremely well: his blood sugars soon came down, the fat came off, the muscle built up and his wife was delighted.

The Right Stuff

DR FOO JOO PIN is another endocrinologist who sees a lot of male patients, many of them expats, for various hormonal and endocrine conditions, including testosterone deficiency and replacement therapy, osteoporosis (yes, it's common in men, too), obesity, metabolic syndrome and more.

"With some, it's clear-cut: they complain of fatigue, inability to concentrate, erectile dysfunction, fatigue, grumpiness and feeling generally lousy. This group is usually very worried about their loss of libido – worried that they've lost interest, and maybe about performance issues." Another category of men don't initially complain of these symptoms, he says; they come to him with diabetes and obesity, and on further probing, they admit to the other problems.

Testosterone, says Dr Foo, is the hallmark of being a man. It gives you a healthy libido and plenty of energy, ensures emotional health and good mood and guards against metabolic syndrome – powerful stuff!

Believing that almost all endocrine conditions can be treated and managed with good results, he is quick to stress the importance of a considered and holistic approach that includes proper monitoring by a skilled professional. He warns that neither testosterone nor any other hormone should be administered lightly or indiscriminately; and that to do so can lead to a host of adverse effects.

It needs to be administered not only carefully, but only for the right reasons. To illustrate his point, Dr Foo tells me about a 30-year-old Australian bodybuilder who'd been injecting himself with testosterone for many years.

"All this exogenous testosterone had caused my patient's body to suppress its own production of the hormone," he explains, "so he'd become very dependent on the stuff and was feeling very unwell." What was Dr Foo's treatment? "After I'd gradually weaned him off the injections, I reassessed his needs and we took it from there." That's all he'll reveal; every doctor needs to retain at least a little mystery!

Apart from cases of abuse such as this one, how common, I wonder, is low testosterone in younger men? Dr Foo acknowledges that he does see it in twenty- and thirty-something men, but only rarely. Usually, it's due to an operation or injury to the testes; or it's a problem with the pituitary gland, where testosterone is produced.

Dr Ben Ng agrees that there's a lack of data on the prevalence of low testosterone in younger, non-andropausal men. Nevertheless, he personally believes that it's higher than generally thought. "Some studies show rates of 30 to 34 percent in men over 45, which is very high; but as this is not something we generally screen for, it's hard to know for sure."

As you'd expect, testosterone is affected by stress and exercise levels; obese and unfit individuals tend to have



lower levels. "When the body is under stress," he explains, "the reproduction of the species is low on its list of priorities."

Testosterone Treatment

Dr Foo describes a number of options for improving testosterone levels. First of all, though, for a patient who is obese or diabetic, these conditions need to be treated with the necessary medications, together with lifestyle and dietary changes.

Replacement testosterone comes in the form of an oral tablet, gels or injections. Gels are preferred to tablets, but the injection at three- or four-weekly intervals seems the most popular choice.

Before deciding on a treatment plan, it's necessary to make a detailed assessment of the person's needs, wants and so on. Though testosterone replacement has been shown to have some health benefits, they're not all well established; so the main purpose is to improve quality of life, says Dr Ben Ng.

"Giving you more when you already have enough can be dangerous," he stresses. "The challenge is to know at what level to intervene. For an older man, the idea would not necessarily be to restore the levels he had in his youth; but we could bring them up to the level that's appropriate for his age group, in order to promote his health, strength and happiness."

#2 MAKING A STAND

According to urologist DR SIMON CHONG, erectile dysfunction (ED) can refer to various problems with erection, such as having an erection that is not hard enough, losing an erection before orgasm, and having no erection at all. It can affect all age groups, from young healthy teenagers to elderly men. What's more, ED is not just about sex, he says, and is often a reflection of one's underlying health.

He acknowledges that only a small percentage of sufferers seek help. Two main reasons are, firstly, that some men are embarrassed to talk about something so intimate; and secondly, that they and their spouses accept the condition as part of normal ageing and feel that treatment is unnecessary.

Is this the best attitude to take? It may not be. Even for an older man, ED can be a red flag for conditions such as diabetes and coronary arterial disease. That's because the penile artery is half the size of the coronary artery and a quarter of the size of the internal carotid artery (the one in the neck supplying blood to the brain); so any disease that causes narrowing of the heart and neck blood vessels, can similarly cause narrowing of the penile blood vessels. But, being smaller, narrowing of the penile artery can manifest as ED from two to five years before a heart attack or a stroke, thus serving as a harbinger or warning of what may be ahead.

Culprits

The causes can be broadly placed into two groups, says Dr Chong. The first is medical causes, which can be related to poor blood supply, pelvic nerves that aren't working properly, low levels of testosterone hormone, and so on. The second is psychological factors, such as depression, anxiety, insomnia, work stress and relationship problems. These often overlap.

As one might expect, ED in younger men is more often due to problems affecting their mind and their moods. In older men, it's more likely to be due to underlying health issues like high cholesterol or diabetes. "Of course, the worry with not getting a good erection can cause mental stress," he adds, "which can dampen a man's confidence in bed."

In his experience, there's little difference between nationalities, and mental stress is a common underlying issue. "Busy couples can find it difficult to set aside enough time for slow, stress-free intercourse that is enjoyable for both of them."

Another important cause of ED is having a low testosterone level, and that can affect a man's libido, leading to difficulty with arousal and disinterest in sex. "Besides ageing, other factors such as stress, an unhealthy diet, a lack of exercise, and excess body fat, can all contribute to low levels of testosterone and diminished sex drive."



Pills, Gels, Jabs... and More

Phosphodiesterase (PDE5) inhibitors, such as **Viagra, Levitra and Cialis**, are oral pills that all work in a similar manner, explains Dr Chong. They increase the levels of certain neuro-chemicals that will lead to dilatation of the penile blood vessels, thus bringing more blood into the penis, resulting in a fuller, harder erection.

These pills are usually taken on demand, about an hour before sex. Viagra and Levitra may not work well if taken with food. One common issue with taking these pills on demand is the need to wait for the effect to kick in, by which time the mood for intimacy may have passed, leaving the couple feeling frustrated. Cialis also has a lower dosage form that the man takes daily. This results in a constant level of the drug within his system, and when the mood is there and with sexual arousal, it will take effect immediately.

Not all men respond well to the pills, however. For these men, the next option is a penile injection of a drug which works by a different pathway from one used by PDE5 inhibitors. Though this may sound frightening, it is usually not painful and it can work better than the pills.

The last resort, which Dr Chong says is guaranteed to work, is undergoing **penile implant** surgery. A silicone prosthesis is surgically inserted into the penis, under the skin so that it is not visible externally. It comes in two forms – malleable and inflatable. The **malleable** prosthesis can be bent and tucked within the underwear to hide it, and then straightened for intercourse. The **inflatable** prosthesis comes with a pump hidden within the scrotum, which is used to inflate and deflate the prosthesis inside the penis.

"As the prosthesis is a physical structure, having a good and hard erection is always possible, for however long the man requires it. What's more, it does not affect urination nor reduce the sensation and pleasure of sex. The man can experience orgasm and can ejaculate just as he did before," says Dr Chong.

Finally, though it sounds a bit, well, shocking, there's something new to treat ED: **shock wave therapy**. Using a machine that delivers low energy shock waves to the penile organ, it works by promoting the growth of blood vessels and smooth muscles, as well as by stimulating production of the neuro-chemicals needed for erection. The treatment is painless and is done in the privacy of the doctor's consultation room.

Each session takes about 15 to 20 minutes, and usually 12 sessions are recommended. To date, no complications have been reported, and improvement can be expected within two to three months.

#3 NEVER IN VEIN

Vascular surgeon DR CHENG SHIN CHUEN explains that his discipline overlaps with that of the urologist, as a significant number of urology patients have blockages in the arteries that feed the penis.

Causes of such vascular disease include the usual suspects, he tells me: smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. They affect the arteries of the entire body system – arteries of the brain (located in the neck), of the heart, of the gut, the kidneys, the male reproductive organs and the legs.

“So, as vascular surgeons, we often see people who have difficulty walking because of blockages to the arteries of the legs – and if you probe further, you’ll often find problems with erectile dysfunction, too.”

Good news for us all is that technological advances now mean that minimally invasive methods can be used to treat arterial blockages. “Those big ops that require long hospital stays are no longer necessarily; usually, you’ll just stay overnight for observation,” says Dr Cheng.

In my interview with urologist Dr Simon Chong, he mentioned a group of patients for whom medications for ED don’t work; Dr Cheng explains that in these cases, the arteries of the penis are blocked. The solution? “I’ll balloon those blocked arteries to improve blood flow and thus solve the problem.”

It’s not quite as easy as it sounds, he says, as the artery that supplies the penis – a branch of the internal iliac artery – is located rather deep. Luckily, vascular surgeons like himself have the necessary skills from years of treating blocked leg arteries, and the same principle is at work here. “It’s just a subset of leg artery ballooning, and we’ve had good results. The thing is, it addresses the cause of the problem and eliminates the need for ED medication.”

Pacific Health has a special facility for this sort of procedure, its Interventional Procedure Room on Level 12 of Paragon. For those who have no severe medical problems, the treatment can be done as an outpatient day surgery, making for convenience and saving on costs.

Venous leak – eek!

It’s obvious that for an erection to occur, you need blood to go into the penis and stay there for some time; venous leak occurs when the veins aren’t working so well and allow blood to leak back into the vascular system.

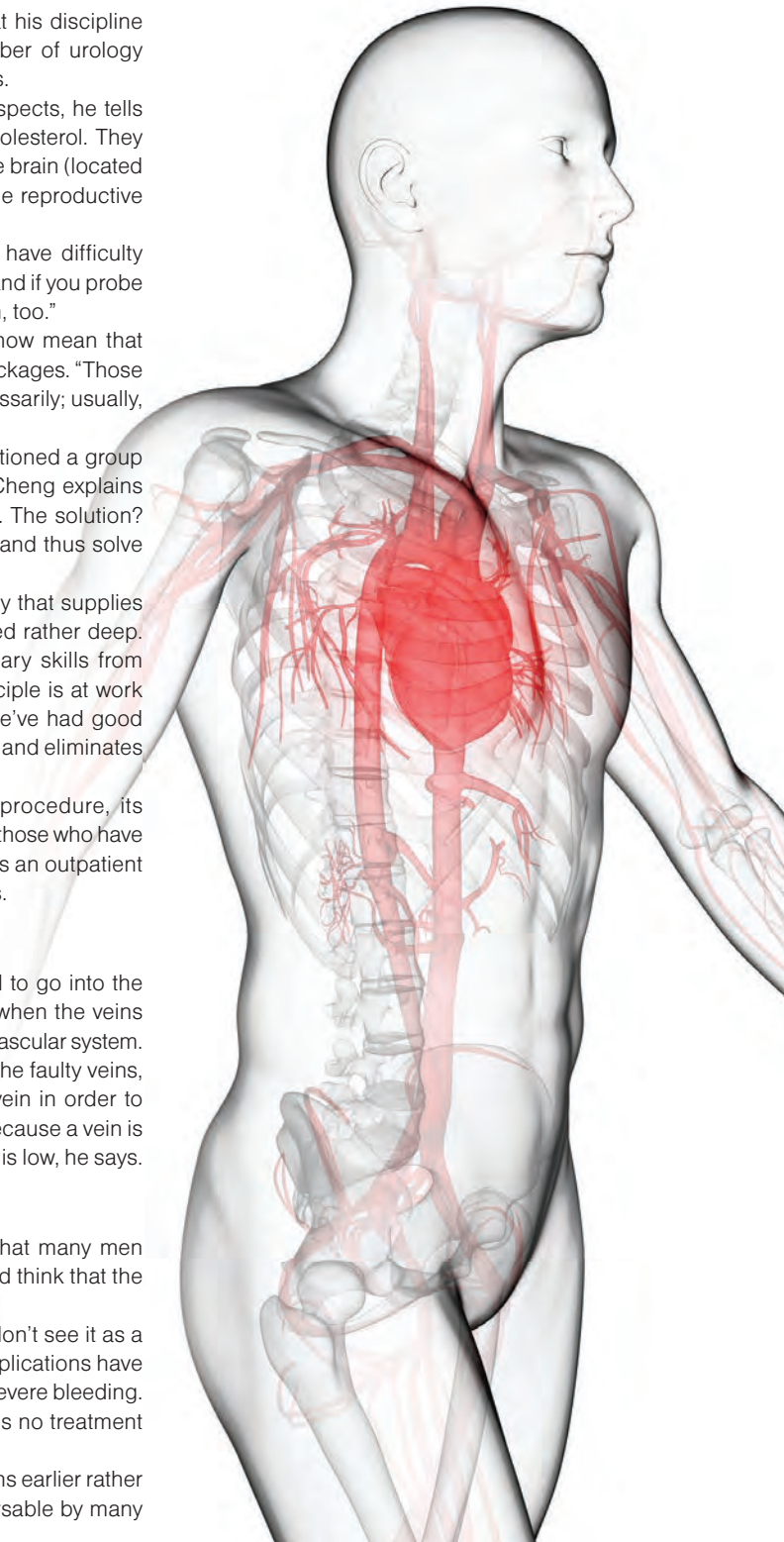
Dr Cheng explains how this is treated: After identifying the faulty veins, a catheter is used to insert metallic coils into the faulty vein in order to block it and slow down the flow of blood from the penis. Because a vein is not a high-pressure system like an artery, the bleeding risk is low, he says.

A leg to stand on

Back on the subject of leg arteries, Dr Cheng tells me that many men wrongly regard varicose veins as “a women’s disease”, and think that the treatment for them is mainly cosmetic.

“Men don’t seek help in time,” he says, “because they don’t see it as a medical issue. As a result, they come to me only after complications have arisen, like ulceration, infection, superficial vein clots and severe bleeding. Once the skin is permanently damaged in this way, there’s no treatment to reverse that damage.”

The message is clear: get treatment for your varicose veins earlier rather than later. It is a medical issue, and that’s why it’s reimbursable by many insurance companies.



MALE INFERTILITY

As long as the working apparatus is in order, most men assume themselves capable of fathering a child – and that’s a fair assumption, says obstetrician and gynaecologist DR CHRISTOPHER NG, whose fertility clinic offers help for the 15 percent of couples who experience problems in this area. In half of these couples, male infertility can be a contributing factor.

Apart from the well-known culprits alcohol, tobacco smoking and obesity, here are some other possible causes – an unlucky 13 of them:

- **Varicocele**, a swelling of the veins that drain the testicle that may prevent normal cooling of the testicle, leading to reduced sperm count and fewer moving sperm
- **Infections** such as gonorrhoea or mumps that can interfere with sperm production or sperm health, or cause scarring that blocks the passage of sperm
- **Retrograde ejaculation**, where semen enters the bladder during orgasm instead of emerging out of the tip of the penis
- **Anti-sperm antibodies** that mistakenly identify sperm as harmful invaders and attack them
- **Cancers and non-malignant tumours** that can affect the male reproductive organs or the glands that release hormones related to reproduction
- **Undescended testicles** that make decreased fertility more likely
- **Hormone imbalances**, such as low testosterone, resulting from disorders of the testicles or an abnormality affecting the hypothalamus, pituitary, thyroid and adrenal glands
- **Sperm duct defects**
- **Chromosome defects** (Klinefelter’s syndrome) causing abnormal development of the male reproductive organs
- **Sexual intercourse problems** resulting from erectile dysfunction or premature ejaculation



- **Medications** like testosterone replacement therapy, long-term anabolic steroid use and chemotherapy; they can impair sperm production
- **Previous surgeries** such as vasectomy, inguinal hernia repair, scrotal or testicular surgery and prostate surgery
- **Environmental factors**, such as overexposure to heat, heavy metals, toxins, radiation, x-rays and chemicals, which can reduce sperm production or sperm function.

To determine the cause in a particular case, scrotal ultrasound scanning, hormonal tests and chromosomal analysis are used. **Semen analysis** measures the number of sperm present and looks for any abnormalities in their shape and movement, also screening for sperm infections.

Treatment

Surgery can correct a varicocele or repair an obstructed vas deferens, explains Dr Ng, and vasectomy can be reversed. In cases where no sperm are present in the ejaculate, sperm can be retrieved directly from the testicles or epididymis using sperm retrieval techniques as part of the IVF procedure. Sperm infections should be treated with **antibiotics**. **Medication** and **counselling** can improve erectile dysfunction or premature ejaculation, as can **hormone replacement therapy**, while **multivitamins** (A, C and E), **zinc** and **L-carnitine** can improve sperm quality and motility respectively. In the end, the couple may require **assisted reproductive technology** treatment; various forms of this are available.

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#4 ON THE JOB

Part of the medical team at International Medical Clinic (IMC), British GP DR MICHAEL RODGER sees a lot of stressed expatriate men who work in demanding roles.

It's not just a matter of writing prescriptions for anti-depressants, blood pressure control medications, antacids or sleeping tablets, he believes. A good GP has a wider approach that encompasses the whole person, so an important part of his role is to listen to his patients' health-related issues and to offer appropriate advice and support.

A man who is simultaneously wound up and at the end of his tether may possibly not be in the best frame of mind to talk health problems through with his wife or partner. Sometimes, a neutral party like your doctor or a professional counsellor is a better bet. They won't be just as stressed as you, and you're more likely to take advice from someone who has other agendas than your medical health.

Though by no means always, in the majority of expat families it's the man who is the breadwinner, sometimes the sole breadwinner, and that role brings its own special pressures to bear.

What's more, he may be in a new country, and in a new job with new responsibilities. They say that all change is inherently stressful (with the possible exception of jetting off on a Maldives holiday), and our man probably had to adjust to different working conditions, different management style and reporting systems. Working hours may be longer than he's been used to, leaving little time for family and leisure; and he may be doing more business travel, with all its attendant woes.

Along with Singapore no longer being seen as a hardship posting, reimbursement packages are lower and conditions are seldom the sinecure they might once have been. "I see men who are facing job insecurity and financial worries," confirms Dr Rodger, "and it's no wonder they have difficulty in maintaining a good work-life balance.

"What's more, the executive is usually not alone; he comes with a family that includes his wife and possibly children, each of whom has his or her needs, wants and problems. So, when he gets home from a frustrating day at the office or jet-lagged after a horrible transatlantic flight, he has to deal with each of their expectations, too. It can all become too much."

Though some families find moving to a different country easier after the first time, multiple relocations – especially if they happen every year or two – can be terribly hard on them, threatening the stability of relationships. "That is a fact that needs to be properly taken account of and acknowledged," he tells me.

What Goes Wrong

Apart from stress-related disorders – headaches, depression, high blood pressure, gastro-intestinal problems, poor sleep patterns and more – Dr Rodger sees a lot of men with respiratory infections that can linger for weeks or even months.

Musculoskeletal aches and pains are another common complaint, especially back pain related to poor posture. Doing less sitting behind your computer is easier said than done; so is avoiding aeroplane seats when your job demands frequent long-haul flights.

Pre-emptive Tactics

Screening for the so-called dread diseases is an important part of preventive medicine in general and IMC's Executive Health Programme in particular.

"Cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar checks to pick up cardiac risk factors should be carried out annually from the age of 40," Dr Rodger advises.

Unfortunately, the screening tests for most cancers are controversial, as he confirms. "Only screening for colon cancer by colonoscopy is truly effective. We advise everyone aged 50 and above to undergo it, or as early as the age of 40 if one of your family relatives has been affected by the disease."



When it comes to preventing disease in the first place, lifestyle factors such as exercise are tremendously important. "All exercise is good," says Dr Rodger. "I tell my patients that even brisk walking three times per week is far better than nothing." Finally, he adds, never underestimate the benefits of getting eight hours' sleep. "Studies show that a good night's rest even reduces the long-term risk of conditions such as diabetes." Hear, hear!

Dr Ben Ng

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Dr Ben Ng Jen Min is an **Endocrinologist and Specialist in Internal Medicine** with an interest in Diabetes Mellitus, Thyroid and Parathyroid disease and Osteoporosis. He trained in the United Kingdom and has worked for 16 years in the National Health Service in the UK and since 2011 in Singapore. He is an accredited specialist in both countries.

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Entertainment

- eventshub.sg — Information on cultural and entertainment events
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GEMINI

May 21 – June 20

Sometimes confusion is no more than that. But each of the unsettling issues and dilemmas you face during May and June's first half will, ultimately, prove informative. Being patient won't be easy. If you can't avoid decisions, at least ensure they're flexible. Then, when pivotal events in mid-June clarify issues, enabling you to rethink plans, you'll be free to make dramatic changes. Just as important are your shifting priorities, especially regarding finances; here, too, carefully assess your requirements, then stand your ground.



CANCER

June 21 – July 22

While you may already have acknowledged unsettling changes are inevitable, obviously you'd like to be sure what's next. However, the picture won't be clear until late June, and even then, your own priorities remain unsettled until mid-July's Cancer New Moon. Knowing that, focus on decluttering your life. Also, continue exploring your existing options and, even more, the unexpected ideas and offers that make life more exciting than for ages. Taking things in stages requires courage and patience, but the results justify it.



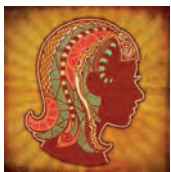
LEO

July 23 – August 22

You can't plan for the unexpected. Instead, ensure both existing arrangements and your perspective are flexible enough to take advantage of June's remarkable events. During its first half, focus on what must go. Often this requires faith. However daunting initially, your courage pays off when, on the 22nd, Jupiter, in Leo, forms a superb alliance with unpredictable Uranus, the climax of a cycle of powerful change that began in mid-2014. Be bold. You'll only regret what you didn't do, not what you did.

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JUNE



VIRGO

August 23 – September 22

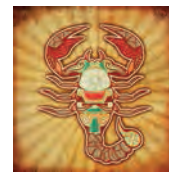
Once you understand that you'll be short of reliable information, and even seemingly simple arrangements are unlikely to last long, you'll stop worrying and allow events to unfold as they must. This is challenging for every sign but especially so for you, as a Virgo and somebody who prefers to be well informed. By midmonth you realise what seem solid facts one day, change the next. This gives you the freedom to take chances, on both plans and people, in ways you'd usually avoid.



LIBRA

September 23 – October 22

No matter how carefully you plan, you can't help but think about unrealistic yet still thrilling dreams. This may involve your personal life, relationships or long-cherished goals. However, judging by June's rare and amazing planetary setup, even what's seemed beyond reach is now possible. True, the form may be different from that you'd imagined. Still, proceed, since things could work better than you'd conceived possible. Waste no time on analysis. Plunge in, however risky things seem. Opportunities this wonderful appear only rarely.



SCORPIO

October 23 – November 21

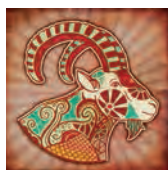
You've reached an exciting turning point, although unexpected and perhaps challenging events may make you wonder what's next. In mid-June, practical Saturn makes a brief return to your sign. The resulting events and insights clarify what, and who, must go. True, sometimes there's no immediate replacement, often because circumstances around you must change first. In the meanwhile, declutter your life, possessions and even your passions. Let these go now, and as you meet the future, your past will no longer slow your progress.



SAGITTARIUS

November 22 – December 21

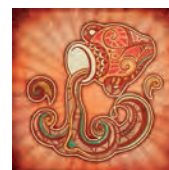
Since last September you've benefitted from the rare alliance between your ruler Jupiter and Uranus, planet of the unexpected. While you've already experienced some of the surprising, if not amazing, events this cycle, it climaxes with the ideas and offers that arise around the 22nd, the last in this series of links. These could be beyond anything you anticipated, if not thought possible. If others raise concerns, thank them but proceed. Events this amazing appear rarely. Take action now, ask any questions later.



CAPRICORN

December 22 – January 19

During June and early July you'll be venturing into unfamiliar alliances and settings. While any concerns are unjustified, as a Capricorn and somebody who prefers to maintain control over your life, these frequent and often unsettling changes could make you wonder if you've lost control. Rather, these are breakthroughs, taking you into new and ultimately rewarding territory. Regard anxieties, especially around the emotionally intense Capricorn Full Moon, in early July, as an indication of progress and, instead of worrying, you'll celebrate them.



AQUARIUS

January 20 – February 17

Often what's best in life isn't initially recognisable for what it is. The rare link between fortunate Jupiter and your ruler Uranus, on the 22nd, indicates a series of thrilling developments, so explore everything, including what seems unwise or unrealistic. With both circumstances and your own world changing rapidly, what seems best is bound to shift dramatically, and often. Equally, let go of even familiar elements of the past. Regard this as an adventure and you'll enjoy every day of it.

HOROSCOPES

By Shelley
Von Strunckel



PISCES

February 18 – March 19

Events may be unsettling but they're only breaking up restrictive arrangements, or so your sharp instincts tell you. However, not everybody will have sensed that, which means you'll need to reassure others, at least until the promised breakthroughs arise in mid-June. Meanwhile, devote your time to undoing increasingly unproductive alliances. This may seem cold and uncaring, but it's time for everybody involved to move on, including you. Better yet, this frees you to pursue once distant dreams. They could now become reality.



ARIES

March 20 – April 19

Annoying as endless discussions are, you learn something valuable from each. While you can't avoid making plans, ensure they're flexible enough that you can rethink them, probably frequently. These delays encourage you to eliminate priorities you once thought essential. Thus by the 24th, when your ruler Mars moves to accent the structure of your life, you're ready to commit to far-reaching, and often unexpectedly dramatic, exchanges. This leads to short-term chaos but also allows you to leave burdensome elements of the past behind.



TAURUS

April 20 – May 20

Some changes are no more than a nuisance. But those you're facing now are breaking up restrictive arrangements. Initially this seems worrying. But you soon realise they're forcing you to examine once-cherished goals. At the same time, sudden changes in circumstances around you lead to rethinking those previously fixed priorities. The more flexible you are, the better advantage you'll be able to take of those changes. Trust your instincts, since with some you'll be making decisions while still short of facts.

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Fighting Fit

By Daniela Morena

Bam! Bam! Bam!
All hell is breaking loose above my head. Darn it, it's him again! Must be 7.30am ... Open one bleary eye; yes, the alarm clock says "07:30". You could set your watch by him.

My lovely but fitness-mad neighbour is exercising – like every morning, punctually and inexorably. Thank goodness he does it at 8.30am on weekends. I am grateful for small mercies.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam!

One last set, then silence. Finally.

Fitness-mad neighbour (for ease of reference, from now on: FMN) is not a rare example in this fast-running city state. The famous *kiasu* (fear of losing) runs deep, if you'll excuse the pun; there are many who feel the need to be one step in front of the next person, whether it's getting on a bus or in a train, or at the brunch buffet queue.

But I digress. Running for fitness has become positively endemic. In the last 12 months at least 90 races have taken place! I kid you not.

Then there are the bare-chested runners, freely sharing their sweat when brushing past you (gentlemen, a word: this is *not* Copacabana Beach, OK?

Cover up please!), the bare-footed ones (on scorching pavements? Ouch!), the runners with a dog on a lead, with pram, or with both at the same time. Makes me tired only to think of it.

And it's not just running. For such a small island we have an inordinate number of fitness studios; there's fencing, kickboxing, martial arts from China, Japan and Malaysia, and dancing from all the continents. And yoga: hot, cold, hatha, kundalini, prana, acrobatic and with Pilates. And tai chi and qigong classes in every park, void-deck and rooftop, mostly at ungodly hours!

And yet, a local Minister was complaining recently that Singaporeans "are not exercising enough". I don't get it. I must introduce him to FMN.

Speaking of whom, he's unstoppable. There I am, at the bus stop, and FMN passes me at a trot, briefly slowing down to wave and flash me a maniacal grin. He is wearing one of two sets of white T-shirt and (daringly short!) flappy shorts, that he dons every day without fail. It is 12 noon and *hot!* But no matter: Mr No-pain-no-gain runs around the block ten times before lunch. And ten before dinner!

So, tonight I'm on the balcony, admiring the glittering landscape of this

beautiful city I call home and pondering: I *am* getting a wee rotund around the waist; perhaps I should look into this fitness thing, try to walk a little faster to the bus stop?

Drip. Splat! A drop lands on my head and another on my nose. Rain? No. I look up, and precariously hung on the railings above are a white T-shirt and a pair of flappy shorts. Dripping wet. So, one mystery is solved: that's how he manages to get by with only two sets per day. This, dear Minister, is *true* dedication to fitness!

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