



Thailand's royal retreat, the seaside town of Hua Hin, offers a multitude of golfing experiences. Find out the best courses in our Free N Easy section, while also deciding on the next carrier you will fly with in Traveller. Two breath-taking Malaysian beach resorts take centrestage in our line-up. It's up to the reader to choose The Taaras, Redang, over Avillion Port Dickson, but we recommend both. Often. Life seems to be a beach this issue, with our focus on Penang, with all its heritage, food and new boutique offerings. So dine, make merry and get away.

travel, golf & spa



Oman Air Launches New Tehran Service

Oman Air will launch a new daily service between Muscat and the Iranian capital Tehran from 1st September 2012. Flights will depart Muscat for Tehran at 0200hrs (3 days per week) and 0930hrs (4 days per week) and return from Tehran at 0610hrs (3 days per week) and 1240hrs (4 days per week) all times local, offering good connections to onward destinations within Oman Air's network. Tickets can be booked immediately through www.omanair.com.

The new Muscat-Tehran route will be operated using Oman Air's new Embraer 175 regional jets, which offer superb levels of comfort in both Business and Economy Classes. The airline took delivery of two of these much-acclaimed aircraft in 2011 and two more will enter service later this year. **ha**

Boeing Unveils VIP Cabin Fittings

The business-flying elite will soon be able to cruise the skies in even more comfort as one of the world's leading aircraft manufacturers unveils its latest VIP cabin fittings.

Boeing has taken delivery of the first Boeing Business jet (BBJ) fitted with the new Aeroloft. Boeing said of the nine Aeroloft-modified BBJ aircrafts that have been sold to date, all are for destined for undisclosed head-of-state customers.

Designed by Washington-based company Greenpoint Technologies, the Aeroloft provides an additional 36.5 meters of cabin space in a VIP-configured BBJ 787-8. The new cabin design sits above the main deck of the aircraft between the upper deck and tail. **ha**



Oman Air's new Embraer 175 regional jets offer superb levels of comfort in Economy.

Soul Food In The Sky

Japan Airlines (JAL) will be refreshing a part of its lineup of in-flight meals onboard most international routes from September 1, 2012 with new creations designed in collaboration with several reputable Japanese food companies as the airline continues to introduce the distinctive food culture of Japan to its customers.

Come September, JAL will introduce a new array of Japan-made cheese with unique flavors such as those from the yeast of miso (fermented mixture of rice, barley and/or soybeans) and sake (Japanese rice wine). JAL invites customers to discover the excellence of Japanese cheese by sampling the assortment offered onboard, and matching it with various western wines, Japanese rice wines, and other suitable alcoholic beverages. **ha**

Air Astana Launches Direct Astana-Beijing Flight

Air Astana has launched a new Astana-Beijing direct flight. Flights will operate on Wednesdays and Saturdays using a Boeing 757 configured with 16 business class seats and 150 economy class seats. The flight will depart from Astana at 15.25 and arrive in Beijing at 22.35 local time. The return departure from Beijing will depart at 23.45 and arrive in Astana at 04.00 local time.

Air Astana first launched Almaty to Beijing services in December 2002, with 500,000 passengers and 7.5 million tons of cargo being carried since that date. **ha**



Malaysia Airlines 737-800 flies to Nepal from Kuala Lumpur.

Delta's New Sky Club

Delta Air Lines has opened a new Delta Sky Club in Terminal C at New York's LaGuardia Airport, the 54th in the award-winning club network.

The new club, Delta's third at LaGuardia, measures nearly 7,600 square feet and offers a full wall of windows featuring a view of the runway. Amenities include a full service bar with complimentary beverages and snacks throughout the day and Delta's Luxury Bar programme featuring premium wines, spirits and cocktails for sale; art featuring aerial landscapes of the region; personalized flight assistance; updated restrooms; satellite television and a work zone complete with complimentary

Wi-Fi, cyber counters with power outlets, desktop computers, wireless printers and additional charging stations. **ha**

Connectivity And More

Singapore Airlines is launching In-Flight Connectivity as part of a US\$50 million programme to bring Internet and mobile data services to customers, even when flying at 35,000 feet.

Following a recent soft launch on a limited number of aircraft, In-Flight Connectivity is now available on 14 aircraft in the fleet, including all five Airbus A340-500s which are deployed on the world's longest non-stop flights, between Singapore and both Newark and Los Angeles. Services have also been extended to more markets such as Australia, for which regulatory approvals had not previously been obtained.

Travellers can surf the Internet, send and receive emails on smartphones and other electronic devices, and send and receive SMS text messages[1] with GSM-compatible mobile phones.

Through a partnership with leading connectivity provider OnAir, the technology will be progressively rolled out across all of SIA's long-haul Airbus A380-800, A340-500 and Boeing 777-300ER aircraft over the next two years. **ha**

Malaysian Airlines On Top Of The World

Malaysia Airlines' inaugural flight touched down on the 'Top of the World' on Saturday September 2. The first Malaysia Airlines flight to Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, departed Kuala Lumpur International Airport at 0855 and arrived just over four hours later at Tribhuvan International Airport Kathmandu at 1130 (Nepali time).

MASHolidays, the travel arm of Malaysia Airlines, is offering attractive and exciting holiday packages to Nepal. Passengers have a choice of full-board packages that include tours to various tourist and spiritual sites in Nepal or free and easy packages for more adventurous travellers.

A two-class configured, state-of-the-art Boeing 737-800 with 144 economy class seats and 16 business class seats is being used on the Kuala Lumpur to Kathmandu return service. **ha**

– David Bowden



Your barefoot luxury...

Like a flawless pearl, which has grown to perfection at its own time and pace, The Taaras has built on the venerability and operational wisdom of 16 years as Berjaya Redang, to emerge, like Aphrodite from the waves, alluring and captivating. The analogy is a fitting one, seeing the resort's name derives from 'Taara', the Sanskrit word for 'goddess of the sea' as well as 'star' or 'apple of the eye.'

Siren Song

The Taaras Beach & Spa Resort, Redang Island
Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia
Tel: +609 630 8888 Fax: +609 630 8898
Email: info@thetaaras.com Website: www.thetaaras.com

The beginning of a magical escapade starts with not having to commute to Kuala Lumpur International Airport, since Redang island in Terengganu is serviced directly by Berjaya Air. The hour-long flight builds up the kind of suspense some may remember on those sweeping camera views of planes arriving on Ricardo Montalban's Fantasy Island.

Domestic flights also land at Kuala Terengganu airport. Guests travelling this route will be met and greeted by the warm guest services team and transferred to Merang jetty to board a private Taaras speedboat which has a capacity of up to 30 passengers. From Merang jetty, the ride on azure blue water takes approximately 45 minutes to The Taaras.

The shrugging off of cares when one arrives at The Taaras begins with a walk down the warm, wood paneled corridors of the reception area. The realization that paradise exists happens about the same time as sunlight glinting off the resort's pool prisms off the ever-changing blue of the South China Sea.

Like spires of a shell, each turn around The Taaras uncovers a lovely new facet. The 184 suites and rooms have an enveloping, enchanting quality about them, which cocoons guests in luxury, from ceiling fans with pretty silver toolwork, to high thread count sheets, specially commissioned photography, and even spa bath tubs in some suites. All suites have lovely views, and are kitted out with Voya amenities. This Irish brand of organic seaweed-based body care features hand-harvested seaweed from an untouched area of Ireland's coastline. A soak using either the Bath Elixir or the Bath Salts will prove how amazing the products are.

*Left page: A private beach so beautiful it is heaven on earth.
Below (from the top): The stylish and chic Ocean Front Studio Suite;
Romantic dining by the shore – Taaras Experience Dinner, The Boardwalk.*



Beauty Everywhere

Accommodation aside, The Taaras draws its guests further into a warm, intimate embrace when they walk the curving pathways from villas to the restaurants or beachfront. Lovely landscaping – not too formal or ornate – frame the walkways, with the odd lizard skittering out of the bushes to make you feel that something unexpected is always around the bend.

The first few hours at The Taaras can be spent just breathing in the salt-tinged air and being caressed by the tropical sun as one sways gently in a hammock or glides on three of the large, specially constructed wooden swings. Cool drinks, beachy cocktails and small bites from Bayu Beach Bar lull one further into the state of bliss until adventure calls.

It is hard to resist the white powdery beaches of the property; and even harder to resist the sea's siren song. While many are content to bask and tan, The Taaras offers so much by way of superior marine experiences that it would be a shame not to take advantage of it.



Dive Into Life

The 5-star Accredited PADI Dive Centre is where all the sea-faring action happens. Headed by the warm, welcoming Vincent Toh, the dive centre makes The Taaras the only 5-star dive resort in Redang. It is also an Instructor Development Centre, with Toh being one of only 11 Course Directors in Malaysia. The rank of Course Director is the highest level attainable in the dive world, and Toh certainly is up there with the best. He has seen the sea in all her moods and knows every inch of Redang's coast, meaning that divers get a superlative experience at The Taaras.

The dive centre offers everything from an introductory Discover Scuba Course for those who have never seen a regulator in their lives, right down to the most interesting night and wreck dives. The average depth of the dive sites is 60 feet, with visibility of 40 feet, and water temperature of 27 Celsius, which makes for highly comfortable diving. While the furthest dive site is 30 minutes away by boat, The Taaras also has a beautiful house reef, where there is an abundance of marine life.

Even non-divers can enjoy the diversity of the marine life, with a rented snorkel. The beach is so clean and flat that there is very little obstruction when one takes to the sea to watch the shimmering, dancing fish dart in and out of the rocks of the reef. Go farther out of the reef and see if you can spot a little waterfall where shrimps gather in the rock pool below.

Another part of The Taaras' winning formula is its care and concern for the environment. Project AWARE is a registered, non-profit organization which works to preserve the underwater environment through education, advocacy and action. Guests diving at The Taaras are taught to respect the marine environment, with in-depth briefings held before each dive session.

There are also activities aplenty for those who prefer being on the surface of the water. Banana boats, catamarans and paddle boats are all available for hire. Parasailing, trips out in the glass bottomed boat for turtle watching, tennis and beach volleyball are other alternatives, as is the day trip to Kuala Terengganu, or a sunset cruise. All of these can be arranged with the 24-hour Leisure Concierge.

Chartering a boat or a yacht for a day of sailing, or island hopping and snorkeling is also one of the best ways to get to know the island. The boat crews are all native to Redang, and have tales aplenty to share with interested listeners about sightings of large game fish and pods of dolphins.

If one needs some shade from the sun but still needs a workout, the Gymtonic Fitness Centre is a great place to get in a cardio blast or do some strength training. A big plus is the boundless view one gets through the bay windows overlooking the sea.

Below: Snorkeling in the crystal clear ocean of Taaras.



Hands On Experiences

A Taaras experience is incomplete without at least one session at the Taaras Spa. Each treatment room is housed in a traditional wooden house. The skillful, warm, Indonesian masseuses have magical hands which soothe, knead and smoothen tired muscles, tense limbs and stressed shoulders. The Taaras Signature Massage utilizes a heated poultice of herbs and spices which is applied to the body's meridian points to soothe sore muscles before an invigorating massage with an Oriental Spice aromatherapy blend oil.

The spa menu is extensive, offering massages in every kind of pressure and strength, as well as reflexology. The body scrubs use all natural ingredients to buff away dead skin and make skin smooth and baby soft, while the selection of body wraps hydrate and help detoxify the body. There is also a selection of facials, manicure, pedicure, foot spa, as well as full pampering packages tailored to energizing, relaxing, revitalizing or detoxing. Spa aficionados would do well to cater a full day to enjoy some top to toe pampering, while couples will love the intimacy of the couples-treatment room.

If togetherness and the celebration of couplehood is yearned for, The Taaras is just the place for it. The resort offers amazing Experience Dinners where couples can opt for a candlelit, tiki torch-lined table set on the shoreline for an intimate dinner, or even dine on a floating pontoon in the middle of the sea. Robinson Crusoe 'castaway' dinners, where couples are boated to a secluded beach for a private repast can also be arranged. Little wonder that The Taaras is the place to go for a magical exchange of wedding vows, or reaffirmation of a marriage, complete with an island blessing.

While the food and beverage team can and does serve up epicurean delights for the bespoke meals, the chance to eat local should never be passed up, especially since much of the kitchen staff hail from the neighbouring villages, and so, cook up some fabulous home-style fare.

Restaurants at the resort include Asean All Day Dining where buffet breakfast is served, along with meals throughout the day which have a strong local bent and flavour. The Asean Terrace offers a full bar overlooking the pool, where cocktails and beer can be enjoyed.

The Beach Brasserie is a chic restaurant overlooking the beach where seafood, Western fare and grills are offered, often to the accompaniment of a strolling band.

To fully enjoy your room, especially if one is housed in one of the seaview suites, ring up a meal served on the balcony or deck of your room, where you can relish your meal in privacy with the sound of the surf as the soundtrack.

Whatever one chooses to do at The Taaras, it almost seems that a divine hand is upon the visitor. It is a feeling of loving benevolence, like that of a warm embrace. It is easy to feel blessed at The Taaras. Which makes saying goodbye such a heartbreak. [ha](#)

Below: Dining by the sea at the chic Brasserie.





Avillion Port Dickson is a glowing testimony to how well Malaysian owned and run resorts can fare. It is a resort which is a destination in itself, no matter how quaint and welcoming the seaside town of Port Dickson is.

The Stuff Of Legends

Avillion Port Dickson

One of the earliest luxury hotels on this part of Malaysia's coastline, it continues to remain the gold standard, in no little part due to the care that has gone into its upkeep. This is no mean feat, considering that the property is modeled after a traditional Malay fishing village, with its corresponding wood-heavy design. Close to 15 years down the line, Avillion has managed to avoid the tarnish of a has-been. Instead, it glows with health and vitality, the very wood and pillars gleaming with the patina of good care and interested management, its floors burnished to a sheen by happy footsteps of guests who keep returning.

It is not difficult to see the attraction of this stellar property. Its two beaches, Tumasek and Riau, are some of the best-kept in Port Dickson. The water sports activities are varied, and most of all, operated by contractors the resort has vetted for safety and responsibility. There are three swimming pools, with one being adult-access only. Children have dedicated play areas, while nature breathes freely, with lush landscapes, a nature walk, orchid hut, spice farm, and even a pet farm. Peacocks roam free and nest in the undergrowth near the beach. Groundsmen whistle as they prune.

Everything is bright and beautiful. It is the perfect combination of luxury getaway and family time.

Hours can be whiled away on slow, leisurely meals at Village Court, the poolside café and alfresco dining outlet, or Crow's Nest, which overlooks the property. Jungle Fringe offers karaoke and a bar. After the indulgences, Avi Spa awaits. This Cape Cod-white-chic meets Peranakan-motiffed wellness retreat looks out to the Straits of Malacca and is an oasis of calm rejuvenation. The 7,000 sq ft stand-alone, double story spa pavilion is built on water and offers amazing treatments designed to balance, uplift and energize. Avi signature treatments are based on four moods – valour, poise, lightness and ardour. Each of the signature oils are based on these moods and a corresponding natural element – water, earth, wind and fire.

Treatments have a strong Straits Chinese (Peranakan) bent, using local ingredients and natural remedies from the Malay and Chinese traditions. A full spa menu is offered, from packages to body treatments and facials. The Spa Manager is always on hand for consultation, while the therapists are warm and engaging, and fully aware of their role as ministers of well being.



The Report Card

Location: It's a 110 km journey to the closest seaside retreat from Kuala Lumpur, and it's worth the drive to Port Dickson's third mile. Avillion has its own private parking lot connected to the hotel, as well as one across the road for when guest numbers abound. The property does get very packed at peak seasons, so choose your dates wisely.

Accommodation: The Beach Room is the entry-level accommodation option. Even these are plush and comfortable. The Beach Studios, Garden Chalets, Water Chalets, Premium Water Chalets and one and two bedroom Water Villas range from RM940++ to RM2650++, each with their own charm.

Food: The buffet spreads are glorious! The Village Court is the all-day dining option, with buffet breakfast, lunch and dinner, all which rotate in terms of the items presented. The bakery items are especially good first thing in the morning (nothing beats a fresh croissant after a morning swim!). Endeavour to try the delicious, satisfying and super healthy offerings at Avi Lounge.

Spa: Avi Spa offers wellness rituals which range from 2.5 to 3.5 hours with elements such as water therapy, luxe hair treatment, body scrub, wrap and facial, depending on the package. There are also dedicated facial and body treatments which are divided into Avi Signature, Avi Traditions and Avi Marine sections.

Kid-Friendly Activities: Avillion Port Dickson wins hands down on the kid-satisfaction metre. There is a dedicated playground with a playset, a Kid's Club for crafts, with smiling care-takers, dedicated kid's pool with water slide, and best of all, the Pet Farm where guests are welcome to join in the feeding and caring of the friendly animal residents, which range from chickens, roosters, rabbits, guinea pigs, tortoises and jungle fowl. Food is provided by the friendly keepers, who also pass along animal handling tips and stories about the critters who call the Pet Farm home.

Your Reviewer: Editor-in-Chief Karen-Michaela Tan prefers to travel on business, unencumbered by her precocious five-year-old daughter, Erin, but if there is a place where both mother and child can find their own slice of heaven, Avillion Port Dickson is it. Husband, father and photographer Chin Kit Sen shot the photos for this Travel Report and kept the two females amicable

A big pull factor for the spa experience is that the wellness journey does not need to end post massage. Avi Lounge offers delightful spa cuisine in a chic, modern setting, with a view to die for (and sometimes sightings of turtles out at sea).

With something for everyone, it seems inconceivable that Avillion Port Dickson can do everything well, but it does. Maintenance is vigilant, with General Manager Michael Quay striding through the property like a friendly, eagle-eyed watchdog; a smile is never far from the face of Jay (Sujeindran), the Assistant Front Office Manager, while charming Executive Sous Chef Lee Ken Hock is always ready to urge diners to try something new off his buffet spreads.

With the team it has, and the value proposition it offers, nothing, it seems, is impossible at Avillion Port Dickson. [ha](#)

Left: Designed to mirror a traditional Malay fishing village, Avillion is the gold standard in Port Dickson resorts. Above (from the top): Avi Spa; The clean lines of Avi Spa's treatment rooms. Right: Good nutrition looks great at Avi Lounge.





The Zenith Hotel, Kuantan

The Zenith Hotel, Kuantan offers 519 luxurious accommodations for travellers of business and leisure alike the convenience and comfort that discerning travelers are looking whilst away from home. The executive rooms executive Titanium Club Lounge located on the 21st floor provides an exclusive retreat for guests, offering complimentary continental breakfast, all day cocktails, personalized check-in and check-out services inclusive of free WiFi and broadband internet access.

The Zenith Hotel

Jalan Putra Square 6, Putra Square, 25200 Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia
Tel: +609 565 9595 Fax: +609 565 9500

KSL Resort Johor Bahru

Located in Taman Abad – famous for local foods stall and lots of entertainment establishments – KSL Resort Johor Bahru is also just five minutes away from Johor Bahru's Causeway to Woodlands, Singapore. It is within Iskandar Malaysia – one of the country's fastest growing business developments regions, which it makes it perfect for the business traveller coming to Malaysia's southernmost state.



KSL Resort

33 Jalan Seladang, Taman Abad, Johor Bahru 80250, Malaysia
Tel: +607 288 2999 Fax: +607 288 2988
E-mail: info@kslresorts.com.my



Peppers Cradle Mountain Lodge

Peppers Cradle Mountain Lodge is widely considered one of Australia's iconic wilderness experiences. Located on the edge of the spectacular World Heritage listed Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park, one of Tasmania's premier wilderness regions.

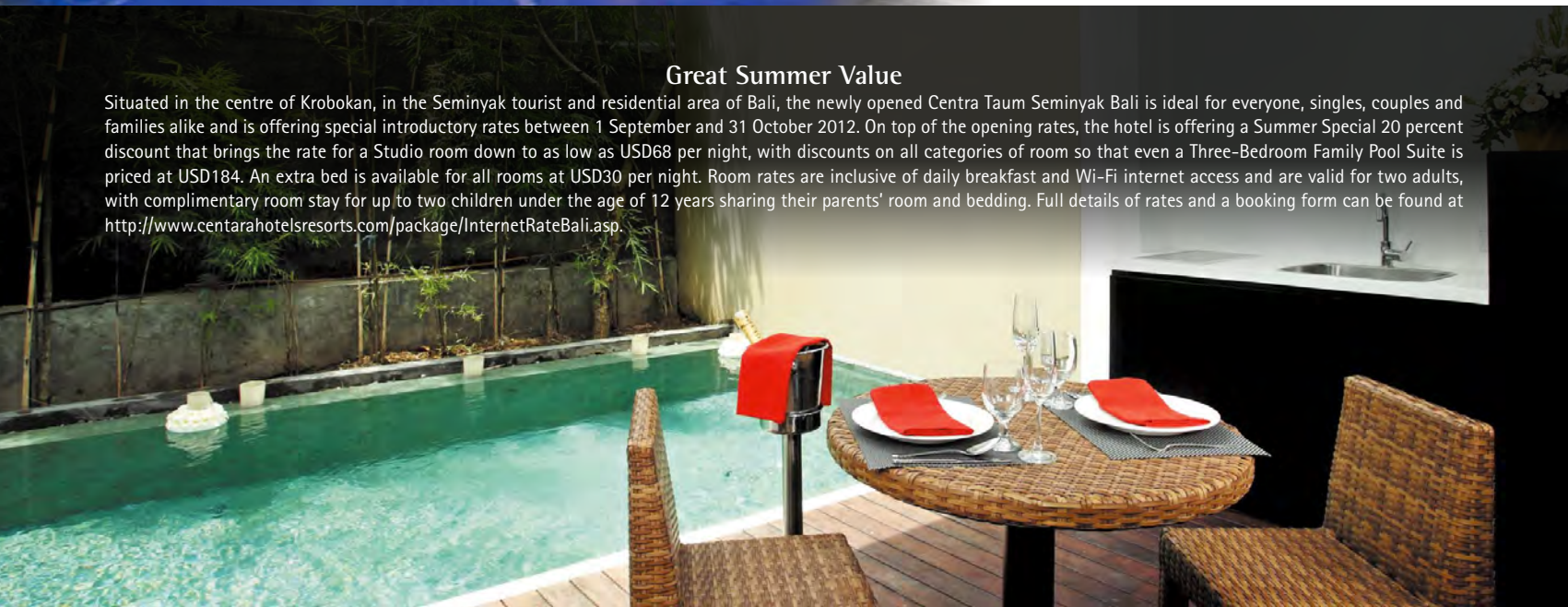
Peppers Cradle Mountain Lodge

4038 Cradle Mountain Rd. Cradle Mountain, TAS, 7306, Australia
Phone: +61 3 6492 2100 (Lodge Reception) Reservations: +61 3 6492 2103



Arabian Interlude

W Doha offers guests' en route to W Maldives an Arabian adventure. The 'Stop Over' Package offers guests an immediate room upgrade, return transfers between Doha International Airport and the hotel in addition to an energizing breakfast at Market - W Doha's signature restaurant by internationally renowned chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten. Then, jet to the Maldives, where a luxury playground of white sand beaches, turquoise lagoons and breathtaking reefs await at the iconic W Retreat & Spa Maldives. A two-storey Beach Oasis or overwater Ocean Oasis room plays host to your stay - a special welcome amenity, a US\$100 Whatever/Whenever® credit are included in your stay. Stay a little longer; receive a complimentary night with every three paying nights. Indulge yourself with W Doha and W Maldives 'Stop Over' package on your way to and from W Maldives at starwoodpromos.com available until December 25 2012. Learn more about W Doha at whoteldoha.com and explore W Maldives at wretreatmaldives.com.



Great Summer Value

Situated in the centre of Krobokan, in the Seminyak tourist and residential area of Bali, the newly opened Centra Taum Seminyak Bali is ideal for everyone, singles, couples and families alike and is offering special introductory rates between 1 September and 31 October 2012. On top of the opening rates, the hotel is offering a Summer Special 20 percent discount that brings the rate for a Studio room down to as low as USD68 per night, with discounts on all categories of room so that even a Three-Bedroom Family Pool Suite is priced at USD184. An extra bed is available for all rooms at USD30 per night. Room rates are inclusive of daily breakfast and Wi-Fi internet access and are valid for two adults, with complimentary room stay for up to two children under the age of 12 years sharing their parents' room and bedding. Full details of rates and a booking form can be found at <http://www.centarahotelsresorts.com/package/InternetRateBali.asp>.



The Ultimate Club Level Experience

Centara Grand at Central Plaza Ladprao Bangkok is offering a selection of benefits between now and 30 September 2012 designed as the ultimate club level experience for guests booking Club Deluxe rooms or suites. The Ultimate Club package starts at Baht 5,250 net per night for a Club Deluxe room for a single and Baht 5,750 net for a twin sharing room, the rates including service and tax. Daily breakfast is included, and amongst the complimentary benefits are two hours daily use of the Club meeting rooms, 24-hour internet access, laundry service for two items per stay, five collations serving daily and beverage servings throughout the day in the Club Lounge, and a welcome drink at Blue Sky rooftop restaurant. Information and a reservation form can be found at http://www.centarahotelsresorts.com/package/CGLB_UltimateClubExperience.asp.



Right: Shamsol Mustapa, Resort Manager of Seri Chenang Resort & Spa Langkawi, Y.Bhg. Dato' Ong Hong Peng, Secretary General of Ministry of Tourism Malaysia, the Guest of Honour, Norlin Dato' Zainal Abidin, CEO of Seri Chenang Resort & Spa Langkawi
 Above (from the top): Signing ceremony by Y.Bhg. Dato' Ong Hong Peng; Y.Bhg. Dato' Ong Hong Peng with Y.Bhg Dato' Zainal Abidin, owner of Seri Chenang Resort & Spa Langkawi

Seductively Personal, Authentically Malaysian

The soft launch of Seri Chenang Resort and Spa Langkawi on June 22 2012 heralded the arrival of a resort experience which sees the present embracing the past with a view to making the future of Malaysian hospitality more locally driven. Held at venue sponsor Berjaya Times Square Hotel, the gala event was steeped in everything which makes Malaysia famous as a holiday destination. A traditional attire dress code saw the best of local fashion, while the rebana musicians lent an ethnic touch to the night, which was presided over by one of Malaysia's foremost emcees, Datuk Yasmin Yusuf. Some of the best Malay cuisine chefs came together to present a menu rich in traditional flavours and textures, while guest marvelled at the effort that went into the making of a replica of one of the houses which make up Langkawi island's newest boutique property.



Clockwise from the top: A mock display of Seri Chenang Resort and Spa Langkawi's Rumah Negeri Sembilan and Rumah Melaka; The main course for the night – Black Angus Short Rib Buah Sukun; HAPA-Award winning chef, Zabidi Ibrahim (centre) at his best with the assistance from the Berjaya Times Square Hotel chefs.

Seri Chenang Resort and Spa Langkawi is a collection of different building designs showcasing the beauty and different unique styles of Malay architecture from different states within Malaysia, all standing together in one area. The six traditional Malay heritage villas of different sizes and characteristics are built on the banks of Kuala Chenang River next to the popular Chenang beach. The luxury boutique resort offers personalized services for guests on an unsurpassed level from the moment they arrive at the airport.

The soft launch, which was officiated by Malaysia's Secretary General of Tourism, Y.Bhg. Dato' Ong Hong Peng, saw guests being given a feel of what the resort offered, beginning from the décor and set-up of the event, all the way to the entertainment. On hand to share the concept of the resort was Chief Executive Officer of Seri Chenang Resort & Spa Langkawi, Norlin Dato' Dr Zainal Abidin, who presented the guest of honour a traditional tepak sireh (betel nut serving tray) as a token of appreciation to

her gracing the event. The tray in its varied forms also appears as part of the room décor at the resort.

The soft launch was organized by World Asia Publishing, who also brought together sponsors Coffex Coffee (M) Sdn Bhd who introduced Bristot Coffee Beans from Italy and tea bags from Gryphon Tea Company; Central Distribution & Agency (KL) Sdn Bhd who offered a refreshing range of Organic Ginger Beer, Organic Orange & Mandarin Orange Juice and Organic Raspberry & Lemonade from the UK, and Vom Fass, the purveyor of some of the world's best olive oils. The event was co-sponsored by Berjaya Times Square Hotel. Schmidt Marketing (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd provided the Epson photo printers which were part of the evening's memento.

The four chefs of the night were Sabri Soid (Hospitality Asia Platinum Award Winning Chef), Zabidi Ibrahim (HAPA Winning Chef), Khairuzzaman bin Ahmad Hadzri (Guest Chef) and Roslan bin Darus (Chef de Cuisine from Seri Chenang). **ha**

Asian Sensations

A round-up of some of the newest, most innovative hotels in Southeast Asia and around the world, some of which are only launching in 2014.



Hotel de l'Opera fuses touches of French décor with a lavish operatic setting.

A Night At The Opera

A night at the opera just took on a whole new perspective with the opening of the theatrically-inspired Hotel de l'Opera in Hanoi. The 107-room member of Accor's MGallery Collection is located within an aria of the grand Hanoi Opera House and just a short walk from the Old Quarter near Hoan Kiem Lake.

The hotel is a boutique property with an ambiance that fuses touches of French décor with its lavish operatic setting and bold contemporary design elements. Like most design hotels, nothing is left to chance and guests will be constantly reminded of colourful and plush fabrics, designer furniture, mood lighting, smartly-attired staff and quirky settings.

The hotel's design is a sophisticated reflection of one of Asia's capitals of culture. Design elements have been incorporated to evoke all the glamour and anticipation of a grand night at the opera. Hotel de l'Opera combines Vietnamese architectural accents and theatrical interior design with sparkling hues of jewels and classic opera motifs.

Four suites at the top of the landmark building overlook the Opera House which is a replica of the Palais Garnier, the older of Paris's two opera houses.

Chengdu's New Offering

The Grand Dorsett Chengdu, under Kosmopolito Hotels International (KHI) is located at the famous historical Luoma Market area of Chengdu, the neighboring bustling downtown Chunxi Road; and renowned Chengdu sports centre. With the Metro Line 1 and 4 directly in front of the hotel, the up-scale Grand Dorsett Chengdu offers easy accessibility for both business and leisure travellers.

The hotel's 556 spacious guestrooms and suites are well furnished with a full array of amenities, contemporary and innovative décor; and each one offer an inviting ambience complemented with modern facilities such as iPod dock and complimentary high speed internet access to ensure instant connectivity.

Embark on exceptional culinary journeys at Grand Dorsett Chengdu. Indulge in the expansive selection of tantalizing cuisine featured in the hotel's restaurants. Enjoy the best of traditional Cantonese fare and authentic Sichuan specialties served in Chinese grandeur at the Chinese restaurant.

For health and fitness enthusiasts, Grand Dorsett Chengdu offers a well-equipped gymnasium featuring a selection of cardio training and strength equipment. A full fledge spa promises a rejuvenating experience. For those seeking a bit of entertainment, the hotel's tea lounge, chess house and KTV are the ideal social gathering spots.

Tea House at Grand Dorsett Chengdu.





Cashless Retreat

Guests arriving at Centara Grand Island Resort & Spa Maldives from 1 November 2012 can leave both their shoes and their cash behind, because from that date the resort begins its Ultimate All-Inclusive experience.

Although Centara has always featured fully inclusive accommodation, Ultimate All-Inclusive takes this concept to an entirely new level and represents the ultimate in luxury escapes.

Included are champagne breakfasts served all the way through until mid-morning, a choice of three restaurants for lunch, and sumptuous dinners that offer a daily theme buffet, Thai cuisine, Italian dining at a romantic overwater restaurant, Japanese teppanyaki cooked to order, fresh seafood, and international dishes.

Also included are credits of USD 100 per person per day to spend at Spa Cenvaree village spa, with a range of treatments that include foot massage,

Indian head massage, face relaxing massage, and a choice of body scrubs and upper back massage.

The package also includes Wi-Fi access in the rooms and across the resort, use of fitness facilities with programmes designed by a personal trainer, tennis, snorkelling equipment, motorized water sports, and windsurfing lessons.

Centara Grand Island Resort & Spa Maldives is set amongst the perfect islands and blue ocean of South Ari Atoll in the Republic of Maldives, and offers the ultimate in barefoot luxury along with a range of exciting activities that will appeal both to couples and families.

Featuring 112 suites, pool villas and overwater villas, the resort offers diving enthusiasts outstanding diving opportunities including a house reef complete with a dedicated sunken shipwreck and is within easy reach of the top dive spots in the Maldives.

Absolute Hotel Services Announces U Sukhumvit Bangkok

U Sukhumvit Bangkok which targets to open by early 2014 enjoys a prime location in the heart of Bangkok's business and dining area in Sukhumvit Soi 15. The overall interior and architecture design concept will be created with a modern living lifestyle in mind with unique touches from all the regions of Thailand. All 94 rooms ranging from 30 – 40 sq m and other facilities will be luxuriously appointed with the comfort of U brand's unique concept of service. Facilities include a themed all day dining restaurant, rooftop swimming pool, fitness center, library/business center and free wi-fi.

Denmark based Evaristti Studios has been appointed as the interior designer for the project. Marco Evaristti is owner and founder of the company and for more than 20 years has become world-renowned for his career as a professional artist. He is known for creating installations using a unique choice of materials often taken directly from nature, heightening the experience of the viewer, making the work more 'real' in a sense.



Hong Kong Fever

Kosmopolito Hotels International (KHI) has unveiled its second property in Hong Kong – Dorsett Regency Kwun Tong, Hong Kong with its soft opening in July 2012. Conveniently situated at Kwun Tong, the heart of Kowloon East, the 29-floor hotel is strategically located near commercial and retail areas such as Manulife Financial Centre, Millennium City, mega shopping malls like apm and MegaBox, and Kowloonbay International Trade & Exhibition Centre. Dorsett Regency Kwun Tong, Hong Kong offers easy accessibility to both business and leisure travellers as it is well connected via various transportation networks, including MTR station, ferry and bus terminal. Complimentary Hotel Shuttle Bus services are also provided by the hotel for guests to/fro shopping mall apm, MegaBox, Tsim Sha Tsui and Kowloon Station Airport Express.



Left page: Centara Grand Island Resort & Spa
Maldives' luxury villas.

Left: Room perspective of U Sukhumvit Bangkok,
designed by Evaristti Studios.

Above : Deluxe Room, Dorsett Regency Kwun
Tong



Hail Caesar!

The 2012 HotelClub Taiwan Hotel Awards were recently announced with Caesar Park Hotel Taipei coming out tops in the Best Hotel for Business Travellers.

Caesar Park Hotel Taipei won its category because of its brand new e-Lounge located in the lobby, refurbished rooms and its in-house restaurants which are ideally suited to those travelling for business. The hotel's new e-Lounge offers guests a small conference meeting room, international express delivery, business card printing, fax facilities and copying in addition to providing a contemporary work environment with complimentary refreshments. [ha](#)

Island Life

Love affairs with Penang come in all shapes and experiences. European snowbirds who honeymooned on Malaysia's most famous island have returned as silver-haired retirees enjoying 90-day sojourns from the cold; backpackers passing through have come back to make the Pearl of the Orient their place of business, while other Malaysians flock to Penang as a food paradise. With so much to offer, and a easy-going, warm populace, Penang seems to keep going from strength to strength. Add a new, burgeoning luxury boutique hotel boom on the island and visitors now have even more reason to fall in love all over again.





One can do everything, or nothing in Penang. It's that kind of island. There's a laid-back vibe to it, which makes even its now-infamous rush hour crawls tolerable. And yet, there is a strong, steady pulse running through Penang, like the resting heartbeat of an athlete who can take off in a burst of pure, raw energy.

There are beaches where bodies can lie motionless, apart from a lazy flip from one side to the other, as the perfect tan is scrupulously worked on. The sands of those beaches can easily be churned up by beach buggies and volleyball players, with corresponding waves being made in the sea by a multitude of powered water craft promising high adrenaline activity rushes.

One can luxuriate in a private cabana with an enclosed garden at Hard Rock Hotel Penang's Batu Spa, enjoying an open air shower post a Hard Rock signature massage which incorporates Swedish and shiatsu techniques, before hitting the famed Hard Rock Café for whopping portions of super food which is then burned off leaping around like a manic Jack Black to the rockin' sounds of the house bands. The morning after, when one wakes blurry-eyed from the excess of the night before, glad of chic room

The beach, pools and the spa – Penang lures you to rest and relax.



Batu Spa, Hard Rock Hotel Penang

with soothing sea views, one can return for The Hangover treatment at Batu Spa which compromises of reflexology, Hard Rock massage and skin repair treatment. Checking out Penang's largest free form pool, complete with its own sand island and kids' water playground is just one of the perks of being in such a rockin' resort, as is the proximity to Batu Feringghi and its vibrant street and night life.



Park The Kids Here!

When toting kids along on vacation, the key to a good time for all is the availability of loads of kid-friendly places within a resort. Families with children will find Parkroyal Penang Resort a welcome port specifically because of its excellent children's club, the Koko-Nut Klub. Open daily from 9.00am to 9.00pm and until 11.00pm on Saturday, it is free of charge for children aged four to 12 years old. Babysitting service is available for children below four years of age with a minimal charge.

Special children's programmes, games, a video room and a fully enclosed play area keep the young ones occupied while parents can enjoy some 'me' time. Among the fun activities offered in the club are face painting, badge designing, ceramic workshop, hair-plaiting and t-shirt painting. There is also a Wii console offering interactive fitness games.

The open, walk-through concept of Parkroyal Penang gives the property a cool vibe grounded by the warm Asian influences one sees in the resort, such as Nyonya vases and collection of Peranakan bric-a-brac. As fitting the five-star standards of the resort, there is no shortage of greenery and lovely landscaping, great restaurants (the freshly squeezed juices at Tamarind Brasserie at breakfast is a must!), and a plush St Gregory Spa.



Parkroyal Penang

Paradise In Paradise

Shangri-La Rasa Sayang Resort and Spa, Penang is replete with a sense of history, place and tradition. Its distinctive Minangkabau architecture houses a dazzling selection of artifacts of Malaysian culture including traditional jewellery, batik-printing moulds, coral sculpture, and signature items from the Malaysian kitchen. If culture and heritage is what one craves, there is probably no other chain which delivers it as well.

Rasa Sayang is also home to CHI, the Spa – the biggest, most spacious spa in Malaysia, with 11 villas, two couple rooms, and even its very own 'secret garden' to boot.

If timelessness is what is craved, Eastern & Oriental Hotel (E&O) is the first and final word. This icon is to Penang what The Raffles is to Singapore. At 127 years old, the property has 100 rooms and lashings of elegance, Old World charm and the glorious patina of age which comes only with engrained history.

Built in answer to the need of swanky digs for affluent travellers who saw the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 as a gateway to the exotic East, E&O has hosted the likes of Rudyard Kipling, Noel Coward, Douglas Fairbanks and Hermann Hesse. It has lost none of its charm in the years that it has been a landmark – in fact, its long and colourful history is what makes the place such a draw.

There is untold satisfaction in treading the black and white tiles of its interior, as well as knowing that every guest has recourse to E&O's round-the-clock butler, who can answer any question from, "Where are the best Hokkien noodles to be had at 2am," to "How far is Church Street Pier?"



St. Gregory Spa, Parkroyal Penang Resort



When one is in a foodie's paradise, the locals scoff at eating anywhere but street stalls, but the dining experiences at E&O need to be savoured. From the award winning 1885 which feature some of the best food and wine pairings on the island, (not to mention a truly amazing traditional English afternoon tea), to the dark wood-panelled Farquhar's Bar and its signature E&O Sling (Bombay gin, Grand Marnier, crème de menthe and Sprite) and great pub grub, one feels every inch the intrepid explorer when enjoying a repast at any of the property's F&B outlets. Of particular note is The Conservatory, which shares space with the oldest Java tree in Penang. Planted before 1885, it is the largest of only three other Java trees on the island! So raise your glass to the kind of longevity good living brings!



Rasa Sayang Resort & Spa

Spas, iconic properties and all the good things in life: Penang has it all.

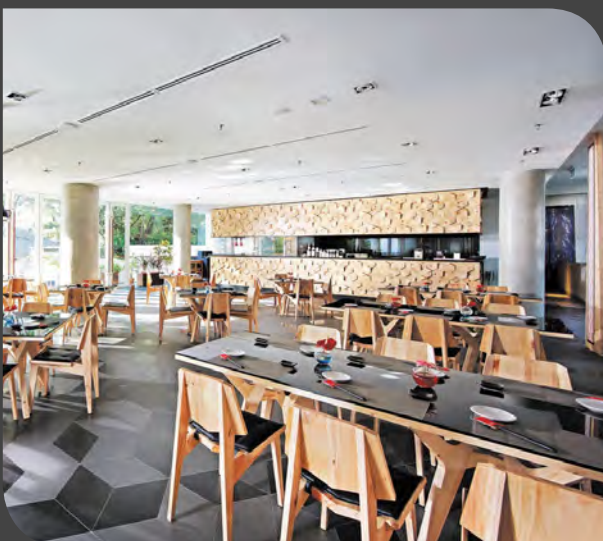
The Pleasure Principle

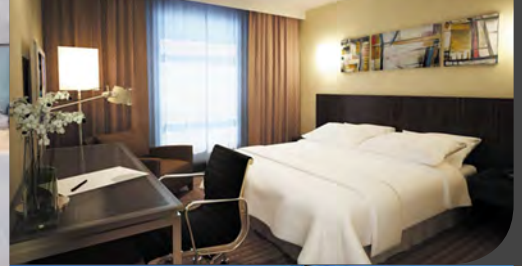
The first hotel on Penang's iconic Batu Feringghi beach made its appearance in 1948 when a bungalow owned by physician Albert McKern was leased to a local Chinese family who were pioneers of the booming hospitality scene of today's Feringghi. The hotel still exists (albeit with more than the ten rooms it first started with), and it now operates in illustrious company, being the sister property to E&O. Lone Pine has just completed an extensive, amazing renovation exercise (it was closed for a year and a half), which readies it for another half a century at least of great hospitality experiences. Not bad for a little rest house which got its name because a solitary casuarina tree was mistaken for a kind of pine.

Its 90 rooms all offer sea views, and its emerald lawns and sweeping canopy of casuarinas trees continue to be the place where many 'I Dos' are said. It has retained the feeling of an intensively private little enclave, though the addition of the chic batubar, brings the cool factor to a whole new level. Batubar is the perfect place to enjoy the hotel's signature Lone Pine Ice Tea, while Japanese bistro Matsu – also a new addition to the hotel, and named after the Japanese word for 'pine' – gives compelling reason to dine at Lone Pine. Matsu's menu is varied, accommodates different sized appetites, and delivers everything that is so loved about Japanese cuisine in edgy, modern little ways which surprise, tempt and delight.

A new spa has also come out of the renovation process. Pure Energy offers three single treatment rooms and one couple suite offering facials including a Face Detox for Him, full body pampering, with scrubs, wraps and body cocoons.

Creature comforts and dining pleasures a-plenty await in the Pearl Of The Orient – Penang's iconic Lone Pine.





Making Business A Pleasure

Not everyone has the luxury of coming to Penang for down time. Road warriors who need to strike a rat race-health balance opt to head to Eastin Hotel Penang where hospitality and great facilities come together. Complimentary internet access means 24-hour connectivity, while the shuttle service to the Free Industrial Zone means being able to schedule a day full of meetings with less hassle. An Executive Lounge, Business Centre and secretarial services are available when things simply need doing.

When it is time to switch over and turn off, the Eastin, which opened in November 2009, offers services for that too. The pool on the roof gives great views of the island and allows a quick way to get some exercise in. There is a gym for those needing more, while Queensbay Mall is a stroll away, with its welcome retail distractions. The Danai Spa also offers excellent pampering facilities for those wanting to escape the world for a bit.

Managed by a fully local management team, headed by the efficient, charming General Manager Mary Ann Harris – one of three women hotel GMs in Penang – the hotel has quickly become Penang's leading business class hotel, with the highest occupancy rates in its class, not to mention the highest Revpar of its set. Harris sums up Eastin Hotel Penang's key competencies like this, "Our strategic location is paired with warmth and a high level of service. With so much foreign investment looking into Penang, we are always challenged to take everything we do to a higher level." So committed is the brand that in three short years since its launching, remodeling of the lobby is already in progress.

"Being a hotel catering to corporates does not mean we have to be aloft. Our service is warm, because when we hire, we look for attitude. People who love to serve can be taught to set a table properly. It is the character of the hire, the person who will move immediately to help a guest in need which we look out for."

For business or pleasure – accommodation and dining is plush and chic at Eastin Hotel Penang.

The Unique Boutique Experience

The biggest growth in the hospitality sector in Penang in the past three years has been in the boutique hotel segment. Forget little backpacker inns and walk-ups. Penang's newest growth engine is a purring, luxurious ride through gorgeous architecture, personal interior decorating touches, whimsical design, and walk-through works of art.

A suite at one of these boutique hotels can cost more than your average Club room, but the experience is worth the price tag. These amazing properties each have individual personalities, and give guests a look at how unfettered creativity can produce an exemplary experience.

While the matriarch of boutique hotels is still Cheong Fatt Sze, the Blue Mansion, in Leith Street, there are now

many others who give it a run for its money. 1881 Chong Tian Hotel is one of the most prolific. Located within three shop lots on Jalan Pintal Tali in George Town, the premises are steeped in history, being 130 years old.

An Oriental bordello comes to mind when one steps into 1881. There is a chandelier in the reception area, while the anteroom is crammed with Tang Dynasty antiques. It is these antiques which birthed the hotel. Owner Seah Kok Heng began collecting antiques less than a decade ago, and his extensive collection needed to be housed somewhere, so when the real estate boom began in heritage properties, Seah picked up the shop houses, spent eight months restoring the evocative moon gate which separates the courtyard from the Chinese restaurant, and transformed the lots into 11 rooms.

It is now the only hotel in Penang with its own museum, with pieces including a 400-year-old ink plate from the Soong Dynasty. Even Star Cruises arranges for its passengers to visit 1881 when it docks in Penang!

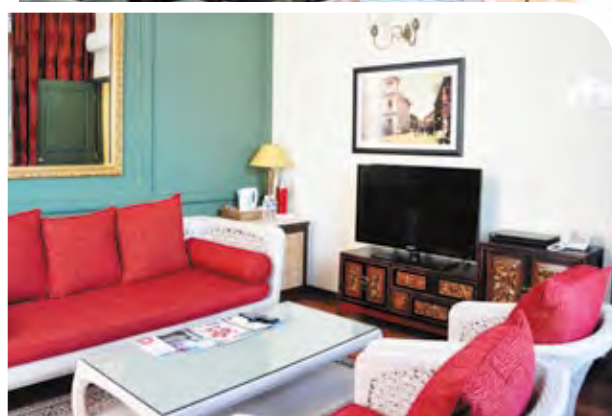
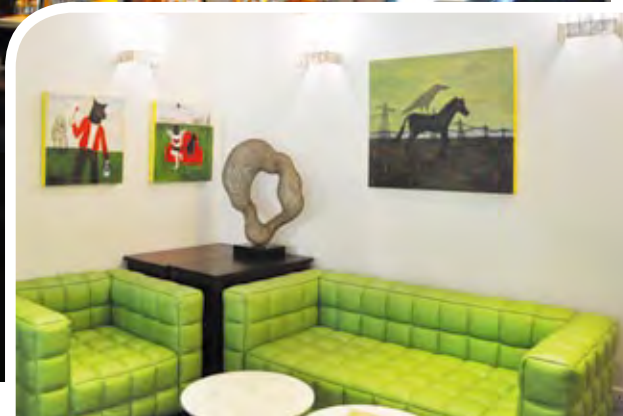
Each of the rooms is named after clan villages of China and offer individually designed themes, with the junior suite offering an open concept bathroom with a Jacuzzi. The super deluxe suite is modeled after the inner rooms of old Chinese houses of ill repute, and features an antique wedding bed, draped in sumptuous red silks.

Even if one does not choose to make 1881 a temporary domicile, a meal at the restaurant is a must. It features two master chefs at the helm and offers a variety of both Chinese and Western menu items.



Heritage rules at 1881 Chong Tian Hotel, Penang





The new breed of luxury boutique hotels are impressive – Hotel Penaga and Yeng Keng Hotel set the benchmark.

Cornering The Market

Hotel Penaga, on the corner of Jalan Hutton and Lebu Clarke was a mere shell of its original self when work on it began. Rebuilt using recycled wood, it is now an iconic little property which exudes warmth and charm while also pressing home the message that bespoke luxury can be ecologically conscious. Penaga utilizes LED lights, inverter air conditioning units, and has 99 solar panels on the roof which enables the property to sell back power to the electric board. Rain water collection tubs, LCD TVs, a high recycle rate, the use of as much eco-friendly amenities as possible all make this 45-room getaway something special.

Another big differentiating factor of Penaga is its Resident Artist programme which sees a slew of talented artisans,

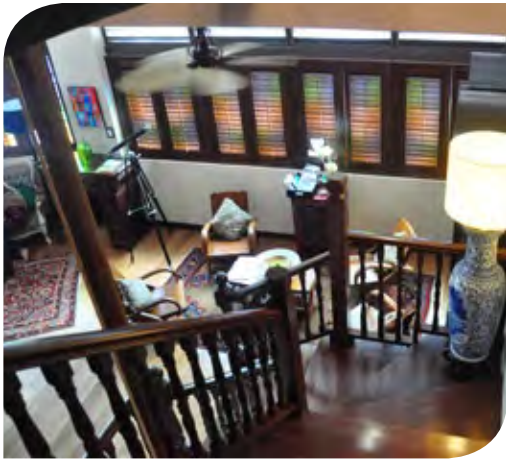
from a wide range of arts backgrounds, making the hotel their studio for a specific time frame. Guests are welcomed to watch them work, and even purchase or commission a piece.

Hotel Penaga's General Manager Hugh M. Cameron, a Glasgow native, has noted the increase of tourist arrivals since George Town was bestowed Unesco World Heritage Site status. "Penaga attracts a very distinct personality type. People who respect architecture, who love art really appreciate what Penaga is. While we have a bar and restaurant, I tell my guests to go out and eat, because that's where the real Penaga is," says Cameron.

Yeng Keng Hotel is considered the oldest surviving intact building on Chulia Street. Built as a private residence in the mid 1800s, the Anglo Indian bungalow

was bought by the Cantonese Club Yin Han Pit Shu who donated it to the trustees of the Straits Chinese British Association in 1939. The beginning of the 20th century saw it converted from residence to lodging house until present owners Hoo Kim Properties Sdn Bhd restored, upgraded and relaunched it into the boutique hotel market.

Not only is the property chockfull of history, it also boasts a well-read, well-researched Hotel Manager in the person of Jacky Chung who has worked tirelessly to uncover details about this little gem. A coffee with Chung will see guests learning that the great Sun Yat Sun had actually stayed in the hotel in one of its past incarnations, among other interesting vignettes including why one steps down into the hotel reception from road level.



Yeng Keng's 20 rooms, four suites and two family rooms cost RM5 million to restore, but it was worth it for the history which was uncovered.

That same labour of love also gave Penang the inimitable Campbell House. Owned, re-fitted, redesigned, conceptualized and brought to vibrant, eclectic life by Nardya Wray and Roberto Dreon, this luxury boutique hotel is nothing short of breath taking. Each room has a feel of its own (Peacock is named for the screen with the bird on it, Indochine is hung with Tibetan tapestries, while Calligraphy has said art form on the wallpaper).

All rooms have mini-bars, Nespresso machines, complimentary Wi-Fi and Sony flat screen TVs with DVD players and Astro plus satellite TV. The couple is also in the habit of leaving little treats for their guests in the bedrooms, and because of the eclectic-ness of Penang, and the quirky charm of the hosts, the items range from tidbits to little keepsakes full of character. Little wonder that Campbell House received Trip Adviser's 2012 Certificate of Excellence.

A huge plus is Il Bacaro, the Italian restaurant in the lobby of Campbell House run by Dreon which offers the best home-style Italian in Penang, including gnocchi with lamb ragu, penne with blue cheese and walnuts, whole peppers stuffed with rice and vegetables and veal ossobuco.

Deluxious Hotel on Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah is a bungalow which has been transformed into a chic boutique hotel. Owner Miranda Khoo is a trained aesthetician and first ran a spa until she convinced her talented chef brother Keith to return from Singapore and enter into partnership which saw a restaurant added to the spa. The residences only opened in 2011, but have since gained popularity for its pretty, cozy interiors, and its casual chic vibe.

The food is a distinct pull factor for Deluxious, with the restaurant initiating an appetizer buffet, and a unique eat-all-you-can off the menu concept which sees some pretty good food served up.



Personalize a stay with an upscale boutique hotel experience, such as one in Campbell House or Deluxious.



Hey, Good Cooking!

It's not a fallacy. The best chefs in Malaysia really do come from Penang. Scour the ranks of hotels in Kuala Lumpur, and one would be pressed not to come upon at least one Penangite in the hierarchy. The Penangites love food with an insatiable hunger, and every stall holder is a master at his dish.

It is little wonder then that the Penang Chapter of the Chefs Association of Malaysia (CAM) is the most active in the country. Its President, Peter Chan, and ex President (now advisor) Audee Cheah, are gourmets and gourmands.

"The Penangites are thrifty. Stuff has to be good before they will part with their money, and everyone in the food business in Penang knows this, whether they are a hawker or restaurant owner," says Chan.

"There is also a movement where you see people moving back to the food of the old days," comments Cheah. "Traditional food like chicken chop, with modern twists is the in-thing now," he observes.

Old still is gold, though. Tan Jee Yong is the Executive Chef of Yeng Keng Hotel, yet another of the new revolutionary properties in Penang. He is one of the old brigade, from the age where chefs still built character in commis by making them shell 50 kilos of prawns in an hour. He is Hainanese, one of those notable culinary Chinese clans who have dominated the food service industry in Malaysia since before Britain ceded to the Sultans of Malaya.

He is on his last lap now, and he knows it. He speaks Hokkien fluently, though little English, but even so, he is ready to do all he can to impart his culinary wisdom before he hangs up his whites. He is now the only chef in Penang to still offer Bombe Alaska on his menu, and it is still the ultimate treat. "A good Bombe begins with good butter cake. You can't bake it and use it the same day. It needs to be kept to harden up, and then doused with Cointreau. Everything else is just repeat, repeat and practice and practice." Including the flourish and dead-pan face when alcohol flames singe one's eyebrows in the process of igniting the Bombe!



From the classic to the modern, Penang gastronomy is about more than good street food.

Chin's Stylish Chinese Cuisine is decadence, indulgence and must-have all at once.



Chin Up!

It seems such immodesty to proclaim a restaurant stylish in its very name, but Chin's Stylish Chinese Cuisine is really stylish. It also serves really, really, really good food. The first Chin's was in London, where the Miele Guide hailed it as being one of Asia's finest restaurants for 2010-2011.

Founder and owner David Chin brought the brand home a year or so ago (the restaurant took a year to design, research, buy and fit-out), and Chin's has frankly become the best place for Chinese cuisine in Penang, if not the best place to eat, period. Its premise in Tanjong City Marina is extravagant, decadent and glamorous. The view of the sea and the lights of the ships at night is lure enough, but there is something addictive about a place which looks like a set from *Dream of a Red Chamber* meets *Moulin Rouge*. The show plates themselves are conversation

starters – hand-painted pieces of art which range from snappy portraits of Che Guevara, to evocative stylized Chinese art.

It's hard to believe the food can live up to a setting like this, but it does. In fact, it eclipses everything else. Like everything else about Chin's, the food influences come from all around China. Sam Chin, son of the founder and possibly the best dinner companion money cannot buy, shares, "We want our food to be authentic Chinese food, which means that there is a little bit of fusion, but the focus is on presenting the best dishes from different parts of China. We have dishes from Hunan, Beijing, Shanghai – every dish is different and is served differently. We do a menu refresher every quarter, which is hard, because people like each present menu!"

While Chin acknowledges that there is no dearth of good food under RM4 to be had in Penang, he stresses that Chin's

has certain target groups which enjoy the lifestyle element of this particular dining experience. And truly, the food is worth writing home about.

The Beijing Duck with pancakes is a must; crisp, succulent and full of different textures once it is paired with spring onions and the egg roll wrap. The Szechuan Flamed Cod Fish Soup is served with a live fire under it, and bursts with sea-sweet goodness. The Hot Wok Fragrant Chicken surpasses the best kung pao chicken you've ever had, while the codfish, prawn and egg yolk served in a stone bowl is designed to feel like crab when it is mixed. Every dish on the menu is a winner, and nothing feels repeated or rehashed.

Chin's Stylish Chinese Cuisine is everything great about Penang served up in Oriental luxe. Service is snappy, the food elicits raves, and like Penang, it deserves constant revisiting. [ha](#)

Icons of Penang

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We are here to serve you better!



Landmark of Penang



SOHO FREE HOUSE

In the heart of Penang's nightlife scene is the island's best known and best loved pub, a place to just be yourself and have a great time, living up to its slogan – **Happy Hour, Every Hour, Everyday NOW!**

SOHO GASTRO PUB @ Precinct 10



Electrifying Penang!

You can never have too much of a good thing at Soho Gastro Pub: Gourmet food at bargain prices • State-of-the-art light & sound Live performers entertaining every night



A 'Must' Visit Restaurant in Malaysia!

CHIN'S STYLISH CHINESE CUISINE

- AWARDED • **Best Chinese Cuisine Restaurant in Malaysia 2010-2012** – Hospitality Asia Platinum Awards
- VOTED • **One of the Finest Restaurant in Asia 2010-2011** – The Miele Guide
- **Malaysia's Best Restaurants 2011 (Highest rating for the Chinese Restaurant category)** – Malaysia Tatler
- **Best Restaurant of the Year** – What's On in London

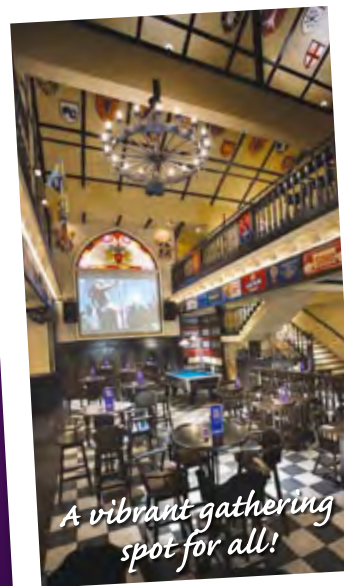


Malaysia's Best Restaurants 2011 – Malaysia Tatler

Best Nightspot in Penang 2009 – InPenang Magazine

QE II – ON THE SEA

Among super yachts, international cruise liners and Penang's iconic ferries, QEII has to be Penang's most panoramic F&B destination. QEII serves European/Mediterranean cuisine and a must try is its signature wood-fired pizzas. After dinner, enjoy great music with live DJs and dance under the stars.



A vibrant gathering spot for all!

SOHO COUNTRY HOUSE

In the 'kingdom' of Autocity, the majestic Soho Country House holds court, providing hearty meals and ales for stressed-out urban knights and damsels. It is Autocity's most happening watering hole right before the Penang Bridge.

QE II Waterfront Venue

Tanjung City Marina, Church St. Pier, 8A, Pangkalan Weld, Georgetown, 10300 Penang. **t:** (6)04-261 2126

Soho Freehouse (Main Branch) & Soho Penthouse

50, Ground & Upper Floor, Penang Road, 10000 Penang. **t:** (6)04-263 3331

Chin's Stylish Chinese Cuisine & Chin Chin Bar

Tanjung City Marina, Church St. Pier, 8A, Pangkalan Weld, Georgetown, 10300 Penang. **t:** (6)04-261 2126 / 261 2611

hotline: (6)04-263 3331

fb: <http://Facebook.com/SohoGroupPg>

Soho Gastro Pub

Precinct 10, Jalan Tanjung Tokong, Penang **t:** (6)04-890 6617

Soho Country House

1832 G-1, Jalan Perusahaan, Highway Auto-City, North-South Juru Interchange, 13600 Perai, Penang. **t:** (6)04-507 0079



e: sohofh@gmail.com

w: www.sohopenang.com



Unforgettable

Black Mountain Golf Club opened to great acclaim in 2007. It offers an 18-hole, par 72 (7,420 yards) championship golf course of unrivalled distinction and prestige. Crafted by Phil Ryan of Pacific Coast Design, the course caters to golfers of all skill levels. This challenging yet playable layout lies in the stunning terrain, features interconnected waterways, undulating fairways and greens breathtaking natural landscape.

**Black Mountain Golf Club,
Hua Hin, Thailand**
Tel: +660 81 763 2200
Golf Bookings:
proshop@bmgahuahin.com

Tradition And Challenge

In the second decade of the 20th century a Scottish railway engineer by the name of O. A. Robins designed Thailand's first golf course. Opened in 1924 and located less than one kilometre from the center of town, the Royal Hua Hin Golf Course offers tempting tee shots for the adventurous, as well as natural jungle surroundings for the scenery loving, not to mention views over the gulf of Thailand, making this course a must for any golfer staying in or near Hua Hin.

Royal Hua Hin Golf Course, Hua Hin, Thailand
Tel: +032 512 475 Fax: +032 513 038



The Winner's Choice

Opened in 2008, Banyan Golf Club, Hua Hin, Thailand, offers golfers a world-class golf experience, complete with superior dining facilities. The unique, contemporary Thai-style clubhouse features luxe changing rooms, exclusive club suite accommodation and the famed Mulligan's Pub and The Terrace restaurant which overlooks the course. Spectacular sunset views make it a visual hole-in-one, while the 18-hole championship course designed and constructed by Pirapon Namatra is both challenging and meditative.

Banyan Golf Club Hua Hin, Thailand
Tel: +660 32 616 200 Email: reservations@banyan thailand.com

Reviews of these Hua Hin golf courses were facilitated by Berjaya Air Sdn Bhd. Berjaya Air will begin operating thrice weekly flights (Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday) to Hua Hin from November 8 2012. More information on www.Berjaya-Air.com



Private Pampering

Total relaxation in the privacy of your own Spa Villa on the oceanfront at Samui is yours when you take the "MySpa" package at Centara Villas Samui that is being offered between now and 31 October 2012.

The package, which is for two people and includes daily breakfast, is for a minimum four-night stay at a Spa Villa or Pool Villa, with rates beginning from Baht 20,345 nett, including 10 percent service charge and 7 percent government tax.

Along with the luxurious accommodation, you will receive in the privacy of your own villa and at the resort's Spa Cenvaree, the choice of a gentle 45-minute head and shoulder massage or lotus foot massage, plus a 45-minute soothing Coconut & Orange Blossom Milky Bath, all provided together with a bottle of sparkling wine twice during your stay. You will also be presented with a spa gift for him and her as a memento of your stay. **ha**



Treatments at Spa Cenvaree at Centara Villas Samui will transport guests to a whole new level.



Butterfly Threading at HerbaLine comes with an improved double-hand technique.

New Spa For Intercontinental Samui Baan Taling Ngam

Intercontinental Samui Baan Taling Ngam unveils its holistic sanctuary, Baan Thai Spa, to complement the iconic property with a unique spa experience at its stunning cliff-top location.

At 120-metres high nestled on the side of a rolling green cliff, Baan Thai Spa offers unparalleled views of the tropical landscape and the turquoise waters of the Gulf of Thailand below, providing an ideal sanctuary for therapeutic treatments and unadulterated relaxation.

Guests at Baan Thai Spa may choose from a wide array of luxurious treatments and services. Oriental Oil Massage, one of Baan Thai Spa's most popular signature massages offers a fusion of the benefits of Thai pressure points (typically dry massage) together with pure massage oil using soothing Swedish effleurage strokes to allow floating movements, performed by trained therapists. This treatment is wonderful for soothing stress, relieving tension, increasing vitality and improving flexibility. **ha**

A Renaissance For Ancient Beauty Techniques

Since time immemorial, the butterfly has been hailed as the epitome of beauty, grace and icon for metamorphosis. Butterfly facial threading, launched at HerbaLine Seapark, Malaysia, is an improved facial threading technique derived from the light, simple yet innovative technique following the butterfly's fluttering movements. Unlike traditional practice, Butterfly Threading does not involve biting the thread between one's teeth but by using only both hands. This improved dexterity helps to create strength and elasticity, effectively removing fine hair.

The threading at HerbaLine is administered comfortably in a spa-like environment that offers complimentary services such as aromatherapy, fish spa and sea salt foot massage.

Customers are relaxed on reclining lounge chairs which are ergonomically designed to offer comfort and ease to customers, while angled to help achieve the best results of threading. **ha**



Danai Spa redefines the pampering spa experience.

Redefining The Pampering Spa Experience

Danai Spa @ Eastin Hotel has three full facility couple treatment rooms which includes Jacuzzi bath, shower area and lavatory, two partial facility single treatment rooms which include Jacuzzi bath and shower area, and 2 single massage rooms, a secluded manicure, pedicure and reflexology area and a stylish reception for consulting guests on their spa services.

Danai Spa's list of more than 30 treatments offers pampering services from various corners of the globe. Among them are the Danai Signature Massage which blends four traditional massage modalities to dissolve tension, and the Hawaiian Pampering Bliss Spa Package – a flowing, cradling and deeply relaxing full body treatment that communicates love, stillness and centreness. **ha**

Bay Of Relaxation

The first Spa Cenvaree to open in Vietnam, set in a quiet bay on Phu Quoc island, offers sublime treatments in a tranquil beachside setting. Here guests can enjoy luxurious relaxation in the most natural of surroundings, with a range of soul soothing treatments. The spa is set within Chen Sea Resort & Spa Phu Quoc, Centara Boutique Collection, and features the warm Thai hospitality that has made Spa Cenvaree an award-winning brand.

Spa Cenvaree, Chen Sea Resort & Spa Phu Quoc

Tel: +84 0773 995 895

E-mail: spacenvareecpv@chr.co.th

Web: www.spacenvaree.com/spa-cenvaree-at-Chen-Sea-Resort-and-Spa-Phu-Quoc-Centara-Boutique-Collection



City Refuge

Spa Alila provides unique treatments from the heart, blending ancient Asian healing techniques with age-old beauty recipes featuring the curative benefits of fresh, natural, quality ingredients. Trained in anatomical physiology, massage, meditation and service, local therapists combine the latest organic nutrition and health knowledge with the most essential element – warm, genuine care that flows from the heart through the hands, to stimulate, rejuvenate, balance and relax.

Alila Jakarta Spa

Tel: +021-231 6008

E-mail: jakarta@alilahotels.com

www.alilahotels.com



Tropical Haven

Mandala Spa & Villas Boracay rests on a 2.5 hectare hilltop above Angol in Barangay Manoc-Manoc, on Boracay Island, the Philippines. The prevailing atmosphere is one of serenity and tranquility. Mandala Spa & Villas is a tropical day spa and resort. The architecture blends Filipino elegance with its capiz doors and woven bamboo floors with Italian modernity, furnished with Italian bathroom fixtures. Sliding walls dissolve the barriers between the outdoors and indoors.

Mandala Spa & Villas Boracay

Tel: +63 036 288 5858

E-mail: reservations@mandalaspaspa.com

