

TimeOut

SINGAPORE



Noor Iskandar
Photographer

Glen Goel
Director

Rishi Naleendra
Chef



CALLING THE SHOTS

[A special issue guest-edited by
local experts in their field]

Agatha Lee
Retailer

Zurina Bryant
Barowner

Sam Lo
Artist



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IN THIS ISSUE...



Taking over

These six individuals present their Singapore

PAGE 11

Hello, Singapore



THIS SEPTEMBER, WE'RE are placing our pens back in their cases and leaving our Word documents blank. Instead, each feature in this issue is written by six guest editors, industry insiders from the worlds of food, drink, retail, travel, art and film. We have Rishi Naleendra, chef extraordinaire, bartending power couple Kamil Foltan and Zurina Bryant, eco-warrior Agatha Lee, spiritual sojourner Noor Iskandar, art rebel Sam Lo and auteur Glen Goei calling the shots. Read their stories on page 11.

Nicole-Marie Ng Editor

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Contents

Cities of light

Noor Iskandar's search for God through travel

PAGE 26



PHOTO: NOOR ISKANDAR



Variety: the spice of life

Rishi Naleendra celebrates Singapore's culinary diversity

PAGE 18



For art's sake

Sam Lo talks creativity and censorship

PAGE 28



PHOTO: REVENGE OF THE PONTIANK

Kindred spirits

Glen Goei on how horror movies create a bonding experience

PAGE 30

↓ FEATURES AND REGULARS

4 City life 11 Calling the shots 18 Food 22 Drink 24 Shopping
26 Travel 28 Art 30 Film 32 Everyone's Instagramming

Time Out
SINGAPORE

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MY SINGAPORE

Yuey Tan

Motor racer
@yuey_tan



PHOTO: YUEY TAN

BEHIND THE WHEEL, Yuey Tan reps the Lion City in motor races around the world. His love for fast cars and knack for making decisions in a flash helped him become the first Singaporean to secure the Class B title in the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia series in 2015. In the past decade he has also competed in 28 Formula 1 support races, four World Endurance Championship weekends and made a support race appearance in the Le Mans championship in Spa-Francorchamps.

Yuey and his wife, Claire Jedrek – also a race car driver – lead a high-octane life even off-track. They've just welcomed baby number two and plan on raising a new generation of racers. Splitting his time between being a husband, a father and a racer who's leading the Porsche Carrera Cup and gearing up for the Singapore Grand Prix (September 20 to 22), Yuey's life is on the fast lane.

Putting Singapore on the map

"As an event of global interest and scale, the Singapore Grand Prix is one of the most exciting parts of the year. It's also my 11th consecutive race on the Marina Bay Circuit. Nothing beats the feeling of racing on the streets of our fantastic city."

Started as a fan

I grew up in Adelaide where the Formula 1 World Championships season finale was held from 1985 to 1995. My interest in racing peaked during the golden era of Formula 1, watching the likes of Ayrton Senna, Nigel Mansell and Michael Schumacher.

Grooming future racers

We don't have a permanent racing circuit and there's a lot of education needed in order to understand the world of motorsport. We do have The Karting Arena at The Grandstand, which is a fun way to sample racing but it's not enough.

Not an easy sport

To get into racing, you have to understand the commercial side too. Choose the right racing series. Although I love driving the Porsche in the Carrera Cup Asia and Supercup, it also helps that Porsche has arguably the best marketing platform of any one-make series. Getting featured at some of the world's biggest racing events among top-level drivers is a great way to attract sponsors.

Top gear fitness

To stay fit in order to motor race, I head to Bukit Timah Hill or the trail at Chestnut Nature Park every week to mountain bike.

Family comes first

Now that Claire and I have kids, we focus more on bringing up our family although we'd like to do more seasons. We love taking them to the Botanic Gardens and water parks.

■ Interview by Cam Khalid



OVERHEARD IN SINGAPORE

"Why does Patrick look like a Beautyblender."

"If you want a submissive wife then just go to siam diu and find la."

"If you ever go keto, will we even be friends?"

"If a guy likes you, he will talk to you one. No need to try so hard."

"I made my boyfriend angry so he went to the living room to do HIIT."

"I really like Japanese stuff even though they invaded our country."

"They're going to have HDB at Keppel Bay leh. Can BTO there."

"All abs, no face – the catfish material is strong."

"If I could embezzle 50 million dollars and just go to jail for three years, I would totally do it. Super worth it."

TO DO

The best events around town this month

DON'T MISS

THINGS TO DO

Formula 1 Singapore Grand Prix

Sep 20-22

Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel aren't the only ones making noise during Formula 1 season. Feel the floor quake when headliners EDM supergroup Swedish House Mafia, Brit sci-fi rock masters Muse, and Cali funk-rockers Red Hot Chili Peppers take the stage alongside Gwen Stefani, Fatboy Slim and more.
→ The Padang, Connaught Dr. 📍 City Hall. From \$98.



Red Hot Chili Peppers



Silver Arts

THINGS TO DO

Silver Arts

Sep 5-29

Bond with your elders through a series of free arts programmes including film screenings, dance performances and concerts like *An Evening of Nanyin Jazz*. The diverse line-up features artists and performing arts groups from different cultural backgrounds, generations and abilities. The programmes are also available in English, Mandarin, Malay, Tamil and various Chinese dialects.
→ Various locations including the National Library Building and School of the Arts.

STAGE

Caught

Sep 10-Oct 6

First performed in San Francisco in 2016, *Caught* by Christopher Chen is an immersive theatrical experience held within an art exhibition. Throughout the course of the evening, you're introduced to Lin Bo, a Chinese fugitive who spent two years in a detention camp over a piece of art. But is everything as they seem? Question your ideas of power, authenticity and stereotypes as the mystery unfolds.
→ 2/F Miaja Gallery, 9 Muthuraman Chetty Rd. 📍 Fort Canning. From \$75.



The 1975

THINGS TO DO

Moonfest

Sep 13-15

Experience Chinese arts and culture at Esplanade's Mid-Autumn Festival as it returns with over 60 free programmes. Gather the entire brood for traditional street opera performances, shadow puppetry and the Lantern Walkabout.
→ 1 Esplanade Dr. 📍 Esplanade. Free-\$30.

MUSIC

The 1975

Sep 16

Matty Healy and gang are back with their celebrated third album *A Brief Inquiry Into Online Relationships*. The British quartet have grown from their '80s glossy, indie-pop roots to embrace a fuller sound.
→ The Star Theatre, 1 Vista Exchange Green. 📍 Buona Vista. From \$88.

STAGE

Joe Wong

China's funniest export Joe Wong is taking the mic for his debut show in Singapore. The self-titled 'All-American Immigrant' is known for his clever blend of Chinese-meets-American humour with punchlines that leave an impression. Captivating the likes of David Letterman and Ellen Degeneres, he also received a standing ovation at the White House Annual Correspondents' Dinner in 2010.
→ Capitol Theatre, 17 Stamford Rd. 📍 City Hall. \$108 and \$128.

and British East India Companies. The East Indies were the centre of the spice trade, comprising the Malay Peninsula and Indonesian Archipelago. But the European arrival is only a fraction of its longer history. Uncover the other factors at play leading up to the events of 1819 through this informative exhibition.
→ National Museum of Singapore, 93 Stamford Rd. 📍 Bencoolen. Free-\$15.



Joe Wong

ART

An Old New World: From the East Indies to the Founding of Singapore, 1600s - 1819

Sep 21-Mar 29 2020

Travel back in time to the bustling trading port of the East Indies that drew the attention of the Dutch

Ready to get CAUGHT?

You arrive at an art gallery. You get a drink. Soon you're chatting with new friends. You take in a specially curated exhibition. And then, you meet the fugitive, Lin Bo, a Chinese dissident who survived two years in a detention center.

His crime? A work of art.

You are now Lin's captive audience member; the only way his story can live on. But, every story has two sides: and, when the stakes are survival, who's to judge what's fact and what's fiction?

Your evening is just beginning.

Welcome to *CAUGHT*, SRT's ground-breaking socially-immersive experience, where the play is the party, and the party is the play.

Conceptualised and directed by
ED SYLVANUS ISKANDAR

Written by
CHRISTOPHER CHEN

From 10 Sep 2019 | Miaja Gallery
Tickets from www.srt.com.sg

CORPORATE PARTNERS: CapitaLand, Deloitte
OFFICIAL CAR: Audi



PHOTO: ARCHIFEST 2019

Archifest

THINGS TO DO
Archifest

Sep 27-Oct 9

Explore the city's urban environment and celebrate all things architecture and design at Archifest. This year, it's all about craft – discover the handiwork behind the architectural marvels around you and how they add vibrancy to our city. Go beyond with talks, exhibitions, tours and workshops and see the art of construction in a different light.

→ Various locations including the URA Centre, 45 Maxwell Rd. 📍 Tanjong Pagar. Free-\$15.

STAGE
The Try Guys

Sep 28

Let The Try Guys (of *Buzzfeed* fame) – Keith, Ned, Zach and Eugene – prove their status as 'Legends Of The Internet'. They're bringing their signature brand of 'trying everything and anything' to life at the Star Theatre this month. Unedited and

unfiltered, the quartet reimagine all the viral content you love in this interactive show.

→ The Star Theatre, 1 Vista Exchange Green. 📍 Buona Vista. \$98-\$298.



The Try Guys

Find more awesome events at timeout.com/singapore/things-to-do.

FIND ME A DATE

These city kids ditched Tinder and let us play matchmaker. Here's a blow-by-blow account of their blind date...



← **AMANDA, 25**

Works as a communications executive

WHY SHE'S SINGLE "I think I haven't met the right one yet."

IDEAL DATE "Dinner, drinks and lots of good conversation."

LUKE, 23 →

Works as a creative producer

WHY HE'S SINGLE "I've been so focused on work lately that my relationships fizzle out after a while. It's a struggle for me to maintain that work-life balance."

IDEAL DATE "Chilling on the couch with a tub of ice cream while we watch and make fun of awful movies."

"He was chill and laid-back, rather soft-spoken and shy."

FIRST IMPRESSION

"She's kind. I was running errands the whole day and misread the time so I arrived late. She told me not to worry without a hint of annoyance."

"I think as the date progressed, it got a bit better."

CHEMISTRY

"We had great chemistry. A lot of laughing and we played along with each others' dumb jokes."

"He was late, but he made up for it by putting in effort to keep the conversation flowing."

AWKWARD MOMENT

"Besides the initial moment where I was late, none at all. Even when we had nothing to say, we were comfortable sitting in silence."

"We went to grab more drinks at CHIJMES, which is nearby."

AFTERWARDS

"We headed to a nearby bar to continue our date. We exchanged numbers after and plan to meet up again over the weekend!"

♥♥♥♥♥ "He's friendly, gentlemanly, open and makes conversation. It was a good date and I wouldn't mind a second."

VERDICT

♥♥♥♥♥ "Amanda's a great conversationalist and listener. She's hella funny too."

HOT SPOT

Our daters had a meal at **Tablescape**



THE ATMOSPHERE

"It was very fancy and quiet, the head waiter, Derek was wonderful."
– Amanda



THE FOOD

"The beef cheek was really enjoyable. It had the right tenderness and was absolutely delicious."
– Luke



THE DRINKS

"We just had the house red which complemented the food really well."
– Amanda

→ 10 Coleman St. 📍 City Hall.

SPONSORED FEATURE

STAGE da:ns festival 2019

Oct 10-20

Bringing the world's best dancers and productions to Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, da:ns festival returns in October for its 14th edition. Whether you're a dance lover or dipping your (pointe) toes into the scene for the first time, the 11-day festival will open your mind, lift your spirit, and get your body moving with a series of performances and workshops.

The world's most revered dance productions and artists take centre stage at Esplanade Theatre. Catch international ballet superstar Carlos Acosta as he brings his Cuban dance company Acosta Danza to Singapore for the first time on October 10 and 11. Celebrated UK

choreographer Hofesh Shechter's *Grand Finale* on Oct 18 and 19 is spectacularly bold, full of anarchic energy and cinematic atmosphere. The production's many accolades includes a nomination for an Olivier Award in 2018.

For intimate and thought-provoking works, Eisa Jocson hijacks Disney's *Snow White* to reveal deeper layers to the beloved character, while Raimund Hoghe challenges notions of beauty in *Pas de Deux*. Finally, don't miss award-winning street crews from USA, Japan and Taiwan, as they go *FULL OUT!* in a celebration of street dance.

If you think you can da:ns, take part in masterclasses by the Hofesh Shechter Company or the dancers from *FULL OUT!*

Secure your front row seats by contacting the Esplanade Box Office at 6828 8389 or email boxoffice@esplanade.com.
→ 1 Esplanade Dr. 📍 Esplanade. Free-\$100.



Carlos Acosta

PHOTO: JOHAN PERSSON

NEIGHBOURHOOD GUIDE

Queenstown

There's so much more to this 'hood than its royal name. *By Cam Khalid.*
Illustration by Ngo Ha Le

BESIDES HAWKER HAUNTS, budget buys and hidden gems, Queenstown is also home to a couple of firsts in Singapore – think satellite town, public library and housing estates. Named after Queen Elizabeth II, the area was formerly a swampy valley that Hokkien, Teochew and Hakka settlers called home before the British military set up camp at Alexandra Road. During the 50s, it was cleared to make way for housing estates. And with that brought plenty of things to eat, drink, see and do.

1 WESSEX ESTATE

Not all of Queenstown's British past has been demolished, some black-and-white colonial houses still exist in scenic Wessex Estate. Stroll past blocks of apartments and semi-detached houses that were previously occupied by non-commissioned British officers and soldiers. Today, these houses are mostly residential, with some transformed into studio spaces for artists.

→ 25 Woking Rd. Commonwealth.

2 COLBAR

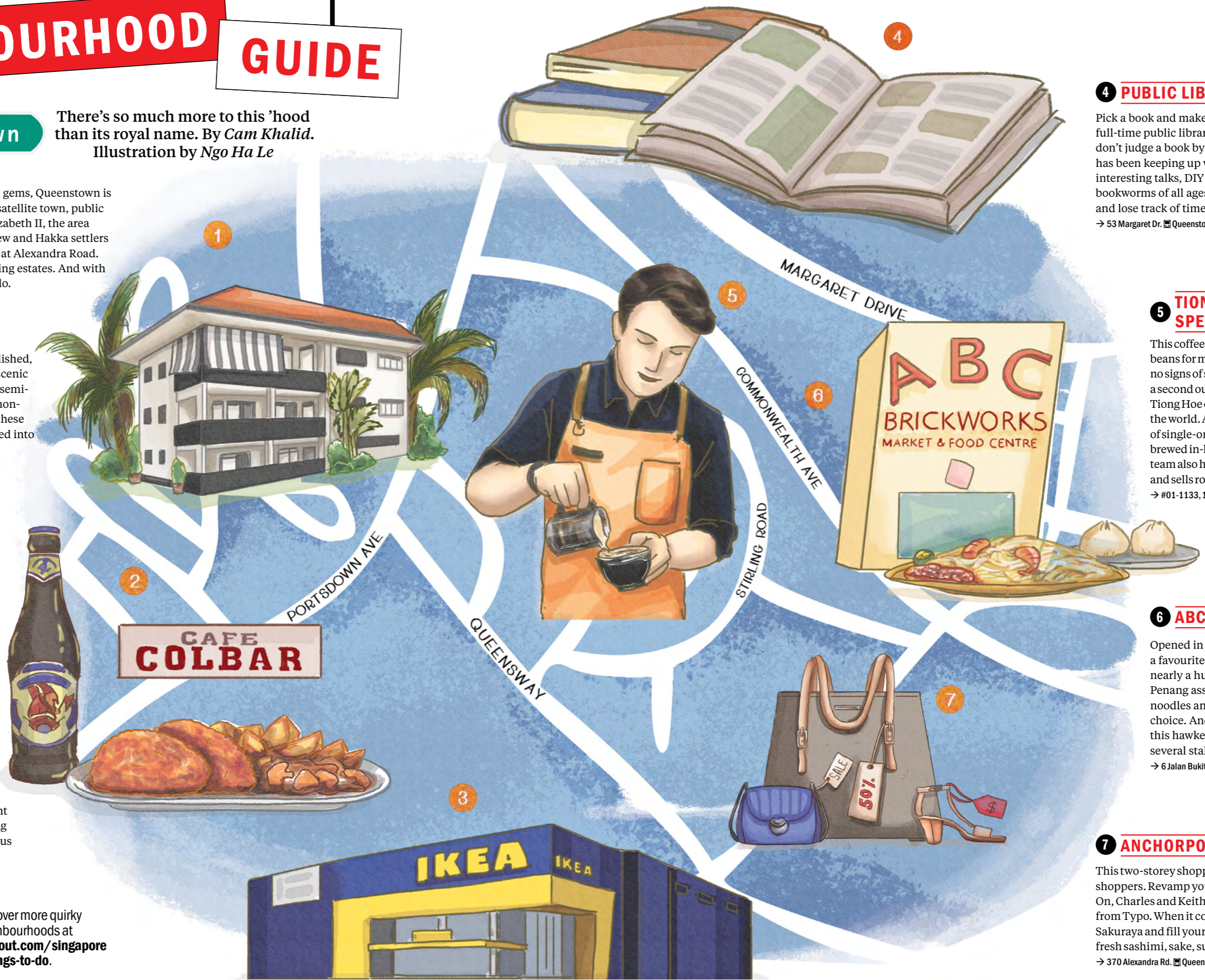
Did you know that Colbar is short for 'Colonial Bar'? This old-school kopitiam used to be a canteen for the British Army when it first opened in 1953. Back then it served a selection of British beers and Asian-Western comfort food. Now, its menu has expanded to include curry, Chinese dishes, sweet treats and milkshakes. Regulars swear by its prawn cocktail (\$11) and T-Bone steak with chips and peas (\$25).

→ 9A Whitchurch Rd. Commonwealth.

3 IKEA

Switch up your home essentials for new ones from the Swedish furniture giant. While you're at it, check out the showrooms for ideas to jazz up your crib. If all that shopping worked up an appetite, stop by the restaurant for Swedish meatballs with mash and broccoli, starting from \$6. It also has local dishes like mee siam, mee rebus or carrot cake at \$2.50 a pop.

→ 317 Alexandra Rd. Queenstown.



4 PUBLIC LIBRARY QUEENSTOWN

Pick a book and make yourself comfy at Singapore's first full-time public library that's chock-full of nostalgia. But don't judge a book by its cover – this 49-year-old library has been keeping up with the times, hosting new titles, interesting talks, DIY sessions and movie screenings for bookworms of all ages to enjoy. Go on, get lost in a book and lose track of time.

→ 53 Margaret Dr. Queenstown.

5 TIONG HOE SPECIALITY COFFEE

This coffee joint has been roasting and brewing beans for more than half a century and shows no signs of slowing down. In fact, it just opened a second outlet within FairPrice Xtra VivoCity. Tiong Hoe offers beans and blends from all over the world. Ask for a brew from its rotational range of single-origin coffee beans roasted, ground and brewed in-house. Can't get enough coffee? The team also hosts coffee appreciation workshops and sells roasted and raw beans.

→ #01-1133, 170 Stirling Rd. Queenstown.

6 ABC BRICKWORKS

Opened in 1974, ABC Brickworks has long been a favourite among Westies for hawker food. With nearly a hundred stalls offering everything from Penang assam laksa and Hokkien mee to prawn noodles and oyster omelette, you're spoilt for choice. And if late-night hunger pangs kick in, this hawker centre makes a great supper spot as several stalls open past 11pm.

→ 6 Jalan Bukit Merah. Redhill.

7 ANCHORPOINT

This two-storey shopping centre is a gem for bargain-savvy shoppers. Revamp your wardrobe with steals from Cotton On, Charles and Keith and Pedro, or stock up on stationery from Typo. When it comes to food, head to Fish Mart Sakuraya and fill your shopping basket with Japanese rice, fresh sashimi, sake, sushi and more.

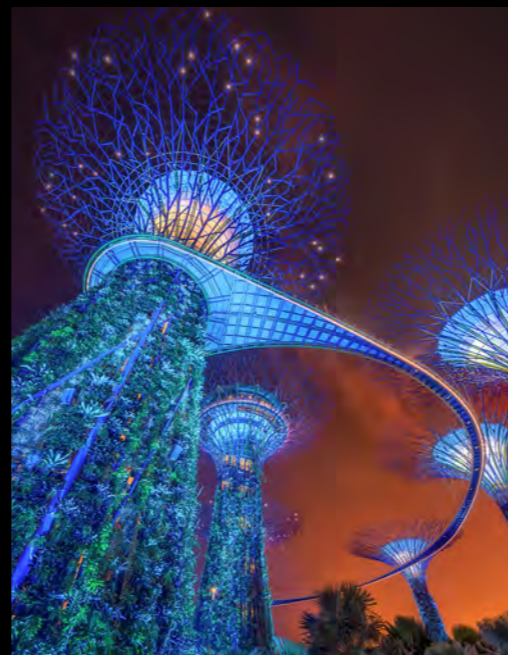
→ 370 Alexandra Rd. Queenstown.



Scan to watch our neighbourhood guide to Queenstown.

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TimeOut
SINGAPORE

Calling the shots

A chef, bar owner, retailer, photographer, artist and filmmaker walk into a studio... And write a magazine



By Cam Khalid, Delfina Utomo, Dewi Nurjuwita and Nicole-Marie Ng. Photography by Ahmad Iskandar



Rishi Naleendra

Chef-owner of Cloudstreet

LIKE MOST CHEFS, Rishi's first job in a kitchen was washing dishes. Soon, he moved up the ranks to become a pizza maker at Lindos in Melbourne, where he met his wife Manuela Toniolo, who continues to work with him today. He's cooked in acclaimed kitchens like Tetsuya's and Yellow by Brent Savage in Sydney but he's always wanted something more. "I love cooking," he says, "but my real passion is restaurants – the food, drinks, music, ambience – you get to be involved with everything you want in life."

He moved to Singapore five years ago to chase the dream of opening his own place. His first local stint was at Maca Restaurant, a pop-up located at the basement of Tanglin Post Office. It was there that he met restaurateur and hotelier Loh Lik Peng, the founding director of Unlisted Collection. Together, they opened Cheek by Jowl on Boon Tat Street in 2016. The restaurant was a triumph,

WORDS OF WISDOM:

“Work under the best people and learn from their work ethic. And not just for six months or a year. When opportunities come, grab them.”

pulling crowds with its novel modern-Australian flavours, earning one Michelin star and plenty of other accolades along the way. Dream fulfilled,

goal achieved, mission accomplished – one might think. But not Rishi. In February this year, he closed Cheek by Jowl, making way for Cheek Bistro – a casual concept with a pocket-friendlier à la carte menu that still draws from CBJ's identity.

In July, he opened Cloudstreet on the buzzing stretch of Amoy, just one street over from Cheek Bistro. "I've matured a lot," says Rishi. "The food is a lot more focused now compared to what I was doing before

but the best thing about Cloudstreet is the team. We have people who love the industry like Gareth Burnett who brings knowledge, skills and professionalism that money can't buy. Our sommelier Vinodhan Veloo has created a wine list that's the most impressive thing I've seen in recent memory. Melissa Ong, our pastry chef has an insane work ethic. I like to think that I work hard, but she'll do anything to get what she wants on a plate. I get to work with a lot of talented individuals and it makes me question if I'm pushing myself hard enough."

Evidently, running a restaurant is more than just cooking. It's running a financially viable business. "It doesn't matter how good the restaurant is if it doesn't make money," he says. "My first goal is to survive the initial year. This is a long-term project that could make my career but I don't think it'll break my career. Even if it doesn't work, I'll start all over again. I won't stop till I get to where I want."

→Read Rishi's food feature on page 18.



Kamil Foltan & Zurina Bryant

Co-owners of IB HQ

ON SEPTEMBER 8, IB HQ, a cosy second-storey bar along North Bridge Road celebrates its one-year anniversary. It's no mean feat in Singapore's highly competitive food and drink landscape, especially in the face of people drinking less and adopting a healthier lifestyle.

But for some reason, barflies keep hovering around this particular spot. It could be because Kamil – an industry veteran who has worked at the likes of The Black Swan, Tippling Club, Open Door Policy and Potato Head – has a repertoire of over 100 drinks he can whip up as long as he has the ingredients. Or it could be credited to Zurina's marketing efforts, fostering strong ties within the industry to organise guest shifts and events never before seen in Singapore, like one fuelled by girl power during International Women's Day. But ultimately, at IB HQ, it always comes back to flavour.

It's been the case ever since the duo founded indigenousofbar.com, a website dedicated to flavours and ingredients from this part of the world. "I had lots of notes scattered everywhere around the house, Zurina got annoyed at the mess," laughs Kamil. "The blog talks about the history and uses of ingredients and provides a cocktail recipe you can try at home." Its first post back in October 2016 was on cascara, or coffee cherry skin, an ingredient Kamil came across while he was working on a project in Hong Kong.

In 2017, they decided to bring the website to life through a series of pop-ups at local bars like Native, Junior and Operation Dagger. "After a year of pop-ups, people were asking us about what we were going to do next," says Zurina. "So we

came up with a proposal and started looking for people to invest in the bar."

A year later, the Indigenous Bartender Headquarters, IB HQ, finally opened. Their focus on regional ingredients and flavours still remain. "If it wasn't for Zurina I'd be working in a corporate role," says Kamil. "She encouraged me to start the website and has given me a lot of support and inspiration to go for my dream. The fact that we're still here after a year is a big success for us."

→Read their drink feature on page 22.

WORDS OF WISDOM:

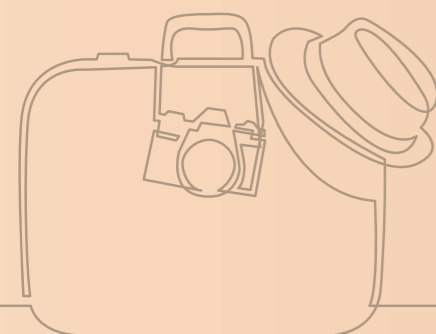
“Choose the right location and the right partner. As a couple, we don't talk about work at all on Sundays.”





Noor Iskandar

Photographer



ON THE SURFACE, Noor Iskandar might seem like just another a traveller, photographer, writer, or even Instagram influencer. But to put him in a box would be unjust as the breadth of his work covers a much deeper, wider scope. “Some people ask me if I’m a traveller or tourist. I prefer the term spiritual sojourner,” he tells us.

The multidisciplinary artist, researcher and adjunct professor holds a Masters of Arts from Nanyang Technological University, and delves deep into Islamic aesthetics and spirituality through his work. These topics are explored through visual culture, heritage studies, practice-led research, and first-hand travel.

Iskandar has made waves in the arts scene both locally and abroad. His works have been exhibited in London, Valencia, Belfast and Bandung. In 2013, he was selected to be part of the World Islamic Economic Forum’s Marketplace of Creative Arts.

“This was all brand new to me then,” recalls Iskandar. “I got to meet artists from around the world who immersed themselves in Islamic art, which is rarely seen in Singapore. They had a

love for everyone, there were no differences. It was then that I decided I needed to travel and gain a deeper understanding of religion.”

Since then, he’s been travelling solo to exotic destinations like Iran, India, Turkey, and the Balkans, realising his goal to travel to 27 countries by 27. With his experiences, the places he’s been to, and the people he’s met on his journey as his muse, he published his first poetry book *For[GOD]* in 2016.

His accolades do not stop there. Iskandar won the prestigious Kwek Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Still Photography (2014) and the Goh Chok Tong Mendaki Youth Promise Award (2016/2017) for his contributions towards the arts in Singapore within the Malay and Muslim community. This is a name you should watch out for.

→Read Iskandar’s travel feature on page 26.

WORDS OF WISDOM:

“Rumi once said: ‘The wound is the place where the light enters you’. I started this journey with that quote in mind. It is so poignant.”

Calling the shots

WORDS OF WISDOM:

“When you slow down, you start to realise the value of certain things in life.”



Agatha Lee

Co-founder of The Green Collective SG



Danielle Champagne (left) and Agatha Lee (right)

WHEN IT COMES to eco-warriors in Singapore, Agatha Lee is in the front line leading the charge. A co-founder of Singapore’s first multi-brand green lifestyle store, The Green Collective SG, Agatha’s contributions to the conscious-living movement run deep, way before sustainability and metal straws became buzzwords in the retail space.

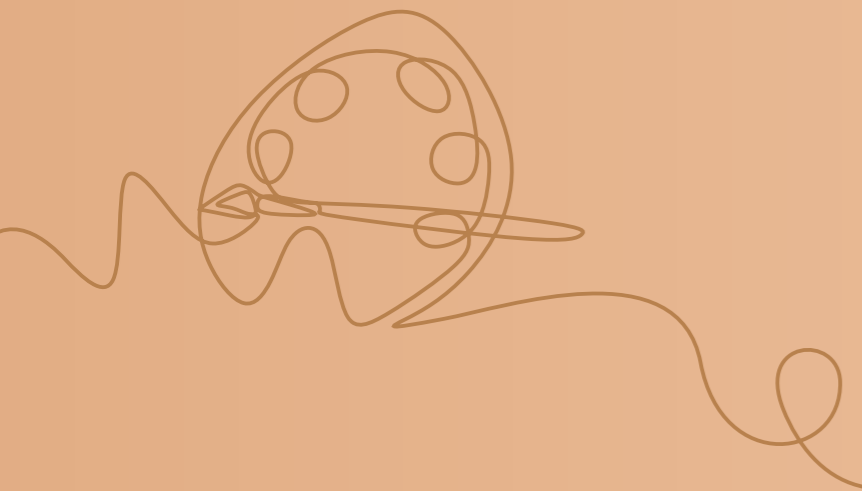
A former senior policy executive at the National Environment Agency, Agatha left her job of more than 10 years to pursue her goal of bringing positive change to society. Using her experience as a policymaker to shape and encourage green living in Singapore – the self-confessed clothes lover has married her passions at The Green Collective SG.

Working off the fashion industry’s notoriously unsustainable and exploitative practices – mindless consumption, clothes made by low-wage workers – Agatha wants us to appreciate textiles in a different way. Some of her key projects include upcycling, where she transforms fabrics into creative wearables. She also creates textile collages and interesting patterns through free-motion embroidery. On top of her creative projects, this environmental scientist and textile artist also set up Connected Threads Asia in 2015, a non-profit platform to raise awareness about sustainable fashion.

Over the years through her work, Agatha met like-minded creatives, which eventually resulted in The Green Collective SG. There are four co-founders: Danielle Champagne who runs a sustainable fashion brand Zhai Eco; Mayur Singh of Coopita, an organisation that works with regional artisans to preserve traditional crafts; Adel Ng who also utilises textile waste in her creations; and of course, Agatha, still in love with textiles, still fighting the good fight.

→Read Agatha’s shopping feature on page 24.





Sam Lo

Artist

IN 2012, SAM Lo skyrocketed to fame as the “Sticker Lady”. Her name was plastered on local newspapers and social media outlets after her run-in with the law for pasting stickers with commonly-used Singaporean words and phrases on traffic lights and in public areas.

Call it fate, a stroke of luck or a fortunate turn of events, but that incident kickstarted her career in art. Seven years later, Sam is a freelance artist and creative director for global art and design company Culturement, where she curates art for various campaigns.

Sam’s works range from murals and sculptures to digital campaigns and content creation for some of the world’s biggest brands such as Rimowa, Adidas, Nike, and Red Bull. She has also fronted local campaigns with Singapore Tourism Board, Sentosa, Singapore River One, The Singapore Zoo, National University Hospital and OCBC.

In her light-filled home studio in Tampines, she lays out pieces for her latest collaboration. Sprawled on her walls are contemporary artworks by fellow artists. Her work space is her balcony, where she stores her arsenal of creative tools: water colours, wheat paste, and spray paint. Truly an artist’s abode.

However, being an artist was never her top career choice. “I only started doing art professionally in 2012 due to the circumstances. Prior to that, I was running an online magazine that documented Singapore’s artists and creatives. Having interviewed them, I thought to myself: ‘wow this is really tough and I’m not going to be able to do this,’” she shares.

In retrospect, creative work is something she has always been destined to do. “Even before I started doing art professionally, I was studying design, running the magazine, and also honing my skills on the side, so it comes naturally to me,” Sam adds.

While she notoriously started out as a street artist, Sam now balances client projects while still creating street art, which she says helps ground her as an artist. “When I create street art, I feel alive because the whole world is my playground. I crave that. When it comes to commercial work, I have to tame that part of myself but still use the technical skills I have in order to execute a piece and earn a living.”

→ Read Sam’s art feature on page 26.



Glen Goei

Director

GLEN GOEI IS no stranger to Singapore’s film scene. The award-winning director’s repertoire extends from film to plays and musicals, even doubling as the co-artistic director of local theatre company Wild Rice. In his breakout role as M. Butterfly – opposite Anthony Hopkins – in the eponymous 1989 West End production in London, he earned an Olivier Award-nomination for Best Newcomer for his performance.

Glen’s transition from theatre to film came about a decade later when he returned to Singapore. The desire to nurture and grow the local film scene – which was close to non-existent in the 90s – brought forth his first feature in 1997, *Forever Fever*, which he wrote, produced and directed. It was the first local film to be screened at the prestigious Sundance Film Festival and went

on to achieve an international commercial release.

Projecting the Singapore experience on the silver screen, Glen uses film to ignite conversations surrounding topics like the death penalty. In *Yellow Flowers* – written by *Off Centre* playwright Haresh Sharma – a single mother is put on death row for unwittingly smuggling drugs.

In his most recent work, *Revenge of the Pontianak*, he explores the supernatural world and local folklore. “I like to tell my story using different mediums, and with film, you can reach out to a wider audience,” he says.

Revenge of the Pontianak marks Glen’s return to the big screen since the release of his 2009 murder mystery *The Blue Mansion*. Co-directed with Malaysian actor and director Gavin Yap, it looks at Southeast Asia’s most famous horror icon but humanises her with a romantic storyline. Unlike his previous full-length features, the horror flick is performed in Malay, a nod to the golden age of filmmaking in Singapore before the 70s, the era where iconic Pontianak films were first produced by Cathay-Keris and Shaw.

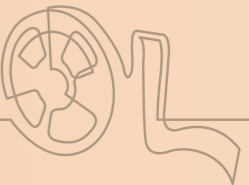
“I grew up on Pontianak stories. Singapore and the Pontianak folklore is such an important part of Southeast Asian mythology, culture and heritage. I think it’s important that the younger generation gets to see Pontianak films done with a contemporary lens,” he adds.

Truth be told the film scene in Singapore is still behind its neighbouring countries. By filming *Revenge of the Pontianak* in Malay, Glen hopes to reach audiences in Malaysia and Indonesia. “Horror films are easier to cross different audiences because horror films tell stories through visuals rather than dialogue. In Singapore, we’ve grown up on a diet of Asian horror films from Japan, Korea and Thailand. Therefore, there’s an opportunity for *Revenge of the Pontianak* to reach out beyond our shores.”

→ Read Glen’s film feature on page 26.

WORDS OF WISDOM:

“Write about what you know, who you are and your experiences because no one else can tell those stories except you.”



WORDS OF WISDOM:

“Your ideas will always change. Adapt and they’ll be better than before.”



Food

Edited by Nicole-Marie Ng

Melting pot

Celebrating Singapore's culinary diversity, regardless of race, language or religion.
By Rishi Naleendra

I WAS BORN into a civil war. In Sri Lanka, the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils were killing each other over a political agenda. I believe that there is no country where people ask for war and no country where people want racism.

Growing up Sinhalese in Colombo, we never hated Tamil people and Tamil people never hated us. My dad can speak fluent Tamil and we'd go to Indian restaurants all the time. We'd celebrate special occasions with all our neighbours, be it Hari Raya, Deepavali or Christmas.

If we were all from the same race, if we had the same beliefs, and if we ate the same food – how boring would the world be? Our differences make things exciting. We are stronger as one human race that shares a lot of different cultures and traditions. It's about toasting to diversity. And Singapore is one of the best places to do that.

DELICIOUS DIFFERENCES

We all love prata in the morning. I get mine from an Indian couple Mr and Mrs Mohgan's at Joo Chiat Road. If I don't feel like going too far, I get Tai Wah bak chor mee from Hong Lim, which is close to my home in Chinatown. For special occasions, I treat myself to Peking duck at Imperial Treasure or a Peranakan feast at Candlenut. When I'm missing Australia, I pop by The Lokal on Neil Road for vegemite on toast.

In my cooking, I incorporate Japanese influences that I picked up when my time in Tetsuya's. At Cloudstreet, I reinterpret the Sri Lankan flavours I grew up with. At Cheek by Jowl I used laksa leaves and green chilli in a dessert



Chef Rishi

based on the food I've tried in Singapore. Can you imagine a world where people only eat or cook dishes from their own cultures? The restaurant industry is one of the best examples of how we benefit from the heterogeneity of Singapore's population. And people should think about what they'd be missing out on the next time they tell a foreigner to "go back where you came from".

PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS

I'm a brown face and yes, I had to work harder than a lot of people to get where I am. On the other hand, who doesn't have to if you want to be at the top of your game. In one of my first jobs as a head chef, I was once told that the restaurant couldn't market me. I was very upset. I took myself out of the situation, went home and had a good think about what I wanted to do. I didn't wallow in self-pity about the colour of my skin or where I came from. I chose to push myself and prove to everyone that I have what it takes.

I've been in kitchens where I'm the only brown

"Race doesn't matter. If you think you're not successful because of your race, you're wrong."

person on the team. People already have expectations of what I can and cannot do. But I don't think it's just me, we are all born into a world where society has already decided what we should be doing and how we should be doing things. You should use this to your advantage, it's a chance to take people by surprise, and this gives you an edge.

RISING ABOVE

Race doesn't matter. If you think you're not successful because of your race, you're wrong. I've been a minority my entire adult life but I've never used it as



an excuse, only a motivator. Vinodhan Veloo, my sommelier at Cloudstreet has worked in restaurants like Odette because he's put in the time and effort to learn everything there is to know about wine. Vijay Mudaliar from Native runs one of the best bars in the world. He's learnt from some of the best in the industry and pushed himself. Haikal Johari from Michelin-starred Alma shows up in the kitchen every day despite being wheelchair-bound from his motorcycle accident. Don't make excuses. No one is going to make your life better, the only person that can do that is you.

Sometimes, you have to learn to see the funny side of things. If you're going to be offended by everything, you'll never be happy. We all meet people who are close-minded and ignorant. Just don't let them get to you. Channel your anger to do something creative, have a discussion about it, make things better. Angry arguments on the internet won't get us anywhere. If we could all have a conversation – preferably over a meal with all our different cuisines – then I think we can move forward together as a society.

→ 84 Amoy St. ■ Tanjong Pagar.



Kohlrabi, nori and scallop rolls

RISHI RECOMMENDS



↑ Candlenut

Modern Peranakan food by local chef Malcolm Lee.
→ 17A Dempsey Rd. ■ Orchard.

Muthu's Curry

For claypot fish head curry in the heart of Little India.
→ #01-01, 138 Race Course Rd. ■ Little India.

Mr and Mrs Mohgan's Super Crispy Roti Prata

A breakfast staple done right by a prata power couple.
→ 300 Joo Chiat Rd. ■ Eunos.

Tai Wah Pork Noodle

Bak chor mee by the younger brother of Michelin-starred Hill Street Tai Hwa Pork Noodle.
→ #02-16, 531A Upper Cross St. ■ Chinatown.

Imperial Treasure Super Peking Duck

For Peking duck with all the trimmings and excellent Chinese dishes.
→ #05-42/45, Paragon, 290 Orchard Rd. ■ Orchard.

The Lokal

Australian brunch and comfort food in a relaxed café setting.
→ 136 Neil Rd. ■ Outram Park.

RVLT

Natural wines and unpretentious food.
→ #01-01, 38 Carpenter St. ■ Clarke Quay.

Find more food recommendations at [timeout.com/singapore/restaurants](https://www.timeout.com/singapore/restaurants)

HAWKER SPOTLIGHT

Jia Xiang

A love for cooking has kept the stoves of this mee siam stall warm for the past 50 years.
By Fabian Loo

IT'S 3PM AT Redhill Food Centre and the lunchtime crowd has finally abated. At long last, Chen Mei Ying, the 64-year-old who runs Jia Xiang, can take break. She's been on her feet since 11am, serving bowls of her famed mee siam (\$3) to customers who have travelled from as far as Bedok and Whampoa.

But sipping on coffee is not on Mei Ying's agenda – even in her downtime, she chooses to busy herself behind the stove. The tireless lady uses the respite from preparing orders to get right back to cooking. "I'm making shallot oil for my soups and noodles," she says while peeling a handful of purple shallots.

"I love to cook," she adds.

It's no surprise then that Mei Ying insists on preparing everything by hand. From the broth right down to sambal, she makes each bowl precisely the way her mother taught her. The mee siam comes crowned with a generous sprinkle of fried omelette, a hard-boiled egg, bean sprouts, fried flour puffs – crispier than the usual tofu puff, but equally adept at soaking up the gravy – and a dollop of homemade hae bee hiam sambal. It's a bowl you won't find anywhere else, and the reason why her customers come back again and again. Her other signature dish, lontong sayur lodeh (\$3), a humble vegetable curry that fills you up with soft cabbage and rice cakes, also has its fans.

Mei Ying grew up in the kitchen. Her father had passed away when she was six and her mother became a hawker to support her family of four. To make ends meet, Mei Ying dropped



Chen Mei Ying

LOCAL DISH OF THE MONTH



out of school to help. "I liked to study, but I didn't have the chance," she shares. While her peers were learning algebra and geography, she was busy studying the art of cooking instead: frying bee hoon, balancing the gravy and chopping up each garnish.

Fast forward to today, Mei Ying has been keeping the stoves at Jia Xiang warm for over 50 years. But being a seasoned cook doesn't make it any easier. "It's tough being a hawker," she says. "I have no time, and my children do not want to take over." She tried passing down the recipe

to her two sons, but the long working hours and demanding conditions put them off after a year. "I think it's a pity," she sighs.

The enterprising hawker has one hope for the younger generation: that more of them start learning time-honoured recipes from the older generation before it's too late.

But even without potential successors and the gruelling working conditions, Mei Ying has no plans to retire just yet. "I rather work till I cannot do it anymore," she says resolutely.

→ #01-35, Redhill Food Centre, 85 Redhill Ln. Redhill.

3 QUESTIONS with Chen Mei Ying

1. What makes a good bowl of mee siam?
It must have a good balance of sour, sweet, and spice.

2. How has the hawker scene changed over the years?
The recipes and dishes of the older generation are slowly disappearing. You cannot find the same traditional,

nostalgic flavours that we used to have anymore. I hope to see more young people learning these recipes.

3. Have you ever thought of selling anything else?
I only sell mee siam and lontong. Just making these two dishes is enough to keep me busy. There are a lot of steps.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Beurre

→ 23 Bukit Pasoh Rd. Outram Park.



BUTTER PLAYS AN essential role in every kitchen – served cold with bread, cooked in a curry, baked in a cake or simply melted down till golden amber, lending a rich, toasted flavour to anything it touches. At Beurre, butter is so important, the restaurant is named after it.

Which is surprising, then, that the ingredient doesn't feature as prominently as we'd expect on the menu. For a place that is "driven by a love for butter", the creamy spread is strangely hidden from the spotlight. We struggle to understand its relationship with the dairy product. The love is vague – clandestine even. It sneaks onto your plate – in some dishes more obvious than others.

The offerings in which butter is the most conspicuous – because it's stated explicitly on the menu – are also the least exciting. The escargot (\$18) is easily forgettable, drowned in an overpowering pool of brown butter and truffle mousse. The Wagyu chuck (\$28) comes with a similar brown butter truffle mousseline, braised onions, and a lotus chip. While the beef comes perfectly cooked, albeit a little tough, the nutty profile you'd expect



Wagyu chuck



Unagi mantou

IT IS...
A modern-European restaurant in a quiet love affair with butter

TRY THIS...
The umami capellini served with caviar, creamy uni, and an XO emulsion

from the sauce is once again lost to the pungent truffle.

Surprisingly, it is in dishes where butter sneaks in – and is left out of the menu description – that leave the biggest impression. The French omelette (\$18) is pillowy soft, and comes studded with crab cooked in a lobster bisque. It is simple, elegant, and flavoured deeply by crustacean. There is also the pork (\$24), served with a curious mix of salted popcorn, sweetcorn puree, and a spicy Sichuan gremolata that leaves us equal parts fascinated and confused. The same can be said about the unagi mantou (\$18). Eel is

grilled over charcoal, broken up into small pieces and served with cubes of deep-fried mantou. Tossed with sakura fish floss and baby shrimp, its textural variation makes this dish a party in the mouth.

If you plan on ending your meal on a sweet note, the restaurant has only two desserts to choose from. Drop the strawberry shortcake (\$14) and go for the peanut butter tart (\$14) with toasted almonds and caramel ice cream instead. Our advice? Skip the otherwise safe sweets and order another main. The capellini (\$26) is an umami tangle of caviar, creamy uni, and a spicy XO emulsion that makes slurping it up as smooth as butter.

The love story between butter and food at Beurre is not one that is grand and intimate. It is, however, a quiet affair; a modest nod to the humble ingredient. But if this is the love story that it hopes to tell (and sell), the restaurant needs to turn sparks into fireworks. ■ Fabian Loo

Read more restaurant reviews at timeout.com/singapore/restaurants

HOT TABLES

New restaurants across towns



↑ Sushiro

Japan's highest-earning conveyor belt chain makes its Southeast Asian debut at Tiong Bahru. Look forward to fresh and affordable plates of sushi such as tuna (\$2.20) and yellowtail (\$3.20). There are unique creations too like the octopus with basil cheese (\$3.20) and the roasted pork with green onion (\$2.20).

→ #02-118, Tiong Bahru Plaza, 302 Tiong Bahru Rd. Tiong Bahru.

Mimi

Step into the oldest building in Clarke Quay and venture to the second floor. Word on the street: this used to be the headquarters of the Ghee Hok Society triad. Now, it's a swanky Chinese-fusion restaurant serving playful dishes inspired by its shadowy past like deep-fried pork ribs marinated in Guinness stout (\$20) and mala Kurobuta pork potstickers (\$12).

→ #01-02, 3A River Valley Rd. Clarke Quay.

Starter Lab

A popular bakery from Bali, Starter Lab, is now baking its signature sourdough bread in the heartlands. Seven different variations of sourdough, along with some other baked treats keep the ovens busy. Choose from signatures like the honey mascarpone toast (\$14).

→ 721 Havelock Rd. Tiong Bahru.

Drink

One-way ticket to flavour town

Southeast Asian flavours in cocktails you can try making at home. By *Kamil Foltan* and *Zurina Bryant*



Kamil Foltan and Zurina Bryant

WHAT FIRST STARTED as an online diary to document the ingredients we've come across in Asia – sharing knowledge and recipes along the way – has evolved into a shophouse space. The indigenous bartender ethos has been and will always be the same: a passion for flavours, respect for cultures and showcasing Singapore with tipples that represent this amazing culinary city. We still highlight regional produce – but now in cocktails our guests can immediately smell and taste. To give you an example of what we do at IB HQ, here are three cocktail recipes inspired by our local culture that you can try shaking up at home.

→ 774A North Bridge Rd. 📍 Bugis.



MAHARAJA

A twist on the classic negroni made with curry leaf-infused gin contrasted with fruity notes of jackfruit. Inspired by gulai nangka.

INGREDIENTS:

40ml Curry-leaf infused gin. 20ml Jackfruit bitters. 15ml Sweet vermouth.



1. CURRY LEAF GIN: Combine 20g of curry leaf together with 200g gin in a jar and sous vide at 57.5C for two hours. Once infused, strain, bottle and label for future use.



2. JACKFRUIT BITTERS: Combine 20g of fresh jackfruit (seeds removed) with 200g Campari in a jar for 24 hours. Once infused, strain, bottle, label for future use.



3. MAHARAJA: Combine all three ingredients in a glass over ice and stir gently. Strain into a chilled glass and garnish with a deep-fried curry leaf.



IB COLADA

An ode to Singapore, this cocktail is an unexpected combination of flavours that somehow work well together.

INGREDIENTS:

50ml Parsnip vodka. 5ml Pineapple caramel. 25ml Coconut cream. 25ml Buntan.



1. PARSNIP VODKA: Combine 80g peeled, thinly sliced, butter-toasted parsnip with 400g vodka in a jar for 24 hours. Once infused, strain, bottle and label for future use.



2. PINEAPPLE CARAMEL: Measure 200g caster sugar and 150g fresh pineapple juice. Caramelize sugar with 30g pineapple juice till mahogany brown. Pour in remaining juice and stir till incorporated.



3. IB COLADA: Combine all the ingredients into a two-piece shaker with ice, shake till cold and strain over a chilled glass over ice. Garnish with three drops of sesame oil.



PANDAN SAZERAC

A sazerac is one of our favourite drinks so we came up with a pandan and fig version. Instead of absinthe, we use yellow chartreuse, an herbal liqueur with an 800-year history and delicate notes of chamomile.

INGREDIENTS:

15ml Yellow Chartreuse. 25ml Pandan bourbon. 25ml Fig cognac. 5ml Sugar syrup (two parts water, one part sugar). A dash Angostura bitters, orange bitters, Peychaud's bitters.



1. PANDAN BOURBON: Combine 50g of fresh pandan with 500g of good-quality bourbon in a jar for 24 hours. Once infused, strain, bottle and label for future use.

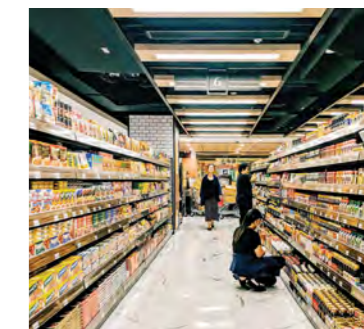


2. FIG COGNAC: Chop 50g of dried figs into small pieces. Combine with 500g of VSOP cognac in a jar for 24 hours. Once infused, strain, bottle and label for future use.



3. PANDAN SAZERAC: Pour yellow chartreuse into glass over ice, let it sit. Combine other six ingredients in a mixing glass, add ice and stir 10 to 15 times. Discard ice and chartreuse from chilled glass, pour in the stirred sazerac. Finish with a spray of essential oils from lemon peel.

GRAB THE INGREDIENTS



↑ Medi-Ya Supermarket

We were introduced to a promotional programme focusing on citrus fruits from Kochi prefecture by the Kochi Representative Office in Singapore. You can get Japanese fruits like yuzu, buntan and konatsu when they're in season from Medi-Ya. Alternatively, you can get the frozen juice through Euraco Finefood. → #01-02, 3A River Valley Rd. 📍 Clarke Quay.

Tekka Centre

We love the variety of fruits and vegetables at Tekka Centre. Everything is so vibrant and colourful, you can't help but pick up new ingredients to experiment with and put in a cocktail. We tend to buy our curry leaves, pandan and jackfruit from Tekka. We also like looking around Mustafa, which is located nearby, for spices and other unique ingredients. → 665 Buffalo Rd. 📍 Little India.

Ghim Moh Market

Another wet market we love is Ghim Moh, not just because the hawker centre is excellent, but because we can find everything we need there too. Aside from fruits and vegetables, Ghim Moh has a wide selection of seafood – so who knows, maybe you'll find a fish cocktail on our menu one day. → 20 Ghim Moh Rd. 📍 Bouna Vista.

Find more drink recommendations at [timeout.com/singapore/bars](https://www.timeout.com/singapore/bars)

Shopping & Style

Edited by Delfina Utomo

Talking shop

Navigating the increasingly complicated business of sustainable shopping and why we should start now. *By Agatha Lee*

SUSTAINABLE LIVING MEANS being mindful of the impact your lifestyle has on the environment, and making informed choices to reduce it. Before you think it's just another fad Singapore is picking up on, it's not. The need to change the way we live now is not only inevitable, it's imperative.

Why should we care?

There are two issues that are very relevant to Singapore. Firstly, Semakau, Singapore's only landfill is filling up fast and is predicted to be full by 2035. That leaves us with only 16 years left to find a solution. Singaporeans need to switch from a mindset of convenience to one of reduce, reuse, recycle and even rot.

Secondly, climate change is a real threat and as mentioned by PM Lee in his National Day Rally speech this year, Singapore is already feeling its impact, with rising temperatures and sea levels. We need to make better lifestyle choices to reduce climate change such as limiting our meat intake,

taking public transport (or even walking) as well as consuming and wasting less.

Be better at shopping

It's hard for the shopping industry to ignore the threats to the environment and their impact on supply chains. It's even harder to ignore how consumers have become more knowledgeable in the way supply chains can impact the environment and society too. Don't be afraid to ask questions – we get a lot of curious people coming to The Green Collective SG asking about the ways in which they can change in order to lead a more sustainable lifestyle.

It definitely is not an overnight change, but we've made it easier for a regular person to start their journey towards sustainability. We have customers who start off with a bamboo straw and return to buy other sustainable products to replace those currently in their lifestyle such as reusable sanitary pads or a swimsuit made from recycled plastic bottles.



Bamboo Straw Girl

aNERDgallery

Going green

The Green Collective SG is possibly the first-ever retail concept globally to be curated based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The 17 global goals were adopted by the UN in 2015 and are the basis of sustainability. The goals range from gender equality and climate action to responsible consumption and production. Each brand at The Green Collective SG is linked to achieving two or more of these goals. This helps people shop based on the causes they are passionate about. It also helps to get individuals to see how they can contribute to achieving the goals by 2030 (a timeline set by the UN). For example, if you are passionate about fair wages for workers, preserving traditional techniques and small batch production, then look out for brands that contribute towards UNSDGs 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth), 5 (Gender Equality), and 12 (Responsible Consumption & Production).

One step at a time

Make small changes and the rest will follow. Start with something that you are passionate about – is it climate change, reducing waste, repairing things, or reducing meat consumption? Begin the journey with a group of friends or your family. Support each other along the way because you'll need all the positive vibes you can get.

→ #02-18, Funan, 107 North Bridge Rd. City Hall.

Discover more cool buys at [timeout.com/singapore/shopping-style](https://www.timeout.com/singapore/shopping-style)



The Handmade Romantics



HOW TO SHOP SUSTAINABLY



1. Buy less, buy better, buy local

Always ask whether it's something you really need – this is what we advocate at **The Green Collective SG**. Only buy items that need replacing. Think about buying items that will not only benefit you, but support local businesses. In fact, over 95 percent of the brands in our store are Singapore-based and all have a good understanding of their supply chains, where their products are from and their impact on the environment. So be curious – ask questions so that you understand what you are buying into.



2. Look for upcycled items

With so much waste generated, some brands are looking to close the loop by using items that would have otherwise been disposed of. We love brands such as **Indosole** which crafts footwear from old tires, and **Muta.Wear**, which makes unique fashion pieces and accessories from scraps. **August Society** designs swimsuits that are manufactured from waste plastic bottles, discarded fishing nets and old carpets.



3. Look for brands that pay a living wage

Brands such as **The Handmade Romantics**, **Ma Te Sai** and **Bamboo Straw Girl** work with communities and artisans to ensure that they work in safe conditions and are paid a living wage. This ensures that people are paid to use their traditional skills in a positive manner, and can lift themselves out of poverty through their work.



4. Buy second-hand

If you don't want to buy new, there's always second-hand or vintage. With consumers wearing their clothes less than 10 times, there is a glut of orphaned clothing waiting for a new home. You can try our pre-loved section or check out **The Dark Horse Vintage**, **The Kint Story**, or clothes swaps such as **Swapaholic** or **The Fashion Pulpit**. You'll also find preloved electrical appliances and furniture at **The Salvation Army**, and even on **Freecycle** and at **The Singapore Really Really Free Market**.



5. Go for less packaging

When it comes to your daily groceries – bring your own reusable bag and containers to pack your meats and vegetables. You can even purchase items such as liquid soap and dried goods in bulk at places such as **Eco.le**, **Scoop Wholefoods**, **The Social Space** or your local wet market.



6. Be fashion conscious

If you need to buy, purchase quality garments (check the seams, quality of fabric and the stitching) and look out for timeless pieces that will last a lifetime. Don't forget that you can also get clothes mended if you've lost a button or the lining of your favourite top has torn. For example, jeans can be sent to **Jeansfix** at CityLink Mall, clothes can be repaired at **Big Mama** in Takashimaya.

Travel

Edited by Dewi Nurjuwita

In Rumi's footsteps

A solo traveller's tour of the world and his rediscovery of Islamic history and culture. Words and photography by *Noor Iskandar*

Yazd, Iran



"Iran has some of the most beautiful manifestations of Islamic architecture."

Islamic architecture can be found here, such as at the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque in Shiraz, the Golestan Palace in Tehran, and the Jameh Mosque of Isfahan in the country's former capital city.

TURKEY

I didn't have a good first impression of Istanbul. I landed in Turkey after two magical weeks in Iran and found the people snobbish in comparison. I only warmed up to it during my second trip, where I forced myself to stay a full

majestic architecture dotted with symbolic geometry and glistening mosques protected by hypnotic ceilings. Some of the most beautiful manifestations of

two weeks to give it a second chance. By the end of my trip, I thought, "this could be the best city on earth". Maybe it was the literature I was carrying with me at the time. I was reading Elif Shafak's *The Architect's Apprentice* and it reminded me of all the changes the city has gone through. You only have to look at the Grand Bazaar to see the idiosyncrasies of the past interwoven with the present.

I think one of the most spiritually gratifying experiences was walking up to the Eyüp Sultan Mosque during Maghrib call for prayers. I took a ferry from Fener after exploring the Jewish neighbourhood of Balat. In Kadıköy, I would take buses that travel along the coastline and stop by the pier to unwind over a glass of cay (Turkish tea). I am especially fond of the Kuzguncuk area where I saw fireworks go off in the distance. It's where I tried my current favourite dessert, trileçe (an intensely sweet, milk-soaked cake) at Balkan Lokantasi. I spent my afternoons in beautiful kitapçı (bookstore) cafés, such as the one on top of the Kadıköy dock overlooking Sultanahmet in the distance.

There's so much history in Konya, you can almost feel it in the air. It's where Rumi lived and taught – and also where he passed away. Most people head down for the sema (whirling dervishes) ceremony but my attraction to it stems from its general aesthetics and the character of the space.

INDIA

As the land of my forefathers, India is a place I've been to many times. But the country is so vast and diverse that I experience something new every time I'm there.

Kashmir is a stunning city. It's one of the most beautiful places I've ever been to and what's happening there breaks my heart. With political wounds cutting through her territory, coursing through Kashmir means that your feelings, uncertainties, and courage grow together. In the town of Leh in Ladakh at the top of a hill, you can sit and listen as Buddhist chimes and the adhan become one.



Cappadocia, Turkey

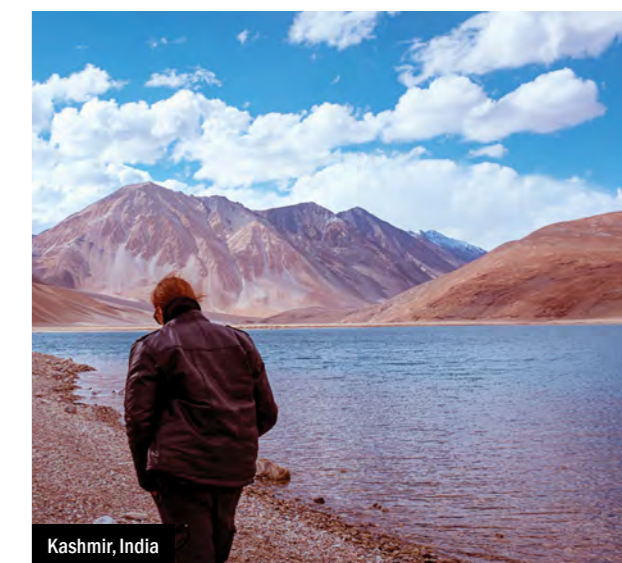
MALAYSIA

Malaysia is comforting. It feels like home. I find the Petronas Twin Towers so poetic. Every time we drive up to Kuala Lumpur, and the car draws nearer to the towers, I feel a magnetic pull towards it. It stands for so many things that I'm familiar with: Malaysian literature, music, Anuar Zain's tracks playing during traffic jams, nasi kandar, the highways, the grittiness of Chow Kit and the fresh flowers in the alleyways off Petaling Street. The old railway and the causeway connecting Singapore and Malaysia carry all the romances (and quarrels) between our two borders.

INDONESIA

I'm drawn to Indonesia's immense history. I love the Nusantara, her darah (blood) and jiwa (soul). My mother's side is Javanese, so I feel a connection to the country. I also collect batik. My most prized piece is from a secondhand shop at the Pasar Beringharjo flea in Yogyakarta. It's in silver, and I've never seen batik so gorgeous. Yogyakarta is the spiritual heart of Indonesia, and it is an artist's haven. Some of my antique books are also shipped and sourced from online retailers there.

→ noor-iskandar.com



Kashmir, India



Locals in Kurdistan, Iran

"IF YOU WANT to meet God then just go to Mecca," said a friend to me once – well-meaning advice for someone looking to delve deeper into Islamic spirituality. But having travelled on my own to different parts of the world over the last five years, I've deepened my connection with God without making the pilgrimage by reaffirming my love for life and religion, regardless of where I visit.

My name, "Noor", means light in Arabic. And photography is painting with light. I like to think that there's a sense of enlightenment I bring to my art. My works are for people to understand more about the world.

Because of terrorist attacks, cross-border conflicts, and violence, many people avoid these destinations. When I first started travelling on my own, I teetered between the lines of fearlessness and fearfulness. My good friend Atikah Amalina (@thetudungtraveller on Instagram) would tell me, "you have to let go and let God".

Some destinations are so stunning both architecturally and culturally, no combination of words can describe their immense beauty.

Instead, I portray them in my photographs and poems. These are the countries I love and want to share with the rest of the world.

IRAN

From the moment I saw Iran, I knew it'd be a country I'd be back to over and over again. It forms the basis of my spiritual sojourn and I've just returned from my fourth trip there.

I first went to Iran in search of Mevlana Rumi. The 13th-century Persian poet and Sufi mystic has always inspired my writing and spirituality. I wanted to feel that connection to Persian culture and also experience the differing schools of Islam, namely Sunni and Shia. Before leaving for Iran, my dad was concerned and my friends joked about how Shia Muslims would stab me. What I experienced was completely different. The first time I ever prayed in a Shia mosque, a man approached me to ask where I was from and gave me a packet of water. It's the most heart-warming thing I've ever experienced.

The Iranians are the most hospitable people I've met. Their history is rich, evident from the

Art

Edited by Dewi Nurjuwita

The state of the arts

What it means to be a creative in Singapore and the names that should be on your radar.

By Sam Lo



Sculpted mural

Sam Lo

MANY PEOPLE TALK about the contemporary arts scene in Singapore. Locally, it's separated into fine art and commercial art. Like most people, I try to balance both, but I lean towards the commercial field.

When I first started out as an artist, I had no idea how I was going to survive. To make a living doing what I love, I got into commercial art. In comparison, a fine artist has to do residencies and are represented by galleries. They sell artwork and do the occasional commission, but the path I took was different. The people that I'm surrounded by did not go down that route either. Most of us work with agencies and use the skillsets we have.

Currently as a freelance creative, I paint murals and design work for a living. Part of the job requires you to think about the clients you work with and whether they are in line with your personal brand. That's what a lot of

people struggle with – balancing the brand's interests and their own – which is why we have learnt to carefully toe the line in order to create something that best represents us as artists.

I've come across scenarios where clients view the artist like a hired hand. They want them to do something based on a brief, but not what the artist represents or what they base their practice on. It is always important to stress to clients that if you want an artist to do a commissioned piece, you have to find the right artist – based on their beliefs, their visual style, their discipline, their messages and their interests. Freelance creatives spend many years honing their practice and I feel that should be respected. Thankfully, those I've worked with know where I'm coming from, and they're familiar with my visual style. To me, the brand and aesthetics have to be in line with the artist's.

Another thing I see happening quite a bit in Singapore is self-policing, or self-censorship. One question I get a lot is if creating art in Singapore is stifling with the rules and regulations. You just have to be creative within these boundaries and view them as a challenge.

For those who create murals or public art, the first thing we think about is whether the Media Development Authority will allow it – on top of the legality of the space the artwork will be in. This covers nudity, religion, racial themes, political themes, or drugs. We can't talk about any of that. As artists, I feel that we have the responsibility to the public, to society, and to the place we live in, to talk about the things that play a part in the way we live. Art that goes beyond the structures we have now. It is important to talk about many of these topics in our society but at the same time, it's hard to progress if we're unable to do so. Finding that sweet spot is a balancing act for a lot of us.

Personally, this has played a part in the approach to my art-making process. Early on in my practice, I have learned to balance between being as objective as I can and taking a more satirical approach to tackle these tough, sensitive topics to navigate around the systems here. We kind of go around it and take a gentler approach. In the process, I find myself understanding my audience more with every piece, and the dialogue that comes out of it. But hopefully in time, there will be a difference.

There are local contemporary artists out there – both up-and-coming and veterans – doing really incredible work. It's my hope that people get to see them.

→ sam-lo.com.

Discover more local art at timeout.com/singapore/arts-entertainment.



LOCAL CREATIVES YOU SHOULD KNOW

Sam Lo picks the people making Singapore's arts scene a more colourful place



ASMR Wonderland. The theme was music and I asked her, "what does music stand for to you?" And she came up with this whole ASMR experience that was just brilliant.

Allison M. Low, @allisonmlow

Allison did her first mural with me. It was during the takeover with Keepers at the now-defunct New Majestic Hotel. Allison's drawings are so detailed and lifelike. When I first saw it, it blew me away. Her work is a result of dedication and attention to detail.

Soph O, @waywardclouds

Full disclaimer, Sophia Ong is my best friend. She did a mural in one of my rooms and I have her paintings in my living room as well. We started out at the same time. We've been friends for many years now and have worked on many projects together. When we went to India, we transformed the transit space of a metro station with a mural of a myna and kingfisher. Although I don't really understand abstract art, it's been so amazing to see her progress.



Zul Othman, @zero_rscls

Zul has been around for a long time, and is one of the most respected names in the industry. I feel like he gets too little credit for the work that he does. He's an urban artist, and is one of the first few in Singapore to do character work. When I first started, he was the one who showed me how to develop my own ideas. His works have a political edge to it and deeply inspire me.

Sufian Hamri, @ts1

Another veteran who has been a source of inspiration to me is Sufian. In fact, one of his pieces is the best street art I've ever seen. He experimented with shadows cast from power boxes, which looked like slopes. He then added skaters on them. In the day, the piece doesn't make sense. But at night, it looks like the figures are skating over a ramp. This was before I got into street art and when I saw it I was like, "wow this is how we can play with it." I fully respect Sufian for showing me how it's done.

Tan Yang Er, @yangermeister_

I like the sensibilities of Yang Er's works. She has a thought process that is so interesting. When you ask her a question, she doesn't just answer it. She goes beyond and develops it in a profound way. We worked together for the Sentosa project where she dreamt up an

Film

Edited by Cam Khalid



Nur Fazura as Mina



Remy Ishak (right) as Khalid



Revenge is sweet

Singapore filmmaker Glen Goei shines a flashlight on the vampiric spirit that inspires his latest film. By *Glen Goei*

EVERY SINGAPOREAN KNOWS the Pontianak. At camps, we exchange ghost stories in hushed voices to scare each other. The Pontianak is a hideous, vengeful female spirit who seeks revenge after dying in childbirth or from male-inflicted violence. She's usually cloaked in a long, white dress with her dark hair hung long and unkempt. Her presence is hinted at through a strong, frangipani scent that then evolves to an unbearable stench. Legend has it, when you see a beautiful woman alone at night, you must not make eye contact. She just might turn into the ghastly figure and rip you apart with her long, sharp nails.

The golden age of Malay cinema

For me, the Pontianak character has always been a source of fascination. I grew up watching countless old, Malay-language horror films in the 70s. This was during the tail end of the golden age of Malay cinema, which spanned from the late 1940s to early 1970s. During its heyday, hundreds of Malay films were filmed and produced in Singapore by two major local film empires: Cathay-Keris Studio and Shaw Brothers' Malay Film Productions.

On 27 April 1957, at the stroke of midnight, Cathay-Keris Studio premiered a film that would forever be ingrained into

the Singaporean psyche. This was *Pontianak*, directed by the prolific B.N. Rao, starring the beautiful Maria Menado as the titular character. *Pontianak* ran for almost three months at Cathay cinemas, its success was unprecedented.

Pontianak spawned two sequels by B.N. Rao: *Dendam Pontianak* (*Revenge of the Pontianak*, 1957) and *Sumpah Pontianak* (*Curse of the Pontianak*, 1958), setting the benchmark for the horror genre locally. Shaw produced its own trilogy – *Anak Pontianak* (*Son of Pontianak*, 1958), *Pontianak Kembali* (*The Pontianak Returns*, 1963) and *Pusaka Pontianak* (*The Pontianak Legacy*, 1965).

Misunderstood madam

Growing up watching these classic local horror films, I always asked: why is she so demonised? Why is she considered a 'bad' ghost? My own reasoning was that a ghost's

discomfort always stems from unfinished business. And this unfinished business could be with loved ones.

This was the genesis of my latest film: *Revenge of the Pontianak*. I wanted to seek out the answers to the questions that have stayed with me since I was a child. I sought to tell the story from her perspective for a change, to see and understand the motivations behind her actions.

Creating a shared narrative

Beyond that, I wanted to pay homage to these great Pontianak films. Younger Singaporeans are fed with a steady diet of super-Westernised Hollywood films. I sometimes feel a tinge of regret that their childhood hasn't been imbued with the same sort of local stories that my generation had access to.

These local Malay films were a beautiful amalgamation of the diverse cultures in South and Southeast Asia. Chinese producers owned the studios and greenlit the projects; Indians

and Filipinos directed and wrote scripts; Malays acted in the movies and composed music. By the early 1960s, Malays took on the role of director too. Films during this era were embraced and beloved by Singaporeans and Malaysians. They were unique to us, and our identities.

Local stories and folklore are no longer a big part of the Singaporean consciousness. But I strongly feel that we have a responsibility to tell our own stories. We need to keep our culture and heritage alive.

"For me, the Pontianak character has always been a source of fascination."

Discover more movie recommendations at [timeout.com/singapore/arts-entertainment](https://www.timeout.com/singapore/arts-entertainment).

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH GLEN GOEI



PHOTO: TIGER PICTURES



Western versus Asian horror

Western horror films are more in your face: jump scares and fake blood for instant gratification. To me, it's like eating McDonald's. You can binge, leave, and it doesn't stay in your consciousness.

Asian horror is more interesting because it's subtle. It works through your psyche. Take the popular Japanese, Korean and Thai ones that work well in Singapore – we don't have to understand the language to appreciate them. With Asian films, there's tension and buildup, plus a moral that stays with you after.



'Pantangs' or superstitions observed while filming

Every day, we made it a point to pray on set. I'm very conscious and respectful of spirits, so I always asked for permission and safety before filming. We always clean up and leave the location how we found it.

One day, our smoke machine ran out of smoke mid-way through filming, so we used kemenyan (often used as incense) to produce smoke. I loved the effect it produced so I kept asking for more to be burnt. Suddenly, some of the crew shouted: "Stop burning the kemenyan! We're drawing spirits out!"



Spooky encounters on set

Nur Fazura, who plays Pontianak, saw a ghostly female figure with long, dark hair watching her while on location. Gavin Yap, my co-director, heard a Pontianak's blood-curdling laughter in the middle of the night.

→ *Revenge of the Pontianak* is now showing at Golden Village cinemas.



EVERYONE'S INSTAGRAMMING...

Reader takeover

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