

1 Singapore has a growing skyline and an expanding economy. 2 A suite in the Fullerton Bay Hotel. 3 Raffles, the unofficial center of the island's colonial core.



SINGAPORE Sling

ASIA'S SMALLEST CITY-STATE MARKS A MAJOR ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR. *Julia Buckley* EXPLORES THE BOOMING LOCATION'S UNSUNG CHARMS.

Singapore achieved independence in 1965. Fifty years on, there's much to celebrate. A bewitching gumbo of world cultures—Chinese, Malay, Indian, Arab and European communities have all left their mark—this diamond-shaped island dangling off the tip of the Malay Peninsula may be Asia's smallest city-state, but it packs a fiery punch. History is everywhere—in the neoclassical colonial buildings and colorful shophouses dwarfed by mushrooming skyscrapers; in the diverse, harmonious racial and religious communities; and in the legendary food. But Singapore looks forward, not back, with ever-new additions to its skyline and a growing footprint, thanks to reclaimed land and a booming economy.

In fact, its modern outlook and megamalls have long dented its reputation, but with new nightlife options, a renewed focus on local designers and even a National Gallery of modern art due to open in October, Singapore's finally finding its feet. Time to join the festivities.

Stay

To many, Singapore is synonymous with just one place: **RAFFLES**. The all-suite

hotel opened in 1887, and its iconic white facade remains the unofficial center of the island's colonial core. *The* place to stay for more than a century, Raffles has drawn everyone from Somerset Maugham to Bill Clinton to its high-ceilinged, antique-filled suites.



Contemporary Singapore doesn't get better than the **FULLERTON BAY HOTEL**. Its superb modern rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows opening onto balconies with spectacular views of the shoreline. Over on Sentosa island, **CAPELLA SINGAPORE** provides respite from the city, with extensive grounds and terraced pools leading down to the beach. (*Raffles*: 1 Beach Road, +65 6337 1886, raffles.com/singapore; *The Fullerton Bay Hotel*: 80 Collyer Quay, +65 6333 8388,



fullertonbayhotel.com; *Capella Singapore*: 1 The Knolls, +65 6377 8888, capellahotels.com)

Do

There's no better way to appreciate Singapore's multicultural mix than by walking through its traditionally ethnic areas: the brightly colored shophouses of Chinatown, Little India's bustling sari shops, and Kampong Glam, the historically Muslim area that's swiftly filling up with bars and boutiques for a hip, younger crowd. Next, take to the water, either by chartering a "bumboat," one of the traditional barges that ply the Singapore River, or in a sailboat. **DBS MARINA BAY SAILING** offers yachting lessons right below the skyscrapers of the Central Business District. Finally, reward yourself with an afternoon at **TANJONG BEACH CLUB**, a mid-century-style restaurant on a pristine Sentosa beach with a pool, bar and DJs on the weekend. (*Singapore River Cruise*: Various jetties, +65 6336 6111, rivercruise.com.sg; *DBS Marina Bay Sailing*: Customs House Pontoon, +65 6444 4555, marinabaysailing.sg; *Tanjong Beach Club*: 120 Tanjong Beach Walk, +65 9750 5323, tanjongbeachclub.com)

SKYLINE: COURTESY OF THE SINGAPORE TOURISM BUREAU; FULLERTON BAY HOTEL: COURTESY OF FULLERTON BAY HOTEL; RAFFLES: COURTESY OF RAFFLES.

BG on Location

Shop

Despite its reputation for mega-malls, Singapore has a thriving independent shopping scene. At **SIFR AROMATICS**,

third-generation perfumier Johari Kazura blends small-batch scents and custom perfumes as modern as his stylish store. **CARRIE K.**'s extraordinary jewelry with an edge is made and sold in her atelier near Little India—pick up something from the Ready-to-Wear

collection or let her design a bespoke piece. And **KEEPERS**, in a pop-up shop through January 2016 on mall-heavy Orchard Road, gathers together the best of local designers, from fashion and accessories to bathroom amenities, stationery and even food.

(*Sifr Aromatics: 42 Arab Street, +65 6392 1966, sifr.sg; Carrie K.: 136 Bukit Timab Road, +65 6735 4036, carriekrocks.com; Keepers: Orchard Green [Orchard Road at Cairnhill Road], +65 8299 7109, keepers.com.sg*)



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1 Shop for custom perfumes at Sifr Aromatics. 2 Jaan sits on the seventieth floor of the Swissôtel. 3 Sweets get a modern backdrop at 2am:dessertbar.

Eat

Nowhere is the city-state's melting pot culture on show better than in its food. Peranakan cuisine—a uniquely Singaporean hybrid with Malay, Chinese and Indonesian roots—doesn't get better than at **TRUE BLUE**, whose traditional setting whisks diners back in time. Try the *Buab Keluak*—chicken curry with candlenut. **JAAN** pairs molecular gastronomy with to-die-for views from the seventieth floor of the Swissôtel, while at **SCOTTS 27**, chef Julien Bompard gives French food an Asian twist in a 100-year-old plantation house. Book well in advance, as space is limited—every table sits within its own private dining room. To finish, head to **2AM:DESSERTBAR**, a chic, industrial restaurant with a menu focused entirely around desserts.

(*True Blue: 49 Armenian Street, +65 6440 0449, trueblucuisine.com; Jaan: 2 Stamford Road, +65 6837 3322, jaan.com.sg; Scotts 27: 27 Scotts Road, +65 6737 0895, scotts27.com; 2am:dessertbar: 21A Lor Liput, +65 6291 9727, 2amdessertbar.com*)

Drink

Standout bars in Singapore have traditionally been all about the views, and there's no better lookout point than **KU DÉ TA**, perched atop the fifty-seven-story Marina Bay Sands. To the west, the Singapore River snakes through the cityscape; eastward, cargo ships line up in rows in the Singapore Strait.

These days, though, the scene is all about bespoke cocktails and secret bars. Although there is a menu at **MAISON IKKOKU**, on the second floor of a Kampong Glam shophouse, just tell the bartender your favorite flavors, and he'll shake up a drink especially for you. **THE LIBRARY** is a speakeasy serving

craft cocktails behind the facade of a Chinatown tailor. Entry is by password, listed weekly on the bar's Facebook page. **OPERATION DAGGER** may be on rowdy Ann Siang Hill, but it's a different world from its neighbors: a subterranean bar, marked only by a symbol scrawled beside an open door. Although they'll make anything to order—hundreds of homemade bitters, liquors and even fruit-infused spirits line the shelves—the menu is deliberately limited to cocktails for which presentation is key. Don't be surprised if yours is blasted with a blowtorch and served in a hay-lined fishbowl.

(*Ku Dé Ta: 1 Bayfront Avenue, +65 6688 7688, kudeta.com/singapore; Maison Ikkoku: 20 Kandabar Street, +65 6294 0078, maison-ikkoku.net; The Library: 47 Keong Saik Road, +65 6221 8338, facebook.com/tbestudy49; Operation Dagger: 7 Ann Siang Hill, no phone, operationdagger.com*)

Day Trip

Hit the water with a private yacht charter from **ONE15 LUXURY YACHTING**, part of the ONE°15 Marina Club on Sentosa. Take it easy with a day cruise of Singaporean waters, mooring in the Southern Islands for some water sports, or go farther afield—Indonesia, Malaysia and even Thailand are all possible with your onboard skipper, especially if you extend the trip overnight.

(*ONE15 Luxury Yachting: 11 Cove Drive, +65 6305 9676, one15luxuryyachting.com*)



BG DISPATCHES

THE BERGDORF GOODMAN CREATIVE TEAM TRAVELED TO SINGAPORE TO SHOOT THE STORIES THAT BEGIN ON PAGES 56 AND 110.

GO BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE SHOOT AND EXPERIENCE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF A TRIP TO THIS DIVERSE, FORWARD-THINKING CITY-STATE IN A VIDEO ON **5th58th**

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SIFR AROMATICS: COURTESY OF SIFR AROMATICS. JAAN: COURTESY OF JAAN. 2AM: DESSERTBAR: COURTESY OF 2AM:DESSERTBAR. DISPATCHES: MAX IMRIE.