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FES

EXPERIENCE SINGAPORE



Open For Business

OUT OF SINGAPORE,
AND TO THE WORLD



For A Better World By 2030

SUPPORTING THE
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS
UNDER THE 2030 AGENDA



Afternoon Delight

COMING TOGETHER FOR
THE SG50 DIPLOMATIC
CHARITY BAZAAR

Foreign FLOURISHES

Architectural partnerships
and the distinctive
Singapore skyline

Ed's Note

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Dear readers,

It has been an exhilarating year for Singapore as we celebrated our Jubilee Year, (SG50). Apart from numerous local festivities, the international community joined in the celebrations as well.

For instance, the "50 Bridges" programme by Australia to commemorate the Golden Jubilee and 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations involved activities that ranged from pop-up BBQs to performances by Australian theatre companies. In addition, leaders such as Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak, Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha and New Zealand Prime Minister John Key attended Singapore's National Day Parade on 9 August to celebrate our 50th birthday.

Indeed, Singapore's warm friendship with the rest of the world is a testament to our global standing and successes. From architecture and commerce to people-to-people links, Singapore has always been open to international collaborations to inject new ideas, colours and richness into the works. This issue of *Experience Singapore* takes a look at Singapore's close connection with our friends from abroad.

For a start, Singapore boasts of a headline-making skyline and landscape borne out of collaborations between talented local and foreign architects. **Building the future together** explores some familiar or award-winning landmarks that dot Singapore's landscape.

Collaborations are not just confined to Singapore's shores. When Singapore was a fledgling republic, other countries had generously lent a helping hand. Singapore now reciprocates by giving back to the international community. **For a better world by 2030** details Singapore's role in supporting the Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda.

Singapore's flourishing global links are also well-demonstrated by strong people-to-people ties. The spirited diplomatic corps came together for the first time to organise the SG50 Diplomatic Charity Bazaar on 24 October. As Singapore's Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan aptly put across, "The relationships built up among each other as well as with the local Singaporean community is something which they treasure". Read about the event that featured local delicacies, traditional handicrafts and artefacts from all over the world in **Afternoon delight**.

This treasured relationship is again echoed in the many individuals who have come from all corners of the globe and made Singapore their adopted home. *Experience Singapore* meets a handful of them in **Open for business**, among them a children's author, an Alaskan who imports seafood from his homeland, as well as an upscale tea retailer.

As Singapore marches on to SG100, the ties that bind Singapore and our international friends will continue to be strong and steadfast. Happy 2016!

Teo Lay Cheng

Director
Public Affairs Directorate
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore

Keep in touch!

Share with us your memories, photos and experiences in Singapore under the Singapore Cooperation Programme. Email us at mfa@sgmfa.gov.sg



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Building the future together

International architectural collaborations have created some of the Republic's most striking and memorable landmarks.



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The SG50 Diplomatic Charity Bazaar treated visitors to performances and goodies from around the world and raised funds for two local charities.



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SINGAPORE

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JURONG ECO-GARDEN

Sprawled over five hectares, this green space is nestled within the Republic's first eco-business park. Simulating tropical rainforest, Jurong Eco-Garden is home to a variety of flora and fauna, including three endangered species of birds: the Red Junglefowl, Straw-headed Bulbul and Oriental Pied Hornbill. The site's designers, Mr Leonard Ng from Singapore and Mr Ryan Shubin from the United States, were keen to create a space that not only allows for sustainable co-existence with nature but which also promotes learning from it. Speaking of their collaboration, Mr Ng said, "Diversity in the work environment is definitely an advantage – different working styles, contrasting points of view and social networks can enrich projects."

COLLABORATIONS

Building the **FUTURE** Together

Many of Singapore's award-winning buildings are a result of international collaborations between local architects and their counterparts from the region and beyond. *Experience Singapore* highlights some of these partnerships, which have invigorated the Republic's urban landscape.

TEXT BY ASHUTOSH RAVIKRISHNAN

Trailblazers

Both The Gridshell and Jurong Eco-Garden were presented the **President's Design Award Singapore 2014**.

The nation's most prestigious design accolade recognises architects and designers whose works have significantly improved the community's quality of life.

SINGAPORE SPORTS HUB

Wide enough to fit four A380 super-jumbo jets under its dome roof, this stunning sporting facility – which has played host to several regional sporting competitions, including the 28th Southeast Asian Games and the 8th ASEAN Para Games – is one of the city's newest landmarks. Architects from British group Arup Associates joined hands with members of Singaporean firm DP Architects to design the S\$1.3 billion structure, which has received a slew of accolades, including the title of Sports Building of the Year at the World Architecture Festival Awards 2014.



THE GRIDSHELL @ SINGAPORE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN (SUTD)

In 2013, architecture students at Singapore's newest university were given a rare chance to witness an award-winning architectural project taking shape in their backyard, thanks to the institution's library extension. Dubbed The Gridshell, the open-air canopy was designed by a team of SUTD students in collaboration with Dr Andres Sevtsuk, then an Assistant Professor of Architecture and Planning at the university. Now an Assistant Professor of Urban Planning at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in the United States, Dr Sevtsuk, an Estonian, was able to source all

of the structure's components, except its raw materials, from Singapore. "This shows that there is enormous know-how in the country for design, engineering and fabrication," he said.

Dr Sevtsuk and his team worked closely with local contractors during the assembly of The Gridshell, which he likened to putting together a huge 3D puzzle. "It was important to keep an open mind and to learn how different professionals involved in construction do their job. That is a good starting point in trying something new together," he said.

MEDIACORP

Prominent Japanese design group Maki and Associates, together with local firm DP Architects, have created a new 800,000 sq ft digital campus for the media conglomerate. The building is designed to be open and welcoming, encouraging the public to participate in studio tours, recordings and theatre performances that Mediacorp will soon offer. It also celebrates Singapore's 50th year of independence with a majestic 50-step staircase that leads to the complex's grand vista, and houses the island's largest outdoor digital screen, spanning 15m by 15m.

Mr Teo Ming Kian, Chairman of Mediacorp, believes the new campus will transform the way the group works and how it engages with its audiences and partners. Despite its recent completion, the structure has already been awarded the Building and Construction Authority's Green Mark Platinum rating for its eco-friendly technology, which include a smart air-conditioning system and innovative lift technology.



Photos: Darren Soh/Singapore Sports Hub, Philip Aldrup/Singapore University of Technology and Design, Capitaland, Raffles Hotel Singapore, Perennial Real Estate, Jewel Changi Airport Devt, Mediacorp

THE INTERLACE

Local developer CapitaLand Limited partnered local group RSP Architects Planners & Engineers Pte Ltd and renowned German/Dutch design firm OMA/Ole Scheeren to construct this striking structure. The Interlace features 31 blocks dramatically stacked to create a unique space for residents to call home. Designers were eager to craft a conducive

and spacious living environment within an unconventional building. To achieve this, they turned to sky terraces and courtyards, which promote communal living while also creating pockets of tranquillity and privacy for residents. Mr Wen Khai Meng, CEO of CapitaLand Singapore, believes such collaborations contribute positively to Singapore's cityscape.

"They offer opportunities for the novel lifestyle experiences provided by projects such as The Interlace," he said.

In November 2015, The Interlace beat 338 entries from around the world to be named the World Building of the Year at this year's World Architecture Festival. It also won the Urban Habitat Award from the Chicago-based Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat in 2014. ●



FROM YESTERDAY TO TOMORROW

THREE CENTURIES OF ARCHITECTURE IN SINGAPORE



19TH CENTURY: GRANDE DAME

To develop the newly colonised city-state, the British colonial government often relied on architects from England such as Regent Alfred John Bidwell. One of his most famous works has now become the island's most iconic hotel. The Raffles Hotel has hosted royalty, celebrities and iconic figures such as Queen Elizabeth II and author W. Somerset Maugham. Completed in 1899, it was considered state-of-the-art during its construction for its use of tropical architectural features – such as high ceilings and extensive verandahs – alongside modern conveniences like powered ceiling fans and electric lights.



20TH CENTURY: STANDING TALL

Following independence in 1965, Singaporean architects grew in prominence, sparking a culture of collaboration that continues today. Sitting in the heart of Singapore's Central Business District, the AXA Tower was the vision of the late American architect Hugh Stubbins and members of two local firms, Architects 61 and Architects Team 3. Despite being constructed in 1986, the 234m-structure is still the world's tallest cylindrical building and the sixth-tallest building in Singapore.



21ST CENTURY: TO THE FUTURE

Set to open by the end of 2018, Jewel Changi Airport will be a S\$1.47 billion retail and lifestyle complex that will be the airport's central hub, connecting its four terminals. It will be encased in a glass and steel dome and feature breathtaking attractions including a lush indoor garden and a 40m-tall man-made waterfall. The project will be helmed by famed Israeli-born architect Mr Moshe Safdie, together with a team from local firm RSP Architects Planners & Engineers Pte Ltd.



**Singapore's role
in supporting
the Sustainable
Development
Goals under the
2030 Agenda.**

PLAYING A PART
FOR A
BETTER WORLD
BY 2030



At the UN Sustainable Development Summit held in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015, 193 member states of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda is the new global development framework that succeeds the Millennium Development Goals for the next 15 years. It outlines 17 new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), covering areas such as poverty eradication, water and sanitation and climate change.

At the Summit, Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan announced a new Sustainable Development Programme in support of the 2030 Agenda. Singapore will offer leadership programmes on good governance and public sector institutions in partnership with the UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence. Singapore will also partner UN agencies and other relevant partners to provide technical assistance programmes in a wide range of fields including sustainable cities, urbanisation as well as water and sanitation solutions.

On top of the new Sustainable Development Programme, Singapore will continue to contribute to capacity building among the international community through existing partnerships with various UN-related agencies under our Third Country Training Programme (TCTP) framework.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Earlier in October this year, Singapore and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) teamed up to strengthen the disaster risk management capacity of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and other countries that are on the front line of climate change. This is the first joint specialised training course in Singapore providing practical support for Disaster Risk Reduction in countries and territories such as Fiji, Mauritius, China, Panama, Pakistan, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, India, Sudan, Zimbabwe and Palestinian National Authority. The course focused on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and mitigation into national strategies and programmes as well as the development of action plans.

Mr Rajarm Luximon, Environment Officer from the Mauritius Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, Disaster and Beach Management, said, "We've read about the Sendai Framework and the four priorities. But after reading, we were not sure what to do. This course showed how the (Sendai Framework's) priorities should link up, and how we need to identify and understand the gaps, then go into specific action plans and objectives."

During the five-day workshop, experts from Singapore and UNISDR shared their expertise on early warning systems, hazard and vulnerability assessment, emergency preparedness plans, resilient public health systems, climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, and sustainable urban planning.

"The 28 participants from the various countries are now in a position to implement





◆ Mr Sanjaya Bhatia, Head, UNISDR Office for Northeast Asia and Global Education and Training Institute (GETI), speaking to participants of the Disaster Risk Reduction course about the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

◆ Participants of the regional training workshop on "The Strategy and Evaluation of Trials on Aedes Mosquito Population Suppression using the Sterile Insect Technique" looking at mosquito samples in the lab.



and integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change actions into their development policies," said Mr Sanjaya Bhatia, Head of UNISDR's Office for Northeast Asia and Global Education and Training Institute.

REGIONAL COURSE ON KEY ISSUES ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AGENDA FOR 2015

In partnership with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Singapore hosted the biennial Regional Course on Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda for Asia-Pacific Region in November 2015.

21 participants from 15 countries in the Asia-Pacific region underwent three weeks of intensive learning and discussions on topics such as development policies, the role of international trade and finance in a globalised world, the evolving multilateral trading system, trade logistics, and productivity through foreign direct investment and innovation. Speakers from Singapore's Civil Service College International also shared Singapore's own developmental experiences and best practices in trade and development policy matters.



COLLABORATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)

In November 2015, Singapore partnered the IAEA on a regional training workshop on "The Strategy and Evaluation of Trials on Aedes Mosquito Population Suppression using the Sterile Insect Technique".

Dengue is the most widespread

◆ Mr Rolf Traeger, Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD, speaking to the participants of the 33rd Regional Course on Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda.

arboviral disease affecting humans today while chikungunya has now been identified in over 60 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. Singapore has been making relentless efforts to combat dengue and chikungunya outbreaks. The inaugural joint workshop aimed to strengthen regional countries' knowledge, skills and capabilities in addressing the challenges and threats of these diseases.

LOOKING FORWARD

Having benefitted from international assistance when we first became independent, Singapore stands ready to give back to the international community. In line with our development history and conviction that human resource development is critical to sustainable development, the Singapore Cooperation Programme remains committed to share our development experience and knowledge with our friends around the world. ●

◆ Participants of the Disaster Risk Reduction course visit the Marina Barrage.





AN UNLIKELY CUP OF TEA

Moroccan-born Mr Taha Bouqdib, 46, and his American wife Ms Maranda Barnes, 40, first visited Singapore in 2007. Mr Bouqdib, who had previously worked at a French tea company, was looking for a base to establish a new tea business and found that Singapore ticked all the right boxes – although few would associate the country with tea.

But as Ms Barnes said, “Singapore is the epicentre of all of the tea-producing countries in Asia. Its proximity to plantations in China, Japan, Taiwan and India ensures unparalleled and consistent access to the best harvests. The nation has also had a rich history as an important port of call along the tea route.”

So, armed with a desire to celebrate this heritage and to share their love for tea with the world, the duo joined hands with Mr Manoj Murjani (who is no longer with the company) to establish TWG Tea in 2008. Since then, the luxury tea retailer has grown extensively and is currently distributed in 40 countries. It also boasts the world’s largest tea collection, offering over 800 blends from across the globe.

But while the brand has gone global, it has not forgotten its roots and recently paid homage to the Republic during its Golden Jubilee celebrations with the Singapore Breakfast Tea. A combination of the flavours of green and black tea, vanilla, and exotic spices, the blend was created to Singapore’s culturally-diverse population.

The couple, both Permanent Residents, now live in Singapore with their 11-year-old son. Besides TWG Tea’s own creations, Ms Barnes, currently the group’s Director of Corporate Communications and Business Development, also enjoys *teh tarik*, a local milk tea beverage. “To me, the age-old concoction is a nod to the past, and the traditions and tastes of historic Singapore,” she said.



OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Experience Singapore meets five expatriates whose Singapore-based businesses have gained a loyal following, both locally and internationally. TEXT BY ASHUTOSH RAVIKRISHNAN

A UNIQUELY SINGAPOREAN STORY

When American citizen Mr Adan Jimenez, 32, relocated to Singapore seven years ago, he had little idea that he would become a popular children’s author. Now the assistant director at the National Book Development Council of Singapore, he had worked around books all his life and enjoyed telling stories but had had few opportunities to write professionally. So in 2012, when he heard about Sherlock Sam – a local publisher’s idea for a food-themed children’s detective series – he decided to give writing it a go. “But I soon found out that I didn’t know enough about Singapore yet to do the series justice,” said Mr Jimenez, now a Permanent Resident. For this, he turned to his Singaporean wife, Ms Felicia Low-Jimenez, 37, who stepped in as co-author and added a distinctly local twist to the stories.

The series has become a favourite among eight to 12-year-olds. For inspiration, the authors take long walks around the island, in search of lesser-known aspects of Singapore to share with their readers. They hope that by including such themes young readers would be encouraged to be more appreciative of the country’s heritage.

Western audiences will also have a chance to learn about this heritage in 2016 when American publisher Andrews McMeel Publishing begins selling Sherlock Sam’s first three titles in the United States. “There’s a greater demand for diversity in the west and our stories are very diverse. They highlight Singapore’s multi-ethnic nature and I think that’s why the publishers wanted it,” said Mr Jimenez, adding that neither his wife nor he plan to leave their day jobs to become full-time authors.



Photos: TWG Tea, Tan Kay Hian



A LOVE FOR ALL THINGS BEAUTIFUL

Since leaving her hometown of Amsterdam, Netherlands in 1997, Ms Irene Hoofs has spent time in several of the world's largest cities, including London, Toronto and New York City. Her experiences in these cities inspired the 42-year-old to launch Bloesem Living, an online design portal, in 2006. "It's the perfect way to channel my passion for design and crafts, along with my interest in graphic and web design," said the former banker.

Ms Hoofs, who moved to Singapore in March last year with her husband and their two children, believes that the island's thriving design scene has created an exciting atmosphere for her team to work in. "Bloesem, which is Dutch for 'blossom', has had several opportunities to collaborate with other local design agencies and companies – through these projects, our team really learns and grows," she said.

The portal is a favourite among design-conscious netizens and was recently listed by British newspaper *The Independent* as one of 2014's 50 Best Interiors Websites.

Encouraged by the portal's success, Ms Hoofs now regularly conducts food styling and photography classes in the Bloesem studio, which is housed in a colonial-era bungalow. These classes allow her to share with others another love of hers: local food. "Anyone who has visited Singapore has definitely fallen in love with the amazing food here. If I were to leave, I'd miss having all these foods so easily accessible."



ANYONE WHO HAS VISITED SINGAPORE HAS DEFINITELY FALLEN IN LOVE WITH THE AMAZING FOOD HERE

MS IRENE HOOFS



I KNEW ALASKA OFFERED SOME OF THE BEST SEAFOOD IN THE WORLD AND I WANTED TO SHARE MY EXPERIENCE WITH SINGAPOREANS

MR KEVIN GANTNER



FRESH FROM THE BERING SEA

Growing up in Alaska in the United States meant that Mr Kevin Gantner was exposed to some of the world's freshest seafood at an early age. When he moved to Singapore in 1999, he found that there was a marked difference in the country's seafood market and what he was familiar with. "I used to get excited when I saw 'Alaskan' seafood on restaurant menus or in grocery stores, but I was always disappointed. For some reason, the food just didn't taste the same as what I grew up eating," said the 47-year-old. Besides, he felt that many stores mislabelled their products.

So discovering a gap in the market, he decided to collaborate with a friend Mr Dean DeCuir, 51, based in Alaska, to launch The Alaskan Guys (TAG) in March 2014. "I knew Alaska offered some of the best seafood in the world and wanted to share my experience with Singaporeans," said Mr Gantner. Initially, the venture was established digitally, with an online store offering fresh, wild-caught Alaskan seafood. But as word of the business spread, demand picked up quickly and within a year, TAG opened its first retail outlet. It now offers several varieties of crab, salmon, halibut and cod to a diverse clientele, ranging from restaurateurs to home cooks looking for healthier alternatives.

Mr Gantner attributes the high demand for quality seafood to Singaporean's love for food, and more specifically, seafood. In the coming year, Mr Gantner, who is engaged to a Singaporean, hopes to open another outlet in Singapore and expand TAG to other countries in the region. "There are also several varieties of seafood, such as Alaskan spotted prawns and Pacific oysters, that we would like to bring in," he said.



➔ Minister Balakrishnan and German Ambassador Dr Michael Witter viewing the German booth.



Gastronomic and cultural delights were in store for the over 4,000 visitors who thronged the SG50 Diplomatic Charity Bazaar held at Shangri-La Hotel on 24 October. To commemorate Singapore's Golden Jubilee, more than 40 resident missions – more than half the number of diplomatic missions here – came together for the first time to organise the charity fair which featured an array of gourmet delicacies and handicrafts for sale. The proceeds of this event were equally distributed between The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund and the Singapore Children's Society.

It was no easy feat to put together such a kaleidoscope of exotic sights, smells, sounds and tastes from all over the globe – from our closest neighbor Malaysia to Costa Rica, 11,500 kms away. The organising committee, comprising Ambassador of Brazil and Dean of Diplomatic Corps Luis Fernando De Andrade Serra, Ambassador of Indonesia Andri Hadi, High Commissioner of Bangladesh Mahbub Uz Zaman, and Ambassador of Chile James Sinclair Manley, led the rest of the diplomatic corps in months of hard work to make this event a success. As Mr Andri Hadi said, "Through this bazaar, we hope the diplomatic communities can

experience our cultural diversity. This is also one of our ways to give thanks to Singapore for the warm welcome."

From unique local delicacies to traditional artefacts or handicraft, the bazaar was a palette of cultural richness and diversity. Quirky items featured included special Turkish dessert Burma Baklava, jewellery from India, wooden lacquered vases from the Maldives as well as French pastries and German pretzels, and even Colombian coffee which was specially flown in for the day.

Visitors were also treated to a line-up of beautiful and energetic cultural performances. The attention-grabbing repertoire included a Brazilian *capoeira* demonstration,

CELEBRATING SG50

AFTERNOON

DELIGHT

No passports or visas were required to experience the sights and sounds of over 40 countries at the SG50 Diplomatic Charity Bazaar.





Minister Balakrishnan and Mrs Balakrishnan with the organising committee of the SG50 Diplomatic Charity Bazaar. The organising committee comprises Ambassador of Brazil and Dean of Diplomatic Corps Luis Fernando De Andrade Serra, Ambassador of Indonesia Andri Hadi, High Commissioner of Bangladesh Mahbub Uz Zaman, as well as Ambassador of Chile James Sinclair Manley.

“THE RELATIONSHIPS BUILT UP AMONGST EACH OTHER AS WELL AS WITH LOCAL SINGAPOREAN COMMUNITY IS SOMETHING WHICH [THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS] TREASURE

SINGAPORE FOREIGN MINISTER
DR VIVIAN BALAKRISHNAN

Bangladeshi flute recital, songs from an Indonesian choir and folk dances from Greece, Lao and Sri Lanka.

Speaking at the event, Singapore's Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan said that the packed venue and the wide participation by the diplomatic corps showed that although Singapore is a small country, it is well plugged into the global circuit and that the diplomats based in Singapore obviously feel that their time here is meaningful. "The relationships built up amongst each other as well as with local Singaporean community is something which they treasure," said Minister Balakrishnan. ●



↑ Minister Balakrishnan and Mrs Balakrishnan touring the Indonesian booth with many traditional handcraft works on sale.



↑ Minister Balakrishnan dropping by the Canadian booth and having a hearty conversation.

→ Chilean Ambassador James Sinclair Manley introducing the Chilean booth to Minister Balakrishnan.



↑ The Chinese booth preparing freshly-made traditional Chinese delicacies such as dumplings.

A vision of the
past with a place
in contemporary
Singapore.

