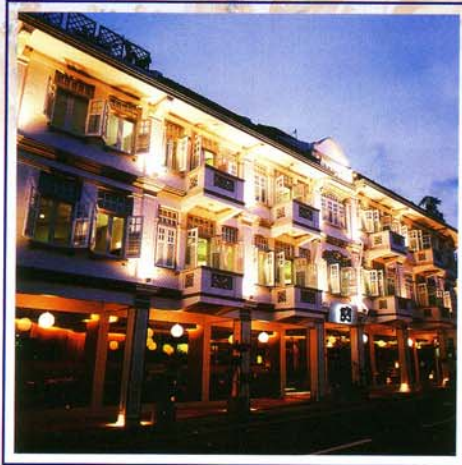


“Red light district” and “uber-hip boutique hotel” are hardly phrases that one would use to describe a hotel in the same breath. But that is exactly how to describe the hottest new kid on the block - Hotel 1929, a smart, witty and sexy boutique hotel that’s plunk in the heart of the infamous Keong Saik district of Chinatown in Singapore.

Lawyer-turned-hotelier Peng Loh (who has a collection of superb original retro furniture) has transformed the 74-year old row of conservation shophouses into a trendy 32-room hotel that marries a traditional Chinatown façade with vintage designer furniture and ultra stylish décor. Peng-Loh’s personal passion for design carries throughout the rooms with their glass-walled bathrooms, rain showerheads, porcelain bowl sinks, LCD televisions and broadband internet access.

Enter the hotel and its stunning reception and lounge greet you. Here are the centerpieces of Peng-Loh’s hobby - an Arne Jacobsen Egg chair, two Poul Volther Corona chairs, or a swish Bauhaus-style sofa strewn with fake fur for that sixties effect. While all this may appeal to the style-sensitive traveller, what has garnered the attention of Singapore’s cool crowd is 1929’s new and only restaurant - Ember. Run by famous chef Sebastian Ng, Ember has been making waves with its funky fusion cuisine at very reasonable prices. “European with a dash of Asian” is the best way to describe the menu from deep-fried soft shell crab with sweet wasabi to oven-roasted Chilean sea bass served with ginger and soy broth.



The night-scene outside the hotel is very different from what happens inside and you can see some very interesting people walk by through the sheer glass windows while you enjoy your fine wine and meal. Suffice to say that “people watching” takes on a whole new meaning here!

Chinatown is very centrally located and easily accessible. The district itself makes for an interesting evening stroll with its Chinese lanterns, porridge shops, herbal medicine stalls, and gaudily coloured temples.

A great time to experience 1929 for yourself is the Chinese New Year throughout January when Chinatown is at its resplendent best. There are plenty of celebrations

starting with the Chinatown Light Up & Festival from Jan 5th with fireworks and street-food and ending with Chingay, the Lunar New Year days on Jan 30th and 31st where the streets of Chinatown are filled with grand floats, parades and wild partygoers.

So is the hip Hotel 1929 Singapore’s answer to Ian Schrager? Perhaps so!

About the author: Ashish Gupta runs his own travel company, Milesworth Holidays, an American Express Travel office in Chennai. He specializes in customized tours to popular and exotic destinations in India and overseas. Enquiries are very welcome at: R. M. Towers, 108 Chamiers Road, Chennai, Tel: 2432 0522, Fax: 2435 9554, E-mail: ashish@milesworth.com



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