

# Venture<sup>®</sup>

BY TRAVELERS: FOR TRAVELERS

## EXPLORING LIKE A LOCAL

48 HOURS IN SINGAPORE  
WAEREBO CLOUD VILLAGE  
TEMPLE-HOPPING IN MYANMAR  
BIG-SCREEN MAGIC AT HOBBITON  
TRIBAL FLAIR AT THE GOROKA SHOW

Hawaii  
Myanmar  
Indonesia  
Singapore  
New Zealand  
Papua New Guinea



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Taking a gourmet walking tour with a local gives Melanie Whitmarsh a fresh, decadent, and personal introduction to **Auckland**, New Zealand's largest city



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A tour of Peter Jackson's *The Hobbit* movie set Hobbiton, in Matamata, **New Zealand**, feels like a countryside amble through a real, living hamlet



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When Shweta Ganesh Kumar gave birth to a baby girl, she wondered if it would be the end of her **travel writing** career



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Set like an eyrie at the top of a mountain is the village of Waerebo in Flores, **Indonesia**. Rich Blando is one of the hamlet's few visitors



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Popular Indonesian travel blogger Susan Natalia Poskitt cuts straight through the middle of a mountain in **Laos** by canoe



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## 48 HOURS IN SINGAPORE

Going to Singapore? Guidebook writer Esther van Veen has created this must-see must-do two-day tour for you



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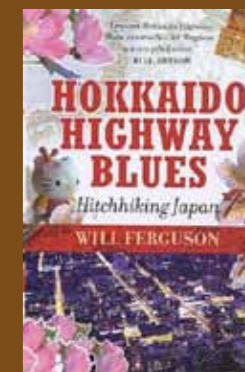
## 564 STEPS TO PARADISE

After hours of hunting, Deanira Bong's got the lowdown on how to access the secret stairs to **Bali's** Nyang Nyang beach, Indonesia

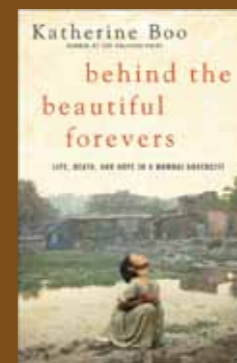


## Always travel with a good book

Lauren recommends Will Ferguson's *Hokkaido Highway Blues*. "This funny insight into Japanese culture eventually inspired me to hitchhike to Hokkaido myself."



"My favorite book ever," says Esther of Anita Amirrezvani's *The Blood of Flowers*. "An intricately woven tale about the coming of age of a resilient and passionate young woman in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Persia."



Judi loves *How to Be a Canadian (Even If You Already Are One)* by Will and Ian Ferguson. "I love the brutally honest commentary about traveling across the Great White North and how to interact with people along the way."



"An engrossing page-turner," says Lydia of Katherine Boo's *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*. "Boo makes you feel like you are in the heart of pulsating Mumbai experiencing all its sights and smells."



Susan recommends Aravind Adiga's novel *The White Tiger*, winner of the Man Booker prize in 2008. This is a tale of murder and ambition set in Bangalore, India.

Amsterdam-based travel writer and photographer **ESTHER VAN VEEN** ("48 Hours in Singapore," page 32) backpacked through Nepal, Tibet, Thailand, and Malaysia for three months in 2001. This sparked her ongoing love affair with Asia. Working as a tour leader, Esther has explored the Mediterranean, the Middle East, North Africa, and Latin America. She dreams of tracing Marco Polo's footsteps along the Silk Road.  
[www.esthervanveen.com](http://www.esthervanveen.com)



Having lived everywhere from Southeast Asia to Northwest Canada, **JUDI ZIENCHUK** ("Deeper than Lake Toba," page 70) spends most of her time dealing with the symptoms of her travel bug infection. When she's not trekking up Machu Picchu or skydiving over the Rocky Mountains, she's on a longboard or consuming large amounts of caffeine. To get more personal, check out her blog:  
[www.travvelsized.com](http://www.travvelsized.com)



An engineer by trade, **SUSAN NATALIA POSKITT** gave up the corporate world to travel the globe. She blogs about her adventures at [www.pergidulu.com](http://www.pergidulu.com) and tweets @PergiDulu. Susan and her husband prefer a slower style of travel and recently spent four months in Laos ("Into Kong Lor Cave," page 28) exploring one end of the country to the other.



Journalist **LYDIA TOMKIW** ("Aloha Hawaii," page 58) has reported from Jakarta, Indonesia, Washington DC, and places in between. She is currently based in New York City pursuing a Master's degree in International Affairs. Follow her adventures on Twitter @lydiatomkiw. To see her professional work visit [www.lydiatomkiw.com](http://www.lydiatomkiw.com)



**DEANIRA BONG** ("564 Steps to Paradise," page 78) has no permanent home and no desire for one most of the time, except when she happens upon the latest Ikea brochure. Born in Indonesia, Dea has lived in Singapore, Australia, and Canada. She's currently developing a personal finance website that explores how regular people afford to travel:  
[www.nomadwallet.com](http://www.nomadwallet.com)



**SHWETA GANESH KUMAR** is the bestselling author of *Coming Up On The Show* and *Between The Headlines*, two novels on the Indian broadcast news industry. Her travel columns have been featured in *The New Indian Express*, *One Philippines*, and *Geo*. Shweta ("Can A Mum Be A Travel Writer?" page 44) currently lives in El Salvador with her husband and one-and-a-half-year-old daughter.  
[www.shwetaganeshkumar.com](http://www.shwetaganeshkumar.com)

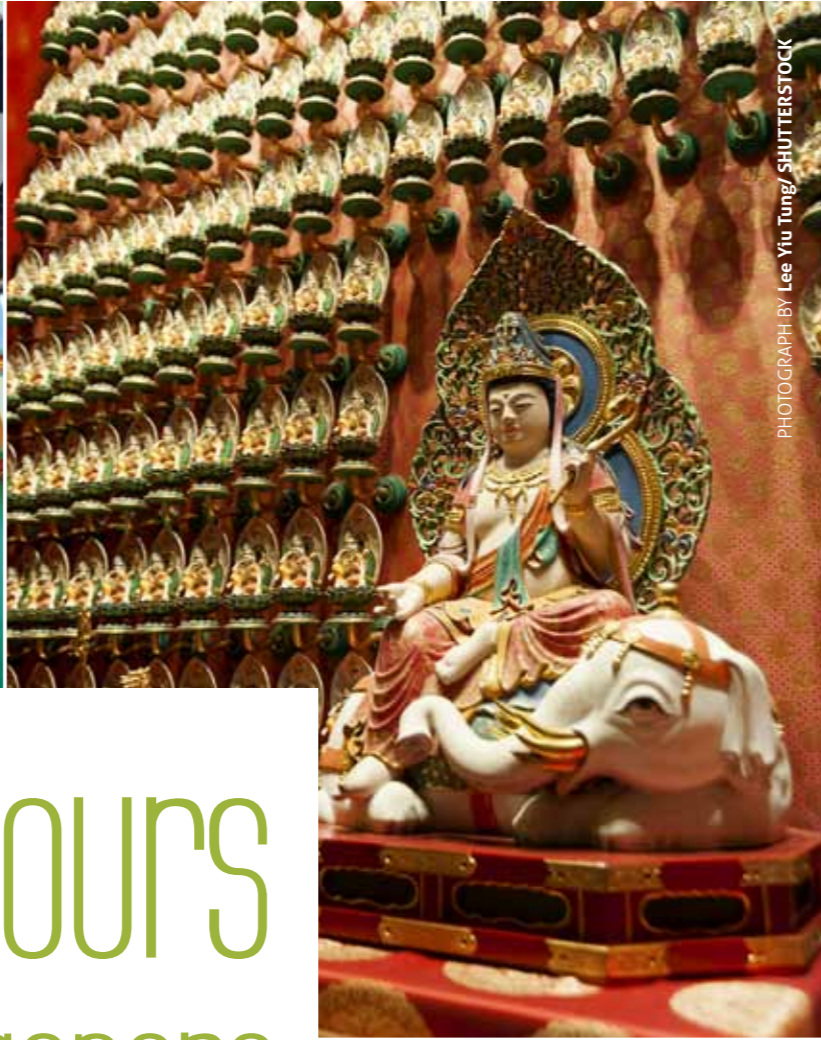


Co-founder and editor of Global Indonesian Voices, **TONY SUGIARTA** ("Land of Golden Temples," page 38) enjoys immersing himself in new cultures and wandering around without a map. Once just fun, travel has become his way of recharging, fulfilling his wanderlust, and exploring his love for adventure. Originally from Bali, Tony is now based in Singapore.  
[www.globalindonesianvoices.com](http://www.globalindonesianvoices.com)





PHOTOGRAPH BY Lee Yiu Tung/ SHUTTERSTOCK

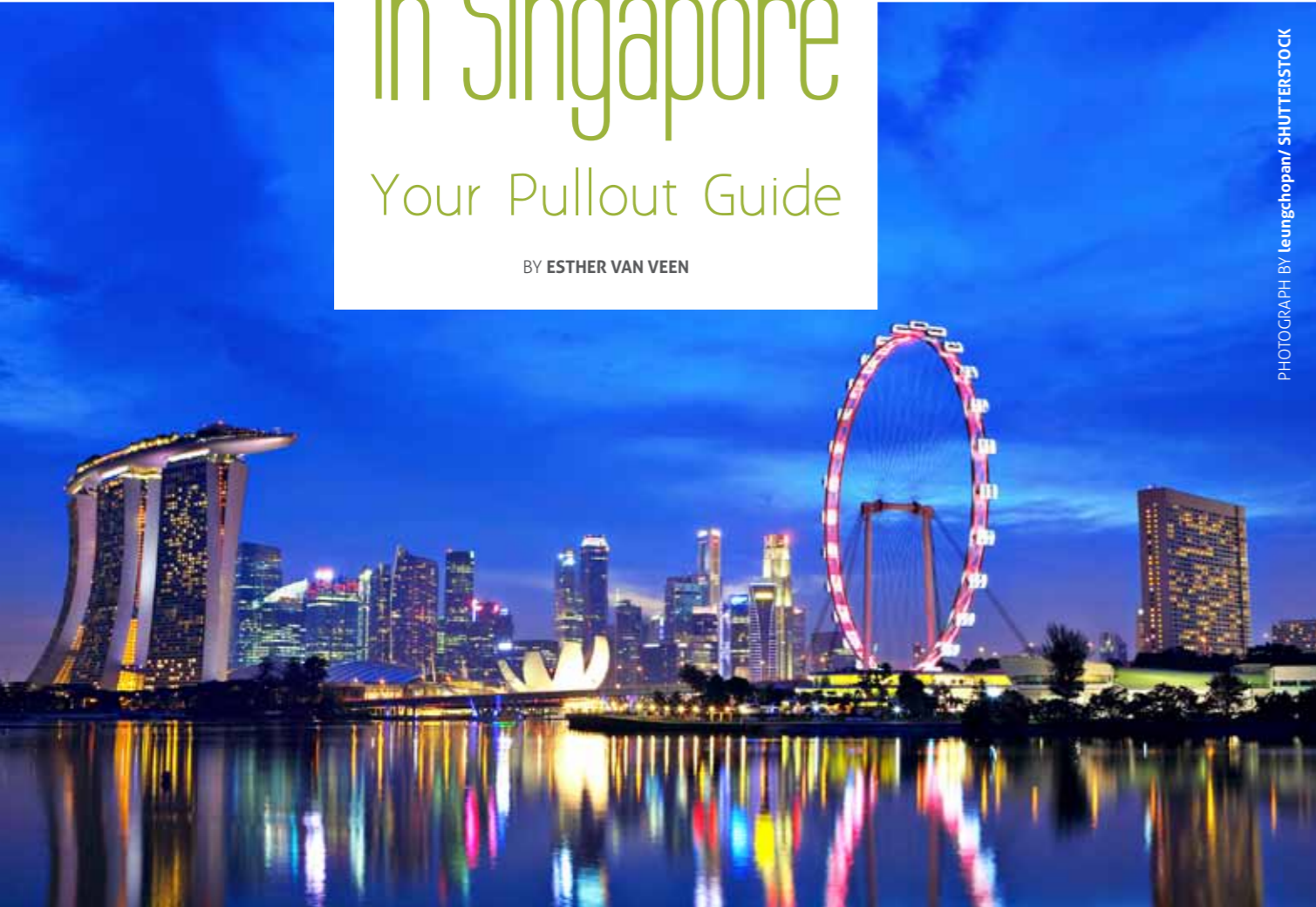


PHOTOGRAPH BY Lee Yiu Tung/ SHUTTERSTOCK

# 48 Hours in Singapore

## Your Pullout Guide

BY ESTHER VAN VEEN



PHOTOGRAPH BY leungchopan/ SHUTTERSTOCK

Hotspots Singapore guidebook writer Esther van Veen distills hip-and-happening Singapore into a two-day tour of must-see experiences.

### DAY ONE COLONIAL HISTORY ALONG THE SINGAPORE RIVER

Start at the Fullerton Hotel at the mouth of the Singapore River (1 Fullerton Square). Here, in the 1800s, countless bumboats floated on the river while sweating laborers heaved goods on their backs. For insights into life along this waterway (and a superb collection of Asian Art), visit the Asian Civilisations Museum at 1 Empress Place.

Next to the museum is Siêm Rêap II, an alfresco restaurant overlooking the river, Raffles Landing Site (the spot Stamford Raffles first stepped ashore in 1819), and Boat Quay – a popular bar and restaurant area. Walk north up Old Parliament Lane to the Arts House. Built in 1827, this building used to house the High Court and the Houses of Parliament. Nowadays it is a library, café, and gallery hosting contemporary art and photography.

From the Arts House, head to Raffles City passing the cathedral on St Andrews Road. The best modern art gallery in town is Ode to Art Gallery (on Level 1). Ode to Art exhibits contemporary works by emerging local and high-profile international artists. Cross the street to stroll through the nearby Chijmes (30 Victoria Street). Built in 1854, Chijmes is a former monastic complex now converted into a shopping and dining area. From Chijmes, cross the street to the legendary Raffles Hotel.

Built in 1899, this gorgeous white colonial structure is fringed by palms and frangipani trees, and radiates old-world charm. Former guests have included Ernest Hemingway and Michael Jackson. Skip the touristy Long Bar (the birthplace of the city's signature drink - the Singapore Sling) and instead try the glorious Chili Crab Spaghetini at the Halia at Raffles Hotel. Next door is Raffles Arcade – a haven of exclusive shops, bars, and restaurants.

The final stop in the colonial quarter is the unique Peranakan Museum at 39 Armenian Street which explores the fusion of Chinese and Malay culture.

**FAR LEFT**  
Colorful renovations in Little India

**FAR RIGHT**  
A statue of Buddha in the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple

**BOTTOM LEFT**  
The bright lights of Singapore; Marina Bay Sands is on the left

**RIGHT**  
Chijmes, formerly the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus

**BELOW**  
Halia Chili Crab Spaghetini is served at The Halia at Singapore Botanical Gardens and at The Halia at Raffles Hotel



PHOTOGRAPH BY javarman/ SHUTTERSTOCK

Photograph courtesy of **The Halia**



In 1819, on behalf of the East India Company, Stamford Raffles bought Singapore for 60,000 Spanish dollars from local Malay rulers. Today, this city-island, measuring just 27 miles by 14 miles, operates one of the world's largest harbors, has a thriving financial sector and dining scene, and stylishly marries east with west, colonial with futuristic, and local with cosmopolitan.

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN LITTLE INDIA

From the Peranakan Museum, take the subway from Bras Basah MRT to Little India. For Chinese, Malay, and Indian goods, as well as a wet market and religious paraphernalia, visit the hectic Tekka Centre at 665 Buffalo Rd. For bangles, hippie dresses, and other tourist souvenirs, check out the Little India Arcade at 48 Serangoon Road.

Stroll up Campbell Lane for a feel for daily life in this vibrant neighborhood. Local eateries here serve delicious Southern Indian food on banana leaves. Stop by the Abdul-Gaffoor Mosque on Dunlop Street. The mosque combines Moorish, Arabian, and Classical architecture and reminds me of tales from *The Arabian Nights*.

Don't miss the hypnotizing puja rituals held daily at 8:00, 12:00, 18:30 and 21:00 at the Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple on Serangoon Rd. On the same street is the Srinivasa Perumal Temple; built in 1855, it's one of the oldest temples in town.



PHOTOGRAPH BY Lawrence Wee/ SHUTTERSTOCK

ABOVE  
Souvenirs in Little India

LEFT  
The Abdul-Gaffoor Mosque

BELOW  
Local landmark,  
the Sultan Mosque

RIGHT  
There's plenty of space  
for pedestrians in this  
thoroughly modern city



PHOTOGRAPH BY R.A.R. de Bruijn Holding BV/ SHUTTERSTOCK

KAMPONG GLAM COMES ALIVE AT NIGHT

From Farrer Park, take the subway to Bugis. The neighborhood around Bussorah Street has a Malay-Arab vibe. Bussorah St itself is home to the popular Sultan Mosque; topped with a gilded dome. Also along the street are perfumeries, artists' workshops, and the Wayan Retreat (61 Bussorah St) – a Balinese massage parlor. Have a bite at Zac's Middle Eastern & Mediterranean Cuisines (53 Bussorah St).

For a sense of the old kampong, head north to the Malay Heritage Centre (85 Sultan Gate), where a few local shacks still stand on stilts among the colonial houses. For traditional carpets and vintage boutiques, head south to Arab Street and Haji Lane respectively. Finally, have a Tiger beer with the locals at the popular Blu Jaz Café (11 Bali Lane).



PHOTOGRAPH BY katon1a82/ SHUTTERSTOCK



Esther's guidebook *Singapore* was published in Dutch by Wat & Hoe Select this September. "In the book, I cover Singapore's most amazing experiences, hotspots, most lavish hotels, yummiest food courts, and most beautiful parks," says Esther. "Writing a guidebook is a gigantic process; so many choices to be made. I always try to offer the reader a three-dimensional experience of the city by integrating juicy history with the essence and contemporary vibe of the place."

DAY TWO  
ONCE A SHABBY AREA OF OPIUM  
DENS, CHINATOWN IS NOW A SMART  
NEIGHBORHOOD

Skip coffee and start the morning with a cup of chi-enhancing Taiwanese oolong tea at the Yi Xing Xuan teashop (30 Tanjong Pagar Road) in Chinatown.

A little east is hip Duxton Hill, where vibrantly-colored shop houses have been transformed into bars and restaurants. Head north to 28 Maxwell Road for the Red Dot Design Museum, a must for aficionados of award-winning furniture and lifestyle gadgets.

The Buddha Tooth Relic Temple at

288 South Bridge Road is one of the most serene temples in town. This temple is famous for enshrining a tooth of Siddhartha Gautama, found at a Burmese temple in 1980, and for its countless Bodhisattva statues donated in exchange for good karma. Upstairs is a museum of religious artifacts.

Check out the street markets and the lively Chinatown Complex at 335 Smith Street. For more on fascinating Chinese-Singaporean history, head north to the Chinatown Heritage Centre at 48 Pagoda Street.

The trendy Ann Siang Hill area has a more European vibe. Head for the iconic hotel The Scarlet (33 Erskine Road) for a

pastry at Antoinette Patisserie, or Breeze – the hotel's rooftop bar, or some serious fashion inspiration at De Walk-In Wardrobe.

Crossing through Ann Siang Hill park, walk to the skyscrapers of the Central Business District. It's hard to believe Telok Ayer Street used to be a beach lined with the boats of newly-arrived immigrants. The Victorian-style Lau Pa Sat food court (18 Raffles Quay) is a popular lunch spot for office workers.

Back along the river, look for the Merlion in front of One Fullerton. This 8.6-meter statue of a half-lion half-fish is Singapore's mascot. Cross the river at the Fullerton Hotel and take a boat from Raffles Landing Site to Marina Bay.



PHOTOGRAPH BY SurangaWeeratunga/ SHUTTERSTOCK

## Esther's Top 8 Highlights:

- The Marina Bay Sands Complex including the ArtScience Museum
- Asian Civilisations Museum
- Ode to Art Gallery
- Raffles Hotel
- 1-Altitude rooftop bar
- Buddha Tooth Relic Temple and Museum
- Haji Lane
- Gardens by the Bay



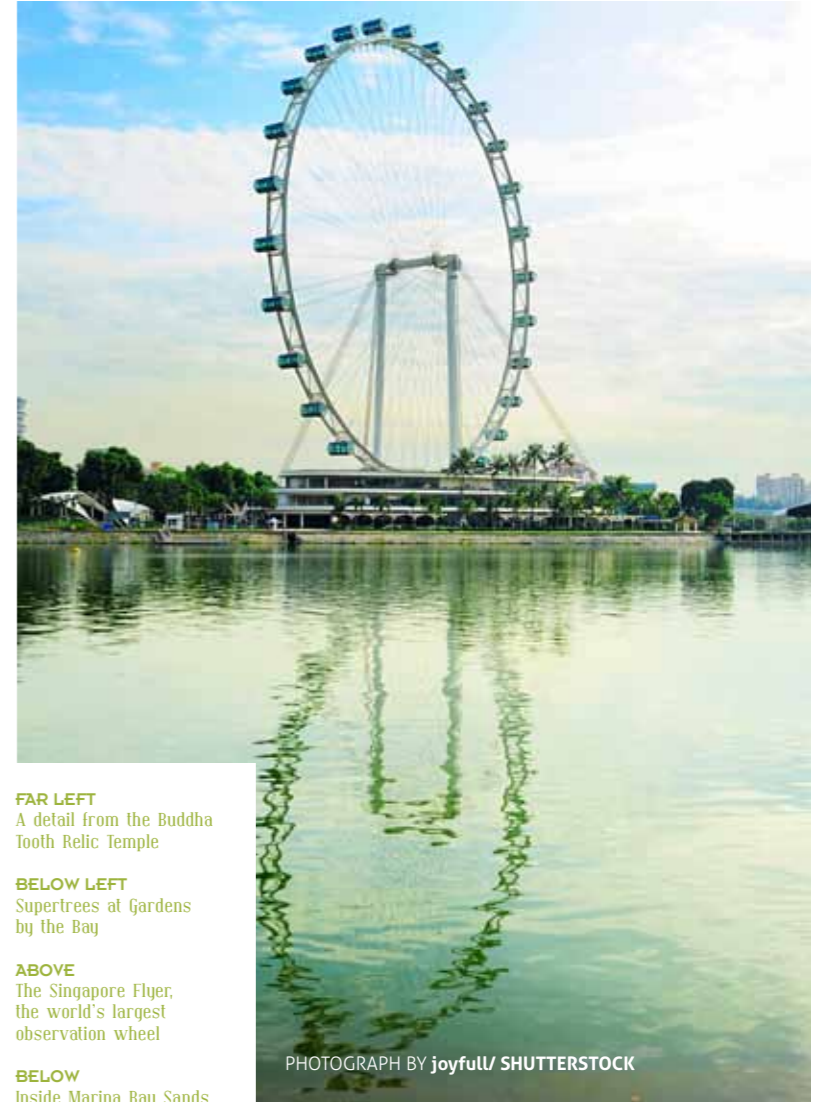
PHOTOGRAPH BY ESTHER VAN VEEN

## PANORAMIC SKYLINE VIEWS

Stroll along the Marina Bay Promenade to the flagship Louis Vuitton store. Above, soar the three towers of Marina Bay Sands: a 5-star hotel, casino, conference center, entertainment area, and shopping mall all-in-one. The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands is the most expensive retail area in Singapore. In front of Marina Bay Sands is the lotus-shaped ArtScience museum, designed by Moshe Safdie - the architect behind the entire complex.

Taking the eastern exit from Marina Bay Sands, head to Gardens by the Bay. Standing up to 50 meters in height are Supertrees: vertical botanical gardens of steel. Sleek glass domes contain rare plants, flowers, and non-indigenous trees like date palms and Baobabs.

During sunset, sip a cocktail and have a bite at KU DÉ TA on top of Marina Bay Sands. Cross the water via the Helix Bridge (whose spiraling design resembles human DNA), and ride on the Singapore Flyer – the world's largest observation wheel. For more drinks with views, try the New Asia Bar (on the 71<sup>st</sup> floor) at Swissôtel The Stamford (2 Stamford Road), the rooftop Lantern at The Fullerton Bay Hotel (80 Collyer Quay), or at 1- Altitude, one of the best rooftop bars in the world (1 Raffles Place). ■



**FAR LEFT**  
A detail from the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple

**BELOW LEFT**  
Supertrees at Gardens by the Bay

**ABOVE**  
The Singapore Flyer, the world's largest observation wheel

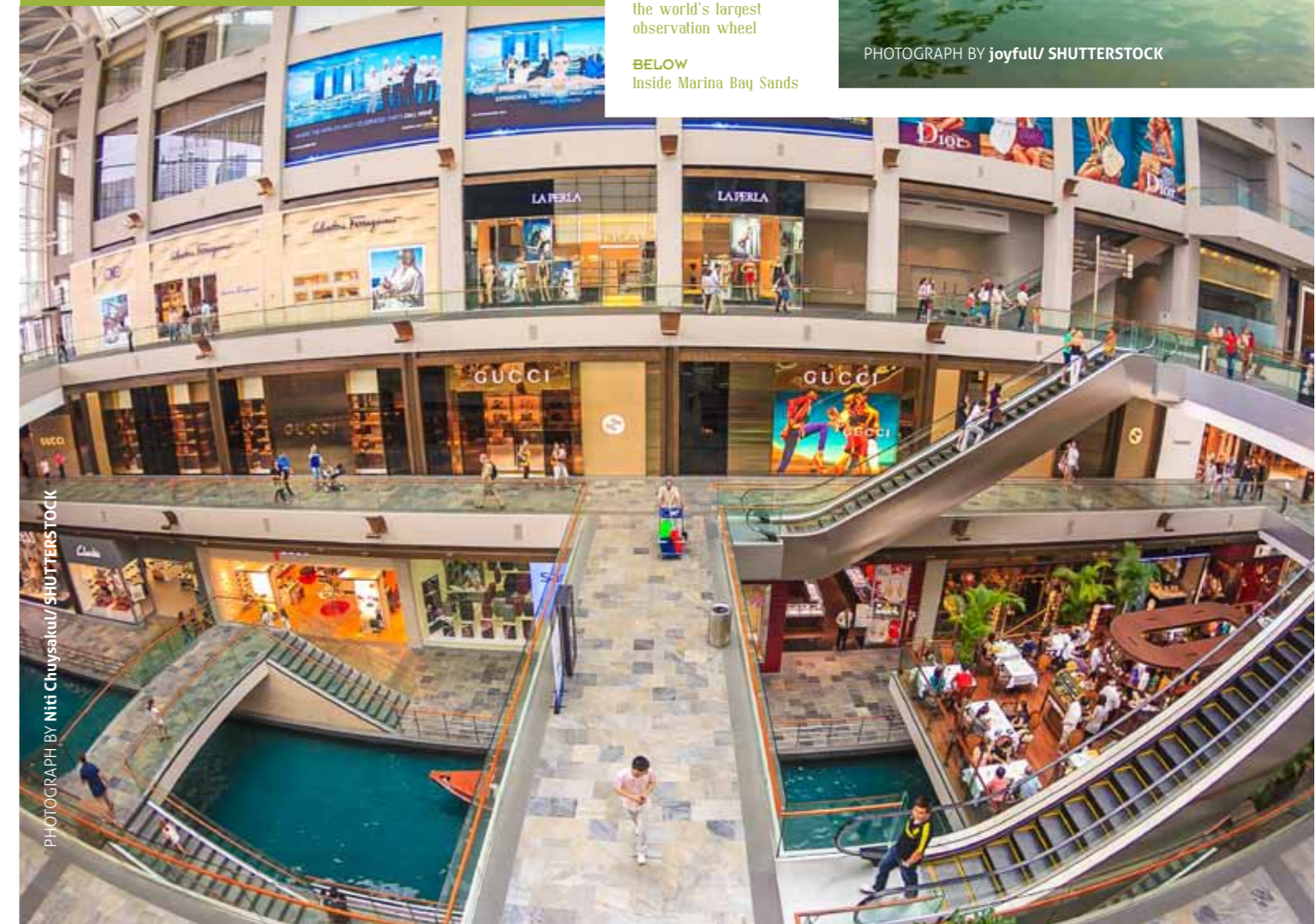
**BELOW**  
Inside Marina Bay Sands

PHOTOGRAPH BY joyfull/ SHUTTERSTOCK

The next Thaipusam festival in Singapore will be held on January 16, 2014



PHOTOGRAPH BY R.A.R. de Bruijn Holding BV/ SHUTTERSTOCK



PHOTOGRAPH BY Niti Chuysakul/ SHUTTERSTOCK