

HOME / LIFE

LOTTIE LIFESTYLE / ISSUE 6



TEEN HEALTH

Three experts provide an insight into how we can best help teens today

SPRING HAS SPRUNG

A time to renew and recharge, gather your friends for a gorgeous Easter lunch

FASHION

Floral inspired cotton dresses for a relaxed Easter look





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Spring has Sprung! Sounds catchy doesn't it? While it makes for a good heading the truth is, in Singapore, "Spring" is a loose concept. As far as I can tell, there aren't any farms where lambs are birthing and I've seen very little of pretty blooms pushing up from the thawing earth after a freezing winter, or buds all of a sudden appearing on the trees. After 12 years in Asia, I can say without doubt, I thoroughly miss the seasons. Winter? Maybe not. But Spring, Summer and Autumn are an absolute delight and I miss the *change* of seasons most of all - that transition period when one season ends and another begins. In those moments, there is a sense of the year moving on, and as a result, a feeling that we too are moving on, mirroring nature and transitioning into the next phase of our year. Nature does a very good job of providing us with this very real need for change and as the seasons unfold we adapt what we wear, how we decorate our homes, the food we eat, how we spend our leisure time and how much we sleep. These subtle shifts make a big difference. Over the years, I have often heard friends wonder why their time in Singapore just seems to slip by un-noticed, one month rolling into another and before you know it years have passed. And I think the answer lies, in part, in the lack of seasons.

On the flip side we have year-long warmth, which I, for one, am grateful for. So I have decided to not be defeated by this equatorial living, with its year round same-same monsoonal weather patterns and permanent green canopy of jungle which, as far as I can tell, never changes. In the Northern Hemisphere it's Spring and Easter is nearly upon us, so with that, I am declaring (for this magazine issue at least) that Spring has Sprung!

To celebrate our pretend seasonal change, we are entertaining at home with a casual Easter lunch with friends, wearing lovely cotton dresses, delighting in Breton stripes, baking hot cross buns and generally making the most of the Spring season.

There is no doubt that the past year has started to take it's toll on everybody and whilst it is always my aim to provide some levity (and perhaps distraction) from our endless days, it is important also to



note when we, or the ones we love, are struggling. In our Ask A Doctor segment this issue, we are talking teens with Dr. Neil Forrest and a feature article from Psychologist, Helen Barker, on anxiety and teens. Like the changing of seasons, the teen years are a time of transition and not always easy to navigate. So we have asked a range of experts to guide us on different areas of a teen's life - from mental health to their physical body, we are attempting to understand how and when we can support our lovely children as they move towards adulthood.

Lastly, after more than a year without travel and most of us having done at least one staycation in one of the well-known hotels, our travel writer Dee Thompson has dug a little deeper to unearth for you seven staycation hotels that remain (somewhat) of a secret. There are some great options to choose from, so while we wait to get vaccinated, another staycation (or two) will no doubt be on the cards.

And before I go, I should mention that here we are in digital land again with no print version yet of the magazine for you to hold in your hot little hand. The wheels of progress turn slowly and this past month also saw a new business-related curve ball thrown my way. So for now, it is onwards and upwards with another lovely digital issue for you to enjoy. Many thanks for your patience and support, as always.

Wishing you all a very happy Easter.

Lottie

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“Behind the facade of a traditional Singaporean shophouse, an oasis of calm has been created. ”

Contributors



FAY REES

Fashion and Beauty: Something Old, Something New and Beauty News

Fay is a retail and fashion consultant, avid beauty tester and founder of her own start up which combines all three.



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Food and Entertaining: Gather & Graze

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DR. NEIL FORREST, MBChB (Leeds, UK), MRCP (UK)

Health and Wellness: Ask a Doctor

Dr Neil Forrest is a UK trained GP based at Osler Health International. Dr Neil has been caring for teens (and parents of teens!) in Singapore for over 5 years, and is known for his down-to-earth, kind approach. He practices from the Star Vista clinic.



HELEN BARKER MA, MSc, C.PSYCHOL

Feature: Anxiety and Teens

Helen is a Psychologist and Coach who works with clients to help them grow their self awareness, overcome challenges and create change. She provides Executive Coaching, Personal & Transition Coaching and Psychotherapy in person at Core Collective Singapore and online.



RABIA SHAH, BSc (HONS), PHYSIOTHERAPY

Feature: Should We Tell Teens to 'Sit up Straight'?

Originally from the UK, Rabia has been working in Singapore for the past 13 years as a highly qualified Physiotherapist and Clinical Pilates Instructor. Rabia believes in providing holistic, evidence-based care to her patients and specializes in Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation (Acute & Chronic), Women's Health, Pre and post-natal Physiotherapy, Clinical Pilates, Core training, Chronic Pain and Mindfulness for Health.

Contributors



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Styling Assistant: Set the Table

Josephine is a cross discipline creative, devoted to the transformative benefits of beauty in all its domestic and atmospheric forms.



DEE THOMPSON

Travel: 7 Secret Singapore Staycations

Dee is a British born marketing manager, living in Singapore, who turned her obsession with travel, culture and people into the travel blog weavingmyway.com. She has a unique talent to find out what's hot, happening, how to get under the skin and most importantly where to get a good meal in any place she lands.

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N O M A D

NOUVELLE NOMAD / A selection of vintage and antique Berber rugs originating from the Atlas Mountains and traditional handcraft regions of Morocco. This collection features some rare and beautifully aged pieces ranging from 50 – 70 years old. The collection is curated by founder Bridget John, traveler, treasure hunter and brand consultant based between Melbourne and Marrakech. Focusing on vintage, the unique and hard to find, Nouvelle Nomad is all about finding new homes for the beautiful handmade treasures that already exist in this world. Available in Singapore exclusively at Shop Lottie Lifestyle.

www.shoplottielifestyle.com / [@lottieisloving](https://www.instagram.com/lottieisloving)

THIS MONTH WE'RE LOVING
Lifestyle

TIME TO RENEW / Spring is a time to renew and refresh. Start with a good spring clean of your wardrobe - make sure everything that you would like to keep is clean, freshly pressed and where needed, repaired. Tidy out your underwear drawer and make room for some new feminine pieces and finish each day with a face massage using a beautiful calming cleansing oil. Weekends are for curling up with a good book and a cold glass of rosé...you deserve it!



1. **BONJOUR TRISTESSE**, Françoise Sagan, bookdepository.com
2. **OLIVE GLASSES**, shoplottielifestyle.com
3. **PURIFYING CLEANSING OIL**, Vandrohe No. 1 shoplottielifestyle.com
4. **SANTINI EARRINGS**, Laura Lombardi, net-a-porter.com
5. **WINE**, Whispering Angel, winesonline.com.sg
6. **MELAMINE SIDE PLATE**, 'Lupin' showcaseonline.shop
7. **POT DE MIEL**, cream woven bag, clarev.com
8. **BRA**, 'Touktouk Lace', farfetch.com
9. **BRIEFS**, 'Cithare Lace', farfetch.com
10. **CUSHION COVER**, 'Komati Olive', stylodeco.com

THIS MONTH WE'RE LOVING
Lifestyle



GEORGES PENDANT LIGHT SHADED NUDE L, stylodeco.com

SPRING FLING / Easter lunch calls for a pretty and practical dress for a casual-but-I-still-made-an-effort-look. In a gorgeous faded floral pattern, this dress pairs well with a pair of tobacco leather flat sandals, detailed gold earrings and a bright pop of nail polish. Or go floaty and floral with a midi dress in saffron yellow, woven navy leather bag and the most beautiful nude lipstick in a refillable leather case.



SOEUR 'MAUD' POPLIN DRESS, smallable.com / SEE BY CHLOE BAG, smallable.com / ANTHOLOGY PARIS BIRMANIE SANDALS, smallable.com / ELISE TSIKIS STERNA EARRINGS, smallable.com / MANUCURIST NAILPOLISH IN 'ANEMONE', manucurist.com / DINOSAUR DESIGNS RESIN RING IN CREAM, shoplottielifestyle.com



THIS MONTH WE'RE LOVING
Fashion



RHODE LEA GATHERED FLORAL DRESS, theoutnet.com/ / ANYA HINDMARCH TOTE 'NEESON', anyahindmarch.com/ / ZIMMERMANN KNOTTED LEATHER SANDALS, theoutnet.com/ / LA BOUGE ROUGE REFILLABLE LIPSTICK IN 'NUDE PINK', netaporter.com/ / STICKS AND SPARROW SUNGLASSES IN CLOVER 'MILKY PEACH', sticksandsparrow.com.au



Find me the perfect...

STRIPEY TEE SHIRT



BEST
BASIC

WHAT WE LOVE...

*Subtle frill
detail*



EDITOR'S
FAVE



Steal Her Style

STRIPEY TEE SHIRT



Image credit: mijajlatau.com



This page: **LOEWE**, Filipa oversized glasses, matchesfashion.com / **CELINE**, Knot bracelet, 24s.com / **BONDI BORN**, The Line Trouser Oyster, bondiborn.com / **JACQUEMUS**, Le Baci straw basket bag, farfetch.com / **ST AGNI**, Pina Croc Flats, st-agni.com

Opposite page: **SAINT JAMES**, Levant Moderne Breton Stripe, basicsdepartment.com / **JCREW**, Vintage Cotton V-neck, jcrew.com / **PETIT BATEAU**, Sailor T-shirt Navy, en.smallable.eu / **BY IRIS**, Rebecca Stripe Top irisfashion.co.uk / **COMME DES GARÇONS PLAY**, Striped cotton top, fvr.com / **SOUER**, Katy Striped T-shirt Ecruy en.smallable.eu / **BELLEROSE**, Seas Linen Striped T-shirt Blue en.smallable.eu / **BELLEROSE**, Maow Stripe T-Shirt Blue, en.smallable.eu / **BELLEROSE**, Seas Linen Striped T-shirt Red en.smallable.eu

Something Old, Something New

WORDS: FAY REES

Mindful consumption isn't something new. Back in the post-war period many of our grandparents and parents went through rationing, darning socks and reusing everyday items so as not to be wasteful. We're in a different world now but the message around not wasting is just as relevant today and, in many ways, far more urgent.

We know that buying something old is a better choice for the environment but what about buying something new (as let's face it sometimes we want to buy something that hasn't already been in circulation, especially when it comes to underwear, sleepwear, swimwear and basics). What then, are the things we need to consider in order to make a more conscious choice? From fabrics through to landfill we know that our buying patterns make an impact but where to start when it all seems so overwhelming?

One of the easiest ways to make a good (read: more sustainable) purchase is to think about the fabric. Synthetic fabrics release microfibres into water when washed, with up to 40% of those fibres entering rivers, lakes and oceans, ingested by fish and working their way into the human food chain. By buying from brands that use only certified materials such as Tencel Lyocell, responsible wool and organic cotton or, if synthetic, recycled, you are already making a positive impact. Look for GRS certification (which guarantees that material marked as recycled really is) and also Oeko-Tex certification which ensures that the material doesn't contain chemicals that can harm health or the environment.

Here are a few of our favourite brands that are using more responsible fabrics, so that you can feel more confident (and ethical) in your choices.



UBU SWIMWEAR

Local brand that uses a luxury Italian fabric made from ECONYL®, a yarn that is 100% regenerated from post-consumer materials. This fabric is one of the best ecological options for swimwear and also has excellent UV protection at UPF 50+. UBU employs ethical trading practices across their business ensuring fair working conditions.

What can you expect? Easy to wear swimwear and turkish cotton towels.

Where to buy? Head to their website located in Singapore.

www.ubuswimwear.com



UNDER PROTECTION

Gorgeous Danish brand that only uses sustainable materials such as recycled polyester, recycled wool, Tencel lyocell and organic cotton. All their packaging, paper and polybags are either recycled or biodegradable. They also believe that fair working conditions and a fair wage is a human right and only work with certified factories.

What can you expect? Beautiful sleepwear, loungewear, lingerie and swimwear.

Where to buy? Head to their stockist page to find an online store that ships to Singapore.

www.underprotection.eu

NINETY PERCENT

London-based sustainable womenswear label that shares 90% of their profits to charitable causes. With a "planet first" ethos the brand takes responsibility for every material they use, always selecting the most ethically considered options with the lowest environmental impact across all of their collections as well as working with responsible clothing factories to ensure fair treatment.

What can you expect? Pared back, luxury basics to elevate the everyday.

Where to buy? Ninety Percent ship direct to Singapore..

www.ninetypercent.com



THIS MONTH WE'RE LOVING

Beauty

SPRING BEAUTY / Spring is all about rejuvenation. Get your glow on and feel fresh with this selection of daily beauty treats for skin, hair and nails all of which focus on organic ingredients. While our lives get busier again after having more time at home last year, these basics serve to provide a fast, effective and hopefully, safer, beauty routine.



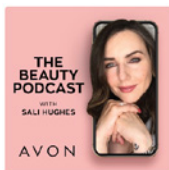
- 1. LUXE BOTANICS AURORA RADIANCE DISCOVERY KIT, ulotravel.co
- 2. ILIA TINTED LIP CONDITIONER IN 'LITTLE SISTER', ulotravel.co
- 3. SWEET PEA (STELLA MCCARTNEY) PRITI NYC NAIL POLISH, naturallybetterco.com.sg
- 4. KITSCH QUICK DRYING HAIR TOWEL, sg.iherb.com
- 5. AESOP RESURRECTION RINSE FREE HAND WASH, aesop.com
- 6. LE LABO DISCOVERY SET, netaporter.com
- 7. VANDEROHE SASAWASHI EXFOLIATING FACE CLOTH, shoplottielifestyle.com
- 8. COOLA MINERAL BB+CREAM, naturallybetterco.com.sg



The beauty world seems to move now as fast as fashion used to. With new formulations, treatments and tweakments there is always something new to consider. Couple that with more time spent looking at our own faces on screens, and arguably more time at home to hone our routines and it's helpful to have direct and sage advice to break through the beauty 'noise'. I've found listening to podcasts - which can be done while exercising, commuting or getting ready for the day, the easiest way to absorb beauty news and have access to advice that I wouldn't have found otherwise.

Fay x

3 OF MY FAVOURITE BEAUTY PODCASTS



SALI HUGHES:
THE BEAUTY PODCAST



THE GUINEA PIG WITH FIONA
GOLFAR AND DR MARYAM ZAMANI



YOU BEAUTY WITH LEIGH CAMPBELL
AND KELLY MCCARREN

While this hasn't been updated since the end of 2019, Sali's no-nonsense approach and coverage of topics such as rosacea, botox and adult acne are highly relevant, honest and most definitely worth listening to.

[thebeautypodcast](#)

With no beauty subjects off limits and the combination of an expert aesthetician and a self-proclaimed 'guinea pig', this is an essential beauty listen. It helps that Fiona is also extremely self-deprecating and hilariously honest. [theguineapig](#)

Part of Australian media group, Mamamia, this beauty podcast also provides a 'no bull' access point to other people's routines as well as deep dives into specific beauty products from dry shampoo to hand-soap and current beauty challenges such as 'maskne' caused by our long-term wearing of masks. [youbeautypodcast](#)

THIS MONTH WE'RE LOVING
Homewares

PRETTY PLEASE / Bringing a little pretty into your home doesn't have to mean going all out in (the *very* overused) 'millennial' pink. Create a fresh spring vibe with a touch of pink, beautiful ivory handled cutlery patterned plates and classic designs. Refresh the entrance to your home with a mirror, striped cushion and accents in pale timbers.



1. MUUTO DOTS IN OAK, finnishdesignshop.com
2. PARIS CHIC COFFEE TABLE BOOK , bungalow55.com
3. VINTAGE CREAM CUTLERY SET, shoplottiellifestyle.com
4. SHIELD MIRROR, shoplottiellifestyle.com
5. TAPER CANDLES IN PEACH AND CORAL shoplottiellifestyle.com
6. CESTITA BATERÍA TABLE LAMP, finnishdesignshop.com
7. FERM LIVING SPECKLE POT, theeditorsmarket.com
8. MUD AUSTRALIA EXPRESSOR CUP, originals.com.sg
9. OCRE STRIPE CUSHION WITH BRUSH FRINGING, lucymontgomery.com
10. MOSAICO DESSERT PLATES SET OF 2, ladoublej.com

THIS MONTH WE'RE LOVING
Original Art



Image credit: Studio Gallery Melbourne

Mandy Francis, GETTING POSH WITH A TABLE CLOTH
OIL ON LINEN , 195 X 146 CM
studiogallerymelbourne.com.au





DAYAWAY

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RELAX RECHARGE RECONNECT / As this year continues to throw challenges our way, we are looking for experiences that provide a chance to relax, recharge and reconnect. Staycations are a great option for giving a feeling of escaping the everyday, but in between times, weave into your life some time away - from work, from the kids, from the daily admin - even if it's just for a couple of hours for a walk with a friend or an indulgent morning with a spa treatment and a chance to read a book by the pool.



Image credit: raffles.com

SUNRISE SPA AND SWIM / New business, DayAway, has partnered with some of Singapore's most luxurious hotels to offer daytime packages that allow you to indulge in some time away without the need to do a full blown Staycation. DayAway's 'Sunrise Spa and Swim' package at Raffles Hotel ticks all the boxes for a gorgeous relaxing morning away from it all. Book a spa treatment in the morning, then head to the pool for some post treatment relaxing. dayaway.com.sg

CONEY ISLAND WALK / Rather than heading to the Botanic Gardens (again!) take a trip to Coney Island Park for a walk with a friend. A boardwalk allows you to explore the forest and mangrove habitats and there are points along the way where you can access the beach. You can also ride through the island along the 2.5 km Coney Island Park Connector, taking in the beautiful promenade view of the Serangoon Reservoir.



Image credit: andreaalkovaphotography.com

Ask a Doctor

TEENAGE HEALTH

INSIGHT FROM: DR. NEIL FORREST

There can be few greater challenges in life than being a parent of teenagers. Although my children are younger, I see the pressures of this period manifest in various ways in my consult room. Watching your children develop from kids into adults can be both rewarding and terrifying in equal measure. Teen health can be viewed through three lenses – physical, sexual and mental. Different personalities may have challenges in one or all (or none!) of these areas. Boys and girls can present in different ways and are exposed to different kinds of pressures, so parents may need to take a different approach with each of their kids.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

In my opinion this should be one of the easier elements for parents as it is most aligned with the things we should be doing for our own well-being. Eating a healthy balanced diet, taking regular exercise, not smoking or drinking to excess. There are of course some physical issues which are specific to teenagers. I see lots of young people struggling with acne and the onset of periods in girls can sometimes be problematic. Sometimes teenagers need some reassurance that a physical change they've noticed is completely normal.

Drugs and alcohol are a particular concern for parents, especially in Singapore, where severe punishments for drug use are in force. Whilst Singapore is safer in this regard than many other countries, we should not be so naive as to think that our kids could not be exposed here. If you are concerned that your child may be taking recreational drugs, smoking or drinking to excess, have an open conversation with them and if this does not allay your concerns, have a chat to your GP. Also note that vaping/e-cigarettes, commonly used by teenagers overseas, are illegal in Singapore.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Surely one of the most difficult topics to discuss with your children! I think taking the lead on this and talking openly and frankly with your kids is key. Remember, if they don't learn this stuff from you, they'll be learning it from the internet or their friends. Teenagers these days aren't having any more sex (on average), any younger than previous generations, but they are being exposed to it in different ways, often online.

Young people who are starting to become sexually active need to be aware of their contraceptive options, as well as how to reduce their risk of STDs. Teenagers can see a doctor for these issues in Singapore without their parental consent, if the doctor deems them to be competent and mature enough to make an informed decision. It is important to note that the legal age of sexual consent in Singapore is 16. At Osler Health we can undertake comprehensive STD testing and provide a wide range of contraception options.

MENTAL HEALTH

Adolescence is a period where people often experience mental health problems for the first time. Depression, anxiety, eating disorders and even psychotic illnesses can all present during the teenage years. As doctors, we have noticed over the last year that mental health problems in young people have increased.

The COVID restrictions have perhaps fallen most heavily on teenagers, who are facing huge disruption at a key stage of their lives, when the individual risk to them is very low. It's often difficult to know whether your child is experiencing

worrying mental health issues or just going through the normal stages of teen development. This is where speaking to a doctor or school counsellor may be helpful. I try to see teenagers both alone AND with their parents to allow me to get a more complete picture. Sometimes parents come to see me without their kids just to see if their concerns warrant further assessment.

What are the common flags for identifying a problem? The below can give you some guidance, but I urge you as parents to seek help if you are concerned.

Anxiety/Depression

- Social withdrawal
- Change in appetite
- Change in sleep
- Change in behaviour
- Low mood. Inability to take pleasure in things.
- Physical signs of self harm/injury

Eating disorders

- Rapid or excessive weight loss
- Refusing to eat with others
- Tooth decay in bulimia
- Obsession with weight/appearance/exercise

Psychosis

- Erratic behaviour
- Paranoia
- Delusional beliefs
- Hallucinations

I would advise people to have two main goals for their teenage parenting. Firstly, be a role model - treat yourself and others with respect and kindness. Secondly, be there for them, be the person they can talk to - openly, non-

judgmental and understanding. You don't have to have all the answers, and they don't expect you to.

If you feel your teen would benefit from discussing something with a GP please encourage them to see the GP without you and assure them that it is confidential. It is important to note that confidentiality can be broken if the teenager is at risk of harm, for example suffering abuse or expressing suicidal intent.

3 TOP TIPS WITH TEENS

1. You are a parent, not their friend. Teens crave the security of knowing their parents appreciate them, and love them no matter what.
2. - Check-in every day. Even if only for 2 minutes at the end of the day. They may close you down again and again, but on the 100th time you may find you are exactly where they need you, when they need you.
3. Encourage good self-care and explain why. This means prioritising sleep, eating a balanced diet and exercising. This is where role modelling comes in.

Dr Neil Forrest is a UK trained GP based at Osler Health International. Dr.Neil has been caring for teens (and parents of teens!) in Singapore for over 5 years, and is known for his down-to-earth, kind approach. He practises from the Star Vista clinic (convenient for those parents from Tanglin Trust, UWC, Dover and Dulwich). www.osler-health.com





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INTERNATIONAL

OSLER HEALTH INTERNATIONAL / A new GP medical clinic offering personalised healthcare for the whole family. With a small clinic offering, the practice is perfectly positioned to get to know you and your loved ones. With a special emphasis on teenagers, we hope the Star Vista clinic becomes a place they feel comfortable to come and unload their concerns. Make an appointment for you or your child today. You are not alone. We can help. Be Well.

Anxiety and Teens

WRITTEN BY: HELEN BARKER, MA, MSc, C.PSYCHOL

One in three adolescents will suffer from an anxiety disorder between the ages of 13 and 18. Think about that for a moment. That's a third of all teens....

We read about it in the press alarmingly often; the 'epidemic of anxiety in teenagers today', but what is the difference between worry and anxiety, and why is it such a problem in teens? Who is at fault? What is the cause? And as a parent, or a person who cares about the wellbeing of our next generation, what do you need to know? This article informs, shares up to date research and gives recommendations. It's tailored to teens, but the themes discussed are useful for anyone who suffers from anxiety or who knows someone that does. I'm evidence based in my approach, so everything here is backed by published research, and resources are shared. It's a topic that deserves a bit of detail and thought, so get a cuppa, a comfy chair and settle in.

Lets start at the beginning. Is anxiety the same as being a bit worried, or sad about something that has happened, or might happen? And is it normal to feel worried, scared and sad some of the time?

Our brains are incredible things and we are only beginning to unravel the magical mystery of how they work. Our emotions (fear, shame, sadness, disgust, surprise, joy, love, trust, excitement) are a key part of our physiology. They keep us safe, connect us

to others, and are central to getting just about every single one of our human needs met. They are the signalling system that is running the show in your brain and without them, life wouldn't just be without meaning, it would be impossible. So, is it normal and helpful to react with feelings of sadness and despair to difficult life events? Hell yes! Worry is a useful signal that there is a potential threat to our wellbeing, and fear is essential in protecting us from danger in all sorts of forms. These 'difficult' emotions keep us alive. We need them!

But what about when the feelings of sadness or worry or fear have no apparent cause, or are grossly disproportionate to the situation at hand?

Our body and brain may go into an extreme fear response apparently out of nowhere. We feel like we're out of control - with things like racing thoughts, ruminating, shallow breathing, difficulty concentrating, an erratic heartbeat, sweatiness, or a pervading sense that something awful is about to happen, but we have no idea what. These are some of the signs and symptoms associated with Generalised Anxiety Disorder, the most common of the anxiety disorders that are diagnosed today (others include PTSD, OCD, Panic Disorder, and Phobias). When we experience these extreme fear responses it can be enormously unsettling, and we may try to control them through rituals, or through food and alcohol, or

self harm, or push them away by shutting off from how we feel entirely. The fear of experiencing these symptoms can become worse than the symptoms themselves.

Does this affect teens too? Isn't being emotional just a normal part of being a teenager?

It's not rocket science to point out that the teenage period is one associated with some emotional turbulence, from Kevin the Teenager to a smoking James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause* we have no shortage of media reinforcement for rebellion and drama as rights of passage of the teenage years. Studies show that adolescents experience more emotional intensity when compared to children and adults and negative emotions, such as anxiety and anger, are found to increase from early to middle adolescence. Ongoing brain development seems to make the process of emotional regulation a harder thing to do. But does this explain the extent of teen anxiety we see today? Let's look at the stats.... on average, 1 in 3 adolescents will suffer from an anxiety disorder between the ages of 13 and 18. That's a third of all teens, who are not 'just a bit worried' but whose level of symptoms are severe enough to meet the criteria for anxiety disorder. And it doesn't stop there. Anxiety is significantly higher in adolescents than in adults (32% vs 19%) and teen girls suffer from anxiety more than any other social group. Between 2007 and 2012 anxiety disorders in teens rose by a whopping 20% (vs. 0.2 % rise for depression) and U.S. high school students today are twice as likely to suffer from anxiety symptoms for than in the 1980s. The fact that we are now in the midst of a global pandemic is likely to be pushing these figures up even further. Although we don't yet have many published studies for anxiety in teens since COVID-19, research on Chinese students during the early 2020 lockdown suggests 45% showed disordered anxiety during this period.

So, aside from the pandemic, what's going on? What's causing this exponential rise in anxiety in our young people?

Are teens today somehow less resilient, less able to deal with the ups and downs of their daily existences? Has something about early childhood today led to teens being less well equipped to deal with their emotions, and to acquire the skills of doing hard things and pushing on through? Or have feelings of fear and panic always been part of the journey through adolescence for some teens, but now we are betting at identifying this, talking about it and giving support? Or

maybe the self help industry created this crisis as a means of feeding the machine? There are big bucks in it after all - treatment of anxiety costs approximately \$42 billion a year in the U.S alone.

Is it diet? Lack of sleep? Social media? Exam pressure? Or, maybe our teens are somehow acting as a bellweather for our society? Are they the canaries in the mine, whose younger, more sensitive nervous systems are sounding the warning call, alerting us to the impossibility of the demands that modern society has created for us? We know that anxiety and depression tend to rise in step with a country's GDP, (yep you read that right, the better off the country the more anxious and depressed its people are) and when you stop to think about that, it makes no sense. Like many human problems it is complex in nature, and these explanations probably all have a part to play. This is not a popular thing to say of course. Simple solutions, top tips and quick fixes get far more airtime; ambiguity, grey areas and multiple solutions do not make for fun, high traffic social media posts, or articles (sorry!). But they do make for useful ones, if we are patient enough.

So, given it's a complex issue, what can we actually do? How to help an anxious teen (you can).

When I'm working with clients I look to understand causes of anxiety from the whole system. In helping your teens you can do the same. But before we get into action, lets step back and make sure we've understood what's going on in the brain first... We know that emotions are a signalling system and anxiety is driven by our emotions. So these emotional reactions that feel disproportionate in some way, that are getting in the way of living our lives, are part of the same signalling system. The signalling is not broken, it is telling us something. We need to be patient, and work out what.

I'm going to say that again. When our teens experience anxiety, their emotional signalling system is not broken, it is telling them, and us, something. We need to be patient, and help them to work out what.

The problem with anxiety is that the emotional signals it involves can be pretty strong, so when you're in it and the volume on the signals are turned up super high then its VERY hard to think clearly. This is because your brain isn't accessing the state (or regions) where rational thoughts happen. They're switched off. It's like trying to access the parts of your brain needed to solve complex algebra with thrash metal at full blast. Not ideal. So first we need to Turn

It Down!. The following three step plan is based on the way our brains work and tilted for you to use with a teen.

STEP 1: BREATHE

The quickest and easiest way to help your teen to ‘turn down the volume’ on their anxiety is with breath. It’s literally impossible to be in full panic mode whilst breathing slowly and deeply. Karen from Hey Sigmund (a wonderful resource for anxiety in teens) recommends the following 2 breathing activities. It is best to practise them when everything’s ok, so that when the ‘volume’ gets turned up they are easy to remember:

1. Hot cocoa breathing. Get them to imagine they have a mug of delicious hot chocolate in their hands. Breathe in the lovely warm chocolatey smell for three slow counts, hold for one, and blow it cool for three. Do this for as long as needed to calm the system.
2. Figure 8 Breathing: This is lovely because it combines touch and breath. Get them to trace a figure 8 on their palm, or arm or wherever feels nice. As they trace the top of the 8 they breathe in, when they get to the middle they hold and as they trace the bottom of the 8 they breathe out. Trace slowly and steadily and keep the breath in sync.

STEP 2: CONNECT

As humans, our brains are regulated by the other humans around us, particularly those that we feel close to (yes parents, that’s right, your brain and your emotional state, ‘tunes’ the emotional states of your kids...eek!). And when we feel connected we get a very helpful burst of neurotransmitters and hormones, that can shift our state positively. Touch is a very effective way to do this, but has to be approached sensitively with teens for obvious reasons. If you’re a parent of a teen who is not averse to a lovely big hug then dive right in. If that’s not an option then holding a hand, putting an arm around or getting some eye contact are all powerful ways of creating the connection that ‘turns down the volume’ on anxiety. Soothing words that help them feel seen are also great, “I can see that xxx is big / sad / scary / overwhelming for you right now. Its ok to feel sad, scared, like you can’t cope”. Be with them. Connection changes their brain state. Just be careful you don’t ‘catch it’. Emotions are contagious and if you get dragged into their fear you won’t be able to help them to get out of it. It’s also important to remember that this is not

about solving, or about judging, or about telling. They’re all tempting options. But please, don’t. It is about connecting. If you’re not sure of what the difference is, then this is your homework.

STEP 3: ENGAGE THE ‘THINKING’ BRAIN

Once they are calmer and the ‘volume’ on their anxiety is reducing, work with them on ‘What do they need to do to nourish themselves and move forward’. Do they need your help to be brave and do the ‘hard thing’ right now (doing the exam, going to school, facing the difficult friend)? *Note – it’s ok to do hard things. This is what helps us to know we are brave humans.* Or do they need to take some time out, to look after themselves with a good meal, or a good sleep, or some fun relaxation? Do they need to write a list or make a plan or journal their feelings? Or read a book or phone a friend? Remember this is triage. It is turning the volume down, it is not about solving it. Yet. So once they are starting to feel more calm and connected you are help them to move forward with their day.

What next, how to get at the underlying causes of anxiety.

Here are some of the things that can create or underpin feelings of anxiety and overwhelm in teens. But please note, this is not an exhaustive list, and many or none of these may apply.

Physiological needs. Is your teen getting good sleep (ideally 9 hrs), daily fresh air and exercise, and eating a diet with fresh food and not too much junk? Their systems are more affected by caffeine and additives than adult, and experimenting with alcohol and substances can throw their nervous system off key in a big way. This can include excessive gaming, which I often view as a symptom of what is missing in their worlds (ie. is the Fortnite addict missing real physical challenge and opportunities for bravery in their world? is the Instagram addict missing the sense of being really connected to a tribe?) Are they laughing and having fun?

Connection needs. Do they have warm, fun relationships with people that they can depend on and who accept them, as they are, for who they are? Do they connect with people in person more than half the time (as opposed to online)? Has something gone wrong in a relationship? The teenage brain is very alert to signs of rejection and shame can be

pervasive or overwhelming at this age. Having a place to make sense of this and all relationship concerns with a non-judgmental other is super important.

Are there places in their world where they are giving back to others? Part of what ‘tunes’ our nervous system is to give as well as to receive so acts of service can be an enormously powerful mood booster. They also have the added benefit of allowing us to connect with the very real challenges that others also face in life.

Safety needs. The correlation between traumatic events in childhood and anxiety is widely recorded, but what is often not well understood is that it is not what happened but how the person it happened to has been able to make sense of it, that mediates the symptoms. If you suspect or know that your teen has experienced traumatic events then helping them to understand these can be central to lessening their anxiety moving forwards. Working with a trained professional can be enormously helpful here.

Family dynamics can also play an important part in how safe and accepted they feel. What ‘part’ do they play in the family system? Have they non consciously been cast in a role that is conferring anxiety? Do they subconsciously feel responsible for getting things right to please others? Or for making sure that their parents or other adults in their world are ‘ok? Has the burden somehow fallen on them for ‘living the un-lived life’ of one or both parents? Whilst most parents don’t consciously ask their children to achieve what they wished they themselves had, this message can be conveyed in more subtle ways leaving children feeling overwhelmed by an invisible burden that they don’t know how to fulfil.

It is important to remember that lives of teens do not, and should not, be perfectly orchestrated. We don’t need them to have all their emotional needs met all of the time. We need bumps and challenges to teach us how to cope with the difficult business of being alive. However, if our basic emotional needs are for the most part, being met then we are many times more likely to develop the emotional regulation skills that we need and to head off anxiety when it does show up, now or later in life.

So how to prevent, or protect against anxiety in our teens?

Well, the areas above can form a useful checklist for what teens (and all of us) need to feel at our best. Mindful Parenting

is also a style that has been strongly associated with positive outcomes in teen anxiety. It is not a fad or a framework, but describes some common sense approaches to helping teens such as; being accepting when they express emotion and encouraging and support them to solve problems together, (vs punishing or minimizing emotion) showing compassion, non-judgmental listening and listening with full attention, being present. This has been shown to help teens to ‘distance’ themselves from their thoughts, to ‘observe them’ and know that difficult emotions are natural and will pass – all key skills in emotional health, and challenges for those who are anxious.

The other really important factor that is associated with lower levels of teen anxiety is how kind we are to ourselves. Teens of parents who are more accepting of their personal limitations and less likely to criticise or blame themselves when things go wrong are more likely to have non-anxious teens. Yep, that’s right, in looking after yourself, you are actually helping them. And this is down to role modelling more than simple genetics – when our young people see us being kind to ourselves when we face difficult problems they learn self-compassion, one of the key skills in healthy emotion regulation (and lower anxiety) through the course of life. So if you do one thing as a result of reading this, start with you. Be as compassionate and caring in the way you talk to and react to yourself as you’d like your teenager to be and in doing so you will change the dynamic for them. How great is that?

If you’d like more information on any of the issues raised in this article please get in touch with Helen, helen@theilluminatedmind.com. For a list of references and resources please go to theilluminatedmind.com

Helen is a Psychologist and Coach who works with clients to help them grow their self awareness, overcome challenges and create change. She provides Executive Coaching, Personal & Transition Coaching and Psychotherapy in person at Core Collective Singapore and online. For more information check out theilluminatedmind.com.

USEFUL HELPLINES

- Institute of Mental Health’s Mental Health Helpline (6389-2222)
- Samaritans of Singapore (1800-221-4444)
- Silver Ribbon Singapore (6385-3714)
- Big Love Child Protection Specialist Centre (6445-0400)
- HEART @ Fei Yue Child Protection Specialist Centre (6819-9170)
- PAVE Integrated Services for Individual and Family Protection (6555-0390)
- AWARE (Women’s Helpline 1800-777-5555) Sexual Assault Helpline (6779-0282)



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Should we be telling our teens to sit up straight?

WRITTEN BY: *RABIA SHAH, BSc (HONS), Physiotherapy*

As our teens transform from children to adults, what advice can we give them to support their changing body?

We can all recall the number of times our parents would tell us to “sit up straight” and “straighten your back” but did this really help us? As a physiotherapist working with people of various ages, I’ve learnt that just telling people to “sit up straight” doesn’t really help them. It doesn’t really help them understand what healthy posture looks like and why it would be of benefit to them.

Telling a teen to ‘sit up straight’ can often end up with teens forcing the spine to look straight, which can result in tight muscles and a military raised chest. This is the opposite of what we wish to achieve!

So, what do we wish to achieve? It’s important to empower our teens with knowledge about healthy posture, so they can understand the basic anatomy of the spine, what the most beneficial positions are to optimize function, how to prevent injuries and how to create good posture habits.

What are the key messages we should be sharing with our teens? Having healthy posture habits is good for teens. It prevents them from common neck, shoulder and back problems and can also improve mood, energy and concentration throughout the day.

6 KEY MESSAGES

- **Lengthen your spine, activate your core and breathe.** There is a natural S-shape in the spine so when we maintain this s-shape, it allows muscles to be able to do their job of support better. This also allows us to lengthen the spine and create space in the between the vertebrae, which is better for the discs. By activating the deep core muscles by 20% teens can start to feel more supported in the spine.
- **Motion is lotion:** lubricate your joints and work your muscles by moving better throughout the day. Take movement breaks every 40 minutes by stretching or going for a walk.
- **Practice makes perfect.** Good posture practice may feel like an effort at first, but the more you practice, the stronger you will become at maintaining your posture.
- **Teach by example.** Demonstrate healthy posture to your teen by practicing good posture when you are driving, talking on the phone and watching television.
- **Never do homework on your sofa or bed.**
- **Make sure your teen's desk and chair have been appropriately set up:** invest in a good chair.

POSTURE TIPS

STANDING POSTURE

Start by standing tall. Imagine a balloon at the crown of your head helping you lengthen your spine

Gently bring your ears over the shoulders
Gently move the shoulder blades down towards your lower back.

Engage your deep abdominals and stand evenly on both feet.

SITTING POSTURE

Try to choose a chair with back support.

Take your bottom to the back of the chair .
place your feet flat on the floor and maintain your ankles, knees and hips at 90 degrees.

Keep your monitor at eye level.

Rabia is a highly qualified Physiotherapist and Clinical Pilates Instructor who believes in providing holistic, evidence-based care to her patients and specializes in Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation (Acute & Chronic), Women's Health, Pre and Post-natal Physiotherapy, Clinical Pilates, Core training, Chronic Pain and Mindfulness for Health. To find out more about Rabia's services, go to [Como Shambhala](#)



TROPICAL
Basis

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: CHARLIE CAMERON





Located in the heart of Joo Chiat lies a hidden gem of a home. Behind the facade of a traditional Singaporean shophouse, an oasis of calm has been created. A true sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of the city beyond.

With soaring ceilings and original features, the space has been sympathetically restored and added to with a mediterranean sensibility. The overall effect is one of calm - with a neutral palette and a layered approach to styling, the home feels relaxed and refined.

The project to transform this shophouse commenced in April last year by owner Vivienne Shen ([@thehomeodyssey](#)). Not to be deterred by the disruption of Covid, Vivienne and her husband forged ahead with their renovation plans and moved in while the home was still in a serious state of renovation.

Walls were knocked through, arches created and the light-well in the middle of the ground floor was opened up to create a palm strewn oasis complete with stepping stones and water feature, between the living and dining / kitchen area. It is a stunning unexpected feature that somehow feels totally in keeping with the home.











HOME AS A SANCTUARY

Bringing nature inside is one way to create a sense of calm and connection in a space. The tropical palm oasis created in the middle of the living space in this home is a stunning example of creating a sanctuary and it works beautifully.



INTERIORS AND HOME
Tropical Oasis

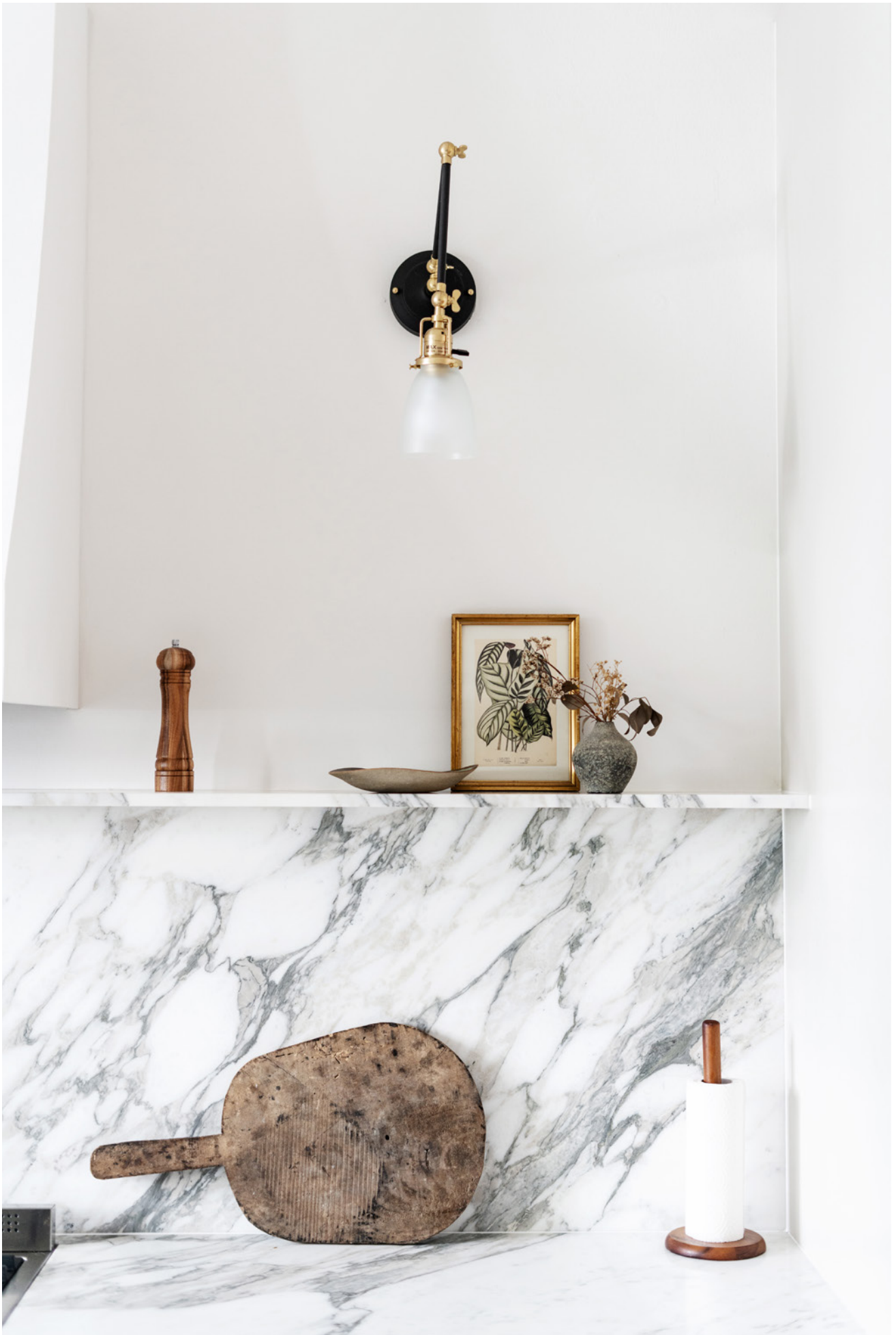




THE HEART OF THE HOME

The shaker style kitchen in neutral tones provides a beautiful open plan space perfect for entertaining. Natural materials have also been chosen to add a tactile warmth to the space - honed marble, natural stone tiles, leather woven bar stools and brass fittings. The Georges pendant light above the dining table continues the use of materials to create interest.









CREATE INTIMACY

Despite the ground floor being open plan, there is a sense of intimacy to the spaces created. The little breakfast nook with banquette seating is a great example of using a corner to create a practical and stylish 'moment' in your home.











INTERIORS AND HOME
Tropical Oasis









Shop the Look

STYLE IDEAS



1. Minna Anni cushion, [Lulu and Georgia](#) / 2. Rica cushion, [Lulu and Georgia](#) / 3. Acoma rug, [Lulu and Georgia](#) / 4. Little Petra armchair, [& Tradition](#) / 5. Georges Pendant Light Shaded Nude L, [Stylo deco](#) / 6. Rainforest Vintage wallpaper, [Hello Circus](#) / 7. Vadala Lumbar cushion, [Lulu and Georgia](#) / 8. Stanmore II bluetooth speaker, [Marshall](#) / 9. AD at 100 book, [Architectural Digest](#) / 10. Vintage vase jug, [Noden](#)



STYLODECO

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FOOD AND ENTERTAINING

Happy Easter



Happy Easter

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHARLIE CAMERON

STYLING: CHARLIE CAMERON & JOSEPHINE BYRNES




Set the Table


FOR AN EASTER LUNCH WITH FRIENDS



Bring a sense of spring to your table this Easter with an earthy palette - think neutrals and greens with a touch of white. Floral bulbs nestled in moss and dotted with mini easter eggs, small sprigs of flowers and egg shells as vases. A little whimsy and a lot of joy to celebrate a delicious relaxed lunch with friends.

A close-up photograph of a spring-themed table setting. In the foreground, a white ceramic plate with a subtle, concentric circular pattern is placed on a white tablecloth featuring a blue and yellow floral design. To the right of the plate, a small, rustic nest made of brown twigs sits on the table. A white paper sign, rolled into a ring, is placed over the nest and contains the handwritten text "Spring is a low". A small white egg is visible within the nest. In the background, a glass vase with green stems and a white ceramic container with greenery are softly blurred. The entire scene is set on a light-colored, textured surface, possibly a table or floor.

Spring is a low



ely reminder of how beautiful change



FLORALS

Use floral bulbs nestled in moss to create centre pieces. Clean the dirt from the roots of the bulbs and let the roots drape over the edge of the dish. Add quail eggs or mini chocolate eggs for an added touch of Easter. Little sprigs of spring flowers in glass bottles add a lovely spring touch. We used daisies, white tulips and purple veronicas.

TABLE SETTING

Keep a relaxed table setting by using irregular shaped stoneware plates, stonewashed vintage cutlery and lovely soft cotton hand printed napkins with a floral motif. Top your place settings with a birds nest (we found ours) and use an empty egg shell as a mini vase to hold a sprig of flowers. Handwrite 'springtime' quotes on curled paper ribbon as a finishing touch.

THINK TEXTURE

For an outdoor day time lunch, think about adding texture and layers to your table. A natural tablecloth fringed at the ends, rattan plate chargers, olive green glassware and vintage inspired wine glasses for a relaxed look.



Napkins, [Zojora](#). Olive glass tumblers, [Lottie Lifestyle](#). Stonewashed vintage cutlery, [Lottie Lifestyle](#). Wine glasses and small white bowls used for flowers, [Crate and Barrel](#). Tablecloth, glass jars, rattan charger plates, stylists own. Flowers from [Far East Flora](#). Nests, nature's own

Shop the Look

STYLE IDEAS FOR EASTER BREAKFAST



1. Dinosaur Designs Horn Vase in Pink [Lottie Lifestyle](#) / 2. Handmade ceramic vintage 'Lace' serving plate, [Lottie Lifestyle](#) / 3. Set of 4 gingham napkins in 'Summer Sorbet' [Lottie Lifestyle](#) / 4. Ceramic egg crate [Crate and Barrel](#) / 5. 'Mercer' appetizer place in white, [Crate and Barrel](#) / 6. Wooden egg cups, [The Small Folk](#)

Shop the Look

STYLE IDEAS FOR EASTER LUNCH



1. Set of 6 'Olive' tumblers, [Lottie Lifestyle](#) / 2. Napkin Bundle 1, [Zojora](#) / 3. 'Welcome II' salad plate, [Crate and Barrel](#) / 4. Washed linen tablecloth, [Smallable](#) / 5. French wine glass, [Crate and Barrel](#) / 6. Vintage stonewash cutlery, [Lottie Lifestyle](#)



Gather & Graze

celebrate Easter with a relaxed lunch menu full of
fresh flavours and easy to prepare dishes

“This is the power of gathering; it inspires us, delightfully, to be more hopeful, more joyful, more thoughtful: in a word, more alive.”

ALICE WATERS





SLOW ROASTED SALMON WITH DILL, ORANGE AND FENNEL

This slow cooked salmon dish is sublime and simple. By roasting it at a super low temperature, it keeps the salmon really soft, buttery and tender. You can prep this hours before, chill in fridge and then serve at room temperature.

Adapted from Bon Appetite

Feeds 6-8 people

INGREDIENTS

1-1.2kg Salmon side from a good fishmonger
1 fennel bulb medium
1 lemon thinly sliced
1 orange thinly sliced
4-5 sprigs of dill plus more to garnish
1/3 cup olive oil
Sea salt and Pepper

Mustard sauce

1/2 cup mayo
1 tbs wholegrain mustard
1/2 tsp salt
Juice and zest of 1/4 orange
Salt and Pepper

METHOD

Mix mustard sauce ingredients together, season with salt and pepper, and add more orange juice if needed. Set aside.

Preheat oven to 135C. Place baking paper on the baking tray. Toss orange, fennel, lemon, dill, thyme and parsley on the baking paper in the baking dish and season with salt and pepper.

Season salmon with salt and pepper on both sides and place on top of the bed of citrus, fennel and herbs. Place a few of the citrus and dill pieces on top and drizzle with the olive oil.

Roast the salmon on low 135C until just cooked. The best way to test this is when the tip of the knife slides through easily in the thickest part. It should still be a bit pink in the center. It will take approximately 30-40 mins for 1kg.

Transfer the salmon carefully on the plate, arrange some of the lemon and orange pieces on top and spoon over the oil.

Garnish with fresh dill and thinly sliced radish (optional) and serve

Note: *If you are short on time, you can also roast the salmon at 180C for 25-30 min or until you can just slide the tip of a knife through the middle and it is still pink inside. But try the slow cooked method for a softer, buttery salmon texture.*



SMASHED CRISPY POTATOES WITH GREEK YOGHURT, FETTA AND SPRING HERBS

These garlicky, crispy potatoes with fetta are a winner and moreish. They go perfectly with the silky, buttery salmon and salads.

Serves 6-8 people as a side dish

INGREDIENTS

1kg small thumb size potatoes
1-2tbs salt for the boiling water
2-3 tbs olive oil
4 garlic cloves finely chopped
A few sprigs of rosemary or thyme or both
1 tbs parsley
Salt and Pepper
Flaky sea salt

Dressing

½ cup greek yoghurt
150g fetta
¼ cup chopped parsley
1 tbs dill
1 tbs mint
Juice and zest of 1 lemon
Salt and Pepper

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 220C.

Add salt to the boiling water and place potatoes in the pot until par-boiled which will take about 5-7 mins. To check if they are ready, stab a potato with a fork and it should just be able to go in. Drain and let them dry for 10 mins.

Mix olive oil, garlic and parsley, herbs, salt and pepper in a bowl. Lightly flatten the potatoes with a fork so the skin breaks but the potato is still in one piece. This will expose more of the potato to crisp up and coat the potato in the olive oil and garlic mix.

Place on a baking tray well spaced out and roast for 20-30 mins or until crispy.

While potatoes are roasting, whisk yoghurt, dill, mint, zest and lemon juice together. Crumble in the fetta and add in chopped parsley. Season with salt and pepper.

To serve top the potatoes with the yoghurt, fetta mixture and add extra parsley and lemon zest to garnish.



ROASTED CARROT AND ORANGE SALAD WITH BABA GANOUSH

*Adapted from Donna Hay**Serves 6-8 people as a side dish*

INGREDIENTS

Baba Ganoush

2 large eggplants
 2 garlic cloves minced
 4 tbs tahini
 1 tbs lemon juice
 1 tsp salt
 2 tbs yoghurt (if desired)

Carrots

500g small dutch carrots, trimmed, cleaned and halved
 1 tbs olive oil
 ½ tbs ground coriander
 Finely grated orange rind of 1 orange
 Salt and Pepper
 1 tbs honey

Dressing and Garnish

3 tbs cup extra virgin olive oil
 1 tbs honey
 2 tbs orange juice
 Some green leaves washed and dried
 ¼ cup chopped pistachios
 ¼ cup dukkah spice (store bought)

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 220c.

Start by making the Baba Ganoush. Char the eggplant over a fire or the flame of a gas stove. Hold the eggplant over the flame using tongs and turn frequently until the skin is thoroughly blackened on all sides. Be patient with this step, it may take 15-20 mins before it is completely blackened.

Place the charred eggplant in a bowl and cover the bowl with clingfilm or a tea towel for 5 mins to allow the skin of the eggplant to loosen.

Once cool enough to handle, peel the blackened skin off the eggplant and discard. Chop the flesh finely and save the smokey liquid for later.

Strain the chopped eggplant with a sieve over another mixing bowl for 10 mins and discard the liquid.

Stir the tahini, garlic and lemon juice into the first bowl with the smokey liquid. Add the finely chopped eggplant. This will make quite a chunky baba ganoush, if you like it a smoother consistency, you can mix it in a food processor and add 2 tbs of yoghurt.

The Baba Ganoush can be made ahead of time and stored in a sealed container.

Place carrots on a roasting tray and drizzle with 1tbs of olive oil. Sprinkle the carrots with the coriander, orange rind, and salt and pepper then toss and roast for 10 mins. After 10 mins, drizzle with 1 tbs honey and cook another 5 min or until the carrots are golden, caramelised and tender.

To make the dressing, place the olive oil, honey, orange juice, salt and pepper in a bowl and whisk until well combined.

When ready to serve, spread the Baba Ganoush on the plate in a flat circle, place the roasted carrots and some green leaves on top.

To garnish sprinkle pistachios, dukkah and dressing.



SPRING GREEN SALAD WITH ZUCCHINI, ASPARAGUS, PEAS, MINT AND HAZELNUTS

This green salad is literally spring on a plate. The lovely crunchy green asparagus, peas, zucchini and mint goes perfectly with a simple lemon dressing and some salty parmigiano shavings.

Serves 6-8 people as a side dish

INGREDIENTS

1 large or 2 small zucchinis
1 bunch of asparagus (if you can, buy the thicker type)
100g rocket
1/3 cup garden peas (frozen is ok)
250g sugar snap peas
Handful of fresh mint

Dressing

1/4 cup olive oil
Juice 1/2 lemon
Zest 1 lemon
1 tsp honey
Salt and Pepper

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 200c and place the hazelnuts on a roasting tray and roast in the oven until just turning golden. Watch the nuts carefully as they can burn very quickly. Once roasted, set aside to cool.

Mix the ingredients for the lemon dressing and set aside.

Using a peeler, make zucchini ribbons and shave the asparagus. and set aside.

Set a bowl with iced water to the side. Blanch the garden peas and sugar snap peas in boiling water for 1 min and immediately take out and place in iced water so they don't overcook.

Wash and drain rocket and mint.

Assemble the zucchini, asparagus and rocket in a salad bowl. Add mint, hazelnuts, and shavings of parmigiano. Drizzle with the dressing and serve immediately.



BALSAMIC AND STRAWBERRY GALETTES

These strawberry and balsamic galettes are heavenly! The fresh strawberries with the sweet sharp balsamic vinegar is a winning flavour combination. For the crust, I've added ground almonds for a nuttier crunch. It's the perfect spring fruity dessert with a big dollop of creme fraiche.

*Adapted from My Little Larder
Makes 4 galettes*

INGREDIENTS

Pastry

1 ³/₄ cups of plain flour
 1/3 cup of almond meal
 1/2 cup of icing sugar
 Zest of 1 lemon
 125g cold butter cut into cubes
 2 free range eggs yolks beaten
 2 tbs cold ice water

Filling

500g strawberries sliced
 1/3 cup caster sugar
 1 tsp vanilla extract or seeds from 1 vanilla pod
 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
 Zest of 1 lemon
 1/3 cup almond meal

Assembly

1 free range egg for wash
 2 tbs raw demerara sugar

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180c.

Start by making the pastry. Place the flour, almond meal, icing sugar, lemon zest and butter in a bowl and use your fingers to rub the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Try and work lightly and quickly as you don't want the butter to start melting under the warmth of your fingers (it's a good idea to do this in a cool room).

Add the egg yolks and mix together with a fork. Then add the

iced cold water a dribble at a time until it just comes together. Depending on your flour you may need very little or a bit more so go carefully when you add the water.

Form the pastry into a disc and wrap in cling film and place in the fridge for 1 hour to let it rest. Line tray with baking paper or baking silicone sheet.

In a medium bowl, mix strawberries, balsamic vinegar, lemon zest, sugar and vanilla and set aside.

Remove pastry from the refrigerator and divide into 4 pieces. Roll each piece into a circle on a lightly floured piece of baking paper. Roll until 3mm thick and 18-20 cm in diameter. Roll the 3 other pieces into a flat disc and place in the fridge with baking paper in between each disc to chill and firm for 20-30 mins.

Divide almond meal evenly between pastry circles and pile in the centre 12cm. This will soak up the juices so the base stays crisp.

Divide the strawberry mixture between the 4 pastry discs and gently fold the edge of pastry into the middle to stop the juices running out. Check for any holes and mend with pastry bits. Don't worry if it looks a bit rough as a galette is meant to look a bit rustic.

In a small bowl, lightly beat the egg and brush onto the pastry edges using a pastry brush. Sprinkle with raw sugar and bake for 15-20 min until golden brown.

Cool on a wire rack to keep the base crunchy. When cool or room temperature serve with a big dollop of creme fraiche, mascarpone or whipped cream or ice cream.

Note: The pastry can be made up to 1 week ahead and kept in wrapped in the fridge until needed.



PASSIONFRUIT, CUCUMBER, MINT AND GIN SPRITZER

This is a light and refreshing tropical cocktail that can be pre-mixed and stored in the fridge. This gin spritzer is perfect for brunch, lunch or happy hour drinks for the hot steamy weather. Passionfruit is one of my favourite fruits and you can buy them really cheap at the wet market for \$5 a kilo.

Adapted from Peony Lim

Makes 4

INGREDIENTS

1 inch of fresh grated ginger
8 sprigs of mint
1 cucumber
1 cup of passionfruit pulp (about 16 passionfruits)
½ cup of gin
1 chilled soda water or prosecco to add a bit of fizz
2 passionfruits cut in half for garnish
Extra mint for garnish

METHOD

Pulverise the passionfruit pulp in a food processor or blender to loosen the pulp from the seeds. Use a sieve to extract the juice using a wooden spoon to push the juice into a bowl. Discard the seeds.

Using a peeler, make 4 peels of cucumber for garnish later.

With the remaining cucumber, peel, dice and add to a food processor or blender. Add mint and ginger and blitz.

Use a sieve to strain the cucumber, ginger juice and discard the rest. Add passionfruit juice, gin and cucumber juice into a jug and refrigerate until needed.

Before serving, place a cucumber peel in each glass, top with gin, passionfruit, cucumber juice and top with some soda water or prosecco if you prefer. Garnish with half a passionfruit and some mint leaves.

Cheers!



Hot Cross Buns

“*One a penny, two
a penny...*”



I make hot cross buns every Easter as I have a serious weakness for these fragrant spiced, citrus sweet buns. Hot cross buns take a bit of work and technique but it is a great baking treat to pass the time with the kids. This year I was inspired to add a little twist to my usual recipe by adding candied apple, fresh diced apple, candied lemon and cardamon spice (one of my favourite spices in the world).

That heady scent of cinnamon, spices, candied lemon wafting in the kitchen and seeing your little buns grow and rise is an instant feel good mood changer. My two boys absolutely love hot cross buns and can devour quite a few. My 2 year old insists on calling them hot cross bum bums which makes us laugh. We all need a bit of hot cross bun love and laughter in these tough, unpredictable times. Happy Easter to all!

Angie Ma x



SPICED HOT CROSS BUNS

Recipe by Angie Ma from Once Upon A Secret Supper

Adapted from Gourmet Traveller

Makes about 20-24 buns

Notes and Tips:

- *This recipe includes 3 stages of proving to get really fluffy (rather than rock hard) buns. It is worth it.*
- *The dough is super sticky as there is a high volume of milk/butter so best to use a mixer with dough hook.*
- *Use strong bread flour as it has more gluten and will give you that nice springy texture. If you use plain flour it will just be less springy.*
- *This recipe uses instant active yeast so you can just dump it straight into the flour. If you don't have instant yeast, activate it first in lukewarm milk for 5-10 mins until foamy and then add the melted butter.*
- *If you like more sultanas or more candied peel go ahead and add more, I've added apple as the kids love it.*
- *These will keep well in the freezer. To keep them fresh, freeze as soon as cool and bring to room temperature and warm in the oven before eating.*
- *If you can't be bothered making the simple syrup glaze, just warm up some golden syrup or apricot jam to glaze when the buns are hot out of the oven.*
- *Making hot cross buns does require a bit of technique but give it a go. Practice makes perfect.*

Glaze, candied lemon and candied apple

260 gm raw caster sugar
 375 ml water
 1 cinnamon quill
 8 lightly crushed cardamon pods with shell
 1 lemon
 1 ½ granny smith apple, peeled, cored and diced into small 5mm cubes
 ½ teaspoon of ground cinnamon (for later)

Bun ingredients

700 gm flour (additional 50g flour if needed)
 65 gm raw caster sugar
 3 ½ tsp ground cinnamon
 ½ tsp allspice
 8 cardamon pods crushed into powder (discard shell) or just ¾ tsp ground cardamon
 Finely grated rind of 1 orange and 1 lemon
 14 gm instant active dry yeast
 1 tsp salt
 150 gm or ½ cup of sultanas or golden raisins
 30 gm or ¼ cup of candied orange peel
 Candied lemon peel and apple
 1 ½ - 2 granny smith apple, peeled, core and diced into small 5mm cubes

Flour paste for crosses:

50 gm flour
 70 ml ice cold water

To make candied apple and lemon combine 260 gm sugar, 375 ml water and juice of ½ lemon into a saucepan and stir over med high heat until sugar dissolves. Meanwhile, cut remaining lemon half into 5mm-thick slices, add to the pan with Granny Smith apple and cinnamon quill. Bring to the simmer, reduce heat to medium and cook until lemon and apple are translucent (20-25 minutes). Strain, reserving fruit and syrup separately. When cool enough to handle, dice lemon, combine with apple and set aside.

Sift dry ingredients into a mixer bowl and combine flour, cinnamon, allspice and ground cardamon. Then add sugar, orange and lemon zest and mix. On opposite sides of the bowl add the salt and yeast (add them to opposite sides of the bowl as the salt can kill the yeast if it comes in direct contact).

Combine milk and butter in a small saucepan and warm over low heat until butter melts and mixture is lukewarm and set aside.

Turn on the dough hook and add 1 beaten egg with dry ingredients, then add the warm milk / butter mixture slowly (the warm milk will activate the yeast). At low speed combine all ingredients and then turn up to medium speed for 5 mins. Rest for 30 seconds to relax the gluten and then mix for 5 more mins on mid speed before resting again for 30 seconds.

Add the candied apple, candied lemon, candied orange peel, sultanas, diced fresh apple and continue mixing on medium speed for another 5-10 mins. You may need to add another 30-50 gm of flour which I did as Singapore is super humid. When the dough starts to stick less to the side of the bowl and starts coming together a bit more you are ready to prove. Don't worry the dough will still be quite sticky but it should be less translucent

SPICED HOT CROSS BUNS (CONT'D)

than before. Use a dough scraper to get the dough into a bigger well oiled bowl and cover with damp tea towel. Rest until double in size (about 30-45 mins)

Knock air out of dough and turn onto well floured surface and knead with well floured hands for about 5 mins. The dough will still be quite sticky don't worry. As it is a sticky dough either slap the dough down and stretch when kneading or fold over like a present a few times to knead. Scrape any extra bits off hands and tabletop with scraper. Shape into ball and place to prove 2nd time in well oiled bowl and cover with damp cloth. Rest in warm place until doubled in size (30-45 minutes).

Knock back dough again and divide into 2 even sized pieces. Place one piece back in bowl and cover with damp cloth. With the other half divide into 10-12 even pieces or about 70g, and knead and shape into balls. With lightly floured hands and surface flatten into disc and bring in the two opposite corners into middle and repeat with other 2 opposite sides a few times. Knead a few times with palm of hand and then fold 4 corners in again to create a nice tension in the bun, squeeze it together and turn over so smooth side upwards and roll into a nice smooth ball. You know it's good when you the dough springs back when you poke it with your finger. Arrange dough balls into two concentric circles on a large round or rectangular baking tray lined with baking paper, leaving 1cm

between each for dough to expand. Cover with a tea towel and stand in a warm place until doubled in size (30-40 minutes).

Preheat oven to 220C. Combine remaining flour and 70ml cold water in a bowl and stir to a smooth paste. Spoon into a piping bag fitted with a small plain nozzle and pipe a cross shape onto each bun. Bake for 6-8minutes on high 220C to get lovely rise and golden brown colour. You may need to turn the baking sheet around halfway through if your oven heat is uneven. Then reduce oven to 200C and bake until golden brown and buns sound hollow when tapped (5-8minutes).

Meanwhile, take the cardamon seeds out of the pods and grind into powder and combine reserved syrup and 1/2 teaspoon of ground cinnamon in a small saucepan and stir over medium heat until syrupy and combined. Brush thickly over hot buns, then transfer to a wire rack to cool.

Eat warm with a thick slather of butter and cup of strong tea.



IN CONVERSATION WITH

Anju Cawthra



It is a gorgeous sunny breezy day in Singapore, and Anju Cawthra has just arrived looking resplendent in a fuchsia wrap dress and bearing Chinese New Year treats. While I make us coffees we do away with small talk and launch straight into the importance of eyebrows, choosing the right glasses to frame your face, hair, feeling good on the inside and how delicious Chinese New Year biscuits are with all their melt in the mouth buttery goodness.

Anju has a wonderful disarming openness - which I suspect is the perfect prerequisite for her newly appointed role as Director of the Facebook group, Seasoned Singapore Expat Women. So with buttery biscuits and coffee at hand, we sit down to talk all things living in Singapore.

What started as a six month stint in Singapore has turned into a 14 year residency. And whilst that sounds like a long time, I think it is a common occurrence for expats to arrive thinking they will only be here a short time only to find themselves making the move more permanent. There is a shift that happens once you have lived away for a while and part of what drew me to the role at Seasoned Singapore Expat Women was the community that it created for what I like to think of as the ‘long timer’ expats. To join SSEW you have to have lived in Singapore for a minimum of 3 years - and the reason for that is that once you are established with your feet firmly planted in Singapore, the kind of interactions and support you are looking for is different from those who have only just arrived. So it makes sense to have this community within the community.

My whole first year in Singapore I wore jeans. I had come from living in the UK and that was the look I was used to - jeans, dark tops, scarves (I am all about accessories, so scarves were always a part of my ‘look’) and it took me time to let go of my London style. Now I look back and think “what was I doing??” There definitely comes a point where you let go of your previous life and embrace where you are - but it can take time.

I have witnessed so many changes to the expat experience since moving to Singapore. When I first arrived there was a different pace to the expat life - most families were here on expat packages and not as many women were working (partly because a decade ago expat postings were more often for a predetermined period of time and with the financial packages, fewer women needed to work). As a result the way the expat community supported one another was much more in person - coffee mornings, outings and activities together. Now, there is a growing trend for expats to move here and stay - with a desire to call Singapore home for the foreseeable future. Many more

expat women are interested in finding meaningful work and continuing on their career path, or creating a new one.

Facebook groups like SSEW have now become the new online version of a coffee morning get together. With busier lives, people are looking for advice and guidance on a range of topics and whilst the online experience can never replace meeting up in person, it certainly helps to know you have a community of people ready to support you.



I find it curious that the longer you live somewhere, the less you explore. When you first arrive in a new country you head out to discover your new home - but after a while, we tend to fall into our regular patterns of living - coffee here, a walk with a friend there, dinner here...it’s all lovely and familiar and predictable. But if this past year has

“My friends jokingly call me a walking ‘Time Out’ as there is nothing I love more than finding a new exhibition, bar or restaurant to try.”

taught us anything, it is that we really need to explore what is on our doorstep in Singapore because we are not going anywhere else for a while. I recently went to Pasir Ris for a beach clean up day and realised when I arrived, that it had been many years since my last visit to the area. But why? Pasir Ris beach is lovely (and actually quite clean...which meant he had a fairly easy job on the day!) So one of my aims with SSEW is to bring interesting content about what is on in Singapore and get people interested in our little red dot again.

To this end, I recently did a whole week spotlight on Joo Chiat. I visited the shops and businesses in the area and got to know what is on offer in this trendy suburb. Now, if you live in the East, Joo Chiat is obviously well known to you - but, you would be amazed by how many expats living elsewhere on the island haven't been to Joo Chiat for a long time, or in some cases ever! So it has been a popular series of videos on the SSEW site for everyone wishing to see a little of what Joo Chiat has to offer.

My first job in Singapore was working for a charity called i-india that supports street children in India. It was a great introduction to working in Singapore and it

is a charity that is still very close to my heart. Through my work I made some great friendships that are still ongoing today and I am grateful that I had the chance to find work amongst a group of locals and seasoned expats as it has meant my friendship base here hasn't changed every couple of years. Saying goodbye to good friends is surely one of the toughest aspects of living abroad so I am always grateful for these long term friendships which help to keep me feeling grounded here.

My friends jokingly call me a walking ‘Time Out’. There is nothing I love more than heading out to new places, trying new exhibitions, bars or restaurants and I feel so lucky to live in a city that has so much choice.

Sometimes it takes time to let go of the cultural values you grew up with. Both of my parents are Indian and I was born and raised in the UK. My parents aren't particularly conservative but I would say they do have traditional values, so growing up I had a mixture of Indian and British values. It dawned on me recently how the cultural values I have grown up with have informed the decisions I've made in my life - like not ever wearing a bikini until recently! As I grow older I am able to question some

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Anju Cawthra



of these values, take them out and examine them, and decide if they fit who I am. I think this is the same for many of us and living abroad enables the questioning of our cultural beliefs or values in a way that maybe wouldn't happen if we still lived in our home countries.

I often get complimented on my short hair and it has now become my defining style statement.

My mother taught me when I was growing up that a girl's hair was her 'crowning glory'. The expectation was that a girl's hair should be long, luscious and feminine - and mine was - for a very long time. That was until I became a mother for the first time. In those first few months of motherhood I felt that I'd lost a little of 'me' so I decided to tackle this feeling with a haircut. Once I'd taken the plunge with a pixie cut, I was all in for the short hair and I've never looked back. Now when I look in the mirror I see 'me' and love the confidence that brings.

Anju is the Director of Seasoned Singapore Expat Women, a supportive community predominantly run through a closed Facebook group. If you have lived in Singapore for at least 3 years you can join the #wisetribe [here](#). Or follow them on Instagram [here](#).

Anju's Singapore Favourites

SIP... *a Blue cheese martini at IBHQ (yes really!) or my go-to, a Manhattan.*

SEE... *The National Gallery - it really is awe inspiring. As a creative I always love to spend time there.*

EAT... *at Siri House for somewhere funky or Odette for a super special occasion*

DO... *head to the Botanic Gardens for outdoor yoga, evening runs or thinking time with your favourite tree**

STAY... *at the Shangri-La Orchard to tick all the boxes - happy kids, happy life!*

7 SECRET SIN



Image credit: The Warehouse Hotel



SINGAPORE STAYCATIONS

WORDS: DEE THOMPSON

The past year in Singapore has taken some adjustment. Gone are the frequent trips away to near and far-flung destinations and in its place, the realisation that we need to find a new appreciation for what is on our doorstep. Becoming a tourist in our home town is a great way to put a band-aid on the lack of international travel and it gives us the chance to explore Singapore through fresh eyes - to see the sights, smells and culture which may have become the norm and allow us that precious “getting away from it all” feeling.

My daughter’s friend says we’re lucky to ‘live on vacation’ - and it’s true. Our tropical location is something to be grateful for and we have a number of incredible hotels all within easy access offering amazing stay-cation packages. By now you may have already indulged in a staycation at one of Singapore’s more iconic hotels: Marina Bay Sands, Raffles Hotel, The Shangri-la chain. But what if there were some secret locations or hotels which haven’t yet caught your eye? Something new to be discovered and explored...

With this in mind, we’ve dug beneath the surface of the Singapore hotel scene and come up with some gems to tempt you into a staycay or two. So get ready to slide your feet into a pair of hotel slippers, sip a cocktail or two, get lost in a book and let go of your everyday demands with our list of secret Singapore staycations.

DUXTON RESERVE

I've always loved the former red light district of Singapore, Duxton Hill. Perhaps even a little bit more now that I know that this hotel was designed by former Bond Girl turned interior designer Anouska Hempel. No two rooms are the same but all have organic mattresses, organic linen, and ooze style. The hotel is surrounded by cool bars and restaurants to tempt you out of the hotel. But make sure you visit their bar, 'Anouska's' for a cocktail or two, pre-covid we would always take visitors here for a tipple.

TIP: Their Singapore twist on classic cocktails are delicious, check out their Duxton Mary, a Bloody Mary laced with orange and hua diao wine. www.duxtonreserve.com



Image credit: Duxton Reserve

Image credit: Villa Samadhi



VILLA SAMADHI

A 20-room hotel tucked into Labrador Nature Reserve at the southern coast of Singapore, this boutique hotel was once an enclave of the British military. All rooms exude colonial style but some also come with their own private whirlpools.

A convenient two minute walk, through the lush rainforest, to Tamarind Hill, one of the best thai restaurants in Singapore, for those looking for a good meal. No swimming pool yet but news is there is one on it's way.

www.villasamadhi.com.sg

THE CLAN

There's a new kid on the block and it's a chic hotel in Singapore's CBD. Lucky guests can bag themselves a room with views over the Telok Ayer shophouses with fun bars and some of the best restaurants in Singapore to beckon you onto the streets.

If you have a head for heights and are keen for a swim it's a short nip up to level 30 to do some laps, soak in the jacuzzi or knock out some reps in the sky gym. They also offer a tour of the local precinct twice a week with visits to the hawkers and more. www.theclanhotel.com.sg

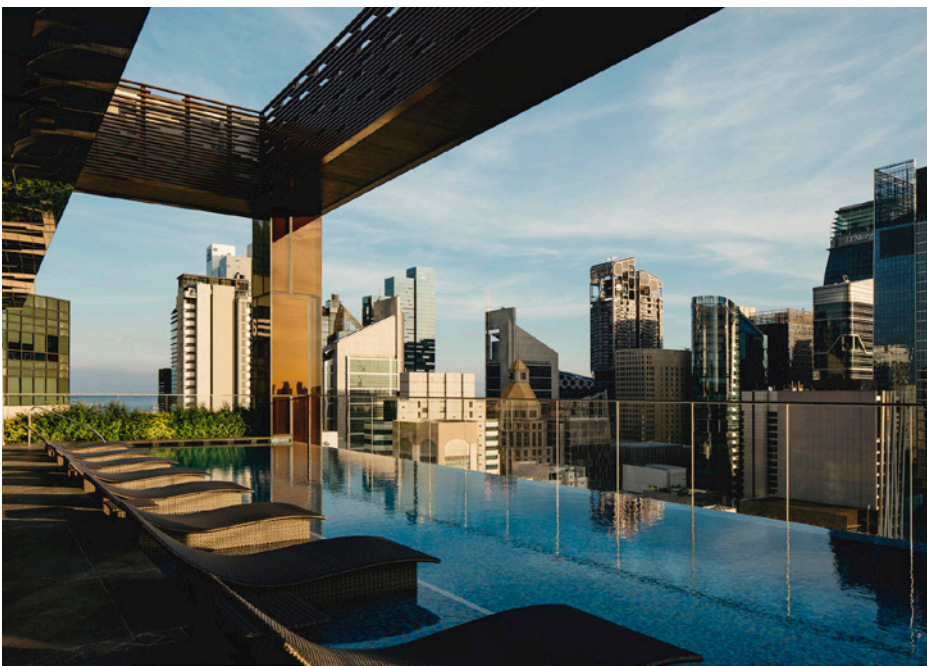


Image credit: The Clan Hotel



Image credit: The Warehouse Hotel

THE WAREHOUSE HOTEL

Fabricated from three former warehouses which housed the goods of the Melaka spice trade and even a nightclub, this cool hotel sits on the banks of the Singapore River in Robertson Quay. Cool and slick interiors where no two rooms are the same, some split level and others looking out onto the river. Check out the bar Po (Mandarin for Grandmother) for some cool heritage cocktails.

TIP: Note the roof-top pool is limited to one-family at a time during phase 3. www.thewarehousehotel.com



Image credit: The Barracks Hotel

THE BARRACKS HOTEL

Nestled up on the hillside in Sentosa lies the discrete heritage hideaway, Barracks Hotel. Its history as a British artillery outpost is embraced as it transports guests back to the golden era of travel. Sporting two generous lap pools, it also shares with its sister hotel next door the following: a cascading pool, lazy river, children's adventure pool, all with views over the sea and not to forget the swim up bar. Guests can also top up on their local knowledge with a one-hour historical tour of the property.

Sentosa has lots to offer the thrill seekers with the luge, zip line and hydrodash but also just across the lawn is one of my favourite brunch locations, Le Faubourg, a must if you have any room after breakfast.

www.thebarrackshotel.com.sg



Image credit: Hotel Fort Canning

HOTEL FORT CANNING

If the black & white colonial style and great location in Fort Canning Park and near Clarke Quay and Orchard Road didn't grab your attention the "NASA grade" mineral water filled swimming pools certainly will! Yup they have three pools to choose from, so pick up a book, cocktail and chill. Guests are encouraged to explore Fort Canning and learn about it's importance in Singapore's history. www.hfcsingapore.com

Image credit: Parkroyal on Pickering



PARKROYAL COLLECTION ON PICKERING

A stay in a garden in the sky, a stone's throw from ChinaTown. Many of us have marvelled at this architectural delight when driving past but the inside strives to blow your socks off too.

Swim your worries away in the infinity pool at the 5th floor wellness centre, then cozy up in the clever cabanas made to look like bird cages. Fancy a walk? They have it covered with a 300m garden track in the sky.

TIP: If you're planning on indulging in the spa make sure you book well in advance. www.panpacific.com

Content Roundup

WHAT WE ARE READING, LISTENING TO AND WATCHING

BOOKS

INFINITE SPLENDOURS BY SOPHIE LAGUNA / Infinite Splendours is the latest gripping book by Sofie Laguna. The story tells of a boy, Lawrence, who lives with his mother and younger brother, Paul, near the Grampians in Victoria. Lawrence is a talented student and particularly enjoys and excels at art. His family is poor and his mother has to work each day allowing the boys freedom to be at home alone and exploring their environs, particularly the mountains.

All the routine and acceptance of their lives changes when their uncle, whom the boys have not met before, arrives to stay. The result of this causes a rift between the brothers and at the age of ten, a traumatic event changes Lawrence's life and he is left to deal with the outcomes.

This is a real page-turner and emotionally charged. Sofie Laguna understands her characters implicitly and the reader is involved from the start.

PODCASTS

I'M NOT A MONSTER / I gobbled up this podcast. A BBC Panorama and Frontline PBS collaboration, this journalistic podcast investigates the story of an American mother who left the States and moved to Syria to live in the heart of the ISIS caliphate. She took her small children with her and while living in Syria her 10 year old son was forced to make propaganda videos for ISIS. But did she willingly go to Syria? And did she know her husband was ISIS? The podcast looks to understand how a seemingly normal American woman ends up in the middle of a violent terrorist organisation with her children. Was she a victim herself? Or did she manipulate the people around her in her bid to return to the United States when it all started going horribly wrong. You decide.

RICH ROLL TEENS UNDER PRESSURE /

This Rich Roll episode with guest Lisa Damour, PhD, delves into the pressures that teen girls face. It is a wonderfully balanced and informative episode and Lisa Damour who is the author of two books about teen girls, Untangled and Under Pressure, raises important and thought provoking insights into the experience of teen girls. From cultural expectations, harrasment that girls face at school from boys to how teen girls deal with worries.

YOU DON'T KNOW ME /

Another teen based podcast but this one is hosted by youth issue expert, journalist and author Chloe Combi. Each episode reveals a topic facing teenagers today and is told through their own experiences and voices. From cancel culture to body image, sexuality, race and popularity, the podcast provides an insight into the world of Gen Z. As a Mum, I found some of these episodes a bit confronting.

TV AND MOVIES

OPERATION VARSITY BLUES: THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS SCANDAL /

I'm sure we all remember the furure that erupted a couple of years ago when an FBI investigation uncovered that wealthy and famous parents in the United States were bribing their way into college places for their children. This documentary uses re-enactments to tell the story of how it happened. Using actual conversations captured on an FBI wire-tap, the documentary reveals just how corrupt the college admissions process was and how the very wealthiest, most priviledged children were being ensured places in the elite schools of their choice.

MADE YOU LOOK /

Another Netflix documentary that I really enjoyed. Made You Look is a crime documentary about the largest art fraud in American history set in the super rich art world. It is

an extraordinary story about a New York art dealer who believes a huge number of fake paintings are real and sells them on to galleries and extremely wealthy individuals over a decade. But did she really think they were real? Or was she in on the scam? It is an extraordinary peek behind the curtain of the high-end art world.

YES DAY / A fun family friendly movie starring Jennifer Garner about a Mum who finds herself always saying 'no' to her children. After learning from the school that her strict parenting style is having an effect on the kids, she decides to implement a 'yes day' where her and her husband have to say 'yes' to everything that her kids want to do on the day. It is a fun movie that my 10 year old daughter loved and it is watchable as a parent too.

LOTTIE LIFESTYLE

www.shoplottielifestyle.com

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