

# Singapore travel bubble: 3 new hotspots that draw on the Lion City's strong sense of local identity

■ [scmp.com/lifestyle/travel-leisure/article/3132611/singapore-travel-bubble-3-new-hotspots-draw-lion-citys](https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/travel-leisure/article/3132611/singapore-travel-bubble-3-new-hotspots-draw-lion-citys)

May 9, 2021



The 324-room, 30-storey Clan Hotel has opened since Hongkongers were last able to visit Singapore.

When Singapore went into lockdown in April 2020, businesses not offering essential services closed for two months. While life in Singapore has since returned to some semblance of normality – save for a recent flare-up in cases and resulting retightening of restrictions – the business environment remains challenging because of social distancing measures and a lack of visitors to the city.

But Singaporeans are a resilient lot, and some opened new ventures during these tough times. The three listed below offer products and services that draw on Singapore's strong sense of local identity, and offer something new for Hong Kong travellers to check out when the

[Hong Kong-Singapore travel bubble opens](#)  
on May 26, or later if there is further postponement.

**Laut**

The owners of this new restaurant in Singapore’s central business district received their operating licence on the second day of Singapore’s lockdown last year. Instead of an opening party, Frank Shen and Leon Tan, both in their early 30s, scrambled to put together an online platform for delivery orders.

A year on, Laut is now well known on the gastrobar scene. And for good reason: the owners use locally sourced ingredients wherever possible, with up to 70 per cent coming from Singapore – unusual in a place that imports 90 per cent of its produce.



Oysters at Laut.

The menu at Laut (which means “the sea” in Malay) could be described largely as “seafood with a twist”. Prawn Raja, for example, is Hakka thunder tea rice reinterpreted as a comfort dish of rice cooked in a pesto of Asian herbs topped with grilled king prawns. Diced century egg and petai (a pungent offering known locally as “stink beans”) are stirred in before serving. To drink, heady concoctions made with spirits from Compendium, a Singapore distillery, are on offer.

Eco-conscious diners will be pleased to know that Laut runs on a minimum-waste policy. Banana pulp left over from a cocktail made with aged Malaysian molasses, candlenut and palm sugar, for example, is given a second life in the dessert Pisang Laut, which comes with tapioca and sweet potato fritters.



Interior of Laut.

The reliance on local produce drives up Laut's food costs by 20 per cent but prices remain affordable. Five sharing plates and two drinks each cost our party of three S\$60 (HK\$350) per person.

*Laut, 17 Stanley Street*

## **The Clan Hotel**

---

In the 19th century, the streets of Singapore's Chinatown were home to buzzing clan associations, where Chinese migrants exchanged news, bonded and helped one another settle in the city.

Today, The Clan Hotel, a 324-room, 30-storey property operated by home-grown Far East Hospitality, does a good job of plugging guests into its neighbourhood's rich heritage.

My induction began with a welcome tea ceremony: oolong tea served with a salted mung bean pastry. This was how guests would have been welcomed into a Chinese home.

Art installations and artefacts deck the lobby and a menu of experiences has been curated by The Clan Collective – local experts and artists – that will have visitors delving into the craftsmanship and culture for which 19th-century Chinatown was known.



A recent flare-up of Covid-19 cases in Singapore has seen several social distancing restrictions return.  
Photo: Getty Images

The streets surrounding the hotel are paved with good restaurants and bars, but guests also can opt to stay in. The Clan Daily Special, a selection of hawker fare curated by food blogger ishootieatipost (doctor Leslie Tay) is served in-room and doesn't disappoint. The hotel's Qin Restaurant and Bar, meanwhile, has a menu inspired by a medley of Asian cultures. Its Angus short ribs grilled over charcoal and served with peanut espuma and sambal matah (Balinese chilli relish) is a meat lover's dream.

The service, however, is what leaves the deepest impression. The staff treat guests as though they are one of their own, embodying the spirit of the clans of yore.

*The Clan Hotel, 10 Cross Street*

## **Beyond The Vines Design Post**

---

In September 2020, not long after Singapore emerged from a total lockdown and shops had cautiously reopened, home-grown label Beyond The Vines (BTV) opened its 2,216 square foot (206 square metre) flagship store on Orchard Road. For husband-and-wife founders Rebecca Ting and Daniel Chew, the opening of Beyond The Vines Design Store marked a relaunch of their womenswear line into a brand encompassing several product categories. Famous for its Dumpling Bag, BTV now offers a menswear line, bucket hats, masks and even household items such as glass jugs.

The store, with its industrial-chic theme, reflects the modern, clean design ethos of BTV. Although the brand originated in Singapore, its minimalistic aesthetics have given it a cult following overseas, where it has stores in the Philippines, Australia and Thailand.



The Beyond The Vines Design Store.

This month, in Singapore, BTV is opening its sixth store. At the 200 square foot Beyond The Vines Design Post – so called because the interiors take inspiration from a post office – customers can find the Dumpling Bag and eco-friendly products exclusive to the store, such as Nalgene water bottles and reusable toy cameras.

Later this year, BTV Design Post will carry products from collaborations with other brands. The first partner will be an F&B brand with a newly spawned design arm. While Ting stresses that a common design philosophy will be the main prerequisite for choosing a partner, it appears BTV has also taken on the role of launch platform for budding creatives.

“We are blessed that we can create an environment to help nurture dreams,” Ting says.

*Beyond The Vines Design Store, B1-42/46 Takashimaya Shopping Centre; Beyond The Vines Design Post, B3-11, ION Orchard*

This article appeared in the South China Morning Post print edition as: Three new hotspots that draw on Singapore’s sense of local identity

Mavis Teo

Travel writer Mavis Teo is based in Singapore. As well as writing for the South China Morning Post, she also contributes to DestinAsian, Prestige Singapore and The Straits Times. An avid horse rider, diver and foodie, Mavis also writes on equestrianism, polo, boating, diving and dining.

