

The Clan Hotel: We review Telok Ayer's newest luxury staycation

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It's rare to profess that your favourite part of a hotel is the ground floor. You probably think I'm referring to the lobby, where guests make their first impression of the place, second only to the establishment's exterior. Except that the lobby is not where you step into when you set foot through the opaque glass doors at The Clan Hotel.

Though that's not to say that the lobby doesn't pull its weight. Located a floor above with lofty ceilings and full-height window views of Telok Ayer, the dark and modern interiors keep the space sleek, while towering shelves featuring Chinese centerpieces by local artisans add a storied touch.

Of all the paraphernalia, the umbrella collection easily steals your gaze. Exhibited Kingsman-style in full black with fancy knobs, all are for sale alongside many of the artisanal display pieces. You'll then notice the adjacent brewing station, where a tiny tea ceremony is prepared as initiation to your stay.

The welcome extends with the rooms' amenity kit serving the same hotel-exclusive Nanyang Ritual tea (a delicious blend of oolong and *tie guan ying*) and Bak Kut Teh Cookies on top of complimentary snacks. There are a total of 324 rooms across Deluxe, Premier and Grand Premier, but only the latter two belong to the Master Series entailing a guest experience signature to the hotel.



The umbrella collection represents the brand's commitment to provide familial refuge for guests.

For starters, corner window views of the central business district, all-day breakfast with the option to enjoy it in-room, using the petite bathtub to the fullest with a selection of aromatic bath salts, and a turndown service—nighttime essential oil and, hey, more tea. Plus, your own teapot set to brew it in. You know, the little things.

Plus, access to personal concierge services by The Clan Keepers, who also provide a local precinct tour. You're not wrong to think that the Clan identity strongly pervades the hotel. From uniforms to the hotel's locally brewed craft beer The Orient Brew, many touchpoints are put together by The Clan Collective—the hotel's network of local craftsmen and influential culture figures.

Design details like the notepad filled with traditional Chinese style grids, and heck, even a Wing Chun dummy in the gym, surely underscore the heritage and pay homage to the cultural spot of land the hotel stands upon. This continues in the all-day modern Chinese fare at Qin Restaurant and Bar, helmed by the Tung Lok group (for anyone asking, the Siphon Mushroom Tea is a must).

There are a couple other features that are pretty great. The unbroken room seals at the door are a pandemic-ensued hygiene measure—one that should be adopted by all hotels for guest safety. In an otherwise perfect pandemic-ridden world, airport check-ins include luxury car transfers or having room keys handed to you and your luggage sent directly to the hotel.



The 324-room property features signature MASTER Series rooms comprising 18 Grand Premier and 60 Premier rooms.

Not to mention The Inner Circle Guide, where guests can flash their room card at partnering dining and entertainment merchants for perks. Oh, and the Sky Pool fitted with semi-submerged lounge chairs to sink back and admire the city panorama. Our only gripe? The misleading names of The Den and Mahjong Room, which are simply meeting rooms with nary of a game table to be seen.

So why, with the rooftop gym and jacuzzi, decent fare at the restaurant and a subtle identity ribboning the entire space, should the ground floor deserve a worthy mention? Picture this: with the lobby on the second level, the first is no different from every other lift landing.

Not only does it allow you to exit the hotel without having to bypass the check-in crowd—if, say, you would like to go for a quick outdoor run or are casually dressed for nearby hawker eats—it essentially feels like returning to your own apartment when you return and head straight up to your floor. And if that doesn't feel like being part of the inner circle, we don't know what does.

The Clan Hotel is located at 10 Cross Street, Singapore 048417. Opening Promo is available until 31 May.