

Cognoscenti magazine

Because life is short

Goodwood Park Hotel Singapore

First built in 1900, **Goodwood Park Hotel** went on to become one of Singapore's most notable landmarks during the city-state's tumultuous 20th century. Until the building was transformed into a hotel in 1929, its superb location on a hill overlooking Scotts and Orchard Roads made it a favored meeting spot for the expatriate community. During the darker days of World War II, the Japanese Imperial Army requisitioned the hotel as a headquarters.

Today the "Grand Old Lady" is a national monument. While a recently built wing of the hotel strikes a more modern stance, careful restoration work in the older sections has retained the languid curves and fluted columns of the building's original conception. Taking a traditional English afternoon tea in the charming **Café L'Espresso** (where the scones are outstanding!) or lounging in cool shadows around lushly landscaped Mayfair swimming pool, guests are given glimpses of what it might have been like to be here during colonial times.

The deluxe Tower Wing room occupied by visiting **Cognoscenti**

Magazine editors is one of 234 rooms on the property. It featured bleached wooden furnishings and slate-accented walls, with the color palate ranging from beige to burgundy. The space was generous

by Singaporean standards, and the room was equipped with most modern comforts, including color TV, two telephones, air-conditioning, mini-bar and large valu-



The hotel is a Singapore landmark

ables safe (although the safe wasn't bolted down!). A few quality issues were also evident: A thin carpet stretched over a hard floor didn't adequately cushion the feet, foam-stuffed furniture was plebian, a request for ice went

unanswered, and there were problems first unlocking and then locking the door—finally rectified by changing rooms.

Suites we viewed were more impressive—especially the spectacular Grand Brunei Suite. With its octagonal conference room, glittering chandelier, Louis XVI drapes and ornate mirrors and ceilings, this suite is deservedly viewed as one of the finest in Singapore.



The Grand Brunei Suite

The hotel's **Min Jiang Sichuan Restaurant**, one of several dining venues at this SRS World Hotels Deluxe property, is popular with locals for lunch. The décor is pretty, with wood paneling and coned-shaped lamps in smoked glass. White tablecloths and carved wooden chairs with fabric seats complete the charming effect. The menu we sampled featured an impressive array of dishes that included such choice seafood items as shark's fin, lobster, abalone and crab.

Pre-cracked crab came with a rather sweetish red chili sauce, but very good indeed! Plump spears of still-crunchy stir-fried asparagus were combined with *hoshimeji* mushrooms to make a lovely vegetarian plate. Local lobster with black bean sauce was also very tasty, although someone's heavy hand with a chopping cleaver in the kitchen had unfortunately left shards of brittle lobster shell for us to contend with as we tried to scoop out bits of scrumptious flesh with tiny forks.

Part of the Spacare International Group, **The Aspara** at Goodwood Park Hotel offers a variety of relaxing as well as therapeutic treatments. Shortly after our visit, it was scheduled to relocate within the hotel to new facilities, more spacious and better-equipped than the old. The new spa is to feature 10 treatment rooms, each with two treatment tables and en-suite shower.

We began with a vigorous exfoliation that featured Dead Sea Salt with 21 minerals, coconut oil and vitamin E. Next came an Aroma Body Massage with essential oils of lavender and eucalyptus. Although not particularly artful, the massages were professional and thorough, paying attention to body areas such as stomach, scalp and hands, that are often overlooked at lesser spas.

This article was written by contributing editors to *Cognoscenti Magazine*.

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