

How to be listed

Information must arrive in writing by the **Monday five weeks** before publication. Listings can be sent by post or emailed to listings@timeoutsingapore.com. Listings are free but, as space is limited, inclusion is not guaranteed.

Deals of the month

Mr and Mrs Smith card

If you're more of a flashpacker than a backpacker, it may be worth signing up for the Mr and Mrs Smith card – it comes with top-notch discounts at boutique and luxury hotels, freebies like complimentary cocktails, glasses of champagne and massages on arrival. Known to recommend only the coolest, design-savvy hotspots, the website displays many a drool-worthy hotel – including Britney Spears' favourite, Parrot Cay in the Turks and Caicos Islands. While the choices may come across as a bit pretentious, we can forgive them when complimentary afternoon tea is up for grabs at Carcosa Seri Negara in Kuala Lumpur, and the Oberoi in Mauritius is currently offering seven nights for the price of five. Hotels on their select list include The Naumi (Singapore), Cocoa Island (Maldives) and Brunton Boatyard (Kerala). Available for \$29 (Blacksmith), \$290 (Silversmith) and \$750 (Goldsmith). Go to www.mrandmrsmith.com for details.



The Hoxton Hotel, London

A funky hotel room for S\$3? Sinclair Beecham was no fool when he decided to embark on his first hotel venture. The owner of the famous sandwich chain Pret a Manger was so appalled at being charged S\$7.50 for a Mars bar in a hotel, he did what most of us can only dream of – he opened The Hoxton, his own budget-conscious design hotel. Located in (yes, you've guessed it) Hoxton EC2, London's super-cool postcode of the moment, the rooms come with Aveda products, flat-screen TVs, free Wi-Fi and a 'Lite Pret Breakfast' of banana, yoghurt, orange juice, a litre of milk and water. Room rates range from £59 (S\$148) to £235 (S\$591), but the golden ticket lies in the S\$3 rooms known only to those

who register on their website. How does it work? They sell five rooms at S\$3 every night, and another five at S\$90. Very cool indeed, especially considering the price of milk these days. *Hoxton Hotel, 81 Great Eastern St, London EC2A 3HU (+44 20 7550 1000, www.hoxtonhotels.com).*

Running from the Paparazzi, Off 'N Running Tours

Sick of the usual holiday formula of beach, sun and cocktails? Why not go for a four-mile (6.43km) run instead? Don't worry – you can still consider this a holiday, since this isn't the East Coast you're plodding down, but Hollywood. The tour starts off at flashy Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, cuts through West Hollywood and past the boutiques on Robertson Boulevard. If you're lucky, you may even spot the odd celeb window-shopping or dodging the ever-intent paparazzi. The cost? US\$60 (S\$88). Not bad when it includes a T-shirt, bottled water and fresh fruit, and ends with a sweeter-than-sweet touch – a frosted cupcake. Go to www.offnrunningtours.com for more information.

Just opened

Ivy, Shanghai

Shanghai's newest kid on the boutique block is the Ivy. This glam hotel is housed within a former 1950s cinema, with interiors by *très chic* French-American designer Dillon Garris. Garris made his mark on the five-star, Hong Kong-based Sharma serviced apartments and designed Rupert Murdoch's uber-cool dwellings. At the Ivy, you can expect polished, wooden floors, red leather foot-poufs and side tables shaped like ancient Chinese coins. The opening special offer is a tempting room rate of RMB850++ (S\$182) – massively reduced from the usual price of RMB2,288 (S\$491). *Till 31 Dec. 709 Jiaozhou Rd, Jing'an District, Shanghai (+86 21 2221 2600, www.ivyshanghai.com).*

Website of the month

www.iloho.com

This travel resource website from Hong Kong gets our approval. It was launched more than a year ago by Richard Archer-Perkins, 54, after having spent a lot of 'dead' time (when you usually just stare into space) in airport lounges. His aim? To keep you itinerant and in tune with the globe you trot – the user-generated information-sharing and networking platform for travellers is perhaps one of the most well-integrated online travel communities on the 'net. It also boasts the latest travel news, flight information and offers a space where users can share photos and itineraries. Its flight search shows routes across a map – a rare and useful feature.

Compiled by Rachel Askham and Hsieh Nizhen



Edinburgh Castle



Princes Street

Book early Hogmanay Street Party, Edinburgh 31 Dec-3 Jan

Fancy doing the Highland fling this year? Check out Edinburgh's Hogmanay Street Party, one of the world's iconic New Year's celebrations. A four-day festival set in the cultural and cosmopolitan heart of Scotland, Hogmanay starts on 31 December and carries on to 'Ne'erday' (1 January – or these days, till 3 January). Expect fireworks (spectacular against the backdrop of the 1,000-year-old Edinburgh Castle), traditional dancing and plenty of revelry in the streets.

As with any festival, some local customs are to be expected. First-footing (don't panic – there's no shin-kicking involved) refers to the first person after midnight to cross the door of a friend's or neighbour's home, who then has to dole out gifts such as fruit cake, shortbread and whisky. Meant to bring good luck (and possibly a foggy head), this custom goes on until the wee hours of the morning.

Otherwise, take a peek at decadent St Margaret's Chapel, which dates back to the 12th century. Soak up the story of **King Malcolm III** (Castle Hill, +44 131 225 9846, www.historic-scotland.gov.uk), or sign up for a night-time **Ghost Tour** (+44 131 225 5445, www.mercattours.com) – guides take you down to the creepy vaults and tunnels below the Old Town, where they re-tell ancient spooky stories by candlelight, all in an overtly dramatic fashion.

Where to eat and drink: While the national dish of haggis may not appeal to most, it's a must-try in these parts, as is the deep-fried Mars bar. Once you're done and want to sample the local catch of the day, head to **Fisher's**



Haggis

Bistro (1 The Shore, +44 131 554 5666) in Edinburgh's northern district of Leith. For a blowout meal, go to **The Witchery** (+44 131 225 5613) for an eclectic mix of modern European fare. For a real medieval feel, walk downstairs into an ancient candlelit vault restaurant; then head to **Sandy Bell's** (25 Forrest Rd, +44 131 225 2751), a down-to-earth boozier with live traditional music and a raucous atmosphere, for a few cold ones.

Where to stay: Malmaison, a sleek and modern hotel in Leith, is a stylish stopover at £275 (S\$691) a night. It also has two excellent restaurants, **Brassiere** and **Café Bar** (1 Tower Pl, +44 131 468 5000, www.malmaison.com). More affordable (and hip) is **Rick's** (55A Frederick St, +44 131 622 7800, www.ricksedinburgh.co.uk) in New Town at £130 (S\$327) a night. It has a popular wine bar that serves light bites to a crowd of regulars.

How to get there: British Airways flies direct from Singapore to Edinburgh. Go to www.britishairways.com.

Compiled by Rachel Askham