

expatriate lifestyle



Startup Savvy

TECHXPATS MAKING WAVES IN THE DIGITAL SCENE

KABIR WETESAMP
OF HEALTHY FOOD
DELIVERY SERVICE
DAMBAKAN.COM

CEO DEVELOPER OF YUPPOO.COM
TRAVEL HOSTESS OF PHACOM
CLARE AUBREY/CEO OF SUPPLING.COM

Get HIT

Stay fit the type of high intensity interval training

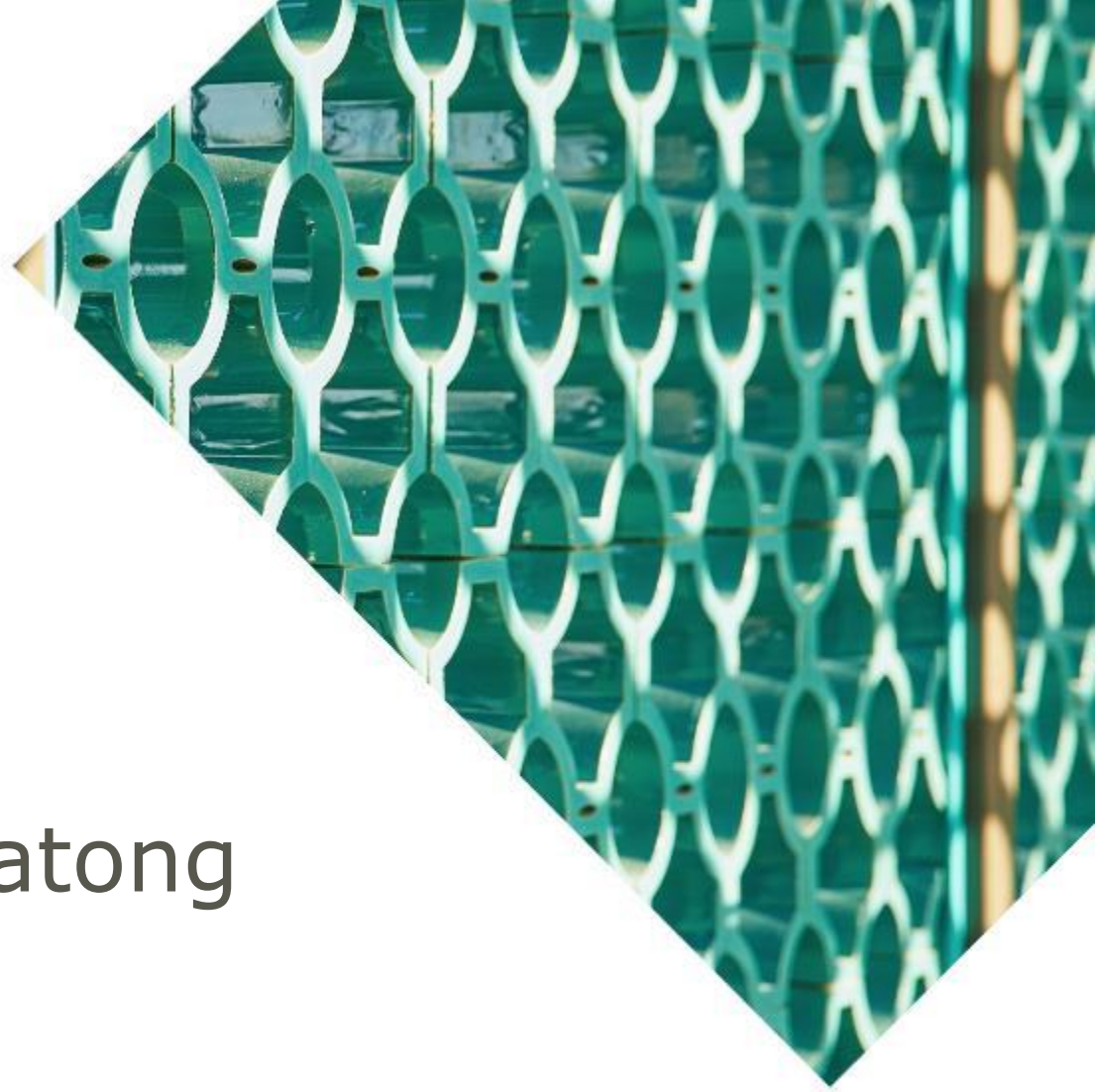
Eastside!

Cultural trappings and the best of natural Sabah and Sarawak

Moonstruck

Discover mooncakes and the Mid-Autumn Festival

As featured in
Expatriate Lifestyle



Village Hotel Katong



EL TRIES

VILLAGE HOTEL KATONG



VILLAGE HOTEL KATONG

25 Marine Parade,
Singapore 449536
Tel: +65 6344 2200

By Karin Chan



www.stayfirst.com/villagekatong



The thought of vacationing in metropolitan Singapore immediately brings tourist hotspots like Orchard Road, Marina Bay Sands and Sentosa Island to mind. But if you're keen for a more local experience, try visiting the quaint neighbourhood of Katong in the southeast of the island.

Before land reclamation on the East Coast, Katong was once on the waterfront, attracting wealthy foreign settlers to establish estates and plantations there – a mix of cultures reflected by the eclectic architectural style of the surviving buildings, harmoniously blending Chinese, colonial and Peranakan (Straits-born Chinese) influences. Now, it's considered the Eurasian (mixed European-Asian heritage) and Peranakan hub of Singapore.

Within the vicinity Village Hotel Katong is well-placed – only 10 minutes' walk to most of Katong's popular attractions – to be your base. It shares a historic building with Katong V, a small shopping centre, both extensively refurbished by Far East Hospitality. Attention to detail is evident in the Peranakan-influenced décor, along with thoughtful service add-ons like free data-enabled smartphones for guests and a Grab kiosk in the lobby.

We went from the hotel to the Joo Chiat area – Singapore's first Heritage Town – for Instagram-worthy shots of the colourful colonial-style shophouses and Peranakan terrace homes, and then took a guided tour of the Eurasian Heritage Centre to learn about their arrival in Singapore, World War II and more. Meanwhile, visits to beautiful stores like Rurnah Babe and Katong Antique House gave us glimpses of traditional kebays, beaded slippers and vintage Peranakan furniture.

There's an up-and-coming café scene in Katong, but it's still best known for its traditional fare. We breakfasted on soft-boiled eggs and toast with kaya (coconut jam) in a Hainanese-style coffee shop, shared a tiny plastic table with the locals to sample creamy Katong laksa for lunch, and made nine-layer steamed cake and ondeh-ondeh (glutinous rice balls with palm sugar) in a Peranakan kueh (cake) appreciation session with popular rice dumpling makers Kim Choo.

Upon returning to the hotel, we made full use of our Peranakan Club Lounge access privileges to snack on canapés and sip on cocktails before dinner at Katong Kitchin, their halal-certified restaurant. Quality over quantity – everything I sampled from the modest selection was tasty with the fresh seafood, Katong laksa and salted egg crayfish being definite highlights.

My bright, spacious Peranakan Club room on level five (the largest in the category) was a welcome sight to return to. I most enjoyed taking a long soak in the free-standing in-room bathtub while watching a movie on TV. A sliding door separated the bathtub and bathroom, but allowed easy access for rinsing off.

Leaving was mentally hard but logistically easy – we took the free hotel shuttle to the airport and were at Terminal 2 in 20 minutes. Since Peranakan Club room guests also enjoy two-hour complimentary use of the airport lounge, we had lunch there and took pictures in the sunflower garden before making our way to our gate. If you're looking for a local stay and a down-to-earth Singaporean experience, the Village Katong is a good bet. ☺