

Hotel Vagabond

media coverage table

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Theatrical tendencies

Fine art and Parisian opulence come together in dramatic fashion at Hotel Vagabond. Designed by renowned French architect Jacques Garcia, the plush establishment stands out in rustic Kampong Glam. By Justina Tan

Previously home to Malay aristocrats and Arab merchants in the 19th century, Kampong Glam has since transformed into a hip neighbourhood teeming with street art, art galleries, restaurants, and curios shops. Set among vibrant conserved shophouses is Hotel Vagabond, a luxury boutique hotel owned by Satinder Garcha – an Indian-born dot-com entrepreneur turned luxury real estate developer, who is also the 48th richest man in Singapore – and conceptualised by acclaimed French architect and interior designer Jacques Garcia, who is responsible for such gems as New York City's NoMad and Hôtel Costes in Paris.

The three-storey hotel housed within a restored Art Deco building on Syed Alwi Road retains the structure's original façade, but accents such as red window shutters hint at the sumptuousness that awaits. Inherently old world yet unabashedly lavish, Hotel Vagabond is Parisian chic at its finest. "Jacques' interiors are sympathetic to the exterior, with an overwhelming layer of theatrics and opulent luxury. I love the work he has done with heritage buildings globally. He creates spaces that are intimate but plush, decadent, theatrical, and most of all, sexy," gushes Garcha, who gave Garcia carte blanche with his latest offering.

LUXURY REINVENTED

In all honesty, Hotel Vagabond's interiors can be polarising. Frequent travellers who have seen it all may find Garcia's latest



Red shutters stand out against the building's retro exterior.

work refreshing, while others might be taken aback at the unbridled use of red, dark woods, rich textures, and imposing brass sculptures.

Art is an intrinsic part of the hotel. Not only is every piece personally sourced and commissioned by Garcia, the hotel is also the only one in Singapore to offer a rotational Artist in Residence programme, which invites creative types – writers, performers, painters, and photographers – from all over the world to stay free for up to three months. During that time, they will work and create from two spacious ateliers, while engaging with hotel guests during the Artist Cocktail Hour that starts every evening at 6pm in the Vagabond Salon.

The Vagabond Salon is truly the heart and soul of Hotel Vagabond. A modern interpretation of a Parisian salon, it's designed to be an experiential space that fosters interactions with resident artists over

cocktails, and where guests can dine while enjoying live jazz performances or watching independent films. The 5,000 sq ft space features luxe furnishings, excellent acoustics, and plush red velvet curtains.

The salon boasts six magnificent brass trees that were intricately handcrafted in India by a family who has been making armoury for Rajasthani royalty for 500 years. The same family also made the solid brass rhino reception desk, which took eight months and 15 villages to create.

Other impressive sculptures include two life-size elephants 'hoisting' up the main elevator and a brass monkey taking

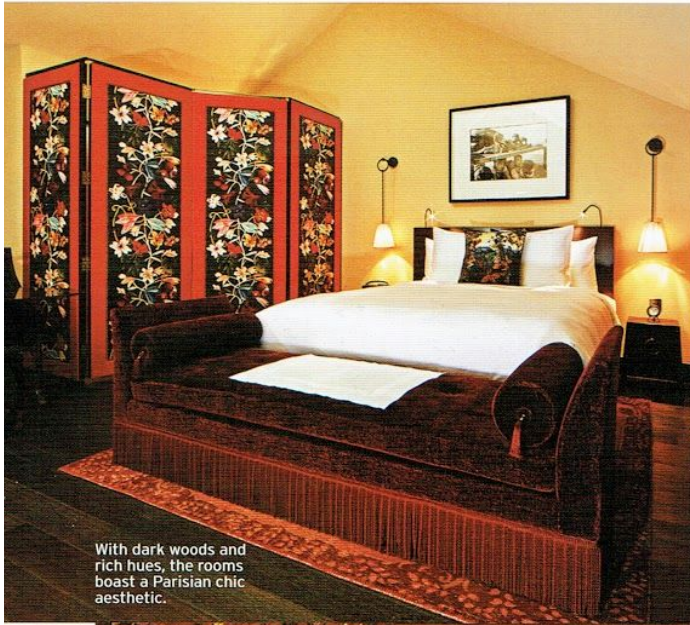
The rustic facade of Hotel Vagabond
betrays its luxurious interiors.



Catch an
independent film
in the Vagabond
Salon, a plush
space with superb
acoustics and
velvet curtains.



LOOKBOOK



With dark woods and rich hues, the rooms boast a Parisian chic aesthetic.



Vagabond Bar

A room with courtyard access

pride of place at Vagabond Bar – both works are by French artist and sculptor Franck Le Ray. “Motifs like the elephants were inspired by India’s great beasts, while the vibrant hues throughout the hotel are inspired by the souks and bazaars of Marrakech,” says Garcha.

Photography by celebrated photographer Julia Calfee depicting the glamour and excess of New York’s Chelsea Hotel adorn the walls of public areas, while guests continue to have their senses titillated by a video art installation as they take the elevator up to their rooms.

The abundance of art is designed to create a beautiful, theatrical experience rather than to be ostentatious. “Our main focus is actually on what happens in the hotel as opposed to the art on our walls. It’s an ecosystem for our guests to mingle, and a hub of sorts for artists to hang out,” shares Garcha of his dream for Hotel Vagabond.

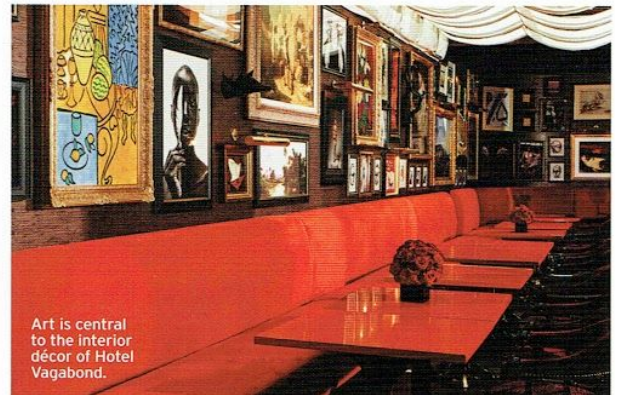
THE PULL OF PASSION

It’s clear that neither Garcha nor Garcia held back with the design of Hotel Vagabond, and their passion is what makes the spaces within inviting despite the bold use of colours, textures, and art.

Furnished with dark wood flooring, mahogany writing desks, ornate rugs, and original photography of Garcha’s travels and international polo team wins, the 41 guestrooms and two-bedroom Suite Royale exude a luxurious yet lived-in vibe. Some rooms offer courtyard access, while the suite has an additional perk – a luxurious free standing clawfoot bathtub. Etro toiletries further enhance the experience.

The hotel’s on-site restaurant, 5th Quarter, is a collaboration between Garcha and F&B stalwart Loh Lik Peng. Helmed by Gordon Ramsay protégé Andrew Nocente, the five-star joint serves cuisine centred on its house-made charcuterie. Meanwhile, Vagabond Bar offers a rotating selection of artisanal cocktails conceptualised by renowned drinks collective Proof & Company.

This is how Garcha sums up his latest project: “By focusing on genuine old world hospitality, we hope to deliver a space that’s conducive for guests to linger, mingle, and converse for hours in a comfortable yet theatrical setting. If you must get into trouble, do it at Vagabond.” e



Art is central to the interior décor of Hotel Vagabond.



Photos of Garcha’s international polo team wins give the guestrooms a lived-in vibe.