

BOUTIQUE BEDDING

George Town remains the best choice to immerse yourself in Penang's eclectic, street-smart character.

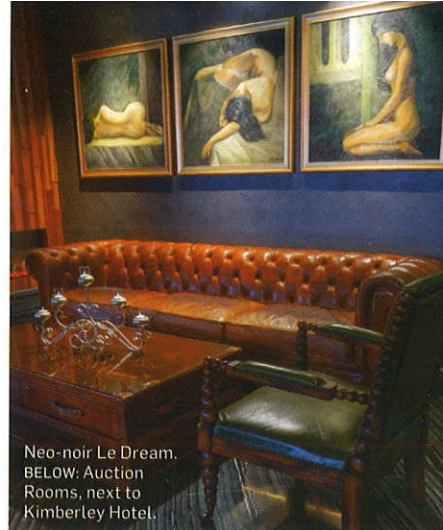
+ Black interiors, marble floors and soft lights give **Le Dream** a classy, timeless neo-noir style. The ample alfresco rooftop café soars over a vista of terra-cotta gable roofs and crowns 43 sleek, crayon-tinted rooms equipped with Japanese Izumi style showers. Next to the reception hall, **La Vie** offers French-inspired, steak-focused fine dining—think perfectly cooked sirloin served with chives and homemade wasabi—and international wines in a confidential glass-and-marble ambience loved by Penang's well-heeled crowd. ledreamhotel.com; doubles from RM258; dinner for two RM200.

+ New kid **Kimberley Hotel** renovated Jalan Sungai Ujong's neglected block by transforming a four-story prewar heritage building into an elegant boutique hotel. The 118 modern rooms are tinted in hushed colors, around verandas overlooking China Town. The annexed bistro **Auction Rooms** infuses heritage chic in a spacious loft-like setting, dishing up Western-inspired mains like grilled tilapia and

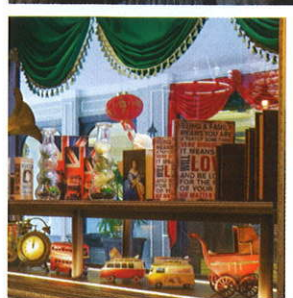
prime Aussie rib eyes. kimberleyhotel.com.my; doubles from RM158; dinner for two RM70.

+ A 1940 Art Deco building salvaged from a bird-nesting-induced slow death, **Spices by the Park** makes for a quiet urban stay. The six wood-floored rooms have high ceilings and nostalgic black-and-white-tiled bathrooms. The secluded rooftop overlooks the heritage enclave's mosque and clan house. Downstairs, the dreamy gaze of the Indian water bearer, one of Penang's latest street-art pieces by Russian Julia Volchkova, connects to **Urban Spices Café**. The Javanese beans, Western breakfasts and Asian-fusion mains here (such as seafood *sambal tumis* pasta) are great company to while away the day's hottest hours. 89 Acheen St.; spicesbythepark.com; doubles from RM250; dinner for two RM50.

+ **The Edison** is the latest makeover to George Town's string of neglected properties. This new incarnation of the old Anglo-Indian Cathay Hotel reinvented itself with a boost of Midcentury-inspired furniture, Chinese art and sapient mixing of heritage and modern panache. The 35 deluxe suites are a haven of comfort amidst the ebb and flow of George Town's bustling arteries Chulia Street, Penang Road and Jalan Muntri. theedisonhotels.com; doubles from RM550.



Neo-noir Le Dream. BELOW: Auction Rooms, next to Kimberley Hotel.



GREEN ISLAND

The western side of the island hides lush rainforest and less-visited beaches a world away from George Town's heritage hustle. Rent a car to explore at your own pace, or ride on the far reaching Rapid Penang bus network (rapidpg.com.my).



1. **Penang Botanic Gardens**, established in 1884, has a wide collection of plants and cheeky resident macaques. Loop around the main paved road, or strike off along trails that branch as far as Penang Hill.



4. Backtrack to the **National Park** for an invigorating jungle hike. A canopy walkway is a quick intro to a monkey's point of view. A one-hour hike leads to **Monkey Beach**, one of Penang's last crescents of uncluttered sand. Boats (one way from RM20 per person) can whiz you back to headquarters.



5. Drive to **Balik Pulau**—literally “the back of the island”—via windy Road 6, stopping to gaze at Titi Kerawang waterfall en route. The town, recently uplifted by new street murals by Russian artist **Julia Volchkova**, still oozes a relaxed old time charm.



6. Cut through durian and banana farms to **Pulau Betong**, a Chinese fishermen's settlement of atmospheric wooden houses. The beach nearby faces atoll Betong, and it's a great place to enjoy the most natural side of Penang, and truly electric sunsets.



2-3. Bypass Batu Ferringhi's crowds and continue to eco-theme-park **Entopia** (entopia.com; admission RM49) for a glimpse in the world of tropical butterflies. A quick drive south, the impressive **Teluk Bahang Dam** is a worthy pit stop



Ask an Insider
Howard Tan
(studiohoward.com)
Local shutterbug



“Art & Garden (fb.com/artandgardenbyfuanwong; admission RM30) is filled with artist Fuan Wong's collection of plants, glass installations, and arts and sculptures. **Cozy in the Rocket** (264 Lbh. Pantai, George Town) is a small café decorated with old memorabilia. **Dickensian Kang's Antique** (fb.com/sweetmemorylanepenang) is packed with antique furniture and vintage items.”