

STAYCATION GRAND PARK CITY HALL

BY
BENNY
TEO

piece of heritage
in the heart of
Singapore's civic centre
has been transformed
and what a grand rebirth
it has seen. The world
caught a

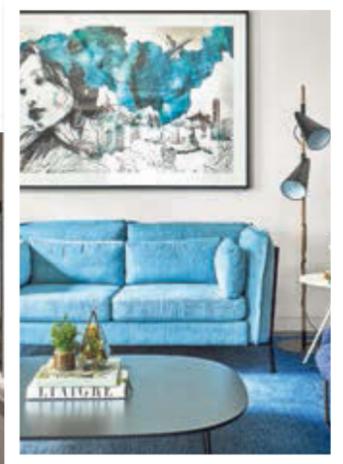
glimpse of the Grand Park City Hall's extensive renovation back in May and its resurgence as a architectural wonder that combines heritage with modernity.

That it belongs to a part of the nation's colonial history going back into the early 19th century along a stretch of similar ancestral buildings on Coleman Street, makes this change even more poignant.

Named after George D. Coleman, the first architect in Singapore, today's landmarks on Coleman Street include the Masonic Hall, Philatelic Museum, Peninsula Shopping Centre, Peninsula Excelsior Hotel and, of course, the newly rebooted Grand Park City Hall.

Conceptualised by world-renowned firm Hirsch Bedner Associates, guests can expect their senses to be engaged - from the curated hotel scent, through to an art collection that recounts the history of the island state.

As part of the restoration work, Grand Park



City Hall features an updated driveway and majestic bronze arch gate entrance that fronts the main Coleman Street instead of previously at Coleman Lane.

Colonial façade outside and vintage Peranakan within features artwork comprising local landmarks; the architecture and design celebrate the modernity of a country with a counterpoint to its rich past and multiplicity of cultures.

Singapore-based artist, illustrator and photographer Aubrey Kurlansky curated the modern art pieces that are located in the main lobby and Tablescape resto-bar on the third floor, as well as photographs of heritage corridors and shophouses in the Singapore of old.

The guest rooms embody Singapore's culture and history with Peranakan pattern tiles on the floor, vintage trunks and bespoke furniture pieces and cornice mouldings.

Located on the top floors of the hotel, a collection of contemporary suites offers private gar-

dens along with in-built Jacuzzis.

Six pairs of interconnecting child-friendly rooms are specifically designed with families in mind, complete with colourful bean bag chairs, an activity desk, a magnetic blackboard wall and rolling paper for kids to express their creativity.

And blending the past with the future is a mobile application that allows guests to skip the queue and front desk following a digital check-in and go straight to their room with their digital key.

This same application also allows them to adjust in-room lighting and climate control. Housekeeping services can also be requested together with the personalised assistance of the hotel guest services manager.

Following the completion of 186 brand new rooms, the final phase of transformation features an additional 157 guest rooms and suites, a new gym facility, a new swimming pool and a new rooftop garden event space.

TAN WINS MEXICO TRIP IN STYLE WITH 40 POINTS

BT CORP LEAGUE HERO IS AMONG THREE CHAMPIONS OF BMW GOLF CUP

He had honed his competitive game in the Business Times Corporate Golf League.

Playing in all six legs this year for the eventual champions, Proelect, in the popular league that attracts corporates and companies, Tan Lee Hong was as best prepared as he can be for the BMW Golf Cup.

Even before the tee-off of the German car company's National Finals at Sentosa's New Tanjong course last Wednesday, the long-haired Tan was tipped by many to be the champion.

And he did it in style, extracting an eagle and two birdies in his 78 gross score that gave him a superb 40-point total and a spot to the 29th BMW Golf Cup World Final in Mexico from March 18 to 23.

As winner of Category A (0-12 handicap), Tan will compete with representatives from over 50 countries in the final in the historic Spanish-speaking nation that is known for its tequilla drink.

On his eagle on the par-five 490-metre eighth hole which placed him in the driver's seat for the coveted crown, Tan said: "I hit a driver and three-wood to the fringe of the green. And I was over-



The three winners, Tan Lee Hong (second from left), Chia Siang Pio and Xie Xiong, with BMW representatives, Christopher Wehner (left) and Arnt Bayer (right).

joyed when my chip-in from about 20 feet rolled in."

Tan, 47, a businessman who hit a 290-metre drive on hole 5 of the same course in the BT League, said: "I was very keen to compete in this grand event. As a BMW owner, I had paid the \$500 to enter the event.

"Subsequently, when two golfers from Tanah Merah Country Club who were slated to play had to withdraw, the club asked me to represent them. I agreed and had my \$500 refunded."

He is looking forward to the trip as the much-

travelled Tan, a TMCC and Warren member, has never been to Mexico. "I understand they have great courses, and I hope to do Singapore and BMW proud," he added.

Unlike Tan, ladies' winner Chia Siang Pio has been to Mexico on holiday. But the freelance associate trainer, a member of SICC and Keppel, has never golfed in the country and is truly excited about the forthcoming trip.

Said Ms Chia, who amassed 37 points (gross 81), "I have been playing golf for close to 13 years and this is my second attempt at the event. Last year I finished third with 36 points, so I am truly pleased at making it this time."

She played a consistent round, sprinkled with a birdie, seven pars and 10 bogeys in her round. On her birdie, she said: "On the par-four 11th hole, I hit a driver and three-wood and sank a good putt."

Like the long-hitter Tan, averaging 250 metres, Ms Chia believes her 180-metre average drive is her strength as it puts her in good positions to attack the pin. The 9.8 handicap index golfer is a regular face on the golf course, playing two or three times a week.

The pair will be joined by Xie Xiong, winner of Category B (13-24 handicap) with 39 points for the trip to the North American country.

— Godfrey Robert