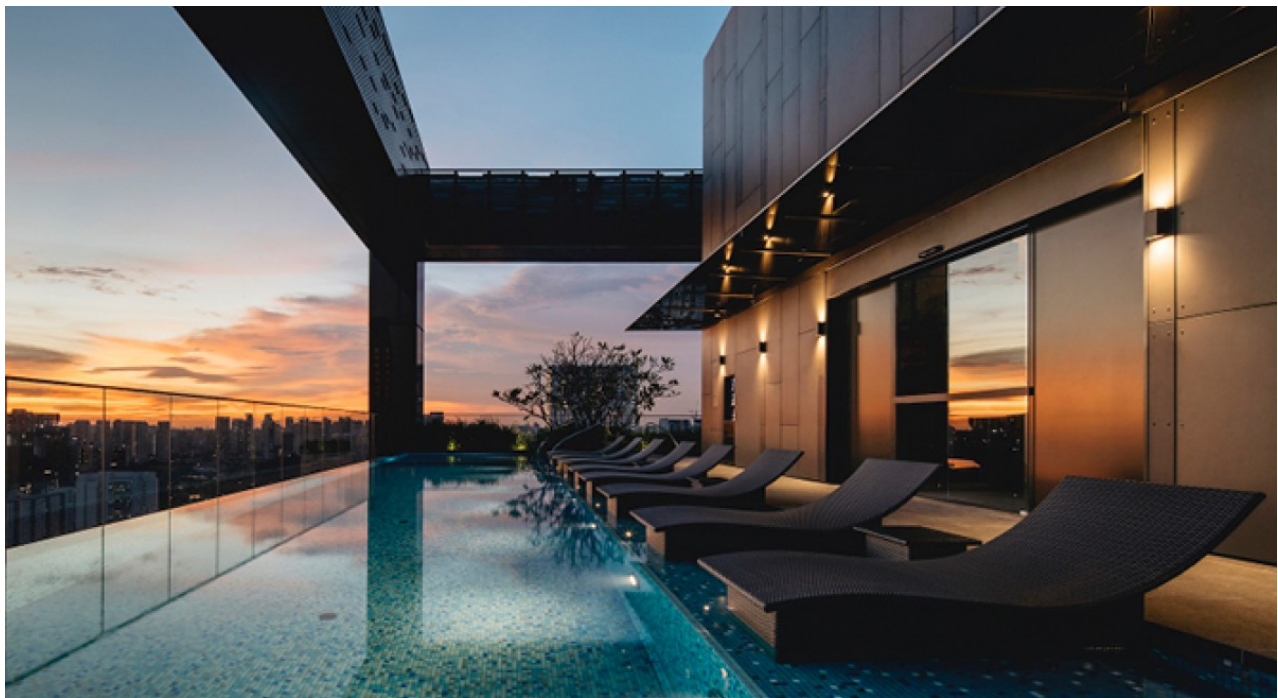


# Kinship with a view

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March 19, 2021



*Far East Hospitality defies the pandemic with the launch of The Clan Hotel, a 30-storey business hotel at Telok Ayer that weaves its cultural capital into modern destination travel* With travel borders still shut, opening a brand new hotel now is a move few hoteliers will make. But the way Arthur Kiong sees it, Singapore is entering a unique third wave of tourism. Speaking at the start of our stay at The Clan Hotel, the CEO of Far East Hospitality Management recounts the bygone eras of Singapore emulating foreign destinations in the 1960s, followed by improvements to the tourist experience in the 1980s. Kiong says that tourists today seek cultural significance in their voyages. “Covid-19 has changed the game, travel is going to be inconvenient,” he adds. “In order for business clients to come here, there must be a convincing purpose.” The CEO hopes business and leisure travellers alike will find that *raison d’etre* in The Clan Hotel, the newest name on Far East Hospitality’s portfolio.

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Open since March 1, The Clan Hotel is the first property to debut under the brand by Far East Hospitality. Located above Telok Ayer MRT Station, the business hotel sits on the Far East Square, a heritage mall located adjacent to sister property Amoy Hotel Singapore.



The 30-storey hotel features a rooftop gym, jacuzzi and infinity pool with unrivalled views of Chinatown and the CBD. Of its 324 guestrooms, 246 are Deluxe Rooms, 60 are Premier Rooms and a select 18 are Grand Premier Rooms, where guests can enjoy relaxing soaks in their own bathtubs.





The two premier tiers make up the hotel's Master Series package, which includes airport check-in, luggage forwarding and airport transfers through the hotel's dedicated Mercedes and Rolls-Royce fleet. Upon arrival, guests checking into the Master Series rooms are greeted with a tea ceremony at the hotel lobby. Alternatively, guests may also use the self-check-in kiosks, or arrange for in-room check-in, along with an orientation tour of the hotel. Butler and concierge services come in the form of the hotel's "clan keepers", who also double as personal shoppers and tour guides of the precinct, upon request.



Should guests find their beds too comfortable to leave behind, guests of the Master Series rooms may also arrange for an all-day breakfast spread to be enjoyed in their rooms. For dinner, Master Series room guests may opt for hawker fare to be delivered between 6pm and 8pm. Titled The Clan Daily Special, guests can sample Singaporean favourites, such as chicken satay, nasi lemak, laksa and more. Orders are dispatched to hawkers in the vicinity and meals are delivered in *tingkats*, or aluminium containers, to guests' rooms. **A taste of kinship** Serving as the hotel's only F&B establishment, Qin Restaurant and Bar has been dealt the difficult task of welcoming guests at all times of the day, across various meals and courses. This, the restaurant does with ease, thanks to its smart use of the two-storey space spread across levels four and five. Over breakfast, the floor-to-ceiling windows are generous with their supply of soft sunlight. At noon, they offer a bird's eye view of pedestrians scuttling past Cross Street, one of the oldest roads in Singapore, where early settlers met and mingled in their newly-adopted home.



Qin is helmed by chef James Tay, who brings his Teochew heritage to the plate through contemporary techniques. Before joining the Tung Lok Group in 2014, Tay had spent five years overseas. Formerly the sous chef of Le Maverick Restaurant and Bar in Bangkok and petit sous chef at the Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Hotel in Tianjin, Tay's last position in Singapore was at Janice Wong's 2am:dessertbar. At our dinner, Tay plays both host and chef, announcing each course as it is brought out from the open kitchen.





The Siphon Mushroom Tea (\$58++) is an elaborate affair, though with robust flavours that back up its showy preparation. The take on *chawanmushi* (egg custard) involves a brew siphoned from a trio of mushrooms, extracted using a set of eye-catching apparatus. As the selection of mushrooms is seasonal, the brew changes every three months. Tay himself is looking forward to the fall months between September and November, when most mushrooms are in season.



The Short Rib (\$68++) is easily the star of the evening. A 400g portion of Margaret River 100% Angus short rib is grilled over *binchotan*, the Japanese charcoal revered for its intense heat and minimal smoke. Already unbelievably rich, the beef is paired with *sambal matah* and spicy peanut *espuma*, or froth, offering heat and a touch of sweetness to the meat. Equally noteworthy is the San Mein (\$38++): Inspired by the unique claypot fried prawn noodles served at a Toa Payoh hawker stall, Tay's version elevates the humble dish from its origins as a stir-fry of leftovers to a standout entree on its own. Topped with giant prawns and truffle oil, angel hair pasta replaces the usual mix of noodles and rice vermicelli, retaining deep flavours even with its thin strands. We sample two desserts, each evoking a uniquely Singaporean experience. Childhood Memories (\$15++) comes with a bizarre description that only makes sense with the first bite. "Crispy, soft, dinosaur, crunchy, ice cream, surprise, roar," reads the menu, each word representing an element in the dish. With certain parts that resemble toy building blocks, the dessert is a love letter to Milo, a favourite of Tay's children. The Rose Love Letter (\$12++) comes served in a scarlet Chinese paper cutting, mimicking a wedding invitation. The crisp *kuih kapit* (love letters) is filled to its ends with rose-infused aerated cream, though some may miss the pleasing crunch of the light wafer roll, now dampened by the cream filling.



Over the course of the evening, the sun bows behind lowered blinds. Now lit from within, the restaurant reveals its pedigree through its decor. Granite and wood meld together with contemporary Chinese design elements, while what appear to be metal studs line the ceiling and wall panels on the upper floor. Look closer and Qin's reveals another nod to its heritage — the hundreds of knobs mimic the myriad medicine cabinets found in traditional Chinese medical halls. Together with the restaurant's familiar yet reimagined cuisine, Qin's ethos and offerings are the perfect complement to the hotel. Business travellers may be interested in using the hotel's two meeting rooms. Located on Levels two and three, The Den and The Mahjong Room each seat approximately 15 people in a boardroom set-up. The Clan Hotel is currently running an 'Opening Special' promotion until May 31 at \$588 nett for a night in the Master Series Premier Room, along with a complimentary second night's stay. Guests will also receive a \$100 voucher for a subsequent stay at Oasia Hotel Downtown, Orchard Rendezvous Hotel or The Barracks Hotel, valid from May 1 to Dec 23, 2021.

## **THE CLAN HOTEL**

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