



Junior

Step it up with these hotel club floors offering VIP service, extra privileges and the best views in town

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THE CLUB



LEFT: Superb views from Horizon Club rooms; INSET: the Club at Marina Bay Sands gives a new high

Although long the province of business travellers, many leisure travellers are discovering that hotel club floors are a good deal with extras like all-day beverages, complimentary cocktails, pre-dinner canapés and private check-in services. And when they also come with panoramic views and top-end privacy — who can resist? Here are our top seven picks of the region.

The newest addition to Singapore's hotel scene, **Marina Bay Sands** has broken one record after another, claiming fame as the largest hotel in Singapore, home to the grandest suites in Asia and the world's highest swimming pool at 200m above ground level. Opening up to a 360-degree panorama of the city, The Club — an exclusive club floor guests' lounge — is poised on the hotel's plush open-roof Sands SkyPark. By night, The Club takes dining to a whole new level with Singapore's first chocolate bar, at 57 storeys above ground. The decadent spread of chocolate-themed buffet seduces with more than 57 items, crafted by hand with Valrhona chocolate and created by executive pastry chef Alejandro Luna and his team. It is also available to the general public at S\$38++ per person.

In Jetstar Asia's latest Chinese destination, Guilin, the **Shangri-la Guilin** boasts impressive views of the poetic Li River, but pushes it up a notch by offering the biggest club floor rooms in Guilin (average size of 42m²) with



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Breakfast and (INSET) cocktails at The Club at Marina Bay Sands; the pool at the Grand Borneo; the Club lounge at Grand Millenium KL

its Horizon Club. Marrying eclectic oriental designs with mod cons, the 74 club rooms epitomise Chinese opulence. At the Horizon Club Lounge, guests can hold private meetings, sip a tippie, or sample Guilin local snacks such as osmanthus cakes — all while surrounded by Guilin’s landscapes, some of the most beautiful scenery in China. “Since our opening in March, the demand for our Horizon Club facilities has been overwhelming, and more guests have the opportunity to experience our acclaimed personalised service, special privileges and amenities,” says Sigi Bierbaumer, general manager of the Shangri-La Hotel Guilin.

In Vietnam, **ParkRoyal Saigon** burnishes its reputation as Ho Chi Minh City’s first atrium-design hotel with the opening of its Orchid Club Floor. The verdant garden milieu, housed in a Nouveau-inspired building, has fast become a favourite for both business and leisure travellers thanks to its oasis setting. Don’t be fooled by the hotel’s laid-back atmosphere: its facilities are the finest in the country. In addition to standard privileges, guests in club floor suites enjoy discounts off massage services from the in-house spa, hotel restaurants and complimentary airport

transfers. The Orchid Club Lounge, led by sous chef Nguyen Trung Tam, serves up authentic, mouth-watering bites.

Kuala Lumpur’s glitzy five-star **Grand Millennium KL** packs a punch with its phenomenal location right in the heart of the city and inches away from the stately Twin Towers. Thanks to the impeccable service and show-stopping design, the hotel is the proud owner of the Hospitality Asia Platinum Award for Best Executive Club Lounge. Designed specifically for the business traveller, the hotel’s glorified club lounge is one of the biggest in the region with an outdoor dining area, meeting and boardroom sprawling across three exclusive levels. Executive travellers will be happy to find slick individual workstations and complimentary usage of iPads and laptops at the lounge. Poised on the 18th floor of the building, the lounge sets the perfect scene for after-work lounging.

Experience Penang with a modern twist at the **Cititel Penang**: the jazzy Pinnacle Lounge on its 18th floor is a standout among the city’s many luxury hotel clubs. The plush canvas-laden lounge pays tribute to eclectic Penang fusion fare — sample hors d’oeuvres that blend Malaysian and European flavours

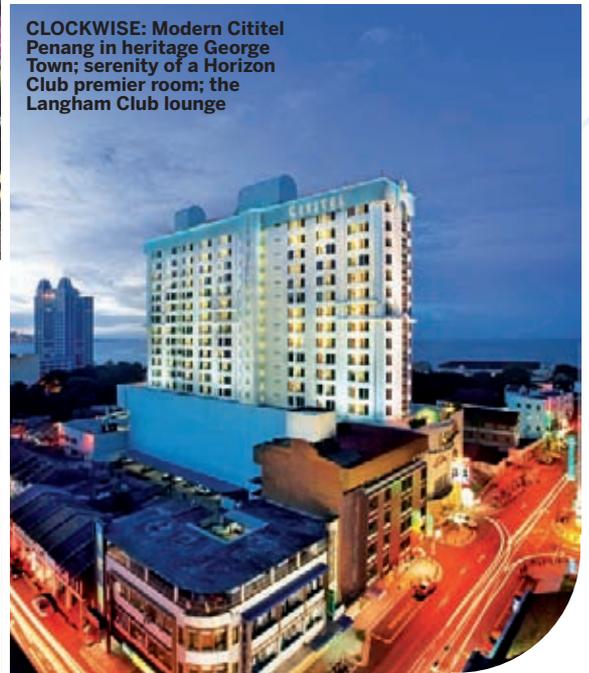
During a vacation in Kuala Lumpur, Australian writer Lara Dunston decided to check into the Grand Millenium KL club floor. She describes the experience: “I remember thinking the high-speed internet and business facilities would have been super had I have been working, but what we appreciated most was the generous spread of delish hors d’oeuvres.

With complimentary breakfasts, all-day snacks and cocktails, they can actually prove to be great value for holidaymakers, too.”





CLOCKWISE: Modern Cititel Penang in heritage George Town; serenity of a Horizon Club premier room; the Langham Club lounge



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and wash them down with French wine. The Pinnacle Lounge is helmed by veteran chef Hisham bin Harun, who has clocked up more than 14 years experience cooking Penang cuisine. Keeping the number of club floor rooms to an intimate 27, the club lounge retains calm tranquillity throughout the day. Back in the top-floor Pinnacle rooms, guests are treated to either an unparalleled sea view or a heritage view — pieced together by the vintage oriental shophouses of George Town.

Chic, stylish and trendy, the **Grand Borneo Kota Kinabalu** presents a different approach to luxury travel. Part-business hotel, part-boutique design pad, the hotel has earned a following among urbanites who feed on creativity. The hotel's show-stopping design flourishes come courtesy of a local leading design agency, giving Grand Borneo touches of Sabah flavours and cutting-edge furnishings. From the top-floor club rooms, drink in a

view of Mount Kinabalu, the highest peak in South-East Asia. The Borneo Privilege Lounge is flanked by glass panels that look out onto bamboo-strewn greenery.

Earning accolades for its cultish cuisine and unimpeachable decor, **The Langham Auckland** sets the gold standard for the hospitality industry in New Zealand. Tastefully appointed in a regal, vintage design, the Langham gives a taste of old-world country living. After checking into the hotel's club rooms, Langham Club members are treated like royalty. "Our concept is to give the highest standard of luxury to guests who rightfully deserve it." This raison d'être imbues the Langham Club, frequented by politicians and celebrities. For a culinary experience, don't miss out on the Langham Signature Afternoon Tea (priced at NZ\$36; S\$35.30 per person) at the club lounge for its delectable selection of pastries, cakes and truffles. ★

Take Me There

- **Marina Bay Sands**
10 Bayfront Ave, Singapore, tel: +65 6688 8868, marinabaysands.com
- **Shangri-la Guilin**
111 Huan Cheng Bei Er Lu, Guilin, tel: +86 (773) 269 8888, shangri-la.com
- **ParkRoyal Saigon**
309B-311 Nguyen Van Troi, Tan Binh District, Ho Chi Minh City, tel: +84 (8) 3842 1111, parkroyalhotels.com
- **Grand Millennium Kuala Lumpur**
160 JI Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur, tel: +60 (3) 2117 4888, millenniumhotels.com
- **Cititel Penang**
66 JI Penang, Penang, tel: +60 (4) 370 1188, cititelpenang.com
- **Grand Borneo Kota Kinabalu**
1 Borneo Hypermall, JI UMS, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, tel: +60 (88) 526 888, grandborneohotel.com
- **The Langham Auckland**
83 Symonds St, Auckland, tel: +64 (9) 379 5132, auckland.langhamhotels.co.nz