

# asia surface

FASHION / DESIGN / ARCHITECTURE / ART / CULTURE

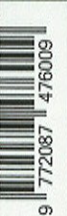
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## GLOBAL POSITIONING

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# view point

*Past and present meet in a lush new hotel in Singapore.*

WORDS DAVEN WU

These days, new hotels are a dime a dozen and this truism has never been more apparent than in Singapore. In the short space of a year, there have been grand opening parties from Little India to the Central Business District, each of which has given lie to any notion of a credit crunch.

To be sure, the inventory of new rooms contains its fair share of duds, not least for the shoddy finishing and the lacklustre service; but, happily, the newly opened Fullerton Bay Hotel smartly side-steps these pitfalls.

Set on the edge of Marina Bay, the airy six-storey glass cube is the first – and to date, only – Singaporean hotel to be built over the water which explains the distinct aquatic frisson one gets from the 100 Hirsch Bedner-designed rooms.

But on an island where historical buildings tend to get short shrift, what sets the Fullerton Bay apart is a discreet but tangible thread to the area's colonial past. To wit, what is now the foyer and restaurant – glossily marbled with shards of light bouncing off chandeliers – was once the Clifford Pier, the then-British colony's equivalent to Staten Island where generations of immigrants stepped ashore in search of a better life.

This sense of continuity and heritage continues in the hotel's public spaces. Here, Hong Kong-based designer du jour Andre Fu has fashioned a lightly Chinoiserie palette of marble, timber and rosewood while lining the corridors with steamer trunks and quiet unobtrusive touches like black and white reproduction photographs of early 20th-century Singapore.

"My design intention was to celebrate the historical context of Clifford Pier with a scheme that would depict a sense of 'bespoke heritage,'" he says, adding that the arrival experience "is layered into a journey where each customer will enter the hotel via a series of waterfront glass boxes, from the landing point lounge to the 18m high hotel lobby that's capped by a massive cylindrical chandelier, and finally Clifford restaurant."

The highlight of Fu's manipulation of contemporary interior design and historical perspective is captured by the rooftop bar where a rectilinear 25m pool sets the stage for one of the best views in town of the mirror-flat water and the Raffles Place skyscrapers. Like much of Fu's work, it's a quiet flourish, but on an island that likes to think it's seen it all, it's also all the more memorable.

[fullertonbayhotel.com](http://fullertonbayhotel.com) ■

