

# Robb Report

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SINGAPORE



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# NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Artists-in-residence mingle with guests as part of Hotel Vagabond's creative new spin on the art hotel.




By BEN CHIN

**E**ntrepreneur, avid polo player and multi-hyphenate Satinder Garcha donned his hotelier hat this September with the much-anticipated Hotel Vagabond, the first of four from the Garcha Hotels Collection. The first luxury boutique hotel in Singapore with an Artist in Residence programme, Hotel Vagabond also enjoys the

distinction of being the first and only hotel in Asia designed by famed French architect Jacques Garcia. Located in the colourful historic neighbourhood of Kampong Glam, the 41-room property retains its original charm with its art deco facade, veranda and red shutters.

After years of success on the dot-com market, Garcha's love for property drew





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him into the world of luxury residence development. Given his ambitious nature, making the progression to running his own hotel chain seemed almost inevitable. “I’m a serial entrepreneur at heart. After moving to Singapore and pursuing my passion for architecture and design through my commercial and residential projects, I wanted to explore hotel development because I believe

One of six gold-leaf banyan trees in Hotel Vagabond. The sculptures were hand-crafted in Jaipur.

it’s about so much more than just great design or architecture. It’s about creating an enticing environment through attention to every small detail – even down to the uniforms worn by staff – and ensuring guests have a memorable experience every time they visit or stay with us. Each Garcha Hotel will have its own unique personality and vibe, but the common thread running through all of them





will be my passion for genuine old-world hospitality, extraordinary aesthetics, and most importantly, a fun-filled environment. Each hotel will be set in historically rich buildings, which are very much rooted in their locale, and will be conceptualised by internationally celebrated designers such as Jacques Garcia and Anouska Hempel.”

What can guests expect from Hotel Vagabond and its Artist in Residence programme? “Hotel Vagabond will be Singapore’s first experience-driven luxury boutique hotel with a passion for the arts at its very core. Artists can apply for up to three months’ residency in one of our two Artist Ateliers. Our main focus will be on artists working within performance, music, spoken word or photography and we’d love to hear from local, international, acclaimed or novice artists. Guests will have the opportunity to mingle with our resident artists in Vagabond

Vagabond Salon, which takes up the entire ground floor, allows artists and guests to admire the artworks and interact with each other over food and drinks.

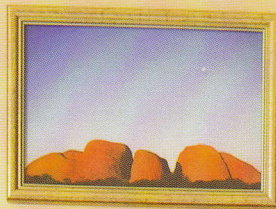
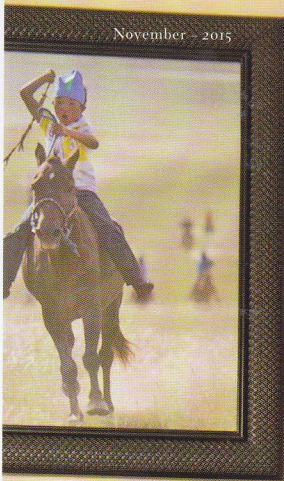


Salon over a beautifully crafted cocktail, dine next to a piece of performance art, watch an independent film produced by a talented documentary maker, or listen to an up-and-coming jazz quartet.

“The heady and intoxicating atmosphere I want to create at Hotel Vagabond demands interiors which are theatrical, luxurious, decadent and whimsical, and so working with Jacques Garcia was an easy decision for me to make. I’m a huge fan of his design aesthetic.”

Four unique pieces of artwork were specially curated for Hotel Vagabond, perhaps most notably Julia Calfee’s photograph from her series *Life Inside the Chelsea Hotel* where she was the resident artist from 2003 to 2008. Satinder explains: “The Chelsea Hotel in its heyday was a buzzing hive of artists, writers and musicians from all walks of life, and it was very much an inspiration for me when I began conceptualising Hotel Vagabond.”





Guests are immersed in a metaphysical journey through art.

Marco Brambilla's *Civilisation* is also a compelling piece. A large-scale video collage comprising more than 300 individual channels of looped video depict the metaphorical progression from hell to heaven. Located in the hotel elevator, guests are immersed in a metaphysical journey through art.

Works by Berlin-based painter Michel Platnic and Argentinian photographer Marco Lopez round up the selection, but also worthy of note are exclusive pieces in the Vagabond Salon by sculptor Franck Le Ray. Says Satinder: "Yes, we worked with Franck Le Ray who is an incredibly talented artist and sculptor and who has worked with Jacques Garcia on numerous projects. He created some of the fabulous creatures you'll find in Vagabond Salon, namely our majestic ape which oversees Vagabond Bar and our giant twin elephants adorning the main guest elevator as you enter the hotel." [hotelvagabondsingapore.com](http://hotelvagabondsingapore.com)



The 41 stylish guestrooms feature goose down pillows and Egyptian cotton sheets made in Italy.