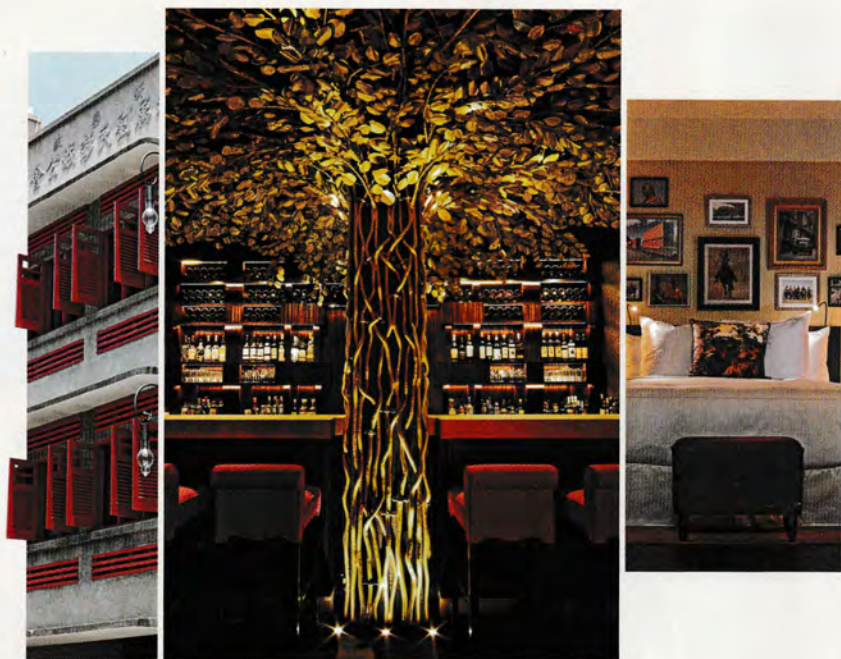


FOR: THE HIP AND SOCIABLE



A HUGE
ELEPHANT
SCULPTURE SITS
ALONGSIDE A
GOLD BANYAN
TREE, AGAINST
A BACKDROP OF
THICK VELVET
CURTAINS.

HOTEL VAGABOND

In the darkened lobby, a receptionist pops up cheerily from behind a golden rhinoceros masquerading as a desk. I blink and take in the scene. A huge elephant sculpture sits alongside a gold banyan tree, with branches stretching across the ceiling, against a backdrop of crimson settees and thick velvet curtains.

I've arrived in time for the hotel's complimentary afternoon tea, served in the lobby daily from 3pm to 5pm. The spread is substantial – think pastries, sandwiches, French press coffee and local TWG teas – and it's a great way to mingle with fellow guests. The hotel owners are also known to drop by.

With so much going on, I almost forget to make my way to my room upstairs, which is small but well designed. The minibar is neatly ensconced in the wardrobe, where there is ample space for a large suitcase. And the bathroom has a huge sink and spacious shower stall.

Touches of luxury include cut crystal glassware and Etro toiletries. But my favourite is the retro-inspired Roberts radio, which streams music from your mobile device via Bluetooth.

Between socialising in the lobby and exploring the surrounding neighbourhoods using the hotel's thoughtful fold-out maps, I barely have time to sleep. But after a good night's rest, I enjoy a delectable breakfast of French toast with bacon, prepared fresh to order. – OLIVIA LIM

www.hotelvagabondsingapore.com