



Kemi Wells strolling on Temple Street



Shophouses in Katong-Joo Chiat



Singapore Sidecar Tour



Kampong Gelam



Shop local at Design Orchard



Raffles Singapore



The Long Bar's Singapore Sling



The Fullerton Hotel

The Cultural Gems of Singapore

Travel + Leisure Travel Advisory Board Member **Kemi Wells** immersed herself in the fascinating melting pot of Singapore's sights, sounds, and flavors.

WITH ITS RICH LAYERS of history and many diverse neighborhoods, Singapore brims with cultural attractions. Traditions run deep, but they've also been reinvented and reimagined with a modern twist. To get a sense of place, Kemi Wells sought out an unexpected way to explore local life—a sidecar scooter tour with Singapore Sidecars. “One striking feature of the city is how many cultures have left their imprint,” says Wells, who founded Wells Luxury Travel to share her passion for new discoveries. “The sidecar tour covered a lot of ground and provided a great overview of just how diverse Singapore is.”

On her tour, Wells visited Chinatown, drove past Peranakan shophouses, breezed

past classic, colonial Victorian buildings, and saw the modern skyline.

“The Kampong Gelam neighborhood was one of my favorites,” says Wells. “On Muscat Street and Haji Lane, street art murals cover entire building fronts and side streets. It's incredible!” The area of Chinatown along South Bridge Road was also fascinating with the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple and Museum, a mosque, and a Hindu temple all just steps from one another.

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

To explore Kampong Gelam more deeply, Wells returned to the area, historically home to a large Malay community and site of the Malay Heritage Center and

the Sultan Mosque. She was enticed by a local fragrance shop dating back to 1933, Jamal Kazura Aromatics, which is now making a stir on social media. “I ended up with some beautiful white musk in stunning, handmade vials,” she enthuses. On Haji Lane, she found a colorful street packed with boutiques and bars. “It is always buzzing—you could spend hours wandering about.”

Another area Wells recommends visiting is Katong-Joo Chiat. “A century ago, Chinese immigrants came to the area as merchants. They married local Malay women and embraced a blended culture which is known today as Peranakan,” explains Wells, referring to the distinctive architecture and cuisine of this group.

Amid quaint and colorful streets, she discovered delicious cuisine and boutique shops like Onlewo, a homewares store whose designer draws inspiration from Singapore's rich past and diverse cultures.

For a look at one of the city's most glamorous landmarks, Wells visited Raffles Singapore. “No visit to here would be complete without a visit to The Long Bar at Raffles to try a Singapore Sling,” she says. “Fun fact: for every 25 sold, Raffles plants a tree.”

FRESH IDEAS IN BLOOM

In a city which seamlessly mingles old and new, a new generation has embraced their unique roots. “Design Orchard is an integrated retail and incubation space,

which nurtures and showcases local designers,” says Wells. “It embodies cross collaborations and mutual support—which I noticed is a key part of culture in Singapore.”

Set over three levels, the ground level is a retail space featuring more than 100 Singapore-based brands. “It's where amazing one-of-a-kind items are available for purchase,” says Wells. “If you like shopping, you must check it out. On the upper floors, designers have access to exclusive co-working space, where industry events and networking take place.”

For another mix of heritage and modernity, Wells points to the Fullerton Hotel, which once housed the General

Post Office and was designed to be a “monument worthy of the city.” Its massive façade and fluted colonnades are as commanding today as they were a century ago. Its younger sister property, the Fullerton Bay Hotel, which opened in 2001, is another stylish spot. “They have an amazing rooftop pool and Lantern bar is a must. It's the perfect spot to take pictures with the iconic Marina Bay Sands in the background.” Find out more about Kemi Wells' travels in Singapore on Instagram [@wellsluxurytravel](#).

If you're craving culture, go to [visitsingapore.com](#) for tips on what to see, do, and eat in Singapore.