



HOTEL WATCH

Live the BRITISH WAY

ONE of the finest things about staying at the famous The Lakehouse country house at Ringlet, Cameron Highlands, is walking about the resort, especially its corridors. It evokes nostalgia of several things that hark back to the colonial years.

A leg-driven sawing machine on the first floor of the House Wing bowled me over. It reminded me of the one my mother owned way back in the 1960s.

The Lakehouse comprises two Tudor-styled storeyed buildings, the Main Wing and the House Wing. Both are similar in design to the Royal Selangor Club, though smaller in size.

Their advantage is that they perch high on a beautifully-terraced landscape in what is called Valley of Eternal Spring. This makes them particularly appealing when one drives up to the Cameron Highlands. It's almost like the British countryside brought home.

The only drawback here is ironically the lake which the country house is named after. The Sultan Abu Bakar Lake is silting and is yellowish like *teh tarik*. The fresh breeze that blows over the lake to the Lakehouse is the only *bonus* one gets from the lake now.

"Let's hope that there will be more balanced development and one that is in harmony with nature," the hotel manager Krishna Badhur commented when he showed me around the

The Lakehouse in the Camerons is famous for providing a British-style of life, writes **JOHN TIONG**

country house.

The Lakehouse country house features a deluxe room, a junior suite and a honeymoon suite at the House Wing. This overlooks the Main Wing that has 10 deluxe rooms, two junior suites and three family suites.

The quaint stately-looking pigeon house on a pillar of stones at both wings enhances the warmth of the resort. I secretly wished to see delightful pigeons flying around but I saw none.

I felt pampered during my stay. Every afternoon at four, a maid would knock faintly on the room to deliver to me fresh strawberries and scones. Before leaving, she would ask politely if I needed any other things.

What attracted me most at the country house were the chandeliers and wall lamps at the various banquet outlets, the rooms and the reception area. These are archaic. The chandeliers are adorned with little red lanterns with black cottony little balls around their base.

At the reception itself, there is an old typewriter

and, nearby, a long bench where one can see a plethora of antiques, including an old bulky gritty seal stamper.

A coppery pan with a long handle on a wooden pole at the Highlander Lounge was used in the old days to warm up beds in England during winter.

They look odd and I guess few Malaysians would know what they were for without the explanation from the hotel.

The furniture in the more expensive rooms, such as the Honeymoon Suite and Family's Room in the House Wing, also make staying at the country house a novelty.

They are a sight to behold because they were made in the middle of the last century. The hardwood, elaborate and unique designs now speak of grandeur.

The bed itself is four-postered and with white draperies which one can draw close to make sleeping more private.

The Lakehouse was the brainchild of retired British army officer Colonel Stanley Jack Forster, who spent four years building it from 1966.

To make staying here more pleasant, there are facilities such as a reading room, a fireplace, a terrace where one can have afternoon tea amid an enchanting landscape and a restaurant that serves international and local cuisine.

■ Pictures by JOHN TIONG

HOTEL

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GETTING THERE

The Lakehouse is 2km from the town of Ringlet and 10km from Tanah Rata, the main town in the highlands. It is three hours' drive from Kuala Lumpur and an hour from the Tapah Road railway station.

There are two roads to go to the highlands. The first is the Tapah-Ringlet route that's older, narrow and winding. The other is the newer Simpang Pulai-Kg Raja route which is straighter and more pleasant to drive through.

MAIN ATTRACTIONS

English country home ambience with beautiful blooms in the garden as well as antique items displayed indoors. The cool climate with lush rainforest and enchanting landscapes add to a pleasant stay. About an hour's drive away are strawberry and flower farms, cactus garden, butterfly garden, Orang Asli village, Boh Tea Plantation and Factory, Sungei Palas Tea Plantation, the mossy forest and the peak of the highlands at 6,666 feet on Mount Brinchang.

FIRST IMPRESSION

Like a countryside in England with its cottage houses. A totally relaxing and unharassed getaway.

RATING

Four-star

ROOMS

The deluxe and junior suites with an extra bed can fit three persons while the Family Suite with a master bedroom and a room with two beds can accommodate up to four persons.

The Honeymoon Suite, the main attraction, is large. It features a logwood fireplace with a dining area. Its spacious bathroom has a walk-in wardrobe, sunken bath and shower area.

RATES

Deluxe Suite RM582; Junior Suite RM679; Family Suite RM800; Honeymoon Suite RM922; Extra Bed RM85. All rates are nett.

For periodic special packages, please log on to www.lakehouse-cameron.com

OVERALL SERVICE

Polite staff who are eager to pamper you as guests of the house.

F&B OUTLETS

A restaurant serving international as well as local fare.

Highlander Lounge is where one can have a drink and experience the warmth of a log fireplace. Cameron bar offers exciting television programmes while guests enjoy scotch whiskeys and other beverages. Lakeview Terrace is the place to enjoy the landscape view over a cup of coffee.

FACILITIES

Among others, the hotel has a reading room and games room for board games.

PLACES WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE

Within two minutes' walk is a row of stalls where one can get strawberries, vegetables, cactus and pitcher plants, flowers such as orchids, soft drinks and munchies. The hotel offers guests guided trekking in the jungle just behind the hotel. It also arranges tours to anywhere on the highlands.



Antique chairs at the lobby

Fresh strawberries, a delight to have at the hotel

The old chandelier that adds to the English charm