

ESCAPE ROUTES

Michael Franco checks into unique ways to check out of town.

With the long holiday coming up, the time is right for packing up and heading out. These package deals and free night offers should help you celebrate in style ...

Hilton for Half

American seems to get all the good stuff first—especially when it comes to movies and juicy sports-star scandals. But here's a case where living in Asia is actually going to put you ahead of the Yanks. Right now **Hilton** is running a promotion that takes 33 percent off stays at certain of their properties in the Americas but—get this—50 percent off select hotels in Asia! It's a pretty cool way to beat the post-holiday blues and soothe your aching wallet. Properties in Malaysia, the Maldives, Thailand and more are available, and there are even two properties right here in town that are participating, so if you don't want to pony up the airfare, you can still get away in your own backyard. The offer is good during all weekend stays in 2010 but reservations must be made by January 31, so pick today, pack tomorrow. Reserve at: HiltonHonors.com/JanuarySale and be sure to click the "Asia Pacific" link.



Have Your CNY Feast in Bali

Normally, getting out of town for Chinese New Year means having to miss out on all that great food (unless, of course you're going to China). But if you head to Bali's **Laguna Resort and Spa** in Nusa Dua over the holiday weekend, you'll be able to dig into a festive buffet on the night of the 14th featuring: Jellyfish salad, dim sum, Szechuan soup, Chinese noodles, Peking duck, century egg, lontong cap go meh and, of course, yusheng. The three-night package not only includes this scrumptious spread, you also get:

- Daily international buffet breakfast at Café Lagoon for two persons
- Airport transfer to and from the resort with luxury limousine
- One indigenous Balinese massage per couple at the Laguna Spa & Villa
- Two complimentary glasses of sparkling wine served in the room by butler upon arrival
- Complimentary seasonal fresh fruits in the room
- Free access to gymnasium, sauna and Jacuzzi
- Late check out until 4pm (subject to availability)

Rates start at \$288++ per night. For enquiries and bookings, contact the reservations department at 62-361-771-327 or email thelaguna.nusaduabali@luxurycollection.com.

Visa Villas

Well, they say money comes to those who have it, and to emphasize this axiom, **Visa** has teamed up with website privatehomesandvillas.com to provide their premium card holders (Visa Platinum, Visa Signature or Visa Infinite) with big savings on villa bookings in Phuket, Koh Samui and Bali. The offer starts with one free night for every two-night booking, and goes all the way up to four free nights with a 10-night booking. In addition to the free stays, many villas are also throwing in free meals and spa treatments. Even if you're not a super-special Visa card holder, it might still be worth a visit to site as all villas they represent have been personally inspected by PHAV staff so you're not going to find any dirty dishes or stains on the sheets. To take advantage of the special Visa deal, visit: www.privatehomesandvillas.com/visa (just leave off the Visa bit for their regular site).

Sail Sale

Keeping on the free night theme, **Sunsail Holidays** is giving away bonus nights for sailing trips among Australia's Whitsunday Islands. So if you've ever wanted to live the glamorous life of white-clad yachtsies gliding along electric blue waters with a golden glass of sauvignon blanc in hand, now is the time. For departures through March 31, if you pay for three or four nights, you'll receive one bonus night free. Pay for five nights and you'll get two free. Your journey begins with pickup from Hamilton Island airport and transfer to the jetty just three minutes away, where you'll get a thorough and easy-to-understand briefing on the boat's state-of-the-art systems and equipment. Sunsail can even provision the boat and have it all ready-to-go following the briefing, so you can literally be out of the marina within a couple of hours of landing. A wide choice of catamarans and monohulls are available to suit all group sizes and budgets, and non-sailors can hire a Sunsail skipper to show them the ropes. For booking and more info call Sunsail Sailing Holidays at +61 7 49489509 or log onto: www.sunsail.com.au.



Hurray for Hua Hin

Once a holiday destination for Thai royalty, Hua Hin now caters mainly to Thais of a less lofty lineage. The beach destination located about 200km south of Bangkok is a favorite spot for locals to catch some rays for the weekend and unwind with a Singha or two. So when you vacation there, you not only get to visit Thailand and be surrounded by Thai wait and hotel staff, you'll be immersed in a full-on Thai experience! The **Rest Detail Hotel** (give us a break, we didn't name it) is offering a 5-night, 6-day Romance Package that makes it even easier to fall in love with (or in) Hua Hin. You get:

- A Daily Champagne Cocktail
- A range of relaxing spa treatments including:
 - A classical aromatic massage and aromatic herbal tea
 - A bliss exfoliating massage
 - An oriental foot relaxant treatment
 - After-sun facial treatment
 - After-sun soothing body mask
 - Aromatic bath salts
- A private beachside moonlight dinner for two
- A romantic gift for two
- Personalized romantic themed turndown



Healthy Valentine/ New Year Getaway

Want to really get away from it all to celebrate Valentine's Day? Would a resort on its own island suffice? That's what we thought. The newly-opened **Six Senses Resort and Spa** is set on its own private island, Naka Yai, off the coast of Phuket. To help you get all relaxed with your partner for the love fest (or to just help you avoid the stress of celebrating the dawning of the Year of the Tiger with your family here), you can take advantage of a special they're running from February 11-18. For \$927 per night, two people get an 80-minute Thai massage, 80-minute Holistic massage and 60-minute foot acupressure treatment—as well as a health consultation on arrival and daily wellness activities and lectures. Breakfast is also included as are two "fishetarian" spa cuisine meals a day (hmmm), along with round-trip transfers by car and speedboat from Phuket International Airport. Add-ons include "My Happy Valentine" (\$360) for those staying two nights, with a healthy dessert cooking class, Six Senses "Oriental Fusion" treatment and a clay body wrap treatment; or if you're staying three nights, you can add on "Welcome the Year of the Tiger" (\$470) which gets you a tea-tasting ceremony, mocktail mixing class, Thai Pra Kob massage, kinesic kick-training session and choice of iridology health diagnosis or nutritional consultation. Book the bliss at www.SixSensesDestinationSpaPhuket.com.



Also included is a complimentary shuttle bus for shopping and visiting Hua Hin's famous night market. Rates start at \$335 for a standard room to \$490 for a beachfront room with surf-soothed verandah. Book at www.restdetailhotel.com.

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things happen." That's funny, those things usually just make us sleepy. The deal is only available for Singaporeans (which means Club Med probably won't have to award too many "CM Kid" titles) and can be booked through the hotline at 1800-CLUBMED or online at www.clubmed.com.sg.

Quick Getaway

A new iPhone app makes it easier than ever to be spontaneous when it comes to your travel plans. Had a crappy week at work? Skip the giant Tiger at your local coffee shop and head straight to the airport. Buy a ticket to somewhere—anywhere! What's that you say? Don't have a hotel room? Ah, but you were smart enough to visit <http://bit.ly/fastbooking> and download the free FastBooking.com app before you left. So when you land in Hyderabad (or Houston) all you need to do is fire up the program and the GPS positioning system will provide you with a real-time list of available rooms in the area—all at great prices. You can view pictures of the hotels, book, and then use Google maps to find your way there. Then just check in and chill. Or worry about how crazy you were to be so impulsive. Time for that giant Tiger—or whatever the local brew is.



Sexy Sunsets

There are happy hours and then there are happy hours. In fact, we're so taken with the new "Infinity Sunset" program at Anantara Resort on Phuket that we think a more appropriate name for downing drinks while the sun slips into the sea would be "Bliss Hours." Until the end of April, the resort, set on the sands of Mai Kao Beach, will be kissing each day goodbye in true style. Visitors can lounge by the fiber-optic infinity pool, listen to a soundtrack spun out by world-class DJs, and enjoy special cocktails, like the grilled peach martini, while watching the sky go all purple and rose. DJ Tony Montana from London will be manning the decks in January with other top-rate acts to follow. The action (or inaction) starts at 5pm and on Fridays, guests can take advantage of a barefoot barbecue with free flow of wine at 7pm for \$113. Book at phuket.anantara.com.

Bali Bliss

It doesn't get much more romantic than Bali. Lucky, then, that Valentine's Day falls during Chinese New Year in February, because you can celebrate both occasions simultaneously at the Ayana Resort and Spa in Jimbaran on Bali's southwestern tip. They're offering a Lunar New Year Celebration package that includes daily breakfast, a three-course dinner, aromatic petal massage for two, access to the Aquatonic Seawater Therapy Pool (with 12 hydro-massage stations), transfers, flower bath on arrival, and daily fruit service. The cost for three nights is \$1,257+-. If you feel like really splashing out, you can upgrade to villa accommodations for \$2,900 where you'll be able to enjoy dinner in your private home to the light of hundreds of candles. If that doesn't help you get lucky on Valentine's Day, we don't know what will! To book the Lunar New Year Celebration package, please contact the hotel directly at +62-361-702222, via e-mail at reservation@ayanaresort.com or reach the hotel through www.ayanaresort.com online booking service.



South Korean Comfort

This year will see the opening of the Intercontinental Alpensia Pyeongchang Resort in the Taebaek mountains, located a two-and-a-half hour drive from Seoul. The hotel features alpine design and great countryside views. It is also located close to an Olympic-class ski park, a 27-hole golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr. and the Ocean 700 Waterpark. The property additionally includes a Planet Trekkers kid's club, spa and open-air conference hall. It offers a great way to add a little green and fresh air to your next trip to Seoul. More information at www.ichotelsgroup.com.