

hot spots The Spire, Queenstown, New Zealand

What is it, and where? Luxury and style have arrived in Queenstown, on New Zealand's South Island, with the opening of The Spire Hotel. Honoured with the NZ BeST Design Award for Interiors, The Spire is turning well-coiffed heads in the Antipodes.

Who goes there? Stylemeisters wanting serious time out against the backdrop of the Southern Alps and Lake Wakatipu. Queenstown is the adventure-sports capital of the world, but it's best to watch the paragliders from your suite balcony, which comes complete with Dedon furniture to impress your visitors. The red-hued rooms are spacious and warm, with king-sized beds, shag-pile rugs and loads of leather.

Each room also has a 42-inch plasma screen, a surround-sound speaker system

and an interactive Windows media package. This means you can check your e-mails, make a call from your Bang & Olufsen phone or peruse the movie selection while soaking in the bathtub.

What's on the menu? Dining is exclusive, The Spire having no more than 14 guests for nightly degustation. Choose from seven or 10 courses, with matching wines, from a menu created by leading New Zealand chef Rex Morgan. A Gordon Ramsay protégé and owner of Wellington's famed Citron restaurant, Morgan mixes local produce with international flavours. Breakfast is a lengthy, relaxed affair, with baked muffins, brioche, sourdough, vanilla rice pudding with peach, and prosciutto and buffalo mozzarella dishes. Meanwhile, copper is the new black in the bar, where

metalwork provides the bling. Ask for the martini with a kiwi twist. The hotel sits in the heart of the Central Otago wine district, so its wine menu lists the finest local offerings. Try the complimentary vino placed next to your bed and you won't leave your suite.

Anything else we should know?

Travelling in a group? The thoughtful folk at The Spire provide a printed sheet of your friends' telephone extensions so you can stay in touch. Chocolates are so passé that turn-down time means miniature tubes of New Zealand spring-water eye gel are left on your pillow. And if you still can't sleep, peruse the book selection on your bedside table.

What's the bottom line? The suite rate is NZ\$885 (\$4,750) a night, including breakfast and transfers, for the best



accommodation in Queenstown. And with more than 270 places to stay, that's saying something.

The Spire Hotel is on Church Lane, Queenstown, New Zealand, tel: 64 3 441 0004; www.thespirehotels.com.

Rachael Oakes-Ash

spree Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur

At the heart of Kuala Lumpur's shopping and entertainment zone is Jalan Bukit Bintang. By day, the street is filled with young families laden with shopping bags. At night, couples and groups of singles fill the outdoor, garden-style bars that spill onto the main road at the heart of the city's Golden Triangle.

Royal Selangor (G9, Lot 10 Shopping Centre, 50 Jalan Sultan Ismail, tel: 603 2142 5755) is the world's largest pewter company. Top buys include a pair of double-walled cups for M\$160 (\$330) and an ice bucket for M\$660.

For a taste of modern Malaysian fashion, head to the first floor of Sungai Wang Plaza, where you'll

find the country's best design talent. Melinda Looi's **Mell** (F082, Sungai Wang Plaza, Jalan Bukit Bintang, tel: 603 2144 0560) specialises in youth apparel in cotton and denim. A T-shirt costs about M\$60. Fellow Malaysian designer Khoo Hooi's **Inspire** (F082-C, Sungai Wang Plaza, tel: 603 9283 8357) stocks off-the-wall men's and women's wear. **Kwan** (F088, Sungai Wang Plaza, tel: 603 2141 2722) sells men's work apparel designed by Daniel Cho and gift items made from local dark wood. Villiam Oooi's store, **My Closet**, (F082, Sungai Wang Plaza, tel: 603 2144 1775) sells vintage dresses for about M\$100 each.

Kensapothecary (F9, Lot 10 Shopping Centre, tel: 603 2142 4361) is an old-fashioned dispensary in contemporary surroundings selling skincare products and fragrances, including Aesop, Peter Thomas Roth and Annick Goutal. Local watch specialist **Woohing** (G11, Lot 10 Shopping Centre, tel: 603 2144 1931) stocks all the big-name international brands, including Rolex.

For locally made lacquerware, birthday cards, freshwater pearls and other gift items touting a "Made in Malaysia" sticker, head to **Teratai** (P3A, Lot 10 Shopping Centre, tel: 603 2144 8866), where most items are priced at about M\$125. **Eclipse** (F21, Lot 10 Shopping Centre, tel: 603 2143 9237) is a nationwide chain store selling locally made women's fashion, accessories and bargain-priced jewellery. Men might want to head to **projectshopBLOODbros** (F22, Lot 10 Shopping Centre, tel: 603 2144 5139) from Singapore, which specialises in urban accessories for creative types and students. Backpacks and shoulder bags are a steal at M\$200.

For accessories of a different kind, head to **Igewels** (P02, Lot 10 Shopping Centre, tel: 603 2145 9129), a boldly designed store in which semi-precious jewellery is displayed in birdcages. **British India**, a popular Malaysian chain store that specialises in high-quality apparel made from linen, cotton and silk, can also be found in Lot 10 (tel: 603 2142 2126).

Nicole Fall



Nicole Fall

be our guest

Enjoy the epitome of South Korean hospitality in vibrant Seoul at the revitalised Renaissance Seoul Hotel. With sweeping views, extensive business facilities and gracious service, the Renaissance towers proudly over the heart of the Gangnam business district. For the executive traveller, a high-speed internet connection, cable and satellite television and a fax machine come as standard in the 493 guest rooms.

But it's not all work and no play: that's taken care of by the hotel's atrium-enclosed, heated swimming pool; outdoor sun terrace; fitness centre and sauna; tennis, basketball and squash courts; aerobics studio; and golf driving range. Then there are the award-winning restaurants, which offer Korean, Chinese, Japanese and European cuisine. The magnificent Manhattan Grill serves the finest steak in town and Toscana is widely recognised as Seoul's premier Italian restaurant.

If you would like the chance to enjoy a complimentary three-night stay for two, including breakfast, in a deluxe room at this hotel, enter our simple competition. All you have to do is write to us using the words "Renaissance", "Seoul" and "dynamic" in the most creative way possible. For inspiration, go to www.renaissance-seoul.com/eng, then visit promotions.scmp.com, click on "Travel Club" and complete the registration form. Entries must be no longer than 75 words. Closing date: February 4. Offer valid until June 30, 2006. The editor's decision is final. Air fares are not provided.

