

## Singapore

Not such a magical entry into Singapore second time round – different flight path and terminal – it was quite ordinary really. At the hotel, there was Angela with grisly details of her flight next to an enormous male who spread into her seat; her attempting to drug herself to sleep to combat back pain – sounded gruesome on a twelve hour flight with Munich stopover!

However she had refreshed herself enough to sort the immediate locality and we found an Asian food joint where the food was acceptable tho' the service left much to be desired. On Wednesday we attempted to find a local breakfast but returned to hotel to do their buffet which set us up till evening. Then off we all went on the bus to Chinatown where we found a shop to replace my camera recharger which we had lost. The chap grabbed Nick's camera and started to clean it lovingly while engaging Nick in knowledgeable and impressive camera talk concerning a wide angle lens which Nick has been coveting for ages. We're **so** glad he didn't buy as he found one a couple of hours later for almost a third of the price!! Then it was off to the Chinese Heritage Centre and around the many, many shops and markets.



A bit of a hiccup on our return as we overshot our stop and were miles off course and out of the city. The great thing is that Singapore citizens readily help confused and helpless tourists, so with the help of two or three of them we found our way back to the hotel, using the mass transit system (an enlarged version of that in KL) and a taxi for the final bit as the heavens opened! A siesta was required and in the evening we went out for street food but returned to the hotel to enjoy a



little more with a drink.



Guess what we found this morning? My original camera recharger! Well, you can never have too many! After breakfast we set off for the waterfront in decidedly damp and overcast conditions. Although we never saw any sun, the high-rise buildings of the commercial sector were dazzling and the

architecture amazing. We were dropped by the elegant Fullerton Bay Hotel and spent the entire morning working our way around Marina Bay, gasping at the beauty of the amazing skyline and the elephants along the way, painted by a variety of artists. They will all



eventually be auctioned off by Sotheby's, the proceeds going to an elephant conservation charity. The highlights: i) the bendy boat (complete with palm trees) on the three towers; ii) Marina Bay Sands Exhibition and Shopping Centre where we walked along the top, high above the world on a walkway which was deserted; iii) the beautiful Art Science Museum, shaped like a fully open lotus blossom and finally; iv) the fabulous helix bridge arching from the museum towards Raffles Avenue, across the water's edge and alongside the East Coast Highway.



Footsore (especially me as I seem to have injured several different toes on my travels) we came back and collapsed in our room as Angela had checked out of hers – a case of three **on** the bed tho' Nick was kicked off as he was too wriggly! Then it was farewell to an excited Angela, off to meet BJ at airport and anticipating a spell of time with him in the Business Class lounge and just a tad hopeful of him wangling an

upgrade – she looked the part!

We went out and found a Thai eatery – small, tasteful with pictures of Buddhas with added bonus of quite tasteful Xmas decorations and renderings of *Rudolf* and *I'm dreaming of a blah, blah-blah!* Why does all that make me feel distinctly **less** Christmas-y!

Friday, and it's still extremely damp and dull so we psyched ourselves up to 'do' the serious shopping experience – Christmas gifts for the loved ones at home, smart gear for the cruise, an extra bag to make travelling easier. But we two grumps found the Singapore Christmas Shopping Experience pretty unattractive. We saw either ...beautiful, but hugely, off the planet, expensive, elegant stuff ....or moderately expensive tacky tatt . . . or inexpensive, honestly and truly, tackier tatt! Consequently, came back after five hours totally empty handed. We are really so oo.. unimpressed with the Father Christmas hats in MacDonalds, where we breakfasted this morning (fodder, but could have been worse!) and the flashy, flamboyant decorations in Orchard Street where there are a 'shop till you drop' number of Malls. Ugh!!!



Evening so much better! Set off to see Marina Bay by night and disconcerted when bus took us all over! Ended up at Harbour, which was fortuitous as it was another splendid night rendez-vous. Had supper watching starry cablecars, laser lights and cruise liner departing. So then, felt we **still** needed to see bay, waiting an age for a bus to get us there. It was well worth it as pictures will testify but I was really tired when we made it back to the Ibis not long before midnight.