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profile

YOUR TEAM TO ACHIEVING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC NEEDS



Contents

all images by
SANJITPAAL SINGH / FULLCIRCLEPIX.COM®

OUR SERVICES

Architectural - Interior – Editorial – Nature and Wildlife – Advertising – Commercial –
Products - Fashion - Corporate Portraits – Events – Creative Stock – Studio – Aerial –
Travel – Sports – Landscapes – Lifestyle – Portrait – Food – Healthcare – Industrial

contact: notsquare@fullcirclepix.com



OUR AWARDS

- 🏆 2013 (USA) - Five Honorable Mention (5 images) for International Photography Awards, Professional Category (Wildlife) September.
- 🏆 2012 (USA) - Second Place in the International Photography Awards (IPA), Professional Category (Nature/Trees), September.
- 🏆 2012 (USA) - Two Honorable Mention (2 images) for International Photography Awards, Professional Category (Nature/Flowers) & (Nature Landscapes), September.
- 🏆 2007 (UK) - Semi Finalists for Shell-BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year Award.
- 🏆 2006 (UK) - Semi Finalists for Shell-BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year Award.
- 🏆 2008 (Malaysia) - 2 awards from the Malaysian Nature Society's Raptor Watch Wildframe Photography competition, Second placing (Nature) & Second placing (People).
- 🏆 2008 (Malaysia) - Merit prize, World Lupus day 'Anything Butterfly Competition'.
- 🏆 2008 (Malaysia) - 5 Merit Awards for commended photos for the 2008 Wildlife Photographer of the Year Award.
- 🏆 2008 (Malaysia) - National Zoo Malaysian One Earth Award - 2008 Malaysian Wildlife Photographer of the year award.



The Team



SANJITPAAL SINGH **FOUNDER / SHARPSHOOTER**

He's really good at what he does and has an array of international awards to show for it. Calm, creative, soft spoken yet wildly passionate about his craft, Sanjit has become one of Malaysia's most in demand photographer.

When he's not shooting, he's teaching photography and when he's not teaching, he's reviewing cameras for various companies. Always pushing the limits of his creativity, expect nothing but the best when you put him on the job.

AHMAD RAFLIS **GUNSLINGER / PHOTOGRAPHER**

With over 15 years of experience in photography, Raflis has an unwavering passion for photography. He has a knack for being able to work well in various situations. With his down to earth attitude and friendly nature, he creates the ideal working environment for the clients especially during challenging shoots. He's constantly seeking out new adventures whether in studio or on location, to express his creativity and to socialize with new groups of people.



The Team



DANIEL
CREATIVE DIRECTOR /
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Armed with a creative understanding of things, a sociable character and a meticulous streak to make sure all aspects of the project is covered, your project is safe in the hands of this seasoned art authority who wants nothing less than a 100% success rate in your project aspirations.



RAVINDER KAUR
MARKETING DIVA

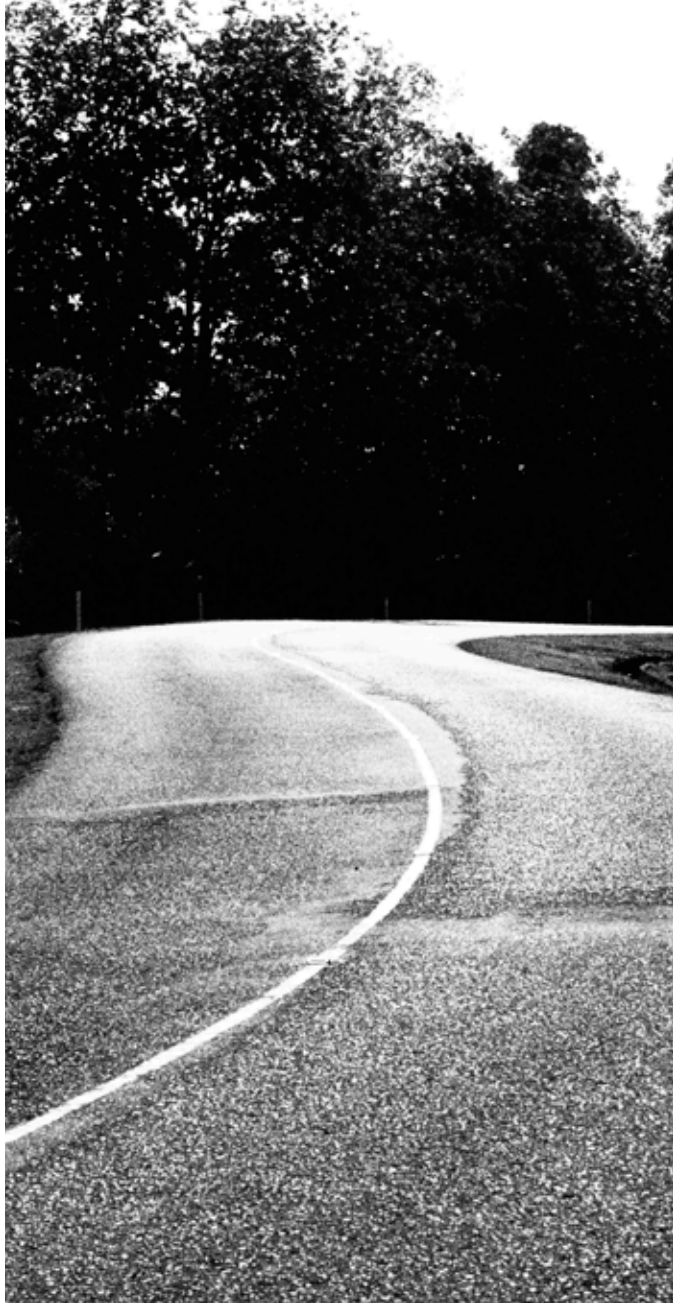
Besides being the writer, Ravin is the co-founder and the brains behind the company's branding and marketing strategies. Currently she is pursuing her PhD in wildlife conservation. Ravin enjoys photography and often dabbles with macro photography. She has been a journalist for various travel & photography magazines worldwide.

ASHA ASOGAN
MAKEUP AND HAIR / ARTIST

Asha is a certified makeup and hair artist with an advanced diploma in this field. Her talent and friendly personality has led her to numerous makeovers on clients with various ethnicities. Asha is experienced in runway male and female model makeovers, catalogue fashion shoots, bridal makeovers and theatrical make up for broadcast.



FC[©] Miles...



TIFFANY & CO.



OLYMPUS



Corporate / Portraits



Corporate / Portraits



Architecture & Interior



Architecture & Interior



Social Events



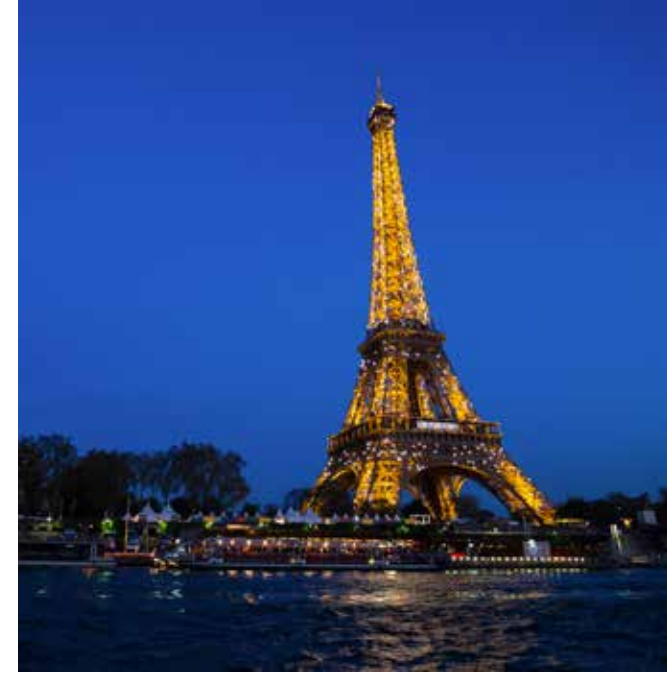
Social Events



Travel



Travel



Wildlife



Nature



Food



Food



Luxury Cars



Tun Mahathir Tours Langkawi



Adventure / Watersports



Studio & Personalities



Studio & Personalities



Published Works...

Lifestyle



Superior by design

ESSENTIAL VISITS THE TROIKA, BRDB'S STUNNING NEW RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY, AND STEPS INTO THE WORLD OF INTERIOR DESIGNER GEOFFREY THOMAS

By: Chad Merchant
Photographer: Santipal Singh / fullcirclepix.com



When UK interior designer Geoffrey Thomas arrived in Malaysia 17 years ago from Hertfordshire, England, his beginnings were indeed humble. Having already paid his dues and learned the art and business of interior design, Thomas relocated to Kuala Lumpur, a city that was still about to explode onto the international scene. The year was 1995, the single Peranakan Towers were only halfway through their seven construction, and the city was in transition. Kuala Lumpur was emerging itself, and this emerging design had every intention of being a part of the Malaysian renaissance. Today, Thomas has remarkably positioned himself as one of the most sought-after residential interior designers in one of the world's most unique and cosmopolitan cities.

I got to spend an afternoon with Thomas in an extraordinary unit at The Troika, an inspiring and impressive condominium located near the heart of KL. As we wandered from room to room in the spacious 3,300-square-foot apartment, the affable and engaging designer shared some of his insights and philosophies with me. When confronted with an unbalanced space, Thomas begins, "I approach the design from a perspective of what I envision living there and then see that as my inspiration for the theme and design." In this instance, Thomas inspired the occupants as a founding partner in a hedge fund company now focused on building the ever-growing investment portfolio, and his wife, a fine arts graduate with a pedigree in public relations within the fashion industry

and her own costume consultancy inspired and influenced by minimalist Japanese aesthetics. Thomas gave behind the curtain aspects of these fictional occupants to flesh them out more fully as real people, investing their own personal sense of fashion and fitness, their appreciation for food and wine, and even their lifestyle choices. He calls this exercise the Occupancy Profile. Once this profile has been determined, Thomas then sets to create a meaningful, ideal space in which these imagined occupants can live and enjoy.

Having designed the client units for a number of high-end residences in KL, utilizing the Occupancy Profile concept with great results for not only the specific client units, but for the overall development as a whole, involving the design



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essentially with the building's architecture and general theme of the property, Thomas seemed a natural choice for The Troika. At this important juncture in the heart of KL, he put forth his talents to great effect, employing his professional palate of neutral colors and various shades of grey to produce an ambience that is at once minimalist yet warm and welcoming. "I respect the American designer Victor Wolf and David Klingberg among my personal favorites," Thomas offered, "and perhaps I am influenced by these works to a degree. One thing I like to do is use mirrors to reflect focal points within a room." Indeed, in the dining room, a narrow floor-to-ceiling mirror was directly opposite an oval table, which Thomas used to double a room's feel of bold, sometimes black, he explains. "In a room with neutral colors, a splash of red offers a good idea."

I asked Thomas what some of the challenges he faced were, both specific to the space at The Troika and, more generally, in working with clients whose ideas and demands might occasionally run counter to his own. "One challenge I run into with this unit was working with the odd angle of some of the rooms. I would walk into a room and see a wall. What can't do to confirm this space was the angle of the architecture didn't respect the form and function of the design?" Indeed, an aspect of the apartment that didn't respect the form and function of the design? Thomas looked at me and said, "I'm not sure, but I think you're right. The angle of the architecture didn't respect the form and function of the design?"

Geoffrey Thomas has come a long way from that young man who was such a fresh arrival in KL in the mid-90s. Through his talent, his method of creative concept evaluation and application, and his change of those hard hats, his fine work in this residence in these rooms.



EssentialCar

Gran design

THE NEW BMW 6 SERIES COUPÉ IS A PARADIGM OF MODERN CAR DESIGN, FUSING CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY WITH BLISTERING PERFORMANCE AND STUNNING AESTHETIC APPEAL.

Photographer: Santipal Singh / fullcirclepix.com

When we think of luxury or performance automobiles, we tend to attribute the label models with the perception of address design and aesthetic beauty and the German models, with cutting-edge engineering and unparalleled reliability.

Of course there are some notable, some exceptional, but nothing high-stature performance with the label luxury is rarely so confidently achieved. In recent times it was claimed that all cars could transform from mundane into the noble realm, but one goal. Under the hood, the models at BMW have achieved something equally unlikely by blending two systems: electric, power and luxury into one, or actually into 6 Series, the 6 Series Gran Coupé.

Inside and outside, the BMW 6 Series Gran Coupé is an intricately woven balance of

design and technology. The beautiful contours, reinforcing attention to detail, and outstanding performance of the Gran Coupé collectively represent a unique synthesis of elegance and athleticism, forming a captivating automobile that denotes sophistication and individuality.

The car's exterior is a triumph of form and engineering. Bold, muscular, smooth, and flowing, are adjectives that rarely go well together, but the 6 Series Gran Coupé incorporates and embodies them all, seamlessly blending aesthetic luxury with powerful performance, giving the Gran Coupé an aura of fitness and versatility that exceedingly rare, in any car.

The interior is adapted perfectly to both its drive and passenger. It is said that the BMW designers drew their inspiration for the front

EssentialCar

is not impressive, particularly considering the available acceleration from 0 to 100 km/h in only 5.4 seconds.

The BMW 6 Series Gran Coupé is designed from the inside out with the driver in mind. To the right of the steering wheel, the switch for driver assistance systems and the high-visibility steering wheel, all the information relevant to driving and safety, which the full-color BMW Head-Up Display from BMW ConnectedDrive projects directly into your field of vision, equipping you with the information you need to drive safely and comfortably.

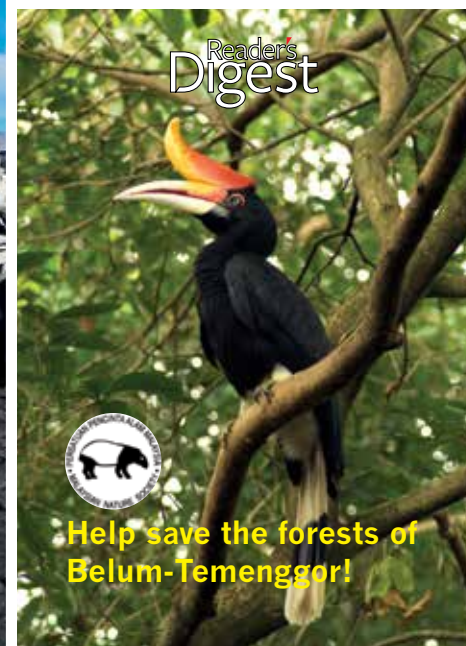
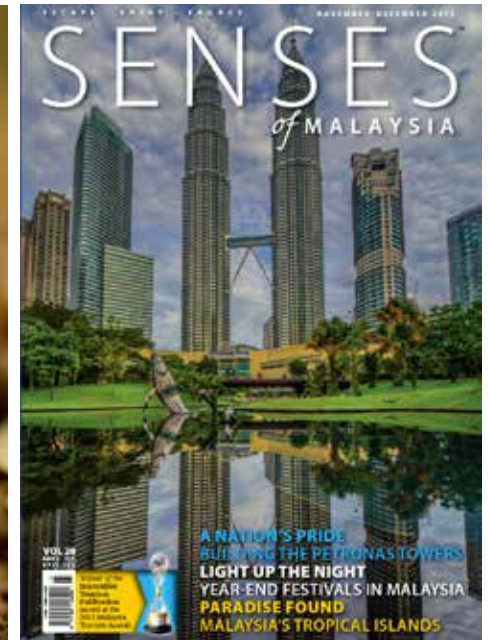
The strength of the BMW inline-6-cylinder petrol engine are legendary. The powerful drivetrain in the BMW 6 Series Gran Coupé highlights in this success story. Boasting 215 kW (290 hp) of power and 450 Nm torque, the engine, the full consumption of only 7.4 l/100 km

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Front Covers...



We've been Published...

LAP OF LUXURY...



This issue of Senses of Malaysia explores some of the very best that life can offer in Kuala Lumpur, a world-class city of the twenty-first century. By land, sea and air, we take you on a magnificent tour, a 'Lap of Luxury', enjoying some of the finest products and services available in Malaysia's capital.



Mercedes-Benz S500 L

It takes something very special to replace the luxury and serenity of a private jet as a mode of transport. But Mercedes-Benz, celebrating 125 years of innovation, has just the answer in the exquisite form of its S500 L, which has now been complemented by a new set of the art SHOOTER™ turbo power unit generating 425 Horsepower with a consumption of only 9.3 l/100km.

The Mercedes-Benz S-Class has always been an icon of style and luxury. Its remarkable design combines elegance and efficiency superiority in their purest form. The S-Class continues to have featured many technological innovations over the years. The new S-Class upholds the tradition right down to the smallest detail. "The car was the first with airbag, web-link brakes and air suspension," notes Roland Fiebig, President & CEO of Mercedes Malaysia.

The S500 L is the pinnacle of the executive transport offered by Mercedes. Its unmistakable front end, distinctive side line and muscular tail end appear to be cast from a single mould. The S-Class embodies exclusivity on four wheels.

For more information on the S500 L and other Mercedes vehicles, visit www.mercedes-benz.com.my

04-22

lap of luxury



PHOTO BY SHREYA (RBI) PALLADIGRAPHY
MODEL BY SYLVO (INTERNATIONAL)

Tiffany & Co

Since 1837, Tiffany & Co has been one of the world's premier jewelers and has been at the forefront of the world's greatest design movements. Its Japanese silver won Tiffany & Co the highest honour at the 1876 Paris World Exposition and at the turn of the twentieth century, Louis Comfort Tiffany emerged as an Art Nouveau leader.

From glamorous, geometric Art Deco pieces and bold cocktail-style creations to the nature-inspired works of Jean Schlumberger and Elsa Peretti, Tiffany & Co has broken new ground time and again with exceptional designs that remain relevant today.

Rare and brilliant diamonds, dazzling in Tiffany's legendary engagement rings, fine jewellery, yellow diamond designs and exquisite statement creations have made Tiffany & Co the destination for those seeking the best.

For more information on Tiffany & Co products and stores in Malaysia, visit www.tiffany.com.

lap of luxury



04-04



SkyPark Business Aviation Centre

Nothing else literally represents the height of luxury than flying in a business jet. Being seated in beautiful leather seats, either in a luxurious seatback or spread out on a couch, surrounded by beautiful wood trim and gold-plated fixtures, while cruising at a ceiling of 60,000 feet at a speed of nearly 500 KTAS (Knots True Air Speed) or 500 mph, is an experience rarely out of this world.

From such great heights landing can be a headache, but the SkyPark Business Aviation Centre (BAC) is the perfect solution. The BAC is located within the confines of Sepang Terminal which was formerly known as Terminal 3 of the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah International Airport, Sepang. It has recently undergone a RM42 million renovation and refurbishment. The BAC has since been converted as a corporate and business jet destination for Malaysia and the region. This newly renovated, sleek and sophisticated facility conveniently located a mere half an hour from Kuala Lumpur now offers state-of-the-art facilities and world-class services. It caters to local and international visitors, high-net-worth individuals, global corporations and high value investors.

Private jet charter and personal ownership is high in Malaysia, and the BAC in the SkyPark Terminal is a popular destination for those who seek to charter and maintain their aircraft in an affordable and convenient location. The BAC is managed and operated by SkyPark FBO Malaysia, a joint venture company between Sabong SkyPark and Hawker Pacific. The BAC is equipped with a luxurious lounge that serves food and beverages, a corporate meeting room, a gymnasium and even a cigar room.

For more information, please visit www.skyparkmalaysia.com or www.skypark.com



lap of luxury



PHOTO BY SHREYA (RBI) PALLADIGRAPHY
MODEL BY SYLVO (INTERNATIONAL)

04-22

lap of luxury



PHOTO BY SHREYA (RBI) PALLADIGRAPHY
MODEL BY SYLVO (INTERNATIONAL)

04-04



Sabrina

What better way is there to relax than with a private cruise on board a luxury motor yacht? The change of pace and informal environment on a yacht bring people together and gets them talking while enjoying themselves in unparalleled luxury.

Sabrina, a luxury motor yacht, is an elegant, steady vessel with a relaxing ambience. Sabrina offers exceptional elegance and comfort that will take your mind beyond the ordinary. With well-appointed interiors and glorious outdoor areas, this corporate charter yacht can accommodate up to 12 guests for a day cruise in its spacious social areas ideal for entertaining and featuring a motor upper deck which affords spectacular panoramic views.

The Sabrina's expansive open salon incorporates dining, bar and lounge areas, all of which are roomy enough for amiable gatherings. For longer charters, accommodations are for six guests in two luxurious en suite staterooms and a twin cabin.

Email info@submarine.com for more information about chartering the Sabrina yacht.



We've been Published...

LAUNCH
THURSDAY
11 APRIL 2013

automania.my | Your weekly motoring guide

This MINI's THE ONE

WHETHER IN CHILLI RED OR PEPPER WHITE, THE NEW MINI ONE IS SURE TO EXCITE.

MINI Malaysia has brought in the new MINI One – the limited edition MINI which stood out from the crowd two years ago and has been immensely popular ever since.

The car is powered by a 1.6 litre four-cylinder in-line engine with a six-speed automatic transmission, which delivers 92hp and 150Nm of torque.

The new MINI promises a remarkable fuel efficiency reading with an average fuel consumption rate of 6.7 litres per 100km.

Available in its signature Chilli Red and fashionable Pepper White exterior, the MINI One is also equipped with 15-inch light alloy 5-Star Twin Spoke wheels as standard, along with some exciting new additions, including multi-function buttons, sport steering wheel, rain sensor and automatic light control, radio MINI Boost and Bluetooth hands-free kit with USB interface.

MINI has always been a symbol of urban driving fun," said BMW Group Malaysia CEO Dr Gerhard Pilz.

"The indispensable element of excitement promised in each model, combined with agile 'go-cart' handling and its most natural characteristic with cutting-edge efficiency have led to a very successful MINI story to date. MINI reported a record-breaking 13% growth in vehicle deliveries in Malaysia."

Three new dealerships in Sabah, Sarawak and in the Bangsar area, Kuala Lumpur, have been opened.

"This year, we will better this record and I strongly believe that the new MINI One will help us achieve this and continue to charm Malaysian MINI fans further," said Dr Pilz.

The MINI Tender Loving Care (TLC) service package is available as an optional upgrade for RM4,088 which takes care of the MINI in terms of inspection and wear and tear repairs for three years or 50,000km, whichever comes first.

MINI TLC package covers work such as engine oil changes; servicing of the air filter, micro filter, spark plugs and brake fluid; maintenance and servicing of brake pads and brake discs; maintenance and servicing of clutch in the event of wear and tear as well as replacement of windscreen wiper rubbers and blades.

The retail price (OTR without insurance) for the new MINI One is RM146,888.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVELLER

New Zealand Splendour

The astounding Tongariro Crossing beckons many with its untold mysteries.

DISCOVERING ILHA FORMOSA
Exploring the rugged and exciting island of Taiwan.

SOJOURN IN THE LAND OF SNOWS
A spectacularly beautiful destination that's worth the wait.

MALAYSIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET
The Belum-Temengor forest opens up.

GREAT MIGRATION OF KENYA
A race on a global scale.

Special travel equipment for your trip

DESTINATION
Trek and Photos by Sanjaya Singh

Malaysia's Best Kept Secret

The Belum-Temengor forest opens up to this shutterbug where Plain-Pouched Hornbills take flight

Birds and people are a plenty in the city of Guruh, Sarawak. The journey continues towards the Belum-Temengor forest, the sights are soon replaced by lush greenery. Unfamiliar road signs depicting various birds begin to appear on the roadside. The 45-degree drive leads to a bridge that carries across a shallow lake surrounded by the overlapping hills of the rain forest.

Located in the southern region of Peninsular Malaysia, the Belum-Temengor forest is one of Sarawak's best kept secrets. It is home to an species of hornbills and large mammals such as elephants, leopards and tigers. The landscape offers an escape from the usual concrete jungle and the city lights.

As I drive to the forest, the road is flanked by lush green rice fields and small villages. The road is well-maintained and the scenery is beautiful. The forest is a hidden gem, a place where nature is still in its prime.

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We've been Published...

POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE



Digital Camera

POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE

MISSION FACTILE
 Who: Sanjitpaal Singh, Wildlife photographer
 What: To take the beauty of the tiger out of the zoo and into the wild.
 Where: Eastern Ghats National Park, Odisha, India.
 When: Late 2009 to early 2010.
 Why: To capture the tiger in its natural habitat and to raise awareness about the species.
 How: Sanjitpaal Singh spent several months in the forest, waiting for the right moment to capture the tiger in its natural habitat.

Adrenaline Rush

Nature is not a bed of roses. Sanjitpaal Singh shares his passion for things wild and untouched...

Using focus and hanging from trees, encountering someone snakes face to face, storming into a nest of wasps, being attacked by a tiger, and being the hunter killed. It's a body dangerous out there. Every step is taken with much consideration and I will wake up early the next day to do it all over again.

When did you get your start in photography?
 I started out in photography with the sole purpose of being a photographer and the my dream of being in forest places and capturing the best of them. Of course, the beginning was the toughest period of my life. I had no camera, no money and hardly any experience. With the best of friends and their constant support and motivation I managed to land a couple of jobs and just kept going over there over building my portfolio.

What made you choose Nature as your main focus?
 I've always had a fascination for animals and they intrigue me so many ways. From their

POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE

Shivraj Ladd Mehrotra (Photographer/Artist)
 A teaching moment between an adult and a young boy.
 Shivraj Ladd Mehrotra is a wildlife photographer and an artist. He has been published in various magazines and has a book titled 'The Tiger'.

Alia in wilderness
 A tiger in the wilderness. Alia is a tiger in the wilderness. She is a tiger in the wilderness. She is a tiger in the wilderness.

Harish Chandra
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It just needs a little effort to make your street food or food photos look sedap.

By ADA AHMAD

Photographing food

It's not just about the food, it's about the atmosphere. When you're photographing food, you're also capturing the mood of the place. To get the best results, you need to be in the right place at the right time. This means you need to be in the kitchen or near the counter, where you can see the food being prepared. You also need to be in the right mood. If you're stressed or tired, your photos won't be as good as when you're relaxed and happy. So, take a break, get some rest, and then go back to work. You'll be glad to see the difference in your photos.

- **Be simple and experiment with backgrounds.** When visiting street food establishments, there are a lot of backgrounds you can experiment with. Choose a setting that is interesting and simple. A simple table, with or without a table cloth, that has a nice contrast and harmonizes with the type of food you're shooting. Before shooting, avoid any clutter in the background.
- **Arrive early and sit where there is light.** Try to avoid using the flash. It makes the food look harsh, shiny with dark shadows and flat in the most unappealing way. When you're going to shoot in a popular or busy stall, go early so you can choose a nice spot with good natural light.
- **Use Coffee.** Learn to use the colour balance and white balance settings on your camera. There will be situations where you will experience low-light conditions. Your photos can end up yellow or blue and make your subject look like a alien dish.



- **Shoot Slowly.** Take some test shots during the day long process. - Photo courtesy of Sanjitpaal Singh and Nik Mubt Hatt, Full Circle.
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Hot shot

Hot shot is a new breed of Malaysian photographers who show that complacency is not optional when it comes to nature. And just to prove their point, they traipse through mud, scale mountains and endure potentially fatal insect bites. Meet the Indiana Joneses of photography.

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Exposure

READERS GET A CHANCE TO LEARN ABOUT CREATIVE STILL-LIFE

Readers had a great time learning how to shoot still-life images. The winners of the contest were...
 The winners of the contest were...
 The winners of the contest were...



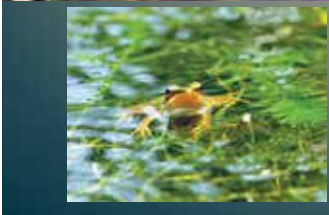
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Sanjitpaal captures the beauty of nature and conveys the message of 'voiceless' animals through his photography

Messages from nature

Sanjitpaal Singh shares his experiences with nature through the lens of his camera

SANJITPAAL Singh is a Kuala Lumpur-born award-winning nature and wildlife photographer. With more than 10 years of experience in the industry, he was won various prestigious awards, including being shortlisted as a semifinalist for the UK's BBC-Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year Award in 2006 and 2007 and receiving the Malaysian One Earth Award in 2009. He was also a semifinalist for the UK's Veolia Environment Wildlife Photographer of the Year in 2011 and a runner-up for the US' International Photography Awards (professional category, nature/trees) in 2012.

Sanjit is a self-taught professional who gained knowledge of photography through books, magazines and the Internet. "I have always had a fascination with the great outdoors from my adventures through the bushes as a young boy, to the primetime weekly TV spot of *National Geographic*," he says.

Sanjit recalls that from the minute



by NIGEL GONSALVES

he picked up a camera he realised that he never wanted to let go. In college, he enrolled himself for one semester of photography. He tagged along with his seniors on various assignments and was always the first to volunteer for nature projects.

Sanjit has a particular love for wildlife photography as the tranquillity of nature holds a special place in his heart. "I embrace the peace and solitude," he says, adding that he enjoys stargazing as well, which would be impossible to do under the brightness of city lights.

He believes that he keeps a respectful attitude towards nature on his many visits into the forest. "In the wild, we're in the world of the unknown," he says. "It reflects our inability to predict the future. Furthermore, when we're in the wild, [we should] consider it as being in the house of a host."

Sanjit draws his inspiration from the hidden beauties of Malaysia, and is passionate about the rich forests and natural resources that the country has to offer. He aims to focus on his work in the country and showcase it to the world. He believes that as animals are

"voiceless", the only means for him to transmit their message to the world is through his photography.

Wildlife photography can be a very taxing endeavour. Sanjit often has to go deep into the forest with about 20kg of equipment strapped onto his body. But it is worth it, as each time he goes in, he has a chance of capturing that once-in-a-lifetime shot.

Apart from shooting the flora and fauna, Sanjit loves capturing shots of birds. He attributes all his work to his wife Ravinder Kaur, a conservation biologist who heads her own nature research-based company called Gaia and accompanies Sanjit on most of his trips.

Sanjit uses an Olympus E-System camera and 300mm f/2.8 Zuiko Digital Lens with a 2x Teleconverter for most of his shoots. For shooting wildlife, the camera settings for each shot are very specific and the lighting conditions play an important role. While Sanjit also relies on his camera's shutter speed to capture the tremendous speed of the wild animals, through experience, he is sometimes able to anticipate the animal's next move and plan his shot ahead of time.

Gonsalves is the founder of *The Arts Central*, a free global community website for artists. To view more works or to find out more about the artist featured here, please visit <http://www.theartscentral.com>



Hiding place: A chick longingly waits in the tree cavity with the female for food.



Monogamous: The Wreathed Hornbill (*Aceros undulatus*)



Sole breadwinner: The male Helmeted Hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*) holding food in between its beak to feed the female.

Romancing Hornbills

Conservationist's starry-eyed love for the bird

By AIDA AHMAD
aidaahmad@thestar.com.my
Photos courtesy of SANJITPAAL SINGH

Valentine's Day is celebrated on Feb 14 in many parts of the world, "when loved ones shower each other with gifts and chocolates."

But did you know that Feb 13 is "Love Hornbills Day"?

This day of recognition for the Bucerotidae family of birds was coined by Prof Pilal Poonswad, a pioneer in Hornbill conservation and hailed as the Great Mother of the Hornbills more than 30 years ago. Her purpose was to save threatened

Hornbills and their rainforest habitats.

"Love Hornbills Day is a big affair in Thailand and India but not so much in Malaysia. There should be more publicity here as they are such fascinating creatures and Malaysia has 10 species of hornbills," said Ravinder Kaur, a conservationist specialising in Hornbills.

It is endearing listening to Ravinder romanticise the courtship of hornbills. She stated as a matter of fact that Hornbills were monogamous, as in they pair for life. She said the male Hornbills are considered the sole breadwinners or in their case seed winners, and dedicated to protecting the families.

Let's just say the female cannot live without the male. If the male dies or is poached, the female and its chicks may starve to death.

— RAVINDER KAUR



The specialist: Ravinder has spent a lot of time in the forest studying the Hornbill.

Ravinder, 30, went on to explain that before mating season, the female bird seals herself inside a tree cavity, which becomes her home, and waits for her male partner to feed her. The tree cavity is sealed with mud or sap and the opening is just big enough to receive food two to three times a day, mostly figs, insects and other animal matters.

The feeding times will increase to five or six times a day when the female has to raise a single chick. "This is to protect the females and their chicks from predators. But some say it is so the females can remain faithful," said Ravinder in jest.

Evidently, when a female Hornbill tries to leave the hole, the male partner will entice her with fruit.

"Let's just say the female cannot live without the male. If the male dies or is poached, the female and its chicks may starve to death."

Her findings are based on years of observation when camping out in the Belum-Temenggor forest in Perak.

Ravinder received her Masters in Science (Animal Behaviour) from Universiti Malaysia Sabah. She will



Nature's gardeners: The Rhinoceros Hornbill (*Buceros rhinoceros*).

also be submitting a paper based on the breeding habits of the biggest Asian Hornbills — Helmeted, Great and Rhinoceros, during the Hornbill Conference in Manila in April 2013.

Her day in the jungle starts before sunrise where she hikes into the depths in the dark.

"The first Hornbill feed starts as soon as there is light at about 7am. These birds are smart and very sensitive to the surroundings. If they see me, they won't feed and my day is over."

Sometimes it takes hours before anything happens. Armed with binoculars and her favourite reading material, Ravinder's forest stakeout lasts until sundown and she needs to stay alert for Hornbills as well as other wild animals.

"Also, these are not silent birds. They lack underlying covers which make them generate a loud 'whooshing' sound, announcing their arrival," she said.

Why are Hornbills so important to the forest?

"They are considered nature's gardeners. Hornbills can consume large seeds whole and undamaged and pass these seeds out all over the forest."

The whimsical courtship of Hornbills is in a way mirrored in Ravinder's marriage to award-winning wildlife photographer Sanjitpaal Singh.

"She packs the clothes, I pack cameras. I wouldn't be doing wildlife photography if we had not met," said Sanjit.

Both of them were pen pals at the tender age of 13. "I put out a message 'Seeking Sincere Friendship' in *Galaxie* magazine," said Sanjit, while Ravinder added that they finally met after five years of correspondence.

Now that both of them have a mutual love for hornbills, Ravinder plans to do her PhD in hornbill research while Sanjit's next big plan is to plant special cameras in the tree cavities to film a documentary on hornbill behaviour.

For more on 'Love Hornbills Day', visit <http://fullcirclepix.com/blog/>

We've been Published...



Trigger happy: The job of being a professional photographer like Sanjipal Singh is as much about hard work and dedication as it is about art and creativity.

METRO BIZ

Clicking for a career

The barriers to entry are now lower, but to make a living from photography still takes hard work and passion

18 6 10



- 1 Sanjipal's passion and eye for a good picture landed him several awards and sponsorships from Olympus.
- 2 A shot of Valentino Rossi by Abdul Shukor.
- 3 Abdul Shukor was initially spending his weekends at the former Batu Tiga race track taking pictures of races and events.

For love of the lens

Late career switch pays off for two photography fans

By NEVASH NAR
nevesh@metrostar.com.my

DERIVED from the Greek words photos (light) and graphein (to draw), photography has come a long way since 1825 when its first modern process was invented.

Today, photography has become a very popular hobby thanks to the invention of digital cameras that makes it easy for anyone to point and snap.

Camera phones also introduced photography to many youngsters and those who enjoy it, slowly upgrade to compact cameras and eventually digital single-lens reflex cameras (DSLRs).

A portable medium that allows anyone to express their creativity, photography has become a part of the human race and some have even turned it into a successful career.

Metrobiz talks to two successful photographers who gave up their high-paying jobs to pursue their love for the flash.

Flash love
Sanjipal Singh and Abdul Shukor Md Janis were both thriving in their corporate roles before picking up a camera to make a living. Sanjipal was in advertising for eight years before moving into photography full time. Prior to that, the journalism graduate worked in a post-production company.

"I got my first taste of photography after I graduated. I worked for a travel and entertainment magazine where I was a photojournalist for a couple of years," said Sanjipal.

"When I was with the advertising firm, my ex-boss was kind enough to get me the equipment I needed to continue my passion for photography. The equipment was for the company but he allowed me to use it on the



weekends to build my portfolio."

Sanjipal's passion and eye for a good picture landed him several awards and a sponsorship from Olympus.

"I was not happy being behind the desk. I always loved wildlife photography as I consider myself a nature lover. I enjoy the outdoors and that became my niche. That's how I separate myself from the rest," he said.

However, to pay the bills, Sanjipal does corporate events, branding photoshoots and profile photography.

He spent the last four years building his clientele and his work has been recognised by major organisations. That has also helped him draw in sponsors such as photography equipment companies like Gitzo and



DataColor.

He is also frequently invited to judge local photography competitions and conduct workshops overseas.

Abdul Shukor, on the other hand, took up photography as a hobby, but that passion soon turned into something that he could make a living out of.

Similar to Sanjipal, Abdul Shukor was not happy being tied down to a desk job.

"I was making good money being a manager at a multinational oil and gas company, but I was not happy. My heart was crying out to be released," quipped Abdul Shukor.

The diehard motorsports fan was spending his weekends at the former Batu Tiga race track to take pictures of cars and

events. He was doing this on his own time without any monetary returns.

Soon after, drivers and race teams started engaging his services and he found that he enjoyed what he was doing.

At the age of 40, Abdul Shukor decided to venture out and start his own motorsport photography services.

"Everybody thought I was crazy to give up a steady job and pay cheque to start something new. I have four kids and, at the same time, my wife had also decided to quit her job to care for her mother.

"It came down to wants versus needs. I evaluated what I actually needed and how



Always looking at improving their skills

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

much that would cost against my wants. I did not need a maid and I could send my children to school every day. My wife and I managed it," he added.

Today, Abdul Shukor is one of the most sought-after motorsport photographers in the country. His work has been picked up by many news agencies across the globe and featured in many magazines.

Perfecting the shot
Both Abdul Shukor and Sanjipal agree that photography is a work in progress and both men took time to hone their skills.

When he is not at the track, Abdul Shukor is at home studying his pictures and always looking at improving.

"I like to fail. Because when you do something wrong, you remember. I am not afraid of making mistakes as I learn from them and I get better," said Abdul Shukor.

Sanjipal explained that in order to be a

good photographer one had to be humble, honest and sincere.

"Every client is different. We can't tell the client that this is my style and this is what I will do.

"The client might have something else in mind. We give them what they want and give them what we think would look good. That's how we maintain a good relationship," he said.

Both Sanjipal and Abdul Shukor advise young photographers to keep polishing their skills and to never settle for mediocrity.

"Find your niche and work on it. Set yourself apart from the others and work towards becoming the best," said Sanjipal.

"It is also important that we respect our fellow photographers.

"I charge RM1,200 for a four-hour event and commercial shoots start from RM5,500. If we go any lower, we kill the market for our peers," he added.



- 4 A shot by Abdul Shukor of a local motorsport event.
- 5 The rushing river waters of Ulu Tem are brilliantly captured here which also shows the unusual rock formations that caught Sanjipal's attention.
- 6 Sanjipal in the wild.
- 7 A photo of the Wreathed Hornbill would require lots of patience and dedication to capture.

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