

The RuMa, Kuala Lumpur – hotel review

Laura Millar falls for a sophisticated, city-centre stay which showcases KL's tin-mining and rubber-producing past in defiantly contemporary style

LAURA MILLAR | Friday 1 March 2019 10:05 | [0 comments](#)

Unassuming from the outside, this slick, luxurious hotel surprises and delights with several design show-stoppers.

Where is it?

The RuMa is located on the edge of Bukit Bintang, a lively entertainment and shopping district home to massive modern malls such as The Pavilion and Lot 10. It's a five-minute walk to green, airy KLCC Park, most notable for the distinctive, 88-storey steel and glass Petronas Towers which loom at one end.

Style

British designer and architect Andy Hall wanted the hotel to reflect **Kuala Lumpur's** history in tin-mining and rubber plantations. To this effect, he's made good use of copper as a design feature, both as a material and as a colour, starting with the entrance foyer. This small, intimate space is designed like a giant bird cage – referencing the canaries which were brought down the mines – with a bronze fountain in the middle, which achieves the effect of instantly cocooning guests from the street outside. Then, a jaw-dropper of a lobby, with its soft, glimmering copper ceiling; in the middle is an audacious, double staircase, which Hall wanted to recall mining drill bits (trust us, it looks better than that sounds). Spot-lit in between the stairways is a bright, glittering gold sculpture of a kebaya – the Malay national dress – by Malaysian designer Bernard Chandran.

When you get closer, you see that it's made up of hundreds of tiny butterflies. Drawing back, the reception desk is to the right, and the lobby bar, 7 Lobby Lounge, is on the left. This features five futuristic-looking lights which dangle from above, the light reflecting seductively off the copper. The corridors to the lifts are hung with vintage carved wooden panels which are sections of bannisters from old colonial houses. Rooms are somewhat simpler, but again nodding to colonial style, paneled in blond wood, with darker wooden flooring. Headboards are of woven rattan, with drop pendant lights by the bed, and the copper details are picked up again by the his and hers sinks in the bathroom.

Facilities

The RuMa's ace in the hole has to be its sixth floor pool; glass-edged, and tiled in glittering gold and black, it's sliced into a corner of the building. To swim in here is to feel dwarfed by a forest of skyscrapers, including, in the near distance, the Towers. On the same level is a well-equipped gym, a lounge area scattered with locally-made rattan furniture – including a handful of huge, egg-shaped seating pods – an event space, and the Suntai pool bar. Urban Resort Concepts, the Chinese hotel firm which owns RuMa, has a mantra of 'hostmanship', meaning everything is done for the guest's convenience, rather than theirs. This translates to brilliant touches such as a complimentary mini bar, no added cost for ordering room service and – hallelujah – 24-hour check-in, and late check out, all at no extra charge.

Food and drink

There is one main restaurant, ATAS, which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. The concept is modern Malaysian cuisine, using local, traditional ingredients; tasty dishes include the likes of raw yellowfin tuna with pomelo, mint and green chilli, or salt grass lamb rump with jasmine rice salad. Perhaps don't order the durian ice cream sundae if you don't like the taste of custard mixed with a gas leak. Suntain serves moreish bar food along the lines of mee goreng and chicken rendang, while on the ground floor, the soothing, airy Librari, its bookshelves stocked with tomes about art, photography and history, is the place for a civilized afternoon tea. Order a Jungle Bird cocktail at 7 Lobby Lounge; made with rum and Campari, it originated at a KL bar called the Aviary in the 1970s.

Extracurricular

There's plenty to do within walking distance, particularly if you like to shop. Whizz up the Petronas Towers for mind-boggling views of the city, or stroll to 'food street', Jalan Alor, lined with dozens of stalls and delightfully cheap restaurants. Spend a morning at the Batu Caves, a short taxi ride out of the city; this beautiful set of Hindu temples is to be found at the top of 272 rainbow coloured steps. See if you can make it all the way up without being mugged for your bottle of soda by a macaque monkey.

Which room?

There are 253 rooms and suites, of varying sizes, located between the 7th and 18th floors. Most have standalone bathtubs and rainforest showers. Feeling fancy? Bag yourself a RuMa suite, with views onto the Towers.



One of the suites at the RuMa (The RuMa)

Best for

Instagram-obsessives, solo travellers who want to treat themselves to a slick city stay, style-conscious couples.

When to go

May to July counts as the dry season, with hot, sunny, humid days. Avoid monsoon season - March to April.

Details:

Rooms from £155 per night, including breakfast, 7, Jalan Kia Peng, Kuala Lumpur, 50450, Malaysia; theruma.com ■



the-ruma-5.jpg

The sixth-floor infinity pool at the RuMa(The RuMa)