



## Colonial Charm, Cameron Cool

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE COMFORTS OF THE LAKEHOUSE, AND STEP BACK IN TIME TO THE GENTEEL DAYS OF COLONIAL GRACE AND CHARM IN THE CAMERON HIGHLANDS. EDITOR **CHAD MERCHANT** DISCOVERED MUCH TO ENJOY DURING A MARVELLOUS WEEKEND GETAWAY.

Always a pleasant and relaxing destination, Cameron Highlands really shines when you're staying at one of its finest and most refined hotels. It actually seems almost a misnomer to call The Lakehouse a hotel. This 19-room country inn has a far more personal and intimate feel than you'd ever get in a larger property, and the small size is a considerable part of its charm; the wonderful English décor and beautiful collection of antiques, another. I particularly enjoyed the original hand-drawn architect's plans of the inn, preserved and framed in what is now a meeting room just adjacent to the library.

Nestled against a bucolic green hillside near the town of Ringlet, The Lakehouse is a Tudor-style country house so inviting, I felt as if I'd stepped into another world. All the urban chaos of KL melted away at this boutique hill station haven and a weekend of rest, rejuvenation, and enjoyment was just what the doctor ordered. The Lakehouse offers complimentary morning jungle trekking so you don't grow too lethargic, but also has the Salkara Spa, an unexpected treat for such a small property. Treatment prices for services such as facials, massages, and body scrubs are quite reasonable.

Diners in the main dining room were a cosy affair, with a four-course meal an excellent choice. All the veggies are sourced locally, and a standout was the crisp, sweet Cameron Highlands corn, easily the best I've ever had in Malaysia. The Highlands' well-known strawberries, of course, made several mealtime appearances, and were always welcomed. Another dinner featured a marvellous barbecue on the Lakeview Terrace. The excellent team of servers put together an array of dishes ranging from chicken satay to packets of *otak-otak* to lamb chops and sirloin steaks, built a ferocious wood fire in the stainless steel BBQ pit, and let us grill our own dinner at our leisure, popping by periodically to clear plates and fill our wine glasses. It was a splendid (and delicious) experience.

It wouldn't be a trip to the Highlands without taking afternoon tea, and here, The Lakehouse excels. One particularly nice thing is the choice of enjoying the tea at a number of places, whether on the terrace, in the garden, by the fireplace in the lounge, or even in the comfortable library, which was our choice. Supremely English and traditional, our tea came with all the usual suspects, such as crustless cucumber sandwiches and fresh scones with clotted



cream and homemade strawberry jam, but also featured treats like fresh-baked banana bread, mini egg tarts, juicy strawberries, and plump seedless grapes.

If you need a break from the bustle of city life, I cannot recommend highly enough that you escape to the Highlands and explore The Lakehouse. You'll like it if you just drop in for tea, but you'll love it if you stay awhile. The allure of an authentic English countryside inn complemented by a personal level of service reserved for just such cosy properties – they even wash your car each day! – is exactly the soothing balm the busy expat needs from time to time.

[www.lakehouse-cameron.com](http://www.lakehouse-cameron.com)