

Title: Playground for the fabulous
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LIVING
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DISCOVER PLAYGROUND FOR THE FABULOUS

Over the past year, the smorgasbord of specialty tenants populating Tiong Bahru Estate has revived its status as a charming neighbourhood for the discerning crowd.

BY TAN LILI

History has, quite possibly, repeated itself. During the pre-World War II years, only the rich and powerful could afford to live in one of the oldest housing estates in Singapore, Tiong Bahru. It used to house the mistresses of many wealthy businessmen — a dirty, not-so-little secret that's added a lick of intrigue to the estate. The aesthetic art deco appeal of the neighbourhood was apparent; rounded balconies, spiral staircases, shuttered windows were the main fixtures of the flats.

After the war, the population in Tiong Bahru tripled, causing it to lose its upper-class status and, instead, turning the once-exclusive estate into a bustling town with local food stalls aplenty — some of which still crowd-pleasers today.

Fast forward nearly 80 years. As rental rates for flats and commercial units in the estate skyrocket over the years, it's given rise to a new wave of artsy, discerning specialty tenants.

PLAIN VANILLA BAKERY

Don't be fooled by the word "plain"; their cupcakes are anything but. The good people of Plain Vanilla Bakery pride themselves in baking good cake — and they sure deliver on their promise. Moist and rich sponge cake topped with finger-licking frosting that isn't too sweet, the cupcakes — especially the Dark Chocolate Ganache and Red Velvet — are quite possibly the best we've tried yet. Not to mention, the bakery is an advocate for the greater good; they avoid non-biodegradable materials in their packaging, using recyclable paper instead.

1D Yong Siak Street, Tel: 6465 5942

THE FRENCH BOOKSHOP

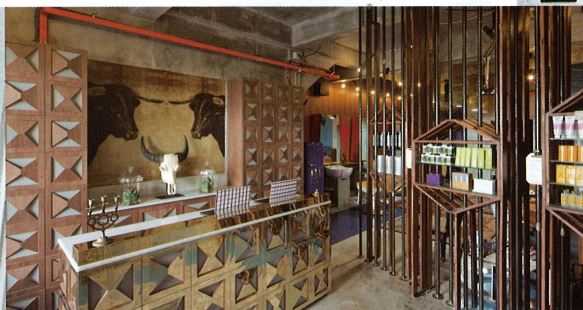
Singapore's only French bookstore, this hidden gem houses around 4,000 books, including a dizzying array of classic French literature. It also hosts events and art exhibitions — the latter, for young artists and photographers to showcase their work.

#01-53C 55 Tiong Bahru Road

WE NEED A HERO

Offering a host of services — from haircuts to hair removal — We Need A Hero is a one-stop men's grooming concept store for the Don Drapers of Singapore. Besides employing some of the finest grooming experts to deliver unparalleled results and service, it also uses skincare and haircare brands like Malin+Goetz and Geo. F. Trumper. We Need A Hero is another project of the Spa Esprit Group (SEG) — the unstoppable team that has helped propel Tiong Bahru to hip-dom with Tiong Bahru Bakery, Open Door Policy and 40 Hands.

#01-86 57 Eng Hoon Street, Tel: 6222 5590



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OPEN DOOR POLICY

Modern bistro fare designed by Tippling Club's Ryan Clift, boutique wines from around the world, and, of course, a dedicated coffee bar by the 40 Hands team — you know a winning formula when you see one. Like its name suggests, customers will be able to see how their meals are prepared through the glass wall that runs down the dining space — which results in slightly cramped seating, although the scrumptious food more than makes up for it.
19 Yong Siak Street, Tel: 6221 9307



NANA & BIRD

A multi-label boutique that stocks fashion and lifestyle products lovingly handpicked by the shop's co-founders, Nana & Bird is a must-visit for those looking to take home rare eclectic finds. It features a wide range of brands from around the world, from Japanese jewellery designer Yuki Mitsuyasu to Singapore's much-recognised fashion label Hansel.

#01-02 79 Chay Yan Street

40 HANDS CAFE

Beloved for its handcrafted specialty coffee, 40 Hands Cafe is tucked away in the quieter corner of Tiong Bahru but no less popular. An advocate for sustainable coffee sourcing, this coffee house only stocks fair trade and direct trade coffee beans.

#01-12 78 Yong Siak Street, Tel: 6225 8545

ONE OLIVE FLORIST

Looking to get a luxury bouquet for a special occasion? Search no further. Nestled within the ever-popular Tiong Bahru estate is this little oasis of fresh greens and blooms, handmade decorative vases, and vintage wares.

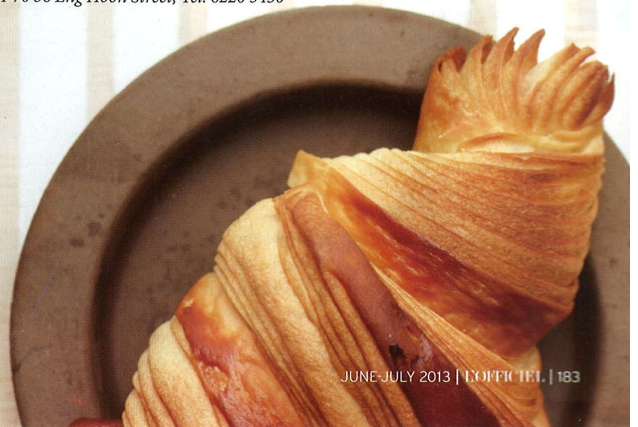
#01-01 61 Seng Poh Lane, Tel: 6779 3543



TIONG BAHRU BAKERY

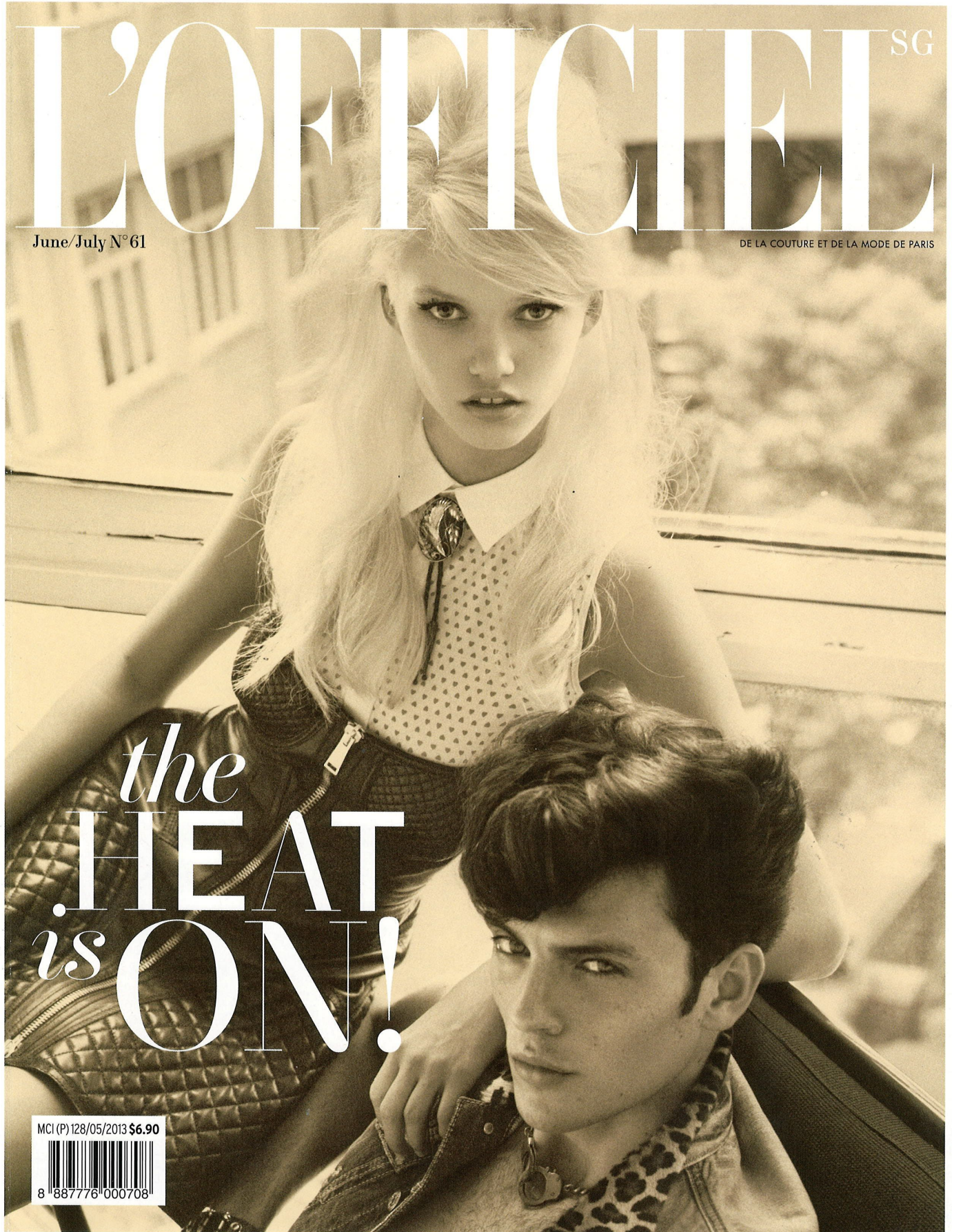
Bread connoisseurs would be no strangers to this artisan bakery. A collaboration between celebrity chef Gontran Cherrier and the SEG, its most raved about creation is the croissant. But — the French treat that warrants a repeat visit to Tiong Bahru Bakery is the kouign amann, a Breton pastry that contains a generous amount of butter and sugar. It's baked to crisp, crackling perfection on the outside, and is rich and buttery soft inside. Tiong Bahru Bakery also delivers exceptional coffee designed by 40 Hands, yet another SEG venture just a few streets away.

#01-70 56 Eng Hoon Street, Tel: 6220 3430



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