



Sister Act

One historic, one modern, Singapore's two Fullerton hotels both offer service and charm. *Teresa Ooi* compares the two.

**FULLERTON HOTEL,
1 FULLERTON SQUARE,
SINGAPORE**

**FULLERTON BAY HOTEL,
80 COLLYER QUAY,
SINGAPORE**



WHY YOU'D CHOOSE THEM

■ One of the best things about the Fullerton Hotel is that it is smack in the heart of Singapore's bustling CBD. The heritage building with imposing Doric columns was completed in 1928 as Singapore's General Post Office. Seventy-three years later it was restored as a grand hotel with 400 rooms retaining its history. It is a short walk from Raffles Place, the Asian Civilisation Museum, the Esplanade and a Mass Rapid Transit station.

In sharp contrast, its nearby sister, Fullerton Bay Hotel (FBH) is contemporary and elegant with gob-smacking views of the water and the Marina Bay Sands twin towers. With only 100 rooms, it attracts chic corporate guests.

WHERE WE STAYED

■ At Fullerton Hotel, we had a Straits Club Quay room overlooking the Singapore River and swimming pool with direct access to the hotel's executive club, The Straits Club. Our room is well appointed, but not spacious (38 square metres) due to heritage restraints. The bathroom has a bath, separate shower and double marble vanity.

The joy of walking out of your room straight to The Straits Club for a complimentary champagne breakfast, afternoon tea or evening canapes and cocktails, is hard to beat. I indulged in my favourite pan-fired turnip cake, a dim sum dish made of shredded Chinese radish and rice flour, washed down with teh tarik – black tea with evaporated milk. Perfect.

When we moved to the FBH, across the road, we stayed in a 58-square-metre Bay View room with balcony. In the evening, you can sit in the Jacuzzi bath and watch sampans (boats) plying the water against the dramatic backdrop of Marina Bay Sands. Simply magical.



WHERE WE ATE

■ We tried the Fullerton Hotel's fine Chinese restaurant, Jade, for dim sum. The steamed enoki mushroom with squid ink and bun with crabmeat were delicious. The wasabi bun with runny salted egg was interesting. Unlike other hotels' noisy dim sum restaurants, the business crowd at Jade was measured and not at all loud and the service was attentive. Breakfast at FBH's French bistro, La Brasserie, is superb with a wide choice of local, Japanese, Chinese and European staples. For lunch, FBH's The Clifford Pier offered Singapore hawker-food favourites such as mee-goreng, char kway teow and rojak, but lacked the breathtaking spice often associated with these dishes. Still the place was humming with tourists and locals, especially during the popular afternoon tea and weekend dim sum brunch.



THE VERDICT

If you enjoy immersing yourself in a bit of history, heritage and some razzmatazz, both hotels are ideal. The grand Fullerton is big on heritage while the Fullerton Bay is just too cool for words. They both are members of Preferred Hotels & Resorts' luxury collections. Service is friendly and helpful. The ambience is refreshingly charming. The local kopi (coffee) and teh tarik (pulled tea) are excellent.

Find out more: A Straits Club Quay room at the Fullerton Hotel is priced from US\$469 a night with access to The Straits Club. A Bay View room at the Fullerton Bay Hotel costs from US\$648 a night including breakfast with complimentary local calls, internet and heritage tours. fullertonhotels.com



WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

■ Start early. Put on your running shoes, shorts and t-shirt and head for a picturesque waterside walk from either hotel to Marina Bay Sands and the Esplanade. With Singapore's humid temperatures, it is best to be out before 7am and back for breakfast before the sun beats down. To stay out of the midday sun, visit the National Gallery or Asian Civilisation Museum, or follow the Fullerton Heritage trail. In the cool of the evening, take a short cab ride to Gardens by the Bay, a man-made outdoor

and indoor garden with a flower dome and cloud forest. You can also see a 1,000-year old olive tree from Spain. At night, you will marvel at the towering super-tree structures that come to life with a spectacular light and sound show. We walked across to MBS to view the Van Cleef & Arpels jewellery exhibition at the Art Science Museum and were bowled over – nothing like exquisitely designed pendants, necklaces, rings and earrings from the old French jewellery house to rekindle a woman's love affair with precious gems. 🌿

