

## ***For immediate reporting***

### **AN OVERVIEW OF THE ISTANA HERITAGE GALLERY**

The Istana, completed in 1869, is a symbol of Singapore's independence and sovereignty. The Istana Heritage Gallery presents the Istana's history and heritage, and a brief account of its transformation from a colonial governor's house to the official residence of the President of the Republic of Singapore. On 14 February 1992, the Istana, together with Sri Temasek, was preserved as a National Monument. These are the two key structures within the 43 hectares of land that constitute the Istana domain.

The total space of the gallery is 254 sqm, and of this, about 240 sqm is usable for the exhibition:

- a. Exhibition panels that provide an account of the Istana's transformation and the important functions it serves today;
- b. Displays of artefacts and State Gifts, and a replica of a signing-in table that is used in state visits;
- c. iPad stations to allow visitors to view digitised guestbooks that complement the information on state visits as well as videos of the grounds of the Istana;
- d. A photo opportunity corner; and
- e. A station for visitors to "DIY" an embossed stamp of the Presidential Crest.

The Gallery is located at Istana Park (35 Orchard Road), which is opposite the Istana, and admission is free.

#### **1. Exhibition Panels**

##### **Panel 1: Sri Temasek**

This panel describes Sri Temasek, which together with the Istana, was preserved as a National Monument. Completed in 1869, Sri Temasek was originally the colonial secretary's house. Its name recalls Singapore's ancient name, *Temasek*, which means "sea town" in Javanese.

##### **Panels 2 and 3: Early Years (1869-1942)**

These panels trace the early years of the Istana, when it was constructed between 1867 and 1869 on a piece of land that used to be a nutmeg plantation.

##### **Panel 4: The War Years (1942-1945)**

This panel recounts the development of the Istana during the Second World War and the experiences of its occupants during that period.

##### **Panel 5: Emblems of Change**

This panel traces the transformation of the Government House into the Istana and the replacement of the colonial symbols with the State Crest, Presidential Standard and Presidential Crest, after Singapore attained full internal self-government status in 1959.

## **Panel 6: Garden within a City**

This panel showcases the rich flora and fauna of the Istana which exemplifies Singapore's Garden City image.

## **Panel 7: Functions of the Istana**

This panel introduces the many functions the Istana performs in connection with the President's multi-faceted roles.

## **2. About the Displays and State Gifts**

The displays at the Gallery include artefacts (some of which are replicas) from the Istana. They are

- The *mandor* (a fibre-glass replica);
- Bust of President Yusof bin Ishak;
- A replica of the table which guests to the Istana sign the guestbook on; and
- A teapot, a set of cup and saucer, and a plate which carry the crest of the Straits Settlements, the royal cypher of King George V or King George VI ("GRI" which stands for Georgius Rex Imperator) and the Presidential Crest respectively.

There is also a selection of State Gifts from various countries including Brunei, China and Malaysia.

## **3. About the Interactive Features**

There are two iPad stations in the Gallery:

- The first iPad station carries the digitised guestbooks which visitors can flip through; and
- The second iPad station carries an interface that will allow visitors to select videos that offer a glimpse of the Istana domain, a preview of the Istana building guided tour and the changing of guards. This interface is designed by Republic Polytechnic.

Visitors can also create their own souvenirs to commemorate their visit to the Istana Heritage Gallery:

- Visitors can take a group photo with the East Wing of the Istana as the background in the photo opportunity corner;
- There is also an activity station where visitors can emboss the Presidential Crest onto the souvenir bookmark.

There are also plans to launch school programmes at the end of the first quarter of 2017, with learning journeys planned for students aged 10 onwards. This programme will be designed to complement the humanities and National Education curriculum.

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## Factsheet for Istana Heritage Gallery

**Size of Gallery:** 254 sqm, and of this, about 240 sqm is usable for the exhibition

**Location:** 35 Orchard Rd, Singapore 238902, Istana Park (directly opposite main gate of the Istana)

**Opening Hours:** Daily from 10 am-6 pm, except Wednesdays when it is closed for maintenance

**Getting there:** Nearest MRT station is Dhoby Ghaut which connects to the Circle Line, Northeast Line and the North South Line. Take Exit C to Istana Park

**Admission charges:** Free

**For general enquiries:** Email [gallery\\_enquiry@istana.gov.sg](mailto:gallery_enquiry@istana.gov.sg)

**For group visits:** Email [gallery\\_enquiry@istana.gov.sg](mailto:gallery_enquiry@istana.gov.sg) at least 2 weeks before the visit. Do also note that the maximum capacity for the gallery is 40-45 visitors at any one time. Visitors may be asked to return at a later timeslot if the gallery is full.

**For guided tour:** There is currently no guided tour of the gallery available.

**Maximum capacity:** 45 pax

**Exhibits for viewing:** Information panels of the Istana's history and heritage, State Gifts, artefacts and artwork. A digitised copy of the Istana guestbook will be made available for viewing on one of the iPad stations.

**Other museums nearby:** National Museum of Singapore (93 Stamford Road, S178897) and the Singapore Art Museum (71 Bras Basah Rd, S189555)

**Nearest amenities:** Nearest dining and washroom facilities are at My Art Space opposite the Istana Heritage Gallery or Plaza Singapura or The Cathay

**Nearest alighting point:** Hotel Innotel along Penang Lane or Plaza Singapura Atrium Wing Porch along Oldham Lane

**Note:** The Istana Heritage Gallery will be officially opened by President Tony Tan Keng Yam on 7 Oct 2016. Members of the public may start visiting the gallery on 8 Oct onwards.

# National Archives of Singapore

### Annex A – Yusof Ishak bust

Artist - Lim Yew Kuan

- On 28 February 1966, in appreciation of Yusof Ishak's interest in the Singapore Arts Society, the latter commissioned a white marble bust of Yusof in suit and tie, which was presented to him at a ceremony held at the Istana.
- It is currently displayed in the East Wing of the Istana, and the room it resides in is consequentially named the "Yusof Room"
- The same artist also sculpted the bust of President Benjamin Sheares, which is in the West Wing of the Istana (hence named the "Sheares Room"). The Gallery will feature a photo of the Sheares bust



Photo credit: MCI

### Annex B - Mandor statue

- The Gallery will display a replica of the Mandor statue, which is also nicknamed the Guardian of the House
- The original statue sits on the grand staircase of the Istana main building, facing the entrance. Members of the public can catch a glimpse of the statue when they visit the building during the Istana Open House.
- It was believed that this statue was sculpted by the convict labourers who constructed the Istana building (1867-1869) and was worshipped as a kind of spiritual benefactor
- The statue originally depicted an Indian man with a moustache and beard but was believed to be painted over in the early 1900s to show a clean shaven Malay man by the predominantly Malay domestic staff
- This hypothesis was corroborated by the fact that a principal gardener then was



Photo credit: MCI

popularly addressed as Mandor (“Overseer” in Malay)

- This statue was discovered by chance in the storeroom, when the Istana underwent restoration in the 1990s, and the underlying paint layers were discovered during its restoration
- The height of the statue is 72.5cm

### Annex C - Istana Harvest

- The Istana is itself a garden within a city and an epitome of Singapore’s Garden City vision. A part of the Gallery will feature this history and role of the Istana.
- In 2015, President Tony Tan and Mrs Tan unveiled a new Spice Garden in the Istana as part of the nation’s celebrations of SG50 and in recognition of the Istana grounds being formerly a nutmeg plantation. Since then, the Istana Butlers have concocted a signature drink, aptly named “The Istana Harvest” by President and Mrs Tan, from spices and fruits found in this garden. The drink is now served to special guests, including foreign dignitaries, when they call on President and Mrs Tan.
- “The Istana Harvest” reflects the Istana’s history as a plantation and connotes idea of hard work and industry which Singapore is associated with.

#### **Ingredients (serves 2)**

200 gm	Roselle calyces
10 gm	Stevia Leaves
50 gm	Young Ginger
3 stalks	Lemongrass
20 ml	Fresh Lime Juice
20 ml	Ginger Ale
4 – 5	Cubes of Ice

Garnish with Lime Wheel and Mint Leaf



Photo credit: President’s Office



**Method**

- Place 200 gm of medium sized Roselle calyces (seeds removed) in a saucepan with 500 ml of water and bring to boil.
  - Strain and remove the calyces after 30 minutes of boiling
- Boil the Stevia leaves in 50ml of water
  - Strain and remove the leaves after 30 minutes of boiling
- Blend the lemongrass and young ginger
- Mix the Roselle, Stevia leaves, lime juice, ginger and lemongrass with ice in a cocktail shaker for 5 – 8 seconds and strain into a highball glass
- Add a splash of Ginger Ale, if necessary
- Garnish with a lime wheel and mint leaf
- Serve cold