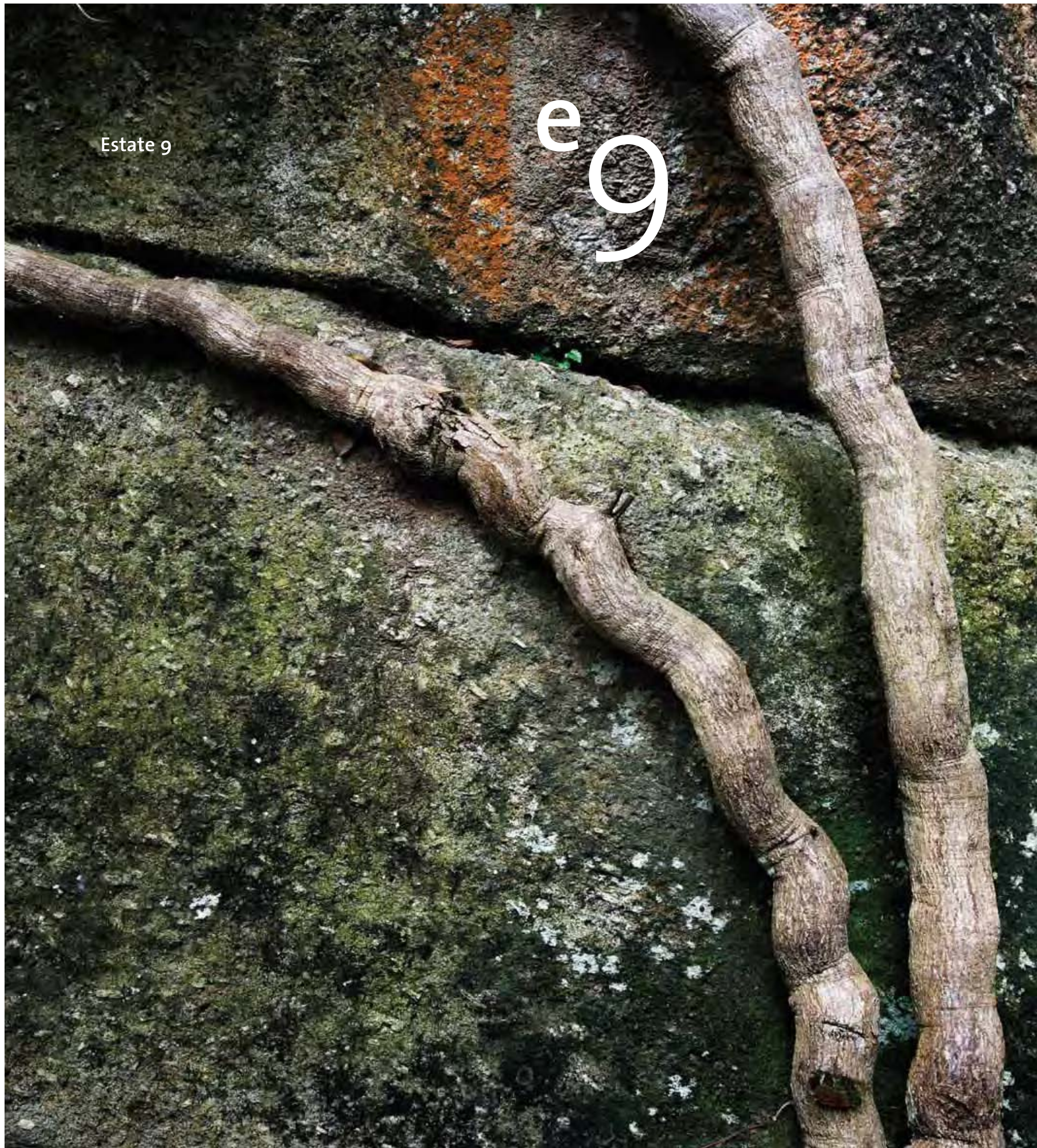
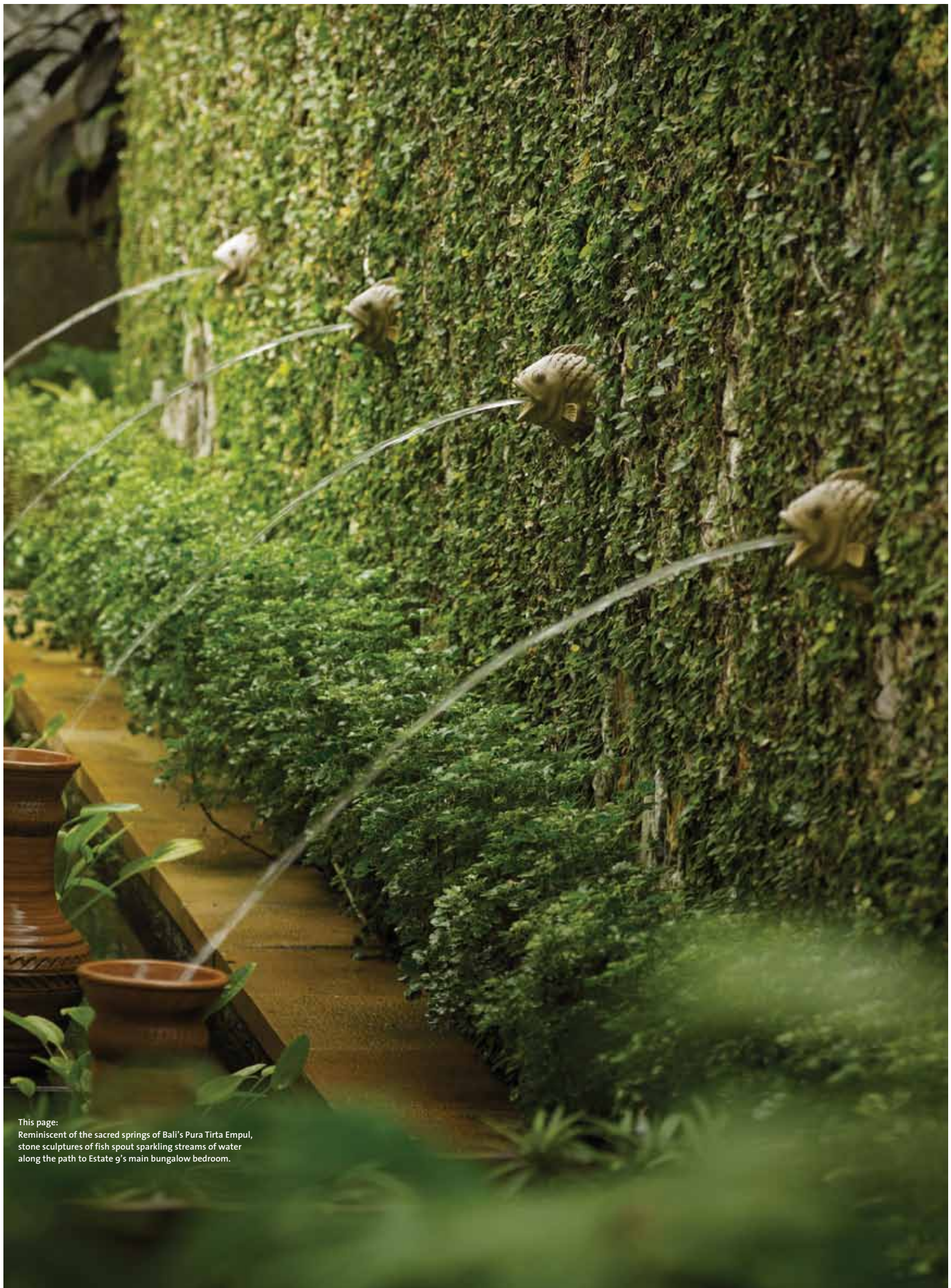




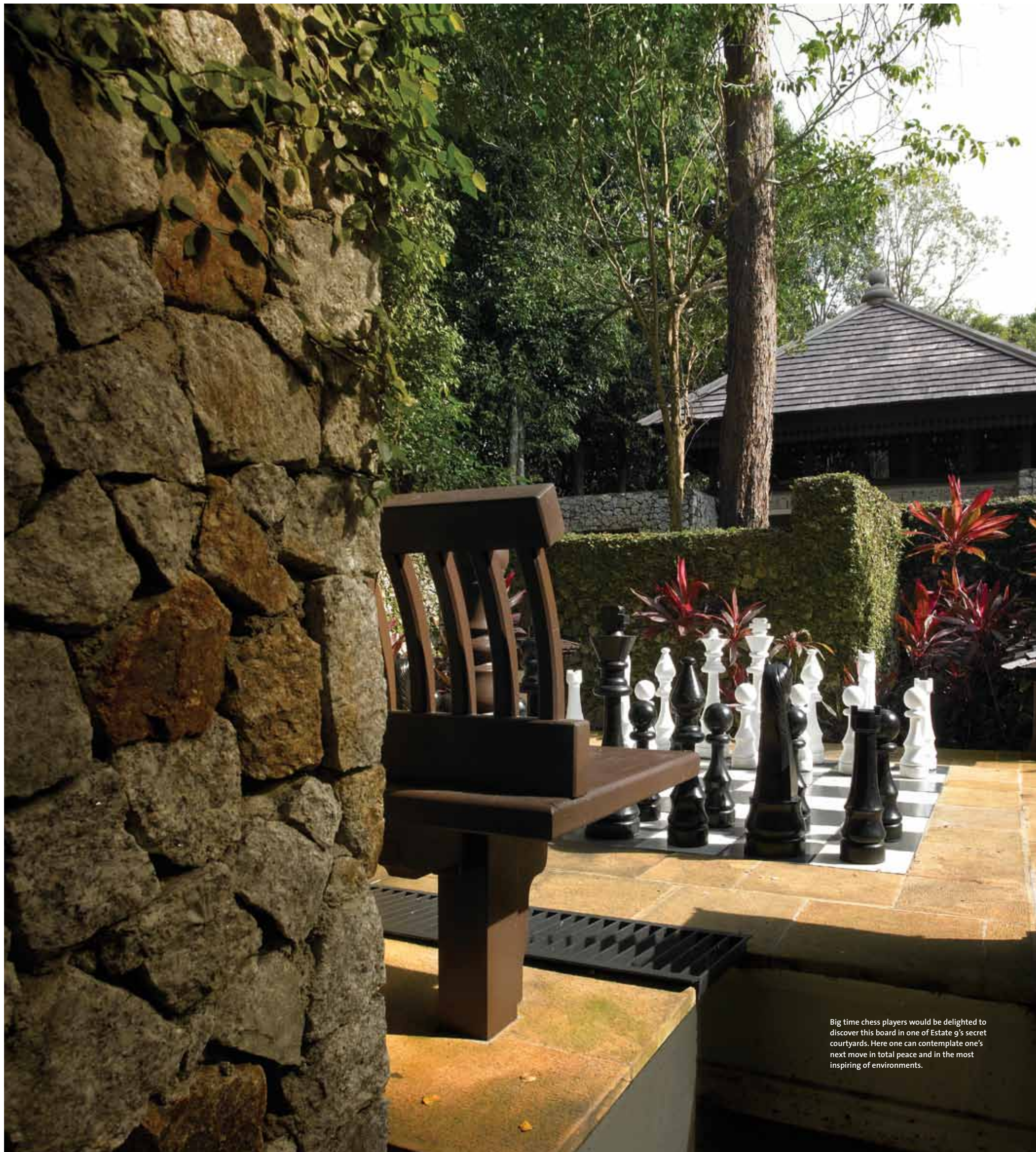
Estate 9

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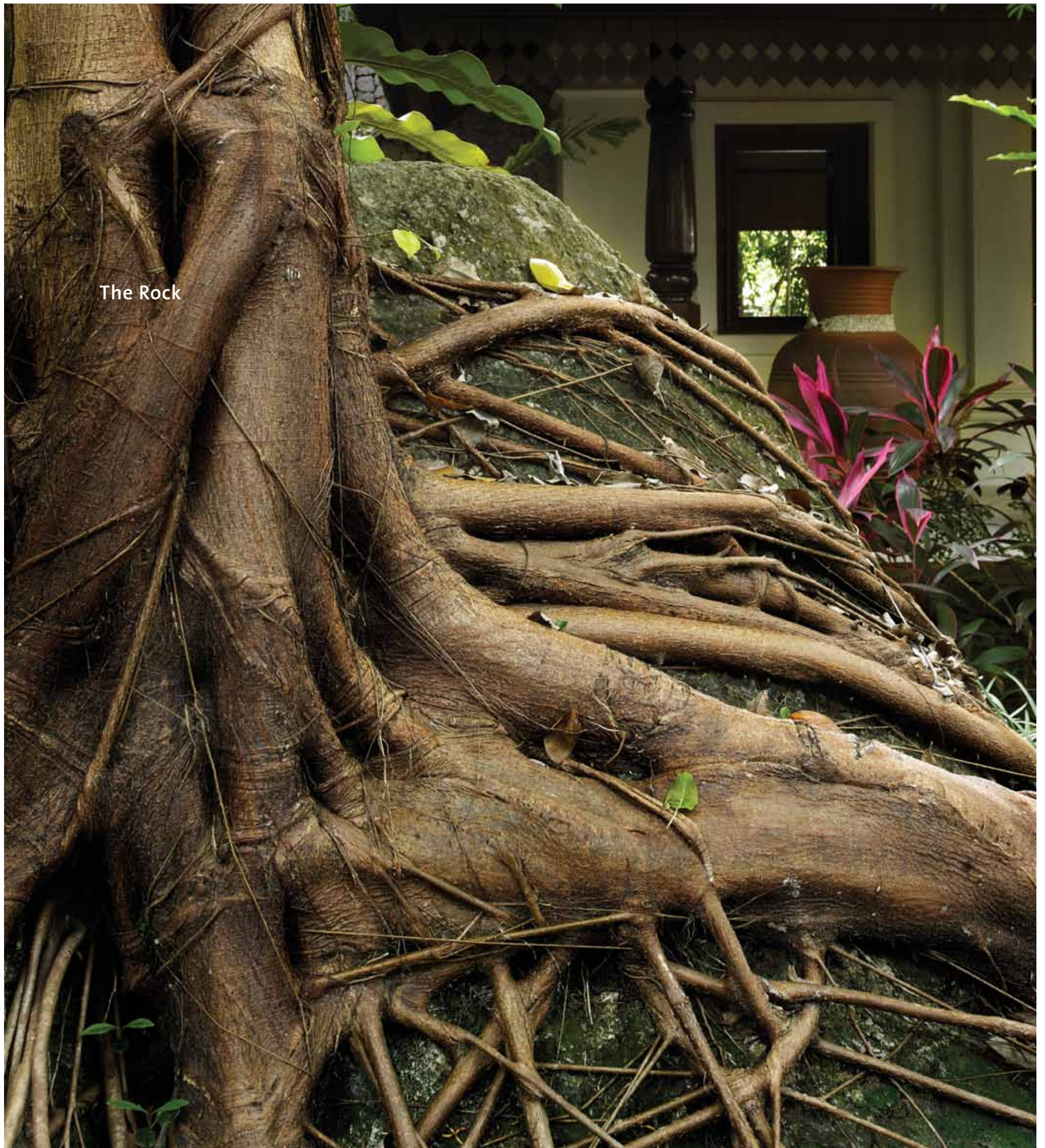


This page:
Reminiscent of the sacred springs of Bali's Pura Tirta Empul, stone sculptures of fish spout sparkling streams of water along the path to Estate 9's main bungalow bedroom.



Big time chess players would be delighted to discover this board in one of Estate g's secret courtyards. Here one can contemplate one's next move in total peace and in the most inspiring of environments.

The Rock



Opposite:
One of the ancient boulders of Estate 9,
in the embrace of a fig tree.

of Ages

genius loci **eg**
NATURAL ROCK GARDEN

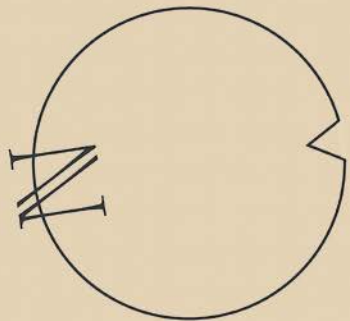
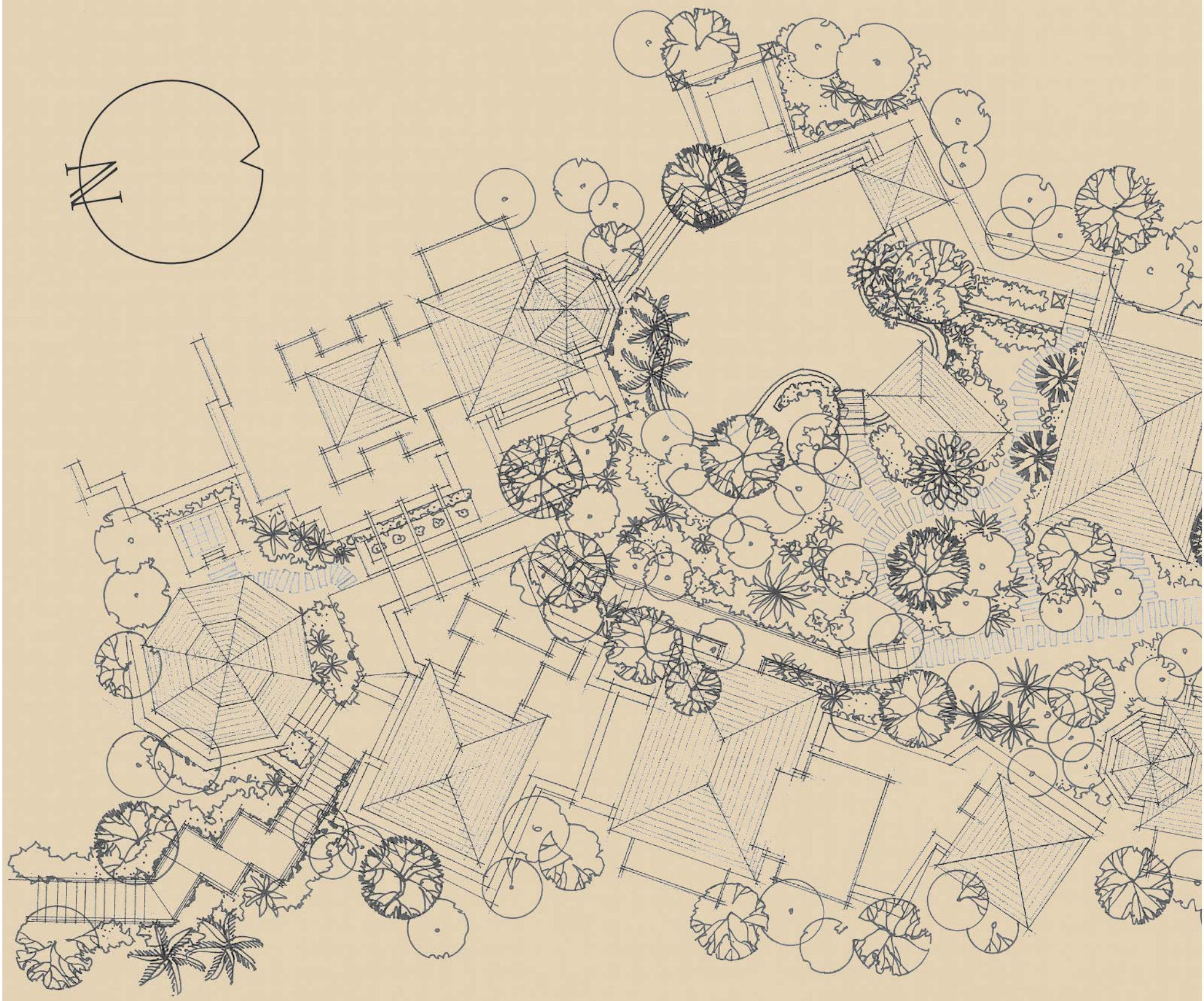
*Rock of ages,
Cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee
– Augustus Montague Toplady –*

Climbing up the soaring sandstone staircase that leads up to the forested hilltop haven of Estate 9, some guests are moved into a hushed reverence, while others feel this deep sense of tranquillity and calm – as if they are entering a holy place. And they are right, for this rain forest is a sacred site, consecrated as a perpetual sanctuary for all of God’s creatures great and small. With its eternal landscapes and protected rain forest, it is a place where one can find healing, hope and space for the soul. The 17th century *haiku* poet Basho Matsuo once sought out sites where one can “feel the truth of old poems” and wrote of places where “orchids breathe incense into butterfly wings”. With its truly ancient woodland, this Estate is reminiscent of that.

Yet however old its rain forest, far greater in age are the massive rocks of Estate 9. Estimated to be 200 million years old, these monoliths are a minute

segment of the 3,500-kilometre chain of granitic rock stretching from Yunnan in south China to the Bangka and Belitung islands in Indonesia.

Although officially referred to as “the rock garden”, Estate 9’s huge boulders are fundamentally different from rock gardens in latter-day Japan or elsewhere in the world, because no human has ever had a hand in its design. Not a single one of these rocks has ever been moved or removed. Each rock has been standing in its exact location for hundreds of millions of years. The placement, size and shape of each rock were decided purely by elemental forces, sculpted by the weathering effects of wind, water, time and temperature. Yet contemplating these rocks may just inspire insights similar to that of Zen rock gardens. When one considers the age of these rocks, one becomes aware of how transient human life is by comparison.

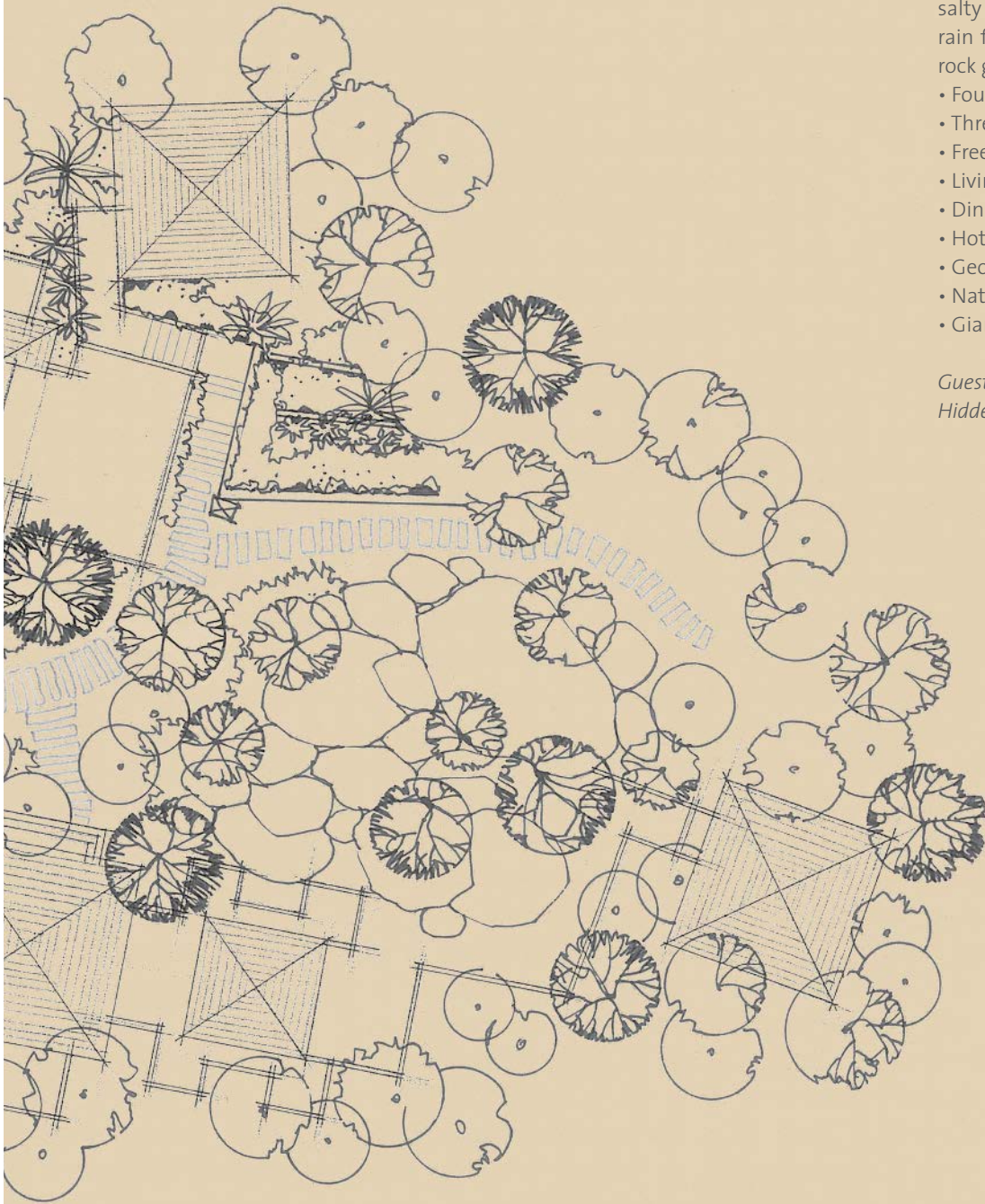


Estate 9

Located at the crest of the western ridge, Estate 9 enjoys a magnificent elevation. Its living and dining pavilions at the northernmost point face the ocean and salty sea breezes, while the balconies of its bungalow bedrooms overlook the rain forest. At the southern end is Estate 9's *genius loci*, an enormous natural rock garden. This Estate features:

- Four bungalow bedrooms
- Three outdoor bath pavilions
- Free-form infinity pool
- Living pavilion
- Dining pavilion
- Hot spa pavilion
- Geometric fish pond
- Natural rock garden
- Giant chess board

Guests that have stayed here include Dato' Michelle Yeoh of "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon".







As the most powerful architectural element on this property, the swimming pool is the central focus of Estate 9's pavilions.





Left:
A partial view of the extensive 'rock garden' of Estate 9. Though apparently barren and lifeless at a cursory glance, closer inspection will reveal a surprising diversity of lichens, mosses, even tiny rare orchids and unusual palms growing on these boulders.

Right:
In Estate 9, as it would be in a rain forest untouched by man, dead leaves are left on the ground upon which they have fallen to continue the natural cycle of composting and to keep precious topsoil intact.

DESIGNED BY MOTHER NATURE

Rock gardens commonly associated today with Zen have come a long way since their early roots in the Tang Dynasty (618-906 AD). The lay person, accustomed to seeing rock gardens with raked gravel 'ripples' around outcroppings of rock arranged in specific symmetry, may not be aware of how deeply Zen design is grounded in nature. As Lafcadio Hearn, an expert on Zen rock gardens who lived from 1850-1904, explains in his book "Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan":

"In order to comprehend the beauty of a Japanese garden, it is necessary to understand – or at least to learn to understand – the beauty of stones. Not of stones quarried by the hand of man, but of stones shaped by nature only. Until you can feel, and keenly feel, that stones have character, that stones have tones and values, the whole artistic meaning of a Japanese garden cannot be revealed to you. Not only is every stone chosen with a view to its particular expressiveness of form, but every stone in the garden or about the premises has its separate and individual name, indicating its purpose or its decorative duty."

By letting go of the craving to impose man's designs upon nature, the result can be said to be uniquely Zen from that perspective. In its pristine state, this rock garden has much to impart to the willing seeker. As part of YTL's commitment to preserve the ancient rain forest's biodiversity, the native plants growing on and around the rocks are also left totally undisturbed. Among them are rare ferns and orchids, as well as palms that can climb up rocks and trees. Thriving on one of the bare rocks is the rare wild orchid *Dendrobium rhodostele* (first described by Henry Ridley in 1893 in "Flora of the Eastern Coast of the Malay Peninsula").





Left:
When dead leaves decay, they form humus, often described as the "life-force" of the soil. In Latin, the word "humus" means "fertile ground".

Right:
Secret sanctuary. Hidden among granite rubble walls luxuriantly clad in green is a tiny door that leads to the main bungalow bedroom of Estate 9.







ORCHIDS AND FERNS THAT BREATHE ONLY AT NIGHT

Virtually every child learns in school that when the sun shines, a plant 'breathes' in carbon dioxide through the stomata on its leaves and converts it into sugars and oxygen, a process called photosynthesis. Amazingly, a significant number of epiphytic ferns as well as various orchids 'breathe' only in the dark coolness of the night. These remarkable plants take in carbon dioxide in these wee hours, storing it as malic and aspartic acids in their tissues. Then when the sun rises, photosynthesis occurs using this stored carbon dioxide to produce oxygen and sugars. This is important as such orchids and ferns grow on rocks and trees where water supply is often insufficient, and 'breathing' at night minimises the loss of water through transpiration. This form of photosynthesis is called Crassulacean Acid Metabolism or CAM. Researchers who have tried chewing on leaves of CAM plants at dawn say that they have an unmistakably sour taste, as a result of these acids. The layperson, however, is strictly advised not to attempt such a stunt.



THE PALM TREE THAT GOES ROCK-CLIMBING

When the word "palm" is mentioned, the image conjured up is that of the type depicted in glossy tourist brochures: the coconut palm. However, in reality, palms are one of the most diverse of plant families, with up to 420 species in Malaysia alone. On Estate 9, the rattan palm (*Daemonorops* sp.) can be seen climbing up the giant boulders of the rock garden and then up taller trees by reaching out with its whip-like climbing apparatus that have extremely sharp, grapnel-like spines. Although these whip-like structures do not look at all like typical palm fronds, they are technically part of this palm tree's leaves.

The *Daemonorops* genus of rattan palms is described in one of Malaysia's earliest and most comprehensive records of plant species, "A Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula", as "almost as useful as those of the *Calamus*" (the *Calamus* being the more commercially exploited type of rattan). This dictionary also noted the local use of *Daemonorops* for the weaving of rattan baskets, tying thatch and bindings for indigenous buildings. The flexible and shiny cane of the rattan palm is exposed when the bases of the leaves rot away or are stripped off. Some *Daemonorops*' fruits produce *jernang*, a kind of kino called "Dragon's blood" in English, which was once used as a natural dye and varnish. When heated, Dragon's blood produces scented benzoic acid, which accounts for its Malay name *kemenyan merah* (red incense). In previous centuries, Burkill notes, European medicine "formerly used Dragon's blood for dysentery and diarrhoea, and as an astringent in tooth-powders".



THE PLANT THAT MOVES FROM TREE TO TREE

The Tarzan character in movies is often depicted swinging from tree to tree on vines (the more accurate term is “lianas”, the high-climbing woody vines found in the tropics). These lianas reach the tops of trees by climbing a series of successively taller trees, draping themselves from tree to tree. Because lianas do not need to expend energy supporting their own weight like normal trees, they channel their energy towards growth, reaching 2-5 metres in length per year. Malaysia’s forests have about 1,000 species of lianas, constituting about 8% of the total flowering plant flora. Despite what is shown in the movies, it is rather unlikely that humans or apes would be able to swing Tarzan-like from tree to tree – as lianas are rooted on the ground and also attached to the tops of trees – not hanging loosely like a rope from tree tops *à la* Hollywood and Disney. Thus it is the liana that moves from tree to tree, not Tarzan.

Even aerial roots of trees which do hang loosely would not be able to support the weight of one man, much less the combined poundage of a Tarzan carrying Jane. What is possible, however, is a “tree sway” rather than a true swing. The tree sway is defined as the way “in which orangutans oscillate a compliant tree trunk with increasing magnitude to bridge a gap” between tree to tree, as described by scientists Thorpe, Crompton and Alexander in their article in *Biology Letters: Biomechanics*, 2007. To his credit, Edgar Rice Burroughs, the creator of “Tarzan”, never wrote of the character swinging either on lianas or vines. For safety reasons, residents of Estate 9 are strongly advised not to attempt swinging from tree to tree on the lianas, however Tarzan-like one’s physique may be.



THE GIANT COUSIN OF YOUR LITTLE HOUSEPLANT

The *Dracaena* is a genus of trees and shrubs found in the warmer parts of the Old World. Looking at the native dark green *Dracaena* tree found on Estate 9, one sees very little resemblance to the ornamental *Dracaena* commonly grown as a house plant today, especially the *Dracaena sandersoniana*. The house plant has been artificially twisted into myriad ridiculous formations, such as spirals, and commonly but mistakenly marketed under the name “Lucky Bamboo” or “Kuanyin’s Bamboo” when it is totally unrelated to the true bamboo. The native *Dracaena* of Estate 9 carries its regal rain forest heritage with dignity, growing into a big tree and producing terminal bunches of glossy round fruits.

Another huge wild tree on Estate 9 with domesticated cousins is the *Garcinea*. Among its better known relatives are the delicious mangosteen fruit (*Garcinea mangostana*) and the *asam gelugor* (*Garcinea atroviridis*).

A rare specimen of the largest orchid in the world, *Grammatophyllum speciosum*, also known as the giant tiger orchid, can be seen growing on the roundabout outside Estate 9. A native of Malaysia, this orchid is “uncommon in nature and rarely found in cultivation”, according to the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens. Capable of growing up to 15 feet in length, the largest single plant on record had a mass of two tons. This species has been found with up to 7,000 flowers, although it is said to bloom only once every two to five years.

The amazing flora and fauna on Estate 9 is but a microcosm of the wider rain forest biodiversity in mainland Asia and worldwide. Mankind does not need to change anything to make this world a better place. All that is needed is for all development to be in harmony with what the Creator has endowed the planet.



This page:
Partially hidden behind one of Estate 9's massive boulders is a bungalow bedroom with a balcony overlooking the forest canopy. Careful orientation of the buildings ensures total privacy for guests while maintaining a sense of freedom and openness.

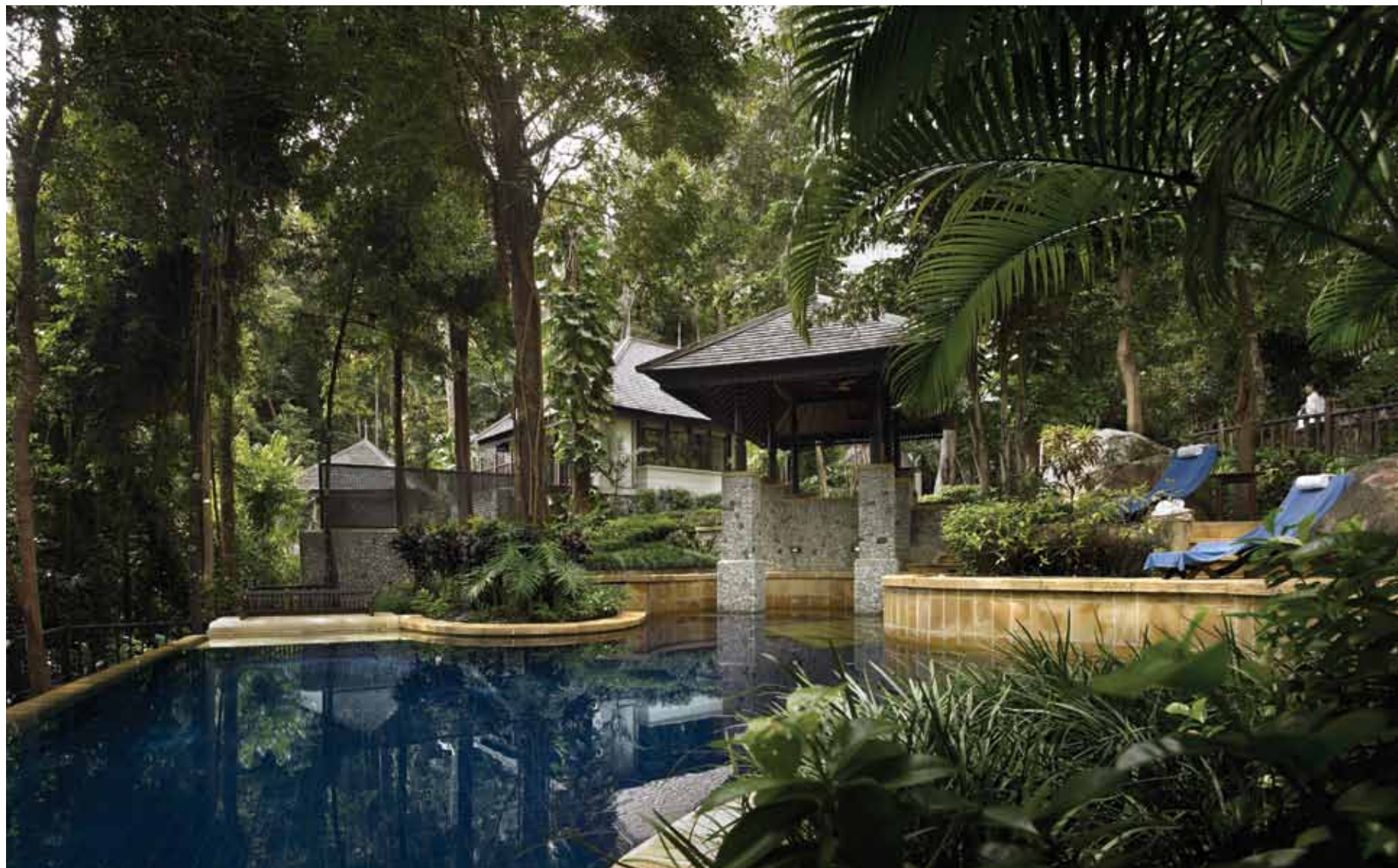
Opposite:
This private staircase through the forest leads from the bungalow bedroom to the secluded bathing pavilion.



This page:
View of the swimming pool and the forest, as seen when one is luxuriating in the *onsen*-style hot spa.

Opposite:
Surrounded by rain forest trees, the pavilion 'rises' from the waters at the far end of the pool like an island.





RESTFUL WATERS OF THE HOT SPA

Perched on a natural high point on the hill beside a huge granite boulder, overlooking the pool and the forest canopy, is the hot spa pavilion of Estate 9. Architecturally, this pavilion is classically Malay Archipelago with its Balinese-style radiating rafters, *belian* wood shingles, and carved *chengal* fascia boards, but with hints of Japanese outdoor *onsen* or hot springs in its layout and the way it is used.

Unlike the other private bath pavilions which have exclusive access from bungalow bedrooms, Estate 9's hot spa is designed to be a communal bath, in the tradition of Japanese *onsen*. The virtue of communal bathing is described as *hadaka no tsukiai* or 'au naturel communion' which breaks down barriers and helps families to bond. Nakedness strips off hierarchical tensions between the generations, as well as between superiors and subordinates. Centrally located on the Estate, overlooking the pool and viewing deck, the hot spa is also a natural gathering place as all the bungalow bedrooms encircle it. As with outdoor *onsen*, the view here is similarly spectacular. The difference is

that the scene is that of the tropical jungle instead of temperate forests, and the air is fresh with the sweet scent of moist equatorial earth, jungle greenery and the song of tropical cicadas. The design and surroundings of this hot spa harness the power of nature to heal mind and body, and also to strengthen ties between family and friends.


In the balmy tropics of Malaysia, the natives bathe daily, even several times a day, in the cool springs and streams, waterfalls and wells. Being far from the volcanic belt, hot springs are very rare in this country. Therefore, the precious few hot spas are reserved for therapeutic purposes. It is traditionally recognised that the swirling waters of hot spas ease stressed muscles, promote the healing of body tissue, and improve blood flow. Metabolism is stimulated, helping the brain to release endorphins, the hormones that elevate one's sensation of well-being. The hot spa of Estate 9 combines the benefits of *onsen* as well as that of native hot springs.






This page:
Designed by the architects to blend seamlessly into the rain forest, the architecture helps guests experience a fuller communion with Nature.

Opposite:
While the furniture and table settings in Estate g's living pavilion are reminiscent of old colonial bungalows of British Malaya, the background is not that of an orderly rubber plantation. Instead it is one of ancient rain forest trees.

A photograph of a dense tropical forest. The foreground is filled with various green plants, including large-leafed tropical foliage and palm fronds. The middle ground shows a thick canopy of trees, and the background features a line of taller trees against a pale, overcast sky. A small, bright full moon is visible in the upper left portion of the sky.

*... Abandon,
as in love or sleep, holds
them to their way, clear,
in the ancient faith: what we need
is here. And we pray, not
for new earth or heaven, but to be
quiet in heart, and in eye
clear. What we need is here.*

– Wendell Berry’s “Sabbath Poem II”, 1995 –

A photograph of a private bathing pavilion nestled in a dense rainforest at night. The pavilion features a traditional-style roof with grey tiles and a white base. The interior is warmly lit, revealing a seating area with cushions and a table. The structure is surrounded by lush tropical vegetation, with large, dark green leaves in the foreground framing the scene. The overall atmosphere is serene and secluded.

While being pampered in Estate 9's private bathing pavilion set in the middle of pristine rain forest, the words of Wendell Berry's *Sabbath Poem* – "What we need is here" – ring especially true.