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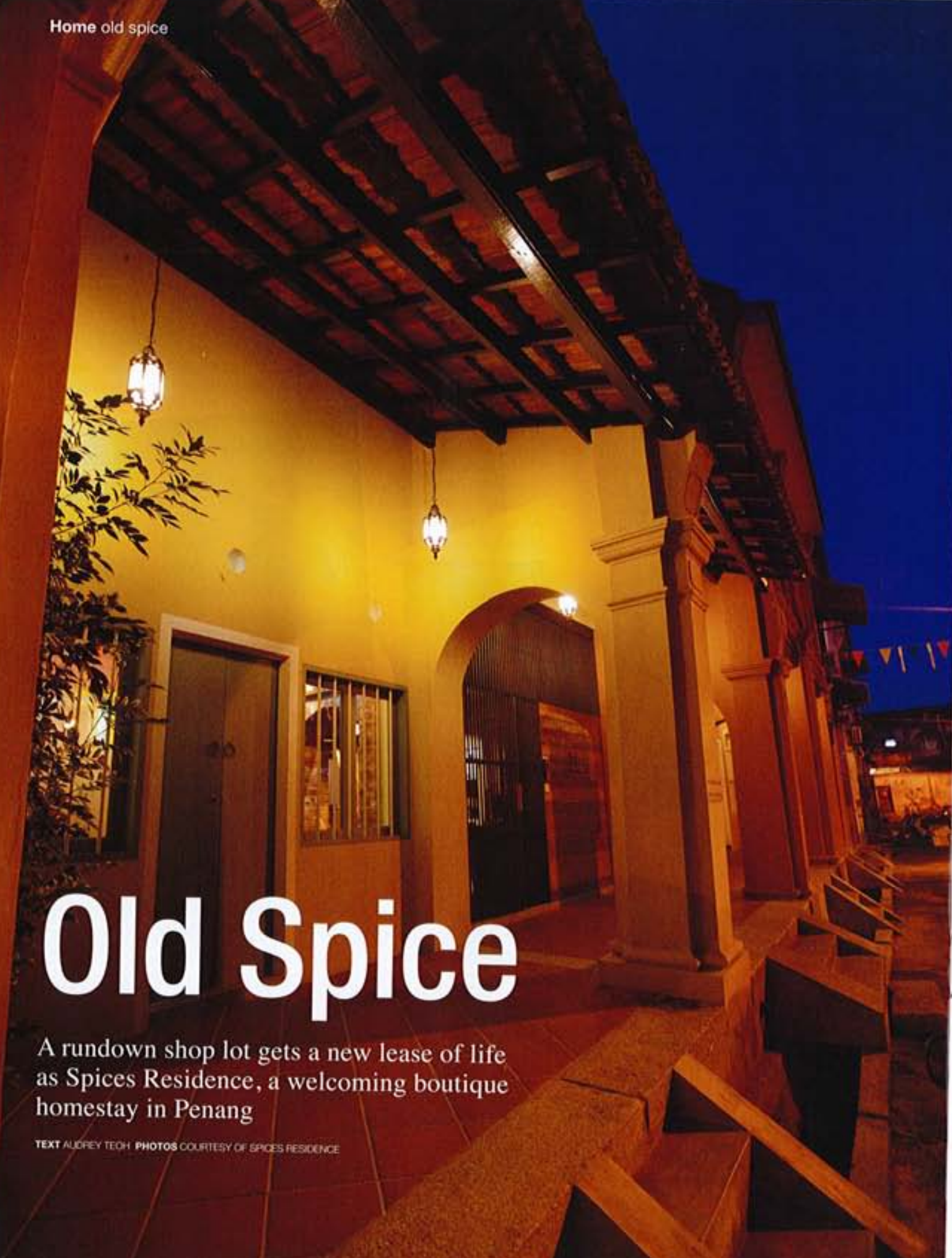


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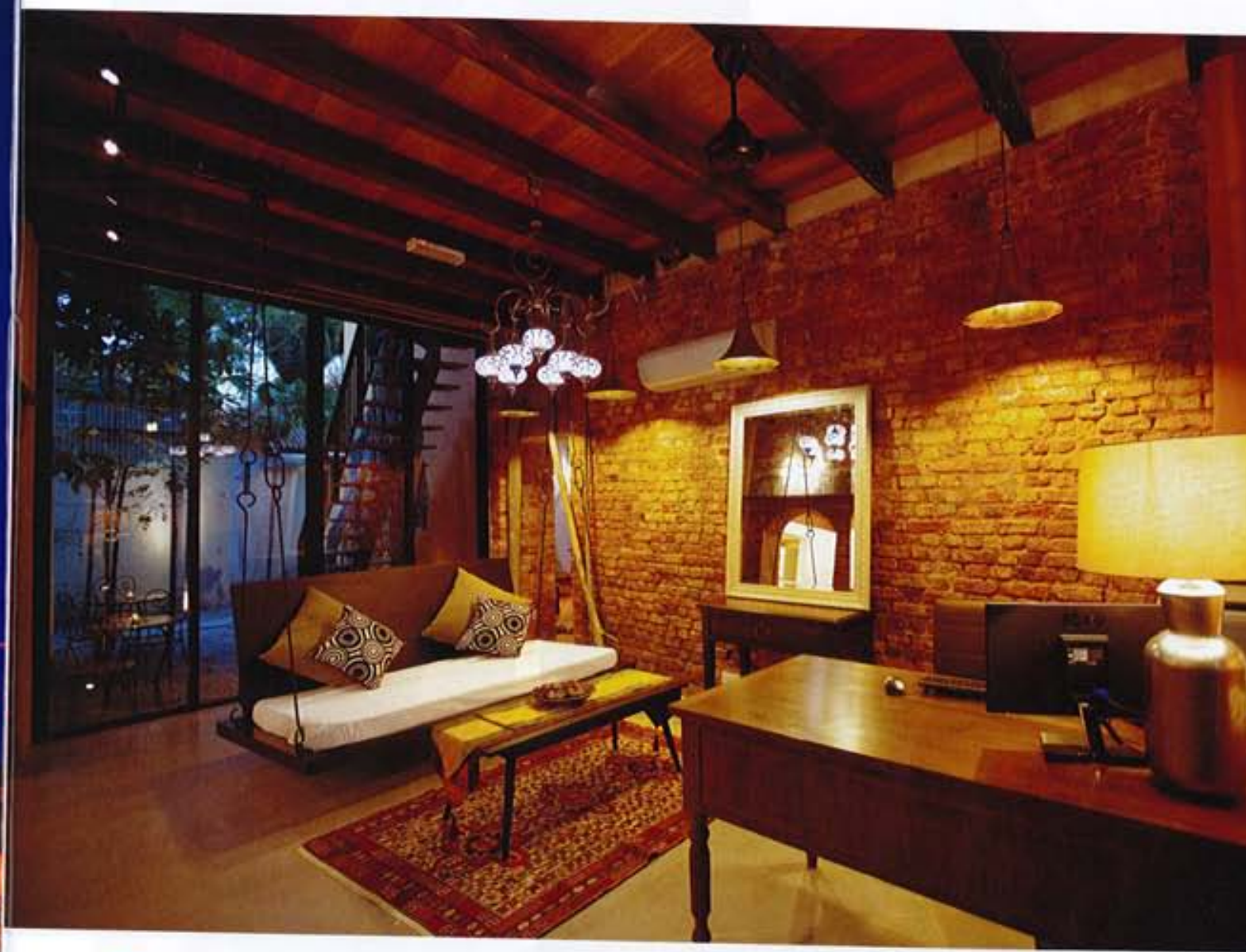
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Old Spice

A rundown shop lot gets a new lease of life as Spices Residence, a welcoming boutique homestay in Penang

TEXT AUDREY TEOH PHOTOS COURTESY OF SPICES RESIDENCE



A bright and cheery citrus-themed façade greets visitors upon arrival at Spices Residence, but few realise what a dramatic change the four shop lots have gone through in recent years. Formerly unoccupied and in deplorable condition, each shop lot measures only 500 sq ft, but is now fully renovated into a cosy and inviting B&B homestay, with ornate façades dating back as far as the early 1970s restored to their original beauty.

Located at Lumut Lane in Georgetown, Penang, Spices Residence occupies four lots – lots 3 and 5 were transformed into living quarters for the owners while lots 7 and 9 now house rooms for short- and long-term guests, reflecting the original function of the lots which once housed pilgrims and traders from the 18th to 20th century.

A spacious lobby featuring warm, multi-toned colours and the rich texture of exposed brickwork invites visitors into the welcoming space. From here, the direct view of the open courtyard at the rear reveals the preserved Bodhi tree with its rich tapestry of roots creeping up one wall – formerly the only resident of the vacant lot 5 – which offers its shade for the courtyard and allows visitors an up-close viewing from the external stairs which leads up to the first level.

Artfully merging the four lots, an archway to the left of the lobby links lots 3 and 5 while on the right, lots 5 and 7 also feature openings on each level, allowing easy connectivity to the hallways that lead to the guest rooms. On the ground floor, units 7 and 9 house an inviting library with a garden view room and two standard rooms with direct access to the

Client: Enchanting Estate Sdn Bhd
 Architect/Conservator: BYG Architecture Sdn Bhd
 Built-up space: 2000 sq ft
 Completed: 2012/2013



RIGHT
Cheery orange and yellow with lime green accents are part of the warm welcome. Although the façade has been restored to its original form, the colours create a contemporary look and feel

BOTTOM
By day or by night, the courtyard with its cosy seating and greenery is a welcoming spot



veranda. Upstairs, two loft suites, each with their own terrace, overlook the Acheen Street mosque at the rear while two more rooms face the front.

All the rooms are named after spices used in popular Penang cuisine – the Double rooms are Turmeric, Paprika and Star Anise, while the Deluxe rooms named Cumin and Clove feature high ceilings with an extra bed on an upper level, accessible by ladder, creating a semi-loft effect. There are also two lofts named Cinnamon and Cardamom, plus one family suite.

Deviating slightly from the conventional Peranakan theme, Spices Residence also features design elements from Moroccan and Indian Muslim influences in the furniture and lighting fixtures,



LEFT
The lovingly maintained Bodhi tree keeps visitors company on their way up the stairs, providing a living piece of history that connects the former state of the lots to its present incarnation

RIGHT
The lounge is a relaxing and comforting space to unwind after a long day of sightseeing

BOTTOM
The library resembles a relaxing reading room, with an inviting exposed brick wall and terracotta tile flooring perfect for lounging with a good book



BELOW
A home away from home, the rooms are welcoming and finished with rich carpeting and simple décor that are reminiscent of earlier eras

RIGHT
Tasteful decor and discreet lighting maintain an elegant feel without overpowering the vintage features



collected from the owners' many travels and creating a unique yet appealing interior style.

Overall, the residence complies with conservation guidelines, with clay tile finishing on the ground floors and timber flooring on the upper levels, and salvaged timber beams are left exposed to highlight the architectural features of the interior. To further protect and preserve the structure, localised areas are strengthened and fibre glass installed to contain wet areas such as additional bathrooms. To maintain a cooling interior, walls are finished with lime plaster for better breathability.

At the rear, the carefully landscaped courtyard and back lanes are a pleasant and cooling escape from the afternoon heat while also providing a refreshing view from the library and garden view room. Like a secret garden, the courtyard at Spices Residence is similarly a delicious getaway reserved for the lucky few. ■