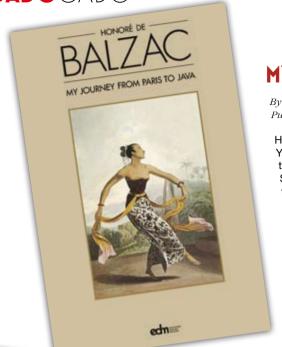


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TROPICAL HOME

BOOKS ABOUT BALI AND INDONESIA

MY JOURNEY FROM PARIS TO JAVA

Ry Honore De Balzac Published by Editions Didier Millet

Honore Balzac never in his lifetime traveled to Java, nor did he pretend to have done so. You'll want to know that from the outset. The writer himself makes this clear enough through mention of such popular imaginary figures as Robinson Crusoe and Sinbad the Sailor as if they were factual rather than fantasy. Rather, what Balzac accomplishes in this short yet compelling travelogue is a sort of anthem to the spirit of imagination and discovery, the will of the dreamer to embrace his dreams in palpable form. "I promised myself," writes Balzac, "that my account of my travels would be coloured by fantasy so that it could be read equally well by scientists as by children, and believed by those who will believe anything incredible." And incredible they are, these sometimes exotic, sometimes humorous sketches of life in the Orient--from the Pohen Upas, the Poison Tree, which can instantly kill anyone who inhales its scent, to the untold beauty of the Javanese woman, curiously white of skin, and with long hair that possesses a magic its own. Written in 1832, arising from the gray background of the Industrial Age, Balzac's Journey to Java transports the reader to an alternative land, where freedom and passion and possibility reign, and where love "... is real fire, it burns."

US\$14.95 www.edmbooks.com Available at all leading bookstores

TROPICAL HOME

INSPIRATIONAL DESIGN IDEAS

By Kim Inglis Photography by Luca Invernizzi Tettoni Published by Tuttle

Whether many of us could ever afford the sumptuous home interiors and exteriors spilled like so many jewels over the glossy pages of Tropical Home is questionable at best. But we can always dream, right?

And maybe that's what finely-done, colourfully-illustrated coffee table books like this are all about. Showcasing homes and design styles from all over Asia, this is a window shopping book to be passed around and admired.

Especially suited to those who bring an experienced palate to the field, Tropical Home advises rather than dictates. Each of the six chapters addresses one room or an exterior, from the finer points of style to purely practical considerations of the fabrics and woods best suited to tropical climate and conditions.

Design in the tropics is all about space and light. It is about fluidity between inner and outer domains, an ongoing flirtation between nature and structure. Not surprising then is the attention given to the garden, the patio, and the verandah, so essential to the flavour of the Orient. "One may make their house a palace of sham," as Mark Twain once said, "or they can make it a home, a refuge." Tropical Home is all about how to achieve the latter, and in this it succeeds quite well.

Rp245.000 Available at Periplus bookstores

NATHANIEĽS NUTMEG

HOW ONE MAN'S COURAGE CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY

By Giles Milton Published by Sceptre

This book has to be one the greatest pieces of historical non-fiction about the Indonesian archipelago ever written. And if you haven't read it yet, you should. It tells the story of Nathaniel Courthope, one of the lesser known of England's devoted soldiers and navigators who made a heroic stand to claim the isle of Run, (the island that would later be exchanged for Manhattan) in the Banda archipelago for the British crown in the early 17th century. Living in extraordinarily harsh conditions he was blockaded by the Dutch on the tiny island and forced to survive on a diet of sago palm "whose pithy trunk could be boiled down into a glutinous, porridge-like starch." In impeccably researched detail, interwoven with maps, engravings and direct quotations from primary sources in the original Elizabethan spelling, the book tells the swashbuckling, and often "harsh and bloody" tale of the Spice Race of the 1500s and 1600s between the European colonial powers to monopolize the trade in the exotic spices of nutmeg, mace and pepper from the east. A must-read for those interested in Indonesian history.

