

JAN/FEB 2015

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TIRED BUT WIRED

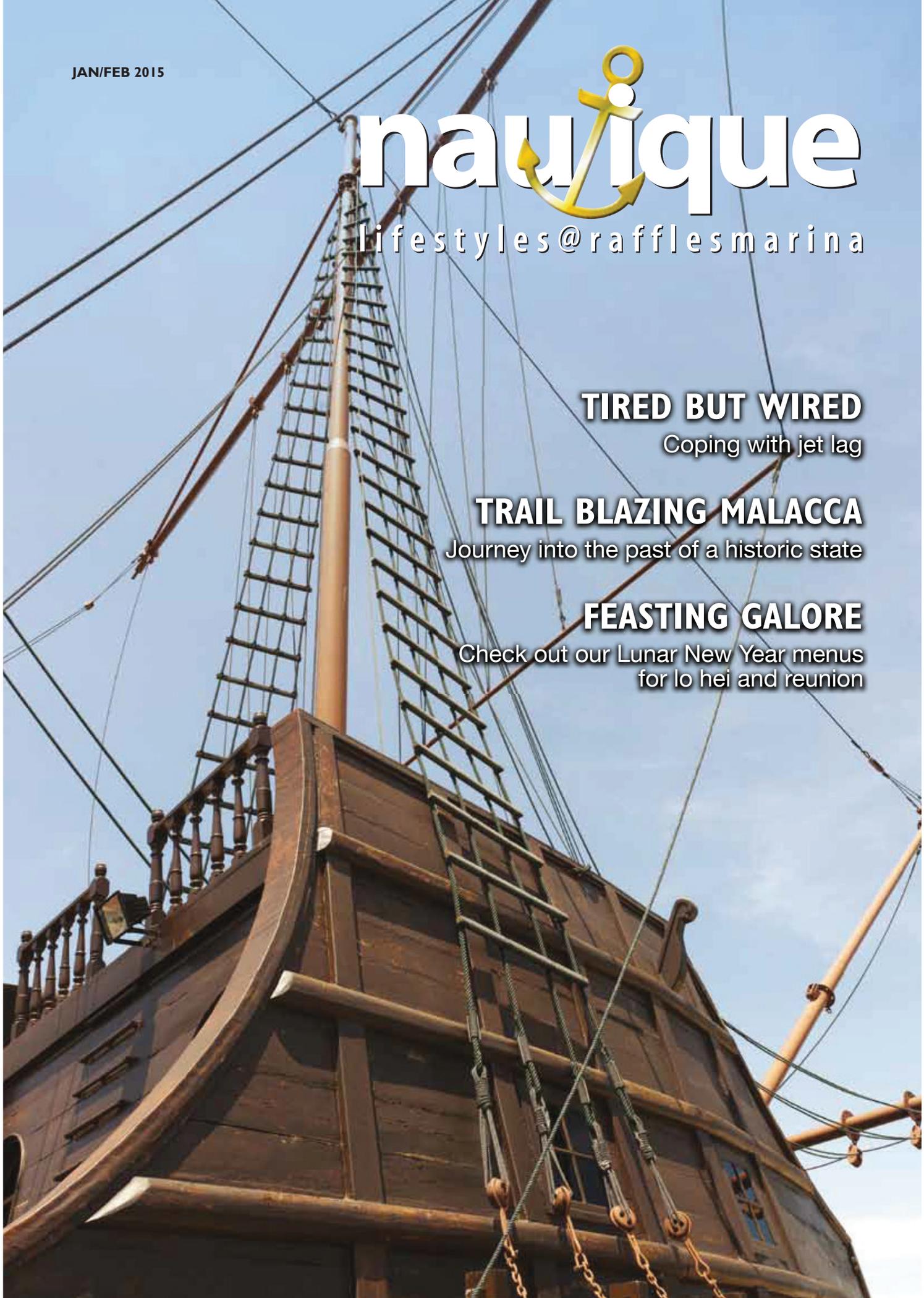
Coping with jet lag

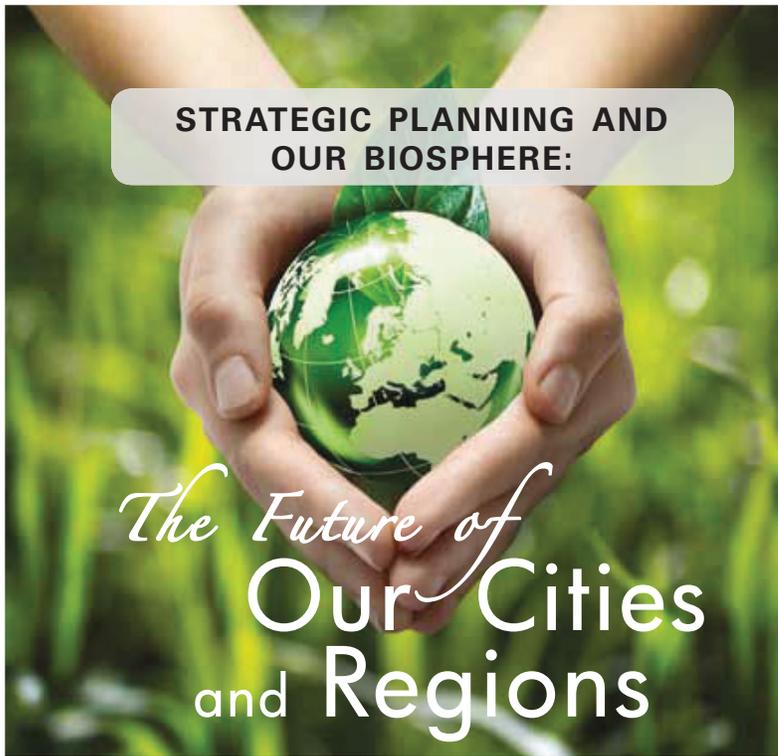
TRAIL BLAZING MALACCA

Journey into the past of a historic state

FEASTING GALORE

Check out our Lunar New Year menus
for lo hei and reunion

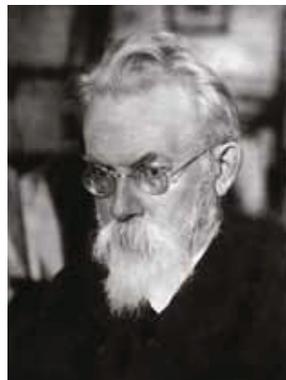




Cynthia Lazaroff, Executive Vice President of Biosphere Foundation, has directed an international campaign to preserve coral reefs – the endangered “rainforests of the sea” – and created biosphere stewardship educational programmes for students from many countries. She was recently invited to address the Russian National Forum on Strategic Planning in Russian Regions and Cities, which took place in October 2014 in St Petersburg, Russia. Her focus was on how to approach urban planning from the perspective of stewardship of the biosphere. Below are excerpts from her text.



Having worked for more than three decades on how we human beings can live peacefully together, and how we can maintain a healthy biosphere, I would like to honour the great visionary scientist Vladimir Vernadsky, who pioneered the concept of the biosphere. In 1944, in his last paper written in Leningrad, Vernadsky wrote of what he saw back then as a profound new state. He wrote that humanity as a whole would become a new and powerful geological entity able to transform the planet.



The new period of which Vernadsky spoke is now referred to as the Anthropocene, beginning around 1800 with the Industrial Revolution, when we started to alter significantly the carbon content of the atmosphere. The fact that humanity is now exerting the dominant influence on climate and environment is evident everywhere, mostly in negative changes: from climate change, chemical pollution, ocean acidification and other human-created problems that threaten the health and stability of our biosphere.

To bring positive change, we must live our lives with the conscious awareness that our Earth is a spaceship; and see our cities, our regions and our planet as a closed loop. Every decision you and I make, every act we take, will have

a positive or negative impact on the future of life on Earth. What we do to the Earth, we do to ourselves.

Thus we see the critical importance of strategic planning in our regions and cities throughout the world. We also see the critical importance of collaboration and cooperation of all peoples for the good of the whole of humankind. At this time in Russian-American relations, I and a multitude of other Americans and Russians, hear a call to find ways to rise above current political rhetoric, to find agreement so that we can work together to respond to the greater long-term problems facing all of us, facing our biosphere.

May we rise to this great historical challenge. In the words of one of my all-time heroes, Nelson Mandela: ***“Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation.”*** and ***“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”***



May his words live as inspiration to all of us around the world to rise to the challenge of transcending political rhetoric, making people-to-people connections, rediscovering our common interests and joining together to meet the truly daunting challenges facing our biosphere, facing us.

Please join us online at www.biospherefoundation.org