

WHEN OLD MEETS NEW

THEY MIGHT STAND ALONGSIDE TRENDY MALLS, BUT CLEMENTI'S TRADITIONAL SHOPS BOAST A UNIQUE CHARM AND A LOYAL CLIENTELE.

Walking around Clementi easily brings to light the many new amenities that have sprung up in its 40-year history, among them the five-storey Clementi Mall and Clementi 321. But for many of its long-time residents, nothing comes close to the heartland shops that dot the estate.

The charm of these mom-and-pop shops even attracts younger

residents, who flock to them citing their nostalgic appeal. "There's something warm and comforting about buying treats from an old-school bakery," says Mr Justin Tan, 25, a student who has lived in Clementi since he was a teenager.

So step back in time with our tour of shops that have become a staple of the area — some of them have been around for more than 20 years!

1 Albert Lee Locksmith

Blk 502A West Coast Drive #01-318

> Founded in 1984

It is almost impossible to miss Mr Albert Lee's shop as one navigates the "maze" at 502 Ayer Rajah Market. Mr Lee's mastery of all-things keys has made him a legend of sorts among some older residents, who fondly recall tales of how Mr Lee rescued them from being locked out of their homes.



2 Teo Seng Heng Sundry Goods Kiosk

Blk 503A West Coast Drive #01-324

> Founded in 1981

A stone's throw away from Ayer Rajah Food Centre, Mr Teo Seng Heng's provision store seems to be the go-to shop where many seniors would pick up their daily newspaper before proceeding to tuck into their breakfast. It's a tradition that's still going strong more than 35 years after Mr Teo set up the shop. Whether it's an emergency carton of coconut milk for *nasi lemak* or a packet of chips to beat the Saturday night munchies, Mr Teo sells it all.



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THERE'S SOMETHING WARM AND COMFORTING ABOUT BUYING TREATS FROM AN OLD-SCHOOL BAKERY.

Mr Justin Tan, 25, student



3 Balmoral Bakery

Blk 105 Clementi St 12 #01-06

> Founded in 1985

A favourite of any resident with a sweet tooth, Balmoral Bakery serves up treats for every shade of foodie: cupcakes for those hankering for an Instagram-ready dessert and hearty chicken pies for customers yearning for a taste of their childhood. Mr Kenneth Lew, 34, belongs to the latter group. "Remember teas with your aunties, lace paper doilies, bone china cups and fans whirring on humid afternoons?" he says, reminiscing the years gone by. "Well, Balmoral Bakery makes cakes that remind you of just that."



4 Yi Chiah Tailoring & Dressmaking Institute

Blk 354 Clementi Ave 2 #01-215

> *Founded in 1980*

Finding the perfect outfit for a special occasion these days simply requires a keen eye, a few clicks, and a credit or debit card. But sometimes, what is delivered is not what the product promises to be. Wouldn't it be great if you could just create the outfit yourself? Such skills can be picked up at tailoring and dressmaking schools such as Yi Chiah Institute, which continues to run courses to this day.



5 Ban Soon Sewing Machine

Blk 431 Clementi Ave 3 #01-328

> *Founded in 1980*

And if you're going to sew, you will most certainly need a sewing machine and supplies. As its name implies, Ban Soon Sewing Machine sells a wide range of sewing machines — from the very basic to even the industrial kinds with advanced embroidery technology. The shop also provides services such as repair, trade-in and maintenance support for your sewing machines. Not quite sure what sewing machine to get? The friendly elderly couple who run the shop are ever-ready with advice and tips.



6 Clementi Kian Seng Fashion Textile

Blk 442 Clementi Ave 3 #01-113

> *Founded in 1980*

Don't be fooled by the old-school facade of this textile seller. A retailer of everything from curtains to blinds to wallpapers, it's a shop that certainly knows how to keep up with the times. The goods here are sold by folks who have a wealth of experience, so don't hesitate to ask if you're unsure whether a curtain matches your new wall or window type. Like most heartland shopkeepers, they're more than happy to share their knowledge.

CLEMENTI TOWN



DID YOU KNOW?

Clementi was named after **Sir Cecil Clementi Smith**, who was the first British High Commissioner of the Straits Settlements.

Source: National Library Board

