



FOREWORD

Previous books on the Istana have documented its history, architecture and greenery. This book provides readers with insights into Istana from the perspectives of the people who passed through its gates.

The Istana story began as a private residence for the British Colonial Governors in the mid-1800s, but it was in the last 50 years that the Istana grounds and buildings went through the greatest change.

Physically, the Istana's buildings and facilities were enhanced to create stately and functional spaces for its growing numbers of local and international guests. The Istana's 41-hectare grounds bloomed into a sanctuary of flora and fauna befitting of Singapore's reputation as a City in a Garden.

Though the Istana is the preferred venue to host state ceremonies and diplomatic functions, Singaporeans from all walks of life are welcomed. Tea receptions for respected professions such as teachers, nurses and social workers have become a norm. Artists, designers, and sportsmen and women celebrate their achievements here. Thousands of visitors enjoy the heritage and greenery of Istana during Istana Open Houses, which has also become a platform for school bands and community arts groups to perform for the public.

As Singapore celebrates its Golden Jubilee this year, "Our Istana through the Years" serves to commemorate this significant milestone in our young nation's history by contributing to the rich repository of SG50 material which documents Singapore's progress in various areas over 50 years of nation building.

I hope that Singaporeans will continue to enjoy our Istana in the next 50 years as Singapore marches toward SG100.

Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam
President of the Republic of Singapore