



Artist in residence: Hoe relaxing at the back courtyard of the fully-restored 120-year-old house turned shop in Malacca. — A. MALEX YAHAYA / The Star

Housing art in a heritage home

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Artist blends love for history and paintings

By **LEE YUK PENG**

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MALACCA: He is an artist and loves history.

So Hoe Kok Yong is very much at home in the 120-year-old house at 70, Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock. The 48-year-old sells his art, antique furniture, souvenir items, paintings, garden decorations and design items at aptly named Malaqa House Museum.

The house won a heritage award from Badan Warisan Malaysia in 2000.

Besides being converted into a shop, it is now a privately-owned museum which opens seven days a week from 10am to 6pm.

"I love this house very much. I like the design of the door and the wood used to build the house," he said.

"There is also a well which is still functioning. There is no problem when there is a water cut or during a fire," he said.

Hoe, a former art editor of *Sin Chew Daily*, is renting the shophouse from its Singaporean owner Sim Juek Wah, who bought it in the 1990s from one of the children of Tay Eik Seng, the previous owner.

He said Sim, who had restored the



Work of art: The Malaqa House Museum is a resplendent example of a well-kept and much-loved heritage building.

house to its original design, had intended to turn the house into a hotel.

When the plan did not succeed, Hoe rented it with the intention of opening an art gallery.

On Monday, Tay Kwai Neo, one of

Eik Seng's granddaughters, visited the shophouse, after 40 years.

"I used to dream of this house, so decided to visit it again," said Kwai Neo, 51, who spotted a photo of her grandfather on one of the walls of her former home.