

WHAT I'VE LEARNED	Interviewed by Shermian Lim, December 16, 2014	Photographed by Marcus Wong
<h1>Henry Golding</h1>		
Travel host and presenter, 27, Singapore		

Words that come to mind when someone mentions Great Britain are the royal family, weather, pine mash and posh people. [laughs] **I still get** thrust into that category of model-slash-presenter, which I’m not. I’m a travel presenter. **When we finished the 45 days** [of filming in Japan for *Welcome to the Railworld Japan*], we realised that the show had evolved from what it had been. We saw the juxtaposition of how I was back in the first season and how I am now. It’s definitely been a process... I don’t want to say ageing—evolving! **I’ve tried to imagine** what it would be like if I lived my life here. There’s one guy in my mother’s longhouse who’s half-Dutch, half-Iban, and he’s about one or two years older than me. Our lives are so different. Sadly, his dad left him and his mum behind. **My first job** was in hairdressing. **Surprisingly**, I haven’t travelled much around the UK. When you live in London, you live in this bubble—you think, “It’s the best place in the world and I don’t need to go anywhere else!” You literally have everything on your doorstep. **I never leave home** without a few good-luck amulets from family and friends that I’ve collected over the years. **Summers in the UK** are always on one end of the spectrum or the other—it could be amazingly crap, like always gloomy and raining, or it could be like a lush Indian summer where it’s just beautiful and magical to go for walks and berry-picking in the countryside. **I’ve always liked** the Southwest, like Cornwall, where there’s a lot of countryside and beautiful coastline. **Ignorance** is one of my pet peeves. **We’ve got a long way to go** until it’s a country that can be proud of its successes as well as its past. We’re at a critical pivot point, and who knows which way it’s gonna go. **I love cats.** Near our HDB flat in Singapore, there is a ridiculous amount of alley cats. I have names for all of them. They’re so pampered by these eight or nine old ladies that come to feed them every single day. Imagine being fed eight or nine times a day. **The Japanese are so perfect** at planning that everything actually goes according to plan. Being thrust from our Southeast Asian culture to their culture, sometimes we’re like, “What’s going on?” Nothing ever goes wrong. **If you want to disconnect**, it’s easy. Leave your phone at home when you go out. Just exist to experience. **The amount of times** I’ve tried to learn Bahasa as an adult hasn’t worked out very well. That sucks. **Singapore** is where I live because it’s a bit easier to relax. In Malaysia, we have restrictions and censorship that could land you in jail for sedition. **When I first moved** over in 2010, I was going back and forth from Malaysia. It was really hard for me to adjust—I was so anti-Singapore—and I was all about Malaysia. Then I realised, “Why the hate?” I really like it now. **Pine mash** is like *nasi lemak* for the Brits. It’s comfort food. It’s like an East London thing where you have a meat pie, the mash and liquor—which is just gravy without alcohol. In the East End, you usually have jellied eels as well, but I don’t go for that. It’s a bit strange. **The world** is a lot bigger than the small problems that you get yourself down about. Think of the bigger picture. **I’m a reasonably private person.** I get very flustered when it comes to what goes with the territory of being on television. **The art** of filming and storytelling through video—the production side of it is something I really enjoy doing. I’ve started a production house in KL, and we’ll be growing it. **One of my travel host duties** took me to Gunung Tahan—that stupid mountain. [laughs] We decided to climb it for five days and four nights, not giving a crap about how sweaty or dirty or wet or muddy we were. All we had was sheer determination to push us along to the next stop. The trip was one of my favourite moments in travel hosting so far. The irony is that my producer had to really talk me into doing it! **People** who are proud of their religion are usually very proud of their country and what their ancestors have done. **Religion shouldn’t** be imposed on people. It should be a choice. Live harmoniously. 🇲🇾

