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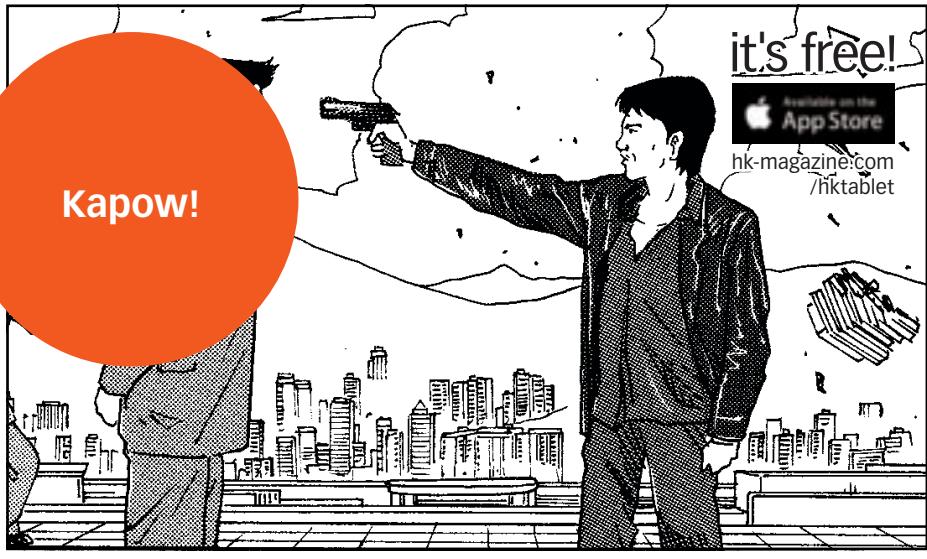
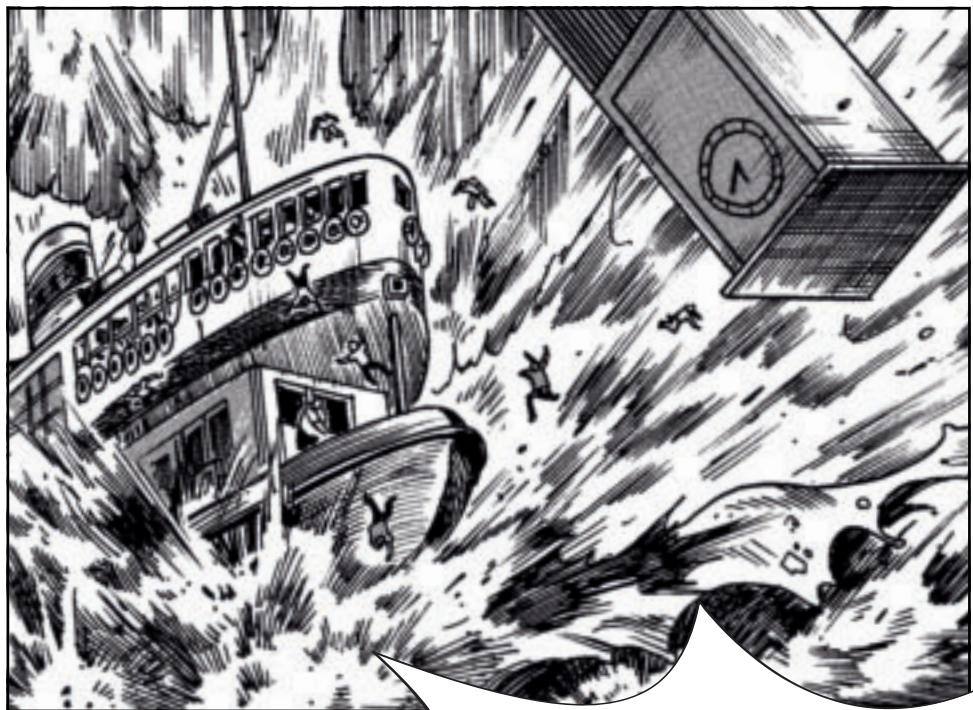
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The Cheaters' Database

Affair-friendly dating website Ashley Madison was hacked this week, with the antagonists threatening to leak the identities of the site's infidelity-prone users. We've got an early glimpse of the database, and you'd be surprised to hear who's casting about for a little bit on the side.

Name: CY Leung

Looking for: A strong, independent leader of a massive nation who can dominate me and tell me what a good boy I am when I do naughty things.



About me: I'm no stranger to sneaking around behind people's backs, which makes me the perfect partner for you. No external forces or fatties.

Name: Jasper Tsang

Looking for: The strong, silent type.

About me: This is really difficult for me, because loyalty is the most important thing in my life. However, I'm desperate to get away from that shrill, shrewish harpy who's constantly needling me for everything I do wrong. His name is Long Hair.



Name: Li Ka-shing

Looking for: A like-minded person to share in long walks on moonlit beaches and luxury property development.

About me: I'm a self-made man just looking for someone to share my dreams with. Must like multimillion dollar developments, hobnobbing with the elite and the words "Mister Li, you're so talented and auspicious."



No timewasters or Cecil Chao.

Name: John Tsang

Looking for: An experienced gold-digger to make my wildest dreams come true.

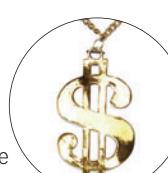
About me: I signed up to this site because Regina told me that it was full of gold-diggers. I am a 64-year-old Financial Secretary currently seeking miners experienced in extracting precious metals from the earth in order to add to my ever-increasing horde of gold and riches. No fatties.



Name: Cecil Chao

Looking for: Handsome, rich men who look like a young Cecil Chao.

About me: I'm a multimillionaire playboy who doesn't need to arrange illicit liaisons to get laid. I just want to find a nice man for my daughter.



Name: Carrie Lam

Looking for: A fun-loving government official for some no-strings-attached fun.

About me: I just want to spend some time with someone who isn't CY Leung. Please?



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Editor Adam White
Features Editor Kate Springer
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Meeting the SAR's best comics artists



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ESCAPE ROUTES

Go see some pandas. Go on, git



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Serving you softly with this cone, serving you softly

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DISH

Serving you softly with this cone, serving you softly



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Are you hip enough for Mitte's East Berlin cool?

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OPEN BAR

Are you hip enough for Mitte's East Berlin cool?



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We meet the "Father of Shrek" Raman Hui

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FIRST PERSON

We meet the "Father of Shrek" Raman Hui

MAILBAG

Mr. Know-It-All's Guide to Life

Dear Mr. Know-It-All,

Can you explain to me, in simple terms, what happened to China's stock market earlier in the month? – Jordan Gecko

Put simply: the stock market crashed, and the CCP used every dirty trick in the book to try and save it.

You can blame two interrelated things: A hugely overvalued stock market, and what's called "margin financing," or using borrowed money to buy securities. Here's how it works: An investor borrows money from a broker to buy stocks. He puts down a deposit—the margin—as collateral. If the investor's chosen stocks plunge, the broker issues a "margin call" and the investor has to pump in more money to cover those losses, or lose his stock. Basically if you do well, you do very well. If you lose, you lose very big. And if an unexpected margin call comes in, the effect can snowball and crash a market.

Why does it matter for China? Well, on the mainland this form of financing was authorized in 2010. By 2013 the practice was open to all comers, rich or poor. A disproportionate amount of China's stock markets—80-90 percent of daily turnover—is formed by domestic "retail investors," speculating members of the public, as opposed to big money institutions. These are the investors who piled in to boost the market. Despite a slowing Chinese economy, share prices rose 150 percent in the last year. And at its peak, margin financing reached RMB2.2 trillion—a ridiculously high 3.5 percent of China's GDP. It was a huge bubble, and bubbles only do one thing: burst.

Problems arose when prices began to fall and the margin calls came in. Scared of the stock slide, the Chinese central bank slashed interest rates to pump more money into the economy—standard cooling measures. It did nothing, and so the government ordered brokerages to buy shares to buoy up the ailing market, and

pledge not to sell their own stock.

But prices kept dropping, falling by 30 percent and wiping out an incomprehensible US\$3.5 trillion: that's more than the Indian economy. Among a raft of other measures China's regulators decided that the best way to stop the market from plummeting was to make it easier to borrow money to buy shares, and it waived regulations designed to protect investors: it even allowed people to put up their own homes as collateral for loans. Thankfully, without confidence in the market, the public stayed away.

And then the government went all-out. It forced about half of the market's 2,800 listed companies to suspend trading. It banned major shareholders from selling shares for six months, and ordered companies—as well as staff and management—to buy back their own shares. As if that wasn't enough, the Ministry of Public Security announced that it would crack down on "malicious" short selling which got in the way of the government's stimulus efforts. In other words: Get in our way, and we will take you down.

The freefall, at least for now, seems to be under control. China seems to have halted the nosedive. But it's come at a considerable cost. The country's heavy-handed approach has shattered investor confidence. International markets have grown shy of China's strong-arm tactics, while inside China mom-and-pop investors have had their buy-low, sell-high dreams shattered. China's market had been heading towards a more transparent, international-facing model. But this latest move has thrown a big red spanner in the works. With money subject not to the whims of the market, but to the whims of the CCP, the mainland's markets may not have stopped sliding yet.

Mr. Know-It-All answers your questions and quells your urban concerns. Send queries, troubles or problems to mrkia@hkmagmedia.com.

#PrivateEyeHK



Shek O in Sepia
Photo by Alan Leung



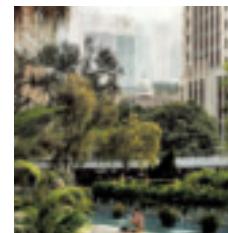
OUR TABLET APP: OUT NOW!

Your love, love, love:

"Whatever happened to organic cultivation of your fan base?"

Photo Finish

Looks like our Facebook fans loved recently featured Private Eye "Urban Utopia" photo, submitted by Luc Di Gregorio [July 10, issue 1104].



So it has come to this; everybody is buying his own fans. Whatever happened to organic cultivation of your fan base?

Frank Chung

So good? So why you look like a dumb-ass wandering the streets with a big cheap chunk of plastic in your face

Gregory Murray

Prodigious Plots

We were big fans of "The Young and Prodigious T.S. Spivet" [Film Review, July 17, issue 1105], which proved that great adventure stories don't have to be full of explosions. Our readers agreed.

Really good film... but it's ages old.

Sarah Burrows

Lovely. Just lovely.

Forest Harder

Fan Mail

Some of our Facebook readers were feeling a little punny after reading Mr. Know-it-All's guide to those trendy portable electric fans that everyone seems to be toting around this summer [July 10, issue 1104].

Write in and Win!

Got something to say? Write us! Our letter of the week gets an HK Magazine notebook, umbrella (pictured) and copy of "Historical Hong Kong Hikes," total value \$470.



Keep a Modern Family Happy



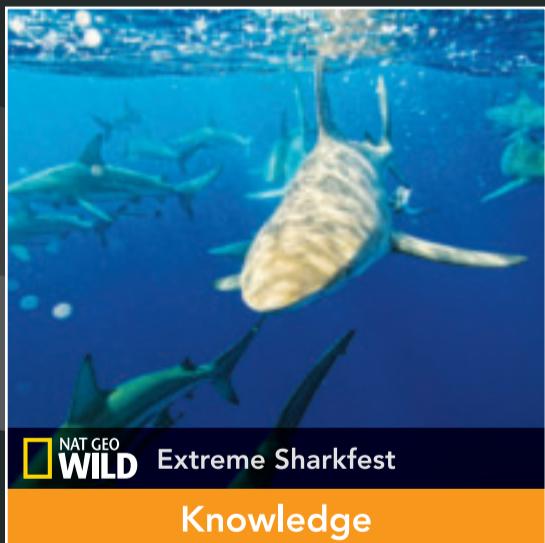
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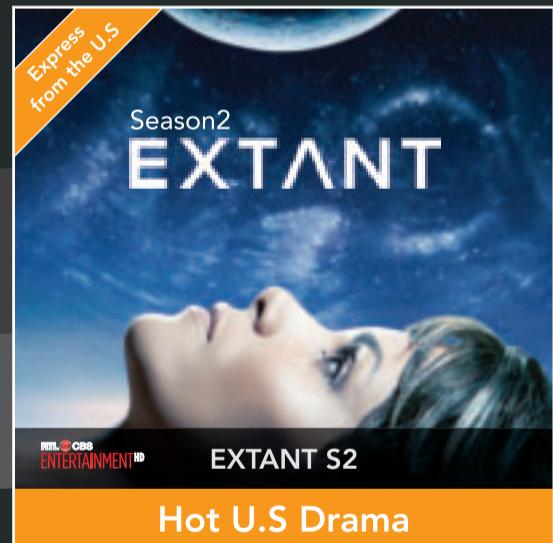
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THE WEEK

MON 7/27



Friday 7/24

Beauty Call

This is your last chance to see "Beauty and the Beast," staged at the Venetian to celebrate its 20th anniversary. Do it... before the petals drop off the rose or whatever.

Through Jul 26. Venetian Theatre, The Venetian, Estrada da Baía de N. Senhora da Esperança, Taipa, Macau, (+853) 2882-8888. \$280-680 from www.cotaiticketing.com.

Saturday 7/25

Market Watch

Following a successful first run, the **Hollywood Road Market** returns to please all shopaholics. Browse racks of indie Hong Kong labels like handbag and scarf designer The Dot, ethical products from PhatRice, men's shirts from Rcano, summer hats and shoes from Solidayz and more.

Jul 25-26, 11am-8pm. 210 Hollywood Rd., Sheung Wan. Free.

Sunday 7/26

Fookin' Hot Chicks

Ho Lee Fook is doing a special collab with Melbourne restaurant Belle's Hot Chicken. For \$350, you'll get a taste of the southern fried chicken Belle's is famous for—you can have it served southern style, or with Texas hot sauce.

6pm. 1 Elgin St., Central, 2810-0860. \$350 per person; no reservations.

SAT 7/25



WED 7/29



Monday 7/27

Beaches Do Yoga

Limewood is putting on a second session of **Yogi Monday**. Expect an hour-long yoga session on The Pulse's rooftop, followed by a healthy dinner where you can also sip Nood's cold-pressed juices and talk about your good life choices.

6pm. Shop 103-104, The Pulse, 28 Beach Rd., Repulse Bay, 2866-8668. \$590 per person.

Tuesday 7/28

Game On

Today is your last chance to catch **Ani-Com and Games** in all its intricate cosplay glory. It's packed with dancing, singing, figure-designing and way more for the geek in all of us.

July 24-28, 10am-9pm. Hall 1, HKCEC, 1 Expo Drive, Wan Chai. \$35 at the door.

Wednesday 7/29

Out and Aboot

Hop aboard the **Sai Kung Boat Tour** to explore the waters, visit abandoned Yim Tin Tsai, see the caves on Jin Island, then head to Sharp Island to check out "elephant nose rock" and the area's famous geopark.

Jul 29, Aug 2, 5, 8 & 12, 9:25am.

Meeting point: Wu Kai Sha MTR. \$200 on weekdays; \$220 on weekends, from hikingtours.hk.

Thursday 7/30

Comic Relief

Comedy HK is hosting another edition of **Chungking Comedy** at the Delhi Club. Fill up on curry and then laugh the night away with the city's best stand-ups. Bottled beers are \$20 all night.

3/F, Block 3, Chungking Mansions, 38-44 Nathan Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, 2368-1682. \$100 from www.eventbrite.hk.

Friday 7/31

Macau Calling

Grand Lapa Macau is doing a special staycation deal throughout the summer. For \$1,588, stay at one of the hotel's deluxe city view rooms and get \$500 credit for its restaurants and spa. We're big fans of the pool—don't miss out.

Through Sep 6. 956-1110 Avenida Da Amizade, Macau, (853) 2856-7888, www.grandlapa.com.

Saturday 8/1

Cutting Edge

Indie three-piece **New Youth Barbershop** is known for holding gigs at surprising locations, and this time the band is doing two morning shows at Jyut Wan Go Zo, an old-school karaoke venue on Temple Street. To book, email your last will and testament to organizers. No, seriously.

Aug 1-2, 11am. 53-57 Temple St., Yau Ma Tei. \$120; email nybsconcert@gmail.com.



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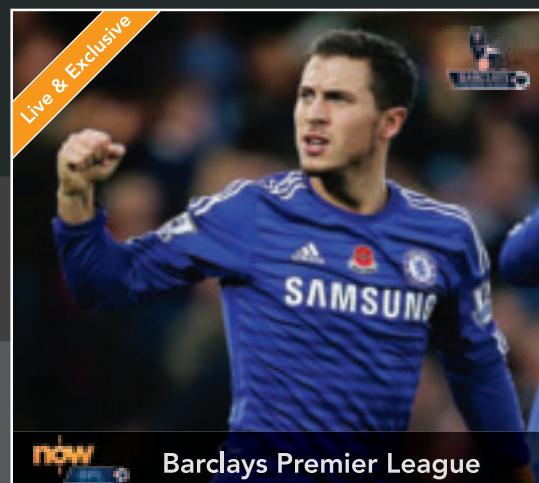
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HONG KONG INSIDER'S GUIDE

A series of stories, recommendations and tips on Hong Kong from people in the know. Explore our city based on the travel experiences that interest you and get itineraries for off-the-beaten-path neighborhoods



Tung Lung Chau

Adventure Seeker

Let's get physical! If you're all shopped out, have had your fill of good food, covered Hong Kong's main sights, and are now looking for outdoor adventures, Hong Kong won't disappoint! Whether it's hiking, biking or splashing around in the surf, there are plenty of options, while for armchair sports fans there are exciting sporting events that take place all year round.

Sensational Sport

The **Hong Kong Rugby Sevens** is one of the most famous sporting events in the world and the city is transformed into a rugby fanatic's dream for one crazy weekend. You'll also find that other big events have their slot on Hong Kong's sporting calendar: from horse racing to badminton, golf, volleyball and tennis, to name just a few. And **Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races**, attended by over 5,000 athletes from 10-plus countries and regions, is a can't-miss event.

Get on Board!

As largely a series of islands in the South China Sea, Hong Kong offers plenty of opportunity for you to try a sport for yourself—with water-based activities being the obvious choice. Board sports are popular: surfing, windsurfing, kiteboarding, wakeboarding, stand-up paddle boarding—Hong Kong welcomes water sports enthusiasts galore. **Stanley Main Beach** on the Southside and **Lantau Island** are particularly popular spots.

Wheely great fun

A sport that can be enjoyed by the whole family on a visit to Hong Kong—and one which provides a great opportunity to experience the great outdoors—is cycling. Head up to Sha Tin in the New Territories, and you'll find a series of designated cycle paths through picturesque surrounds. You can rent your wheels from the **Sha Tin Park Bike Kiosk** where you'll find several companies hiring out bicycles by the day. Hiking also offers opportunities to see a beautifully rural world at your own pace, taking in mountains, beaches, woodland and more.

For more insider info on Hong Kong, head to www.DiscoverHongKong.com/InsidersGuide

Spotlight on: Sai Kung

Adventurers will love Sai Kung's volcanic caves, pristine coral and remote hikes. The area is historically one of Hong Kong's remotest rural reaches, but its rare geological and environmental treasures ensure this district is revered far and wide. A close-knit community first settled here in the Song Dynasty (960-1279AD), and this has expanded to some 50-plus villages today.



Sai Kung Kiu Tsui Park

Hit the Trail

Sai Kung's big claim to fame among hiking enthusiasts is the **MacLehose Trail**. This 100km, ten-stage route is not for the faint-hearted as it climbs some of Hong Kong's highest peaks and descends its deepest valleys; but it's really worth the effort, and you can do it in parts. Sections 1 and 2 of the trail, which pass along the peninsula and deep into **Sai Kung East Country Park**, are manageable for day trips—and the best part is that you'll find crystal clear waters along the way in which to cool down.

Island life

Perfect for outdoor adventurers is the far-flung island of **Tung Lung Chau**, a now rarely-inhabited idyll east of Hong Kong Island. The walking trail around the island is worth it for the geological features alone, but the spot is a destination in its own right for unrestricted rock

climbing and wild camping if you're brave enough! Here you'll also find **Tung Lung Fort**, which was constructed in the early 1700s to fend off pirates. It was in use until the beginning of the 19th century, and it has since been partially restored for visitors.

Catch of the Day

After you've burned all that energy, it's time to eat, drink and shop! Unsurprisingly, Sai Kung is famous for its seafood—**Hoi Pong Street** along the waterfront is more commonly referred to as "Seafood Street". Peer over the edge of the harbor and you'll find myriad junk boats hawking fresh-caught seafood: simply pick what you fancy, take it to one of the many restaurants and they'll cook it the way you like it.

Head online to www.DiscoverHongKong.com/InsidersGuide to create your personalized itinerary for Sai Kung.



Kayaking fun in Sai Kung



Liu Man Shek Tong Ancestral Hall



Tai Mei Tuk Dam

Beyond the Walls

In its earliest days, Hong Kong was a series of small communities subsisting on the land and living inside walled villages, and if you travel up into the New Territories you'll discover traditional life still exists behind these walls. In fact, you don't need to move too far away from the heart of downtown Hong Kong to discover a region that will make you feel you've ventured back in time to this era, where you'll still find ancient traditions and a more simple way of life.

Village Life

The Tang clan first settled in Kam Tin in the early 14th century, and Lo Wai was the first of the five wai—or walled villages—they built. It's enclosed on all four sides by brick walls, with a gateway and entrance tower, which protect the central ancestral hall and adjacent dwellings. Much of the original village walls and internal layout still exist here: if you follow the **Lung Yeuk Tau Heritage Trail** you can see the protected entranceway and walls, but much is closed to the public to protect the villagers' privacy.

Community Spirit

An ancestral hall is the focal point for any wai villager: it's a study hall for children, as well as a place for worshipping ancestors, for social gatherings, and for discussing important village issues.

Liu Man Shek Tong Ancestral Hall in Sheung Shui Wai is an elaborate example that was built in 1751 by the prosperous Liu clan, who initially settled from Fujian in the Ming Dynasty. Built in the typical three-hall two-courtyard style, the decoration of the main building is opulent—you'll be able to see plaster moldings, intricate wood carvings and significant murals.

Organic Growth

Instead of merely surviving off the land to feed themselves, entrepreneurial villagers have branched out to sell their produce—producing a trend across Hong Kong for locally grown, locally sourced ingredients. **Po Sang Yuen Bee Farm** in Fanling does a great job of protecting the environment in its enterprise, while the trendy **IPC Foodlab** is a restaurant that advocates eating local farm produce and practices what it preaches. On the fusion menu you'll find all-organic vegetables picked from its farm in Fanling, with handy descriptions and the medicinal properties each ingredient can provide.

For more insider info on Hong Kong, head to www.DiscoverHongKong.com/InsidersGuide



Spotlight on: Tai Po

In the northeasterly New Territories, the historic market town of Tai Po is one of Hong Kong's largest districts, with a population divided between the relatively new town and the area's 80-plus far-flung villages. While its roots lie with these ancient walled villages, Tai Po has grown into a modern suburb that revolves around its people and its land, whether you're after delicious local food, curated parks or a slice of walled village culture.



Fu Shin Street Traditional Bazaar

Basin bonanza

Many of the oldest communities are dotted around the mountainous walled village region of **Lam Tsuen**, a collection of 26 indigenous and Hakka hamlets including ancient ancestral halls and temples, many of which date back to the 13th century. A big part of the walled village community culture is poon choi, which literally translates as “basin meal”, laden with different layers of meat, seafood and vegetables. Taste this delicious tradition for yourself in Tai Mei Tuk Village, at the renowned **Chung Shing Poon Choi restaurant**.



Market magic

A village atmosphere still pervades even in the more modern parts of the town, such as in the **Fu Shin Street Traditional Bazaar**, which dates back to 1892 and is one of the oldest remaining wet markets. Pick up a hot egg tart as you browse the stalls selling fresh farm produce, as well as myriad dry goods and even Hakka-style hats. The nearby Tai Po Hui Market & Food Complex Centre is great for dining and gifts.

Natural beauty

As well as cultural relics, Tai Po boasts an abundance of natural resources and precious reserves. In the valley behind the 300-year-old Hakka village of Fung Yuen sprawls the **Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve**, a protected site that's home to more than 200 species of butterflies, including the pretty Common Birdwing and White Dragontail varieties. If you're after outdoor activities and incredible scenery, **Tai Mei Tuk Dam** is a hidden gem: the 2km long stretch boasts picture-perfect views of **Plover Cover Reservoir**.

Head online to www.DiscoverHongKong.com/InsidersGuide to create your personalized itinerary for Tai Po.



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NEWS

Last Week In Reality

Sat 11

Unbearable Fightness At 7pm in Lam Tin, a 45-year-old bus driver and a younger man crossing the road get into an altercation, because neither would give way. The two quarrel after the man hits the door of the bus, then punches the driver in the back of the head. The driver grabs the man in a bear hug while his opponent keeps punching him. Both are arrested and the driver is sent to the hospital for head, hand and back injuries. The incident was caught on tape. Watch it here: tiny.cc/hk-bus.



Sun 12

Gamer Gate At 5am, a man and his female friend are gaming at an internet café in Shau Kei Wan when a 15-year-old boy comes up to the woman and begins to flirt with her. The man objects, starts to argue and the boy runs off. He returns with two other men, one of whom hands him a 14-inch fruit carving knife. The boy threatens the couple with the knife, but police arrive and arrest the aggressors. The boy had recently been expelled from school.



Mon 13

Follow the Trail A Kwai Chung man is arrested for pouring red paint and writing debt collection warnings on the door of a 66-year-old man, surnamed Leung. Police had found traces of paint leading from Leung's door down into another flat several floors below. They stage an ambush and arrest the 43-year-old offender. Leung had been a witness in a court case, and the vandal had been a friend of the accused. He admits to pouring red paint on Leung's door as revenge.

Tue 14

High Tea Hong Kong Customs arrests a 47-year-old man in Tai Wai on suspicion of drug trafficking. Inside the man's rucksack officers find 500g of what they suspect to be cannabis buds packed inside packets of tea. A search of the man's vehicle also yields 3.9kg of suspected cannabis buds, along with related paraphernalia.

Wed 15

Dumping Grounds A dump truck hauling cement slurry in Yau Ma Tei brakes too hard at a stop and hits the bumper of the BMW in front of it.

The truck's forward momentum carries the slurry over the top of the truck and on to the BMW, covering it in cement. FEHD staff are called to hose off the car and clean the cement from the road. A spokesman for the Hong Kong Dumper Truck Drivers Association said that slurry should be always transported in sealed trucks. The car's driver is considering legal action.



Thu 16

Even Hawking? A 65-year-old retiree appears in court for street obstruction and hawking without a license. The man, who is known in Sha Tin for his bicycle repair skills, would typically fix bikes for free, charging only \$10-20 for the cost of the parts. Last month two FEHD staff had waited for him to receive \$10 from a cyclist for handlebar repairs, before detaining him and taking away his tools. The defendant hopes he will not be prosecuted, as he does not make any money from the repairs. The case has been adjourned until July 29.

Fri 17

Boaring Driving At around 3am, a police van driving through Stanley sees a wild boar crossing the road. The driver swerves to avoid the animal but loses control of the vehicle, crashing into a lamppost and two metal railings before stopping. The driver and another officer are taken to the hospital after suffering a shoulder injury and a bruised finger.

Illustrations: Ryan Chan

Talking Points

We read the news, so you don't have to.



Book Fair Big With Moms, Youth... and Perverts?

The annual Hong Kong Book Fair has attracted big spenders this year. One woman interviewed said she had **spent about \$50,000 on books for her 7-month-old niece**, while another mother said she had spent \$50,000 over the last two years for her twin 2-year-old daughters. Locally written and published political books were in the spotlight, with **youth flocking to books about democracy and Occupy**. Meanwhile a photo book featuring child model Celine Yeung has been the center of controversy, thanks to **photos of the 6-year-old posing in her underwear**. The book drew heavy criticism from netizens and protection agency Against Child Abuse, and a signing event was cancelled. The book has been removed from the fair and police have called in photographer Ronald Lam, who has since apologized, for questioning.

Our Take: The moral: Read more, read often, don't be creepy.

Bad Week for Hong Kong Press

It's been a **difficult week for Hong Kong media**. Daily paper The Hong Kong Daily News shut down on July 12, after 56 years in business. The next day **ATV lost the right to broadcast horse racing and the Mark Six results**. It has passed the rights to TVB, which will air them on cable channels. On July 16 the Next Media Trade Union said that Next Magazine staff are being offered voluntary severance packages, as it will be losing half its editorial staff in two months and ceasing its print version in September. The same day, Sing Pao Daily News was **unable to pay the costs of printing the newspaper** after liquidators froze the organization's bank accounts. On July 17 Gu Zhuoheng, chairman of Sing Pao Media, submitted a plan to inject \$5 million into Sing Pao and invest \$100 million annually to keep it running. As of press time, he is awaiting the high court's decision.

Our Take: Who's next?

ICAC Wants to Get its Hack On

WikiLeaks has released more than a million emails from the Independent Commission Against Corruption, revealing that the **ICAC is in the market for mobile phone surveillance software Galileo**, created by Italian cybersecurity firm "Hacking Team." The Galileo brochure claims that the software "is invisible to the user, evades antivirus and firewalls, and doesn't affect the devices' performance or battery life," and claims it is "**the hacking suite for governmental interception**." HKU law professor Simon Young said that the move was "proactive," while IT sector lawmaker Charles Mok expressed concerns that the system was intrusive and subject to considerable privacy concerns. The ICAC has confirmed that they were looking into the software.

Our Take: Clear your browser history!

Quote of the Week

"If everything about CY Leung is bad, then shouldn't he just do nothing? ... Why don't we all just kill ourselves, all of Hong Kong?" Christopher Chung, Legco member and Eastern District Council chairman, defends CY Leung's actions as legitimate during a Finance Committee meeting.

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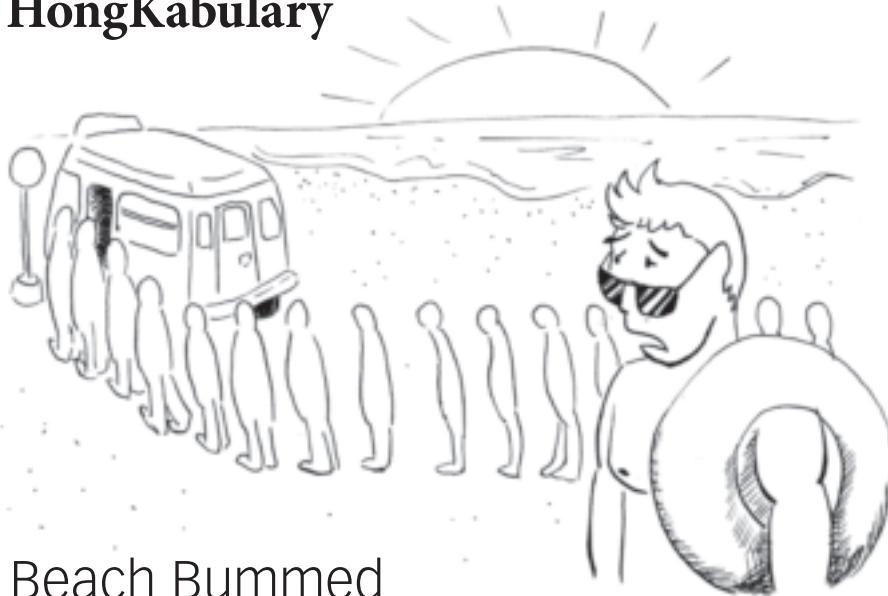
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UPFRONT

HongKabulary



Beach Bummed

(bi:tʃ bʌmd), adj.

Finishing a day at the beach and then realizing that it's going to take three hours to get home because everyone else is also queuing for the minibus.

"Shek O was lovely until everyone sprinted to the bus terminus at 6pm. We were all majorly beach bummed."

Caption This

HONG KONG—A Lego exhibit in Ocean Terminal (Nora Tam/SCMP)



Fast Facts

Peak Efficiency

A study says that Hong Kong has the fourth most efficient government in the world. How is this possible?

- We can pay our bills at a 7-Eleven. A 7-Eleven!
- Only other governments in the study were Somalia, South Somalia, West Somalia.
- Study skipped over political reform, welfare and housing departments, mostly concentrated on Hong Kong Observatory weather app.
- You'd be amazed how easy it is to get stuff done if you just ignore everyone who doesn't agree with you.

Street Talk



Yukari as Inori Yuzuriha and Naoshi as Ouma Shu from "Guilty Crown"

Hongkongers by day, cosplayers by night: Aio Ching aka **Naoshi** (right) and **Yukari** Heung (left) dress up to bring their favorite anime characters to life. They tell Adrienne Chum about costumes, cross-dressing, and staying in character.

HK Magazine: What got you started in cosplay?

Naoshi: We always loved manga. We saw others cosplaying, so we thought we'd try it out too. I've been doing this for about a year, but Yukari has been cosplaying for almost four years. I think we've done almost 40 cosplays in a year—we do photoshoots almost every weekend.

HK: Photoshoots? Doesn't it get hot in the summer?

N: It really does! Lugging around a costume and a set of props in the heat can be pretty bad, but the photographers have it bad too. During the summer we usually do our shoots in a studio. If we're doing any outdoor shoots, like at the beach, we wait until after 5pm because it's not as hot. We typically book the studio or photographer for three hours, but with travel and prep time, a single session can take all day.

HK: What do your families think of your hobby?

Yukari: My dad doesn't really have much of an opinion, while my mom will sometimes help with the costumes, as she's better at sewing than me. She thinks it's kind of cute. For example, for my current costume, I need a flower that is hard to find in Hong Kong, so my mother is helping me make a paper one.

N: My dad doesn't really care. My mom is more conservative, so she thinks I'm pretending to be gay or doing gay stuff, especially because I do my own makeup.

HK: Are the costumes expensive?

N: It really depends on how detailed you want them to be. Usually the props are the most expensive: A sword can cost up to \$1,000 even when the costume averages just \$500.

Y: We also often customize the costumes when we get them so they fit better. Sometimes we will buy simpler, less expensive costumes, then add extra details

we think are important using raw materials and creating them by hand. We don't have sewing machines though, so it does take time—some costumes take about a week to finish, while others can take a couple of months.

HK: What do you do with your costumes when you're done?

N: Some costumes, like the ones we've done so many times that we don't want to do again, we sell. Other costumes we'll keep if we really love them and plan on doing them again. Right now, two-thirds of my two wardrobes are all cosplay clothes. I keep tossing my normal work clothes to make more space for costumes!

Y: We end up keeping a lot of wigs because we can wear them for many different costumes, but they're space hogs. We thought about renting some storage space with other cosplayers, but it's expensive.

HK: Naoshi, sometimes you cosplay as a girl. Is it hard to stay in character?

N: Normally I only dress as a girl for photos, so nobody has to hear my male voice. But there are way more female cosplayers than male, so when I cosplay as a male character at an event, a line of girls will queue up to take photos with me.



Catch Yukari and Naoshi as characters from "No Game No Life" at Ani-Com this Sunday, or visit them at www.facebook.com/LYC3.6.

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Drawn to Life

Six of Hong Kong's leading comics—or *manhua*—artists tell **Evelyn Lok** about the highs and lows of the industry and of their love of storytelling.



Never pick what you love most as your job.



LAI TAT TAT WING

Lai Tat Tat Wing worked an office job for eight years before returning to drawing, his teenage passion. He only formally entered the comic scene after being inspired by a performance by Hong Kong/international experimental theater company Zuni Icosahedron in 1991, and is now its current artist-in-residence. His signature character Woody Woody Wood currently appears in Ming Pao Weekly.

HK Magazine: How did you get into comics?

Lai Tat Tat Wing: I've been reading comics since I was in primary two or three, and doodling too. Back then we were poor and the house was cramped. I killed a lot of time copying from Japanese comics. I learned that there was some form of hidden logic behind the way comics were laid out.

HK: Why do you love drawing comics?

LTTW: I enjoy longer stories, slowly seeing a story play out, how it's twisted, noticing how actions are organized, how the characters are introduced and how a theme is developed.

HK: Where do you find inspiration?

LTTW: I really admire the work of [director] Akira Kurosawa. For instance the way he adapted Shakespeare into the world of Japanese samurai, without creating conflict with Japanese culture. In film, a director decides how long a scene lasts and the atmosphere, music and all that. But comics are different. The pacing is decided by the reader themselves. How do you manipulate the squares in a comic to control tension and time?

HK: What's your working process like?

LTTW: I always listen to music when I work. Every book I create is accompanied by a different soundtrack. In the 80s I got hooked on western chart music. To listen to music at that time, you also had to pay attention to music videos. It was here I learned that text and image do not have to be put together. In the world of music videos, no matter how crazy the visuals are—think Prince crawling out from a bathtub, then releasing a flock of doves—when you have a song as well, everything makes sense. I can appreciate strict structure, but I enjoy stories that are very free. There are a lot of authors who value storytelling—but authors who tell stories led by visuals are rarer.

HK: Ever wanted to be a music critic?

LTTW: No, no, no. Never pick what you love most as your job. You have to have the space to be able to combat it, critique it, argue with it, be content with it. As someone who worships music, I can only compliment and appreciate it.

HK: What do you think of comics in Hong Kong?

LTTW: The work you see nowadays seems to react to a situation, rather than to introduce a new talking point or world view. Before, artists would be like "let me imagine a world about triads in Mong Kok." You'd compare and contrast it with reality and that's the conversation between the reader and artist. But today, whatever happens on the news just gets drawn directly onto the page.

Read this: "The Magic Flute" (1999), a sci-fi tale inspired by Mozart's opera; "East Wing West Wing" (2008), in which giant politicians battle among the city's skyscrapers; "Horror Horror Woody's Cube" (Aug 2015), celebrating the 20th anniversary of Woody Woody Wood.



"East Wing, West Wing" (2008)

"There's a whole school of thought behind the control of time in comics. How do you translate the tension-filled moments of movies to manhua? There are tricks to control time."



I like planning comics when my imagination is the least restrained.

LITTLE THUNDER

First submitting works to comics magazine A-Club at the tender age of 11, Little Thunder (aka Cheng Sum-ling) has developed a colorful, sultry style that champions strong, sexy female protagonists. As well as a new book set to come out this year, she's also featured in "Que Sera, Sera," an exhibition of erotic work at the new branch of sex shop Sally Coco.

HK Magazine: How did you get into comics?

Little Thunder: When I was about three or four years old, I loved to watch the anime "Q Tailong" ("Obake no Q-taro"), and would draw the characters from the show. I also really liked drawing princes and princesses. I haven't stopped drawing since.

HK: Why do you love drawing?

LT: I like the feeling of improving, of finding something new. Drawing is what gives me this feeling the most: I can discover a new way to draw every day. When I was little I liked adventure stories. Lately I'm most attracted to stories where I can deeply express aspects of human nature.

HK: What's your working process?

LT: I usually draw from 3pm to 5am: lately I've been listening to a lot of ghost stories or crime segments on internet radio

while drawing. I like planning out stories for my comics right before I sleep, in that half-dreaming, half-awake state. It's when my imagination is the least restrained.

HK: What do you think of comics in the SAR?

LT: The comic culture of a place and the city's own "personality" has always been closely related. Hong Kong was originally a place that had a lot of quirks and charm, but in recent decades that unique charm has been eroding, losing its focus. If we drew scenes of old Hong Kong today, kids in the future wouldn't recognize it. If you want to protect the unique features of local comics, the best you can do is to protect the city as well as you can.

Read this: "Kylooe," (2010-2012) a trilogy about a young girl coping with loneliness by creating a fantastical, imaginary world.

"Que Sera, Sera," through October at Sally Coco, 3B, Po Foo Building, 1-5 Foo Ming St., Causeway Bay, 2110-0354. society6.com/littlethunder.



Work from "Que Sera, Sera"

"Sir Youde Proposal" (2014—artwork in private collection)

"Margaret Thatcher originally fell over in Beijing after meeting Deng Xiaoping. I changed it to Hong Kong. I looked for a photo of this same view as close to September 24, 1982 as possible to make sure of what buildings existed then, the cars that diplomats used and the uniforms."



CHIHOI LEE

A stalwart in both the comics and fine art worlds, Chihoi Lee has drawn a weekly column for the Hong Kong Daily News since 2008. "Fa Fa World" is a benign and humorous reflection of Hong Kong concerns as seen through a father-daughter relationship. It's about to be compiled into its seventh anthology. His 2007 book "The Train" has just been translated into Finnish.

HK Magazine: How did you get into comics?

Chihoi Lee: I loved drawing since I was a kid, but I studied science in school, not art. [In university], a friend encouraged me to submit my drawings to the supplement pages of the Hong Kong Daily News and Express News. If it got published, I got a couple hundred dollars, which was really great for a poor student.

HK: What do you think of comics in Hong Kong?

CL: After the financial crisis of 1997-1998, many comics columns disappeared from newspapers. Some editors didn't want to take as many risks. Before '97 the CCP, Kuomintang and the US invested a lot in newspapers in Hong Kong. After the Handover, many companies also got closer to China, and relied on Chinese commerce for advertising—which affected editorial decisions. Even recently, there has been a lot of Occupy-related art but only online. Before the internet and after 1997 we only had the same two or three comics columnists, and in the late 90s to early noughties there were no new political cartoonists at all. We are getting a few more prominent new artists nowadays, which is a good sign.

HK: Is Hong Kong preserving the local comics scene?

CL: There should be more resources given to print publishing houses. There are a lot of resources poured into culture, promotion and exhibitions, and that's not healthy. Seeing works at an exhibition or on a website are not the same as experiencing it in a book.

Read this: "The Train" (2007) a dreamlike story about a strange train ride adapted from the work of Taiwanese poet Hung Hung; "Fa Fa World" (2009-ongoing), down-to-earth observations of issues that preoccupy a little girl and her father in Hong Kong.



Excerpt from "The Train"

In comics, the emphasis is on the drama.



A QUICK HISTORY OF MANHUA

Despite being called "manhua" in Cantonese—indicating decades of influence from Japanese manga culture—the roots of Hong Kong comics can be traced back to the Qing dynasty, when a Guangdong man named He Jianshi published drawings which satirised current affairs.

But the comic scene truly began to buzz with the work of Alphonso Wong (pen name Wong Chak), the author behind the long-running series "**Old Master Q**," which first appeared in 1962.

Other notables popped up in the 70s and 80s, incorporating cinematic influences into their works: From the legendary martial arts comics "**Storm Riders**" by Ma Wing Shing and "**Bruce Lee**" by Seung-gun Siu-bo to more experimental work by artists such as Li Chi-tak. In the 90s the city's most iconic characters were born: Alice Mak Ka-pik's **McMug** and **McDull**, anthropomorphic pigs that shone light on serious grassroots issues. From then scores of artists appeared, each offering a different commentary on Hong Kong society.

Find out more at **Comix Home Base**, which hosts regular exhibitions and is home to a library of Hong Kong comics.

7 Mallory St., Wan Chai, 2824-5303,
www.comixhomebase.com.
Closed Mondays.



I've been telling people for a while that the comic world is dead.

LI CHI-TAK

Li Chi-tak has been called the Wong Kar-wai of the SAR comics scene. He started in the industry at age 17, developing a firm hand for cinematic and experimental storytelling and a realistic style that embeds meaning into every detail. Li co-founded the city's first independent comics magazine "Cockroach" and his 1992 "Black Mask" was turned into a film starring Jet Li. Japanese fans have dubbed him the "Hong Kong Katsuhiro Otomo" (the creator of "Akira").

HK Magazine: How did you get into comics?

Li Chi-tak: I started around primary school, I think. I read "Old Master Q," Lo Koon-chiu's "Children's Paradise" and a whole lot of translated Japanese comics such as "Otoko-gumi" by Tetsu Kariya. After high school I wasn't sure what to do, so I submitted a few comics and it just happened.

HK: Why do you love drawing comics?

LC: Because of stories. I wanted to tell stories in frames. At first they were quite bad—I kept copying others. But once you fall deep into something, you realize that you shouldn't do what other artists in the industry are also doing.



HK: What stories interest you?

LC: I used to read comics to seek out a kind of excitement. But in my own work, I try to do what other people don't do. When I was younger I listened to a bunch of British electronic music and watched a lot of movies, a lot of weird Japanese films. It all must've created something within me, but I'm not quite sure how to pinpoint it.

HK: What's the industry like for comics artists?

LC: It's very difficult to be successful: It's not just drawing a pretty picture. I feel young people are content with just drawing a nice illustration, and storytelling is often ignored. The most practical thing we can give artists is things to draw, so they can earn money.

HK: What's your ideal comics?

LC: I've been telling people this for a while, that the comics world is dead. I really want to draw a magnum opus of sorts, but it's tough. I thought of a story a long time ago: it would be about little kids traveling up the mountain to learn kung fu, but underneath it all it would be about the world of comics. It didn't happen in the end. It's not what people want. People want cutesy stuff. But I don't mind doing the opposite of what everyone else does.

Read this: "**The Voyager**" (2011) and "**The Lovers**" (2011), both filled with surreal short stories; "**Stone Gods**" (2011), a legend about the world which lies between mortals and gods.



"The Voyager" (2011)

"Comics rely on pictures to express meaning, so I try not to use too many unnecessary descriptions."

It's not the story you tell but how you tell it.



JONATHAN JAY LEE

Jonathan Jay Lee is a Taiwanese-American artist based in Hong Kong, best known for his vibrant renditions of Hong Kong street culture. He works on art projects across town (you'll find his work on the walls of SoHo's Ho Lee Fook, for instance) and his own illustrations. He's also worked with Marvel, in a one-off anthology where he recontextualized antihero The Punisher in Hong Kong. Among other comic projects, he's currently working on "The Other Dead" for IDW Comics in the US.

HK Magazine: How did you get into comics?

Jonathan Jay Lee: My first exposure was [classic Japanese manga] "Lone Wolf and Cub" when I was maybe 4 or so. I remember amazing ink drawings of samurai action and feeling deeply embarrassed when my family teased me for checking out the nude parts. A childhood friend in the States got me into comics properly at around 7 years old. It was a Marvel book: "Uncanny X-Men." I always felt alone in my

devotion to comics like it was some kind of shameful love, but as an adult now I meet a lot of ubergeeks who grew up on the same stuff.

HK: What do you love about drawing comics?

JJL: Storytelling! It's not the story you tell but how you tell it.

HK: What do you think of comics in Hong Kong?

JJL: Japanese comics have always had a healthy lifeline in Hong Kong. In terms of American comics, we had options in the 90s and early 2000s for comics shops, but things died down and the shops started closing. Since then, American comics have made a comeback thanks to both the toy and film industries, but I feel most people will be reading their content digitally.

Read this: "**Drifting Wolves**," (Heavy Metal Magazine Issue 267, 2014), a wordless fantasy tale about survival and tough love, inspired by "Lone Wolf and Cub"; "**Strange Tales MAX - Issue 3**," (Marvel Miniseries, 2009) an anthology of stories by indie artists.

See Lee's work in group exhibition "Tribes," through Sep 18 at Emergency Lab, 3-4/F, 506-508 Lockhart Rd., Causeway Bay.



"Walking the Dog" (2014)

"Comics are universally accessible. Pictures are stronger than words."

My character is an immigrant and can offer a different point of view.



KONG KEE

The co-founder of comics and animation team Penguin Lab, Kong Kee is the creator of "Ding Ding Penguin" and "Pandaman," comics that reflect on Hong Kong social issues—the former with lighthearted social observations, the latter with a more belligerent take on political issues. His works are imbued with tragedy and comedy in equal measure.

HK Magazine: How did you get into comics?

Kong Kee: I've liked comics ever since I was a kid in the 80s. I grew up reading translated Japanese comics, a lot of "Ding Dong" [Doraemon] and "Dragonball Z." I tried to draw some on my own—I'd staple them together and share them with my classmates.



"Travel to Hong Kong with Blur" (2015—see p.26)

"Hong Kong is very conducive to storytelling. I like looking under bridges and taking photos of construction sites. It's very sci-fi."

HK: Why is your main character a penguin?

KK: I like two animals: whales and penguins. But whales are very hard to turn into a character that fits in with daily life! So I went with a penguin. It's a small creature, you can draw a lot of them walking around and a lot of things can happen to them. [Ding Ding Penguin] is basically an immigrant, and can offer a different point of view.

HK: What do you think of comics in Hong Kong?

KK: I see an emergence of diversity. In the last decade or so there have been a lot more independent artists who use graphic novels or comics to talk about relatively personal themes. For example, works such as Yeung Hok-tak's **"How Blue Was My Valley"** [about life in housing estates], or Rainbow Leung's **"Wo Che Village the Ups and Downs"** [about the artist's home on the verge of urbanization] take more of a personal angle to explore Hong Kong's development. There are also funnier stories, such as by **Lo Bin Tan**, who looks at Hongkongers' lifestyles through a very girly, OL [Office Lady] point of view. It's very hard to come by such a great diversity of work.

Read this: "Pandaman" (2010), a vigilante comic which comments on the political state of post-Handover Hong Kong; "Ding Ding Penguin," (2008-ongoing), a lighthearted comic about Hong Kong life; "Our Sai Yee Street" (2014) is a story about the struggle to live in small spaces in the city.



YOU'VE CONVINCED ME! WHERE CAN I BUY SOME OF THESE AMAZING COMICS?

- Kubrick** Shop H2, Prosperous Garden, 3 Public Square St., Yau Ma Tei, 2384-8929, www.kubrick.com.hk.
- ACO (Art and Culture Outreach) Books** 1/F, Foo Tak Building, 365-367 Hennessy Rd., Wan Chai, 2893-4808, www.aco.hk
- The Coming Society** 2/F, Foo Tak Building, 365 Hennessy Rd., Wan Chai, 2467-7300, thecomingsociety.wordpress.com.
- Clark's Comics** Shop B7, Basement, Causeway Bay Centre, 15-23 Sugar St., Causeway Bay, 2890-7718, www.clarks-comics.com.
- Metro Comics** Shop B8, Basement, Causeway Bay Centre, 15-23 Sugar St., Causeway Bay, 2895-1162, [metrocomics.com](http://www.metrocomics.com).

Photos by Emily Chu (www.emilychu.hk).

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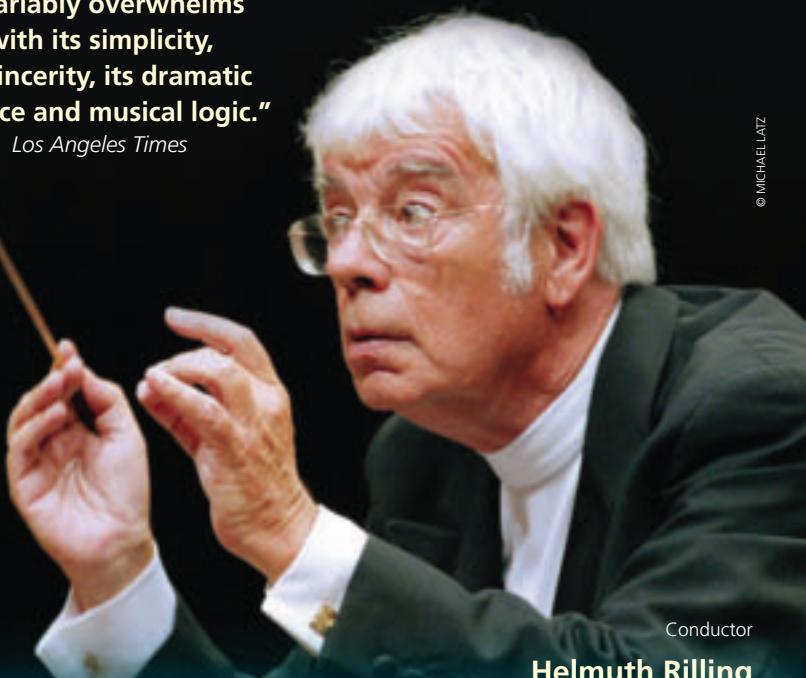
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Hong Kong Sinfonietta is financially supported by the
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BACH 330 is financially supported by the Arts Capacity
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European meat on the tables of Hong Kong

"Man does not live to eat, he eats to live" - Socrates would say, the ancient Greek philosopher living in the 4th century BCE. Millennia have passed since then and this wisdom still applies to the entire world.

Which products should we choose to "eat smart"? We will be happy to answer your questions during the International Exhibition of Food and Drink FOOD EXPO 2015 which will be held in Hong Kong on 13th-15th August. We will be eager to talk to you about our product portfolio, which includes pork, beef meats, as well as their products, and high quality poultry. We will be showing you how to prepare dishes using these meat types. We will have a few outstanding chefs from Poland working at the fair kitchen of the "European Meat" program.

With the support of the leading producers of meat from Europe, and Poland, the chefs will cook spectacular dishes which will combine the flavors of Europe and Asia, and which will prove to you that the products offered by us can be easily placed on the highest shelf, and offered to the most discerning customers and consumers.

As we know, there are over 8000 restaurants and bars in Hong Kong, which serve hundreds of dishes of the regional Chinese and Asiatic cuisines, but also those which draw richly from the culinary wealth of other continents. Most of these places offer dishes from pork, beef or poultry. European meat would be a beneficial addition to the package used for the

preparation of these dishes.

European countries, including Poland, are famous for their pork, beef and poultry meats, which are known for their one-of-a-kind taste and quality. This uniqueness is underlined by the method of rearing and the tradition, which farmers, breeders and meat product manufacturers refer back to, at every stage of meat production.

Tradition and modernity - these two elements merge the entire manufacturing process. European quality and top-notch meat taste - are the result of constant concern for as natural as possible method of feed production, care for animal welfare, adherence to the most stringent standards in slaughter houses, cutting and processing plants. European, and, particularly, Polish meat industry is considered to be the most modern in the world. And once again, it is worth reminding that in the European countries, the entire food chain is constructed in accordance with the principles of environmental protection - in line with the tradition and the concern for the quality and taste.

Promotional and information program "European Meat - Tradition, Quality and Taste," which we will be presenting at booth 5B-E02 during the International Exhibition of Food and Drink FOOD EXPO 2015, encompasses the promotion of the European fresh, chilled or frozen meat and its products, including fresh chilled or frozen beef and pork, as well as

EUROPEAN MEAT
TRADITION QUALITY TASTE

processed meat products manufactured in accordance with HACCP quality system - Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point; the industry ISO standard - Quality management systems - Requirements; standards of GMP - Good Manufacturing Practice, and GHP activities - Good Hygienic Practice alongside with high quality poultry meat.

The merits of the European meat, sourced from only select animal breeds, favor the systematic development of animal rearing and the increase of exports. Hong Kong is an important mark on the map of the meat product exporters. Hoping for the increase in the popularity of the European meat in China, and particularly in Hong Kong, we extend to you our invitation to visit booth of the Promotion Program "European Meat - Tradition, Quality and Taste."

Detailed information on the promotional program "European Meat - Tradition Quality Taste," and on the Association Butchers and Producers of Processed Meat of the Republic of Poland, who is the proponent of the program, and on the promotional events during the FOOD EXPO exhibition is available on www.eu-meat.eu.

CAMPAIGN FINANCED WITH AID FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND    AND ALSO THE PORK PROMOTION FUND AND THE BEEF PROMOTION FUND 





Best Bar None

Move over, Willy Wonka—chef and nutritionist sisters Priscilla Soligo and Rachel Whitfield make up small-batch chocolatier **Raiz the Bar**. It's all about producing nutritious chocolate that's untouched by preservatives, refined sugar, or anything artificial—they're also chock-full of superfoods. Cacao beans are sourced directly from a co-op in Indonesia, and the rest is done by hand in Kwun Tong. Try the original "Authentic Me" bar for a complex, fruity flavor or ramp it up with the spice-packed "Love Me" chai chaga chipotle chili bar. Now that's a mouthful.

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Six Senses Qing Cheng Mountain

Ask an Expert



James Steyn is the nature guide at boutique South Africa safari camp Senalala, inside the Kruger National Park. An influential player in the region's anti-poaching efforts for over 23 years, he gives us the low-down on endangered animals and sustainable travel in the region.

HK Magazine: What's the most amazing thing a traveler could see in Senalala?

JS: Most travelers to Senalala arrive in search of the big five: elephant, rhino, buffalo, lion and leopard. From my perspective, however, the most amazing sightings for a traveler are wild dogs and pangolins. Both are very rare and we are fortunate that they're in our area.

HK: What is so special about wild dogs?

JS: Wild dogs are among Africa's most endangered animals. There are currently an estimated 400-500 wild dogs in the Greater Kruger National Park. They are fascinating creatures.

Come to Your Senses

Eco-resort brand Six Senses has just touched down in China for the first time—the debut comes in the form of **Six Senses Qing Cheng Mountain**, opening August 1. It's located near UNESCO heritage site Dujiangyan, which is known for its ancient irrigation system, its location on the Silk Road and its giant pandas. The hotel plans to accentuate these ecological wonders with wooden interiors, Tesla Model S airport transfers, lots of outdoor courtyards and garden-to-table eating at the hotel's aptly named Farm2Fork restaurant. About an hour outside of Chengdu, the secluded property is home to 113 guest rooms—some with verandas and others with private pools. The spa, meanwhile, is accessed by way of waterfall for a Robinson Crusoe-style bout of relaxation.

**From \$2,705. 2 Dong Ruan Rd.,
Qingcheng Mountain Town,
Chengdu, China, (+86) 28-8728-9871,
www.sixsenses.com.**

Palm it Off



Another one for your wellbeing: new-to-town **The Palms Retreat Samui** is launching with some healthy itineraries this summer. The outfit's three- to 10-day wellness programs are all tailor-made according to your goals—unless of course your main ambition is to binge-eat ice cream all week. Travelers will be downing specially crafted herbal smoothies and putting in some serious yoga and meditation time led by GM Ron Veldhuis, who doubles as a health coach. The all-inclusive daily rates include Thai massages, easy access to Cheong Mon beach, a pool and locally sourced meals.

**From US\$229 (\$1,775). Plailaem Soi 6,
59/64 Moo 5 Tambol Bophut,
Koh Samui, Thailand,
(+66) 9-4579-5065,
www.thepalms-retreat.com.**

**Traveled anywhere incredible lately?
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tweet @KateSpringer and #hktravels.**

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Hong Kong Sinfonietta is financially supported by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region



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Serving Me Softly

There's nothing cooler than soft-serve ice cream during a Hong Kong summer—unless of course, it's covered in honeycomb or edible astronauts. By **Natasha Fernandes** and **Yanis Chan**

Loooop There It Is

As the name implies, **Loooop** serves up truly loopy creations. The name comes from the delicate process of looping the soft serve around in circles to fill up your cone, but that's not the only thing this ice cream parlor has going for it. The flavors here are as creative as they are delicious: Try the Blue Moon ice cream, served with a freshly baked cookie cup and topped with chocolate popping candy, gold crispy stars, crunchy chocolate coating and edible rice paper astronauts.

Need we say? It's out of this world.

2A Wun Sha St., Tai Hang, 8192-8815.



Oddies One Out

Get a taste of Hong Kong's famous *gai daan zai* egg puffs at **Oddies**—which stuffs creatively flavored egg puffs into gelato parfaits and loads on the toppings. Take the Night Wolf, for example, which includes super-rich brownies and chocolate chips, butter crumbs, caramelized banana ice cream and passion fruit panna cotta.

The Homer is another favorite: Named after Homer Simpson, the recipe calls for Italian gelato, espresso jelly, homemade Guinness ice cream, and a home-baked donut glazed in pink chocolate and raspberry crisps. Hence the constantly long lines...

Shop 1F, 149 Wan Chai Rd., Wan Chai, 9551-7972.



Fishy Business

Ice cream in a fish? You read that right. Inspired by the *taiyaki* in Japan and *bungeoppang* in Korea (both fish-shaped waffles), **Café Aboong** has brought this aquatic dessert to town. It's pretty much what it sounds like: a warm, cooked-to-order fish-shaped waffle cone filled with frosty lemon froyo and topped with peanuts, chocolate drizzles and a chocolate-dipped fruit skewer. You also choose from a custard or azuki bean paste filling—both make for more authentic bites.

Shop G18, Yan On Building, 1 Kwong Wa St., Mong Kok, 6194-9796.



Crème de la Crème

Putting together a new menu every month, **Soft Creme** is always whipping up innovative flavors of soft-serve to keep your palate guessing. The bestseller, cereal milk ice cream topped with bacon flakes and cornflakes, is a mix of sweet and savory. Meanwhile, the champagne ice cream comes on top of smoking dry ice to channel those clubby vibes and ensure that you snap tons of photos.

7 Shepherd St., Tai Hang, 2370-3205.



Room for More

If you're not trying to blow all your money on a fancy frozen yogurt, then head up to Ma On Shan where **Chocolate Room** awaits. The tiny, humble shop makes its own soft-serve and lists the flavors of the month on a chalkboard menu, always keeping things fresh and seasonal. When it comes to toppings, you have all kinds of options: chewy mochi, crunchy chocolate chips or soft red bean to add some texture to your treat.

Shop 2040-41, 2/F, Sunshine City Plaza, 18 On Luk St., Ma On Shan, 2755-6966.



Honey, Honey

If you haven't already caught on to the Korean honeycomb soft-serve craze, **Honey Creme** is the place to try it. The outfit uses premium organic milk imported from Korea and generous hunks of honeycomb to make its outlandish cones. Its Summer Series of ice creams includes the Summer Floss, which explodes with pop rocks hidden between layers of pinkish cotton candy and milky soft-serve. Who needs to fit into a bikini anyway?

Various locations including Shop 5A, G/F, 44-44A Lyndhurst Terrace, Central and 34 Lee Garden Rd., Causeway Bay, 3525-1264.



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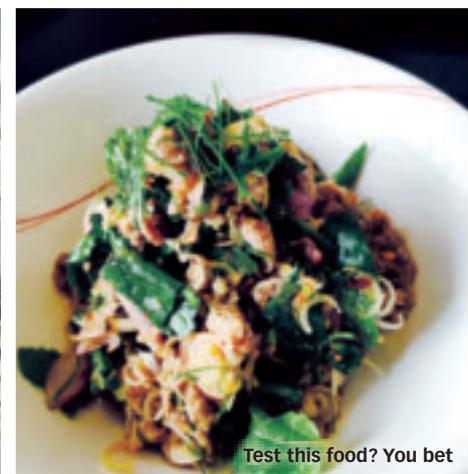
NEW AND NOTED with Adele Wong



Reubens at Grand Central



You say oysters,
I say ersters at the Walrus



Test this food? You bet

Kitchen Confidential

Pop-up specialist **Test Kitchen** is organizing its second-ever event on August 1, this time flying in chef Sarawut Phawakkarakun from Bangkok to prep an interactive dinner for TK's participants. Chef Sarawut worked under Nahm's David Thompson and is about to open his own restaurant in Bangkok, so you can think of his Hong Kong show as a sort of testing ground for his ideas. How does it work? Diners get to rate each dish chef Sarawut cooks, marking down opinions on comment cards. At the end of the meal, all the feedback goes straight to the chef. But everyone gets a presumably delicious meal out of the whole affair—so hopefully you won't be giving out too many low marks. The dinner will be held at a secret location to be announced closer to the date. Tickets cost \$980 per person, and can be bought at testkitchen.com.hk.

Consider the Oyster

Get ready to get your slurp on at **The Walrus** (64 Staunton St., Central) oyster bar, so named for the fantastically cruel oyster-baiting poem "The Walrus and the Carpenter" in Lewis

Carroll's "Through the Looking-Glass." Owned by the Chow sisters of The Woods fame, TW is a colorful, under-the-sea-inspired venue that serves the briny creatures raw, as part of shots, and many other creative ways besides. There will also be other fresh seafood on the menu to go with the briny bivalves.

A Grand Affair

American pub **Grand Central Bar & Grill** (Shop R001, Civic Square, Elements, 1 Austin Rd. West, West Kowloon, 2736-4888) has launched a new brunch menu that's available every weekend from 11am-3pm. Besides the usual suspects (eggs Benedict and his buddies), you can also live a little and go for a half-dozen oysters (\$248) to start your meal, with a piping-hot iron skillet (\$189) of striploin and sausages to follow. A Sunday roast of beef or pork can also be arranged, if you're so inclined. Rounding out the menu are Reuben sandwiches, fish and chips, and burgers.

Email me at adele.wong@hkmagmedia.com
or follow me on Twitter: @adelewong_hk

RESTAURANT REVIEWS

Solera ★★★★☆

Spanish. Shop 101, 1/F, D Deck, Discovery Bay, 2555-0772.



Discovery Bay doesn't exactly leap to mind when you think of dining meccas, but Solera, sitting in a quiet first-floor location in DB Plaza, serves up Spanish bites with a mostly authentic feel.

■ **HIT** Grilled sardines (\$55) were simply cooked and delicious, with a crispy char and juicy flesh, a salty skin perfectly undercut with a squeeze of lemon. Gambas al ajillo (\$92)

were plump prawns swimming in deliciously garlicky olive oil, which we were happy to mop up with bread. Slow-cooked Angus Beef Cheek (\$118) was superb: rich, fall-apart-in-your-mouth morsels of fantastic meat, topped with a hint of sharp gooseberry chutney. We skipped the paella and went for Chicken meloso (\$218): a huge cast iron pot of soupy rice, full of chicken and suffused with a truffle aroma that burst out of the pot when it was opened at the table. Ladled out, it was a warm, rich, very truffly dish that we happily dug into.

■ **MISS** We were disappointed by the chorizo dishes. Chorizo in cider (\$75) did nothing special, while the chorizo with 63-degree egg on fried potato (\$62) was oily and overwhelming.

■ **BOTTOM LINE** With strong Spanish bites for acceptable prices, Solera might just be our favorite DB restaurant.

Open Tue-Sun noon-11pm. \$\$

All of our reviews are independent and anonymous!

The Drunken Duck ★★★★☆

Gastropub. 44-46 Staunton St., Central, 2803-0050.



SoHo seems to be slightly cooler these days: The area is undergoing a resurgence of new concepts. From the Enoteca Group comes the Drunken Duck, a gastropub serving up Asian-inspired dishes bang in the middle of Staunton Street.

■ **HIT** Visiting on a weeknight, the place was packed—the casual atmosphere and attentive service were a big plus. Crunchy Irish rock oysters (\$139) were cooked in a crisp Tsingtao

batter and served with a Thai dipping sauce that packed a kick. Eight-hour slow roasted and grilled octopus (\$108) was tender, with slightly burnt ends that gave a smoky flavor and an interesting textural contrast. The portion was a bit stingy for the price though.

■ **MISS** DD's signature duck (\$138 for a quarter) is marinated in five-spice, then steamed, dried and sozzled in Tsingtao before being roasted. It's presented Peking duck-style and served with hoisin sauce, spring onions and steamed pancakes, but this felt unnecessary. Duck is a fatty meat, but this dish seemed fattier than most. It could have had a crispier skin, too.

■ **BOTTOM LINE** The Drunken Duck offers a solid dining experience in SoHo, with some interesting variations on Asian classics.

Open Sun-Thu noon-11pm; Fri-Sat noon-midnight. \$\$

Ratings

★ Don't go ★★ Disappointing ★★★ We'll be back ★★★★ We'll be back—with friends ★★★★★ You MUST go

Price Guide

\$ Less than \$200 \$\$ \$200-\$399 \$\$\$ \$400-\$599 \$\$\$ \$600-\$799 \$\$\$\$\$ \$800 and up

Our Policy

Reviews are based on actual visits to the establishments listed by our super-sneaky team of hungry reviewers, without the knowledge of the restaurants. Reviews are included at the discretion of the editors and are not paid for by the restaurants. Menus, opening hours and prices change and should be checked. New restaurants are not reviewed within one month of their opening. Reviews are written from a typical diner's perspective. Ratings are awarded in accordance with the type of restaurant reviewed, so the city's best wonton noodle stall could earn five stars while a fancy French restaurant could be a one-star disaster.

PERKS

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REVISIT THE ADVENTUROUS HONG KONG - BEIJING RALLY

Hong Kong-Beijing Rally 30th Anniversary Tour enrollment start and the deadline of Full and Half trip is July 31, 2015. Hong Kong trip deadline is Aug 31, 2015. The entry fee are HK\$3,000 to HK\$95,800. The kick-off ceremony will be in Central Harbourfront Venue at Sep 12, 2015. You can call 3583 3618 for the reservation of the Kick-Off Ceremony ticket. For more information, please contact HKAA staff as below number.

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Get Your Alfresco Brekkie at BRICK LANE

Known mostly for its brunch menu options, BRICK LANE is a great choice whether you crave eggs benedict or Roast with Yorkshire pudding. Their eclectic menu will never get you bored. Everything here is hip and relaxed with a massive terrace that let you gorge on runny eggs in the open air. The red velvet cakes are almost too good for words. So we will try one word. Yum.

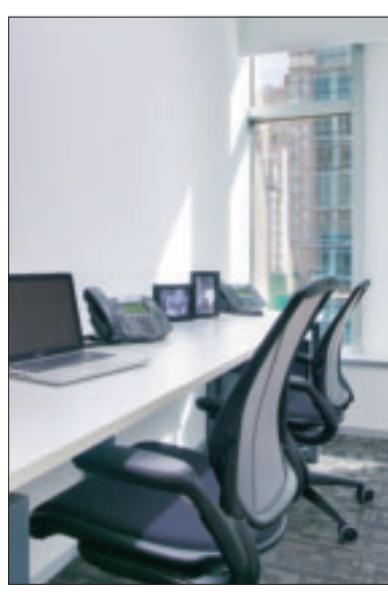
Shop No 222, K11 Art Mall, 18 Hanoi Road, Tsim Sha Tsui 3122 4108



TJR invades AsiaWorld-Expo this Saturday!

Known for his three Beatport overall #1's and the certified Platinum smash, 'Don't Stop The Party' with Pitbull; TJR is the master of the dance floor anthem. The DJ will be performing at the Hope Charity Party (a paint-less party), a replacement event for the postponed Life In Color, which will be held at AsiaWorld-Expo on 25th July together with Danny Avila and 2 Faced Funks. 100% of ticketing profits will donate to Hong Kong victims of the Taipei tragedy.

www.facebook.com/hopecharityparty
www.sigma-production.com



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WHAT'S ON

CULTURE + NIGHTLIFE + FILM



Peaklife

Britpop legends Blur whizzed through Hong Kong for a concert this month, touring their new album "The Magic Whip," which was written and recorded right here in the SAR. The band also commissioned local comic artist Kong Kee to create "**Travel to Hong Kong with Blur**," a 24-page companion comic to the album. Full of the saturated colors of old school comics and stuffed with references to political turmoil old and new, it's a surreal version of the city complete with flying cars, Cantonese opera singers rocking out to guitars, and plenty of the weird and wonderful.

Snag it online from shop.blur.co.uk for £10 (\$121).



HK PICKS



Freespace Happening

With the West Kowloon Harbourfront partially closed for construction in the coming months, the annual Freespace Fest has taken on a smaller scale of events taking place every second Sunday of the month, through March 2016. For the first event this August, look out for a mix of sports—think a skateboarding showcase and a street workout jam; gigs by local indie faves Chochukmo, King Ly Chee and others; a street dance show and a handicraft market and green workshops for those looking for some low-key Sunday fun. Aug 9, 1pm. West Kowloon Cultural District, West Kowloon. Free.

Arts Festivals



Chinese Opera Festival

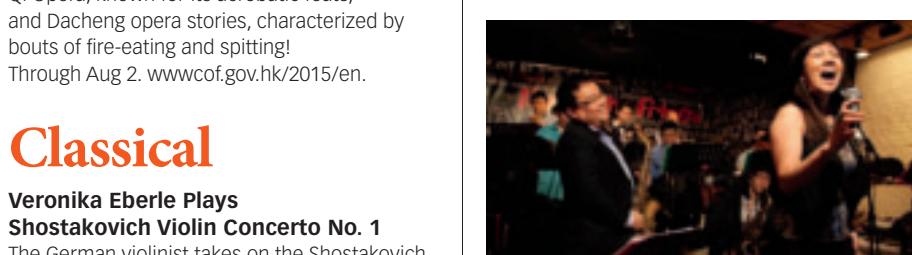
The annual Chinese Opera Festival hits Hong Kong once again this summer. Celebrating the traditional craft of Peking and Kunqu opera forms, the festival opens with a staging of three Shanghai-style plays to introduce the lesser-known art form of Shanghai-style Peking Opera, which has a much more demanding style of acting and rhythm. Other shows to look forward to include an introduction to Hunan-style Qi Opera, known for its acrobatic feats, and Dacheng opera stories, characterized by bouts of fire-eating and spitting! Through Aug 2. wwwcof.gov.hk/2015/en.

Classical

Veronika Eberle Plays

Shostakovich Violin Concerto No. 1

The German violinist takes on the Shostakovich classic, along with Sibelius' "Lemminkäinen"—a tune inspired by Finnish mythology. Eberle will also play the world première of a piece by Hong Kong composer Charles Kwong titled "beforedark.hk.cn," which was commissioned this year by the Sinfonietta. For a more intimate show, meet Eberle in person at the Fringe Dairy (Jul 23, 7:30pm, 2 Lower Albert Rd., Central, \$35-150, includes a drink), where she'll talk about musical insights and also perform some Bach and Ysaÿe. Jul 25, 8pm. Concert Hall, City Hall, 5 Edinburgh Place, Central. \$140-320 from www.urbtix.hk.



Island Express Jazz Orchestra Live at Fringe Dairy

The Island Express Jazz Orchestra is Hong Kong's very own big band—headed by music director Shoichi Chinda, the musicians and solo vocalist Ela Allegre come from a variety of international backgrounds. They'll be playing a tasty selection of big band jazz standards and songs by contemporary jazz composers Bob Mintzer, Frank Mantooth and Matt Catingub. Jul 25, 10pm; Nov 25, 10pm. Fringe Club, 2 Lower Albert Rd., Central, 2521-7251. \$120-150 includes one drink.

Need to Know

Theater & Arts

Urbitix (credit cards)	2111-5999	HK City Hall	2921-2840
Urbitix (enquiries)	2734-9009	HK Academy for Performing Arts	2584-8500
HK Ticketing	3128-8288	Kwai Tsing Theatre	2408-0128
HK Arts Centre	2582-0200	LCSD Music Programme Office	2268-7321
Fringe Club	2521-7251	LCSD Dance/Multi-Arts Office	2268-7323
HK Cultural Centre	2734-2009	LCSD Theatre Office	2268-7323

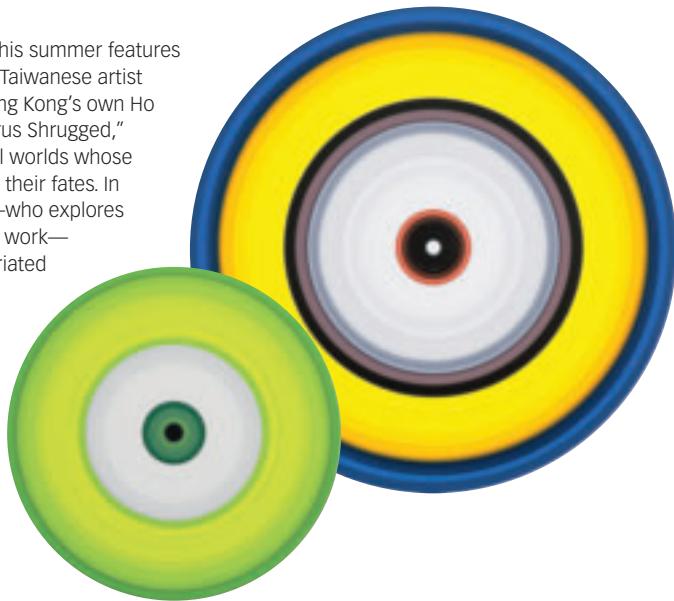
ARTS

Exhibitions



Hanart TZ Duo Show

A duo show at Hanart TZ this summer features two leading Asian talents, Taiwanese artist Agi Chen Yi-Chieh and Hong Kong's own Ho Sin-tung. In her show "Icarus Shrugged," Ho reveals chilling fictional worlds whose protagonists try to escape their fates. In "Encoded Islands," Chen—who explores mass media culture in her work—constructs worlds appropriated from popular cartoons, injecting abstracted versions of their characters into each piece in the form of an eerie bullseye—like this abstracted Minion. Through Aug 13. Hanart TZ Gallery, Room 401, Pedder Building, 12 Pedder St., Central, 2526-9019.



Jaffa Lam: Looking For My Family Story

Sculptor Jaffa Lam strays from her usual bread and butter to present a new series of photographic works. Working with the theme of representing history, she questions the truthfulness that the camera presents. Lam puts together collages of her old family photos juxtaposed with images of society from the same period, analyzing a family history reconstructed from collective memory. Through Aug 23. Lumenvisum, L2-10, 30 Pak Tin St., Shek Kip Mei, 3177-9159.



Nocturnal Friendships

Curated by Liu Wei and Bowen Li, this group exhibition at Lehmann Maupin looks at the idea of friendship and how it ties in with desire and death. The seven artists' artworks work in tandem with concepts taken from Cicero's "Treatise of Friendship"—basically a manifesto for How To Be A Good Friend—and from Nietzsche's idea of a "nocturnal," insignificant friendship without substance. Because artists need friends too. Through Aug 22. Lehmann Maupin, Unit 407, Pedder Building, 12 Pedder St., Central, 2530-0025.



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Open Bar Mitte



The buzz: Combining eclectic Berlin vibes, sound-proof doors, live DJ sets, art exhibitions, quaffable cocktails and Italian food all under one roof, Mitte has all the making of the coolest bar in town. The casual Sheung Wan hangout only has a few seats, though, so either snag a stool at the small bar or be prepared to wait your turn—rest assured the handcrafted food and bevvies are totally worth your time.

The décor: Inside concrete Brutalist-inspired architectural elements mix with retro furnishings and spots of cool neon to make the space come alive. Full of surprises, Mitte is one of those bars where the experience always feels fresh and full of surprises. For instance, the team made the bar by upcycling scrap wood from Hong Kong carpenters, and tucked inside we discovered little handwritten notes—there one day, gone the next.

The drinks: As the neon sign in the back of the bar hints, Mitte has four variations of negronis on the menu. Try the classic negroni (\$126), made with bitters from the aptly named Negroni Distillery (instead of campari), Carpano Antica Formula vermouth and Boodles gin, finished with an orange twist. The Spritz (\$78) is zippy and perhaps too easy to drink, but don't be fooled—it's not for lightweights. It uses sweet "11 percent" bitters, topped off with Italian sparkling wine from the Col Saliz winery. Then there's the Negroni Sbagliato (\$108), which literally means "wrong negroni," with bitters, vermouth and prosecco. Not a negroni nut? Another favorite is the Hugo (\$102), made of elderflower liquor, prosecco, mint and a splash of soda—a surefire summer favorite.

Why you'll be back: The food is just as good as the drinks, with home-style Italian bites, al dente pasta and heavenly desserts. Don't leave without trying the tiramisu and the nutellina: fried pizza dough smothered in Nutella.

Kate Springer

**1A Upper Station St.,
Sheung Wan, 2803-7080.**



Imagine Dragons

Did you miss Imagine Dragons' free gig last year at the "Transformers" premiere? The Las Vegas alt-rock band is coming back for a one-night performance. This time, though, you'll have to pay. Sorry. Aug 23, 9pm. AsiaWorld-Arena, Sky Plaza Rd., Chek Lap Kok. \$288-788 from www.hkticketing.com.



Maroon 5

A Maroon 5 concert is kind of like the bus: You miss one, and the next one is just around the corner. See them at AsiaWorld-Arena. Sep 4, 8pm. AsiaWorld-Arena, Sky Plaza Rd., Chek Lap Kok. \$488-988 from www.hkticketing.com.



Muse

Brit-rockers Muse have been around since 1994, making them one of the most successful, most consistent rock bands in the world. Bellamy and co. always rock their live shows, so this gig will be one to watch. Sep 29, 8pm. AsiaWorld-Arena, Sky Plaza Rd., Chek Lap Kok. \$780 from www.hkticketing.com.

HK PICKS



OpenSesame!

This August, Yuen Long plays host to OpenSesame!, a two-day music festival boasting a lineup of over 30 of Hong Kong's best indie acts including Ni.ne.mo (pictured), ANWIYCTI and Shepherds the Weak. Best part? You can set up camp and stay the night. Organizers stumbled on the space and begged villagers to let them host the shindig, which will also offer games, food, drinks and lots of greenery. Aug 15, noon; Aug 16, 11am. 1 Chi Ma Leng, Pat Heung, Kam Tin Road, Yuen Long. \$280-380; \$150 extra for camping. Tickets from www.ticketflap.com.

Clubs

DJ Magnum

Dragon-i's brand new I Love Wednesday series continues. This time, the club brings Parisian DJ Magnum to the hump-day crowd. Also known as "The Chief Rocker," he'll be spinning a mix of hip-hop, rock, disco and dance. Jul 29, 10pm. Dragon-i, U/G, The Centrium, 60 Wyndham St., Central, 3110-1222. Price TBA.

Summer Series 2—Bali Bikini Night

Can't make it to Bali? Ozone is bringing Bali to you. Four female DJs from the Indonesian island are descending on the highest bar in the world to spin at this gig. Jul 25, 10pm. Ozone, 118/F, The Ritz-Carlton, 1 Austin Rd. West, West Kowloon, 2263-2263. \$200 at the door, including a drink.

Gregor Tresher

Gregor Tresher is known for techno-driven and electronica tracks that please clubbers who are looking to dance to something other than the Top 40. Prefer Iggy Iggs? Stay at home. Jul 31, 10pm. Volar, B/F, 38-44 D'Aguilar St., Central, 2810-1510. \$250 from www.ticketflap.com, including two drinks before 12:30am and one thereafter. \$300 at the door before 12:30am and \$350 thereafter, both include two drinks.



O.T. Genasis

His song "Coco" has been blasting in nightclubs for the past few months—now's your chance to see American-Belizean rapper O.T. Genasis live at Dragon-i. The lyrics? "Baking soda, I got baking soda." Hint: it's not actually baking soda. Can't get enough of the coco? He's also heading to Club Cubic in Macau to perform a few days later. Aug 5, 10:30pm. Dragon-i, U/G/F, The Centrium, 60 Wyndham St., Central, 3110-1222. \$500 at the door. Aug 8, 11:30pm. Club Cubic, 2/F, Hard Rock Hotel, City of Dreams, Estrada do Istmo, Cotai, Macau, (+853) 6638-4999. \$380 at the door.

Concerts



OK Go

LA-based, YouTube-originated pop band OK Go is back on the scene with this concert at Musiczone. Go see them for the nostalgia, if nothing else. Remember when YouTube was a new thing? Nor do we. Jul 24, 8pm. Musiczone, KITEC, 1 Trademart Drive, Kowloon Bay. \$450 from www.ticketflap.com.

Gigs



Musician Area 6th Anniversary

Indie music venue Musician Area is celebrating its 6th birthday with a little help from their friends. See rapper Heyoliztic; post-hardcore five-piece Prayforme; emo and power-poppers Say You Care; rap/metal group SexyHammer; alt-rock and nu-metal foursome Jatbunsing; and newcomers Carrier, who wish to spread their music "like a virus." Jul 25, 7:30pm. Musician Area, Room C, 8/F, Morlite Building, 40 Hung To Rd., Kwun Tong. \$150 at the door.

HK PICKS



Outlook Festival Hong Kong Launch Party 2015

Don't have tickets to Croatia's bass music festival Outlook in September? Or do you just REALLY like Microsoft Office's email client? Go to this party, set at a BBQ venue in Ma On Shan. Local mainstays like DJ Saiyan and Muggsy are behind the decks and it's not all about the DJ beats either—10-piece ska band extraordinaire the Red Stripes and Cantonese reggae band Sensi Lion will also take to the stage. This party has been taking place in Hong Kong for the last two years and for some reason, it's still called a "launch party." But hey—it's an outdoor music festival right here in Hong Kong, so just go with it. Aug 8, 4pm-1am. Whitehead Barbecue, STT 1950, Ma On Shan. \$380 before Aug 7, from www.ticketflap.com; \$450 at the door.

The Mid Summer Ritual

Backstage Live puts on the Mid Summer Ritual, featuring a mix of indie performances on its intimate stage. See Hong Kong-based Mexican electro duo Deer; indie poppers League of Gentlemen; indie five-piece Nowhere Boys, which plays cinematic soft-rock tunes; and finally the experimental sounds of Heroes. Jul 25, 10pm. Backstage Live, 1/F, Somptueux Central, 52-54 Wellington St., Central, 2167-8985. \$200 at the door, including a drink.

JMSN

JMSN (pronounced "Jameson"), aka Albanian-American singer-songwriter Christian Berishaj, is set to bring his soul, electronica and indie R&B sounds to Hidden Agenda. Jul 28, 8:30pm. Hidden Agenda, Unit 2A, Wing Fu Industrial Building, 15-17 Tai Yip St., Ngau Tau Kok. \$180 from www.ticketflap.com; \$240 at the door.



Happy Mondays

UK alt-rock band Happy Mondays defined the "Madchester" scene of the 80s in the UK. Despite disbanding multiple times over the years, they've been able to pull through and come together. Catch them at KITEC. Jul 28, 8pm. Rotunda 3, KITEC, 1 Trademart Drive, Kowloon Bay. \$545-650 from www.wegottickets.com.

Parties

W Hotel Shock Wave:

#PoseWhenever Pool Party

There are only two sessions left of the W Hotel's notorious summer pool parties. This year, they come with the cumbersome title Shock Wave: #PoseWhenever Pool Party. Splash around on the 76th floor pool and gawk at the half-naked beautiful people all around you. Aug 1, 22, 8pm. W Hotel, 1 Austin Rd. West, West Kowloon, 3717-2222. \$400 in advance or \$500 at the door, including one drink at the pool and one at the after-party. \$950 for "VIP" tickets in advance or \$1,100 at the door, including free-flow drinks and champagne until 1am. Tickets from www.w-hongkong.com/en/shockwave.

The Dapper Club

Woobar joins hands with whisky brand Chivas and luxury watch company Hublot to bring us the Dapper Club, a series of parties taking place over the summer. What's in store? There's an open bar with 12 different kinds of whiskies, plus a showcase of new, shiny watches—but more importantly, there are free-flow cheeses, cold cuts, sweet treats and savory snacks. Who can say no to free-flow snacks? Aug 14, 8:30pm. Woobar, W Hotel, 1 Austin Rd. West, West Kowloon, 3717-2222. \$300 per person; call to book.

Splash

The pool party at Macau's Hard Rock Hotel is now in its 12th edition. This year the Stafford Brothers & Chris Lake are headlining with their progressive and electro house beats. Expect live DJs, shots and lots of bikinis. Don't want to catch the ferry home like some kind of zombie? Book a hotel room quick. Aug 22, 3:30pm. Hard Rock Hotel Macau, City of Dreams, Estrada do Istmo, Cotai, (+853) 8868-3338. \$480 from www.cityofdreamsmacau.com.

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Ant-Man ★★★★

(USA) Action/Comedy/Heist. Directed by Peyton Reed. Starring Paul Rudd, Evangeline Lilly, Corey Stoll, Bobby Cannavale, Michael Peña. Category IIA. 117 minutes. Opened July 16.

You've got to admire Marvel Studios and its comprehensive, multi-phase plan to bring its comics to the big screen. Yes, as if part of some kind of nefarious supervillainous scheme, they're actually called "phases." "Ant-Man" signifies the end of Phase Two, and now things are getting really interesting.

They've refined the funny, jokey hero formula to a super-powered T, and now that Marvel has got the big guns out of the way—Iron Man, Captain America, The Avengers—it's getting confident enough to fling its weight (and its stacks upon stacks of cash) behind the company's lesser-known properties. Last year's "Guardians of the Galaxy" was impressively, unexpectedly excellent, despite the fact that only comics nerds knew anything about it. And now it's the turn of Ant-Man, the mighty superhero who can—yes indeed—SHRINK HIMSELF TO THE SIZE OF AN ANT! Does Marvel's gamble pay off? Yes—but in a smaller way than they might have hoped.

Scott Lang (Paul Rudd, "Anchorman") is a principled cat burglar who's just been released from prison. Lang wants to get his life back on track, find a job, start paying child support and hang out with his daughter. But no one wants to hire an ex-con, and Lang finds himself being drawn into one more job: breaking into the home of misanthropic scientist Hank Pym (Michael Douglas). But Pym has set the whole thing up, because he needs a noble soul to take on the role of Ant-Man: a superhero who wears a suit able to shrink to microscopic size. Oh, and who talks to ants. Together with Pym's daughter Hope (Evangeline Lilly) they have to stop evil scientist mastermind Darren Cross (Corey Stoll) from, you guessed it, ending the world.

In many ways "Ant-Man" is a heist movie, just with acrobatics and gadgets on a microscopic level. There's breaking-and-entering aplenty and a bumbling cop or two, plus teeny-tiny munitions... and a whole load of ants. Paul Rudd is the archetypal everyman, whose earnest charm and humor almost makes you forget that he is, in fact, exceedingly handsome. Michael Douglas is entertainingly curmudgeonly, although you have to feel for Evangeline Lilly, whose character—at least in this movie—is relegated to "uptight daughter struggling for dad's approval."

The movie stalls in a few areas—some clunky exposition, curtailed father/daughter tension between Hank and Hope Pym—and most of all, it doesn't completely sell the idea that shrinking to a minuscule size is actually badass. The movie was originally pitched and written by Edgar Wright ("Shaun of the Dead," "Scott Pilgrim") but the offbeat director was replaced at a relatively late stage. As it stands, "Ant-Man" suffers from not having quite enough of that Edgar Wright quirkiness.

That said, certain sequences are really enjoyable. Director Peyton Reed ("Yes Man," "Down With Love") has lots of fun with his sight gags and there are a couple of standout moments anchored by the always entertaining Michael Peña ("End of Watch," "Fury") as Scott's hapless crook buddy Luis. Essentially, "Ant-Man" isn't the best of Marvel's superhero movies, but it's a fun romp nonetheless. The film is smaller-scale in every way than its compatriots, harking back to the early "Iron Man" days of the Marvel universe where not every character had to cameo in everything. Despite occasionally weak narratives, it's a wholly good-natured entry into the Marvel film universe. Roll on Phase Three, and cue supervillain laugh. **Adam White**

Coming Soon



Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation

(USA) Tom Cruise returns once again as Ethan Hunt, a lone operative after spy agency IMF is disbanded. The impossible mission du jour? Hunt must deal with The Syndicate, a group of secret operatives who want to establish a new world order. Hunt bands together with British ex-agent Ilsa Faust (Rebecca Ferguson) to take them down—but can she be trusted? How impossible IS this mission? Opens Jul 30.

Red Amnesia

(China) A dizzying new suspense thriller from Wang Xiaoshuai, one of the forerunners of the "Sixth Generation" of Chinese filmmakers. A widow is plagued by angry anonymous phone calls, but no one believes in her plight—except for her recently dead husband, whom she continues to talk to. Strange events cause her to unearth memories which she's repressed for over 40 years. It's said to be a metaphorical comment on the continued "collective amnesia" of China. Opens Jul 30.

The Tribe

(Ukraine) Not only are you transported to a bleak Ukrainian winter in this film, it's also Category III-rated and shot completely without subtitles... or dialogue. Sergey is the new kid at a boarding school for the deaf, but he stumbles upon the Tribe, a student gang behind a prostitution ring. Hazed into the group, Sergey begins to rise up the ranks... until he finds himself falling for one of the girls. Bleak, depressing and totally silent? Sounds like the perfect date night movie! Opens Jul 30.



What We Do in the Shadows

(New Zealand) Jemaine Clement of comedy rockers Flight of the Conchords directs and stars in this mockumentary about three age-old vampire flatmates who try to cope with the woes of modern day life. When a freshly turned fledgling vampire joins the house, the three try to show him that being undead ain't so bad after all. Opens Jul 30.

Opening



Inside Out

(USA) Another summer, another Pixar cartoon to tug at your heartstrings. The heroes of "Inside Out" are none other than the emotions of Riley, an 11-year-old girl from the Midwest. As she and her parents move to San Francisco, Joy (Amy Poehler), Sadness, Anger, Fear, and Disgust have to work out how to help Riley adjust to her new home. Buckle in: It's definitely going to give you ALL THE FEELS. Opens Jul 23.

Insidious: Chapter 3

(USA) Ah, the curse of the third movie. Gone are Rose Byrne and Patrick Wilson playing the couple trying to save their possessed, comatose son. The third chapter is written and directed by first-time director Leigh Whannell and focuses on the predicament of a teenager grieving for her late mother. Spookiness awaits... Opens Jul 23.

Love is Strange

(USA) This isn't your average love story: John Lithgow and Alfred Molina play an older couple who have just gotten married after spending 40 years together. But when one of them loses his job, they're forced to sell their apartment and temporarily live apart. As George (Molina) moves in with neighbors, Ben (Lithgow) shares a bunk bed with his nephew in Brooklyn. With audiences singing high praises for the lead performances, this is not one to miss. Opens Jul 23.

Magic Mike XXL

(USA) Ladies (and gents), hang on to your shorts, because it's time yet again for shirtless, ab-tastic gyrating from the likes of Channing Tatum, Joe Manganiello and Matt Bomer, with Donald Glover joining the ranks of the strip crew. There's a plot here somewhere, something about Magic Mike (Tatum) rounding up the gang for one last legendary performance on Myrtle Beach. But who needs plot when you've got all those shiny abs? Opens Jul 23.



Paris Holiday

(Hong Kong) A Louis Koo summer rom-com! A freshly jilted Lee Chun-kit (Koo) runs away to Paris to start a new life. In his new apartment, he meets his new roommate, a manic pixie dream girl budding artist (Amber Kuo) who has also recently had her heart broken. Sparks inevitably fly, but is it really the best idea to pine after your roommate? Opened Jul 23.

Continuing

Ant-Man

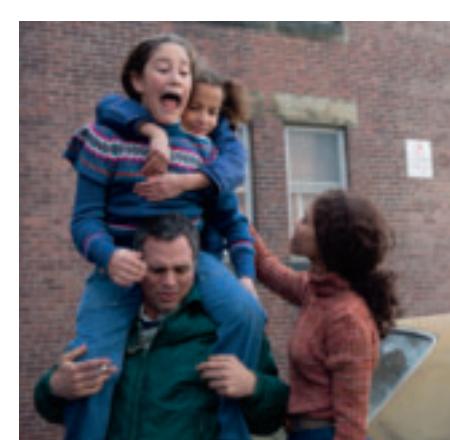
(USA) See review, left.

Entourage

(USA) Picking up where the show left off in 2011, Hollywood's favorite bad boy Vincent Chase is back with manager/best friend E, former gofer-turned-tequila-entrepreneur Turtle, half-brother and failed actor Johnny Drama, and of course agent-from-hell Ari Gold. Making a comeback as the head of a studio, Ari calls Vinnie and the crew to star in their first feature film. Expect lots of name-dropping, celebrity cameos... and boobs. ★★★

Far From the Madding Crowd

(UK/USA) One of Thomas Hardy's classics comes to life on screen once again, this time with Carey Mulligan ("An Education") as the independent Bathsheba Everdene. In the timeless tale, Bathsheba attracts three suitors and must choose between them—while also inheriting her uncle's farm and showing the male workers who's boss. An admirable performance from Mulligan seals the deal for a solid movie. ★★★



Infinitely Polar Bear

(USA) Screened at the Sundance Film Festival in Hong Kong last year, this is a whimsical drama that sees Mark Ruffalo as a father coping with manic depression and recovering from a recent breakdown. Hoping to make a better life for their two precocious daughters, his wife (Zoe Saldana) takes on an MBA at Columbia, leaving Ruffalo to take care of the kids—and himself. Equal parts whimsy and heart-tugging drama, anchored by the wonderful Ruffalo. ★★★★

It Follows

(USA) The sophomore work of David Robert Mitchell ("The Myth of the American Sleepover") was called the best original horror film of 2014. After a young woman sleeps with her boyfriend for the first time, she finds herself up against an evil spirit. A horror film disguised as a pro-abstinence scare tactic? Or the best horror flick of the year? Watch it and see.

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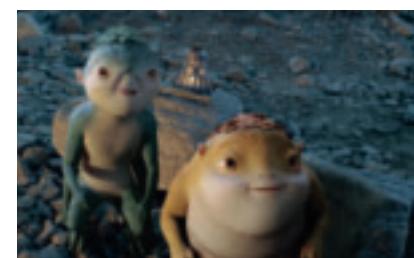
Jurassic World

(USA) It's been 22 years since the infamous dino-park opened and it's back again in a long-awaited fourth installment. Pushed to boost visitor attendance, the park concocts a hybrid creature, the Indominus Rex—a blend of all your worst reptilian nightmares. A fun, flashy revamp, but it can't possibly match up to the original. ★★★



Minions

(USA) The pesky yellow creatures from 2010's "Despicable Me" finally get their own spin-off movie. This time, the plot takes us way back before the minions were serving supervillain Gru. Having worked from the beginning of time for unsuccessful baddies such as T. Rex and Napoleon, they now seek out the latest evil boss to worship lest they fall into deep depression. The search leads them to Scarlet Overkill, the world's first ever super-villainess.



Monster Hunt

(Hong Kong/China) Affectionately dubbed the "Father of Shrek," animator Raman Hui has a new project out. "Monster Hunt" combines the star-studded likes of Jing Boran, Tang Wei and Sandra Ng with an array of animated monsters. Based on traditional supernatural stories from "Strange Tales from Liaozhai," the film is Hui's first live action feature.



Over Your Dead Body

(Japan) Prolific Japanese director Takashi Miike lends his hand to this horror thriller. A theater troupe is about to put on the classic horror play "Yotsuya Kaidan," a story of deadly revenge, ghosts, and murder. But the story begins to take its toll on the cast, who also struggle with grudges and lust off-stage. Juicy.

Poltergeist

(USA) A retelling of the 1982 classic, this time round the spooky tale appears (of course) in brand spankin' new 3D. Eric Bowen (Sam Rockwell), his wife Amy (Rosemarie DeWitt) and their three kids move into a new suburban home in Illinois. But when youngest daughter Maddy begins talking to an imaginary friend—and one day goes missing—the parents consult a team of parapsychologists to save her before it's too late. Kids with imaginary friends: usually a bad sign.

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3516-8811
www.ucinemas.com.hk

The Grand Cinema,
2196-8170
www.thegrandcinema.com.hk

The Metroplex, 2620-2200
www.metroplex.com.hk



Terminator: Genisys

(USA) Arnie returns as the Terminator in the fifth movie of the series—in all steel ab CGI glory. In this rebooted timeline, the future of the past is once again in question. Resistance leader John Connor (Jason Clarke) sends Kyle Reese (Jai Courtney) back in time to protect his mother, Sarah Connor (Emilia Clarke, "mother of dragons" herself)—who this time around is a skilled fighter with a Terminator on her team. The movie franchise may be old, but the story and magnetic performances make it far from obsolete. ★★★★

Ted 2

(USA) Seth MacFarlane's trash-talking, bong-smoking, F-bomb-dropping cuddly stuffed animal returns in this sequel, this time faced with very human and serious dilemmas. With his best friend John (Mark Wahlberg) by his side, Ted is looking to prove his "personhood" in court so that he and his girlfriend can adopt a baby. Couldn't they just go buy a tiny teddy bear or something?

HK PICKS



The Young and Prodigious T.S. Spivet

(USA) This good ol' fashioned adventure story is based on Reif Larsen's 2009 novel. A 10-year-old science prodigy and budding cartographer wins an award for inventing a perpetual motion machine. He secretly embarks on a cross country trek from his family's ranch in Montana to Washington D.C. to receive the prestigious prize—with a dark secret in tow. Thanks to director Jean-Pierre Jeunet ("Amélie") and frequent collab partner Guillaume Laurent, you've got a fantastic, dreamy cinematography and a script that makes your heart swell. ★★★★

Film Festival



CineFan SIFF 2015

Cinephiles, get your cash ready: The annual Summer International Film Festival returns this August. Featured films include Hou Hsiao-hsien's latest offering, "The Assassin," which won him best director at Cannes this year. Starring Shu Qi, it's an arty first foray into the martial arts genre for the director. Stay tuned as well for a filmmaking masterclass from Malaysian director Tsai Ming-liang (1992's "Rebels of the Neon God") on Aug 8-9. Aug 11-25. Various screening locations. www.cinefan.com.hk.

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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

ROB BREZSNY



Leo (Jul 23-Aug 22): A researcher at the University of Amsterdam developed software to read the emotions on faces. He used it to analyze the expression of the woman in Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting, the Mona Lisa. The results suggest that she is 83 percent happy, 9 percent disgusted, 6 percent fearful, and 2 percent angry. Whether or not this assessment is accurate, I appreciate its implication that we humans are rarely filled with a single pure emotion. We often feel a variety of states simultaneously. In this spirit, I have calculated your probably mix for the coming days: 16 percent relieved, 18 percent innocent, 12 percent confused, 22 percent liberated, 23 percent ambitious, and 9 percent impatient.

VIRGO (Aug 23-Sep 22): "What makes you heroic?" asked philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Here's how he answered himself: "simultaneously going out to meet your highest suffering and your highest hope." This is an excellent way to sum up the test that would inspire you most in the coming weeks, Virgo. Are you up for the challenge? If so, grapple with your deepest pain. Make a fierce effort to both heal it and be motivated by it. At the same time, identify your brightest hope and take a decisive step toward fulfilling it.

LIBRA (Sep 23-Oct 22): Actress and musician Carrie Brownstein was born with five planets in Libra. Those who aren't conversant with astrology's mysteries may conclude that she is a connoisseur of elegance and harmony. Even professional stargazers who know how tricky it is to make generalizations might speculate that she is skilled at cultivating balance, attuned to the needs of others, excited by beauty, and adaptive to life's ceaseless change. So what are we to make of the fact that Brownstein has said, "I really don't know what to do when my life is not chaotic"? Here's what I suspect: In her ongoing exertions to thrive on chaos, she is learning how to be a connoisseur of elegance and harmony as she masters the intricacies of being balanced, sensitive to others, thrilled by beauty, and adaptive to change. This is important for you to hear about right now.

SCORPIO (Oct 23-Nov 21): You're entering a volatile phase of your cycle. In the coming weeks, you could become a beguiling monster who leaves a confusing mess in your wake. On the other hand, you could activate the full potential of your animal intelligence as you make everything you touch more interesting and soulful. I am, of course, rooting for the latter outcome. Here's a secret about how to ensure it: Be as ambitious to gain power over your own darkness as you are to gain power over what happens on your turf.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22-Dec 21): I'm a big fan of the attitude summed up by the command "Be here now!" The world would be more like a sanctuary and less like a battleground if people focused more on the present moment rather than on memories of the past and fantasies of the future. But in accordance with the astrological omens, you are hereby granted a temporary exemption from the "Be here now!"

approach. You have a poetic license to dream and scheme profusely about what you want your life to be like in the future. Your word of power is *tomorrow*.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 19): A philanthropist offered \$100,000 to Western Washington chapter of the Girl Scouts. But there were strings attached. The donor specified that the money couldn't be used to support transgender girls. The Girl Scouts rejected the gift, declaring their intention to empower every girl "regardless of her gender identity, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation." Do you have that much spunk, Capricorn? Would you turn down aid that would infringe on your integrity? You may be tested soon. Here's what I suspect: If you are faithful to your deepest values, even if that has a cost, you will ultimately attract an equal blessing that doesn't require you to sell out. (P.S. The Girl Scouts subsequently launched an Indiegogo campaign that raised more than \$300,000.)

AQUARIUS (Jan 20-Feb 18): Consider the possibility of opening your mind, at least briefly, to provocative influences you have closed yourself off from. You may need to refamiliarize yourself with potential resources you have been resisting or ignoring, even if they are problematic. I'm not saying you should blithely welcome them in. There still may be good reasons to keep your distance. But I think it would be wise and healthy for you to update your relationship with them.

PISCES (Feb 19-Mar 20): Over 10,000 species of mushrooms grow in North America. About 125 of those, or 1.25 percent, are tasty and safe to eat. All the others are unappetizing or poisonous, or else their edibility is in question. By my reckoning, a similar statistical breakdown should apply to the influences that are floating your way. I advise you to focus intently on those very few that you know for a fact are pleasurable and vitalizing. Make yourself unavailable for the rest.

ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 19): The Latin motto "Carpe diem" shouldn't be translated as "Seize the day!" says author Nicholson Baker. It's not a battle cry exhorting you to "freaking grab the day in your fist like a burger at a fairground and take a big chomping bite out of it." The proper translation, according to Baker, is "Pluck the day." In other words, "you should gently pull on the day's stem, as if it were a wildflower, holding

it with all the practiced care of your thumb and the side of your finger, which knows how to not crush easily crushed things—so that the day's stem undergoes increasing tension and draws to a tightness, and then snaps softly away at its weakest point, and the flower is released in your hand." Keep that in mind, Aries. I understand you are often tempted to seize rather than pluck, but these days plucking is the preferable approach.

TAURUS (Apr 20-May 20): When I talk about "The Greatest Story Never Told," I'm not referring to the documentary film about singer Lana Del Rey or the debut album of the rap artist Saigon or any other cultural artifact. I am, instead, referring to a part of your past that you have never owned and understood... a phase from the old days that you have partially suppressed... an intense set of memories you have not fully integrated. I say it's time for you to deal with this shadow. You're finally ready to acknowledge it and treasure it as a crucial thread in the drama of your hero's journey.

GEMINI (May 21-Jun 20): The ancient Greek philosopher Thales is credited as being one of the earliest mathematicians and scientists. He was a deep thinker whose thirst for knowledge was hard to quench. Funny story: Once he went out at night for a walk. Gazing intently up at the sky, he contemplated the mysteries of the stars. Oops! He didn't watch where he was going, and fell down into a well. He was OK, but embarrassed. Let's make him your anti-role model, Gemini. I would love to encourage you to unleash your lust to be informed, educated, and inspired—but only if you watch where you're going.

CANCER (Jun 21-Jul 22): Charles Darwin is best known for his book "The Origin of Species," which contains his seminal ideas about evolutionary biology. But while he was still alive, his best-seller was "The Formation of Vegetable Mould Through the Action of Worms." The painstaking result of over forty years' worth of research, it is a tribute to the noble earthworm and that creature's crucial role in the health of soil and plants. It provides a different angle on one of Darwin's central concerns: how small, incremental transformations that take place over extended periods of time can have monumental effects. This also happens to be one of your key themes in the coming months.

HOMEWORK: Write a fairy tale or parable that captures what your life has been like so far in 2015. Share with me at FreeWillAstrology.com.

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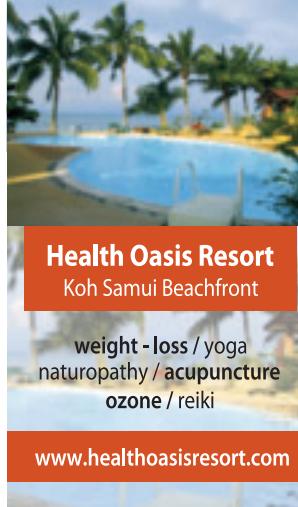
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SAVAGE LOVE

Dan Savage

My wife and I have been together for more than 10 years, practicing some kind of nonmonogamy for more than seven. We tried different things—open, dating others, FWBs—but after a bi threesome with another guy a year ago, we knew that was our thing. For a while, everything was great, but roughly a month after that defining threesome, I came down with a bad case of mono. In a couple of months, we resumed our bi sexdates with our FWB, and I noticed I had a hard time getting horny and even had a hard time getting (and staying) hard. More foreplay was needed and fewer distractions were acceptable. I even resorted to pharmaceutical help. We assumed I was still recovering and that diet and exercise would make it all better. Then I had a work-related crisis that lasted until March (and blamed stress from that, since things didn't really change), and finally in March I got shipped off to a war zone. And I still don't have the drive I had a year ago. My brothers-in-arms ogle every female who happens to be around, and sometimes they hook up even though they're not in open relationships—unlike me, who is in one but has no desire to hook up with anyone. I rarely masturbate these days, and if I do, I need sexts and naughty pictures from my wife (and our FWB) back home to get in the mood. I just recently started to get morning wood again, and I blame all this on the stress of being in a war zone. But I fear these are just excuses and I may have to accept the fact that I'm just getting older and this is how my libido is gonna be from now on. I'm turning 30 in a few weeks, so that doesn't help, either. What are the chances that this is just an unlucky chain of events, and when this is over, I could go back to being my old horny self?

—Currently Occupied Mostly By Arms Though

I asked a doctor—Dr. Barak Gaster, a physician at the University of Washington and a regular (if sometimes mortified) guest expert around here—if mono could damage and/or diminish a guy's libido, his ability to stay hard, and his masturbatory routine for nearly a year.

"Mono is a viral illness for which there is no real treatment other than the tincture of time," said Dr. Gaster. "Mono is a pretty insidious illness in that it typically causes really severe fatigue, which can linger for a long time. Other common symptoms are muscle and joint aches."

Could fatigue and aches still be affecting mood and interest in sex? "They could," said Dr. Gaster. "It would not be typical, but they could. The duration of mono symptoms is typically around three months, but they can persist to some degree for one to two years in more severe cases. None of the effects of mono are typically considered permanent. So it would be important to reassure someone that the effects of mono that are still present after 12 to 18 months could still likely resolve as more time passes."

You came down with mono less than a year ago, COMBAT, so you're still in that one-to-two-year symptoms-could-persist window. You also dealt with a work-related crisis before being shipped off to a combat zone—that sounds extremely stressful, and not everyone reacts to stress the same way. The stress of being in a combat zone could make the guys around you horny while having the opposite effect on you.

Be reassured, like the doctor said, that things—your dick included—will most likely right themselves in another 6 to 12 months. The fact that morning wood is returning seems like a good sign, as is the effect a few dirty texts from the woman (and FWB) waiting for you back home has on your dick.

Come home safe—and props to you and your wife for continuing to grow together sexually.

That's probably why you're still together, and still in love, despite having married so young.

My wife is a submissive. I'm not a natural Dom, but I've become more comfortable assuming the role. Recently, she stopped hormonal birth control, and her sex drive and interest in capital-S Submission kicked into high gear. She joined FetLife and went to her first munch a couple of weeks ago. She's not shopping for a Dom. She's looking to socialize, discuss this part of herself, and not feel like such a freak. She thought she hit it off with a few folks but now realizes she may have been sending mixed signals. The munch was advertised as casual, but she says most left that night with a hookup or play plans. One man in particular seems to read her interest in friendship as sexual. My wife is quite upset. How can she find a group of kinksters who will socialize and share their experiences without assuming her presence as an unaccompanied submissive female is an invitation to fuck?

—Married, Optimally Nookied, Only Need Advice

The people your wife met at that munch are kinksters, MONONA, not psychics. If she's not interested in playing with anyone other than her spouse—if she has a hot Dom at home and is there only to make kinky friends—all she has to do is say so. Munches are informal meetups where kinky people, from nervous novices to wizened pros, get together without the pressures or expectations of a play party. Your wife's presence at a munch is not an invitation to fuck, of course, but someone who respectfully expresses an interest in playing isn't guilty of bending Emily Post over a bondage bench with the intent to fuck her ass. Most people who go to munches are open to play, MONONA, but those who aren't are welcome. Your wife just needs to let her new friends know she's interested only in socializing. You could help her send that unambiguous, non-mixed signal by accompanying her to the next munch.

I'm a 24-year-old heterosexual female. I discovered that my boyfriend still had an online dating profile up and was checking it regularly. We had a calm discussion about it, and he assured me that he just found the messages he got flattering and offered to take it down. I told him if that's all he was doing, then there was no reason he couldn't have those ego boosts and a monogamous relationship with me, too. Had I not been such an avid reader of your column, Dan, that discussion would've gone very differently. And, really, it's not like he was going to forget that other women existed—nor would I want him to. Though I may look back on this and cringe, right now we're in a great place. We have fun and are sexually compatible and have really excellent conversations. Thank you!

—His Answer Perfectly Plausible, Yes

I enjoy letters like HAPPY's because it's nice to be reminded that not everyone is cheating or being cheated on, miserably single and looking to get into a relationship or trapped in a miserable couple and looking to get out, kinky and stuck with a vanilla partner or vanilla and stuck with a kinky one. Some people are doing just fine. And yes, HAPPY, I do think your boyfriend's answer is perfectly plausible—some people are on dating apps for the ego boosts alone (they're called "time wasters")—and here's hoping it's totally truthful as well.

On the Lovecast, Dan speaks with author Joan Price about sex for the senior set: savagecast.com.

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FIRST PERSON

“The father of Shrek’ is an overstatement.

I’m more like the uncle of Shrek.”

Animator and filmmaker **Raman Hui**

is known in Hong Kong as the “The father of Shrek” thanks to his pivotal role in the animated feature. He has also lent his talents to films including “Antz” and “Kung Fu Panda.” Based in the US, he recently returned to his hometown to direct “Monster Hunt,” his first live-action feature. He tells Andrea Lo about struggling to break into Hollywood, what he thinks of his nickname, and why he wants to move back to Hong Kong one day.



I’m a Hong Kong boy. I grew up here and went to the Polytechnic. I studied graphic design.

I wanted to be a painter, because I loved to draw—but there was never any goal.

It wasn’t like, “I have to do this.”

I was more of a passive person, just going with the flow.

My family said, “Are you sure you’re going to get a job?”

I was just a kid. Who would ask a 17-year-old if they knew if they could make a living out of this?

I watched a lot of “Ultraman.” My mom said that I was stupid for watching the show, where the same thing happens every episode—the monster shows up, the Ultraman fights the monster, then everything goes back to normal.

I loved Disney. I remember seeing “Pinocchio” in Tai Kok Tsui; “Fantasia” at the Ocean Theater in Tsim Sha Tsui; and “The Aristocats” in Mong Kok. I don’t know why I remember.

In 1988 I was flipping through a catalog and saw a three-month computer animation course in Canada for CAD\$600.

I thought: “I could afford that.”

I hadn’t been abroad before. I didn’t even bring any winter clothes. Growing up here, you couldn’t imagine how cold it would get in Canada.

I worked there for a few months and bought some winter clothes. It was hard for me, being my size.

Pacific Data Images in Silicon Valley [later acquired by Dreamworks] gave me a job offer.

When my co-workers made jokes, I’d laugh a second after them because I had to pretend to understand them.

It took three to four years before I understood everything fully. I remember one day, I was walking around the company saying, “Hey, it feels like home now!”

The most difficult part [of a Chinese person making it in Hollywood] is the cultural difference. There were times where I would have no idea what my co-workers were talking about.

When “Kung Fu Panda” was in production, I said, “I’m willing to do anything for it.” They asked why I was so desperate to be part of it. I told them it’s because I’m Chinese. They said, “Oh, you’re Chinese?”

I think the name “The father of Shrek” is an exaggeration. I’m more like the uncle of Shrek. I made him talk, smile and cry—made him alive. The father of Shrek should be William Steig, who wrote the book.

It’s weird to say, but Shrek is in my blood.

I thought if I could be an animator on a movie that a lot of people would watch, that would be fantastic. “Shrek” gave me more than that.

I’ve been with Dreamworks for more than 20 years. I told them that I needed a break. They said, “We understand—you’re going back home to do something you want to do.”

But they didn’t know it was going to take that long!

I hope that the audience can see the hard work that we’ve put into “Monster Hunt” and the love we try to bring. We tried to make a new standard for films in this genre.

My favorite thing about Hong Kong is the food. I had an egg tart this morning and a chicken pie just now.

I have thought about moving back permanently. If there’s another movie I can make here, then I would.

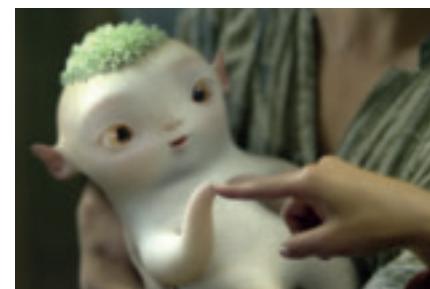
There are too many chain stores now. I went through a period of collecting tin toys. Nowadays, there’s not many shops left.

People say, “Why are you so lucky? You’ve had lots of opportunities.” If you look at my experience—nothing comes easily.

I’ve been animating for 30 years. It’s all through years of hard work. The first time I got to animate a movie was after I had been working for a decade.

When I watched Disney as a kid, I would think, “This just came out.” Later on, I realized that those movies were made 20 years before I watched them.

I hope I can make something that people will still watch 20 or 30 years later and feel what I’m trying to bring to them.



NEED TO KNOW...

Raman Hui made his start as an animator in Hong Kong. He was supervising animator on 1998’s “Antz,” as well as “Shrek” and “Shrek 2,” later co-directing “Shrek the Third.” His new live-action fantasy feature “Monster Hunt” stars Jing Boran and Bai Baihe.

“Monster Hunt” opened in theaters on July 16.



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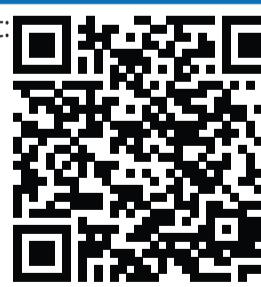
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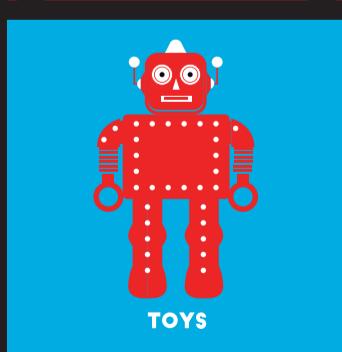
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