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HK

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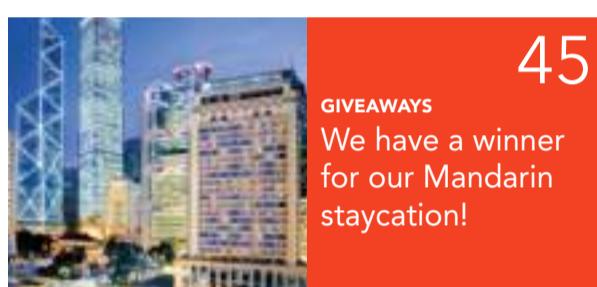
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Mar 4-13

Lyric Theatre, HKAPA

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Performed in English with Chinese surtitles



The Hong Kong Homebuyer's Guide

Fantastic news! Hong Kong is, for the sixth year in a row, the most expensive place in the world to buy an apartment. That's just great for all you homeowners out there, who are sitting on goldmines if you want to sell up and move to a hellhole like Detroit. But for those of you not rich enough to own your own place, we've got some great tips that will take you from renter to owner in no time at all.

Go into Retail.

It's true: Selling goods is a tough industry to make money in. But if you do it right, the rewards are enormous. Here's a case study. A man, L.B., made money by selling the printed word bound into volumes. These words were a combination of gossip and criticism of certain powerful people. This created a ready market of people who wanted to read this kind of material, and were therefore happy to spend money to purchase these volumes. This angered some mid-level functionaries of the powerful people, who abducted L.B. from his city of residence and held him over the border while everyone else wondered what the hell just happened. And L.B. didn't have to worry about buying a house ever again, because he was a guest of state security apparatus instead. See? Retail is super rewarding.

Crash at CY's Place.

You know that movie "The Terminal," where Tom Hanks gets away with living inside JFK Airport for months on end? Simply pack a bag and move into the vast mansion that is Government House. If CY Leung gets curious and asks what you're doing there, look imperious and claim to be from the Liaison Office. He'll avert his eyes and scuttle backwards, muttering vague apologies in atrocious Putonghua.

The Classic Time Machine Gambit.

Struggling to save the 40 percent down payment you'll need to come up with before you can buy an apartment? No problem. Obviously, this is the perfect time for the ol' time machine wheeze. Simply invent and construct a time machine. Go back in time to

the earliest days of Hong Kong and deposit \$500 with a bank, then let compound interest do the work. Zip forward to the modern day and collect your down payment in one handy lump sum. Although given our cratering interest rates you'll make about \$20.

Smash the System.

Let's be real: The government's cooling measures aren't working. The only way we'll be able to afford a place is by engineering the downfall of the entire Hong Kong economy. Thankfully, this appears to be well in progress: Rampant rents, soaring prices, inadequate welfare, useless public housing and a yawning rich-poor gap are all signs of a fundamentally broken society. In sociopolitics, "accelerationism" is the act of encouraging capitalism to fulfil its self-destructive tendencies until it disintegrates. This is all too obviously the hidden agenda of Financial Secretary John Tsang who, far from being a mustachioed buffoon, is evidently a fifth columnist bent on bringing down the prevailing system in order to set up an anarcho-syndicalist utopia. You're doing a killer job, Comrade John!

Diversify.

An international survey has found that the median Hong Kong home costs 19 times the median annual household income. Don't want to slave away at a desk for 19 years of your life just to scrape together enough for a crappy studio walkup? Simple. Remember that time machine you built? Simply go back in time and impregnate yourself 18 times, creating 18 clones. 18 clones plus you working for a single year will rack up that cash no problem. Yeah: same as the government, we just told you to go screw yourself.

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HOME



Mr. Know-It-All's

— Guide to Life —

Dear Mr. Know-It-All,

Why does China use the lunar calendar instead of a solar one? — Moon Boy

Contrary to what you might expect, the Chinese calendar isn't a lunar calendar. Instead it's lunisolar—meaning that it's based on measurements of the phases of the moon, but also on the position of the sun in the sky.

Instead of following the solar calendar in having one leap day every four years, the Chinese calendar introduces a leap month every three years instead. Sounds odd? It's not that unusual. The ancient Babylonians, Greeks and Jews all used a variant of this calendar.

There's been a lunisolar calendar in China since at least the Shang Dynasty, around the 14th century BC. Actually, legend holds that the semi-mythical Yellow Emperor invented the calendar in around 2500BC—but he's also said to have invented math, agriculture, boats and football, so you can take this with a pinch of salt.

In ancient China the secrets of the calendar were jealously guarded, the purview of the king or emperor himself. After all, the emperor carried the mandate of heaven upon his shoulders, which is what allowed him to rule. The interpretation of the spheres was naturally his to pass down. The royal astronomers made their calculations to draw up the calendar, predicting eclipses and forecasting the future. More to the point, it would also be used to tell the people when they should be planting crops or harvesting them.

The brand new Republic of China adopted the Western Gregorian calendar on January 1, 1912, as an attempt to break away from the authority of the emperor. After all, if you've quashed his divine mandate of heaven, then he no longer has control over the months or days of the week. Since then, China's been officially run on the solar calendar.

What are the benefits of a lunisolar calendar? Well, aside from easily being able to tell the phases of the moon and tidal patterns, there aren't that many. They don't allow you to pinpoint where the Earth is in relation to the sun and more practically, it's harder to align the months exactly with the seasons.

But we still use the lunar calendar to mark festivals and decide on auspicious periods for weddings, funerals and more. After all: who wants to mess with the divine mandate of heaven?



My Perfect
HK

This week in My Perfect HK:
The number of crimes committed in Hong Kong last year was the lowest since 1979, says the police commissioner—in other words, that's a 36-year-low. Even in this remarkably safe city it's nice to know that we can be safer still, despite the daily blasts of doom and gloom news. And although some crime inevitably goes unreported, there's no question that this is one of the most law-abiding places in the world.
Most of the time.

Letters

"She and her party are the burden of tax payers!"

Cold Shoulder

We reported online on a woman who shouted at police who blocked her from "Frosthunting" on Tai Mo Shan during the cold snap. Facebook commenters were predictably angry.

She should move to China. There are more people like her living there.

James Lee

I think I was married to her once.

Stephen Glenn

Stupid and selfish....they should have let her go up and ignore her call for help.

Ken Iwaki

All for a sight of frost. Amazing.

Aaron Lee

Porky Pretexts

Last week's "Blowing Water" [January 22, issue 1130] was "Build Raw Pork"—to frame someone. Facebook readers dive into the etymology...

What's the context of fabricating raw pig meat? How does raw pig meat = evidence. I never figured that out. I understand that the 60's HK police force was very corrupt. But how does that relate to raw pig meat?

Peter Wong

Simple mate, use logic, don't follow wrong definitions from the internet, they're all wrong, imagine when English police go to a local Hong Kong restaurant, to order a pork chop,

and the police secretly put a raw pig meat, this raw meat can lead to prosecution the restaurant owner for intentional food poisoning for the police officer, this is more make sense to you.

陳光雨

You Just Can't Win

Our interview with pro-Beijing lawmaker Ann Chiang ["First Person," January 22, issue 1130] was divisive: especially when she insisted that "at least we are creating something."

Finally a political interview for the right! You're improving HK Magazine!!

Jason Wong

She and her party are the burden of tax payers! Vote. Them. Out!

Sabrina Lau

Creating something? Lol

Chrono Chrono

Of course, she's creating anger in hong kong people

Matthew Seafox Tong

Creating troublesssss jerkass

Angus Lai

#PrivateEyeHK



Anyone for Cricket?

Photo by Andrew Tin (Instagram: @andrew.tin)

Need to get something off your chest? Got an amazing photo? Write us! letters@hkmagmedia.com. Letters are printed as-is (unless they need fixing).



Saturday 1/30

El Choco Loco

It's almost Valentine's Day and what better gift than chocolate crafted by your own two hands? El Mercado is putting together a **Chocoteja workshop**: chef Manuel will be there to teach you how to make your own organic Peruvian chocolate, so you'll be able to make your loved one a little something special. No obscene shapes, please. **Jan 30-31, 2pm, Feb 1, 7pm. 21/F, 239 Hennessy Rd., Wan Chai, 2388-8009.** \$200 for one, \$350 for two.

Sunday 1/31

Sevens Heaven

Yes we know it's January and the Sevens don't kick off until April 8 this year, but the **Rugby Sevens ticket ballot** closes today. Throw your hat into the ring for the cheaper tickets, lest you have to shell out through the nose for last-minute tix.

\$350 for Friday, \$750 for Saturday and Sunday from hksevens.com/tickets/ballot.

Coming Up

Many Many Malts

Like a wee dram from time to time? You're in luck: The **Malt Masters Festival** is celebrating its third year in Hong Kong. The two-day event features distilleries from around the world, so that you can savor them all in one go. With activities including masterclasses, food pairing seminars and more, no matter if you're a whisky novice or a single malt connoisseur there's something here for you. Slàinte!

Feb 27-28. Conrad Hong Kong, One Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Admiralty. \$800 for Feb 27, \$600 for Feb 28 from gormei.com.

Monday 2/1

Sweet Mandarin

Get into the CNY spirit and celebrate with something sweet: **Cé La Vi's** corporate pastry chef Jason Licker is launching a limited-edition dessert that's perfect for the festivities. It's a cube of mandarin orange mousse with a nutty black sesame center, for all the textures you need. PLUS it's auspicious. What a win!

25/F, California Tower, 30-32 D'Aguilar St., Central, 3700-2300.

Tuesday 2/2

Monkey Business

The wait is over: The **CNY markets** are now open for business! This year, there are a total of 15 markets around Hong Kong so that you can get all your CNY shopping (cute monkey decorations, traditional sweets, flowers etc.) done in no time.

Through Feb 8. Multiple locations including Victoria Park, 1 Hing Fat St., Causeway Bay.



Wednesday 2/3

Lai Bun Full

Book yourself a family or friend reunion dinner before the holidays:

End the Year of the Sheep on a high note with **Lai Bun Fu's** CNY menu. The restaurant, helmed by the former head chef at Government House, has launched a series of traditional yet modernized Cantonese dishes for the occasion. We say it's freezing, so go all out on the poon choi feast (\$1,880). **5/F, 18 On Lan St., Central.** 2564-3868.



Thursday 2/4

Wood Walk

Thought you knew fairytales? Not like this, you don't. This revival of the Tony-award winning musical **Into the Woods**, intertwines Cinderella, Rapunzel, Little Red Riding Hood and more into a distinctly grown-up whole.

Feb 4-6, 8pm, Feb 7, 7:30pm. Theatre, Hong Kong City Hall, 5 Edinburgh Place, Central. \$295-395 from urbtix.hk.

Friday 2/5

Fringe Benefit

Party like it's 1913 at the Fringe Club's **Open Sesame Fringe Night**, featuring a load of performances including jazz bands, magic shows and DJs as well as a wide range of street food and cocktails. Show up adhering to the black and white dress code and you get in for free!

8pm, Fringe Club, 2 Lower Albert Rd., Central. \$250 at the door if you're not wearing black and white.

Saturday 2/6

Scrum Time

Rugby fans, assemble! The **Natixis Rugby Cup** returns this year to Siu Sai Wan Stadium, where French Top-14 league contenders Racing 92 will face off against defending champions Pulse Energy Highlanders. It's like the Sevens, only the audience is actually paying attention... **4-8pm, Siu Sai Wan Stadium, 8 Fu Hong St., Siu Sai Wan.** \$399 from ticketflap.com.

Last Week In Reality

SAT 16

Tiger Tutor Police arrest a 32-year-old woman in Yuen Long for allegedly fooling a mother into letting her "tutor" her son. The woman had convinced the parent over the phone that she was her son's teacher before being allowed into the flat, where she allegedly stole \$3,600 worth of goods. The arrest came after a few parents in the same district had also been pressured into forking out hefty tuition fees for "concerned teachers" offering to give their young underachievers' grades a boost.

SUN 17

Falun Bomb An annual Falun Gong meeting is interrupted after police receive an anonymous tip about multiple bombs hidden in a hotel where the meeting is to take place. Some 1,200 Falun Gong delegates and around 400 other guests are evacuated from the Tsim Sha Tsui hotel. A bomb squad finds two timers taped around gas cylinders, but no explosives. Police have classified the case as a hoax.



MON 18

Candy Sham Police arrest two men and seize around \$10,000 worth of chocolate, candy, phones and jewelry in Sham Shui Po. One of the pair had allegedly duped nine schoolchildren and senior citizens into believing that they were police and "confiscated" their belongings after conducting searches, using the victims' resistance as an excuse. The two are believed to be responsible for other cases of candy and chocolate theft from supermarkets in the area.

TUE 19

Wrap Star A 54-year-old resident of an apartment building in Happy Valley goes to retrieve his Mercedes-Benz E-Class from the building's car park when he finds that the whole car has been wrapped in cling film. The driver appeared to have parked his car in the wrong place, and police suggest that the spot's real owner might have been seeking revenge to get his spot back.

WED 20

Stunning Failure At around 10pm, a 60-year-old man is walking towards a multi-story car park on Temple Street in Yau Ma Tei when he feels something like a bee sting on his neck. He turns to see a man holding a stun gun. Having failed to stun the man, the thief tries to grab his bag anyway. The man fights the thief, who turns and flees. Police arrive with a search dog, but they are unable to locate the thief.



THU 21

Illustrations: Ryan Chan



FRI 22

Vent Heist A Sai Wan restaurant worker opening up shop in the morning notices that the cash register has been forced open and the safe shows signs of tampering. Police check the restaurant's CCTV feed and discover that a thief has broken into the store through the ceiling. They believe that the thief entered from an exhaust vent outside the store, three meters above the ground, and crawled into the shop. A total of \$18,000 has been taken.

Empress' New Clothes At around 2am a woman is spotted standing completely naked outside a bar in Sham Shui Po. Her photo is posted on social media, where its uploader explains that he had just had dessert in Sham Shui Po when he saw the woman, wearing nothing but a pair of pink slippers on her feet. She stood for a while outside the bar before heading upstairs. According to Hong Kong Observatory, the temperature in Sham Shui Po fell as low as 9°C that night. Netizens suggest that she might have lost a bet.

Quote of the Week

"There are chances in every corner in Hong Kong. Making money was never a difficult task for me."

Property tycoon and casino magnate Lui Che-woo insists on the Hong Kong Dream in an interview with the Hong Kong Economic Times. Lui is worth more than \$58 billion.

Talking Points

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

Sham Marriages Easy To Pull Off

Secretary for Security Lai Tung-kwok has reported on the instances of sham marriages between Hongkongers and mainlanders, wherein mainlanders gain the right to live and work in the SAR. Between 2008 and 2015, the Immigration Department investigated a total of 5,890 suspected sham marriages. In this period 8,655 people were arrested, of whom 1,550 were successfully convicted. The majority were sentenced to between four and 24 months of imprisonment. But the successful prosecution of such cases has been low in the past two years, with conviction rates hovering at about one percent of all arrests. Lai has said that the Immigration Department is working to strengthen its gatekeeping and increase cooperation with mainland authorities.

Our take: One percent conviction rate? It's almost worth fake-marrying a mainland just to get away with it...

Shark's Fin Somehow Still a Thing

With Lunar New Year approaching, The Hong Kong Shark Foundation has surveyed 375 Chinese restaurants across the city, and found that over 98 percent of them are still serving shark fin soup on their Chinese New Year dinner menu. In addition, the foundation reviewed 2,470 regular menus, of which over 85 percent still include shark fin dishes. Joan Chan, the foundation's Campaign Director, says that there has been a significant drop of 30 percent in the number of shark fins imported into Hong Kong between 2012 and 2014. Furthermore, the government has eliminated shark fin from all of its official banquets, and over 60 percent of four-and five-star hotels in the city have promised to stop serving this traditional Chinese delicacy. But despite that the survey shows that the situation is far worse than expected, says Chan, and Hong Kong people are still consuming a considerable amount of shark fin—despite the cruelty with which it is harvested.



Our take: Why are we still talking about this? It doesn't even taste of anything!

Illustration: Elaine Tang

LEE TUNG AVE

利東街

Lee Tung Avenue ushers in the Year of Monkey with an auspicious pair of "Five Fortunes" Chinese arches! A dazzling sea of red lanterns dance to the tune of spring breezes above the enchanting peach blossom garden.

Immerse yourself in the harmonious palette of Spring and be blessed with good fortune!

Lee Tung Avenue Chinese New Year Parade

Be thrilled by performances of world-renowned parade groups at the International Chinese New Year Parade organized by the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

9 February (Second day of CNY) 5pm - 6pm

- Stilt Performances by Stelzen-Art & Confusao, Germany
- Cheerleading Performances by Indianapolis Colts Cheerleaders and Blue, USA

10 February (Third day of CNY) 5pm - 6pm

- Cultural Dances by Tribu Panayanon, the Philippines
- Exciting Performances by The Moscow Variety Theatre, Russia



Red Packet Redemption: Get Your Lucky Red Packets!

Redeem a set of red packet with calligraphy by renowned calligrapher Mr Fung Siu Wah. Free with purchases HK\$300* or above at Lee Tung Avenue from now to 7 Feb 2016. Offer valid while stocks last.

Redemption Venue: Basement 1/F, Customer Service Centre, Lee Tung Avenue (10am - 10pm)

* up to two original machine-printed receipts issued by different shops





Street Talk

Last year, NASA revealed a three-part plan to send humans to live on Mars by 2030. As part of its Habitat Challenge, the space agency asked architects to design a livable habitat for astronauts to survive for long periods on the planet. Hong Kong architect **Sidney Tang** was one of the top 30 finalists with his "Martian Domes" design. He tells Isabelle Hon about the inspiration behind it and his passion for outer space.

HK Magazine: When did you become interested in architecture?

Sidney Tang: When I was young I didn't know I would be so into architecture. I just loved beautiful, delicate things. I was bad at math, so I chose an art-related subject. I started to really fall in love with architecture when I started studying it in university.

HK: How did you become involved in the NASA competition?

ST: At the very early stages, I just sent some pdfs and proposals of my dream house on Mars to NASA. I tried to become knowledgeable about space and then apply a cool concept to my design. The house I designed consists of several egg shapes; the rooms are all separate so people can escape from one egg to another egg during an emergency. Of course, it would be made of specific materials that would be durable in space. Later, I created my design using 3D-printing and made it to the final round.

HK: What do you think helped you create a successful model?

ST: I love to observe, and I love to learn about everything—I am a jack of all trades. Of course everyone has setbacks sometimes, including me. I tried to apply for so many jobs before graduating—but I never got any replies. Once I went into a well-known architect's firm trying to get an interview, and the assistant just told me to leave. Those experiences were hard to deal with, as I was still a student at that time. Whenever I got turned away I would write a note: "I will be back."

HK: Does anyone ever tell you your smile looks like Chow Yun-fat's?

ST: Yes! People have said I look like Chow Yun-fat since secondary school. They all call me "Fat Gor." But I think my boss likes my personality more—appearance doesn't directly help me with my career, but it does make it easier for people to recognize me. When I was in university, I always sat in on other courses besides my major, such as business and film media. It was a big class but the professor still recognized me at first glance. We became good friends. I helped to design the wood deck on his house.

HK: Does being a NASA-recognized architect help you get girls?

ST: I am single, but I am not expecting anything at the moment. I think it will come if it comes.

HK: Any tips for residents of planet Earth?

ST: There are limited resources on the planet right now, and we might have the chance to move to other planets in the future. We really have to treasure what we have now. Also, nowadays Hong Kong seems divided into Yellows and Blues; I think people should try to make friends with each other and be more united.

What if one day we have to cope with aliens?

Check out Sidney's design at facebook.com/nasamartiantdomes.



Blowing Water

吹水 (*chui sui*), v. Cantonese slang. To chat, bullshit.

lou5 si2 fat1
老屎忽

"OLD ASS"

Someone who has worked for the same company for years without learning, slowly becoming more and more lazy.

HongKabulary



Dupermarket (djəpə'ma:kət), n.

An upscale supermarket which charges \$500 for an item that you could get for \$50 at the market round the corner.

*"Check out these fine frozen Alaskan salmon fillets I just picked up!"
"They cost HOW MUCH? Oh, you must have got them at the dupermarket."*



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SHARE YOUR MOMENT



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Draw your love and win a pair of Jan Logan's ring at Hooray

Promotion Period: 12 – 14 Feb 2016

- a) Couples having dinner at Hooray can draw their own ring, the best design will be selected by Jan Logan and be produced as the Valentine's Day gift for the winner couple. Ring valued at around HKD\$12000.

* 10 consolation prizes - free of production cost for 10 couples who place orders at Jan Logan based on their own design.

- b) Enjoy 10% off discount at Jan Logan with any receipt on dinner at Hooray.

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T&C

1. The receipts to redeem discount at Jan Logan must be from 12-14 Feb 2016. Discount effective before 15 May 2016
2. The sketch for the ring design must be given to Hooray staff upon settling check.
3. Winning design may be subject to change due to limitations on production and materials supply.
4. Materials for the ring design will be determined based on budget of production.
5. Result for best ring design will be announced on Hooray's Facebook on 28th Feb 2016.
6. Winner for the ring design will be informed by Jan Logan directly.
7. The ring will be produced in Jan Logan's workshop in Australia. Production time will take 3 weeks.
8. Hooray and Jan Logan reserve the right for final decision in case of any dispute.

Hooray
Bar and Restaurant
www.jcgroup.hk



**Picture for reference only

Lonely Jobs

Hong Kong's a frantic place—for most of us. But there are still those who work alone in a sea of humanity. **Isabelle Hon, Xavier Ng** and **Kate Lok** talk to the people with the loneliest jobs in the city.

Photos by **Kirk Kenny**



Neal Tang, 92

Funeral parlor owner

It doesn't get any lonelier than working with the dead. Neal Tang is one of the owners of the Kowloon Funeral Parlour in Tai Kok Tsui. He tells us about being the only warm body in the room.

“I was born in 1923, so you can do the math. I was originally from a poor part of Guangdong. I came to Hong Kong in 1939, in World War II, when running away from the Japanese.

There weren't that many jobs available at the time. Because of the war, there was one place always hiring—the coffin maker. I started as an apprentice in Yau Ma Tei, learning how to carve a coffin—amongst other duties that were not so pleasant.

I was young and poor so of course I had to do everything. From woodwork on the coffins to carrying the dead to the burial ground, to digging the bones out of the ground. It was a very tough job.

Jobs at a funeral parlor are divided into many parts for different workers. There are workers for the more labor-intensive jobs: moving and dressing corpses, carrying the coffins. It can be quite gruesome, especially for those who didn't die of natural causes. There are also make-up artists for the dead, Taoist priests for the ceremonies, waiters, drivers, customer service officers, accountants, etc. Some work in groups and some alone, depending on the job.

There are around 60 people working at this company. But even though there are that many people, it can still be a lonely job. There's still some stigma to the industry. Some people do try to distance themselves once they figure out where we work. Some won't even walk past

a funeral parlor. But this is all psychological, and society is changing. People are more open to this industry.

Around 46,000 people die per year, and they need to be taken care of. Honestly, it's more of a psychiatric treatment for the living. The dead are already dead. The funeral is to comfort the living.

There aren't that many people joining the industry now. Maybe it's because of the stigma, maybe it's because of the money—the industry is a bit saturated. There are more than 100 coffin stores in Hong Kong—that's too many. People who are not familiar with us think it's a booming industry, but that's not the case.

You get used to the dead bodies. After all, it's just a job and everyone's just trying to make a living. There's nothing scary about it.”



Ming, 60



Refuse transfer point night-shift manager

Ming manages a refuse transfer point in Sai Kung late at night. He's only been doing the job for about a year, but he says there are benefits.

"I am the station manager here. My duties include keeping the station tidy, making sure cars don't park here, and ensuring that garbage all goes into the trash compactor. In the morning the truck takes all the trash to a landfill.

As a night shift station manager, I work from 3:30pm to 11:30 pm. I have an hour's break in between. I buy take-out food most of the time, because sometimes when I eat out, the station is really messy after I get back because people throw their trash anywhere, and it takes a while to clean up.

It is a lonely job. You have to take care of garbage, all alone. Nothing special happens: It's basically the same every day. I don't go and look at the garbage. It's just stuff other people don't need. Sometimes grannies try to collect cardboard boxes here, but it's my job not to allow people in.

I have been here for a year. This job might be lonely to young people, but I'm 60 now. Young people always look for excitement in jobs. Old people just see it as a job. I am happy with my job, and I'm happier to see my grandson on my days off."



Chung Wai-hong, 25

Truck driver

Wai-hong is a delivery driver based in Sai Kung. He spends a lot of time waiting for deliveries... but it's all for a good cause.

"I deliver goods like electronic devices and wines. I help companies to transport goods from one warehouse to another warehouse. I get orders every morning at 7am, and I can clock off as soon as I finish working. Sometimes there are one or two spots, sometimes there are seven or eight.

My company is not big. It only has five trucks and five staff, including the boss. While other companies might have more than one person per truck, we work alone. But that's OK for me as I'm a quiet person. I don't talk much anyway.

I get a monthly salary, I get extra money when we work overtime, and lunch is included. I'm used to buying lunchboxes and eating in the truck. Sometimes we need to wait up to five hours, queuing up to get into the warehouse. I don't think the job is boring. I'll play games on my phone to kill time. Sometimes I'll daydream or listen to K-Pop. I don't know much about politics—I probably think about my wife most of the time. Sometimes I talk to my boss on the phone. But there's nothing much we can talk about. We've already been friends since secondary school."

I'm still in contact with my friends from school, but we rarely meet. We only have karaoke or dinner once every two months, and most of the time I rush home immediately to take care of my wife. She's pregnant, and this job can keep us living happily—so I'm satisfied."



Kan Fu, 51

Postman



Fu has been a postman at the Shau Kei Wan Post Office, covering the route to Taiwoo Shing, for the past 31 years. For him, this solitary job is full of human encounters.

In started working here in 1985. It's been more than 30 years now. Office hours are from 8am to 4pm everyday, but I get to work at around 7 since there are so many letters. After we sort all the letters at around 10am, we get on the staff bus and then start delivering letters.

Although there are more than a hundred postman in the office, we all deliver mail separately so we're alone most of the time. There's a lot of mail every day and the mailbag is heavy. But I don't feel lonely. There are happy memories within these 30 years.

I have a nickname, "Uncle Chocolate Postman." Once I was delivering mail in Taiwoo Shing as usual. A little girl looked at me and asked if there was any mail for her. She was upset because she still hadn't got her birthday present from her parents, who lived overseas. I checked and found that the parcel had been sent back to the Central main office. I ran to the office after work so I could get the parcel for her. She was so happy and ended up sharing her gift with me: They were chocolates. Since then people in that building have called me "Uncle Chocolate Postman."

What do I think about when delivering letters? I basically think about nothing except for the mail. They might just be letters to you, but they're so meaningful to others. I can't make mistakes.



It's Lonely at the Top

It's not just everyday Hongkongers who can be alone. Even the guys at the top of society can feel isolated.



"Long Hair" Leung Kwok-hung
Being the angry voice of dissent over literally everything must get pretty lonesome.



CY Leung
Is there a lonelier job in politics than Hong Kong's top seat? Your allies are useless, the pan-dem block everything you try to do, students are literally waving evil effigies of you and even Beijing doesn't give you the time of day. Tough gig, dude.



Nina Wang
Asia's richest woman might have had it all on paper, but the truth is that her life was a sad tale of protracted legal battles—both before and after her death—as multiple forged wills appeared from people who seemed to be taking advantage of her.



Cecil Chao
The Cheung Nak Holdings tycoon is notorious for his multiple love affairs and has claimed to have slept with 10,000 women. But who holds his heart?

Donald Tsang
Loved by the British, ignored by Hongkongers... where is Bow-Tie Tsang now?



Lonely Hong Kong

It's not just jobs that can be lonely in Hong Kong. Here are some other solitary spots.

Loneliest MTR Station: (LOHAS Park)

This station at the end of the Tseung Kwan O line gets one out of every four trains on the line, which is both amusing and depressing.

Loneliest Village: (Yim Tin Tsai)

This island just off Sai Kung has a permanent population of one, which must make for some pretty great evenings in.

Creepiest Abandoned Building: (Nam Koo Terrace)

This red brick mansion in Wan Chai is beautiful, derelict and rumored to be haunted by the ghosts of Japanese comfort women. So at least you won't be alone...

Most Remote Island: (Tung Ping Chau)

This island sits in Mirs Bay right at the northeastern extent of the city, far closer to Shenzhen than to Hong Kong. It's remote, although at weekends it's also full of geeks with enormous DSLR cameras.

Loneliest Meal:

(Hotpot for One at Café de Coral)

Does anything say "I need friends" more than eating a meal designed to be shared, on your own? Upside: It's delicious.





Photo: Kate Lok

Morgan Wong, 21

Night shift security guard

Morgan works in a car park in Tin Hau. He's pretty chill.

HK Magazine: How long have you been a night shift security guard?

Morgan Wong: I only started working the night shift two days ago. Before that I worked during the day.

HK: What's the biggest change between working days and nights?

MW: I work between 7pm-7am and literally nobody comes into the car park after midnight.

HK: Why did you choose this job?

MW: Because it's very *hea* [lazy, chill]. There's nothing to do. I get a lot of free time.

HK: What do you do with your free time?

MW: I play games on my phone [swipes through Candy Crush] and I text my friends.

HK: Don't you ever fall asleep during your shift?

MW: No. I actually find it easier to fall asleep during day shifts. Maybe it's because there's a lot more to do and it tires you out.

HK: Do you ever feel alone, sitting in this stall all night?

MW: Not really. I quite enjoy being alone. When you work in the day you have to communicate, talk to people. Sometimes people can get quite annoying, especially when they've got questions. But working at night means I don't have to talk to anyone, and I quite like that.

HK: What else would you do?

MW: If I wasn't a security guard I might think about teaching guitar. That's my hobby.

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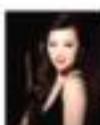
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Dizi :
Tang Junqiao

As the Moon Rises Ancient Melody Arr. by Peng Xiuwen

Autumn Execution Doming Lam

A Sorrowful Tune Zhu Jian'er

Symphonic Suite **Raise the Red Lantern** (Excerpt) Zhao Jiping

The Hallow-e'en Dances (Excerpt) Dirk Brossé

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Symphony No.2 for Chinese Orchestra Liu Xing

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香港中樂團



Trippy City

See Hong Kong through an artist's eyes at **The City Book Exhibition** and book launch at the Mandarin Oriental. A number of local and international artists with links to Hong Kong present works that show off a different side of the city, from sleepy fishing villages to hyperactive nightlife to this surreal cityscape from Jin Meyerson.

Through Feb 3. **The Clipper Lounge, Mandarin Oriental, 5 Connaught Rd. Central, Central, 2825-4007.**

FASHION

LOOKBOOK

Edited by Zoe Chan

Blogger & Stylist at normalchic.com | Instagram @zoe_normalchic



Stairs and Stripes

Stripes are always a good look. Here I've paired two striped pieces to create a laid back jumpsuit style, and in a lively yellow and white for a burst of youth and energy. Pair it with a chain-strap bag like this one from Kate Spade to keep it classy for the office or on the street. Don't forget to accessorize!

Lemon Stripe Vest, \$1,280 from Max&Co

Lemon Stripe Pants, \$2,580 from Max&Co

Emerson Place Lawren bag, \$3,600 from Kate Spade



Petals of Love silver pendant with cubic zirconia, \$999 from Pandora



Gilda Pom Pom tassel torque necklace, \$3,590 from Ela Stone @ Lane Crawford



Glam & Soul Eternal Women watch, \$2,740 from Thomas Sabo



Stud Clasp cuff, \$3,467 from Balenciaga @ FWRD.com.

Max&Co, Shop LG2-03, Festival Walk, 80 Tat Chee Avenue, Kowloon Tong, 2722-9613.

Kate Spade, Shop 2083, IFC Mall, 8 Finance St., Central, 3188-1928.

Pandora, Shop 321, 3/F, Hysan Place, 500 Hennessy Rd., Causeway Bay, 3104-0706.

Lane Crawford, Times Square, 1 Matheson St., Causeway Bay, 2118-2288.

Thomas Sabo, Shop 524, Times Square, 1 Matheson St., Causeway Bay, 2156-2836.

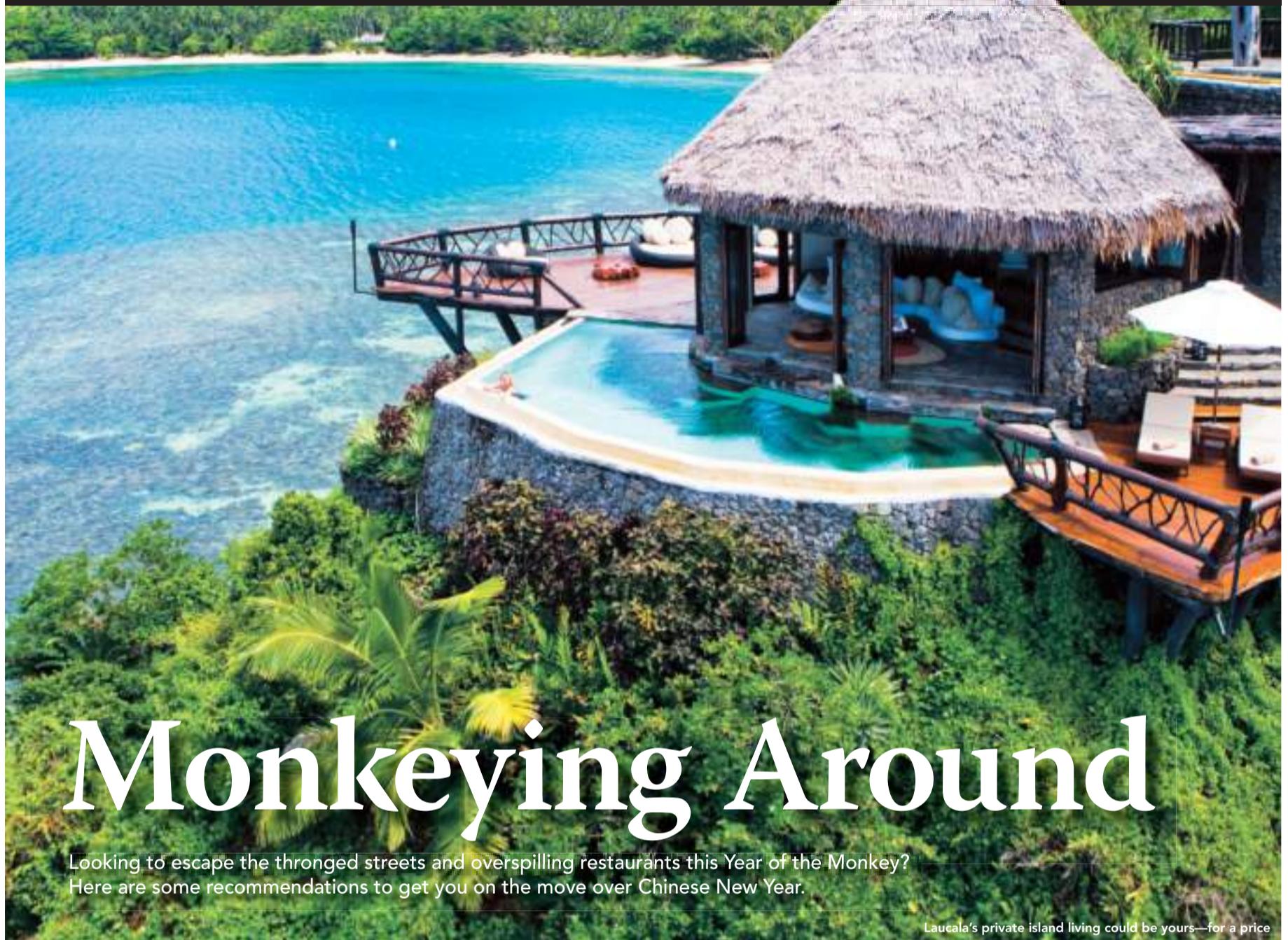
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ESCAPE ROUTES

Edited by Daniel Creffield
daniel.creffield@hkmagmedia.com



Monkeying Around

Looking to escape the thronged streets and overspilling restaurants this Year of the Monkey? Here are some recommendations to get you on the move over Chinese New Year.

Laucala's private island living could be yours—for a price

Healthy New Year

Starting from \$1,180 per night, **The Palms Retreat** on Koh Samui is definitely one of the most competitive offers around over the break, but with its "New Year, New You" deal ending Jan 31, you'll have to move fast. The owners are also throwing in free nights, along with either body scrubs, Thai cooking classes or gym sessions, depending how long you book for.

The Palms' Detox program offers one meal per day alongside health shakes but if that sounds too extreme, the Rejuvenate program provides the regulation three meals on top of the shakes. All food and accommodation is included, as well as the use of a semi-private pool, daily yoga, meditation or aqua aerobics, massage and airport transfers.

Book by Jan 31, stays valid until March 31. Plailaem Soi 6, 59/64 Moo 5 Tambol Bophut, Koh Samui, (+66) 9-4579-5065, bookings@thepalms-retreat.com, thepalms-retreat.com.

The Emperor Experience

Fancy being treated like royalty this CNY? With a team of 350 providing the highest staff-to-guest ratio of any property in the world, this is entirely possible on the all-inclusive, 25-villa private Fijian **Laucala Island**—but it'll cost you close to a king's ransom.

This week of traditional celebrations and activities offering guests the opportunity to "Live like an Emperor" includes a personal chef, child-minding service, laundry and dry cleaning, celebratory food and drink, "Tray of Togetherness" snack box, personalized embroidered slippers, foot massage, aromatherapy spa treatments, sky lantern beach party and more. A travel guide and welcome pack will also be available in Chinese.

The Chinese New Year deal is for the period February 7-13. Prices start at \$37,400 per night for a one-bedroom villa for two, to \$92,000 per night for a three-bedroom villa for six. All rates are subject to eye-watering local government taxes of 25 percent.

Laucala Island, Fiji, (+679) 888-0077, laucala.com.

Come Sail Away

Fancy kicking the Year of the Monkey off with a very different experience—on water? You can, courtesy of Yangon's iconic Strand Hotel, which has just launched its **Strand Cruise**. The hotel is offering a contemporary river cruise experience over Chinese New Year exploring the fabled Irrawaddy River.

The 61-meter colonial-style cruiser boasts cabins and suites, a gourmet restaurant, wine cellar, spa, lounge/library, gym and swimming pool and a "golden age of travel" vibe.

With a regular schedule of three- and four-night sailings between Bagan and Mandalay, excursions will take in landmarks such as the ancient U-Bein teak bridge and the sprawling temples of Bagan.

The Chinese New Year promotion's four-night cruises start from \$22,500. Entertainment on the five-star colonial-style cruiser includes mahjong, treasure hunts and competitions, firecrackers and an exchange of traditional red packets, culminating in a Chinese banquet.

Cruise departs from Bagan to Mandalay on February 8. captain@thestrandcruise.com, thestrandcruise.com

Last-Minute CNY Getaways

Flight Centre has a bunch of last-minute CNY deals. If a city break appeals, Bangkok starts from \$4,559 per person, including economy flights with Hong Kong Airlines, three nights at the Aloft Bangkok Sukhumvit 11 and breakfast.

If you're really looking to get the wintry weather behind you, prices for Puerto Princesa on the tropical island of Palawan are from \$6,499 per person, and include economy flights flying Philippines Airlines, three nights at Sheridan Beach Resort & Spa and breakfast.

For Myanmar, prices start from \$19,499 and include return flights flying Dragonair, two nights each at Yangon, Bagan, and Inle Lake, breakfast, ground transfers, an English-speaking guide and Inle Lake sightseeing and entrance fees.

Finally Sri Lanka deals are from \$19,899 per person, including economy flights flying Singapore Airlines, one night at Negombo and two at Habarana and Kandy respectively, breakfast, ground transfers and entrance fees.

flightcentre.com.hk.



Tranquility guaranteed at The Palms



Shake Your Bon Bon



With Valentine's Day and Chinese New Year approaching, 'tis the season to gift something sweet. Shower your loved ones with these sweet indulgences, says **Leslie Yeh**



Monkey See, Monkey Taste

Somehow this year **Godiva** has managed to make monkey-shaped chocolates that still look good. Packaged in a beautiful gold and red box, the adorable monkey collection is inspired by Chinese tea, with the subtle aromas and fragrance of tea leaves. The Carré chocolate gift box (\$218 for 15 pieces) holds smooth milk chocolates with puffed rice and dark chocolate hazelnut crisps, while the Liquor box (\$328 for 9 pieces) includes liquor-filled Chérié and Cherry Cordial dark chocolates. Really trying to impress your boss or lover? The CNY Chocolate Luxury box (\$1,238) contains 36 of Godiva's signature chocolates in a 3-tiered box.

Shop B236, B2, Times Square, 1 Matheson St., Causeway Bay, 2576-0312.

Melt for Me

With a pop-up shop in Harbour City until Feb 21, Belgian chocolatier **Frederic Blondeel** is satisfying sweet cravings this season with 15 melt-in-your-mouth chocolates presented in bright red festive packaging for Valentine's Day and CNY. Known for its bean-to-bar philosophy and chocolates that are handcrafted fresh daily, the brand is all about preserving the purity of cocoa, from ultra-smooth ganaches to truffles and caramel-filled chocolate shells. This Valentine's Day, they've also partnered with Hahaha Florist to create a "Flower and Chocolate Bottle," featuring preserved Japanese flowers and tea-infused chocolates (\$1,680).

Available at Harbour City
until Feb 21. 3-17 Canton Rd.,
Tsim Sha Tsui.



Ritz Bitz

Afternoon tea at **The Ritz-Carlton** is always a treat with seasonally changing menus: This month, chocolate takes center stage in a collaboration with Valrhona chocolate. Infusing the earthy richness of real Valrhona chocolate into pastry chef Richard Long's award-winning sweets, the Valrhona Afternoon Tea is a dining experience with a CNY red theme (Feb 1-12) that shifts to a Valentine's-friendly pink halfway through the month (Feb 13-29). Perched high above the skyline on the 103rd floor of the ICC, guests will get stunning views while sampling Manjari chocolate mousse, scones, lollipops and bonbons.

Available Feb 1-29, 3:30-5:30pm. \$608 for two on weekdays,
\$628 weekends, \$698 on Feb 13-14. Café 103, 103/F, The Ritz-Carlton,

ICC, 1 Austin Rd. West, West Kowloon, 2263-2263.



I'm in Hévin

French chocolatier **Jean Paul Hévin**'s Valentine's Day collection is inspired by the street art of Paris, with bright colors splashed around the chocolates to mimic graffiti. The Bonbon Coeur Pink is a pink, bite-sized burst of milk chocolate, with hazelnut and praline adding a nutty quality and shiso leaves lending a bright zing. Other signature bonbons include the Bonbon Lune de Miel, a dark ganache seasoned with buckwheat honey, and the Bonbon Street Art, harboring a soft caramel center. The treats (available individually, \$24 each) come in a ruby red box with the engraving "Love is in the Air": what better to melt a lady's heart?

Box set holds 9 bonbons for \$228. Shop 212, Ocean Centre, Harbour City, Tsim Sha Tsui, 2735-3268.

Whisky Business

Can't pull off romance without booze? **Pierre Hermé Paris** is selling a festive gift box this Chinese New Year including a bottle of Glenlivet 12-Year-Old single malt whisky. The Monts & Merveilles x The Glenlivet hamper (\$3,688) is overflowing with assorted chocolate bonbons, Venezuelan chocolate bars, chocolate ganache, creamy caramels, and 24 of Pierre Hermé's signature macarons.

The hamper also includes a tin of violet and blackcurrant tea—but we'd rather wash it all down with a few drams of Glenlivet any day. For a less expensive indulgence, the chocolatier also offers assorted bonbons by the box (\$350 per 210g). **Shop 1019C, IFC Mall, 8 Finance St., Central, 2833-5700.**



Follow the Chocolate Trail

For the seventh year in a row, **Harbour City** has unveiled its annual **Chocolate Trail**, bringing together nearly 30 internationally-renowned chocolate brands in a month-long pop-up of chocolate tastings, chocolate and whisky pairings, art exhibitions and live demonstrations. Stop by the café to savor chocolate and whisky tasting menus under the Alice-in-Wonderland-esque giant teapot display, or help yourself to samples along the chocolate trail from zChocolat, The Peninsula, Domori, Chapon, Bvlgari Il Cioccolato and more. Other photo ops include sculptures from finalists of the 2015 World Chocolate Masters Competition, Ferrero Rocher's grand wall of 2,400 pralines—and the chance to pick up the five-inch-tall Grand Ferrero Rocher (\$160, 60 pieces sold daily). Don't miss the "Chocolate Experience Zone" where you can personalize your own bites to nibble all the way home... **From now until Feb 21. Atrium II, G/F, Gateway Arcade, Harbour City, 3-17 Canton Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui.**



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Edited by Leslie Yeh

leslie.yeh@hkmagmedia.com



May the Best Mac Win

When we heard that a handful of Hong Kong's best chefs were coming together for an all-out mac and cheese battle, we only had one thought: Why did no one think of this earlier?! The carb-loaded battle pits chefs from Little Bao, NOM, Sushi Kuu, Stone Nullah Tavern and Lily & Bloom against each other in the ultimate "Mac Attack," with all five gloriously cheesy versions—think black truffled carbonara and Applewood cheddar mac with foie gras—available on **Lily & Bloom's** menu through Feb 29 (\$188 each, 5/F & 6/F, LKF Tower, 33 Wyndham St., Central, 2810-6166). The chefs with the two top dishes—one with the best social media response via hashtag #theMacAttack, and the other with the highest sales—will take the crown, with 10% of proceeds going to their choice of charity. But with five great reasons to go on a strict mac and cheese diet this month, can anyone really be called a loser here?

RESTAURANT REVIEWS

Sahara Mezz Bar ★★★★

Middle Eastern. G/F, 11 Elgin St., Central, 2291-6060.



salad (\$90), which came dotted with plenty of soft goat cheese. The lamb tagine (\$165) was tasty and a generous portion, though it didn't blow our minds. We washed this down with a couple of bottles of excellent Lebanese 961 beer and a mint tea.

■ **MISS** The vegetarian couscous (\$90), while pleasant enough, was really nothing more than chunky vegetable broth in which we struggled to discern much in the way of a Moroccan influence. With plenty of shisha being smoked, loud music and slightly cramped seating, this might be a less comfortable meal if you're looking to relax instead of rushing off for a big night out after your meal.

■ **HIT** We decided the mezze platter was too obvious (although the one our neighbors were feasting on looked pretty awesome) and instead went for the pastille (\$65), essentially a pigeon pastry filled with egg and spices, which was both unusual and delicious. We also enjoyed the roasted fresh fig

■ **BOTTOM LINE** Good rather than great food, a buzzy atmosphere and generous hospitality mean that Sahara is still the fun night out it's always been.

Open daily 6-11.30pm. \$

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

NEW AND NOTED

Weekend Breezing

One of the latest outlets to join French Creations' stable of casual neighborhood bistros, **Comptoir's** (42 Forbes St., Kennedy Town, 2453-9873) weekend brunch is a must-try, with four delicious courses for \$200 per person, and free-flow wine for an extra \$180—one of the better value brunches in the city. Well-portioned and served piping hot, the meal is best enjoyed at one of the alfresco café's counter seats, with refreshing house sparkling wine to wash down lashings of butter and cream (the more the merrier when it comes to French food, right?). The changing brunch menu currently stars a hearty roast chestnut soup and truffle scrambled eggs, but it's also worth checking out the à la carte selection—all small plates designed to share—including seared sea bass with green peas in a fish emulsion (\$88), tuna-stuffed piquillo peppers (\$60) and sautéed octopus with Thai asparagus (\$98).

From Paris... to Paris

"Why quit when you're ahead?" seems to be the motto at Black Sheep Restaurants, which recently announced the 11th and 12th additions to its growing restaurant empire. This time the Black Sheep compass points west to the Middle East and Paris, with two unique and ambitious offerings: Set to open next month, **Maison Libanaise** (10 Shelley St., Central) celebrates the vibrant culture and delicious cuisine of Lebanon, with three stories evoking a 1960s Beirut house including a ground-floor takeaway, "Le Salon" serving mezze and mains, and the rooftop "La Buvette" wine bar. Moving from "The Paris of the Middle East" to the real deal, **Belon** (41 Elgin St., Central)—set to open in March—will be a neo-Parisian bistro showcasing French-rooted cooking with local ingredients. Expect to be blown away yet again by thoughtfully appointed interiors and unmistakably authentic food.



Brunch bros assemble at Comptoir

Shiki Zen ★★★★☆

Japanese. 29/F, Midtown Soundview Plaza II, 1-29 Tang Lung St., Causeway Bay, 2970-3218.



The newly rebranded Sushi-To on the 29th floor of Causeway Bay's Midtown Plaza, Shiki Zen specializes in handmade udon, producing it fresh in-house everyday with imported Japanese ingredients, including the flour, sea salt and water used.

HIT There are nine types of handmade udon on the lunch menu, with premium toppings ranging from Kagoshima pork to wagyu beef shabu shabu and mentaiko with onsen egg. We opted for the snow crabmeat and egg soup (\$148) with Sanuki-style noodles. Although one of the lighter udon options, it was still hearty and filling, with a generous

amount of sweet snow crab, onion slices and beaten eggs swimming in a slow-simmered fish base soup. The udon noodles themselves were fantastic—supple yet firm, with an al dente texture holding up well against the steaming hot broth. For our tempura udon (\$148), we went for the recommended thinner-cut Kyoto-style noodles. Soft yet sturdy, the long noodles were satisfying served cold with a soy-based dipping sauce, accompanied by lightly fried prawn and vegetable tempura on the side.

MISS While prices were reasonable for the size and quality of the udon bowls, we were disappointed by the other offerings, including a small portion of grilled miso cod for \$148 and an average soft shell crab maki roll (\$108), topped with unripe avocado.

BOTTOM LINE Stick with the udon—it's what they do best.

Open daily noon-10:30pm. \$\$

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.

44th

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Hong Kong Arts Festival

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What comes after

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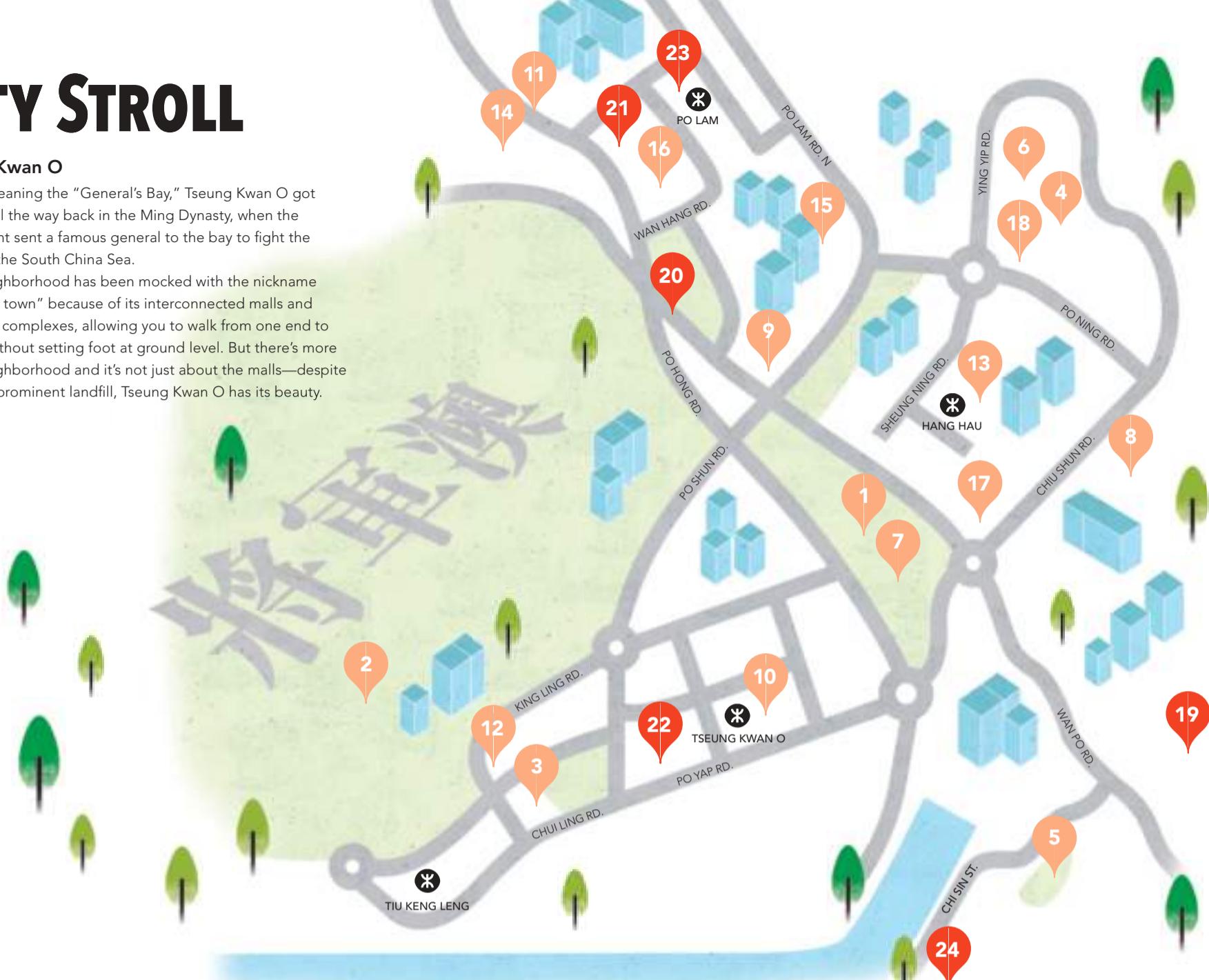


CITY STROLL

Tseung Kwan O

Literally meaning the "General's Bay," Tseung Kwan O got its name all the way back in the Ming Dynasty, when the government sent a famous general to the bay to fight the pirates of the South China Sea.

The neighborhood has been mocked with the nickname "streetless town" because of its interconnected malls and residential complexes, allowing you to walk from one end to another without setting foot at ground level. But there's more to this neighborhood and it's not just about the malls—despite the area's prominent landfill, Tseung Kwan O has its beauty.



19

High Junk Peak

Take a hike to High Junk Peak by trekking from Ng Fai Tin to Tai Miu Au, where you'll get magnificent views of Port Shelter and the whole of Tseung Kwan O. The hike is a bit steep for beginners, but amazing views of Clearwater Bay make it worth the effort.

Take minibus no.103M from Tseung Kwan O MTR station to Ng Fai Tin.



21

Cong Sao Star Dessert

Founded by Cong and his wife Cong Sao, who used to run the RTHK canteen in Kowloon Tong, it has become one of the most popular dessert chains in Hong Kong since 2003. Don't miss their legendary durian sago dessert and their melon sago shaved ice.

Shop 28, G/F, Metro City Plaza I, 1 Wan Hang Rd., Po Lam, 2706-9955.



23

AbuCare

Set foot in AbuCare and you'll feel like you're in Japan already. Get your fix of imported Japanese cosmetics and body care products which aren't commonly found in Hong Kong, while saving on the plane fees. Our tip: go for this limited edition Winnie the Pooh face cleanser from DHC (\$55).

Shop UG042, Metro City Plaza II, 8 Yan King Rd., Po Lam, 2114-2885.



20

Po Hong Park

With Chinese New Year just around the corner, Po Hong Park will be transformed into a CNY market between Feb 2-7. The park will be filled with booths selling cute CNY goodies (expect a lot of monkey dolls for the Year of the Monkey), traditional festive snacks and flowers—it's perfect for all your end of year shopping.

10 Wan Lung Rd., Tseung Kwan O, 2791-3100.



22

Beans the Backyard

This recently opened cafe offers some of the most Instagrammable coffees in the city. Their 3D latte art—think a 3D bear rising from the cup—has captured the attention of Hong Kong's fickle public, while their wide selections of pastas and desserts are also worth a try.

Shop F95, 1/F, PopCorn, 9 Tong Yin St., Tseung Kwan O, 5537-7465.



24

Tseung Kwan O South Waterfront Promenade

End your journey in Tseung Kwan O with a stroll (or a jog, if you're feeling sporty) along the sea, where you'll get to take in the fresh air. Like fishing? Bring your gear and join the crowd—there are plenty of other anglers whiling away the hours on the sea front.

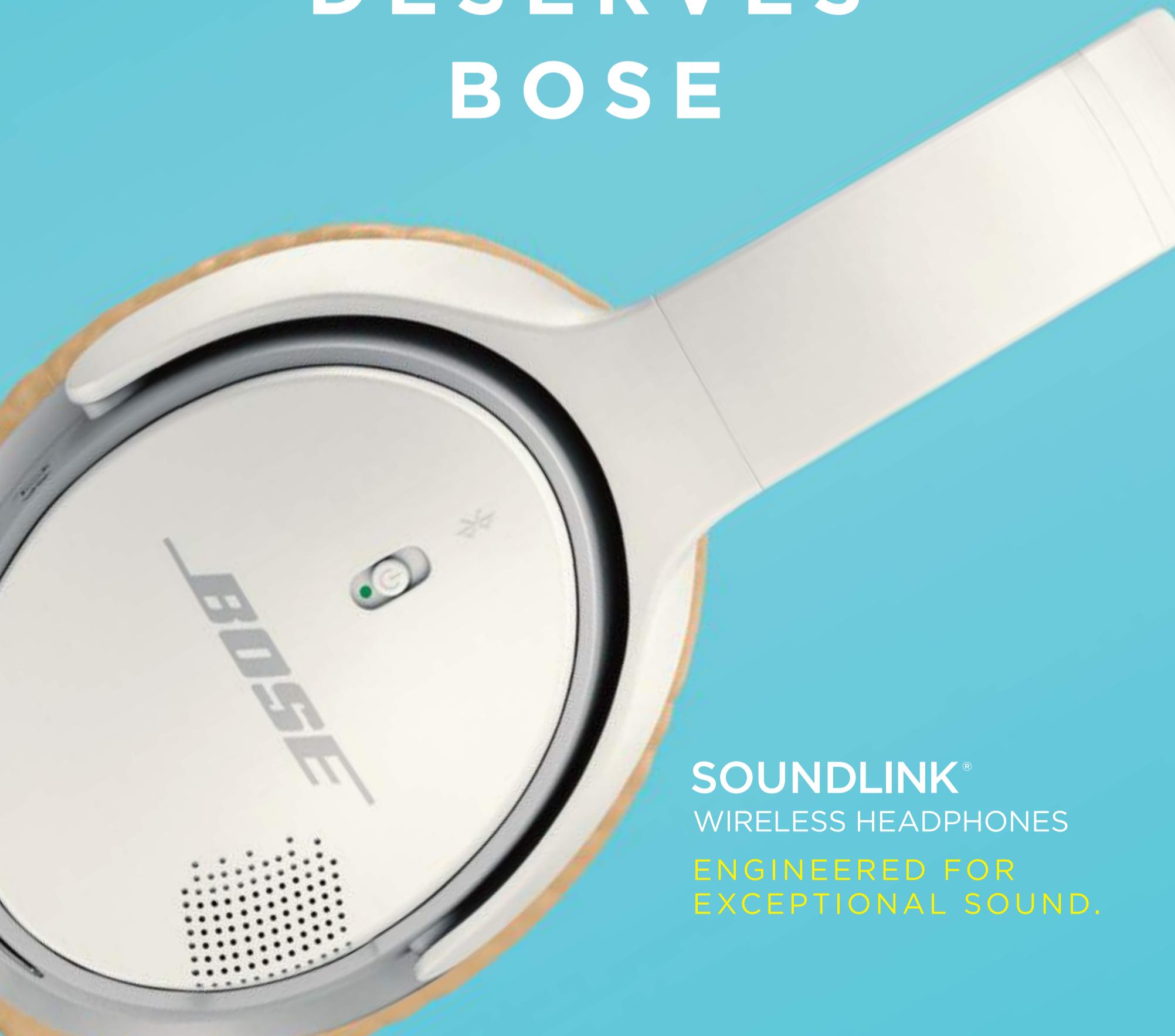
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Check back next week for another awesome district!

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VALENTINE'S DAY
SPECIAL

It's A Date!

So you've managed to score yourself a date on Valentine's Day, but you want to impress beyond just dinner and a movie. Score extra brownie points with these awesome date ideas. By HK Staff

Book a Staycation

Valentine's Day falls on a Sunday this year, which makes it the perfect occasion to book a staycation. Check into **W Hong Kong** for some alone time with your lover with two room packages available: "Love Rules" includes a W Fantasy Pack complete with flirty toys, while "Dare to be Fabulous" offers heart-warming welcome amenities to set the mood.

Starting from \$2,800 + 10 percent for room and suite packages.

1 Austin Rd. West, West Kowloon, 3717-2798.

Propose, Already

Thinking of popping the question on the big night but haven't the faintest clue how to do it? **Morton's** has you covered with its special "Proposal Package": Start the night with a romantic candlelit 3-course dinner, then get down on one knee in a Premium Harbor View Suite at The Sheraton Hotel, with the words "Will U Marry Me" written in balloons as your backdrop. We say YES!

\$9,999 for two. 4/F, The Sheraton Hotel Hong Kong,

20 Nathan Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, 2732-2343.

Get Pampered

Treat yourself and your S.O. this Valentine's Day with some much-deserved pampering at **Melo Spa** at Hyatt Regency Hong Kong Sha Tin. Those with a sweet tooth, don't miss their new cocoa body scrub: a chocolatey scrub to remove dead skin, followed by a nourishing cocoa body massage for some deep relaxation. With that chocolatey smell lingering long after the treatment, we dare you to keep your hands off each other...

\$1,399 per person. 5/F, Hyatt Regency Hong Kong Sha Tin,

18 Chak Cheung St., Sha Tin, 3723-7684.

Netflix & Chill

So you're running on pennies after the CNY holidays, and a fancy night out is a bit outside the budget... never fear, because **Netflix** is here! With subscription plans starting as low as \$63 per month, it's possible to have that V-Day in you always wanted—plus, you'll have total privacy when things start to get hot and heavy. Order a gourmet meal with **Deliveroo.hk**, sit back and relax with a romantic movie. Our suggestion: 1953 Audrey Hepburn classic "Roman Holiday."

Meet the Mouse ▶

Put on your cutest Mickey and Minnie matching outfits and go for a day out at **Hong Kong Disneyland**. On this love-dovey occasion, the theme park is rolling out a collection of "his and hers" keepsakes for all Disney-lovers, as well as some new live shows to celebrate their 10th anniversary (double happiness!). And of course, you get to meet and greet the mousey power couple in person...

Hong Kong Disneyland, Lantau, 3550-3388,

hongkongdisneyland.com.

Valentine's Abroad

Psst... Really want to impress your date? Book a last-minute getaway for two on the Ctrip mobile app and receive \$60 off flights and \$120 off hotels. Offer valid for new users; download at ctrip.com.hk.



Customize your Love ▶

Looking for something scent-imental? Premium dining club **The First Floor** is hosting a special "Blending Love" whisky and perfume workshop to celebrate Valentine's Day. Guests will get to create a one-of-a-kind perfume and whisky blend to take home, complete with a personalized message for their loved one. Feeling peckish? Stay for the sumptuous six-course dinner, featuring Boston lobster and wagyu beef.

\$2,180 + 10 percent for two for "Blending Love" workshop and dinner package. 1/F, Baskerville House, 13 Duddell St., Central, 2840-0032.



V-DAY DINING

It's not that far away: Book your Valentine's table now before you end up squashed into the corner of your local cha chaan teng.



Promenade's mouth-shaped strawberry mousse cake: Lips too good to eat

Red Wine Lips

Dine with your loved one at **Promenade Restaurant** this Valentine's Day, with a romantic dinner buffet surrounded by views of Victoria Harbour. Start the meal with a glass of Glühwein—red wine mixed with clove, cinnamon, star anise, vanilla bean, nutmeg and sugar, then heated until steaming. The sweet mulled wine opens the appetite before you feast on mouthwatering selections of grilled US pork skewers with red onion marmalade, rosemary rack of lamb, slow-cooked wagyu beef, and poached figs in red wine for dessert. Pastry chef Barry has also prepared an extra-special dessert for the occasion: a red lip-shaped strawberry mousse cake with four layers of cookie, sponge cake, mousse and chocolate. You can believe it's lip-smackingly good. Available for lunch (\$398) and dinner Feb 13 (\$588) & Feb 14 (\$688). 7/F, Harbour Plaza Metropolis, 7 Metropolis Drive, Hung Hom, 3160-6880.



Ring Fling

Here's a unique V-Day promotion geared toward the ladies: In addition to offering a six-course Valentine's Day dinner, **Hooray Bar & Restaurant** has partnered with renowned jewelry brand Jan Logan to offer a lucky diner the ring of their dreams, valued at up to \$12,000. From Feb 12-14, guests are encouraged to sketch their ultimate ring design while dining at the restaurant, with the top submission as selected by Jan Logan receiving the very ring they designed. And the gift-giving doesn't end there: 10 couples will also receive consolation prizes, with their own ring produced by Jan Logan at material costs (design costs waived). If you're not a lucky winner there's still an incredible meal to enjoy, featuring Japanese spot prawn tartare, shellfish consommé, sous vide salmon, and cured duck breast in a curry emulsion. Available Feb 12-14, \$580 + 10 percent per person. P502, World Trade Centre, 280 Gloucester Rd., Causeway Bay, 2895-0885.



Love on the Southside

Le Meridien Cyberport whips up a culinary storm this holiday with V-Day menus available at all of its dining outlets. **Prompt** offers a fresh seafood dinner buffet (\$698 per person, Feb 12-14) with a variety of sashimi, sushi, cold cuts and smoked fish along with salads and hot dishes. The romantic alfresco dining room lets guests savor a long, relaxing meal—paired with excellent vintages from the restaurant's extensive wine list. Meanwhile, at **Nam Fong** head chef Jacky has conceived a tantalizing set menu (\$1,488 + 10 percent for two people, Feb 14) featuring wok-fried angus beef with mushrooms and braised South African abalone for an exotic twist. Craving Japanese? Head to **Restaurant & Bar Umami**, which has a seven-course menu (\$1,888 + 10 percent for two, Feb 14) including lobster with sashimi, shishamo salad, crabmeat rice patties and salt-grilled baby snapper. Le Meridien Cyberport, 100 Cyberport Rd., Pokfulam, 2980-7788.



From Paris with Love

As Valentine's Day falls on the weekend this year, a romantic brunch can say "I love you" just as much as a candlelit dinner for two. Fine dining restaurant **Épure** has partnered with fashion house Lanvin to create a tasting menu from Feb 10-14, inspired by two of their classic scents. Available as six or eight courses, the menu features the flavors of comice pears, jasmine and rose in dishes such as smoked Normandy salmon, faisselle cheese caviar, poached French lobster and Corsica sheep's milk cheese with black truffle vinaigrette. The V-Day brunch on Feb 14 is a four-course variation of the tasting menu. \$520 for four-course brunch (Feb 14); \$1,314 for six-course tasting, \$1,588 for eight-course tasting (Feb 10-14). Shop 403, 4/F, Ocean Centre, 17 Canton Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, 3185-8338, epure.hk.

Pink and Red

An extra-special V-Day menu awaits at **Ammo**, one of the most romantic tables in town situated in a stunning heritage site in Admiralty. The European restaurant serves up a colorful and vibrant menu this holiday with tasty creations for both meat- and seafood-lovers. Handmade gnocchi with crab meat and pancetta shows off the skills of the pasta savants in the kitchen. Meanwhile from red prawn mojito with heirloom tomatoes and pomelo to kobe beef two-ways with pink potato, almond crust and Bourbon sauce, Ammo's V-Day menu is a delicious spread of pink and red, celebrating the colors of the season. \$1,080 + 10 percent per person includes a glass of champagne. Asia Society Hong Kong Center, 9 Justice Drive, Admiralty, 2537-9888, ammo.com.hk.



A Woo-nderful V-day

There's no better way to set the mood than on the 21st floor of The One looking out over the bustling Tsim Sha Tsui streets and Victoria Harbour beyond. **Wooloomooloo Prime** showers lovebirds with romance this Valentine's Day alongside a multi-course menu spanning land and sea. Start with the seafood medley, a mountain of fresh ocean jewels: shucked oysters, prawns, Scottish crab claws, sea scallops and lobster. The borlotti beans velouté will warm you up from the inside out, while the grilled Australian Black Angus sirloin is a hearty course for meat lovers. Finish the meal with a spread of signature desserts, from apple crumble tart to rum baba with mascarpone chantilly.

\$1,850 + 10 percent for two people. 21/F, The One, 100 Nathan Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, 2870-0087, wooloo-mooloo.com; also available at the Causeway Bay location.



Spanish Romance

With spectacular views overlooking Victoria Harbour, **Tapagria**'s V-Day menu is a seductive sampling of Spanish cuisine, with a special menu evoking the charming cobbled streets and old-world romance of Barcelona. There's no better way than bubbles to kick off the night: start with a glass of Moët & Chandon Imperial, followed by a selection of tasty tapas including crisply suckling pig, fried padron peppers and seared tuna with tomato salsa and caper berries. Seafood courses include pan-seared scallops on celeriac purée and Tapagria's signature seafood paella featuring a fresh selection of prawns, mussels and squid.

\$1,500 per couple, \$780 per individual includes a glass of Moët. 18/F, The One, 100 Nathan Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, 2147-0111, tapagria.hk.

Wine and Dine

With a newly opened space on Thomson Road, **Le Bistro Winebeast** still retains its intimate charm, with comforting French dishes complemented by a much larger wine cellar. The dinner tasting on Feb 14 starts with a crab roll with wasabi and passionfruit followed by an organic egg and truffle dish, scallop and oyster with enoki mushrooms, and quail with pan-fried foie gras. Top off the night with a chocolate dome over wasabi ice cream. **\$688 per person, \$888 with wine pairing.**

G/F & 1/F, Tai Yip Building, 141 Thomson Rd., Wan Chai, 2782-6689, winebeast.com.



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- SATURDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2016 -

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Blue Passion

King Parrot Group has created menus this year inspired by the color blue—representing the serenity and calmness of love—instead of the traditional red and pink. Whether your relationship is more of a calm sea or a turbulent tide, you can find solace at one of King Parrot's affordable V-Day menus around the city, available from Feb 12-14. Head to **Coast Seafood & Grill** for authentic Mediterranean food (\$620 menu for two), or stop by **Mijas Spanish Restaurant** to take advantage of the stunning garden terrace (\$880 per person). Book before Feb 12 to receive a \$50 coupon (with \$100 deposit), along with a complimentary gift on the night.

Coast Seafood & Grill, Shop C, G/F, 9-11 Cleveland St., Fashion Walk, Causeway Bay, 2576-8650.

Mijas Spanish Restaurant, Shop 102, 1/F, Murray House, Stanley, 2899-0858.

Beauty and Bubbles

Head to **Harlan's Bar and Restaurant** this V-Day to fall in love over foie gras, braised abalone and oscietra caviar. The eight-course menu showcases the use of top-notch ingredients from Europe and Japan, in luxurious dishes from organic egg yolk with uni, oscietra and brioche to butter-poached lobster in a bisque with lemongrass emulsion. Expect a special dessert for sharing from Harlan to end the meal on a sweet note. As part of the Valentine's Day special, ladies can also enjoy a complimentary make-up service at Beauty Bazaar in The One to get primped and pampered for the big night out.

Eight-course dinner is \$1,380 per person + 10 percent.

19/F, The One, 100 Nathan Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, 2972-2222.

So Cheesy

For those couples who still insist on sending each other V-Day sweethearts and handmade cards, a heart-shaped pizza is the perfect lovey dovey meal to share as you cozy up in a booth at Neapolitan pizzeria **Motorino**. Available from Feb 8-14, diners can request the restaurant's expert pizzaiolos to shape their pizzas into a heart—a fun way to say "I love you", not to mention a great Instagram op. Featuring a puffy charred crust and premium Italian ingredients from soppressata to fior di latte mozzarella, Motorino's handcrafted pizzas hit the spot every time. Dine-in or order delivery (available from noon-10:30pm) and top off the meal with a rich torta al cioccolato (\$98) for dessert.

15 Ship St., Wan Chai, 2520-0690;
14 Shelley St., Central, 2801-6881.



Standing The Test of Time

Celebrating its 18th year as a Central landmark for Spanish cuisine, **Olé** continues to honor old-school romance with a four-course Valentine's Day menu accompanied by serenading guitarists. The evening of *amor* in the terracotta-tiled Mediterranean-themed restaurant begins with starters of garlic shrimp, 48-month-old Iberico ham and Basque-style stuffed spider crab. The fisherman's seafood stew to follow is a rich and warming broth, while mains allow guests to choose from juicy prawn and clam rice, pan-seared red mullet and the signature slow-roasted suckling pig. A touch of theater ends the night as the table lights up courtesy of the orange flambé Catalan cream dessert.

\$550 + 10 percent per person includes a glass of Moscatel. 1/F, Shun Ho Tower, 24-30 Ice House St., 2523-8624.



Cantonese Cravings

Cantonese food may not scream romance, but the eight-course tasting menu at **Duddell's** will put you in the mood for love. The two-Michelin-starred restaurant serves up an array of seasonal dishes, starting with chilled abalone with caviar and barbecued Iberico pork with honey, moving on to braised fresh crab claws with shrimp paste and steamed egg white with bird's nest, and finishing with wagyu beef rolled with enoki mushroom and fried rice with fresh shrimp and black truffle. Ladies will receive a specially created bottled cocktail mix, rose tea buds from Fuk Ming Tong, and a pack of Ruinart nougat to commemorate the night.

Available Feb 13-14, \$1,080 + 10 percent per person includes a glass of Ruinart Rosé. 3/F, Shanghai Tang Mansion, 1 Duddell St., Central, 2525-9191, duddells.co.



ANY PLAN ON CELEBRATING WITH YOUR VALENTINE?

Be our special Valentine's Couple this year.

Stay with us on 12-14 Feb and enjoy the unforgettable moments with the love of your life.

Package from **HKD2,599+**

- One night accommodation in a Smart Room with special room setup:
- Upgrade to Smart Pure Room at special rate HKD200+
- Upgrade to Deluxe Ocean Room at special rate HKD400+
- Valentine's Dinner for 2 persons @ Umami, Nam Fong, Prompt or Sunset
- Watch-all-you-can **in-house movies**, or Valentine's Day **Couples Cooking Class** @ SUNSET (14 Feb, 3pm)
- Two Complimentary Glasses of Chandon Champagne @ PSI Bar
- Eye-opening Buffet Breakfast for 2 persons @ Prompt
- A chance to get a buy-one-get-one-free buffet voucher at the Valentine's Day Selfie Booth

Terms and conditions apply

Subject to a 10% service charge

Offer is available for 12-14 Feb 2016 only, subjects to availability and on a first-time-first served basis

Restaurant reservations of the Valentine's Day Dinner has to be confirmed at the time of Room Package reservations

Couples Cooking Class is limited to 5 pairs of couples only and on a first-time-first-served basis

The offer cannot be used in conjunction with other promotional offers or discounts
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V-DAY GIFTS

Want to impress your special someone? Get them one of these gorgeous gifts and they'll be yours forever. Or at least until next Valentine's Day.

FOR HER

① Niin Spectrum Drusy Earrings

Fitted with gold vermeil fastenings, these elegant earrings are lightweight and comfortable, and can easily take an outfit from day to night.

\$2,000 from Shop E, 200 Hollywood Rd., Sheung Wan, 2878-8811, niinstyle.com.

② Sudio Vasa Blå Wireless Freedom

Sudio Vasa's state-of-the-art cherry blossom pink earphones are now available in a wireless edition, with a built-in amplifier for the ultimate hi-fi listening experience.

\$699 from streetvalue.asia, 2577-2599.

③ Club Monaco Werna Coat

Sleek and minimalist, the Werna Coat flatters with an elegant silhouette and belt to cinch in the waist.

\$4,590 from Shop 1039, 1/F, IFC Mall, 8 Finance St., Central, 3586-3046.

④ Kotur Levin Kaleidoscope

Featuring butterfly and scarab prints inspired by Damien Hirst, the Levin Kaleidoscope from Kotur is the ideal accessory for an evening out on the town.

\$6,950 from koturltd.com.

⑤ Tom Ford "Honeymoon" Eye Color Quad

With four lovely shades, the Honeymoon palette features a unique gel-powder formula that can be applied dry for a soft shimmer, or wet for a bold, confident effect.

\$620 from Lane Crawford, IFC Mall, 8 Finance St., Central.

⑥ The Body Shop "British Rose" Body Care Set

Plucked straight from the English countryside, the fragrant roses in The Body Shop's new collection leave skin feeling fresh and energized. Gift the whole set and she'll be bathed in this rosy fragrance all day long.

Collection launches Feb 12. 101-2, 1/F, Man Yee Arcade, 68 Des Voeux Rd., Central, 2259-5266.



FOR HIM

① Bose SoundLink Mini Bluetooth Speaker II

With a full, natural sound and strong bass, this punchy little gadget connects wirelessly to smartphones, tablets or other Bluetooth devices.

\$1,800 from bose.com.hk, 2123-9000.

② Glenrothes 24-Year-Old (Cask Strength)

Boasting dried orange and black pepper notes, this whisky is creamy and smooth with a strong sherry finish. A must for malt maestros.

\$2,461 from whiskyhongkong.com.hk, 2545-2548.

③ G.O.D. 1963 Red Star Pilot Watch Collection

A reissue of the classic 1963 Red Star Pilot Watch, this modern version is powered by a Tianjin Seagull ST19 manual movement and comes with an interchangeable nylon NATO strap.

\$1,780 from G/F, 48 Hollywood Rd., Central, 2805-1876, goodsofdesire.com.

④ Roland TD-30KV V-Pro Series Electronic Drum Kit

Release your man's inner rock star with this electronic drum kit from Roland, which sounds—and plays—just as good as the real thing. Yes, it's super pricy, but at least you won't keep the neighbors up.

\$49,600 from Tom Lee, 1 Cameron Lane, Tsim Sha Tsui, 2723-9932, tomleemusic.com.hk.

⑤ SPHERO Star Wars BB-8 Droid

You don't need to be a big Star Wars fan to appreciate BB-8, just a big kid. The app-enabled droid has an "adaptive personality" that responds to your voice, and can record and play holographic videos. Woot!

\$1,198 from apple.com/hk/en.





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FREESTYLE TRAVEL

UPCLOSE: WESTERN DISTRICT

Contemporary classical group **Western District** (clockwise from right: Sarah Martin, Sophia Yan and Monica Johnston) gives Baroque music a modern spin. Ahead of their latest show, "Bach to the Future," Sophia and Monica talk to Xavier Ng about updating Bach, creating new twists on 90s hits and their upcoming avant-garde projects.



Photo: Brian Bessinaire

HK Magazine: How did you get started?

SY: We met through friends in Hong Kong a few years ago, and started up in 2014 when we found we had the same interest—finding creative ways to make classical music concerts a sociable and fun gathering that audiences can discover organically. Our aim is to attract a diverse audience: From young to old, folks who are already classical music lovers, and also people who may not normally go hear Brahms.

HK: So what makes your gigs different from a regular old classical concert?

SY: Our shows are all about exploring the world of classical

music, and we always curate a creative mix of works that show the range of what classical music has to offer. We've done full-length chamber music works alongside experimental electronic improv. One time, I laid sheets of paper on the strings of the piano to create a rattling sound effect. Our amazing singer, Sarah Martin, even screamed into the inside of a grand piano to create a resonant sound.

MJ: [For the upcoming Bach show] I've studied Baroque performance practice and will be playing the viola d'amore—an instrument which was common in his time.

SY: So "Bach to the Future" is pretty representative of the kind of programs we'd like to present. We think it's a fun

juxtaposition of old and new. Plus, the Baroque era has inspired much of the music that today's composers are writing. It also is an opportunity for amazing mash-ups—we won't give it away, but let's just say we have a pretty stellar Bach-style version of a very well-known 90s pop hit.

HK: What do you think of the Hong Kong music scene?

SY: It's amazing! There's more and more every day—we really love seeing the community grow, and are excited to be contributing to what's being created in Hong Kong. We also think it's a great incubator for experimenting. In our experience thus far, the Hong Kong audience has been quite receptive to checking out our new projects, as well as ideas from other artists.

HK: What's next for the group?

SY: We have a busy year ahead! "Bach to the Future" kicks off our year-long Fringe series. One of the highlights is our April production of the two-person chamber musical "John & Jen," scored beautifully for piano, cello and percussion. The story is about a family's ever-changing relationships. We're also really excited to present the world premiere of a multimedia project, "City Impressions," in early April. The performance pairs Hong Kong photographs by David Clarke with soundscape vignettes—ambient city sounds woven into original music composed by Joyce Tang—that we will perform live. It'll be similar to going to a silent film with live music, but with a contemporary twist.

Check out "Bach to the Future" on Jan 29 at 9pm. Fringe Club, 2 Lower Albert Rd., Central, 2521-7251. \$180-200 from Fringe Box Office or at the door, including one drink.

Classical

Piano Opera

Musical nerds and nerdy musicians assemble! Nobuo Uematsu returns with another performance of his iconic music from the "Final Fantasy" video game series, this time alongside pianist Hiroyuki Nakayama. A game footage will be projected alongside the music, so you can admire Sephiroth's perfect hair while lamenting that he had to be the bad guy. Most of the music covered will be from Final Fantasies VI through IX. Feb 4, 8pm. Concert Hall, Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui. \$340-890 from urbtix.hk.



Holiday & Pops: Rodgers & Hammerstein on Stage and Screen

Celebrate Chinese New Year with epics from classic Broadway musicals and Hollywood movies. International soprano star Lisa Vroman sings standards from "The Sound of Music," "The King and I," "Oklahoma!" and more, with music by the HK Phil. Don't like just watching musicians? The tunes will be accompanied by visuals on both the stage and a big screen. The hills are alive... Feb 12-13, 8pm. Concert Hall, Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui. \$180-480 from urbtix.hk.

Nanyin in Guangdong Music: Talents from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao

Nanyin, or nanguan music, originates from Fujian province. This traditional folk music is a slow, gentle ensemble style, making it perfect for the cold nights. Sounds good? Check out this performance by Yuen Siu-fai, one of Hong Kong's best-known Cantonese opera and nanyin artists, plus other artists from Macau and Guangdong. Feb 19, 8pm. Ko Shan Theatre New Wing, Ko Shan Theatre, 77 Ko Shan Rd., Hung Hom, 2740-9222. \$160-240 from urbtix.hk.

Concerts

Beardyman: One Album Per Hour

Creating a studio-quality album takes hours and hours of hard work, but the scruffy beatboxer known as Beardyman is trying to break all the rules by carving out an album in just one hour live on stage—and you can be a part of it, because he's all about the audience participation. And the beards. Feb 2-3, 9pm. Central Harbourfront Event Space, 9 Lung Wo Rd., Central. \$385-473 from hkticketing.com.

Comedy



Trash Test Dummies

Chinese New Year means it's spring cleaning time. These three trashy acrobats make tedious chores fun, with circus skills and comedy thrown into the show. Get them dumpsters ready... Feb 3-7, various times. Central Harbourfront Event Space, 9 Lung Wo Rd., Central. \$385-523 from hkticketing.com.

Piff the Magic Dragon: Breakfast at Piffy's

America's Got Talent finalist Piff the Magic Dragon comes straight from Vegas with his pal, Mr. Piffles (the adorable chihuahua) to show off hilarious AND amazing magic tricks, with a side order of grump. Feb 8-10, 9pm. Central Harbourfront Event Space, 9 Lung Wo Rd., Central. \$385-523 from hkticketing.com.

Dance

Flawless

Get yo' body movin' with Flawless: The British dance troupe comes to the Udderbelly to show off their hip-hop, breakdancing and acrobatic moves. Having previously danced alongside Madonna and Queen Bey, they're now here to dance with you, you lucky things. Feb 2-14, various times. Central Harbourfront Event Space, 9 Lung Wo Rd., Central. \$385-523 from hkticketing.com..

Office Mad Man

Some say the office is like a battlefield: Why not turn it into a dance floor? Hong Kong dance group R&T (Rhythm & Tempo) presents this tap show featuring original music, which depicts the cruelty of office politics via dance moves. What's tap for "my boss hates me and my co-workers never want to have lunch with me"? Feb 19-20, 8pm; Feb 21, 3pm. Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre, 111 Shau Kei Wan Rd., Sai Wan Ho, 3184-5777. \$160-200 from urbtix.hk.

Opera



The Met: Live in HD: Verdi's Otello

Catch some singing Shakespeare on the big screen. The Met: Live in HD brings Verdi's adaptation of "Otello" to Hong Kong. Set in Cyprus in the late 19th century, Moorish commander Otello (sung by Aleksandr Antonenko) is deceived by the villain Iago, causing him to question the virtue of his innocent wife Desdemona (Bulgarian soprano Sonya Yoncheva). Spoiler: It doesn't end well. Jan 31, 3:40pm. AMC Pacific Place, 1/F, Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Admiralty, 2265-8933. \$180-210 from hkticketing.com.

Theater



Sticks Stones Broken Bones

Aussie master of shadows Bunk Puppets creates shadow puppets from everyday household objects, putting them together to create thrilling—and odd—stories. It's a dog! Is it a dog? Jan 30-31, 2pm. Central Harbourfront Event Space, 9 Lung Wo Rd., Central. \$385-473 from hkticketing.com.



Edinburgh Festival Allstars

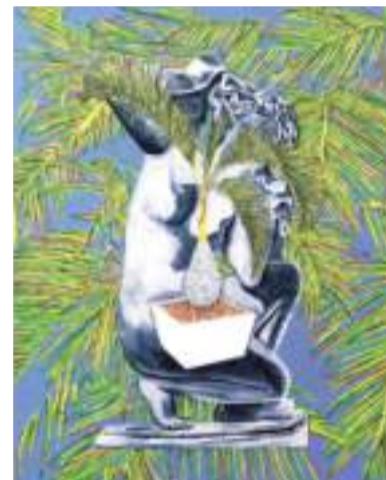
You don't need to fly to the other side of the globe to see them: the Edinburgh Festival's finest are in town to show Hong Kong what they've got. This show at Udderbelly includes mindblowing magic, amazing music and jaw-dropping circus performances... and more. It's a best-of! Feb 4-7, 11-14, various times. Central Harbourfront Event Space, 9 Lung Wo Rd., Central. \$385-523 from hkticketing.com.

Exhibitions

Time and Being
Turner Award-nominated artist Darren Almond presents his first exhibition in Hong Kong. He's unveiling two new series of paintings and sculptures, including three "flip clock" sculptures that look into the art of time, as well as captivating paintings of nocturnal landscapes which explore the "dark night sky paradox" of space. A space-time continuum? We're in. Jan 29-Mar 12. White Cube, 50 Connaught Rd., Central, 2592-2000.



Eclipse
Japanese artist Kazuma Koike presents his latest works in this solo exhibition. The artist showcases depictions of idols, plants and geometric patterns that give the viewer a unique serenity and tranquility. Through Feb 6. Aishonanzuka, 13A, Regency Centre Phase 1, 39 Wong Chuk Hang Rd., Aberdeen, 6923-7170.



Liminal Consciousness
An exhibition exploring what the human mind is capable of, through the work of Indonesian artists Nugroho Wijayatmo and Dedy Sufriadi. The exhibition includes Wijayatmo's bold portraits of women, as well as Sufriadi's visualizations of abstracted textual imagery. Through Feb 13. Affinity for Art, 1/F, 1 Queen's Rd. West, Sheung Wan, 3173-8626.

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NIGHTLIFE

OPEN BAR PACHA MACAU

The buzz: Almost four decades after opening its first location in the Barcelonan beach town Sitges and now with just under 20 clubs across the globe (including its Ibiza flagship), international megaclub brand Pacha has launched its first Asian outpost in Macau's Studio City. It's the perfect marriage of sunny, cheeky Balearic clubbing culture and flashy Macau nightlife.

The décor: Accessed by two flights of escalators, Pacha Macau is a world's difference from the standard golden casino fare outside. Like each of its other global venues, Pacha sticks to its white-on-white interior, complete with acoustics-friendly curvy chrome ceilings and pillars where dancers keep the crowd going from high on up. With the DJ deck up front, the 1,000 sq ft dance floor is flanked by three levels of tables on both sides, and three bars are spread out across the long room. If you're looking to party true Asian style, Pacha's got a few karaoke-equipped private rooms available as well. The club keeps to its iconic cherry branding everywhere, complete with merch shop outside just in case you feel the drunken need to buy a t-shirt or baseball cap before heading home.

The drinks: Early in the night Pacha's a great lounge for sipping your favorite cocktails—either at one of the tables or out back in its spacious leafy terrace. Give one of three Pacha Macau-exclusive drinks, designed after Studio City attractions, a spin. In the main club, as if the wall of enormous golden Armand de Brignac champagne bottles wasn't telling enough, you can expect a comprehensive drinks list—at club prices, of course. House liquors start from \$80, but the selection is broad in case you've got a pickier palate: finer tipplers such as Monkey 47 gin (\$255) or Patron Añejo (\$200) are also on offer. And of course, champagne bottle service starts at \$1,888 for Pacha's own private label.

Why you'll be back: Macau's hard-partying superclub culture just got redefined with Pacha. With a maximum capacity of 3,000 people, you'll be partying with the largest and most diverse crowd anywhere in the two SARs. With the legendary Ibiza club playing host to some of the top DJ gigs in the world, EDM-lovers can expect a regular roster of the best international names to bring the bass to Macau. Evelyn Lok

Studio City, Estrada Flor de Lotus, Cotai, (+853) 8865-3293, pachamacau.com.

Clubs

FuFu: Soichi Terada

A longtime cornerstone of the Japanese house scene and also the man behind soundtracks for games such as the "Ape Escape" series, Soichi Terada will cook up some glitzy 8-bit-tastic tunes with a side of soul at Mahalo. Jan 29, 8pm. Mahalo Tiki Lounge, 29/F, QRE Plaza, 202 Queen's Rd. East, Wan Chai, 2488-8750. \$150 from ticketflap.com, includes one drink; \$300 at the door with two drinks.



General Ludd

Hong Kong's own Fragrant Harbour label has invited Glaswegian tribal house duo General Ludd to play at Bassment—expect a mix of everything from Brazilian to hip hop to Ethiopian beats. Jan 29, 11pm. Bassment, LG/F, 13 Lyndhurst Terrace, Central, 2815-0866. \$100 from eventbrite.com, \$150 at the door; both include one drink.



Rewind One Year Anniversary: &Me

The Rewind party kids are turning one! To celebrate their first anniversary, they're bringing in the rather confusingly named German DJ &Me to party with some soulful house and techno. Who's playing? DJ &Me. Oh wow, you're spinning? No just the DJ &Me. That's what I said! You're DJing... etc. etc. Feb 5, 11pm. \$200-250 from rewindandme.pelago.events, \$300 at the door; all include one drink.

Dining Festivals

Hong Kong Whisky Festival

Cold and rainy February's the month for whisky it seems, as the first ever Hong Kong Whisky Festival (and the second one in town) takes place at the InterContinental Grand Stanford. Dram dabblers can learn how to properly appreciate a single malt through one of the masterclasses on food and whisky pairing, attend a VIP pouring session, or sample the many varieties on offer in the main hall. A Peat Pavilion will also be on site, complete with an ice bar serving oysters, sea urchin and peaty malts. Main hall opens noon-7pm; Peat Pavilion 5-11pm. Feb 20, 12pm. InterContinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong, 70 Mody Rd., 2721-5161. \$220 from cityline.com, includes one glass and two starter tokens; \$420 for ticket plus entry to master class. Additional tokens \$25 each. hkwhiskyfestival.com.

Gigs

Smells like 90s

The Wanch's 90s-themed party Smells like 90s returns with four SAR stalwarts—Shataleene, The Peel Collective, After-After-Party and Milk and Cookies (aka Shepherds The Weak)—covering their favorite 90s guilty pleasures. Free drinks to the one dressed in the best 90s outfit—so get those baggy cargos and jelly shoes out now. Jan 29, 9pm. The Wanch, 54 Jaffe Rd., Wan Chai, 2586-1621.



Picnic in the Park

Don't let the name fool you: Picnic in the Park is more than just that. 26 live bands are rocking out at Siena Park in Discovery Bay. You'll get great tunes with alfresco dining and of course a few drinks, all in a good cause: The bands are playing for the Hong Chi Children's Home and the Hong Kong Student Aid Society. Jan 30, 10am. Siena Park, Discovery Bay, 2987-7382. picnicinthehk.com.

Nightlife Events



LAST CHANCE!

PDT Pop-up Bar

The Shell at MO Bar will be given a makeover this season to recreate legendary New York speakeasy PDT (Please Don't Tell). Just like the New York original, you'll enter the bar through a secret entrance via a phone booth from MO Bar, and you'll find three of PDT's top bartenders—founder Jim Meehan, current GM Jeff Bell and veteran bartender Nick Brown—whipping up a list of 12 classic PDT and new Hong Kong-inspired cocktails. Through Jan 30. MO, The Landmark Mandarin Oriental, 15 Queen's Rd. Central, Central, 2132-0077.



Tiesto

Time to get your untz on. Fresh from his 2015 Grammy win, legendary DJ Tiësto returns to Macau to drop his big house beats. Feb 19, 11:30pm. Club Cubic, 2/F, Hard Rock Hotel Macau, Estrada do Istmo, (853) 6638-4999. \$580-780 from ticket.cityofdreamsmacau.com, \$980 at the door.



Black & White Party

The Fringe Club pays homage to 1913—the year the building it inhabits was finished—with a black-and-white themed party complete with big band jazz, swing dancing, magic tricks and perhaps even a bit of the green fairy. Dress code is black and white... Can we go as a can of evaporated milk? Feb 5, 8pm. Fringe Club, 2 Lower Albert Rd., Central, 2521-7251. Admission by black and white dress code or \$250 at the door.

Edited by Evelyn Lok
evelyn.lok@hkmagmedia.com



The God of Gamblers Pre-CNY Party
Channel your best Chow Yun-fat game face and rally up for a round of Yu Ha Haai (Fish Prawn Crab) dice or Sic Bo at Bao Bei's pre-CNY party. Every \$50 spent on drinks will get you a chip—equating to \$5 off your bill—and a max of 10 chips can be used per game. Feb 6, 10pm. Bao Bei, B1/F, Carfield Commercial Building, 77 Wyndham St., Central, 2801-7779. Free.



Tikitiki Bowling Bar CNY Party
Is ten-pin bowling an auspicious CNY activity? Regardless, couples heading to TikiTiki Bowling Bar dressed in Chinese garb (can you even bowl in a cheongsam?) will receive eight Lucky Dragon shooters to share. Wobbly strikes all round! Feb 8-10. TikiTiki Bowling Bar, 4/F, Centro, 1A Chui Tong Rd., Sai Kung, 2657-8488. Free.

Valentine's Day



Romantic Vibes

Have you always wanted some sax under the stars but were too shy to go for it? Now you can at Vibes' V-day offering, which is bringing in a live saxophonist and DJ to serenade your night. Cozy up in a private cabana, sip Moët Rosé and feed each other canapés in-between careless whispers: sounds like you're getting some good sax for sure. Feb 14, 7pm. Vibes, 5/F, The Mira Hong Kong, 118 Nathan Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, 2315-5999. \$488 includes two glasses of Moët & Chandon Rose Champagne and a platter of six canapés.

Lust and Love with Coffee Meets Bagel
Don't have a Valentine this year? Don't stress about it. Lily & Bloom teams up with dating app Coffee Meets Bagel (where you get to check each single's credentials before deciding to chat) to bring us a "Lust and Love" party on V-Day, where you can nab a free first cocktail and a two-for-one deal afterwards, plus a lucky draw at 9:30pm. Feb 14, 8pm. Lily and Bloom, 6/F, LKF Tower, 33 Wyndham St., Central, 2810-6166. Free.



Arena Triathlon

Nothing says "sports bar" like an epic triple drinking game showdown: Arena's hosting their very first boozy triathlon for teams of two or four players, who can sign up to compete in beer pong, flip cup and darts. They'll score points on speed and accuracy. Go sign up, emerge victorious... and pretty wasted. Register by emailing suki@voltage-pr.com. Feb 3, 7pm. Arena, 1/F, 10 Knutsford Terrace, Tsim Sha Tsui, 9683-7083.

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The Big Short ★★★★

(USA) Comedy. Directed by Adam McKay. Starring Ryan Gosling, Steve Carell, Christian Bale, Brad Pitt. Category IIB. 130 minutes. Opened Jan 21.

Still wondering what really went down in the financial crisis eight years ago? Were you more invested in Britney Spears shaving her hair off than in understanding what the subprime mortgage meltdown really meant? In one of this year's biggest movies (its five Oscar nominations are a big hint) Adam McKay's "The Big Short" has done the best job yet in breaking down the money mumbo jumbo for the masses, walking us through why the bubble burst and how it still affects us today, eight years on.

With goofy titles like "Anchorman" on his roster, McKay lends a comic and infectious energy to the story. Of course it has to be this way, otherwise the audience would be snoozing by the title credits. It's a true tale based on author Michael Lewis' ("The Blind Side," "Moneyball") account of how four Wall Street outsiders predicted the financial crisis before anyone else—and cashed in on it. It's equally an exposé of the ludicrous ease with which banks were doling out mortgages and loans that people couldn't realistically pay off, as well as a deep moral examination and cautionary tale of the sheer greed that led the banks, ratings agencies and mortgage broker bros to make terrible decisions for incomprehensible amounts of cash.

When eccentric real-life hedge fund manager Michael Burry (Christian Bale)—method acted to a T, as usual), a one-eyed, Megadeth-blasting numbers whiz, notices how unstable and risky the American housing market is, he predicts the collapse mid-2007 and plans to profit from it by betting that the loans will default: He's taking a short position. A very big



one. The banks see him as a total nutcase, so obviously they take his money. Suave trader Jared Vennett (Ryan Gosling), catches wind of this and pitches the same plan to hedge fund manager and blustering moral knight Mark Baum (Steve Carell) as a more intense, upright version of "The Office"'s Michael Scott. Hoping to get rich fast, a pair of amateur investors (John Magaro and Finn Wittrock) accidentally come across Vennett's proposal, and enlist the help of pessimistic retired banker Ben Rickert (Brad Pitt) to get in on the profit.

The three groups never intersect, but Vennett whirls us through the story as narrator, demystifying the complex financial jargon. The best way he does this? Bringing in celebrities like Margot Robbie (in a sexy, sudsy bathtub, of

course), Anthony Bourdain and Selena Gomez to explain complex terms like a "collateralized debt obligation" or "synthetic CDOs." It's the best kind of crash course.

Cinematographer Barry Ackroyd ("The Hurt Locker") works in a close-up-ridden, sometimes shaky realism to the film which adds to the grainy mid-noughties charm, but it also brings out the harsh comedy of particularly bleak sets, from abandoned luxury suburbs to deserted Goldman Sachs offices.

Although "The Big Short" is cleverly disguised as an easy breezy lesson in finance, it's 130 minutes of insight as well. Hopefully the people who were just paying attention to celebrity gossip eight years ago will finally listen to what these celebs have to say. **Evelyn Lok**

Coming Soon

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip
(USA) Time for the fourth round of squeaky CGI squirrel adventures: Alvin, Simon and Theo embark on a road trip to stop their owner Dave from proposing to his new girlfriend. With plenty of squeaky Bruno Mars covers in between. Ughhhhhh. Opens Feb 4.



From Vegas to Macau III
(Hong Kong/China) It's CNY, so shitty blockbusters sequels abound: Chow Yun-fat returns as "God of Gamblers" Ko Chun with an all-star cast (Andy Lau, Nick Cheung, Jacky Cheung and Carina Lau) for yet another gambling escapade to Macau: This time involving a bout of amnesia, gratuitous glamor shots of Studio City, and plenty of director Wong Jing's usual ridiculousness. Opens Feb 6.

The Good Dinosaur ▼
(USA) Disney and Pixar's latest long-awaited offering is a tale of unlikely friendship between a human and an Apatosaurus named Arlo, in a world where dinosaurs never went extinct. The trailer already has our eyes getting a little moist. Such kindness! Such adventure! Opens Feb 4.



The Monkey King 2
(Hong Kong) Following up from 2014's rehash of the well-known legend, Aaron Kwok plays Sun Wukong, the Monkey King, after previously playing baddie the Bull Demon King. Sammo Hung has replaced Donnie Yen as action director, so you can still expect plenty of 3D-tastic flying kicks. Year of the Monkey upgrade! Opens Feb 4.

Opening



An
(Japan) A delicate ode to nature and food, "An" is named after the sweet red bean filling of a dorayaki pancake sandwich. Sentaro recruits the eccentric 76-year-old Tokue to help out at his stall, where sales soon begin to skyrocket thanks to Tokue's careful cooking. Opened Jan 28.

Kill The Messenger
(USA) Michael Cuesta (TV's "Homeland") brings the true story of investigative reporter Gary Webb to the big screen. Jeremy Renner plays Webb, who put his life on the line in the 90s when he uncovered the CIA's involvement in crack cocaine smuggling to fund rebels in Nicaragua. Renner doesn't disappoint, and the dark story is apt for our times. Opened Jan 28. ★★★★



The Last Women Standing
(China) Shu Qi is Ruxi, a 35-year-old educated boss bitch who, along with her successful girlfriends (Hao Lei and Xiong Dailin), is suddenly facing the pressure to settle down with a man. In comes the dashing 25-year-old Ma Sai (Eddie Peng), a new assistant at Ruxi's company, who presumably swoops in and saves her heart. But in what world would these ass-kicking ladies need saving? Opened Jan 28.

Les Aventures d'Anthony
(China) Zhou Xun's first film from the producer's seat is a story about a 20-something's experience of leaving his hometown of Dalian to study in Melbourne, while his soulmate Ying also leaves for Japan. Long distance always sucks! Opened Jan 28.

Continuing

The Big Bee
(Japan) Set in 90s Japan, the Big Bee is a state-of-the-art military helicopter that's remotely hijacked on the day of its launch and flown above a nuclear power plant. Full of explosives and with only eight hours before fuel runs out, how will Japan get itself out of this sticky situation?

The Big Short
(USA) See review, above.

Concussion
(USA) Will Smith is Dr. Bennet Omalu, the man who discovered the sports-related brain trauma disease CTE, which leads to brain deterioration similar to Alzheimer's. "Concussion" is the dramatic retelling of his crusade to alert all quarterbacks... Convincing acting from Smith, but the story development is too slow and weak to score a touch-down. ★★★

Daddy's Home

(USA) The second comedy collab between Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg since 2010's detective action-comedy "The Other Guys," Hollywood pits mild-mannered stepdad (Ferrell) against bad boy biological father (Wahlberg) in the ultimate fatherhood one-up competition.



Dirty Grandpa

(USA) Zac Efron, an uptight lawyer (in what world would that work?), is about to marry his boss's daughter, but he's taken on a whirlwind road trip through Florida with his sleazy grandfather (Robert De Niro). Probably exactly what you'd expect from a movie titled "Dirty Grandpa."

Dheepan

(France/Sri Lanka) Inspired by the medieval literary work "Persian Letters," in which two Persian aristocrats write about their journey through France, "Dheepan" is the tale of three Tamil refugees who flee the Sri Lankan civil war to come to France. Apt for our times and deeply moving, the film won the Palme d'Or grand prize at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival.

House of Wolves

(Hong Kong) This CNY comedy's written by frequent Stephen Chow collaborator Vincent Kok, so expect heaps of mo lei tau nonsense: It stars Francis Ng Chun-yu as a con-man who's pretending to be an ALS patient, and Ronald Cheng as a village leader. Both fall in love with a girl who's new to the village.

Ip Man 3

(Hong Kong) Donnie Yen returns as Wing Chun legend Ip Man. This time, the grandmaster duels it out with none other than Mike Tyson himself, who plays a property developer who has his eyes set on land occupied by a local primary school. Obviously, the tightly executed action balances out the dubious plot. ★★★★



Edited by Evelyn Lok
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Need to Know

AMC Cinema, 2265-8933
amccinemas.com.hk

Broadway Circuit,
2388-3188
cinema.com.hk

Golden Harvest Cinema,
2622-6688
goldenharvest.com

UA Cinema,
3516-8811
uacinemas.com.hk

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

MCL Cinema, 3413-6688
mclcinema.com

The Metroplex, 2620-2200
metroplex.com.hk

Joy

(USA) The annual David O. Russell movie starring Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence. We follow J-Law as she plays Joy Mangano: Divorcée, matriarch and founder of the Miracle Mop. J-Law (who received an Oscar nom for her role), bangin' tunes and silliness: Can't go wrong. ★★★

Our Brand is Crisis

(USA) Sandra Bullock is "Calamity" Jane, a retired campaign strategist pulled back onto the scene to help bring up the votes for a dark horse presidential candidate in Bolivia. Hard-sells cynicism in the world of politics but ends on a sweet Hollywood ending: a fun afternoon distraction, but nothing more. ★★



The Revenant

(USA) Alejandro Iñárritu's latest has Leonardo DiCaprio playing famous 18th century fur-trapper Hugh Glass, who is brutally mauled by a bear during a snowy expedition and left for dead by his men. No doubt gunning for an Oscar, DiCaprio goes to ultimate lengths through the chilling winter for revenge... Fantastic acting and cinematography make this a must-see. ★★★★

Sherlock: The Abominable Bride

(UK) It's TV's "Sherlock" on the big screen! The world's best sleuthing partners get a special episode to kick off the year. Sherlock (Benedict Cumberbatch) and Watson (Martin Freeman) return to the Victorian era to solve the case of a bride seeking revenge. Filled with fan service, but an overly meta plot gets in the way of the fun. ★★★

Star Wars: The Force Awakens

(USA) J.J. Abrams takes the reins for this first part of the sequel trilogy to the legendary space opera. Set 30 years after the fall of the Empire in "Return of the Jedi," a new military dictatorship has assumed rule. Brilliant fun, even if it's basically just a remake of "A New Hope." ★★★★

Steve Jobs

(USA) Danny Boyle's Steve Jobs biopic chronicles the story of the father of Apple from his first launch of the Macintosh in 1984 to his departure and later return to Apple, plus his personal struggles along the way. Written by "The Newsroom" screenwriter Aaron Sorkin, it's two hours of fantastic rapid-fire dialogue and tension that'll leave you in awe—and a little bit exhausted. ★★★★

Tag

(Japan) Two buses of high school girls are destroyed while en route to a field trip—with the mysterious murderers still gunning for sole survivor Mitsuko. Yet more grindhouse gore from genre master Sion Sono—featuring the death of a hundred scantily-clad high-school chicks.



Don't miss out on Kieslowski's "Three Colors" trilogy

Film Festivals

All's Well Ends Well

Clifton Ko's cult classic "All's Well Ends Well" is perhaps the best movie around if you want to gear up to Chinese New Year: Family dysfunction, mahjong banter and terrible pranks abound as three brothers try to win the favor of their father. This screening is an extended version which includes a 10-minute firefighting scene starring Leslie Cheung which has never been shown in Hong Kong theaters. Jan 30. The Grand Cinema, 2/F, Elements, 1 Austin Rd. West, West Kowloon, 2196-8170.

Three Colors Trilogy Marathon

Polish arthouse director Krzysztof Kieslowski's "Three Colors" trilogy is a must-see on any film nerd's bucket list. Set aside a Sunday where you can marathon "Blue" (12:30pm), "White" (2:45pm) and "Red" (5:15pm)—which was nominated for three Oscars in 1995—in one sitting. Themed after the three national colors and the motto of France ("liberty, equality, fraternity"), the trilogy also explores the idea of anti-tragedy, anti-comedy, and anti-romance. Get chin-scratching. Jan 31. The Grand Cinema, 2/F, Elements, 1 Austin Rd. West, West Kowloon, 2196-8170. \$75 per movie from thegrandcinema.com.hk.

PERKS

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A Musical Fabric of Dots and Lines

The Granular and The Linear Concert (11-12/3) A cool, relaxing way to get away from the stress of urban living with a musical fabric of dots (plucked strings) and lines (bowed-strings). HKCO's Mao Qinghua (Huqin Co-Principal and Zhonghu Principal), Ge Yang (Liuqin / Xiaoruan Principal), Li Li (Huqin) and Cui Can (Ruan) will bring you Chinese classics and favourites.

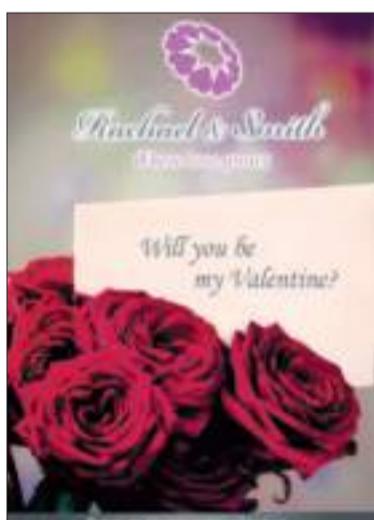
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AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): "It seems that the whole time you're living this life, you're thinking about a different one instead," wrote Latvian novelist Inga Abele in her novel "High Tide." Have you ever been guilty of that, Aquarius? Probably. Most of us have at one time or another. That's the bad news. The good news is that the coming months will bring you excellent opportunities to graduate forever from this habit. Not all at once, but gradually and incrementally, you can shed the idea that you should be doing something other than what you're doing. You can get the hang of what it's like to thoroughly accept and embrace the life you are actually living. And now is an excellent time to get started in earnest on this project.



an endless peace anytime between now and March 15, it really is likely to last a long time.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): "I shiver, thinking how easy it is to be totally wrong about people, to see one tiny part of them and confuse it for the whole." Author Lauren Oliver wrote that, and now I'm offering it to you, just in time for your Season of Correction and Adjustment. The coming weeks will be a favorable time for you to get smarter about evaluating your allies—and maybe even one of your adversaries, as well. I expect you will find it relatively easy, even pleasurable, to overcome your misimpressions and deepen your incomplete understandings.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): In June 1942, the U.S. Navy crushed Japanese naval forces at the Battle of Midway. It was a turning point that was crucial to America's ultimate victory over Japan in World War II. One military historian called it "the most stunning and decisive blow in the history of naval warfare." This milestone occurred just six months after Japan's devastating attack on U.S. forces at Pearl Harbor. To compare your life to these two events may be bombastic, but I'm in a bombastic mood as I contemplate your exciting possibilities. I predict that in the second half of 2016, you'll claim a victory that will make up for a loss or defeat you endured during the last few months of 2015. And right now is when you can lay the groundwork for that future triumph.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Playwright Edmond Rostand (1868-1918) had a lot of friends, and they often came to visit him uninvited. He found it hard to simply tell them to go away and leave him alone. And yet he hated to be interrupted while he was working. His solution was to get naked and write for long hours while in his bathroom, usually soaking in the bathtub. His intrusive friends rarely had the nerve to insist on socializing. In this way, Rostand found the peace he needed to create his masterpiece "Cyrano de Bergerac," as well as numerous other plays. I suggest you consider a comparable gambit, Scorpio. You need to carve out some quality alone time.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "I opened my mouth, almost said something. Almost. The rest of my life might have turned out differently if I had. But I didn't." The preceding reminiscence belongs to a character in Khaled Hosseini's novel "The Kite Runner." I bring it up in hopes that you will do the opposite: Say the words that need to be said. Articulate what you're burning to reveal. Speak the truths that will send your life on a course that's in closer alignment with your pure intentions.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): According to some traditional astrologers, you Capricorns are vigilant to avoid loss. Old horoscope books suggest that you may take elaborate measures to avoid endangering what you have accumulated. To ensure that you will never run out of what you need, you may even ration your output and limit your self-expression. This behavior is rooted in the belief that you should conserve your strength by withholding or even hiding your power. While there may be big grains of truth in this conventional view of you Capricorns, I think it's only part of the story. In the coming weeks, for instance, I bet you will wield your clout with unabashed authority. You won't save yourself for later; you'll engage in no strategic self-suppression. Instead, you will be expansive and unbridled as you do whatever's required to carry out the important foundation work that needs to be done.

HOMEWORK: What could you do to free your imagination from its bondage?
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SAVAGE LOVE

Dan Savage

Down to business: Christmas came and went, and every present I bought for my extraordinary husband could be opened in front of our children. He deserves better, and I have a particular gift in mind for Valentine's Day. My husband has expressed an interest in sounding, something we've attempted only with my little finger. He seemed to enjoy it! But the last thing I want to do is damage his big beautiful dick. So is sounding a fun thing? Is it a safe thing? Recommendations for a beginner's sounding kit? Or should I scrap the idea and just get him another butt plug?

- Safety Of Sounding

P.S. Here is a picture of the big beautiful dick I don't want to damage.

Sounding, for those of you who didn't go to the same Sunday school I did, involves the insertion of smooth metal or plastic rods into the urethra. Sounding is sometimes done for legitimate medical purposes (to open up a constricted urethra, to locate a blockage), and it's sometimes done for legitimate erotic purposes (some find the sensation pleasurable, and others are turned on by the transgression, particularly when a man is being sounded, i.e., the penetrator's penetrator penetrated).

So yeah, some people definitely think sounding is a fun thing, SOS.

"But whether or not something is a safe thing depends on knowledge of the risks/pitfalls and an observance of proper technique," said Dr. Keith D. Newman, a urologist and a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. "The urethral lining has the consistency of wet paper towels and can be damaged easily, producing scarring. And the male urethra takes a bend just before the prostate. Negotiating that bend takes talent, and that's where most sounding injuries occur."

Recreational cock sounders—particularly newbies—shouldn't attempt to push past that bend. But how do you know when you've arrived at that bend?

"SOS's partner should do the inserting initially," said Dr. Newman, "as the bend in the urethra is easily recognized by the soundee. Once he is clear on his cues—once he understands the sensations, what works, and when the danger areas are reached—SOS can participate safely with insertion."

And cleanliness matters, SOS, whether you're sounding the husband or serving burritos to the public.

"Infection is always an issue," said Dr. Newman. "Clean is good, but the closer to sterile the better. And be careful about fingers. They can be more dangerous than sounds because of the nails and difficulty in sterilizing."

So for the record, SOS: Your previous attempts at sounding—those times you jammed your little finger into your husband's member—were more dangerous than the sounding you'll be doing with the lovely set of stainless-steel sounding rods you'll be giving your hubby on Valentine's Day.

Moving on...

"Spit is not lube," said Dr. Newman. "Water- or silicone-based lubes are good; oil-based is not so good with metal instruments." (You can also go online and order little single-serving packets of sterile lubricant. Don't ask me how I know this.) Using "glass or other breakable instruments" as sounds is a Very Bad Idea. Dr. Newman was pretty emphatic on this point—and while it sounds fairly obvious, anyone who's worked in an ER can tell you horror stories about all the Very Bad Ideas they've retrieved from people's urethras, vaginas, and rectums.

Now let's go shopping!

"Choosing the best 'starter kit' is not hard: Pratt Dilators are not hard to find online, they're not that expensive, and they will last a lifetime," said Dr. Newman. (I found a set of Pratt Dilators on Amazon for less than \$30.) And when your set arrives, SOS, don't make the common mistake of starting with the smallest/skinniest sound in the pack. "Inserting something too small allows wiggle room on the way in and for a potential to stab the urethral wall," said Dr. Newman.

The doc's next safety tip will make sense after you've seen a set of Pratt Dilators: "Always keep the inserted curve facing one's face, meaning the visible, external curve facing away toward one's back."

You can gently stroke your husband's cock once the sound is in place, SOS; you can even blow him. Vaginal intercourse is off the table, obviously, and you might not wanna fuck his big beautiful dick with a sound until you're both feeling like sounding experts. And when that time comes: Don't stab away at his cock with a sound in order to sound-fuck him. A quality sound has some weight and heft—hold his erection upright, slowly pull the well-lubricated, non-glass sound until it's almost all the way out, and then let go. It will sink back without any help from you.

Your husband's butt should be plug-free during your sounding sessions, SOS, as a plug could compress a section of his urethra. If you're skilled enough to work around the bend—or if you're foolish enough to push past it—the sound could puncture his compressed urethra. And a punctured urethra is every bit as unpleasant as it sounds. (Sorry.)

Finally, SOS, what about coming? Will your husband's balls explode if he blows a load while a metal rod is stuffed in his urethra?

"Coming with the sound in place is a matter of personal preference," said Dr. Newman. "There is no particular danger involved."

P.S. Thank you for the picture.

My wife and I have an amazing relationship. Our sex life is as hot as it can be given a child and two careers. A couple of years ago, I bought her one of those partial-body sex dolls (it has a cock and part of the abdomen). We took videos and pictures while using it. Very hot for both of us. We later got a black version of the same toy. (We are white.) Even hotter videos. I have kept the videos in a secure app on my iPad. Over the past year, I have created Photoshop porn of my wife with black men using screenshots from commercial porn. I haven't shared this with my wife. We never discussed what to do with the videos and pics we made. I assumed she trusted me not to share these images with anyone. (I haven't and won't!) Is it okay that I have a porn stash that features my wife? Is it okay that I have a stash of Photoshop porn of my wife fucking black men? Should I share this info—and my fantasies—with her? I've always fantasized about her being with a black man, but I'm not sure either of us would truly want that to happen.

- Secretly Keeping Encrypted Porn That Isn't Clearly Allowed Lately

You need to speak to your wife about those pics and videos, about the way you've manipulated them, and about your fantasies—but that's a lot to lay on her at once, SKEPTICAL, so take it in stages.

Find a time to ask her about those old pics and videos and whether she wants them discarded or if you can continue to hang on to them. At a different time, bring up your racially charged fantasies and let her know what those partial-body sex dolls were doing for you. And finally, SKEPTICAL, if she reacts positively to your having held on to the photos and your fantasies, ask her how she feels about you creating a few images using Photoshop of her hooking up with a black man for fantasy purposes only. It's a little dishonest—you're asking permission to do what you've already done—but you'll know what you need to do if her answer to the Photoshop question is "No, absolutely not!" (To be clear: You'll need to delete those Photoshopped pics.)

All that said, SKEPTICAL, if the images you're holding on to—the originals and/or the manipulated ones—could destroy your marriage and/or your wife's life and/or your wife's career if they got out (computers can be hacked or stolen, clouds may not be as secure as advertised), don't wait: Delete all the images now.

On the Lovecast, porn star Bailey Jay on the perils and pleasures of letting your dirty photos out: savagecast.com.

Find the Savage Lovecast (my weekly podcast) every Tuesday at thestrange.com/savage mail@savagelove.net

SPOTLIGHT

The latest news and deals from our partners



An Arcane Valentine's

Valentine's Day is generally recognized as the most romantic day of the year the world over.

That much is not in dispute. What remains open to debate is the best way to spend the day, or more precisely, the evening.

Luckily, the answer to the eternal conundrum is quite simple: Take your significant other to a good restaurant and enjoy a wonderful meal in a romantic setting.

Scattered across Hong Kong there are many fine dining establishments, catering for the most discerning tastes. But on a special night you want something that extra bit special—and that's what's on offer at Arcane.

Arcane provides an exquisite and indulgent six-course

special menu prepared by award-winning Chef Shane Osborn.

Set in a prime location in On Lan Street in Central, the restaurant is private and discreet, away from the hustle of the city and crowded restaurant areas.

Arcane will be offering a six-course Valentine's Day menu for \$988 per person which will be available on February 13 and 14, for dinner only. Guests will have the choice of an à la carte menu on February 13, while on February 14 only the Valentine's Day six-course menu will be on offer.

If you're looking for the perfect night out on Valentine's Day, Arcane is the ideal choice for lovers and friends seeking an intimate rendezvous with gorgeous food and wine to celebrate the most romantic day of the year.

arcane.hk



Swing into the Year of the Monkey

With Chinese New Year rapidly approaching, W Hong Kong is getting its celebrations into top gear with exclusive festival dishes for family and friends to enjoy. From February 8-22, its authentic Cantonese restaurant Sing Yin will be offering an exciting lunch and dinner set for eager diners.

What can you expect? Amazing dishes like sautéed scallops with cordyceps flower and elm fungus: With scallops freshly imported all the way from Canada for their firm, fleshy texture and their size, this is a real winner. Also look out for baked crab shell stuffed with crab meat, onion, mushroom and cheese, braised goose web with sea moss and black mushroom and so much more—all of which can all be enjoyed for just \$3,520 for four people or \$8,280 for eight.

For lunchtime there is a set menu for \$368 per person. Needless to say, popular desserts like turnip cake or rice pudding are also built into the price of all set menus, because it wouldn't be Chinese New Year without a few sweet treats to enjoy, would it?

If you're looking for less traditional dining choices, from January 2 to February 29 head over to Woobar for the prosperous red and gold tea set and indulge in a buffet selection of afternoon delights. Spoil yourself with Cantonese favorites such as char siu and Beijing duck, or go for something sweeter in the form of Woobar's raspberry cake—shaped like a Chinese firecracker, of course.

w-hongkong.com

The Quest for Picture-Perfect Skin

Every woman wants perfect, flawless skin. Clear and beautiful skin is, after all, one of the main elements of beauty. That is why so much time and effort is focused on the eternal quest for beautiful skin.

Everyday living takes a heavy toll on your skin. Obvious factors such as stress, lack of sleep and poor nutrition certainly don't help. Then, of course, there are the twin evils of smoking and alcohol, plus the environmental threats posed by pollution and damage caused by the sun's ultraviolet rays.

But don't worry, it's not all doom and gloom! There's expert assistance out there just waiting to help you achieve the perfect skin of your dreams.

Conveniently located in Granville Road in the heart of Tsim Sha Tsui, Oracle Skinland is the first overseas subsidiary

of the Oracle Medical Group, Korea's leading franchised skin care clinic.

Over the years many Korean-style clinics have sprung up in Hong Kong, but Oracle Skinland is proud to be the first skin care clinic to offer 100 percent South Korea treatment.

The treatment offered focuses on five fields: pigmentation, acne, tightening (including wrinkle removal and collagen rejuvenation), body sculpting and hair removal.

Oracle Skinland also provides a one-on-one customized beauty system through a four-step consultation. This involves a basic consultation, beauty consultation, laser treatment and facial skin care.

hk.oracleclinic.com



SMART JOBS



WOODSIDE

Are you a self-motivated, high-energy, creative individual with a passion for the food & beverage industry? Do you possess strong communication & organisational skills? Does a fast-pace, demanding, but fun-filled work environment interest you?

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(food & beverage industry experience a plus, not a must)



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Recently renovated PLAY and Hong Kong's newest live music venue STUDIO are looking for experienced and talented individuals to fill the following roles:

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GRAPHIC DESIGNER

VISUALS JOCKEY, LIGHTING & SOUND TECHNICIAN

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For further information about these positions and to apply, please email us your CV/portfolio and cover letter to careers@playclub.asia



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ADVERTISING CAREERS

HK Magazine Media Group – publisher of HK Magazine, The List, and the where® family of international travel publications, is looking to fill the following positions in its dynamic and exciting Advertising Department:

1. SENIOR ADVERTISING SALES EXECUTIVE

- 1-year experience in media sales; magazine advertising sales a great advantage
- Fluent in spoken and written Cantonese and English
- Attractive remuneration package and performance based commission

2. ADVERTISING SALES EXECUTIVE

- Positive attitude towards magazine advertising sales
- Fluent in spoken Cantonese and English
- Entry level. Fresh Graduates welcome; no experience necessary

Interested parties, please send your cover letter and CV to resume@hkmagmedia.com



Vanity Fair
BRANDS, LP

Freelance or Part-time Fitting MODEL(S)

A well-known USA Lingerie brand is currently looking for fitting models based in Hong Kong Office.

The person should have a positive attitude and able to give feedback during fitting process.

Lingerie - US Size 38C

- *Full Bust - 40 1/2" - 41"
- *Underbust - 33"

Lingerie - US Size 38DD

- *Full Bust - 43"
- *Underbust - 33"

Lingerie - US Size 38F

- *Full Bust - 43 1/2"
- *Underbust - 33"

*** Other Sizes are also welcome ***

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HK GIVEAWAYS

Can you believe it's the end of the month already? We've got a winner for our big giveaway at the Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong. Not lucky this time?

Hang around for a preview of next month's awesome goodies!

WE HAVE A
WINNER!



Congratulations to the winner of a suite stay at the Mandarin Oriental, valued at \$10,150!

Kimberly Ciszewski is the lucky winner of a one-night weekend stay in a Studio Suite at the Mandarin Oriental, complete with breakfast plus afternoon tea for two at the Clipper Lounge. Kimberly picked up the magazine each week to find the words "sanctuary," "bespoke" and "desire," before putting them together into a description of what a stay at the property would mean to her. Here's the entry:

Standing as a sanctuary of calm in the midst of buzzing Hong Kong, the Mandarin Oriental ignites my desire, as a mum of four, to find rejuvenation with a bespoke experience of luxury, tranquility, and first-class hospitality.

Congratulations, Kimberly, and enjoy your holiday! Hope you get away from the kids!



Not a Winner? There's Plenty More Chances to Come!

Sorry you didn't win this month! But the prizes don't stop there. Check back next week for an all-new set of prizes we've got up for grabs—including a staycation in a suite at the InterContinental Hong Kong, plus a Cantonese-inspired afternoon tea at their legendary lobby lounge!

We've got that and more up for grabs, so check back on **February 5** for another amazing instalment of HK Giveaways!



FIRST PERSON

James Tien is a Legco member and businessman. The former Chairman of the Liberal Party resigned his position as leader in 2014 after urging Chief Executive CY Leung to step down, displeasing Beijing. He tells Isabelle Hon about growing up an introvert, his route into politics, and his disappointment with the government.

I was born in 1947 in Shanghai.

My family came to Hong Kong in 1949. Like many other immigrants, we had no faith in the Communist Party.

My dad wasn't rich when he first came to Hong Kong. But he had studied in the UK before and spoke English well, which was a great advantage in Hong Kong.

There weren't many university graduates, let alone a Chinese person who had graduated in the UK.

To become a successful person, knowledge is really important.

He first started working for others, then in import and export trading before starting his own factory, Manhattan Garments. He named it Manhattan because he started the company with an American friend from New York.

I remember that by around 7 years old, my family had a better life. We had a small factory when I was 11 and we became well-off.

I was a good kid back in school. I was the youngest in my class. I'm not tall enough to be aggressive. Small people are always quiet.

As I remember, going to school was such a happy thing. Society has changed a lot. Nowadays kids get much more pressure.

The first time I left town was when I went to study abroad in the US at age 17. Before that I'd never taken a plane or a ship.

My classmates all wondered why I would become a politician. I was introverted and not very academic.

But during 7 years of studying in the US, I changed.

Nowadays no one thinks I'm an introvert. Some may think I'm too nosy, the "bad boy" of the pro-government camp.

My father was appointed a Legco member from 1975-85. Hong Kong was then reliant on the textile industry. He represented the government when negotiating export quotas with the US and Europe.

I took over the factory after I finished my master's degree. I had to handle labor, environmental and traffic issues—I also got the chance to meet government officials.

I've been a member of Legco since 1988. Back then I represented the industrial constituency. The British Hong Kong government also supported industry. So of course I was pro-government.

In recent years, as a businessman, I've belonged to the Liberal Party.

Without public support, it's not worth taking part in politics. So my point of view comes from the same direction as the public.

Medical issues, public housing, education and welfare: It's got to be balanced.

People in Hong Kong may think I'm a pro-government, bourgeois rich man. But I dare to oppose what the government is pushing, such as TSA [Territory-wide System Assessment exams] or the Copyright Bill—I won't blindly support them.

But compared to the pan-democratic camp I'm rather mild.

Travel makes me feel younger. As my textile business turned into real estate, I haven't had to travel overseas for business. Now I've started to enjoy it.

Nowadays the most fun I have is hanging out with my grandchildren.

I'm quite disappointed in what the government has done.

It's a diverse society—rulers should be mild and listen to public opinions.

Even if they can't meet the public's expectations, they should explain themselves. It makes society less divided.

In recent years, Occupy Central, the Yellow/Blue camp and localists have become the main focus.

Youngsters have lost confidence—Hong Kong used to be the leader, but now look at successful mainland companies like Alibaba and Tencent.

From new technologies and banks to movies, singers and even painters, China has more talent in all professions.

Hong Kong people have lost their confidence to compete, and hence have become more self-protective. I don't think it's good for Hong Kong.

I totally agree that Hongkongers should have the priority in public housing and welfare.

Yet Hong Kong is a free market—we can't blindly get priority for everything.

We should be more confident in ourselves.

There's filibusters every day in Legco. It's not constructive at all. The relationship between Legco and the administration is really bad.

The government really has to put more effort into building the relationship.

If we don't move forward, cities in the mainland such as Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Shanghai will develop faster than Hong Kong. Then it'll be too late to regret it.

I will not run for Chief Executive.

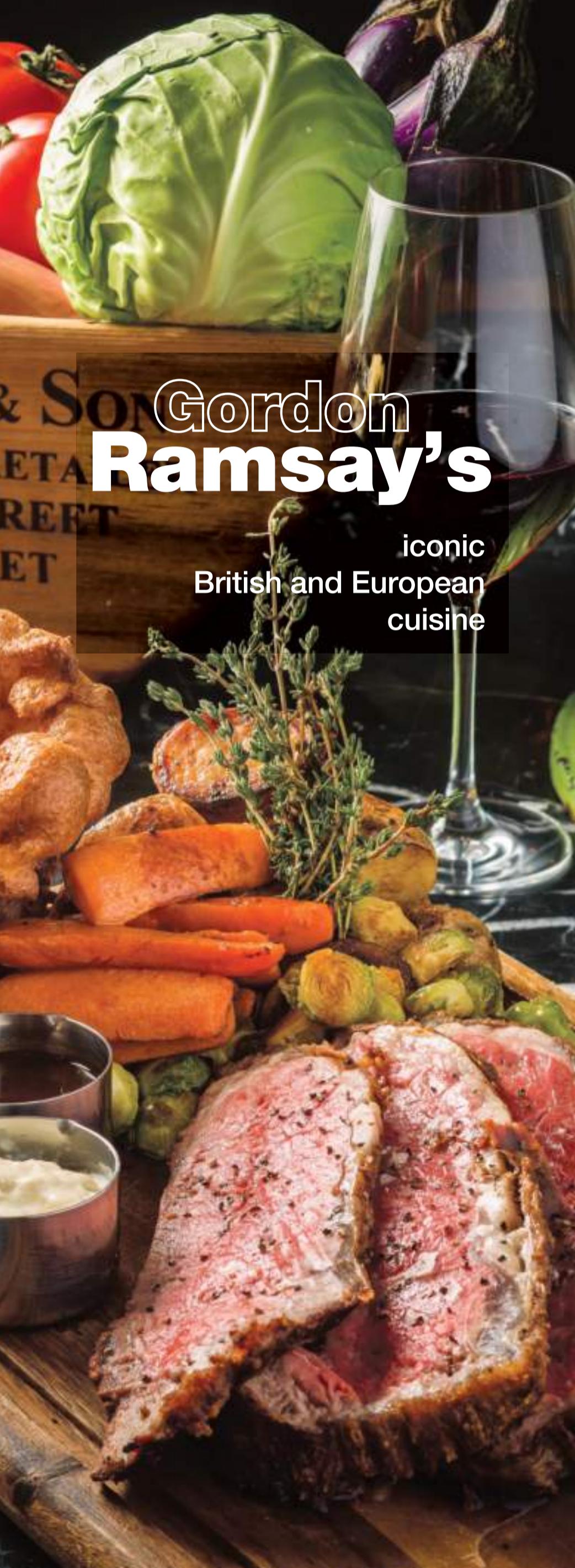
Hong Kong lacks political talent. The old-timers are entering their 70s.

I wish that Hong Kong had more young leaders.

Energy will always bring better things to Hong Kong.

"Hong Kong is a free market—we can't blindly get priority for everything."





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