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Mutual Exacerbation

Hong Kong's so-called "fishball riots" haven't exactly cooled tensions. The government has condemned the protesters wholesale, while Zhang Xiaoming of the Liaison Office has dubbed them "radical separatists," which in Beijing-talk is one very short step from "terrorists."

Lawmakers urged Legco to pass legislation blocking protesters from wearing face masks, so they can be identified. Meanwhile, Basic Law Committee member Rao Geping has used the opportunity to call for the implementation of national security legislation, because nothing quells flames like adding a little extra oil.

It's clear what everyone's got to do here: Step back, take a deep breath, and RAMP UP THE RHETORIC EVEN MORE! Here are a few bright ideas to really increase the city's sense of good-will and mutual respect.

Ban All Face Masks.

The time has clearly passed when wearing a face mask in Hong Kong was simply the sign that you had a cold and didn't want to pass it on to people. Now it's a clear symbol that you are a subversive element ready to bring down the system. Ban all face masks and no one will be able to hide again. Also, viral infection rates will skyrocket. With luck we'll all die of a horrible virus and then everyone will mercifully shut the hell up.

Boost Community Involvement.

If there's one criticism you hear levelled at modern Hong Kong, it's that we're losing our sense of community. We're being isolated into individuals. Nothing brings a community together like organizing large-scale riots. What better expression of "love thy neighbor" than two people standing arm in arm, flinging bricks at cops?

Equip The Police Better.

Frontline cops are super pissed off that they went into Mong Kok unprepared and underequipped. Police bosses were doubtless

terrified of authorizing the use of tear gas again, for fear of bringing another Occupy down on our heads. You know what would have stopped this from being a problem? If you gave every cop a properly trained feline assault unit. Think about it. Sure, they're expensive. But who's gonna mess with a fully armored FREAKING ATTACK LION? Do it, Secretary for Security Lai Tung-kwok. We beg of you. Nothing else will quell the tumult.

Do Some Rebranding.

In another example of mind-bendingly crappy spin, localist rioters are being described as "radical separatists." But why stop with an inflammatory nomenclature that's only ever going to make everyone involved unhappy? Two can play at that game, of course. From now on we suggest renaming literally anyone and everyone who's got involved with this whole sorry mess "useless wastes of oxygen." Subtle, elegant and just... simpler.

Finally Enact National Security Legislation.

Riots in the streets? What better time to make the argument that you need to quash all those uppity Hongkongers with legislation that was shelved back in 2003 because of fears that Hong Kong was getting too close to China? We really showed them, didn't we? Now's the perfect time to take dust off that ol' Article 23 and get 'er going again. Might we suggest terrifyingly broad-ranging powers for the state that allow for the abduction of its citizens and their mysterious, prolonged detention?

Just Give Up Completely And Give in to China on Everything.

Shhhh. Just let it happen. You know you want to. It's just easier this way.

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HOME



Mr. Know-It-All's

— Guide to Life —

Dear Mr. Know-It-All,

Why are the Chinese New Year hawkers worth rioting over? – Fishball Freak

They're not worth rioting over. But they are worth protecting.

The government has been cracking down on the city's hawkers for 40 years, which is why Hong Kong doesn't have the vibrant street food culture of Bangkok or Singapore. Fears about cleanliness and overcrowding led the government to stop issuing new hawker licenses in the 1970s, while also imposing strict restrictions on passing them on: Legal street hawkers can only pass on their licenses through their families. As a result, the number of hawker licenses has tumbled from around 50,000 in 1974 to just 6,000 today.

What happens when you take a step like that? Hongkongers will find a way around it. Illegal hawkers set up where they could, and they would engage in what was called *jau gwei*: "running from ghosts." This was the warning cry that went up when the Hawker Control Teams were seen approaching, most of whom were gweilos, back in the day.

The Chinese New Year street hawkers originally appeared because shops and cha chaan tengs closed over Chinese New Year, so the stalls increased to meet demand. The Kweilin Street Night Market in Sham Shui Po has always been a hotspot. The hawkers of Kweilin Street mostly sell clothes and bric-a-brac. But the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department normally takes Chinese New Year off, meaning that there are no pesky inspectors making the rounds and shutting down stalls that aren't supposed to be there. An enterprising hawker could clean up—and so a tradition was born.

While the government's cleanliness worries may have been valid, the restrictions on licensing have strangled

the city's snack culture. Dai pai dong street stalls are sadly a dying breed, sacrificed in the pursuit of cleaner food standards. The government's plans to introduce food trucks might look good, but they're not exactly accessible to the old granny selling dragon's beard candy from a little Perspex stand.

Historically, many of Hong Kong's hawkers were mainland immigrants, who'd fled to the city in search of a better life. Poor and disadvantaged, they became itinerant hawkers because overheads were low and they could pick up and follow the crowds to chase down their next sale. These hawkers who traveled across Hong Kong in search of profit are the perfect examples of the city's "Lion Rock Spirit," its drive to make a better life for itself. Shut that down, and you might as well shut down everything else.



Nora Tam/SCMP

My Perfect
HK

This week in My Perfect HK:
Transgender activist Joanne Leung has announced her intention to run for Legco in the New Territories East constituency. She's running in the Democratic Party primary, hoping to be selected for the seat. Leung has long championed transgender rights in the city, and says she's hoping to bring an LGBT voice to a more conservative party. Joanne, we're with you all the way.

Letters

"It was a CIA and Taiwanese operation. Protect the police."

Fishballs of Fury

We published our piece about the fishball riots ("Fishballs and Lead," p.10) online first. Here's a selection of responses from readers.

What would Hong Kongers prefer? Protection by their own police or to have them be trained and replaced by the People's Armed Police? Perhaps this is what the police-goading tactics of the plotters behind the protests are aiming for. If so, then these agitators are no friends of the people of Hong Kong. Any sympathy shown to them will only take Hong Kong down a ruinous path to destruction.

Emil Fung

Peaceful and authorized protest should not be bothered, however violent protesters who want to hijack the protest to vent out their anger with violence must be dealt with a similar force to prevent escalation.

Ken Iwaki

Was way overdue. The HK police got their ass kicked and deserved it. Next time the protesters won't play so nice, and will really arm themselves like the big leagues.

Felix Hung

#PrivateEyeHK



Temple Lines

Photo by Rogan Coles (website: archive.argent.photos)

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).



Thursday 2/25 Indian Delights

India's not all about curry and cricketing prowess. Learn more about the world's largest democracy at **India by the Bay**, a week-long festival celebrating its colorful and dynamic culture. Programs include classical and contemporary music, theater, dance, food and more. Don't miss the performance by Nrityagram Dance Ensemble, who give their ancient art a modern touch.

Feb 24-Mar 1, various times and locations.
Tickets from asiasociety.org/hong-kong.

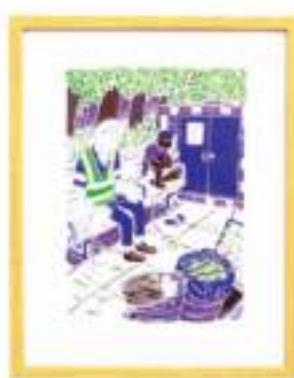
Friday 2/19 True Circus

The wait is over: The Hong Kong Arts Festival opens today. The month-long festival features more than 100 of the world's best shows, ranging from theater to dance to music to acrobatics and more. Kicking off the event is multi-dimensional circus show **La Verità**, which means "the truth" in Italian. Who said you don't learn anything from this magazine?

See Culture (p.22) for more.

Saturday 2/20 Print Isn't Dead

Sick of plain white walls at home? Hit up the second edition of **The Print Market**, where you'll get to meet talented local designers and artists and pick up some of their work to breathe a little more life into your home.
Opening noon-8pm, exhibition through Feb 29. Ethos Gallery, 97 Hill Rd., Shek Tong Tsui.



Sunday 2/21 Music Meets Heritage

How about a nice day out in the wild—or just the New Territories—this Sunday? The **Jockey Club Street Music Series** comes to Green Hub, aka the Old Tai Po Police Station: Chill out on the lawn and be serenaded by everything from traditional Chinese tunes to more experimental beats.
2-4pm. Green Hub, 11 Wan Tau Kok Lane, Tai Po. Free.

Monday 2/22 Light Up Your Love

In trouble because you forgot Valentine's Day? You're in luck because you have Chinese Valentine's Day to make up for it. Also known as the Spring Lantern Festival, bring your date to the traditional lantern carnival outside the Cultural Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui, or go for something more romantic at the **Light Rose Garden** in Tamar Park, where you'll find 25,000 white LED roses carpeting the grounds.
Feb 20-22, 6-11pm. Tamar Park, Admiralty. Free.

Tuesday 2/23 Fit To a Tea

Grab yourself a cuppa at the Conrad Hong Kong's Lobby Lounge, which has paired up with TWG to create **tea-infused delicacies**. Perfect for tannin enthusiasts, the new afternoon tea set features tea-flavored desserts including tea-infused panna cotta and French earl grey and milk chocolate ganache tart. If anyone questions you, just keep repeating: "It's an antioxidant!"

Weekdays, 3-5:30pm. Lobby Lounge, Conrad Hong Kong, Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Admiralty.
\$238 per person.

Wednesday 2/24 Take Flight

Get over humpday with a **themed whisky flight** at Alibi at the Cordis Hotel. The menu changes monthly, featuring whiskies (and whiskeys) from all over the world. In February you can sample drams from America and Canada, including the full-bodied 10 Year WhistlePig Straight Rye Whiskey and Blanton's Straight from the Barrel for bourbon lovers.
Alibi, 5/F, Cordis Hotel, 555 Shanghai St., Mong Kok.
Prices from \$90 per drink (15 percent off for two, 20 percent off for three).

Friday 2/26 LED Soundsystem

Is your hipster-sense tingling? It should be, because **Nancy Whang** of electro-rock legends LCD Soundsystem hits Kee Club to play a DJ set before the reformed band headlines at Coachella in April. Hipster... sense... overload!
8pm. Kee Club, 6/F, 32 Wellington St., Central. \$200 from ticketflap.com, \$300 at the door, both include a glass of champagne.

Saturday 2/27 Amber Fever

Whisky aficionados, this is your weekend. Other than the Malt Masters Festival at the Conrad Hong Kong, you can also head to the Grand Hyatt for the **Dragon 8 Auction**, which will be auctioning the biggest Macallan collection ever assembled at a Hong Kong auction, as well as a 30-litre (!!!) melchizedek bottle of Ace of Spades champagne, just in case Jay-Z's in town and feeling thirsty. The auction house is also running two Whisky Masterclasses on Feb 24 (3pm, \$288; 6pm, \$388) where you'll be hosted and regaled by Master Sommelier Ron Mumford.
11am. The Pool House, 11/F, Grand Hyatt Hong Kong, 1 Harbour Rd., Wan Chai. Register at dragon-8.com.

The Grant Entrance

American singer-songwriter **John Grant** brings his folky, electro-tinged rock to Hong Kong. The bearded bear with the voice of an angel combines melancholy, self-conscious introspection with beautiful melodies... just try not to cry at the gig, OK?

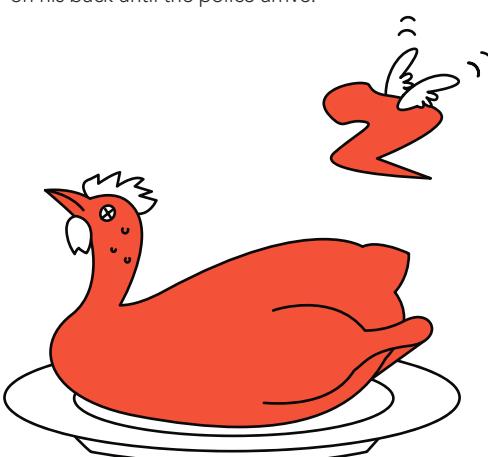
Mar 6, 8pm. Music Zone, Star Hall, E-Max, 1 Trademart Drive, Kowloon Bay. \$560 from ticketflap.com, \$650 at the door.

Coming Up

Last Week In Reality

SAT 6

Gun Crime At 9am, a 62-year-old man tries to rob a jewelry shop in Tsim Sha Tsui. The man approaches a shopkeeper standing outside the shop cleaning the window. He points a fake-looking gun at her and repeatedly shouts "it's a real gun!" as he pushes her into the store. He tries to snatch some jewelry from a showcase, but is stopped by another shopkeeper, who chases the thief away. He eventually catches the thief, pushing him to the ground and sitting on his back until the police arrive.



SUN 7

Flightless Bird A man asks his domestic helper to buy him a freshly slaughtered chicken from a market in Tai Kok Tsui. Returning home, the two open up the bag to discover that the chicken has no wings. He describes it as "terrifying," saying he has lost all appetite. A chicken farmer says that it is a rare occurrence, but the chicken was almost certainly born wingless.

MON 8

Car Chase At around midnight in the New Territories, police are carrying out spot-checks on drunk-drivers. They flag down a car in Sheung Shui which skips a red light, but the driver speeds off. Police officers chase him for 2km, at which point the driver gets out and flees, leaving the car and a female passenger behind. The police take her back to the station to assist with their investigation. They are still searching for the driver.



TUE 9

Firework Fireworks A couple takes their son to see the Chinese New Year fireworks show in Tsim Sha Tsui. After the show, they bump into a family of tourists from the mainland. They all start quarrelling and soon the argument turns into a fistfight. The wife is knocked to the ground, while the husband is struck on the forehead with a high heel, drawing blood. Both families are sent to the hospital.

WED 10

K-Drama! At around 4am, a 26-year-old Korean tourist is arguing with her friend in the lobby of The Peninsula Hotel. A 24-year-old security guard approaches and tries to settle the dispute, but the tourist throws a tantrum and flings her phone, which strikes and wounds the security guard. Police arrive and send the guard to the hospital. They conclude that it was an accidental injury and no one is arrested.

THU 11

Karma Cab Around 11pm, a man hails a taxi in Tai Wai, telling the driver to go to Yuen Long. The driver immediately recognizes the man as the thief who got into his taxi a year and a half ago and stole \$780 from him. He stealthily drives towards a nearby police station, but the passenger realizes that he has been identified and jumps out of the vehicle. The driver chases after him and calls the police, who arrive and arrest the man for theft.

FRI 12

Reader's Revenge At 10am, a retired teacher in his 50s is reading a book in the Central Library when he is attacked by a blond man, who knocks off his glasses and injures his right eye. The attacker flees the scene with a Filipino domestic helper. The day before in the library, the helper was looking after a child and allowed him to climb on the stairs. The teacher tried to stop him for fear that the child would hurt himself, upsetting the helper and causing a dispute. After the attack the teacher says that he likes standing up for people, and will continue to speak out despite the incident.

Illustrations: Joyce Kwok



Talking Points

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

Another Cinema Bites the Dust

Chief Executive CY Leung may have said in his recent Policy Address that he wants to boost the Hong Kong film industry, but a 22-year-old cinema shut up shop at the beginning of the week. **Tsim Sha Tsui's Golden Gateway Cinema closed on February 15 after the expiration of its tenancy.** Opened in 1994 by Golden Harvest Cinemas, the cinema had a starring role as a location in the 2002 classic "Infernal Affairs." The news was announced on the cinema's Facebook page: netizens lamented **the end of an era**, although others took the chance to **criticize the size of the cinema**, comparing it to a classroom, and complained that the people sitting in front would always block the audience sitting behind them.

Our take: Yet another nail in the coffin of Hong Kong's failing film industry... or the chance to build an actually nice art-house cinema?

Animal Abandonment on the Rise

Numbers from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department show that animal abandonment cases are on the rise. In 2015—and not including cats and dogs—the AFCD's Animal Management Center captured **more than 1,400 stray animals, including rabbits, reptiles, birds and cows**. That's a significant rise from 444 cases in 2013. The Rabies Ordinance issued by the AFCD prohibits the abandonment of animals without a suitable reason, but it **does nothing to actually protect animal rights**. Mark Mak, Chairman of the Hong Kong Non-Profit making Veterinary Services Society, pointed out that **the "peak season" for animal abandonment is usually right after festivals and holiday periods**. "A lot of pet owners bring sick pets they don't want and just leave them here," he said.

Our take: A terrapin is for life, not just for Chinese New Year.



Illustration: Elaine Tang

Street Talk

Meet Brian Cha: motivational speaker, author, fitness expert and three-time Guinness World Record holder. He's also just launched Mooofit, a combination calorie counter and social enterprise app. He tells Isabelle Hon about how exercising motivates and inspires him and his plans to set another seven world records.



HK Magazine: Three-time Guinness World Record holder? OK, we'll bite. Which was number one?

Brian Cha: I've been working in the health and fitness sector for quite a while, and wanted to make a positive impact within the industry. Back in March 2012, Tommy, a good friend, was in a coma. I wanted to help raise money to support his family. I have two daughters myself and I know very well the importance of a father to a family. So on February 18, 2013, I broke the record for "Most golf balls hit into a target area in 12 hours," by whacking more than 8,000 golf balls 100 yards on a range in Ma On Shan. By the end of the challenge my hands were sore and bleeding and I could barely move my arms, but I was so glad I did it.

HK: Ouch. What was record number two?

BC: After my first record I realized doing it all by myself was just way too difficult. So for the next one, the "Most electrical energy generated by pedalling on bicycles in 24 hours," I led a group of 800 people. I was the only who biked for 24 hours straight, but it was a very meaningful event getting the public involved and raising money to help remote provinces in China build more water cellars.

HK: OK—record number three?

BC: For my third world record, achieved in April 2015, I got even more people, 1,500, and together we broke the record for the "Most basketball layups made in 12 hours"—73,900. It was also a fundraiser, this time for children with special needs.

HK: What do people think of all your record-breaking feats?

BC: I was initially put off trying to break records because people around me kept saying it would be impossible. However, once I decided to go for it, their discouragement actually motivated to push myself to the limit and ultimately succeed.

HK: You also founded the fitness app Mooofit. What was your idea behind that?

BC: I started planning Mooofit more than two years ago to encourage the local community to live a more active lifestyle. But I wanted it to be different than other fitness apps and better suited for Hong Kong people's busy lifestyles, while benefitting the underprivileged. So I partnered with Park N' Shop, where the calories counted on the app can be converted into their loyalty program. We also give out free gifts such as movie tickets, t-shirts and trainers.

HK: What keeps you going?

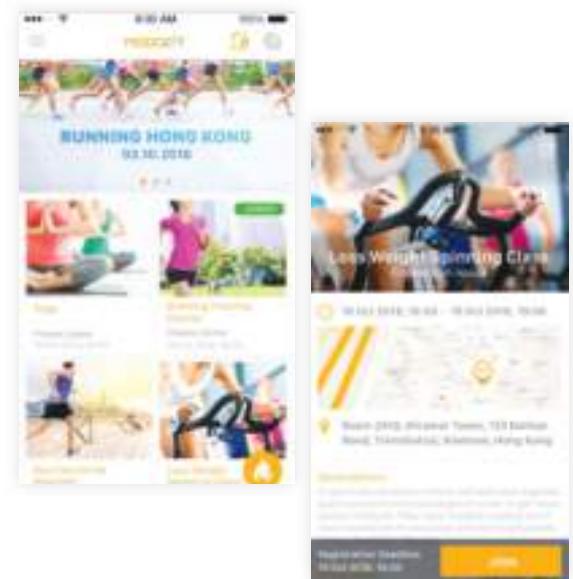
BC: I believe hard work paired with your dream is the equation for success, and that's also what I preach when I'm coaching or when I speak. I'm a strong believer that everything is possible if you put your mind and soul in it.

HK: Any future plans?

BC: I want to be the first person to break 10 world records in 10 different sports, and I'm aiming to achieve that within five years. I've already broken three, so there are seven more to go!

HK: Wow! What's your next word record attempt, then?

BC: I'm planning to break the record for the "Most marathons run on consecutive days" and to that end I'm currently organizing a 2,500km marathon from Beijing to Hong Kong, which will take approximately 60 days.



Mooofit is available for free on iOS and Android.
mooofit.com

Blowing Water

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

tau1 sik6
偷食

"STEAL FOOD"

"Cheat on your partner." Someone who engages in an illicit affair and leaves evidence of their misdeeds is said to 偷食唔抹嘴 (*tau1 sik6 m4 maat3 zeoi2*), "steal food and not wipe your mouth."

HongKabulary



False Trail (fəls trail), n.

The lie you tell yourself that next weekend you'll definitely go hiking, not just stay in bed 'til noon then go for a boozy brunch.

"The weather's looking pretty good on Saturday. Let's finally go do the Dragon's Back!"

"You keep laying that false trail. I'll see you for eggs Benedict at 1."



Fishballs and Lead

The aftershock of a riot reveals Hong Kong's deepening hatred of an overwhelmed police force. By **Justin Heifetz**

On Monday, February 8, the first night of the Lunar New Year, Mong Kok was riled by a level of violence not seen since the riots of the 60s. The small police force stationed there, mostly traffic cops, was outnumbered by a rioting crowd apparently incensed over the closure of holiday food stalls, a long-time city tradition.

Seemingly goaded on by localist group Hong Kong Indigenous, rioters set fires in the streets and flung bricks and garbage bins at police. Amid panic, the police reacted to protesters with batons. One officer fired two shots in the air, an almost unheard-of response. Crowd control officers took more than four hours to arrive.

By then the riots had a name: the "Fishball Revolution."

That night, around 130 public and police were admitted to hospitals, including an unarmed girl who was sent to an intensive care unit. But of the 130, 90 were police officers.

Last week, in a packed Kowloon City courtroom, 39 of the Mong Kok protesters were charged. But why did it happen? And what's the city's tipping point?

Unusual Violence

Police monitoring organization Civil Rights Observer says Monday night was a powder keg: a small police force in the area, swathes of young Hongkongers unhappy with the government, and what it sees as the authorities' increasing tendency towards heavy-handed crowd control.

"I'm surprised that the police hadn't prepared well for crowd management and underestimated the behavior of protesters," says Andrew Shum Wai-nam, a member of Civil Rights Observer.

That lack of preparation led to an unusually violent clash and "the police felt outnumbered," Shum says.

One reporter from Chinese-language newspaper Ming Pao was beaten by police with batons even as he stated his identity—the violence was captured on video.

Government Responsibility

Since the outbreak of violence on the first day of Chinese New Year, there's been little apparent action from the government to investigate what caused the conflict. Instead, there has been a string of condemnations.

New People's Party leader Regina Ip Lau Suk-yee blamed the protests on the demonstrators' social standing—underemployed and undereducated. Chief Secretary Carrie Lam and Financial Secretary John Tsang condemned Monday's violence as inexcusable.

"The government never considers the social conflicts that trigger this," says Icarus Wong Ho-yin, also of the Civil Rights Observer. Wong's colleague Shum agrees: "What we need to do is find out the reason behind the riot."

Law Yuk-kai, the director of independent watchdog Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor, says that "the most important structural problem here is the deep hatred of the youth against police measures in the past, especially police brutality. The police got beat up for the first time—people are missing a very important part of this incident."

a police watchdog called the Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC). The UN committee expressed its dismay that the IPCC has "no power to conduct investigations on its own," despite having authority over CAPO—and worse, the government does not report complete data regarding the outcomes of complaints.

The implications of this potentially toothless mechanism can be frightening for a protest like Monday's—there's little public oversight over an increasingly demoralized police force, that feels trapped between rioters and ill-prepared police brass.

"It's very obvious that the police have used abusive force in handling protesters," says Wong. "We've observed numbers of baton injuries to protesters' heads increasing. Every attack on the head by a baton is lethal force. The function and the duty of the police is to restore order, not to kill civilians."

Baton strikes to the head can indeed be lethal, and police forces around the world are taught to avoid them

"The police got beat up for the first time—people are missing a very important part of this incident."

Police Powers

Why draw and fire a gun, something never done even at the height of the Occupy protests?

Chapter 29 of the Police General Orders governs how a policeman uses force when dealing with a potentially threatening situation. Unlike most of the other chapters, this section is closed to the public. But under a set of 1996 Police General Orders available to the public, the rules state that a police officer may draw or discharge a firearm "to quell a riot or insurrection... provided that no lesser degree of force can achieve his purpose."

A police officer has to report every time he even draws a firearm. If he fires it, there's a complex chain of reports and investigations. It's a tedious process intended to make sure it doesn't happen lightly.

A police investigation on Friday concluded that the officer who fired shots into the air had complied with the rules.

Baton Strikes and Oversight

But the public doesn't get to see the investigation, and that's a problem.

When the UN's Committee Against Torture met in December 2015 to review the government's implementation of the UN Convention Against Torture, the committee largely focused on how Hong Kong has failed to curb police powers and the unjust use of force—and on the gross failure of the system in place to provide public accountability for police actions.

In Hong Kong, the Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO) exists to record the public's complaints against the police—just as its name implies. It's overseen by

when possible. Again, the hidden Chapter 29 of the Police General Orders governs baton use in Hong Kong.

"The UN Committee Against Torture recommends Hong Kong police should disclose their guidelines on the general use of force, but there has not been a positive response yet," says Wong.

With the incomplete data the UN was able to collect from the 79 days of Occupy regarding complaints against police abuse, it found that of 2,078 complaints lodged with CAPO, 104 were endorsed by the IPCC for investigation: a total of 5 percent.

Arms Race

Frontline officers are furious with management: They felt underprepared and underequipped for the riot, and have come forward to say so. Junior police union chairman Joe Chan Cho-kwong appealed to lawmakers to back "new model weapons and gear," such as water cannon.

And in fact, the Hong Kong Police has a tender closing on February 26 for three armored vehicles carrying water cannon that can blast some 200 pounds of force—a \$27 million procurement approved by the Legislative Council last year.

But rights monitor Law says that deploying vehicles with water cannon is futile—and will only increase the likelihood of violence. The more the police force steps up its arms race, he says, from pepper spray to armored cars, the more violent protesters will grow. "It will only create more resentment and an escalation of force."

If that happens, the first fishball riot won't be the last.

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Go Away

Yalun Tu seeks out the best weekend trips just a few short hours from Hong Kong.

Hong Kong: It's fun, it's sexy, it has banging har gao. But it's also crowded, small, and feels oh-so-good to leave. So here's a list of the best trips you can take at a moment's notice. But this isn't your grandmother's vacation guide—this is a surgical strike, meaning:

- We're only choosing places you can do over the weekend (sorry, Bali: a 10-hour round trip flight isn't going to cut it).
- We're only choosing places with semi-intelligent flight times (sorry, Hanoi: 2pm flights with a 10am Sunday return just isn't maximizing our pho time).
- We're only choosing places you can reach quickly from the airport (sorry, Tokyo: ain't nobody got time for a two-hour shuttle).

So, this weekend: Buy the ticket at 5pm, hop on the Airport Express, HKID your way through immigration and bam! Three hours later you're somewhere awesome. You just need to decide what your own kind of awesome is...



You're in Taiwan. What else are you going to eat?



A Party Weekend in TAIPEI

So you're telling us that in the same time it takes to go to Macau, you can be at a place with awesome food, cheap drinks, and people who are actually nice, not Hong Kong nice (i.e. "Hi good to meet you do you have a lot of money?"). Sign us up. Taipei is a dream: It's centrally located with great bars and restaurants. The city is easy to navigate even if your Chinese sucks worse than the old white guy they brought from New York to run your company's office. And people are nice! If you walk up to an impossibly tall girl wearing short shorts in a club in Taipei and say "hi," she'll smile and say "hi" back. Couple that with cheap drinks and not running into the same people all the time and you'll be back for more.

STAY: The **Mandarin Oriental, Taipei**. I'd gush so hard over this hotel that the mag would be unreadable but thankfully they don't let me out of my writing cage. It's got expert service (good English), a super comfy bed, and all the modern Mandarin amenities with an extra sense of privacy.

Rooms from NT\$11,800 (\$2,780). 158 Dunhua North Rd., Taipei, Taiwan, (+886) 2-2715-6888, mandarinoriental.com/Taipei.

DO: We're here to party, but we're here to eat and drink too. Yeah, you can go to **Din Tai Fung** in Hong Kong, but the first ever branch in Taipei is so much better. Down 10 xiaolongbao and you're set up for the night. Also check out **Raw**, chef André Chiang's restaurant serving up modern Taiwanese cuisine. Taiwan's in the midst of a culinary revolution, and Raw is part of the new guard.

Din Tai Fung, 194 Xinyi Rd. (Section 2), Xinyi, Taipei, Taiwan, (+866) 2-2321-8928.

Raw, 301 Lequn Third Rd., Zhongshan, Taipei, Taiwan, (+886) 2-8501-5800.

Get set up at **Ounce**, the first speakeasy in Taipei: It's got a secret entrance and all that usual crap, but most importantly the drinks are magnifique.

Lane 63, 40 Dunhua South Rd. (Section 2) Da'an, Taipei, Taiwan, (+886) 2-2708-6885.

For clubbing, Taiwan has plenty of fun spots, and you can pick your poison with Elektro, Marquee, Strike or Primo. For newbies, I'd suggest **Club Myst** which, just like the 90s game, is a walk into something mysterious and compelling. A large dance floor, outdoor area and the occasional cheesy dance show make it quintessentially Taipei.

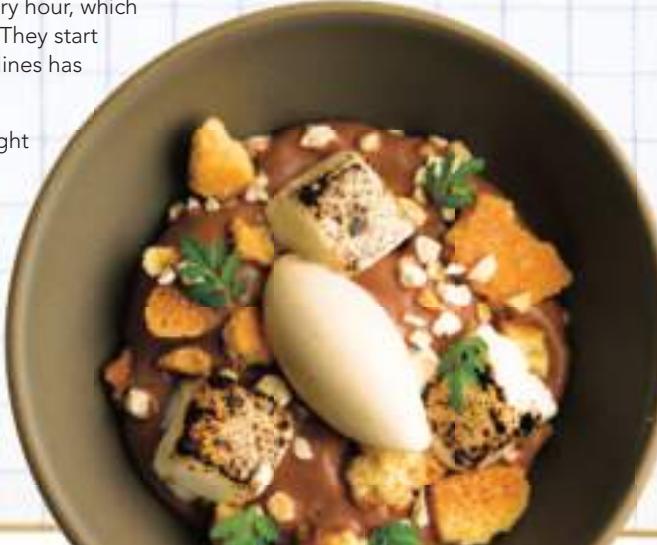
9/F, 12 Song Shou Rd., Xinyi, Taipei, Taiwan, (+886) 2-7737-9997.

Late night food in Taipei is the best. Go to **Lin Dong Fang**, an amazing beef noodle soup place that's open all night until 6am and has a clientele split between super old people and late-night clubbers.

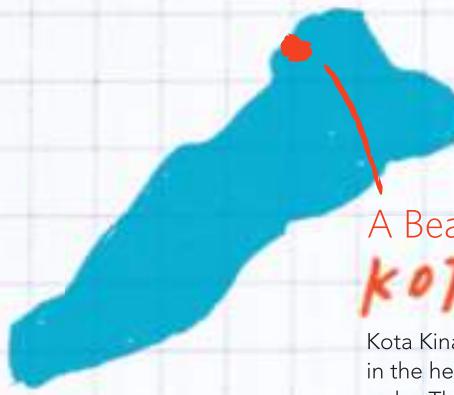
274 Bade Rd. (Section 2), Zhongshan, Taipei, Taiwan, (+886) 2-2752-2556.

FLIGHTS: Airlines fly almost every hour, which means flights are pretty cheap. They start at around \$600: Hong Kong Airlines has decent deals.

HOW LONG? It's a 90-minute flight and then a 45-minute transfer.



Get behind the Raw revolution in Taipei



A Beach Weekend in **KOTA KINABALU**

Kota Kinabalu is an odd duck: a wonderful beach retreat in the heart of Borneo that somehow isn't on anyone's radar. The Balis and Phukets and Boracays get all the press but KK is an island paradise with a rainforest right next door. It takes three hours to fly there and seconds from the airport you can be on a private island.

STAY: **Bunga Raya Resort**, a private island just off the coast. It's pretty cheap and there are private bungalows, your own beach, ziplines, and absolute privacy. The city of KK sucks but the outlying islands are amazing (so, the opposite of Hong Kong). For our holiday we walked on the beach, took pictures, had a private dinner one night in the wine cellar and another night on the boardwalk and felt so exquisitely peaceful. It's the ultimate rejuvenation trip.

Rooms from MYR1,528 (\$2,888). Polish Bay, Gaya Island, Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, (+60) 88-380-390, bungarayaresort.com.

DO: Well, nothing. Stay in and chill to the next episode. But when you're done with that...

The best thing to do is to hike Mt. Kinabalu but that will take two days. If you're sticking to the long weekend thing, there are still a couple of awesome things to do. Go for a sunset drink at the **Shangri-La Tanjung Aru**. There's a little part of the Marina that juts out and has a slow, drooping sunset that you can pair with a nice whisky (have it neat—their cocktails are like mainland China sweet). It's beautiful and romantic and you'll feel great.

20 Jalan Aru, Tanjung Aru, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, (+60) 88-327-888.

Then there are the orangutans at the **Sanctuary**. Head to the nature preserve and see actual orangutans eat fruit and do more pull-ups than your friend who talks about CrossFit. They're freaking cute, man. The Sanctuary is located about a 30-minute drive from the airport at a nature reserve attached to the Shangri La Rasa Risa resort.

Pantai Dalit Beach, Tuaran, Malaysia, (+60) 88-792-888.

If you hate orangutans because you're some kind of monster, you can also do the **Coral Flyer** (coralflyer.com), the world's longest island-to-island zipline at 250 meters long from Gaya Island to Sapi Island. It's only about RM64 (\$120).

FLIGHTS: You've got two choices here—Dragonair and Air Asia. Maybe mix and match with Air Asia AK238 leaving 8pm on Friday, returning on Dragonair KA68 at 8pm on Monday. That gives you all of Saturday/Sunday/Monday in paradise by only taking one day off of work.

HOW LONG? It's a three-hour flight, 15 minutes to the pier and 7 minutes from the pier to the private island. That's three and a half hours from Hong Kong to excellence. AMAZING.



You could be here in three hours and change



Kick back at the Bunga Raya



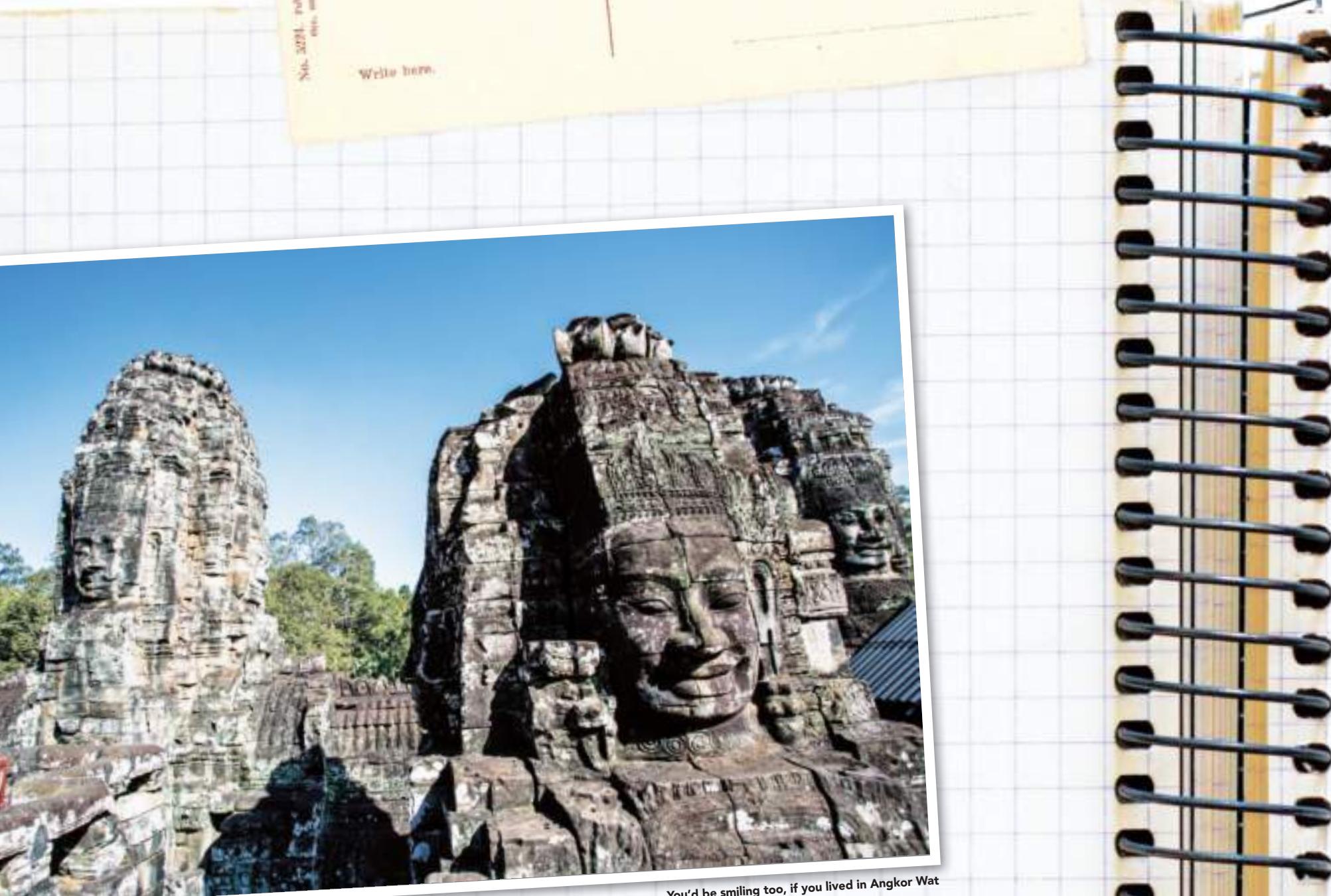
Hang out with orangutans at the Sanctuary



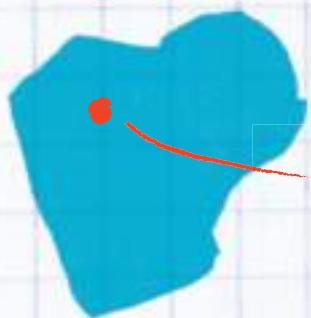
A Wild Weekend in **PATTAYA**

Wait, no. We don't want that kind of wild. Kids read this magazine. Let's try again...





You'd be smiling too, if you lived in Angkor Wat



A Wildish Weekend in **SIEM REAP**

If you've lived in Hong Kong for more than three years and you haven't gone to Angkor Wat, there's nothing left to say. Go there. It's amazing.

STAY: Oddly for this one it really doesn't matter. You're here not for luxury or chillaxing but to explore Angkor Wat. If you want somewhere nice try **Sokkhak Boutique Resort**—it's quiet with good food, an unobtrusive staff, and an infinity pool for good measure. **Kok Chork Village, Trorpeang Ses Commune, Wat Thmey, Siem Reap, Cambodia, (+855) 63-76-56-60.**

DO: Angkor Wat is the largest religious monument in the world and spans over 150 hectares, comprising a number of sites of Hindu and Buddhist temples. The site itself is breathtaking and will easily take multiple days to see everything. It's easy to hire a tuk tuk or a taxi to the site, and then you can wander around on foot. My favorite site is **Ta Prohm**, a temple built in the 13th century that's collapsed with jungle growing up through it. I visited during a monsoon and wandered the old temple, waist-high in water, feeling like an explorer finding an ancient treasure.

Want to do the full service? Get a tour. **Happy Angkor Tour** (happyangkortour.com) runs several itineraries all around the temple complex, including ones specially aimed at avoiding the crowds. If you tire of temples, **Siem Reap Food Tours** ([US\\$75 \(\\$585\)](http://siemreapfoodtours.com), siemreapfoodtours.com) runs guided morning and evening tours through the markets and street foods of the city, with loads of food to explore.

FLIGHTS: Take a day off and hit up HK Express UO706 leaving 6:35am Friday and return on UO707 leaving 10:15am Sunday. That gives you two days at the temple and an early return back—but if you miss your flight, the next one isn't until Tuesday. Don't miss it.

HOW LONG? A two-and-a-half hour flight and then a 20-minute drive. It's CLOSE.



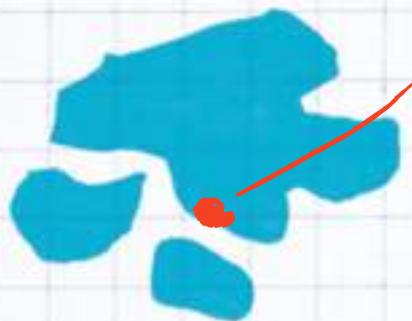
Nathalie Capiton via Flickr



Markets and more on the food tour



a) Helicopter tour
b) Happiness



A Comfort Weekend in **KOWLOON**

"Kowloon?" you ask. That's right. Staycations are amazing and just getting your butt off of Hong Kong Island is a thing of beauty. Turn off your phone (seriously, turn it off), find someone you like more than yourself and use those hours you would've spent traveling canoodling and watching bad TV instead. Tell everyone you're out of town then live like the best tourist in the world!

FLIGHTS: None. Well, not necessarily....

STAY: **The Peninsula.** We're staycationing, y'all: The W is too trendy and the Four Seasons is too businessey, so why not ensure the true romantic colonial experience at the Pen? Get a quiet room and maybe a drink at Felix before returning to your room. Just chill. Don't go anywhere. If you must, order in Tsui Wah. Yes. We. Can.

From \$3,880. Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, 2920-2888.

DO: My favorite thing: A helicopter. But first, some tea. Book the **Sky Tour and Teatime** (\$4,226 for two) deal with HeliServices and you can cut the queue at the Peninsula's famous high tea: Eat finger food, drink awesome teas, and chat about your life next to a gaggle of ladies who lunch. Just don't talk about work. From there you take the elevator up to the top floor and get ready for a helicopter trip of a lifetime. Hong Kong is a beautiful city and when you get up into the air, the skyline and the view is like the Star Ferry times 30 million. Quiet time in Hong Kong, high tea and helicopters? That's a vacation we can all get behind.

hongkong.peninsula.com/en/special-offers/fly-and-tea.

HOW LONG? Probably a maximum of 15 minutes from where you live by MTR or taxi. Here's a tip: Book a deal with the pickup and ask them to come get you in one of the Pen's Rolls-Royce Phantoms.



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People Mountain People Sea

Take a closer look at Chinese contemporary art in the latest M+ Sigg Collection: **Four Decades of Chinese Contemporary Art**. This chronologically curated exhibition charts the development of Chinese art over the last 40 years. And it wouldn't be art without a bit of nudity: Check out this shot from Zhang Huan's 1995 performance piece "To Add One Meter to an Anonymous Mountain." **Feb 23-Apr 5. ArtisTree, 1/F, Cornwall House, Taikoo Place, 979 King's Rd., Quarry Bay, 2844-3888.**



852

GET MORE OUT OF HK

SHOPPING + FASHION + GADGETS + TRAVEL + DINING + CULTURE + NIGHTLIFE + FILM



"To Add One Meter to an Anonymous Mountain," 1995, by Zhang Huan

Fork Up the Pork

From nose to tail to trotter and everything in between, **Leslie Yeh** finds the best new places to pig out in 2016.



Deep-fried pig's ears
at The Fat Pig

Sausage Sizzle ▲

When Tom Aikens' **The Fat Pig** trotted into town in November, it flaunted its philosophy in bright red neon lights: "In Pork We Trust: Leave No Part Behind." To this end, Aikens and his team source pork from Wah Kee Farm in the New Territories, then offer up pork ribs, scratchings, trotters, tail, jowl and even head. They've just launched a weekend brunch with French toast with maple bacon (\$128), sausage sandwiches (\$138), and buttermilk bacon pancakes (\$98). At least you have all day to sweat out those piggy toxins...
Shop 1105, 11/F, Food Forum, Times Square, 1 Matheson St., Causeway Bay, 2577-3444, thefatpig.hk.

A Pig Worth its Salt ▼

One of Hong Kong's favorite pork-centric bistros **The Salted Pig** opened a new restaurant on the Sai Wan Ho waterfront late last year, bringing English farmhouse vibes and cheeky décor to a breezy alfresco space. The new menu is a beast for even the most dedicated of pork eaters: You'll find ground pork, pork ribs, crispy pork belly and pork terrine, as well as whole roasted pig, pork sausages and pork knuckle. The pig ear pasta is a standout, with crunchy, chewy bits clinging to orecchiette shells and shaved parmesan lending a salty bite.
Shop GB8-10, G/F, Site B, 45 Tai Hong St., Lei King Wan, 2707-9459, thesaltedpig.com.hk.

When Pigs Fly ▲

Not to be confused with the now-defunct grungy 1990s Wan Chai dive bar, the **Flying Pig Bistro** is the latest collab between French Creations and restaurateur Christopher Przemyski, fitting seamlessly into the casual-cool vibe of Sai Ying Pun's High Street. While there's more than just pig on the menu—including a fantastic quinoa salad and mushroom pappardelle—the pork dishes are what you should come for, with suckling pig, pork tenderloin with truffle gravy, and a giant pork knuckle with braised sauerkraut all starring on the menu. Don't even think about skipping the pulled pork sliders, slow-cooked with Jack Daniel's and bursting with flavor.
62 High St., Sai Ying Pun, 2540-0311, french-creations.com/flying-pig-bistro.



Bacon-wrapped pork
at The Salted Pig

Char New

Everyone has their favorite char siu place, but here's a new contender to throw into the mix: **Greater China Club** boasts alumni from The Eight in Macau and Lung King Heen at the Four Seasons—both three-Michelin-starred restos—and does an Iberico roast char siu that's up there with the best. With substantial marbling and a thick honey glaze, the pork is fork-tender with char creating a crispy outer coating. The roast suckling pig is also a must-try, presented with a bracing layer of sour ginger and thousand-year-old egg to combat the fattiness of the pork.

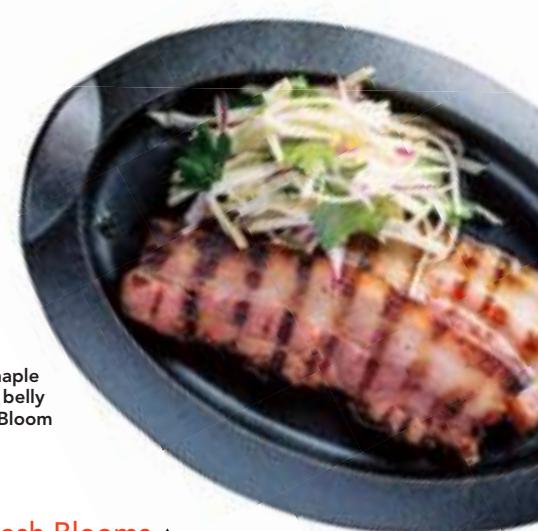
10/F, D2 Place, 9 Cheung Yee St., Lai Chi Kok, 2743-8055, greaterchinaclub.com.



Roast suckling pig at
Greater China Club



Roasted pork knuckle
at Flying Pig Bistro



Grilled maple
smoked pork belly
at Lily & Bloom

Fresh Blooms ▲

A pioneer of American cuisine in Hong Kong, **Lily & Bloom** is borrowing an ingredient from north of the border for one of the signature items on its revamped menu. The grilled maple smoked pork belly (\$125) is one to try amongst a mix of brand new dishes conceived and tested by chef Billy Otis and his team. Sourced from a local artisanal butcher, the pork belly rack is cured in maple syrup, making it ultra-sweet and tender. The smoky grill flavor brings the whole dish to life, offset by a cool celery root and parsley slaw.
5-6/F, LKF Tower, 33 Wyndham St., Central, 2810-6166, lily-bloom.com.

NEW AND NOTED

Edited by Leslie Yeh
leslie.yeh@hkmagmedia.com

Spring Cleaning

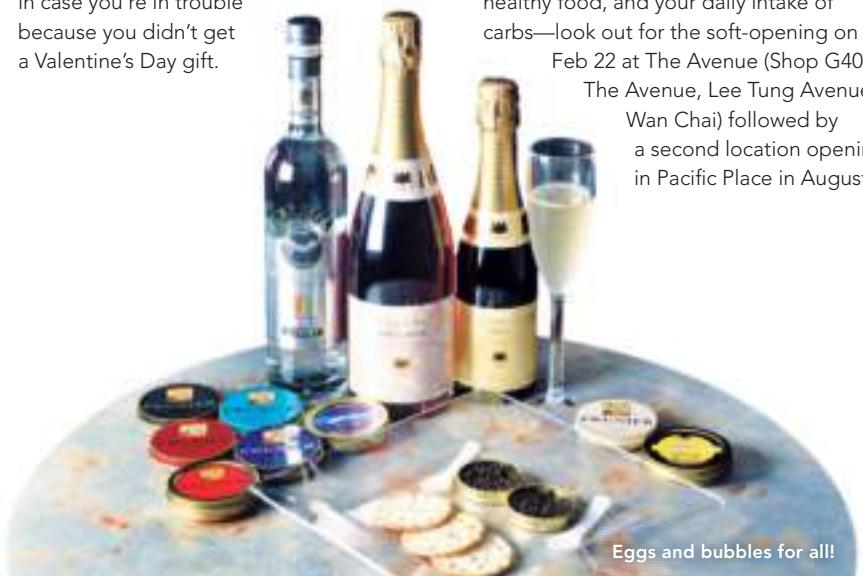
With spring just around the corner, it's time to put down the coffee mug and switch to a soothing cup of tea instead. According to Chinese beliefs, tea helps to remove toxins and excess water from the body, leaving you refreshed and energized during the rainy and humid period. Prefer to eat to your health? Head to two-Michelin-starred **Tin Lung Heen** this month for a six-course spring degustation menu that shows off the versatility of tea as a cooking ingredient (\$1,888, 102/F, The Ritz-Carlton, ICC, 8 Austin Rd., West Kowloon, 2263-2270). Chef Paul Lau pays tribute to the deep-rooted history of the beverage in a medley of aromatic dishes, from double-boiled chicken soup with Jasmine tea to baked fried rice with chrysanthemum and osmanthus snow pea puffs.

Something Fishy

If maxing out your credit card at Prada and Miu Miu just isn't satisfying enough anymore, here might be a better way to dish out the dollars: Pacific Place is hosting a caviar pop-up shop from now until mid-March, giving shoppers a place to kick off their heels and go pinky-up over champagne, caviar and vodka. The **Caviar House & Prunier Pop-up** (3/F, Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Admiralty; open daily 11am-8pm) will showcase eight types of caviar, available as caviar shots. Wash down all that fish roe with a selection of sparkling champagne, rosé champagne or an icy Beluga Vodka. There are also gift sets available (from \$490), in case you're in trouble because you didn't get a Valentine's Day gift.

Brussels Born and Bread

Can you hear the baguettes breaking? That's the sound of international boulangerie chain **Le Pain Quotidien** heading into town with the help of restaurant group Dining Concepts, bringing with it the heady aroma of freshly baked bread. Literally meaning "The Daily Bread" in French, Le Pain Quotidien was founded in Brussels by baker and chef Alain Coumont, with a focus on good quality artisan bread that features prominently in a rustic all-day dining menu—think tartines, soups, salads, homemade pastries and plenty of vegetarian options. Touting its philosophy of organic ingredients and sustainability, Le Pain Quotidien is set to be a one-stop shop for wholesome and healthy food, and your daily intake of carbs—look out for the soft-opening on Feb 22 at The Avenue (Shop G40-41, The Avenue, Lee Tung Avenue, Wan Chai) followed by a second location opening in Pacific Place in August.



RESTAURANT REVIEWS

M&C Duck ★★★★☆

Shop 3319, 3/F, Gateway Arcade, Harbour City, 17 Canton Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, 2347-6898.



M&C Duck celebrates the varied cuisines of Beijing, Sichuan and Shanghai, presented in a contemporary fashion. Apparently, it's also a favorite spot of Hong Kong celebrities: When we were there, we spotted a well-known DJ sitting just a few tables away. Celeb-sighting aside, come early for the signature Peking duck, which tends to sell out by 8:30pm—and be ready to queue, as this place is popular.

HIT The barbecued Peking duck is beautifully roasted and a fairly generous portion—we ordered the half size (\$158, \$298 for full) which could serve 2-3 people with additional sides. The duck skin was thin, crispy and fatty, and the

accompanying duck bone soup had a rich, savory base. The meat of the duck was merely average compared to other, albeit much more expensive, Peking duck places in town; However, when rolled together with the scallions, cucumber and sweet bean sauce, it proved a satisfying bite. Our side of shredded turnip with jellyfish (\$68) was fresh and light with a bit of acidity to cut through the fattiness of the duck.

MISS We ordered the sliced duck with osmanthus pudding (\$80/4pcs) out of pure curiosity. Listed under the dessert section, it proved to be a bizarre creation with layers of duck skin, salad sauce and osmanthus jelly on a potato chip base. The seasoning sauce covered the taste of osmanthus and made it taste weirdly like duck fat—not at all appealing.

BOTTOM LINE Worth the wait for the Peking duck.

Open daily 11:30am-4pm; 6pm-10:30pm. \$\$

Le Garçon Saigon ★★★★☆

Southern Vietnamese. 12-18 Wing Fung St., Wan Chai, 2455-2499.



Another Vietnamese concept by the guys behind Chôm Chôm, Le Garçon Saigon in the Star Street Precinct specializes in Southern Vietnamese cuisine—think grilled meats, skewers and plenty of add-on condiments. The French-Vietnamese bistro is spacious and airy, with a light décor and furnishings evoking a colonial touch.

HIT The cahn ga (fried chicken wings) (\$88) were fried to perfection. With a layer of buttery batter that's not too thick but crunchy enough, these wings were finger-licking good and the spicy mayo gave the flavor an extra push. Kurobuta pork skewers (\$128) were also lovely—tender

and flavorful, you can munch them on their own or wrap them up in rice paper with lettuce, basil and pickles. We also tried the yellow chicken (\$188 for a half), which was lightly charred for a crispy exterior. The chicken was juicy and packed with Southeast Asian spices. We ended with the pandan waffle (\$78): A streetside favorite, we loved the light and fluffy waffles filled with the unique sweetness and aroma of pandan, while the accompanying mascarpone ice cream was smooth and slightly sour, lightening the plate and making it less of an indulgence.

MISS The yellow chicken was good, but it was quite a hassle to eat: Served bone in, it took time to debone before wrapping in the rice paper.

BOTTOM LINE Great regional Vietnamese fare, very friendly service, AND it's ballysy enough to not serve pho: Le Garçon Saigon is a fresh hit of Southeast Asian flavors.

Open Tue-Sun 6-11pm. \$\$\$

Ratings

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

Price Guide

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

Our Policy

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

CITY STROLL

Mui Wo

A peaceful enclave on the southside of Lantau just around the coast from Discovery Bay, Mui Wo's tropical vibe, relatively modest rents and convenient ferry crossings have seen its multinational community swell over the past few years. And with some great restaurants and bars, a decent beach, temples and historical points of interest, festivals, interesting stores and numerous hiking routes, there's something for everyone. It's also the gateway to the rest of Lantau, with buses that run to Tung Chung, Cheung Sha, Tai O, the Ngong Ping 360 and the airport. Just don't try to ride the buffalo...



7 Mui Wo Inn

To say Mui Wo's accommodation options are limited is something of an understatement. For brash chic head for the Silvermine Beach Resort, but for a more surreal experience check out the peculiar statues, rusting gym equipment and 1970s soundtrack of the the Mui Wo Inn. Rooms are \$400-850 depending on whether you have a sea view and if it's a weekday or weekend.

14 Tung Wan Tau Rd., Mui Wo, 2984-7225.



9 The Mui Wo Cultural & Heritage Centre

While the Hong Kong Museum of History has no immediate need to start panicking, this is nevertheless a nice little depository featuring many pieces of local historical and cultural interest. You'll find examples of tableware, clothing, furniture and household items, along with guides to local attractions, photographs and other useful information.

Open 1-4pm every Wednesday and weekends. Free admission. Mui Wo Rural Committee Rd., Mui Wo.



11 Mui Wo Cooked Food Market

Delicious and inexpensive seafood here with great views overlooking the bay—steamed fish and stir-fried clams with black bean sauce are standouts. At the front of the market is **Como Lake Italian Restaurant** (Shops 2 and 4, 2984-0009), slightly incongruous among the steaming woks and live seafood tanks perhaps, but offering decent and affordable pasta and pizza.

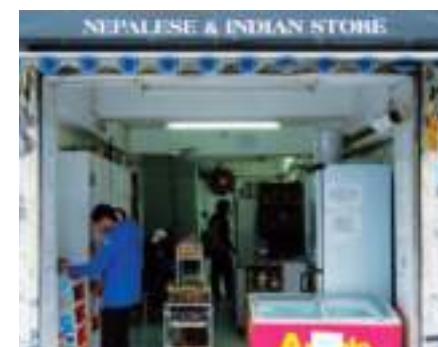
Mui Wo Ferry Pier Rd., Mui Wo.



8 Momola Nepalese and Indian Store

If curry rules your world you'll definitely want to come by this tiny store, which along with a good range of herbs and spices stocks everything else needed to cook your own. There's an authentic vibe and the staff are friendly—too friendly perhaps, as the boss's Nepalese pals always seem to be hanging around drinking his beer. There's also a take-away menu.

G/F, Seaview Building, Mui Wo, 2251-9990.



10 La Pizzeria

Run by an Indian family, this resto serves up excellent and modestly priced Italian food and generous glasses of house wine. While you can't go wrong with the classics, if for any reason you're not in the mood for quattro formaggi or spaghetti vongole then they also do an awesome lamb curry. Check the board for daily specials.

G/F, Grandview Mansion, Mui Wo, 2984-8933.



12 Silvermine Bay Beach

Nice walks, decent restaurants and friendly locals? Yes, Mui Wo has all these things, but it's the fabulous beach that pulls in the tourists. Either stake a place at the livelier side near the barbecue pits and volleyball or hide down the far end, which is often quiet enough that you can imagine you're on your own private beach.



Check back next week for more awesome things to do in Mui Wo!

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CULTURE

UPCLOSE: ROBERTO FONSECA

Cuban pianist **Roberto Fonseca** and Malian singer-songwriter **Fatoumata Diawara** blend their styles to create a unique Afro-Cuban sound. Ahead of their performance at the Hong Kong Arts Festival, Fonseca tells Xavier Ng about combining the best of both worlds.

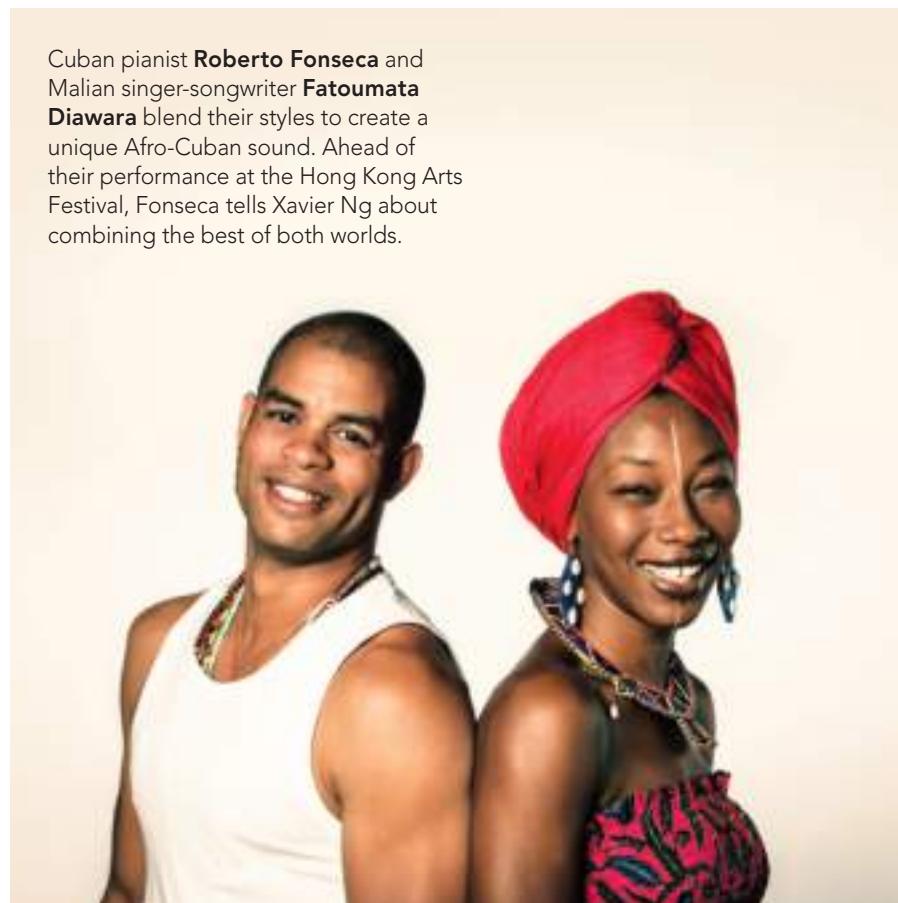


Photo © Carlos Pericás

HK Magazine: How did you two get started?

Roberto Fonseca: We met when I recorded my latest solo release "YO": She sang on one of the tracks and I absolutely loved the originality of her voice. After this we decided to put our work together, to merge experiences and the modernity and tradition of both countries, Cuba and Mali.

HK: What are the similarities and differences between Caribbean music and African music?

RF: There are many similar rhythms, especially the folk rhythms. The differences in reside where the tempo is felt: When performing, it can change the character of the song a lot. It's like speaking in the same language, but with different accents.

HK: How does combining the music of two continents work?

RF: It works very well. In fact, many times the results of this fusion have really surprised us, like it was there waiting for us to do it. As long as it is done with respect, it should sound good.

HK: How would you describe your music?

RF: I call it "open music": I try to reflect all of my influences and experiences in it. And I never make my music for myself—it is always dedicated to someone or something, as it is my way to express my own feelings. I like to create musical dialogues where language is never a barrier.

HK: How do you work with Fatoumata to create your music?

RF: In a very natural way—we never impose or force anything. We try to find something special in the song and then we add all the colors, sounds and structures. It is a great process that gives singularity to each song. I love it.

HK: Where do you see the future of fusion and world music?

RF: Music is something magical and very personal. It responds to feelings and expressions, so it's good that there is a lot of range in different kinds of music and fusions. I am very open to this—but I never forget the roots of where we come from: our traditions.

See **Fatoumata Diawara and Roberto Fonseca** on Feb 26, 8pm. Concert Hall, Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui. \$240-580 from urbtix.hk.

Classical

Jacky Wong's Beethoven Piano Concertos

Hong Kong pianist Jacky Wong sets his fingers to ivory for some Beethoven classics. Wong will conduct the Pan Asia Symphony Orchestra and perform a selection of movements from some of Beethoven's best-loved pieces, including the legendary "Emperor" Concerto. Check out the Friday performance at Tsuen Wan Town Hall and the Saturday gig at the Yuen Long Theatre. Mar 11, 12, 8pm. Tsuen Wan Town Hall Auditorium, 72 Tai Ho Rd., Tsuen Wan; Auditorium, Yuen Long Theatre, 9 Yuen Long Tai Yuk Rd., Yuen Long, \$100-140 from urbtix.hk.



A Soldier's Story—The New Generation
This show by the Hong Kong Sinfonietta is nothing like your usual classical concerts. Combining classical music, dance and narration, this "concert-drama" tells the Faustian story of Igor Stravinsky's "The Soldier's Tale," updated for the modern age. Taiwanese dance artist Chen Wu-kang portrays the dancing devil of the story. Feb 20, 8pm. Concert Hall, City Hall, 5 Edinburgh Place, Central, \$180-400 from urbtix.hk.

Comedy

The Psycho Tour

Go psy-Cho with comedian Margaret Cho's first ever show in Asia. The show is about insanity (obviously) and the crazy absurdity of the world, so expect something hysterical from the hysteria. Mar 8-9, 8pm. King George V School, 2 Tin Kwong Rd., Ho Man Tin, \$380-680 from ticketflap.com.



Opera



Simon Boccanegra

Opera buffs can check out a production of Verdi's Simon Boccanegra by Teatro Regio Torino this month. The masterpiece about love and family is intense and thrilling, so expect all that passion in this live Hong Kong performance. Feb 26, Mar 1, 7:30pm; Feb 28, 2:30pm. Grand Theatre, Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, \$450-480 from urbtix.hk.

Theater



The Ghost Seller & His Butterflies (Version 80)

An innovative double bill of genre-twisting contemporary opera from Hong Kong and Taiwan. "The Ghost Seller" by Taiwan's GuoGuang Opera Company features not-so-scary ghosts inspired by the short allegorical tale "Dingbo Sells A Ghost," while "His Butterflies (Version 80)" by Hong Kong's Utopia Opera Workshop is a romantic, modern musical production consisting of a series of songs written by the legendary Cantonese opera master Tong Tik-sang. Feb 26-27, 7:30pm. Ko Shan Theatre New Wing, Ko Shan Theatre, 77 Ko Shan Rd., Hung Hom, \$100-200 from urbtix.hk.



Buffet Dinner Theater: Family Resemblances

Looking to be entertained during dinner? In French? Buffet Dinner Theater at Quayside combines an evening meal with a side of "Family Resemblances," a black comedy presented by the Hong Kong Theatre Association. Don't speak French? They'll also be giving out English scripts at the door. Mar 2, 4, 9, 12, 7:30pm; Mar 13, 6:30pm. Quayside, G/F, Fenwick Pier, 1 Lung King St., Wan Chai, \$470-710 from hkta.org.hk.

La Verità

The Hong Kong Arts Festival is finally here! Kicking off the month-long festival is La Verità, which means "the truth" in Italian, by Compagnia Finzi Pasca. Inspired by a Salvador Dalí masterpiece, the multi-dimensional circus show features a range of performances including circus, dance, drama, music and vaudeville, making it stunningly colorful and vibrant. Feb 19-20, 7:30pm; Feb 20-21, 2:30pm. Grand Theatre, Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, \$180-620 from urbtix.hk.

King and Country

To commemorate the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, Britain's Royal Shakespeare Company comes to Hong Kong to perform a section from his legendary history plays. "Henry IV" parts I and II and "Henry V" cover the rise of the legendary British king. Uneasy lies the head... Mar 4-13, various times. Lyric Theatre, Academy for Performing Arts, 1 Gloucester Rd., Wan Chai, \$200-680 from urbtix.hk.

The Illusionists

Magic, illusion and mind-reading come together straight from Broadway to Hong Kong. An ensemble of top-flight magicians brings their individual specialties to this group show. Did you ever see the movie "Now You See Me?" It'll be like that, only not awful. Apr 14-24, various times. Grand Theatre, Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, \$445-995 from lunchbox-productions.com, available from Feb 22.



Circa: Opus

A circus masterpiece perfectly choreographed to combine music with movement. Accompanied by the Debussy String Quartet playing the music of Dmitri Shostakovich (wait, what?), 14 acrobats perform mind-blowing feats of tumbling, dance and more. We're exhausted just thinking about it. Mar 11-12, 7:30pm; Mar 13, 2:30pm. Grand Theatre, Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, \$120-380 from urbtix.hk.



Lover

A collaboration between Taiwan's U-Theatre, German composer Christian Jost and Grammy-winning classical choir Rundfunkchor Berlin, "Lover" is a musical theatrical exploration of love itself. Featuring over 80 dancers, drummers, martial artists and singers, this performance takes texts from ancient Chinese poems and the work of E.E. Cummings, making it a one-of-a-kind marriage of Chinese and western cultures. Mar 5-6, 8:15pm. Grand Theatre, Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, \$140-520 from urbtix.hk.

Exhibitions



Sovereign Asian Art Prize Retrospective: 11 Years of Art in Asia

Popsy Modern Kitchen brings art to the dining table by hosting its first official art exhibition in support of the Sovereign Art Foundation. Celebrating emerging contemporary artists across Asia, the exhibition showcases winning entries since 2003, with five out of the 11 featured artists originating from or working in Hong Kong. Support the cause by ordering the five-course set dinner menu (\$698): A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the foundation. Through Mar 5. Popsy Modern Kitchen , 5/F, The Wellington, 184-198 Wellington St., Central, \$698 + 10 percent for the five-course set dinner menu.

Portraits

If you still haven't checked out Amy Winehouse and her cock, now's the time to do so: Terry Richardson's latest exhibition "Portraits" has been extended until March 12, showcasing work from the past 20 years of his career. Through Mar 12. Galerie Perrotin, 17/F, 50 Connaught Rd. Central.



Garth Weiser

New York-based artist Garth Weiser presents his latest works for the first time in Asia. Known for combining layers of line and color, Weiser's works are ever-changing to the viewer, with light reflecting unevenly across their surfaces. Through Mar 17. Simon Lee Gallery, 304, 3/F, Pedder Building, 12 Pedder St., Central.



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NIGHTLIFE

OPEN BAR BAO BEI

The buzz: Another entry to the Wyndham Street revival is recently opened basement restobar Bao Bei, a celebration of modernized Hong Kong flavors... although yes, it is named in Putonghua, ostensibly for catchiness and pronounceability. Meaning "babe," think of it as a stylish watering hole for flirty meetups or date nights with your very own bae.

Decor: Heading down the steps you're met by a wall of dim sum baskets: Quirky Cantonese-esque fixtures like this adorn most of the bar, such as in the traditional-style wooden chairs or updated modern portraits in the dining room. In the first room (aka the bar), there's plenty of standing space but not much bar seating, so be sure to get there early to snag a good seat.

The drinks: Our favorite of the signature cocktails was the Typhoon No. 10 (\$158), which won us over with presentation and taste alike. It's a not-too-sweet, well balanced gin-based cocktail made with Tanqueray No. Ten, osmanthus honey, OJ, lemon juice and egg white, aptly

served in a tilting glass with a broken cocktail umbrella for the full windswept effect, while a few cubes of sweet floral osmanthus jelly add to the whole messy fallen leaves visual. Fans of sweet drinks will be kept happy with the Mango Pomelo Sago (\$128), which is pretty much a rum-based, icy version of the popular Hong Kong dessert, served in a bowl with a spoon. The Chinese Negroni (\$128), made with camomile- and longan-infused gin and goji berry vermouth, was a tad medicinal for our liking, with an almost ginseng aftertaste, but the citrusy Barrel-aged Bijou (\$128) is a strong gin-based alternative.

Why you'll be back: Overheard at Bao Bei: "What EVEN is osmanthus?" Bao Bei's the newest, hippest place on the block to play with the east meets west concept. From Yakult shots to pork belly baos to umami-filled tuna tartare served with yau zha gwai fried dough sticks, the menu serves up classic Chinese flavors with all-new twists.
B1/F, 75-77 Wyndham St., Central, 2801-7779, baobeihk.com.



Clubs

DJ Revolution:

Dimitri Vegas and Like Mike

Electro nuts all better sit down, because DJ legends Dimitri Vegas and Like Mike are hitting up AsiaWorld-Expo this Spring. They're number 1 on DJ Magazine's list of top 100 DJs—but you already knew that, didn't you? May 20, 8pm. \$580-900 from hkticketing.com. Student and VIP packages available.

Bump 2nd Anniversary Party

Those down to party better start stretching, because music and party curator Bump is celebrating its 2nd anniversary with a free party featuring nine DJs spinning underground dance beats, from Bunker Club HK's Zelazowski to Elliot Peverley of Drop, plus three guest DJs playing a special vinyl set. The party will be held at a secret location in Central, with a spacious terrace and two rooms of music—to be revealed on the Facebook page 24 hours before the party. Is it at Government House? It better be at Government House. Feb 20, 10pm. facebook.com/bumphk. Free.

Concerts



5 Seconds of Summer: Sounds Live Feels Live

Feel like hanging out with ALL of the city's teenagers in one room together? Aussie pop punk kids 5 Seconds of Summer are performing in Hong Kong for the first time ever, touring their latest album "Sounds Good Feels Good." Considered by many to be One Direction's protégés (1D's members actually have a financial stake in 5SOS), the foursome is known for boppy hits including "She's Kinda Hot" and "Hey Everybody!" Mar 10, 8-10pm. Boomshack, Shop B, G/F, 8-12 Wo On Lane, Central, \$488-1588 from hkticketing.com.

Mika

After canceling his Hong Kong gig last June due to doctor's orders, the "Grace Kelly" singer is back in town this year to tour his latest album, "No Place in Heaven." It'll be an intimate gig at the Vine. Feb 22, 8-10pm. Vine Centre 2, 29 Burrows St., Wan Chai, \$590 from ticketflap.com.

An Evening with Tom Jones Live

The "Sexbomb"-singing septagenarian returns to Hong Kong. His latest albums "Spirit in the Room," "Praise & Blame" and "Long Lost Suitcase" have garnered some of the best reviews of his 50-year career, so expect some great soul from the suave rocker. Ladies: do NOT throw your underwear at him. It's just unsanitary. Apr 7, 8pm. Grand Hall, HKCEC, 1 Expo Drive, Wan Chai, 2629-6240. \$688-1,488 from hkticketing.com.



Festivals



Malt Masters 2016

Find the perfect dram at this two-day whisky showcase at the Conrad, featuring selections from more than 50 distilleries. There'll also be masterclasses for you to nose deeper into whisky appreciation, as well as classes on cigar and food pairing. Feb 27-28, various times. Conrad Hong Kong, 88 Queensway, \$800 per day from gormei.com.



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. InterContinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong, 70 Mody Rd., \$220 from cityline.com includes one glass and two starter tokens; \$420 for ticket plus entry to master class. Additional tokens \$25 each. hkhiskyfestival.com.



Caspian: Dust & Disquiet

The instrumental post-rock giants are coming to Hong Kong once again, this time supported by local bands Smoke In Half Note and shoegazers Thud. Feb 25, 8-10pm. Hidden Agenda, Unit 2A, Wing Fu Industrial Building, 15-17 Tai Yip St., Ngau Tau Kok, \$220-260 from ticketflap.com \$300 at the door.



The Red Stripes at Café Isara

New Lantau music venue Café Isara's about to rock out with Hong Kong's best ska and soul troupe The Red Stripes, followed by reggae and ska DJs to round off the night with a bang. Dress code is red, white and black and there's a prize for the best dressed. Feb 20, 7pm. Café Isara, Shop 3, G/F, Scenic Crest, 18A Mui Wo Ferry Pier Rd. Mui Wo Ferry Pier Rd., Lantau Island, \$100 in advance from enquiries@isaragroup.com, \$150 at the door. theredstripeshk.com.



Glue

Consisting of one Hong Kong dude and two British chicks, Chochukmo's ex-bassist WaiTing is bringing his new alternative three-piece Glue all the way from the UK to the city with their brand of 80s and 90s punk, grunge and Britpop sounds. They're opened by of course Chochukmo themselves, plus MouseFX. Sweet. Feb 20, 8-10pm. Hidden Agenda, Unit 2A, Wing Fu Industrial Building, 15-17 Tai Yip St., Ngau Tau Kok, \$180 from ticketflap.com.

Edited by Evelyn Lok
evelyn.lok@hkmagmedia.com



All You Need is Love

Everybody needs somebody to love. Former actress and peagent queen Marsha Yuan is at Orange Peel to tell a story about love and relationships, featuring tunes dating from the 20s as well as more recent hits. Feb 25-26, 9pm. Orange Peel, 2/F, 38-44 D'Aguilar St., Central, \$280 from ticketflap.com, includes one drink.



Boomshack: Beer Pong Thursdays

Spiked milkshakes, obscenely fatty burgers and rounds of beer pong: if this is your idea of a great Thursday night, head to Boomshack's weekly beer pong nights, which will reserve the center table for teams of up to five to duke it out. No dillydallying, though—games only go for 10 minutes each, so make sure you've got some fast elbows. Boomshack, Shop B, G/F, 8-12 Wo On Lane, Central, \$150 per game.

Martell Limited Edition Release at RedMr.

Karaoke-loving kids of Hong Kong can now booze up on more than just beer kegs and whisky green teas, because Martell is unleashing its new UV glow-in-the-dark "La French Touch" limited edition cognac bottle—exclusively available at RedMr this month. What better accompaniment to a bit of Tay Tay? Through Feb 29. Available at RedMr citywide. redmr.com.

Disco Naps at Vibes

Those hungry for more (and lazier) untzing on a Sunday can be satiated at Vibes' latest chill-out party, which will welcome Cliché records DJ VISA and Gaby Endo on the decks. Feb 21, 5-9pm. Vibes, 5/F, 118 Nathan Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, \$60 for a drink; \$100 for two.

Nightlife Events

Boomshack: Geek Out on Mondays

Launching mid-February at Boomshack is a weekly video game night, where punters can enter a single-elimination FIFA 16 tournament (so, like, bro-geeky) to win a \$500 dining voucher for Boomshack. \$100 cash deposit required, which you will get back after the game, unless you rage-smash the TV screen with the controller or something. Boomshack, Shop B, G/F, 8-12 Wo On Lane, Central, Free.

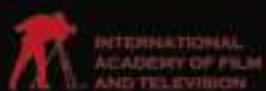
W Hong Kong Presents: Get High Silent Disco Pool Party

The W Hong Kong's famed summer pool parties on its wet deck make an early comeback this year with a winter bash: But this time you'll be partying in a pool that's been emptied and then fitted with a dome-shaped ceiling. We would have looked forward to the great acoustics, but instead you get lots of silent twerking thanks to individual headphones blasting DJ beats. Feb 20, 8pm. W Hong Kong, 1 Austin Rd. West, \$250 from ticketflap.com/wsilentdisco, \$350 at the door; both include one drink.

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The Hateful Eight ★★★★

(USA) Western/Mystery. Directed by Quentin Tarantino.
Starring Samuel L. Jackson, Kurt Russell, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Walton Goggins, Tim Roth, Demián Bichir, Bruce Dern, Michael Madsen. Category III. 168 minutes. Opened Feb 18.

It's like the setup of one long, sick, incredibly good joke: Two bounty hunters, one black-eyed murderess, one old Confederate general, a soon-to-be sheriff, a Mexican, a cowboy, and an executioner all walk into a bar. Not all of them walk out again.

We've been waiting four years for another dose of Quentin Tarantino, ever since "Django Unchained," and Tarantino's long-awaited eighth film once again oozes his signature violence and disturbing humor in a story about mistrust, morality and race set in the heart of wintry Wyoming after the Civil War.

Bounty hunter John "The Hangman" Ruth (Kurt Russell) is heading to the town of Red Rock to cash in his high-value prisoner Daisy Domergue (Jennifer Jason Leigh). When a snowstorm hits, he reluctantly picks up a fellow bounty hunter, Major Marquis Warren (Samuel L. Jackson) who's been stranded in the cold. They run for shelter at a nearby stagecoach rest stop, where they find a cast of misfits also sitting out the storm. These eight hateful individuals all grow increasingly wary of each other's motives as the story develops, blowing open their lives and lies. No one can be trusted, and as the snowy night drags on, each character reveals more that discredits themselves and everyone around them.

"The Hateful Eight" isn't just set in a more intimate space, but it also feels more tightly bound than the average Tarantino film. Told across six titled chapters that almost exclusively



take place in a single room, "The Hateful Eight" feels like a stage play, with the camera sneaking from corner to corner as the characters plot with each other. It's a cross between a Eugene O'Neill play and a tense game of Cluedo—just with a lot more skulls bashed in and a hell of a lot more fun.

Tarantino navigates the question of race here more critically than before. While the hero of "Django Unchained" was a freed slave seeking vengeance, "Hateful Eight" puts the spotlight on Samuel L. Jackson as a more subtle strong black character, but manages to muddy the waters thanks to his own questionable morals. That's the fun of "The Hateful Eight," where you'll constantly question who you're really rooting for.

The whole cast easily melts into each of their own misfit roles, with Jackson delivering his usual slightly sinister bravado. Bruce Dern in particular puts on an impressive performance as the war-weary Confederate general who's increasingly provoked by Warren's presence, and Leigh is fantastically disgusting as the evil-bitch Domergue.

Think "Tarantino movie" and you immediately conjure up his brand of over-the-top violence and crass dialogue, but you tend to forget that there's so much more than that. He's a brilliant filmmaker, with expert storytelling, effortless transitions and masterfully executed gore and action. His stories pull you into a shifting world, and there's no escape from the storm. **Evelyn Lok**

Coming Soon

The Danish Girl ▾

(USA) One of two queer-themed titles to be showered with nominations at the Oscars this year, Eddie Redmayne is at it again with another transformative performance. Redmayne plays Einar Wegener, husband of Danish artist Gerda Wegener (Alicia Vikander), who embraces his long-suppressed femininity and eventually attempts one of the first ever male-to-female sex reassignment surgeries. Opens Feb 25.

Creed

(USA) There are a lot of comebacks this season in the movie world, but none as legendary as Sylvester Stallone's return as Rocky Balboa. The retired boxing star mentors rising talent Adonis (Michael B. Jordan), whose late father was Rocky's old rival Apollo Creed. Opens Feb 25.

Zoolander 2

(USA) We've waited 15 years for more of that Blue Steel pout and finally the wait is over. Ben Stiller reprises his role as really really really ridiculously good-looking supermodel Derek Zoolander, who's back to solve a crisis in which the world's most beautiful people are being targeted and killed. But why male models? Opens Feb 25.

Opening



13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of the Benghazi

(USA) Michael Bay is back with yet more explosions. Based on the novel "13 Hours" by Mitchell Zuckoff, the film adaptation tells the story of how six CIA security agents defended the American diplomatic compound during the September 11, 2012 attack in Benghazi, Libya. Starring John Krasinski and his 5,000 new muscles. Explosive explosions and mind-numbing gunfire action with a heavyhanded dose of patriotism: MasterBay-tion at its most boring. Opened Feb 18. ★

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: Sword of Destiny

(USA/China) A sequel to the 2000 Ang Lee classic delivers yet more flying Michelle Yeoh, joined by the long-haired Donnie Yen and Harry Shum Jr. Directed by legendary choreographer Yuen Woo-ping, this flick is a Netflix Original production: So we might even get to catch all the action legally at home! Opened Feb 18.

The Hateful Eight

(USA) See review, above.

How to Be Single

(USA) Ah, the token anti-Valentine's release. Singles everywhere can rejoice in validation of their solo girl tendencies as Rebel Wilson teaches us (and Dakota Johnson) how to hoe it up in New York City. Amusingly, of course. Opened Feb 18.

Spotlight

(USA) Starring Mark Ruffalo, Michael Keaton and Rachel McAdams, "Spotlight" is based on the 2001 Pulitzer-prize-winning investigation in which a team of journalists at The Boston Globe

dug into the case against John Geoghan, a Roman Catholic priest who was accused of molesting over 80 children—and it was only the tip of the iceberg. The fluorescent-lit beige offices of behind-the-scenes investigative journalism may not be the most glamorous of settings, but "Spotlight" is all rapid-fire twists that leaves you breathless, a salute to the good work of the reporters involved. Opened Feb 18. ★★★★

Continuing

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.



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.

The Big Short

(USA) Some are calling it this year's "The Wolf of Wall Street"—without the drugs and sex. "The Big Short" is a fun-filled and eye-opening retelling of what really went down in the 2008 financial crisis, following the story of four finance bros (Ryan Gosling, Steve Carell, Christian Bale, Brad Pitt) who predicted the market crash long before it happened, with plenty of ludicrous celebrity cameos in between. ★★★★



Carol

(USA) In the 1950s, rich suburban housewife Carol Aird (Cate Blanchett) is in the midst of a divorce. She's drawn to department store clerk Therese Belivet (Rooney Mara) and the two soon develop a secret relationship—risking Carol's custody battle for her daughter. An Oscar heavyweight (six nominations), Blanchett and Mara's sizzling chemistry, the beautiful period set, costume design and a story of undeniable attraction make this a timeless romance. ★★★★



Deadpool

(USA) The ultimate tale of overcoming death for love... by becoming a metafictional superhero. Heartthrob Ryan Reynolds is Wade Wilson, hired assassin with healing powers and a chip on his shoulder. Marvel's most twisted anti-hero finally comes to the big screen and nothing is off-limits. Anal jokes, deformed baby hands and sextime, oh my! ★★★★





Edited by Evelyn Lok
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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."

From Vegas to Macau III
(Hong Kong/China) Still down to watch a crappy CNY blockbuster? 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.

The Good Dinosaur
(USA) Disney and Pixar's latest offering is a tale of unlikely friendship between a human and an Apatosaurus named Arlo, in a world where dinosaurs never went extinct. Despite some breathtaking art, the stale story just doesn't match up to the studio's recent films. ★★★

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. ★★★★

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?

The Mermaid
(China) Stephen Chow's at it again with another insane CGI-fueled frenzy, this time bringing the titular watery mythical creature to the screen... with plenty of flimsy one-legged fish leggings and silly jokes to get you through a dull weekend.

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. With Sammo Hung as action director, you can still expect plenty of 3D-tastic flying kicks. Year of the Monkey upgrade!

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 real-life 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. ★★★★

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. ★★★★



Film Festival

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If you like watching food being made as much as stuffing it in your mouth hole, you'll want to check out UA CineHub's three special screenings of foodporn-tastic films. **"Foodies: The Culinary Jetset"** takes five food bloggers on the ultimate pilgrimage to Michelin restaurants around the world. **"East Side Sushi"** is the tale of Mexican single mother Juana who pursues a career as a sushi chef, a thoughtful tale of how food connects people from different cultures and races. **"For Grace"** is the story of chef Curtis Duffy of three-Michelin-starred restaurant Grace, and how he overcame a difficult family history to rise to the top. Feb 27-Mar 13, noon. 2317-6666. \$75-110 from uacinemas.com.hk.. Screenings are at UA cinemas at iSquare, CityPlaza, MegaBox and TMT Plaza.



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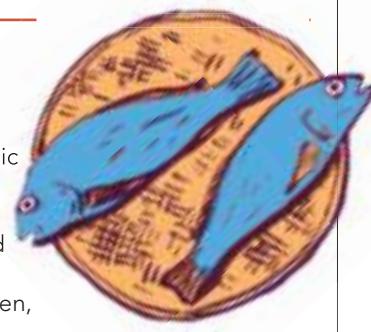
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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

ROB BREZSNY

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): In the long-running TV show "M*A*S*H," the character known as Sidney Freedman was a psychiatrist who did his best to nurture the mental health of the soldiers in his care. He sometimes departed from conventional therapeutic approaches. In the series finale, he delivered the following speech, which I believe is highly pertinent to your current quest for good mental hygiene: "I told you people something a long time ago, and it's just as pertinent today as it was then. Ladies and gentlemen, take my advice: Pull down your pants and slide on the ice."



ARIES (March 21-April 19): "Old paint on a canvas, as it ages, sometimes becomes transparent," said playwright Lillian Hellman. "When that happens, it is possible to see the original lines: a tree will show through a woman's dress, a child makes way for a dog, a large boat is no longer on an open sea." Why does this happen? Because the painter changed his or her mind. Early images were replaced, painted over. I suspect that a metaphorical version of this is underway in your life. Certain choices you made in the past got supplanted by choices you made later. They disappeared from view. But now those older possibilities are re-emerging for your consideration. I'm not saying what you should do about them. I simply want to alert you to their ghostly presence so they don't cause confusion.

One of the best ways to thrive during the coming weeks will be to ask more questions than you have asked since you were five years old. Curiosity and good listening skills will be superpowers that you should you strive to activate. For now, what matters most is not what you already know but rather what you need to find out. It's a favorable time to gather information about riddles and mysteries that have perplexed you for a long time. Be super-receptive and extra wide-eyed!

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Poet Barbara Hamby says the Russian word "osty" can be used to describe "a cup of tea that is too hot, but after you walk to the next room, and return, it is too cool." A little birdie told me that this may be an apt metaphor for a current situation in your life. I completely understand if you wish the tea had lost less of its original warmth, and was exactly the temperature you like, neither burning nor tepid. But that won't happen unless you try to reheat it, which would change the taste. So what should you do? One way or the other, a compromise will be necessary. Do you want the lukewarm tea or the hot tea with a different flavor?

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Russian writer Ivan Turgenev was a Scorpio. Midway through his first novel "Rudin," his main character Dmitrii Nikolaevich Rudin alludes to a problem that affects many Scorpions. "Do you see that apple tree?" Rudin asks a woman companion. "It is broken by the weight and abundance of its own fruit." Ouch! I want very much for you Scorpions to be spared a fate like that in the coming weeks. That's why I propose that you scheme about how you will express the immense creativity that will be welling up in you. Don't let your lush and succulent output go to waste.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Asking you Sagittarians to be patient may be akin to ordering a bonfire to burn more politely. But it's my duty to inform you of the cosmic tendencies, so I will request your forbearance for now. How about some nuances to make it more palatable? Here's a quote from author David G. Allen: "Patience is the calm acceptance that things can happen in a different order than the one you have in mind." Novelist Gustave Flaubert: "Talent is a long patience." French playwright Moliere: "Trees that are slow to grow bear the best fruit." Writer Ann Lamott: "Hope is a revolutionary patience." I've saved the best for last, from Russian novelist Irène Némirovsky: "Waiting is erotic."

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "If you ask for help it comes, but not in any way you'd ever know." Poet Gary Snyder said that, and now I'm passing it on to you, Capricorn. The coming weeks will be an excellent time for you to think deeply about the precise kinds of help you would most benefit from—even as you loosen up your expectations about how your requests for aid might be fulfilled. Be aggressive in seeking assistance, but ready and willing to be surprised as it arrives.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): For a limited time only, 153 is your lucky number. Mauve and olive are your colors of destiny, the platypus is your power animal, and torn burlap mended with silk thread is your magic texture. I realize that all of this may sound odd, but it's the straight-up truth. The nature of the cosmic rhythms are rather erratic right now. To be in maximum alignment with the irregular opportunities that are headed your way, you should probably make yourself magnificently mysterious, even to yourself. To quote an old teacher, this might be a good time to be "so unpredictable that not even you yourself knows what's going to happen."

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): "I would not talk so much about myself if there were anybody else whom I knew as well," said the philosopher and naturalist Henry David Thoreau. In accordance with your astrological constitution, Leo, I authorize you to use this declaration as your own almost any time you feel like it. But I do suggest that you make an exception to the rule during the next four weeks. In my opinion, it will be time to focus on increasing your understanding of the people you care about -- even if that effort takes time and energy away from your quest for ultimate self-knowledge. Don't worry: You can return to emphasizing Thoreau's perspective by the equinox.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You are entering the inquisitive phase of your astrological cycle.

HOMEWORK: What good thing would you have to give up in order to get a great thing? Testify at Freewillastrology.com. Click on "Email Rob."



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SAVAGE LOVE

Dan Savage

My new girlfriend blurted out that she had a cuckolding past with her ex-husband. She says he badgered her into arranging "dates" with strangers and that he picked the guys. Her ex would then watch her having sex with a guy in a hotel room. He only watched and didn't take part. I am really bothered by her past. She says she did it only because her ex pressured her into it and she wanted to save her marriage, so she agreed. But I suspect she may have enjoyed it and may have been testing me to see if I wanted to be a cuck. What should I do? I am really torn by my feelings toward her.

– Confused In NOVA

You suspect she may have enjoyed fucking those other men?

I hope she enjoyed fucking those other men—and you should too, CINOVA. Because even if cuckolding wasn't her fantasy, even if she fucked those other men only to delight her shitty ex-husband, anyone who cares about this woman—and you do care about her, right?—should hope the experiences she had with those other men weren't overwhelmingly negative, completely traumatizing, or utterly joyless.

And, yes, people will sometimes broach the subject of their own sexual interests/fantasies using the passive voice or a negative frame because they're afraid of rejection or they want an easy out or both. ("My ex was into this kinda extreme thing, and I did it because I felt I had to." "That's gross." "Yeah, I totally hated it.") But cuckolding is almost always the husband's fantasy—it's rare for the wife to initiate cuckolding scenes/relationships—so odds are good that your girlfriend is telling you the truth about those other men being her ex-husband's idea/fantasy and not hers.

As for whether she's testing you: That's a pretty easy test to fail, CINOVA. Open your mouth and say, "Cuckolding isn't something I would ever want to do. The thought of you with another man isn't a turn-on for me. Not at all." It's an easy F.

What should you do? If you can't let this go, if you can't get over the sex your girlfriend had with her ex-husband and those other men, if you can't hope she had a good time regardless of whose idea it was, if you can't take "I'm not interested in cuckolding you!" for an answer—if you can't do all of that—then do your girlfriend a favor and break up with her. She just got out from under a shitty husband who pressured her into "cheating." The last thing she needs now is a shitty boyfriend who shames her for "cheating."

My husband is Native American. I'm white. We've been together 16 years, raising a couple of kids. We love each other very much, so this isn't a deal breaker. But... I've got a thing for his long black hair. He's a drop-dead gorgeous man, and while I gave up asking that he wear leggings or a breechcloth once in a while, I wish he would grow out his hair. I'm willing to wear (and do) anything he asks. He's somewhere to the left of Sherman Alexie when it comes to this stuff, but could you tell me why I'm so wrong? He keeps his hair short, and the one time I made enough of a fuss, he grew it out and never washed it just to spite me. A long time ago, he participated in a sun dance, and he looked incredible. So I guess that makes me a blasphemous pervert, but really? Is asking for a couple of braids really so wrong?

– Whitey McWhite Wife

I forwarded your email to Sherman Alexie, the award-winning poet, novelist, essayist, and filmmaker. Your question must have touched a nerve, WMW, because Alexie's response arrived while my computer was still making that *woooosh-sending-email* sound. Now I'm going to step aside and let Alexie answer your question...

"What does 'to the left of Sherman Alexie' mean in this context? I doubt there are very many Native dudes more leftist than me! And long hair on Indian men is more conservative and more tribal, anyway—more ceremonial. More of a peacock thing, really. And a lot of work! My Native wife certainly misses my long hair. But I don't miss the upkeep and I don't miss answering questions about my hair. I mean, I cut my hair 13 years ago (more than 25 percent of my life ago), and some people still ask me about it! Thirteen years! Also, Native men tend to cut their hair as they age. Long hair is generally a young Indian man's gig, culturally speaking.

"I would venture that Native dude is tired of being romanticized, ethnocized, objectified. We Indians get enough of that shit in the outside world. Maybe this dude doesn't want that in bed. Or maybe he just likes the way he looks with shorter hair. Because I am getting so gray, long hair would make me look like a warlock having a midlife crisis. Maybe this Indian dude is just sick of all the sociopolitical shit that comes with long hair. Maybe it kills his boner. Talking about it has certainly killed my boner."

Why would you call blumkins "sexist"? Are you excluding the idea that gay, bi, and trans people might participate? There are many sexual practices that are degrading. If the partner consents, how is it "sexist"? Lastly, have you considered that a heterosexual female may want a blumkin of her own? I'm a heterosexual male, and I have no idea how you could defecate and remain erect—but to each his own! Your answer was irrational and sexist!

– The Problem Isn't Always Sexism

Go to Urban Dictionary and read every definition for "blumkin," TPIAS. There are nine of them. We'll wait.

While almost all of the proposed definitions—including the top one—are gendered ("Taking a nice shit while your woman is sucking your cock"), even definitions that aren't gendered ("Getting a blowjob while taking a stinky shit") include examples of usage that are gendered ("Anthony really enjoyed it when Christy gave him a blumkin last night"). While a gay dude could suck his man's cock while he was taking a stinky shit, and while a trans man could go eat his cis girlfriend's pussy while she was dropping a deuce, the whole conversation about blumkins—and since blumkins are mythical, TPIAS, the convo is all we've got—isn't about consensual degrading sex play. It's about the symbolic degradation of women.

And that's sexist.

It's like gerbiling: Everyone has a butthole, anyone can walk into a pet store and buy a gerbil, paper towel tubes are everywhere. But gerbiling is always described as a gay sex act. The fact that straight, bi, asexual, or even deceased people could theoretically have their asses gerbiled doesn't make joking about gerbiling *not* homophobic. The anatomical technicality doesn't exonerate gerbiling. Same goes for blumkins.

So my ruling is final: Joking about gerbiling is homophobic (but funny if done right, just as joking about blumkins is sexist *ditto*).

It's always a little frustrating to read columns where we hear only one side of the story. Maybe you could solicit letters from both partners? A couple would agree in advance what the problem was and both send in a letter, but they should not read each other's letters. Keep up the great work!

– Just An Idea

I love this idea, JAI. Any game couples out there? Throuples welcome, too!

On the Lovecast, Dan and writer Ephi Stempler discuss companionate marriage: savagecast.com.

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

SPOTLIGHT

The latest news and deals from our partners



Sushi and Champagne with Nobu-san Himself

Enjoy a one-of-a-kind experience at NOBU InterContinental Hong Kong on March 19 and 20, where world famous chef Nobu Matsuhisa returns to his eponymous restaurant to offer discerning diners his magical Japanese delights with two special spring omakase dinners and an exclusive "Sushi Saturday" cooking class, hosted by the chef himself.

For just two nights, you'll be able to embark on a gourmet journey created by Nobu-san and his culinary team with dishes using seasonal spring ingredients prepared "NOBU style." Exquisite dishes include a refreshing shima ebi and madai sashimi with ume ponzu, seasonal mategai (razor clams) sautéed and paired with the unique floral flavor of myoga salsa and ama ponzu foam, as well as a melt-in-your-mouth A5 Miyazaki Wagyu with a tingling wasabi pepper sauce.

This is also the first collaboration between NOBU and Taittinger Champagne: Four selected labels from the exclusive champagne brand have been handpicked to pair with Nobu-san's innovative modern Japanese cuisine. They include two of Taittinger's latest vintages—Taittinger Vintage

Brut 2008 and Taittinger Comtes de Champagne, Blanc de Blancs 2006—chosen for their freshness and liveliness, the perfect accompaniment to your meal.

The spring omakase dinner menu is available through April 9 at \$1,300 per person, while the Champagne pairing option hosted by Nobu is only on March 19 and 20 for an extra \$688 per person.

To learn from the Japanese culinary master himself, join the "Sushi Saturday" "Cooking with the Culinary Stars" class on March 19, in which Nobu-san will take you through the magic behind some of NOBU's signature dishes, and teach you how to make the sushi yourself.

Nobu-san and his team will introduce both NOBU's philosophy and the principles of Japanese cuisine, followed by a sushi demonstration and then the chance to make your very own, including the iconic NOBU Sushi Rolls—before you wash down your creations with unlimited Perrier Jouët Champagne.

After all the hard work, relax and enjoy a special six-course NOBU omakase lunch showcasing the dishes from

the class, and you'll bring home a NOBU cookbook signed by Nobu-san himself. The class is \$2,688 per person.

Craving some local flavors and more bubbly in March? The InterContinental's two-Michelin-starred Yan Toh Heen is hosting a Grand Vintage Collection Champagne Dinner on March 15 with Moët & Chandon. Executive chef Lau Yiu-fai will present a gourmet six-course Cantonese menu, each carefully paired with a different Moët & Chandon Grand Vintage champagne, presented by Benoît Gouez, Chef de Cave of Moët & Chandon. The evening is \$2,288, including a signed bottle of Moët & Chandon 2006 Vintage Champagne.

2313-2323, hongkong-ic.intercontinental.com



The Freshest Oysters Around at Umai

The winter months are always the best time to enjoy oysters, and they taste best when they come fresh from the sea.

In Japan, the people of Kyushu delight in the tradition of gathering in huts along the seashore to enjoy this unique oyster experience.

Now, thanks to a special winter promotion that runs through to February 29, you can sample that traditional taste as well. Lai Chi Kok dining destination Umai is presenting Ebisu seasonal oysters, flown direct from Kyushu, Japan.

Ebisu oysters are crisp, with a clean, ocean salt flavor. Best eaten raw, popular serving choices include with Japanese sour sauce, oyster sushi or oyster with white miso sauce. All three options are just \$58/pc.

For diners who prefer their oysters hot, cooking methods include crispy deep-fried oysters (\$80) or deep-fried oysters with a sweet vinegar sauce (\$68). On a cold day you might prefer to try the oyster rice in hot pot (\$178), where the sweetness of the oysters blends beautifully with the rice. Warm oyster in miso soup (\$178) is another favorite pick for the cold months—enjoy!

2743-8011, umai.com.hk

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El Cid
Fatt's Place
Finds
Grand Central Bar and Grill

JORDAN/YAU MA TEI/MONG KOK

18 Grams
Berliner Olympian City 3
Broadway Cinematheque
Colour Brown Coffee
Englishtown
Hotel Stage
Kadoorie Hill
Langham Hotel
Langham Place Hotel Coffee Shop
Madera Hotel
Park N Shop - Olympian City
Pink Coffee
Royal Plaza Hotel
Starbucks - 3 Jordan Rd.
Starbucks - Bank Centre Mall
Starbucks - Liberte Place
Starbucks - Nathan Hotel
Starbucks - New Kowloon Plaza
Starbucks - Olympian City 2
Take Two Brunch Coffee
The Olympian Hong Kong
White Noise
Zoo Records

SHATIN

Baptist University
Citysuper
Courtyard by Marriott Sha Tin
Crown Relocations
Starbucks - Fortune City One
Starbucks - New Town Plaza L1

SAI KUNG

Bacco
CC Café
Chez les Copains
Classified
Duke of York Pub
Firenze
HEBE ONE o ONE
Italiano's
Park N Shop - Clear Water Bay
Pepperoni's
Piccolos
Pizzeria La Gondola
Starbucks - Sai Kung Chan Man St.
Starbucks - The HKUST
The Bottle Shop

OTHER NEW TERRITORIES

Discovery Park
Englishtown
King's Belly
Mr Steak
Park N Shop - Hong Lok Yuen
Red Alert Airsoft Sports
Starbucks - Citywalk
Starbucks - Luk Yeung Galleria
Starbucks - Metroplaza
Starbucks - Tai Po Market MTR Station
Starbucks - Trend Plaza

LANTAU

Berliner German Bar & Restaurant
Café Duvet
Dymocks
Marriott Skycity
Park N Shop - Discovery Bay
Regal Airport Hotel Zentro Garden
Starbucks - Airport T2
Starbucks - Airport T1
Starbucks - Citygate
Zentro Garden

HK GIVEAWAYS

Chinese New Year may be over but our February giveaways march onwards with an amazing suite stay at the InterContinental Hong Kong, plus we've got the winners of dining vouchers at a Michelin-starred resto.

WIN A NIGHT AT
THE INTERCON,
WORTH
\$14,000!



Win a Harbor View Suite Stay at the InterContinental Hong Kong!

Hong Kong's all about location, location, location. That's why the **InterContinental Hong Kong** comes out on top, given its stunning position right at the tip of Tsim Sha Tsui, offering up top-flight luxury as well as unbeatable panoramic views of Victoria Harbour and our iconic skyline.

Thanks to the InterContinental Hong Kong, we've offering one lucky reader the chance to win a dream staycation at this fantastic hotel. We've got a **one-night stay for two in a Deluxe Junior Harbourview Suite**, including access to all the luxury services of Club InterContinental—the hotel's Executive Lounge service, which includes buffet breakfast, afternoon tea, evening cocktails as the sun goes down, plus personalized concierge services.

The lucky winner will also get to try the hotel's brand new **RED BOX Contemporary Chinese Tea Set** for two in the Lobby Lounge. Set against a spectacular panorama of the harbor, this Asian alternative to the classic Parisian afternoon tea is a three-tiered lacquered basket containing Chinese pastries, from savory treats to classic sweet bites, all served with premium Chinese teas. The value of this whole prize? A hugely generous \$13,990.

Want a chance to win? Here's how.

If you were reading our February 5 issue, you should already have found an *italicized* word in the appropriate Spotlight page article. Now you have to do the same with this issue! Once you've got both, include them in a paragraph of no more than 30 words about what you'd do with a staycation at the InterContinental Hong Kong. Go to hk-magazine.com/hk-giveaways to submit your entry before 10am on February 22, 2016.

Good luck! The winner will be announced on February 26.

Congratulations to the lucky winners of dining vouchers!

Congratulations to David McCracken, Michelle Ho, Martin Eber, Kate Kulaga and Dawn Aquino, who have each won a **\$1,000 voucher for a meal at one-Michelin-starred ON Dining!**

We are big fans of Martin's description of his ideal Mediterranean meal:

"My favourite Mediterranean meal is one that comes with powerful, competing flavours like rich salty cheese, luscious pomegranate, smoky grilled fish, tangy Tzatziki, but most importantly—the company of good friends."

Congratulations to all five of our lucky winners—and enjoy your meal!

WE HAVE
WINNERS!



FIRST PERSON

“There’s still a rebel in me telling me I need to do something different.”

Award-winning actor, singer and DJ

Sara Lee Lai-yui has nearly 30 years of showbiz experience under her belt: These days she stars on TV, hosts radio shows and MCs events. She tells M.C. Hughes about escaping reality and piecing her life together.



I started out in showbiz the same way as many others: through a singing contest.

It was organized by RTHK back in the 80s. There was no prize money, but that didn't matter.

It gave me the chance to record an album and I got exposure through the radio station by hosting a morning program.

The program became quite popular. In the early 80s radio was immensely popular for artists to sell their records.

It put me into the public spotlight and very quickly I became a household name.

It was then that I was approached by TVB and offered the chance to appear on [legendary variety show] "Enjoy Yourself Tonight."

In those days the show had a household penetration rate of nearly 100 percent. Every family in Hong Kong watched it at dinner time.

If you flew into Kai Tak Airport in the evening, you'd almost certainly see people in Kowloon City apartments watching "EYT."

Apart from TVB I also worked for ATV hosting programs and doing dramas, as well as hosting programs for Cable TV.

I've made more than 10 movies. I even won Best Supporting Actress at the Hong Kong Film Awards for my role in [Ringo Lam's] "School on Fire" back in 1989.

It was one of my first films and is still my most successful.

But stupid me—I totally missed the award presentation.

Halfway through the awards ceremony I ducked out to go to the toilet.

That's when the MCs announced the winner. I missed the chance to go on stage.

When I finally got back into the main hall "Fei Fei" [late actress Lydia Shum] was shouting at the top of her voice, telling me off for missing my Hong Kong "Oscar" moment.

So now you know the Hong Kong Film Awards are the real deal. You just get invited to the ceremony. They really don't tell you the results in advance!

To this day I'm still kicking myself for missing that opportunity.

I was stereotyped in most of the films I was in—playing a rebellious youth.

I guess I was a rebel in real life.

After my early success I thought that everything had happened too fast.

I just wanted to escape reality and do something different, so I left Hong Kong to study in the UK.

I spent two years there and it was totally satisfying because it was so different and I gained some fresh perspectives on life.

Not to mention a total freedom away from the shackles of family. It gave me a genuine sense of freedom.

It was a culture shock, but in a good way, and I'm glad I had that experience.

Everyone needs to live in a different environment at least once in their life.

Otherwise you never get the chance to experience something outside of your culture or your comfort zone.

When I returned to Hong Kong after two years, I managed to resume my career.

I worked for Metro Radio in the 90s. I think I've worked for just about every radio and TV station in the city!

Then in 2000, my life suddenly fell apart.

After spending a number of years there, I was fired by Metro Radio.

They had changed senior management and wanted to restructure the station.

After losing my job I broke up with my long-time boyfriend.

My life was disintegrating and bad things seemed to be crashing into me like a tsunami. I felt like I was drowning.

Then I told myself: I MUST solve one problem at a time. First find a flat, then a job.

I took time to think, to assess every part of my life—like they were puzzle pieces.

I examined and reorganized every puzzle piece and found the best place for each.

And voila! In the end I reconstructed a new "product"—like a new roadmap of my life.

Going through such a life-changing process is like being scooped out like a pumpkin at Halloween.

I felt like I'd been put inside a washing machine. It wasn't a pleasant experience, but looking back I now think quite differently.

I think I am pretty blessed. I'm lucky to be always surrounded by people who are willing to help me and offer endless opportunities. For that I'm really grateful.

Now I'm at the stage in life where I've pretty much done just about everything.

But there's still a rebel in me telling me that I still need to do something different, to get out of my comfort zone.

I still want to explore and find a different landscape in life, on both professional and personal levels.

I hope I can find another runway to take off from—to lift my life to another level, another stage.



NEED TO KNOW...

Catch Sara Lee on DBC me2, Mon-Fri 8-10am and DBC 1 Radio Prime, Sunday 4-5pm. dbc.hk

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