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ALL NEW LOOK
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Fishbolls

And other things the \$14K average wage can get you in Hong Kong





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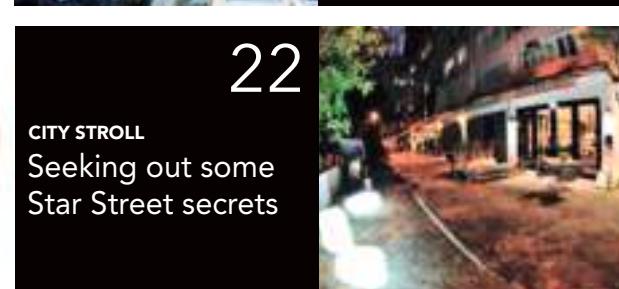
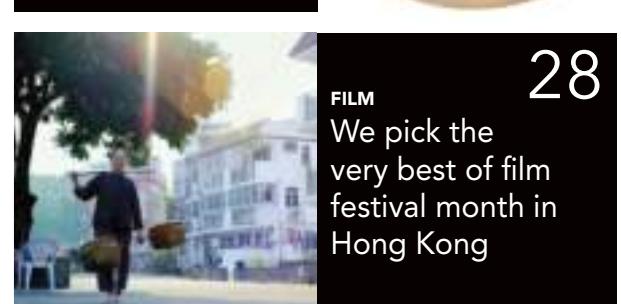


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We've Got a New Look!

HK Magazine turns 25 next year and to celebrate the milestone we've put together an exciting new package to share with you.

While our content will remain vibrant and captivating, we believe there's always room for improvement, so we've freshened things up a little with an all-new look and content that's sure to keep you thrilled for another 25 years.

We've gone the extra mile to bring you fascinating content. Our revamp offers something for everyone with exciting new columns on **fashion and gadgets**, regular features like **HK Giveaways** and neighborhood spotlights like **City Stroll** plus our relentless effort to promote positivity in the community in **My Perfect HK**.

Friendly and practical fashion advice with a touch of glam is the driving force behind our new fashion segment and we're also encouraging readers to send their own street looks to us. The best ones will even make it to publication.

Our cutting-edge gadgets page will showcase all the latest inventions and must-have tech. This monthly section is designed to keep even the most ardent of techies switched on.

And don't think that we've only focused on improved content. To show how much we care about you, we've created a magnificent platform to offer top giveaways to our loyal

readers. To kickstart this exciting new column, HK Giveaways, we're offering prizes totaling nearly \$60,000. What are you waiting for? Find out how to win on the Spotlight and HK Giveaways pages now (p.39 & 40).

After you've taken advantage of the giveaways, why not take a break and explore the hidden wonders of Hong Kong with our new City Stroll page (p.22)? It's a treasure hunt that reveals some of the most interesting sights and sounds throughout Hong Kong.

Or perhaps you'd rather search for the elusive goal of perfection. We hope over time My Perfect HK (p.4) will create a better, hopefully perfect, community for everyone who cherishes the uniqueness of this one-of-a-kind city.

Luisa Tam
Editor-in-Chief



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Look us up!



The List where®



HOME



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

Dear Mr. Know-It-All,

I heard that Tsui Wah in Central is closing! What's the story behind it? — Tsui Woes

I'm afraid it's true. The Wellington Street branch of Tsui Wah is closing—at least for now.

The first branch of Tsui Wah was a *bing sut* snack house in Mong Kok, opened by Choi Cheung-po in 1962. The chain grew steadily over the years, but it wasn't until an ex-cook and delivery boy by the name of Lee Yuen-hong took over in 1989 and expanded to its first *cha chaan teng* restaurant in San Po Kong, that it became the Tsui Wah we know today.

Lee retargeted the usual business model. Instead of courting the laborers and poorer locals who were your usual CCT bread and butter (or pineapple bun with butter, at any rate), Lee opened his new branches in more affluent districts, raising the quality of his ingredients and upping prices to match. He targeted middle-class customers and white-collar workers who were more willing to spend on a meal—but still wanted the flavors they loved.

With a menu that was broader than your average *cha chaan teng*, Tsui Wah could offer everything from condensed milk buns to fried noodles to Swiss-style chicken wings or an admittedly superb Malaysian chicken curry—and it could charge extra for it, too.

Tsui Wah began to take an unheard-of corporate approach to its outlets: uniforms and training for all staff, no smoking in the workplace, and hiring women to balance the male-dominated industry. Since 2008 the chain has also instituted centralized kitchens to maintain food quality across all branches. With the introduction of electronic ordering systems, it's started to analyze sales to optimize the menu. (Although why that led to Tsui Wah replacing classic French toast with their horrible ice cream version is anyone's guess.)

In 2012, the chain even launched an IPO to finance its expansion into the mainland, raising a \$756.7 million. It now has 34 branches in Hong Kong, two in Macau and 20 on the mainland.

But aiming squarely at the well-off wasn't the Tsui Wah masterstroke. The true touch of genius came in December 1998, when the chain opened a late-night eatery on Wellington Street, right at the bottom of Lan Kwai Fong. By day, the restaurant served the worker bees of Central, and all was well. But by night—and especially late, *late* at night—the Central branch of Tsui Wah became the nexus of Hong Kong's post-clubbing world, a chance to shovel some food into your stomach before drunkenly weaving home. The Central Tsui Wah at 3am is a harshly lit cross section of the best of Hong Kong: the good, the great, the loud, the gorgeous... and the drunk.

Sadly, Tsui Wah stock is down right now and the chain has decided to renovate the Wellington Street restaurant to drum up more business. And with a reported monthly rent of some \$2.3 million, that's a lot of iced lemon teas they'll have to shift.

The Central Tsui Wah is set to reopen in November or December. It may be a necessary step, but for four months the SAR isn't just losing the city's finest chicken curry: It's losing a Hong Kong icon.



Letters

"Is it sad that I only look forward to clubbing because I can have Tsui Wah after?"

Wahhhh

Our HongKabulary "Tsui Wah Test" [Aug 28, issue 1111]—taking someone you met clubbing to Tsui Wah to make sure that they're still hot—was widely shared on Facebook. Readers agreed with us...

Tsui Wah closes at 1:30am, I believe.

Andy Wong

LKF one is operating 24 hours for just that

Kenneth Kong

Is it sad that I only look forward to clubbing because I can have Tsui Wah after?

Jason Wun

Hahaha omg we look terrible in Tsui Wah under those lights

Kirsty Lau

Turning Japanese

Mr Know-It-All explained that for the September 3 "Victory Against Japanese Aggression" holiday, he was going to support Japanese business. [Aug 28, issue 1111]. He asked Facebook readers what they were going to do:

Support local Japanese business and remember, it wasn't our generation's fight and the Japanese lost many good people too. There's always two sides to each and every story and so the truth resides somewhere in the middle. May we learn not to repeat the mistakes of the past.

Peter Sargent

Sushi?

David Edwards

Definitely Sushi.

Robert J MacFarland

#PrivateEyeHK



Typhoon Approaching

Photo by Patrick Lee

Instagram: @OrbisPhotography



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THE WEEK



Friday 9/11

Gotta Get Down

FuFu is hosting another **Afterwork** party this week. Go for the free tapas (7-9pm), stay for the deep untz. They've got drinks with a "special punch," whatever that means.

7pm-1am. Peel Fresco Music Lounge, B/F, 49 Peel St., Central, 2540-2046. Free.

Saturday 9/12

Get Glam

Shop for vintage couture and pre-loved designer fashions at **Fashion for Good**. All proceeds go to local charity HandsOn Hong Kong, which promotes community volunteerism.

Sep 12-13, 11am-6pm. Lot 5, 5 Staunton St., Central, handsonhongkong.com. RSVP at fashion4good@handsonhongkong.org.

Monday 9/14

Holy Crab!

The Thai and Canadian consulates-general are collaborating with cajun restaurant Holy Crab for a special dinner menu in "**East Meets West Culinary Exchange**, which includes four Thai dishes, four Canadian dishes, and two fusion cocktails. Maple yum goong, anyone? **6pm-midnight, through Sep 16. Holy Crab, 3/F, Cosmos Building, 8-11 Lan Kwai Fong, Central, 2110-0100.**



Tuesday 9/15

More Magic than Mike

Just when you thought "Magic Mike XXL" was intense, here comes the real magical deal: Aussie duo **The Naked Magicians** brings sneaky R-rated sleight-of-hand to the stage with "full frontal illusions."

Sep 15-17, 7:45; Sep 18-19, 7:15pm & 9:15pm; Sep 20, 7pm. Drama Theatre, HKAPA, 1 Gloucester Rd., Wan Chai, 3759-7617. \$395-595 from www.hkticketing.com.

Wednesday 9/16

Bubble Butt

Science, art, magic, and BUBBLES: **The Amazing Bubble Man** returns with some real bubbly goodness. Not the alcoholic kind. Sorry.

Sep 16-18, 4:30pm; Sep 19-20, 11am, 2:15pm, 4:30pm. Drama Theatre, HKAPA, 1 Gloucester Rd., Wan Chai, 3759-7617. \$395-550 from www.hkticketing.com.

Thursday 9/17

Beersday

Start drinking right after hump day with the **Hong Kong Pub Crawl**: Expect \$20 beers and \$30 cocktails at four bars, and VIP entry to a mystery club. Mystery!

9pm. Crawl starts at Baby Buddha, 18 Wo On Lane, Central. \$100, \$180 with t-shirt from www.hongkongpubcrawl.net.

Friday 9/18

Face Me

French Cameroonian folk-pop singer Irma returns to the SAR after her sold-out performance in May with **Face to Face**, a "music-meets-light" show. Expect sway-worthy melodies and heartfelt lyrics. Date night?

8pm. Vine Centre 2, 29 Burrows St., Wan Chai, 2573-0793. \$380 from www.ticketflap.com, \$430 at the door.

Sunday 9/13

Freeeeeedom!

Freespace Fest may have downsized this year, but it returns as **Freespace Happening**, running monthly through March 2016. Sway to local indie bands, shop for handicrafts, or jump into a frisbee workshop by the Hong Kong Ultimate Players Association.

2-7pm. Nursery Park, West Kowloon Cultural District.

Saturday 9/19

Arty Party

The annual **South Island Art Day** is back. More than 20 galleries and artists' studios in Wong Chuk Hang and Tin Wan are throwing open their doors for performances, exhibitions, talks and tours. Shuttles leave every half hour from World Wide House in Central, and you can leave your kids at the "Kids' Corner" if you think they'll touch something.

Noon-8pm; 8pm after-party at Ovolo Southside, 64 Wong Chuk Hang Rd. Free admission to party, includes food and drink; register at Ovolo Southside or contact@sicd.com.hk.

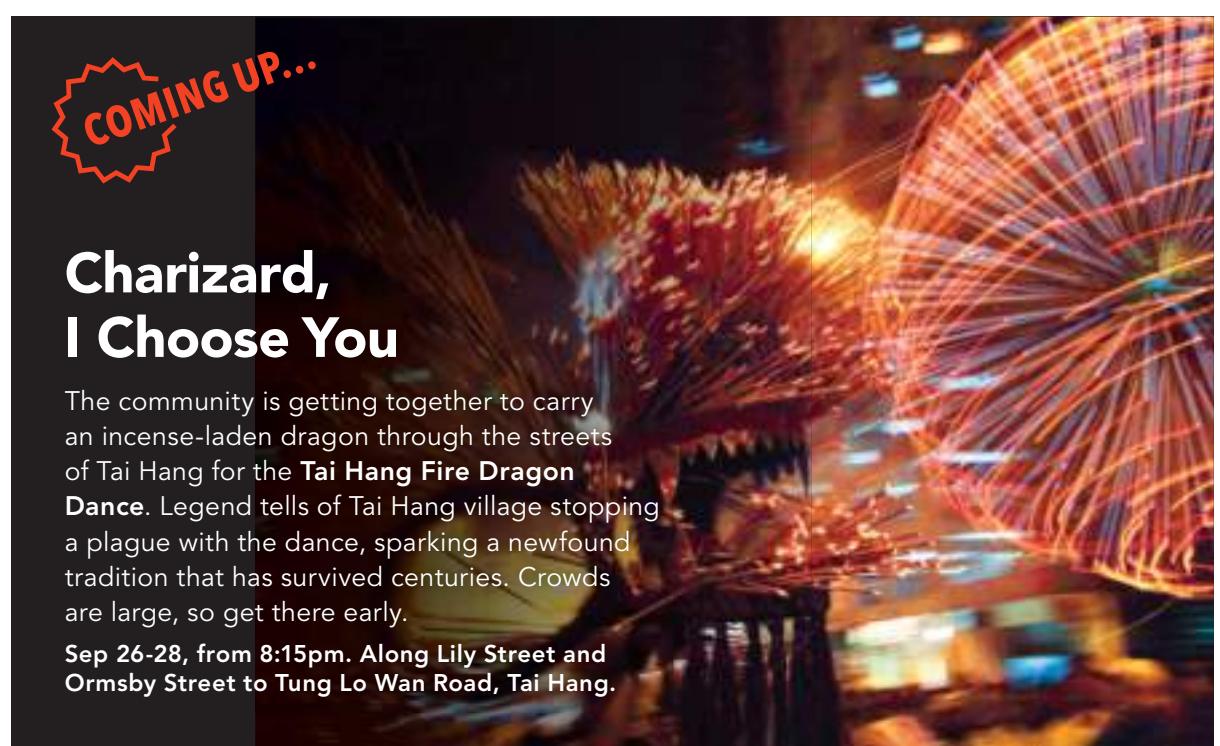


COMING UP...

Charizard, I Choose You

The community is getting together to carry an incense-laden dragon through the streets of Tai Hang for the **Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance**. Legend tells of Tai Hang village stopping a plague with the dance, sparking a newfound tradition that has survived centuries. Crowds are large, so get there early.

Sep 26-28, from 8:15pm. Along Lily Street and Ormsby Street to Tung Lo Wan Road, Tai Hang.



Sundance Film Festival: **'15** Hong Kong

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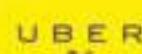
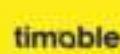
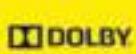
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Last Week In Reality

SAT 29

E-Chicken The Siu Sai Wan market reopens after a \$25 million renovation. New features include

being able to pay for pork from the butcher with an Octopus card, an Octopus-ready fruit vending machine, and a poultry butcher called "i-Chicken." The new poultry service allows customers to choose a chicken from the Chai Wan market via webcam and pick it up in Siu Sai Wan 30 minutes later.



SUN 30

Screw You A woman is eating a slice of golden crispy roll cake when she bites down on

something which turns out to be a slightly rusty 5.5mm screw. She calls the customer hotline of the chain she bought the cake from and sends them messages online, but gets no response. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has also yet to reply to her complaints.

MON 31

What Boars Two men are arrested for animal cruelty after killing a wild boar in Sham Shui Po. One of the men was accustomed to eating wild boar

in China, so when he saw one wandering near his home on Sunday, he called two other friends to help capture and kill it. A patrolling policeman sees them and takes note of their car's license plate as they flee, but it is too late for the boar. The third man is still at large.

TUE 1

Granny Bashing A 28-year-old woman is charged with assaulting her mother-in-law. The older woman allegedly went to her daughter-in-law's Hung Hom flat on August 4 and the two quarrelled. The younger woman sat on the older woman and elbowed her in the chest, then tried to pull her off the sofa. The younger woman's husband captured a video of the fight on his iPhone, and the video will be presented as evidence. The woman cries as she pleads not guilty and the case is adjourned until Sep 29.



WED 2

Put on the Red Dress Two triad members are arrested with 24 mainland women on pimping, prostitution and anti-pornography charges. The prostitution ring used a mobile app to communicate with clients, and undercover officers posed as clients on the app to gather intelligence. Police seize a large number of condoms and costumes, including uniforms of Red Army soldiers.

THU 3

Swap Shop In a shop in Mong Kok's Sincere Podium, a woman steals an iPhone 6 Plus by swapping it with a dummy phone. She uses a jacket to cover the real phone, switching it when the salesperson is not looking. A person matching her description has been reported as pulling the same scam in other shopping malls around town. The owner of another phone shop identifies the thief's husband, but he claims that they recently divorced and she left him heavily in debt.

FRI 4

Turtle Cove A man is sentenced to three months in jail for stealing giant tortoises and turtles from a Yuen Long pet shop in July. The defendant stole an Aldabra giant tortoise worth \$55,000 on July 30, then went back the next day to steal more of the same species as well as an East African leopard turtle, altogether worth more than \$40,000, but he was caught in the act. He says he wanted to bring the first tortoise home as a pet, but when it kept hitting its cage and making noises he released it into the Hong Kong Wetland Park and returned to the shop for more.



Quote of the Week

"We will not be part of the so-called Beijing-authorized democratic parties in China, because they are only political flower vases."

Democratic Party chair Emily Lau rejects the idea of becoming a loyalist pro-democracy party following a meeting with Feng Wei, deputy director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office.

Talking Points

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

Hongkongers Not Happy at Work

A survey of 2,398 Hongkongers by jobhunting site JobsDB has revealed that **62 percent of respondents are unhappy or dissatisfied with their jobs**. The respondents also revealed that **disappointing salary, benefits and incentives, unsatisfactory work environment and culture, and poor relationships with coworkers** are the biggest reasons for unhappiness. However, compared to respondents in Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand, Hongkongers are the least likely to seek a new employer.

Our take: People who hate your jobs: You are not alone!

SAR's Watery Woes Continue

Residents of Shun Lee Estate in Kwun Tong discovered last week that **their potable water was salty** and called the Housing Authority to enquire about the issue. The authority responded that a **saltwater water main had burst** and overflowed into the freshwater tank. Former president of the Medical Association Dr Gabriel Choi warned that untreated water may contain bacteria such as E. coli and **could cause gastroenteritis, vomiting, or stomach aches**. This is the latest in a series of **water supply mishaps** in the city's public buildings, following the discovery of lead in the water supplied to housing estates and schools in the city.

Our take: Lead, now salt... we're looking forward to the mercury scandal.



Street Talk

Hughes Lau is one of the co-founders of Bike the Moment, an urban cycling and lifestyle platform and shop, which holds workshops and meets. He tells Tammy Ha about urban cycling and the hurdles cyclists must overcome in Hong Kong.



HK Magazine: How did you become interested in urban cycling?

Hughes Lau: I was living in Shau Kei Wan around the end of 2012. We were curious about cycling on Hong Kong Island itself, and one day we decided to go cycling after midnight when there were no cars on the road. We cycled from Shau Kei Wan to Causeway Bay for midnight snacks.

HK: What's urban cycling like in Hong Kong?

HL: Exciting! Unlike other cities, there are no urban cycling paths in Hong Kong, and the streets are very busy. The experience in Hong Kong is quite different: there's our unique city landscape for one, and secondly, we can stop whenever we want to grab a bite!

HK: Where do you cycle to for a snack?

HL: For breakfast, I love Hoi On Café in Sheung Wan. It's pretty old and has a vintage style to it, and people there are friendly. For midnight snacks, Hor Hor Deem in Kennedy Town is great—it's an old shop and I love their food.

HK: Where's your favorite place to cycle in the city?

HL: I like cycling in busier areas, because there's a strong city atmosphere. From Shau Kei Wan to Kennedy Town is pretty awesome. In Kowloon, the route from Tsim Sha Tsui to Sham Shui Po is pretty nice too.

HK: Why did you start Bike the Moment?

HL: We wanted to share the fun of urban cycling, because we didn't know anyone who was doing stuff like that. I also like taking pictures so it was like a diary to me, recording what fun things we had been up to. We only started monthly gatherings a year later, when we had about 1,000 Facebook fans. And around November 2014, we opened our store.

HK: How many people come to your gatherings?

HL: An average of 30-40 people. We have many beginners—people who can ride a bike but don't really know how to ride on the road—joining in. But our pace is quite slow and we help each other out.

HK: Where do you like cycling most?

HL: Japan and Taiwan are both pretty awesome. For Europe, I like Copenhagen in Denmark. It's cycling heaven!

HK: What problems face cyclists in Hong Kong?

HL: The infrastructure isn't good enough—there are no cycle paths, which means we have to cycle on the roads. It isn't a problem, except some drivers think we shouldn't be there. They sometimes drive close to you to sandwich you to the curb, even though it's dangerous. They don't seem to care. Also the roads aren't designed perfectly. There are many blind spots.

HK: What should the city do to be more cycle-friendly?

HL: Hong Kong will only become more bike friendly when there are more people cycling. We're doing our part by establishing a culture of urban cycling. With the photos and information we post online, we hope to get more and more people to incorporate urban cycling into their own lives.

HK: What are your plans for Bike the Moment and the store?

HL: I hope it can become a good bicycle store! As well as just offering a means of transportation, bicycles can offer a lifestyle: entertainment, fashion and more. We're chill about cycling, and we want to share the fun, stylish and relaxing aspects with others.

HK: OK! You've convinced me. How should I get started?

HL: Start off on a road where there aren't many cars passing through to get a feel of it, though it can't be completely empty because that would be just like riding on a cycle path! Kwun Tong from 7pm is a good choice, as there are only a few cars around. Tai Koo Shing is good for Islanders.

Learn more about Bike the Moment and their monthly gatherings at www.bikethemoment.com and check out their store at Unit B11, Mai Hing Industrial Building Block B, 16-18 Hing Yip St., Kwun Tong, 9823-9179.

Blowing Water

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

mo5

naai5

yau4

冇奶油

"NO CREAM"

"You are being unreasonable." A pun on the term *mo lei yau*, "no reason," and the similar sounding *naai yau*, which means "condensed milk" in a chaan teng.

HongKabulary



Check Hate
(*tʃek heit*), n.

Going for brunch and getting stung for an extra \$500 because five people left early without putting in for service charge, but everyone else is impatient to leave and too stingy to throw in more than what they owe.

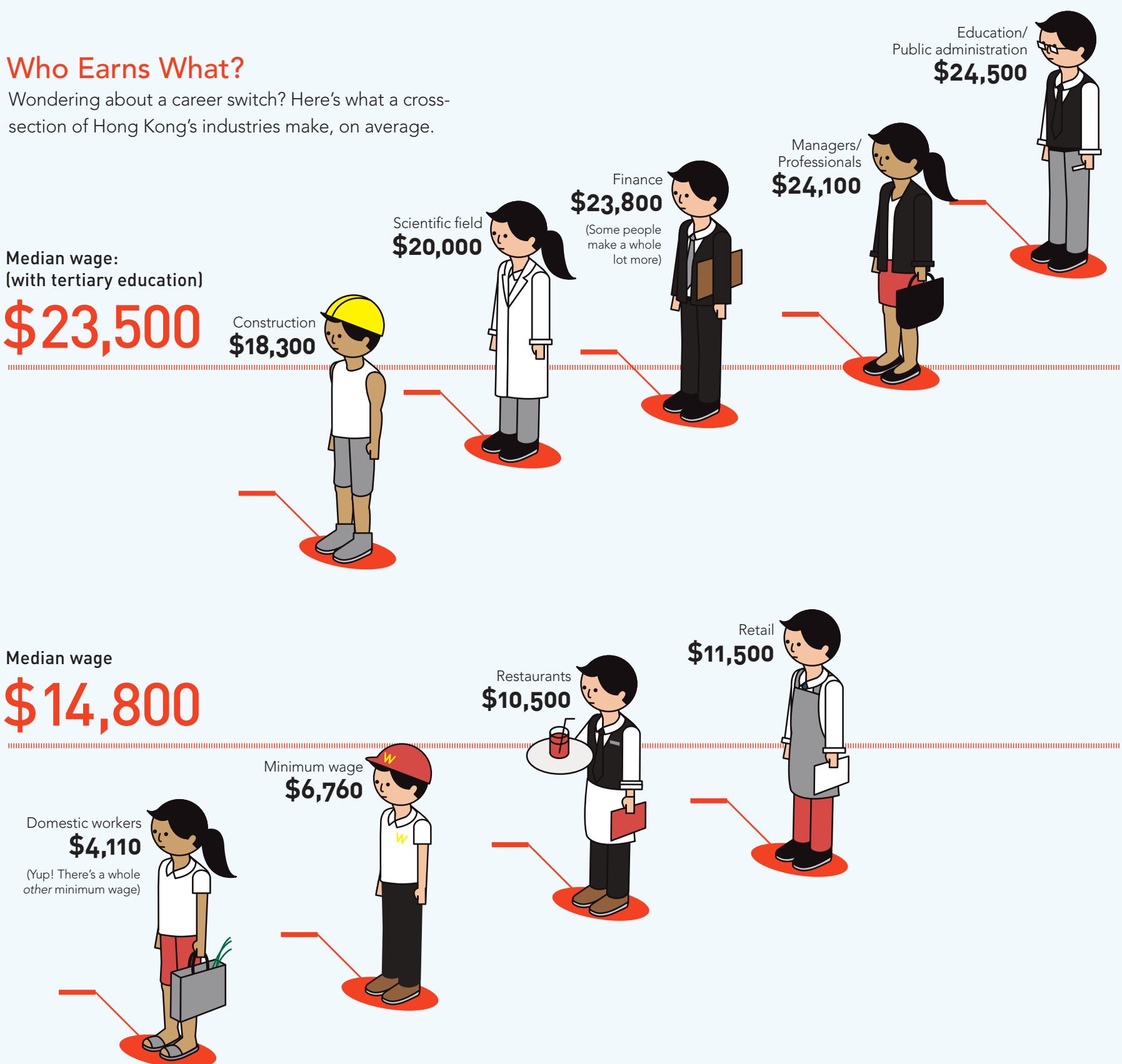
"OK guys, I'm off! \$100 should cover my six drinks, right?"
"Oh, great. Check hate in 10 minutes."

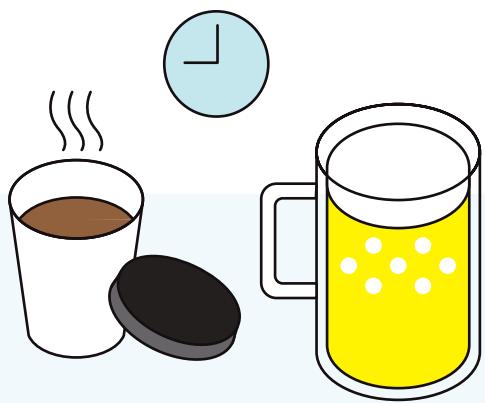
Median Intensity

The median monthly wage in Hong Kong is just \$14,800. This week we get super depressed as we ask: Just how far does \$14K get you in Hong Kong—and around the world? By **Adam White**

Who Earns What?

Wondering about a career switch? Here's what a cross-section of Hong Kong's industries make, on average.





On the Clock

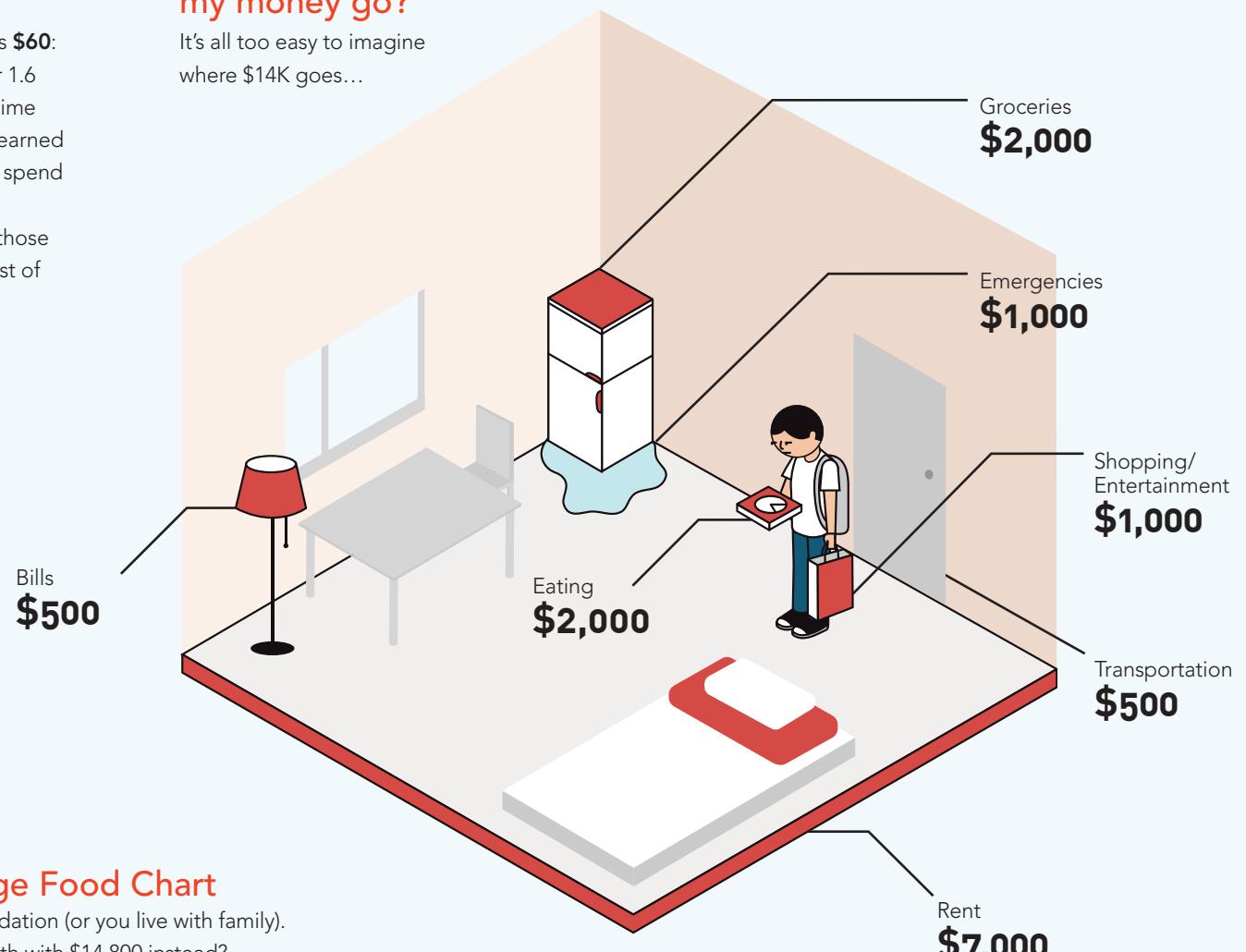
The median hourly wage in Hong Kong is **\$60**:

In other words that's a dollar a minute, or 1.6 cents a second. Congratulations! In the time you read that sentence you've probably earned about 10 cents. Go buy a \$36 coffee and spend half an hour working to get it back...

Meanwhile, the median hourly wage for those with tertiary education is **\$100**, or the cost of a beer in SoHo. Hope you drink slowly!

Where did all my money go?

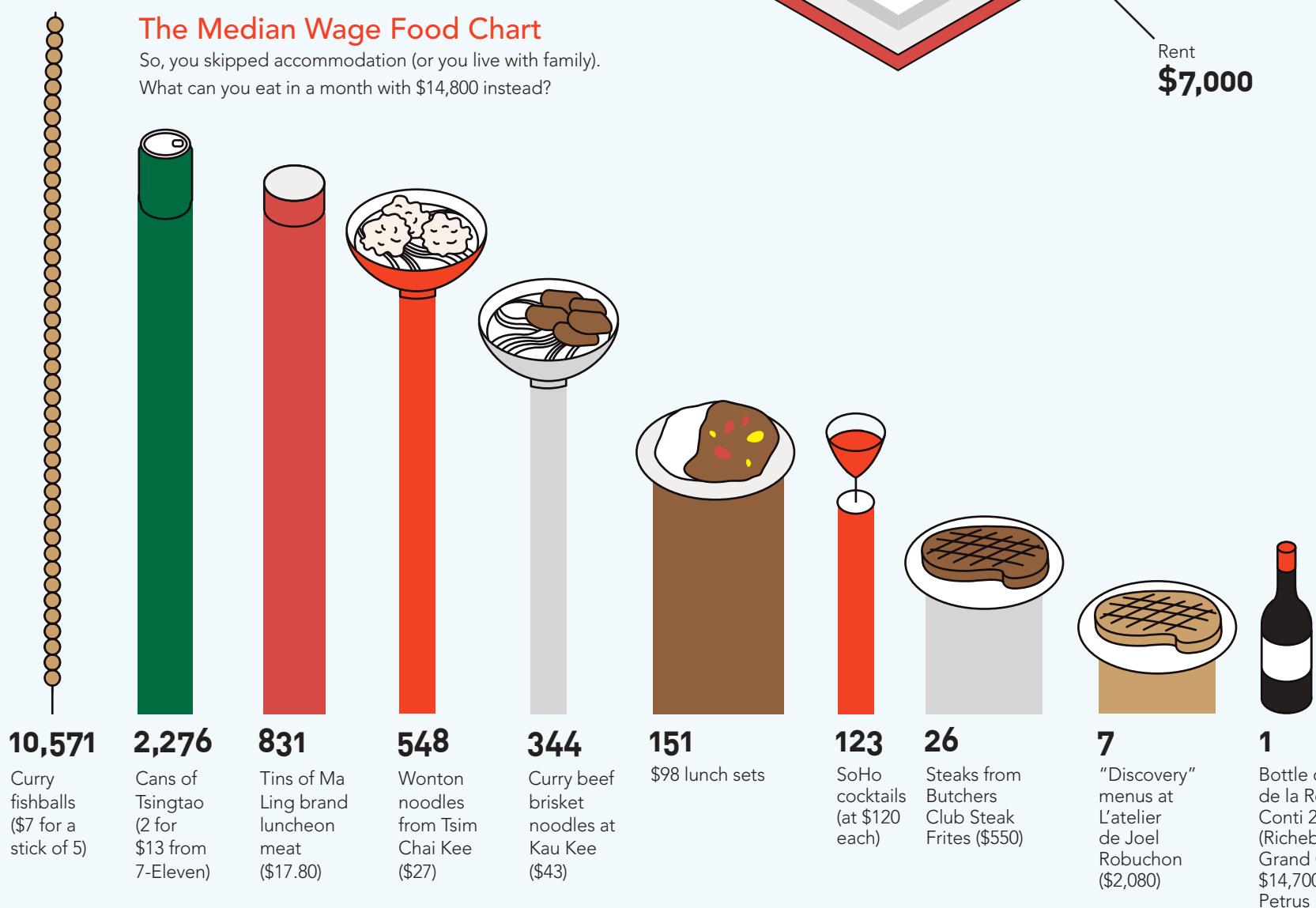
It's all too easy to imagine where \$14K goes...



The Median Wage Food Chart

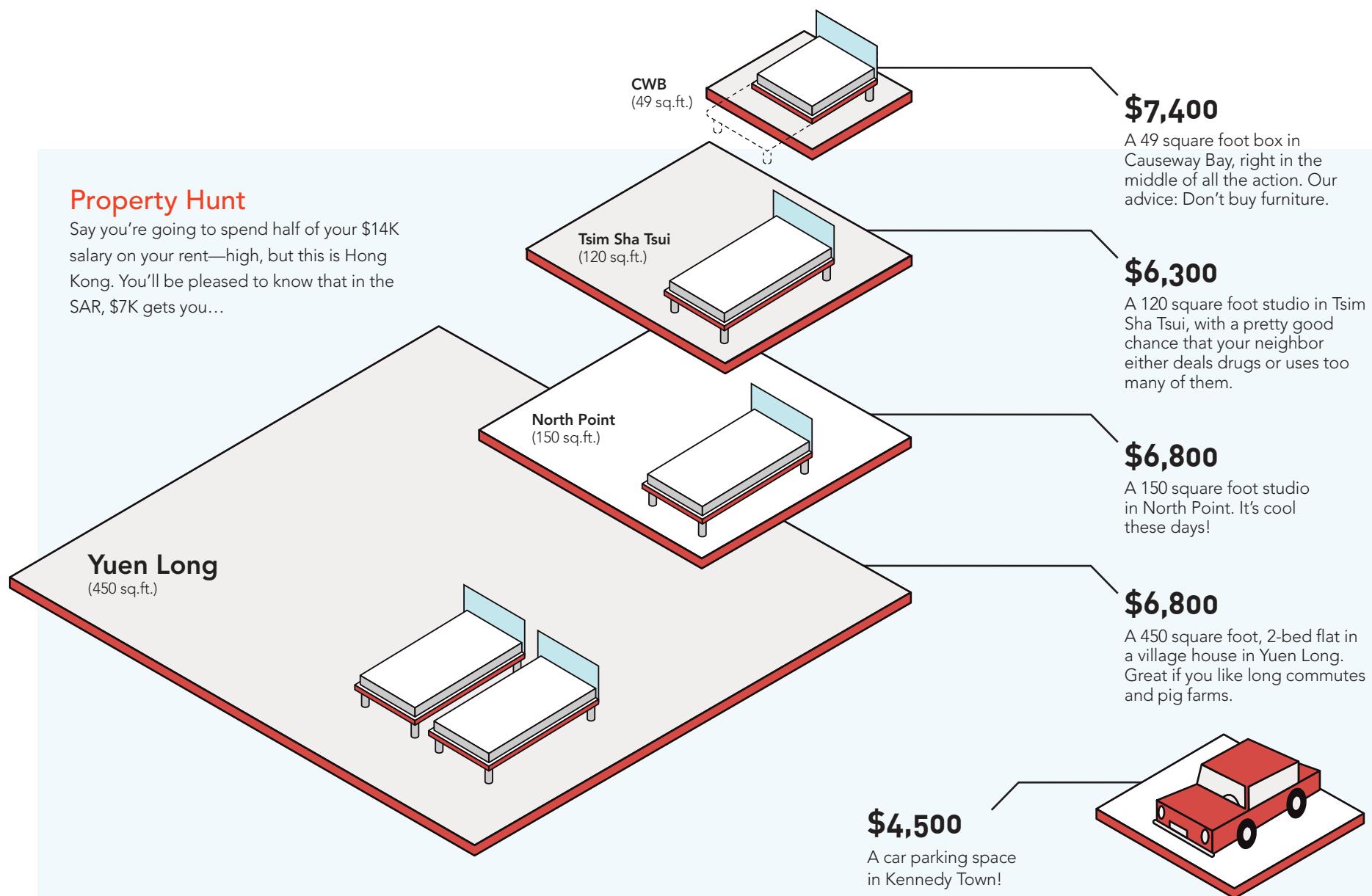
So, you skipped accommodation (or you live with family).

What can you eat in a month with \$14,800 instead?



Property Hunt

Say you're going to spend half of your \$14K salary on your rent—high, but this is Hong Kong. You'll be pleased to know that in the SAR, \$7K gets you...



Square Foot Math

So, say you take all of that \$14K and use it all to rent some space in unorthodox ways. How much room is it going to get you?

Opus Hong Kong Duplex flat A

Hong Kong's most expensive apartment costs \$95,971 per square foot. You could afford to sublet 22 square inches, so at least you could stand around in total luxury (with your elbows tucked in).

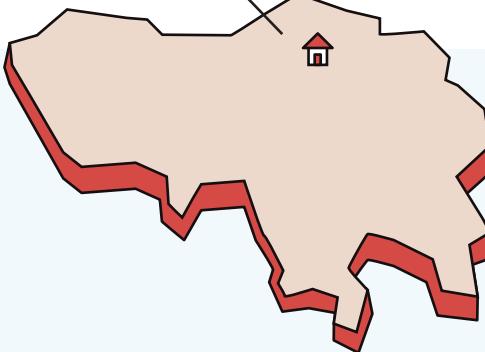
IFC2

\$177 per square foot. You could afford 83 square feet of mini-office space, although they don't rent it like that. Call your company "Glorious Home, Ltd."

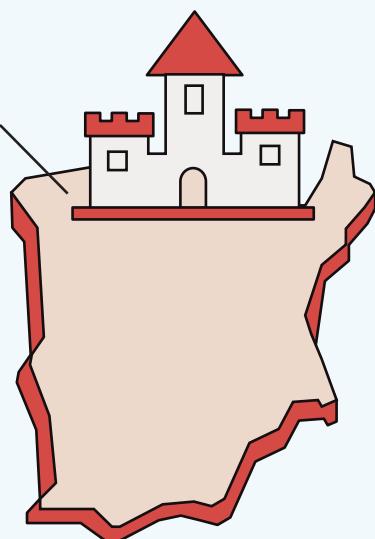
A warehouse in Aberdeen

Prices for warehouses sit at around the exceedingly affordable \$13 per square foot mark, leaving you with a palatial 1,138 square feet of space, as well as free parking. Management fees cost a little extra. Shame you're not allowed to live there. Legally, anyway...

Hong Kong



Koh Samui



Screw It, Just Emigrate

What can \$14K get you around the world?



London GBP1,062 (\$12,580) per month

Ah, swinging London! Just over 1,000 quid a month could get you this 1-bed apartment just north of the Old Street roundabout, London's tech capital. It's also just a few minutes' walk from the hipster meccas of Shoreditch and Hoxton. Downside: It looks like someone died in it.



New York US\$1,800 (\$13,950) per month

You too could be a New York hipster with this sunny 1-bed flat in trendy Williamsburg. It's got exposed brickwork for extra cool cred and a long, thin layout that looks like someone tried to fold a normal apartment in half.



Madrid EUR1,700 (\$14,713) per month

Madrid is a city of great culture and great food: Who wouldn't want to live there? This 2-bed, 2-bath, 968 square foot apartment is in Salamanca, the posh bit of town. See you for tapas in the Plaza Mayor!



Koh Samui THB60,000 (\$12,847) per month.

What are you wasting your time for? Forget city living and move to Thailand, already. This 2-bed sea view villa has a private pool and when your erstwhile Hong Kong friends come to visit they'll be greenish-puce with envy.

Alternative Living

Still want to live in Hong Kong? Here are some alternatives that almost make sense.

Get a houseboat!

If you can find a mooring—which is almost impossible—AND you can find a vessel comfortable enough to live on, mooring fees are around \$5,000 per month, plus additional costs. The downside; if you don't have a boat already, houseboat rental is rare and starts at around \$20K.



Live in Macau

Extremely regular ferries, lower prices and (in Macau and Taipa, at least) a charmingly sleepy atmosphere are all great reasons to live in our sister SAR. Also, you'll have access to all the Portuguese egg tarts you can stuff into your face. If you don't like the idea of renting a flat in Macau, then stride into a casino and drop your \$14K budget on a spin of the roulette wheel. If you win, great! You're richer by \$500K and you don't have to worry about rent for a couple years. If you lose, the casino will think that you're some kind of a high roller, and comp you a suite for a month. It's win-win.



Live in Shenzhen

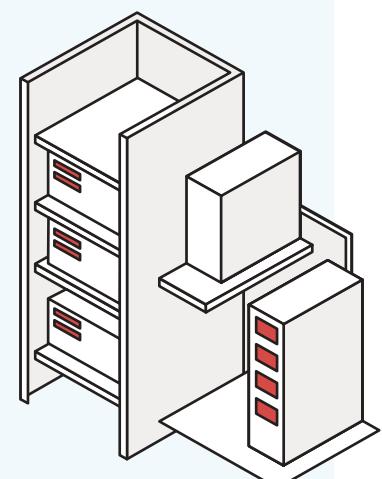
Rents just over the border in Shenzhen might not be as cheap as they once were, but they're still much lower than they are in Hong Kong. If you have a Home Return Permit it's easy to stroll over the border, and \$7K will get you 2-3 bed apartment in the expat-friendly Shekou area, not far from Hong Kong. With almost-integrated transport links you can commute to Kowloon in under two hours. A potential negative: You will be living in Shenzhen.



Live under your desk at work

Sleeping at work is pretty straightforward: all you need is a sleeping bag, comfortable pillow and a reliable alarm. When everyone else begins to leave for the day, just tell them that you're working late on a big project, and that you'll lock up. Once you're sure everyone's gone, you can bunk down for the night. You might have to bribe your office cleaner to leave you in peace, but that's a small price to pay compared to having to drop half a paycheck on rent. Best of all, your boss will love you because you're staying so late every night.

Protip: To really make this work, your most significant outlay should be to join a really good gym. Keep your clothes in a locker at the gym, and you can use their facilities to shower and change. The opposite sex will dig that you go to the gym every day, which is great until you realize that you've got nowhere to take them once you score.



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**A Tale of Two Cities**

Film director, designer, and photographer Water Poon is exhibiting "Two Cities" at Art Beatus Gallery. His impressionistic mixed-media paintings reflect on Hong Kong and Vancouver, showing the striking similarities between the two cities. And no, it's not just because of all the Chinese people. Not totally, anyway. Through Sep 24. Art Beatus Gallery, G/F, 129-133 Wellington St., Central, 2526-0818.

Detail from "Shop Signs · Hong Kong" by Water Poon

FASHION

LOOKBOOK

Edited by Zoe Chan

Blogger & Stylist at normalchic.com | Instagram @zoe_normalchic



Flora with Flora

As we step into the middle of September, fall's no longer far away. With the new breeze in the air, it's the perfect time for a chic floral picnic. Match a top and a skirt with the same floral pattern but different colors, like this **Anteprima** silk top and midi skirt. Add some sweetness and fun with this **Kate Spade** chocolate milk clutch, and finish the style with an elegant silver ring. It's picnic time!

Floral silk top (\$TBC) and skirt (\$9,800) from Anteprima, Shop 214, Lee Gardens One, 33 Hysan Avenue, Causeway Bay, 2907-3388.

Creme de la Creme milk container, \$3,200 from Kate Spade, Shops 6-7, Fashion Walk, Causeway Bay, 2154-1388.

Galaxy silver ring, \$1,299 from Pandora, 57 Queen's Rd. Central, 2117-4650.



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Albanian Escapes

We explore Albania, the Mediterranean's best-kept secret. Words and photos by **Kirk Kenny**

Albania packs a lot into its modest borders. Suffering until recently from political isolation, crippling corruption and the stigma of a rough Balkan neighborhood, it's unsurprising that more tourists haven't come to this country, which sits between Greece and the "heel" of Italy to the west. And that's a shame, because they should be lining up at the borders. The locals are big-hearted and welcoming. The coastline, ruggedly beautiful. The landscape, a patchwork of Greek ruins, medieval castles and minarets. And the food? Sublime. Familiar enough to feel comfortable, different enough to be interesting, Albania should be on every traveler's radar.



The beautiful, unspoiled Adriatic coast

Capital Living

If you're flying into the country your first stop will be the capital, **Tirana**. Getting to a hotel in the city center is a relatively simple affair, with a string of NYC-inspired yellow taxis outside the terminal building. While all cabs have meters, you may wish to avoid any friendly detours and negotiate a price up front. Five euro (\$44) will get you anywhere in the city; anything more and you're officially contributing to someone else's early retirement.

Like most old-world capitals, Tirana is best explored on foot. Traversing the tree-lined boulevards south of **Rinia Park**—the city's central park—reveals a trove of coffee shops, bars and restaurants. By day it's where the working class catch up over cheap, non-hipster espressos, smoke pungent cigarettes and gesticulate in exaggerated fashion over games of dominos. At night young couples, university students and office workers take over, trading coffee for beer and wine, of which there are many excellent local varieties.

The **National History Museum** (Skanderbeg Square, Tirana) is a brilliant, albeit haphazardly assembled, collection of cultural relics. From its Bronze Age Illyrian roots, to Greek, Roman and Byzantine influences all the way up through the Ottomans and the founding of the Albanian nation state in 1912 and the communist period that persisted until 1992, the museum reveals a paradoxical insight into the country as a whole. It is on one hand an amalgam of influences—layers of eastern and western culture, religion and customs ebbing and flowing into one another. And yet those influences, given centuries and millennia to mix and mingle, add up to something distinct, singular and fantastic.

Albanian Eats

You need look no further than the food to see this cultural alchemy at work. The excellent **Sofra e Ariut** restaurant (Elbasan St., Tirana 1019, (+355) 4-230-3030) in Tirana's tree-lined suburbs serves up unapologetically rustic dishes typical of the mountainous, inland region. We began our meal with stuffed vine leaves and savory cheese pastries that felt Greek or Turkish in inspiration. Our next set of dishes looked like straight-up old-school Italian grandmother cooking: wilted spinach and fresh cheese; baked peppers stuffed with homemade ricotta; roasted, melt-in-your-mouth eggplant; a slow-cooked liver ragout and a hearty stew of beans, olives and feta. This moveable feast was all a prequel to a main course of roast lamb with wild oregano, succulent pork and a local take on mashed potatoes. It was unpretentious, hearty food that kept finding its way onto our plates from town to town.



Hire a car to move south along the Adriatic coast, from Berat to Vlore and down to Sarandë (the "Monaco of Albania"). Here the menus shift to reflect the bounty of the crystalline coastal waters. A seaside lunch is the highest note in a symphony of great meals, a testament to the power of fresh ingredients simply prepared. We eat at the **Piratet** café in Dhermi, which has since moved to Tirana. We dine on mains of sea bass baked in salt and aromatic herbs—moist, delicate and almost sweet when drizzled with estate-grown olive oil. Accompanying home-made linguine with freshly caught lobster and clams sets an impossibly high bar. And with the most decadent of multi-course meals topping out at \$150 per person, including drinks and dessert, failure to indulge daily is widely regarded as a capital offense.

Nature and Man

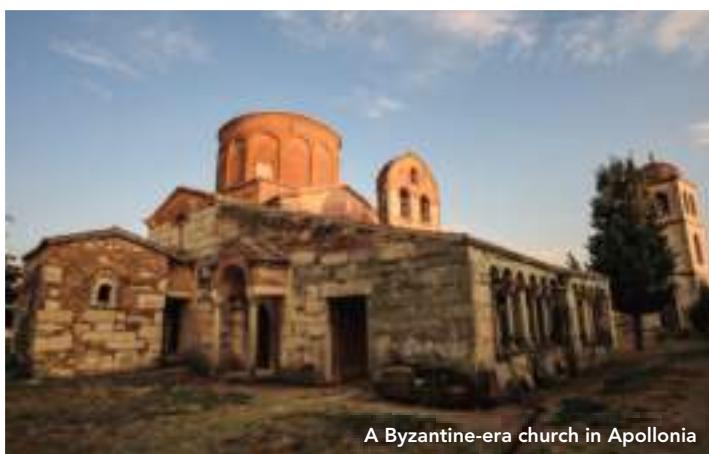
But if the food and café culture aren't reason enough to go (and they should be), there's no shortage of historical and natural attractions in Albania. The recently excavated Roman-era **gladiatorial arena and amphitheater** in the coastal city of Durrës sits serene, if surreally, in the midst of the modern residential neighborhood that has sprung up around it. The 2,500 year old **Greek ruins at Apollonia** and the dramatic hilltop castle town of **Berat**, the latter still an active residence to dozens of families, are just a handful of rich historical veins that run across the landscape. As for jaw-dropping natural beauty, it doesn't get any better than the coastal drive along the Adriatic. The waters are pristine, the sun intense, the mountains dramatic. But should sporting a speedo on the Adriatic not be your thing, there are plenty of fully clothed scenic tour options. Most noteworthy is the **Blue Eye**, some 15km from Sarandë in the south of the country. Nestled in a lush mountain ravine, the Blue Eye



Two boys by a 13th century hilltop castle, Berat



Mountain view outside Tirana



A Byzantine-era church in Apollonia

is a natural mountain pool reflecting surreal shades of turquoise and azure, whose waters are said to cure all manner of aches and pains. If nothing else, it's an idyllic spot for a day trip or picnic. Try and avoid weekends, when it's more popular with locals.

Need to Know...

The Albanian currency is the lek, but the euro is widely accepted. Albania offers visa-free access to a wide range of countries, including Hong Kong, EU and US passport-holders. Turkish Airlines flies regularly to Tirana.

Win a holiday package to the Mediterranean, worth \$50,000!

Interested? You should be. Check out p.40 for more details.



The beach at Durres

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Toon Town Tables

You've watched them on TV, dressed up as them, bought the toys and accessories—and now you can eat them as well. **M.C. Hughes** checks out the ever-growing number of cartoon concept cafés.

Bear-faced Cheek

Kumamoto Café, the newest pop-up café addition at Kwun Tong's Apm mall, takes its cartoon inspiration from Kumamon bear, the official mascot of Japan's Kumamoto prefecture. Created by the local government to draw tourists, such was the popularity of its copyright-free design that it has gone on to generate billions in merchandising revenue. With big crowds in evidence, it's obviously still popular—customers can dig into set meals, mains and desserts, all with Kumamon's face emblazoned on them.

LG/F, Apm Millennium City 5, 418 Kwun Tong Rd., Kwun Tong, 3580-2883.



Moomin Rivers

Moomin was created by Swedish-speaking Finnish illustrator Tove Jansson in the 1940s, rising to popularity in Asia when made into a Japanese animated show in 1969. The lovable, hippopotamus-like creatures have served as inspiration for Harbour City's **Moomin Café**, which offers culinary creations themed around the nordic creature. Head over for a stack of pancakes served next to a Moomin-painted mug tower, or a touch of Moomin art on your cappuccino.

LCX 32, Harbour City Ocean Terminal, Tsim Sha Tsui, 2730-0963.

No Yolking Matter

When Mong Kok's Modern Toilet restaurant went down the tubes, so to speak, it created a novelty restaurant-sized hole, which has been plugged in the form of **Dim Sum Icon**. Icon offers a fun menu of egg-themed dim sum-sized dishes that have been cooked to resemble Gudetama: Sanrio's anthropomorphized, permanently lethargic egg. He might not have the pull of Hello Kitty, but how often does your egg pudding come with a face on it? Not nearly often enough.

Shop L308, 3F, The One, 100 Nathan Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, 2885-1345.

Sweet Dreams

Lifestyle brand Fatina Dreams, created in Hong Kong by crafts brand Chocolate Rain, may be aimed at teenage girls: But it's proved so popular with all ages that a themed café, **Fatina & Chefo—Eat & Play**, has popped up in PMQ. Focusing mainly on sweeter bites, dishes include tiramisu, ice cream sundaes and flavored lattes. Fatina Dreams has even got as far as the UK, where a collection has been launched at Marks & Spencer and is on display at the British Museum. The café itself sells Fatina-themed merchandise, which you can take home after your sundae or the secret six-course "Wow Moment" menu (\$298).

S109-113, 1/F, Block A, PMQ, 35 Aberdeen St., Central, 5544-0810.



Meow You See Her

Hello Kitty is everywhere, and now she's in your food as well, like it or not. Hello Kitty prawn and egg rice, Hello Kitty beef hor fun, Hello Kitty char siu bao, Hello Kitty har gau—it's all got Hello Kitty's unsmiling feline features plastered over it.

Hello Kitty Chinese Cuisine even has Hello Kitty-branded red, white and sparkling wines. The saving grace? The owner ran a health magazine for six years before opening the restaurant, so the food is cooked with organic ingredients, uses coconut oil and is low in oil and salt compared to some Chinese restaurants.

Shop A-C, G/F, Lee Loy Mansion, 332-338 Canton Rd., Jordan, 8202-8203.



Cloud Mascot

Sogno Café+ is a modest little eatery that serves a familiar selection of Western dishes, including steaks, salad and some decent cakes and sweets. It's teamed up with Hong Kong brand Fluffy House, and adorable cloud-faced mascots such as Mr. White Cloud and Miss Rainbow adorn both the food and the décor. Go for the baked lobster or a raspberry and ice cream macaroon sandwich, all adorned by super-cute cloudy mascots.

2D Welley Building, 97 Wellington St., Central, 2757-9898.





NEW AND NOTED

adele.wong@hkmagmedia.com
Twitter: @adelewong_hk



Angelini



Fook Lam Moon



Fishteria

A Fishitorical Moment

Chef Gianni Caprioli of Giando fame has taken over the space where ill-fated Italian resto Opera House used to be, converting it into a modern-looking seafood house with a bar at the bottom, dining room on top.

Fishteria (G-1/F, 111 Queen's Rd. East, Wan Chai, 2511-0006) takes up 6,000 square feet in total, and seats up to 160 guests. On the menu are oysters, octopus stews and seafood pastas; the mains are a selection of fish, from sea bass to John Dory.

The Houdini of Udine

Angelini (Kowloon Shangri-La, 64 Mody Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, 2733-8750) is bringing in a guest chef from Udine in northeastern Italy to serve patrons contemporary Italian lunch and dinner dishes from September 16-19. Chef Emanuele Scarello runs two-Michelin-starred Agli Amici back in his hometown, and has worked at star-studded establishments across Europe. He also knows his wine, being an

accredited sommelier and all. Chef Scarello's dishes will be available for both lunch and dinner, with prices ranging from \$418 to \$1,280 for three to six courses. The menu is quite seafood-heavy, with tiger prawns, razor clams and amberjack all on offer.

Holy Fook

Fook Lam Moon is doing so well that it's going retail, with a luxury goods shop right by its Wan Chai branch. **Fook Lam Moon**

Fine Foods (Shop B, 35-45 Johnston Rd., Wan Chai, 2363-8810) is all about the Belgian chocolates, fine wines, single-origin coffee beans and XO sauces. Everything is displayed on delicate glass shelves, and the decor is predominantly auspicious yellow and gold. The shop is also stocking mooncakes for the mid-Autumn festival—and I have to say, the custard variety is out-of-this-world.

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

RESTAURANT REVIEWS

Café Isara ★★★★☆

Thai. Scenic Crest, Mui Wo Ferry Pier Rd., Mui Wo, Lantau, 2470-1966.



A new venue in Mui Wo to add culinary options to tried and tested favorites such as Bahce Turkish restaurant and China Bear pub was long overdue, and the opening of Café Isara is a welcome addition to the local scene. The Thai theme is also smart thinking, lending the space a chilled tropical vibe that's enhanced by a long bar, rustic furnishings and a pool table.

■ HIT We liked the fishcakes (\$65) which

had a satisfying texture, and tom yum soup (\$55) which was rich and generously prawned. Minced pork with basil (\$98), unusually served with pasta, was bursting with zingy, herby goodness, as was our glass noodle salad (\$68), with prawns, mincemeat and coriander. Deep fried sweet and sour fish (\$88) was meaty, tangy and moreish.

■ MISS At this price point we didn't have any real problems. We did find most things at the higher end of the spicy spectrum though, in spite of being assured by the waitress that the food was just "little bit hot." Still, that means it's authentic, doesn't it?

■ BOTTOM LINE Laid-back Thai-style hangout with decent eats, a wide range of beer, cocktails and wine and a fun bar vibe.

Open Mon-Fri 1:30-10pm,

Sat-Sun noon-10pm. \$\$

Chau Kee ★★★★☆

Cha chaan teng. Shop H1, G/F, Tung Lee Mansion, Water St., Sai Ying Pun, 2559-2389.



Let Chau Kee take you through the quintessential Hong Kong diner experience. You've got to brave a 15-30 minute wait, but it's all worth it for their custard French toast.

■ HIT Once you finally get in: order all your dim sum favorites. The har gau (\$22) is particularly large and juicy, and the fancy "yin yeung siu mai" (\$22) comes with two flavors: one regular and one topped with truffle oil. Shrimp toast (\$22) is also delicious: filled to

the brim with al dente shrimp and covered in toasted sesame seeds. But the star of the show is the "lava custard" French toast (\$18), which is pretty much the only reason you had to queue for half an hour. Slicing into it, a molten filling of sweet egg custard pours out, which complements the crispy fried bread. It's awfully, sinfully good.

■ MISS While the service is as good as any CCT (i.e. meh), you're also more than likely going to be forced to sit next to strangers in the painfully cramped and narrow shop. Come in a group of four to bag booth seats.

■ BOTTOM LINE Fresh ingredients, generous portions and an unbelievable, next-level French toast. We almost didn't want to write this review, so we could keep this restaurant to ourselves...

Open Tue-Sun 6am-5pm. \$

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

Wandering around our city on foot is the best way to discover its secrets: a delicate little antiques shop, a dim sum resto tucked away in a back alley, a hipster café so cool even the owners haven't heard of it yet. Each month we set out on a treasure hunt to find the city's most interesting sights and sounds. This month, we're exploring Star Street Precinct in Wan Chai.



1

BEEF AND LIBERTY

Beef and Liberty serves up some of the best burgers in town. We're big fans of the bacon cheeseburger (\$122), with its hefty topping of bacon jam. Get a skillet cookie with huge amounts of cream poured on top, washed down with a cold glass of Young Master Ale. But if you order your burger well done, never talk to us again. Here's an extra secret: They've got a great little rooftop bar that's perfect for a chilled-out early evening drink.

2/F, 23 Wing Fung St., Wan Chai, 2811-3009.



2

SFS

This achingly hipster but cosy café offers a curated selection of roast coffees, homemade jam and pastries. SFS makes room to showcase and sell designer lifestyle products, and also hosts regular gigs and shows. See? Told you it was hipster.

G/F, 14 St Francis St., Wan Chai, 2527-7898.



3

ODD ONE OUT

Just next to SFS café and connected through a doorway, Odd One Out is an arty hipster abode which offers an eclectic collection of art prints, zines and more by up-and-coming Hong Kong and international artists. You can buy 'em straight off the wall, or check out the website for more awesome designs. The artwork is all designed to be affordable: In other words: prints for the pauper. Ha!

G/F, 14 St Francis St., Wan Chai, 2529-3955, oddoneout.hk.



4

JOUER

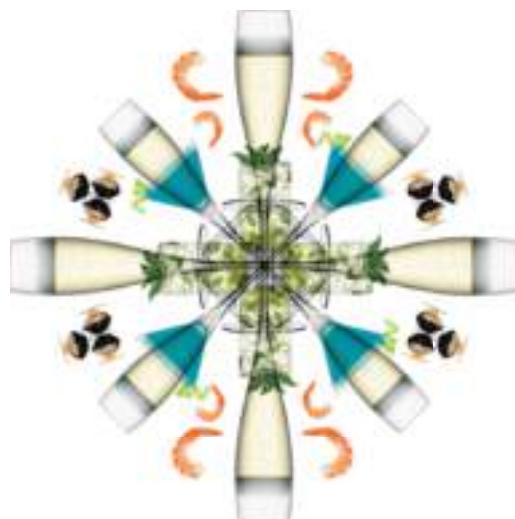
The name may be French, but Jouer hasn't forgotten its roots. The bakery and events space incorporates Hong Kong flavors into its star product—macarons. Think Chinese vinegar and ginger, mango pomelo or Hong Kong-style milk tea varieties. Jouer also sells whimsically crafted macaron gift boxes alongside chic home décor, stylish tableware and vintage accessories. OK, maybe it's a *little* bit French.

G/F, 1 Sau Wa Fong, Wan Chai, 2528-6577.



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CULTURE

UPCLOSE



Raymond Fu is the chairman of the Opera Society of Hong Kong. For "Opera Passion III," he's bringing three Italian opera stars to Hong Kong to give masterclasses and a concert to the public. He tells Adrienne Chum about his hopes for opera in the SAR.

HK Magazine: How did you get into opera?

Raymond Fu: I was born into a non-musical family. In primary school, my voice broke very early, so when we had a singing test in primary six everyone was still singing in treble while I was already singing in a tenor voice. I got a lot of positive reinforcement, so I sang more. I later became a choir leader even though I had never done that sort of thing. In my second year we won a prize. At that moment I thought: "Maybe this could be a possible career path."

HK: Why don't we have an official opera company in Hong Kong?

RF: We actually had the Hong Kong Chorus in the 80s. We had [conductor] Henry Shek as the director, and I was the chorus master. It was a semi-professional group, and we even had an office at the LCSD. In one year we'd have about eight, 10 concerts, and we became an opera company. Then there was a financial crisis, and the government didn't have money to support all the arts groups. The Hong Kong Chorus was the newest, so it was the first to go. I was out of the country and the director, Mr. Shek, was flying back and forth between America and Hong Kong, and some council members thought he wasn't serious about the Chorus. The group was put on hold—but of course that means it's gone; if I had kept on with the group instead of leaving the country to study, maybe it could have kept going. But now Mr. Shek does his own thing with the Chorus, separately from the government. 30 years later, we haven't been able to get it back.

HK: So what's the opera scene like now?

RF: [Former HKAPA director] Lo King-man was the one who had the guts to produce the first opera in Hong Kong. He produces almost all of the operas in the city. All over the world, opera depends on government funding and corporate sponsorship. Hongkongers do have an interest in watching opera, but we need sponsorship; you can't depend on selling tickets alone. Also, there aren't a lot of theatres that can host operas, since the production size of an opera is so big. In one year we can get about 10 operas, but they're scattered around the year. There's no focal point for an opera season right now: It's too irregular to grab people's attention.

HK: You're holding public masterclasses for successful applicants. What's the standard like?

RF: This is the first time we've ever tried this, but the quality of the singers was very high: Most of them are music graduates, music students, semi-amateurs or vocal teachers. We even have a 12-year-old junior student from the APA. Only the singers serious about learning applied, and most of them have sung in professional settings before. After all, you are standing on a stage to be critiqued!

See Chiara Angella (mezzo-soprano), Davide Piaggio (tenor), Silvio Zanon (baritone) and masterclass students perform at Opera Passion III. Sep 14, 8pm at City Hall Concert Hall, 5 Edinburgh Place, Central. \$100-500 from www.urbtix.hk.

Classical



Bang!

Hong Kong New Music Ensemble explodes their season open with music from the last three decades by the likes of Michael Gordon, David Lang and Steve Hui. You'll be hearing some Jimi Hendrix sampling, funky sound processing and amped-up instruments. Don't miss their pre-concert talk (in English, 6:30pm), which includes insights from composer Steve Hui himself. Sep 18-19, 8pm. Multimedia Theatre, HKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity, 135 Junction Rd., Kowloon City, 2180-9595. \$60-120 from www.urbtix.hk.

Cirque de la Symphonie

The HK Phil combines circus and classical at this concert. Expect juggling, acrobatics, contortionists and more, all accompanied by a live orchestra. We're hoping to see the woodwind section hanging from a trapeze while the double bassists balance in a pyramid on top of an elephant wearing a tuxedo. Sep 11-12, 8pm. Concert Hall, Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui. \$280-680 from www.urbtix.hk.

Great Piano Concertos: Ben Kim Plays Chopin

The HK Sinfonietta brings pianist Ben Kim, who has played rooms including Carnegie Hall and the Berlin Konzerthaus, to Hong Kong to perform the Chopin Piano Concerto No.1 with Principal Guest Conductor Christoph Poppen. The program will also include Brahms's Symphony No.4 and Mendelssohn's Ruy Blas Overture. Pianotastic! Sep 12, 8pm. Concert Hall, City Hall, 5 Edinburgh Place, Central. \$140-340 from www.urbtix.hk.

CHK Youth Symphony Family Series: Peter & the Wolf, Japanese Anime Symphony Concert

Yes, it's a family-friendly program of Tchaikovsky... and anime music. The China Hong Kong Youth Symphony performs the classic children's musical symphony Peter and the Wolf, along with orchestral renditions of old childhood anime favorites such as Dragon Ball Z and Sailor Moon. Bring your kids (or your dweebiest friends)! Sep 13, 3pm. Hong Kong Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, 2734-2009. \$60-120 from www.urbtix.hk.



Symphonic Sorcery: Harry Potter in Concert

Need a little magic in your life, muggle? Take a trip to Hogwarts with the HK Philharmonic. Your guide will be an old, long-haired wizard who will teach you about spells, Quidditch and potions, and play the music of the "Harry Potter" movies along the way. Ten points to Slytherin! Sep 18-19, 8pm. Tsuen Wan Town Hall Auditorium, 72 Tai Ho Rd., Tsuen Wan. \$120-380 from www.urbtix.hk.

The Shadow in the Moon: How the Mid-Autumn Festival Began

Mooncake season returns, and to kick off the festivities Premiere Performances of Hong Kong is back with two performances of "The Shadow in the Moon," a collaborative project between composer Alexis Alrich and writer Christina Matula-Häkli. It's the origin story of the Mid-Autumn Festival, told by a chamber music octet playing a blend of traditional Chinese and western instruments. Focusing on inspiring youths to learn more about Chinese culture, kids can also join a fun paper lantern making workshop an hour before the concert. Sep 20, 3pm, 4:30pm. Asia Society, 9 Justice Drive, Admiralty, 2103-9511. \$250-300 from www.phhk.org and www.asiasociety.org.hk.

Comedy



9th Annual HK International Comedy Festival

The HK International Comedy Festival is back for a ninth round, featuring comedians from the US, Australia, the UK, and more. Local comedians including the People's Liberation Improv will also be performing for some good giggles. Don't forget to check out the comedy competition for up-and-comers! This weekend we've got John Robertson and Vivek Mahbubani taking the stage. Various locations; check the website for more info. Sep 3-26. \$150-300 from www.hkcomedyfestival.com.

Dance

Hong Kong's Best Dance Crew 2015

Studiobatz brings in dancers and choreographers from all over the globe to judge Hong Kong's Best Dance Crew 2015. Under-18s and adult crews will compete in styles ranging from hip hop to house to jazz funk, all night long. Will it be like the final scene in every dance movie ever made? We can only hope. Sep 18, 7:30pm. Southorn Stadium, 111 Johnston Rd., Wan Chai. \$170-220 from www.hkticketing.com.

2nd Stage: Creations Never Stop

City Contemporary Dance Company gets together with E-Side Dance Company for a performance of pieces by choreographers Tracy Chan and Camy Wong. Both "Disorder 2" by Chan and "Something you know... you SCARED" by Wong explore emotion as a source of creativity. It's true: that's why we're so scared before deadlines. Sep 19-20, 8pm; Sep 20, 3pm. CCDC Dance Centre, G/F, 110 Shatin Pass Rd., Wong Tai Sin. \$80. www.ccdc.com.hk.

Theater



La Soirée

Move over, Cirque du Soleil. La Soirée is a hair-raising contemporary circus sideshow descending on Hong Kong this September. Met with rave reviews and winning awards in London and New York, it brings a slew of twisting acrobatics, burlesque and vaudeville acts to the Hong Kong stage. Grab your tickets quick! Sep 16-20. Lyric Theatre, Academy for Performing Arts, 1 Gloucester Rd., Wan Chai, 2584-8500. \$395-1,095 from www.hkticketing.com.



Edited by Adrienne Chum
adrienne.chum@hkmagmedia.com

Exhibitions

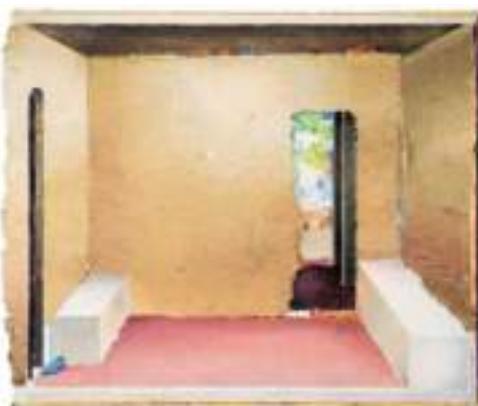


She Says: Photographing Ethnic Minority Women of Hong Kong

Hong Kong Unison is presenting an exhibit with photojournalist Lam Chun-tung and writer Jennifer Ngo that's intended to brush away the stereotypes about ethnic minority women in the SAR. The exhibit examines the stories of 17 of these women, displaying the beauty inherent in their diversity and strength. Guided tours will also be available. Through Sep 19. SoCO269, 1/F, 269 Yu Chau St., Sham Shui Po, 9432-4141. Free.

Fundamental: 40 Years of Design Inspiration from the East

ArtisTree exhibits the career of architect and designer William Lim, whose designs all take inspiration from his Chinese roots. The exhibit will examine how deeply intertwined design and heritage are in Hong Kong. Attend a lamp design workshop with Lim on Sep 19 at 2pm, email workshop@CL3.com. Lim is also giving a series of talks, including "Eastern Elements in Modernism" on Sep 16, 7pm. Visit livingcollection.hk for more. Through Sep 27. ArtisTree, 1/F, Cornwall House, Tai Koo Place, 979 King's Rd., Quarry Bay, 2844-3888. Free.



Traces to Nowhere

German painter Matthias Weischer presents his first solo exhibition in Asia. His partially collaged works explore the idea of space and its relationship with the objects he depicts, all the while exposing the delicate balance between chaos and harmony. Through Oct 3. Lehmann Maupin, Unit 407, Pedder Building, 12 Pedder St., Central, 2530-0025. Free.



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NIGHTLIFE



HK PICKS

Clockenflap 2015

The SAR's biggest festival is back. The preliminary lineup is stronger than ever, featuring big names The Libertines and Damien Rice, while fans of more twizzly beats can nod to Flying Lotus, Ratatat and Mr Scruff. There's a touch of soul via the Earth Wind & Fire Experience and singer-songwriters Crowd Lu and Rachael Yamagata. Tickets are on sale (\$1,280 for three days), but you'll have to contain your excitement for two months... Nov 27-29. West Kowloon Cultural District, West Kowloon. www.clockenflap.com.

Gigs



The Underground Presents: Akira

No, not the seminal post apocalyptic manga/anime. Nope: From visual kei group frontwoman to androgynous visual kei fashion model to solo artist, Akira's fanbase is on the rise. Otakus and Japanese punk aficionados everywhere will be racing to get tickets: She's best known for her debut song "Aoki Tsuki Michite" which was the ending theme to Japanese anime "Black Butler: Book of Circus."

Doors open 7:30pm. Sep 11, 8pm. Hidden Agenda, Unit 2A, Wing Fu Industrial Building, 15-17 Tai Yip St., Ngau Tau Kok. \$250 in advance from www.tixeasy.com; \$300 at the door.



Malik So Chic

Ready to get ratchet? The fabulous gender-bending rap queen and performance artist Malik So Chic hits the stage at D-i this month. Gear up with last year's astonishing hit "#BitchesBeSoThirsty" ... which pretty much sums up a night at D-i. Go on, YouTube it. Sep 16, 18-19, 10pm. Dragon-i, U/G, The Centrium, 60 Wyndham St., Central, 3110-1222. \$300 at the door.

Concerts



Spandau Ballet

Seems like Spandau Ballet can't get enough of Hong Kong... lead singer Tony Hadley has performed solo here in the SAR, and he's bringing the whole gang back to perform their best hits. All the words you'll need to know: ah, ah, ah, aaah, ah... Sep 25, 8:15pm. Star Hall, KITEC, 1 Trademart Drive, Kowloon Bay. \$380-880 from www.hkticketing.com.

Bon Jovi in Macau

Love classic tunes like "Livin' On a Prayer" and "It's My Life"? See US rock legends Bon Jovi live at the Venetian's Cotai Arena in September. It'll be just like standing outside Stormies in LKF, only actually live. Sep 25-26, 8pm. CotaiArena, The Venetian. \$580-3,688 from www.hkticketing.com.

Muse

Brit-rockers Muse have been around since 1994, making them one of the most successful, most consistent rock bands in the world. Bellamy and co. always rock their live shows, so this gig will be one to watch. Sep 29, 8pm. AsiaWorld-Arena, Sky Plaza Rd., Chek Lap Kok, 3606-8828. \$780 from www.hkticketing.com.



Kina Grannis: The Elements Tour

Youtube's favorite songstress embarks on her Asia tour this summer, with a one-night-only performance in Hong Kong. You'll know the singer-songwriter from her sweet vocals, internet-breaking covers and collab videos with Wong Fu Productions. The \$780-tickets get you in on the meet and greet session: Don't be creepy, OK? Doors open 7pm. Sep 20, 8pm. Rotunda 2, KITEC, 1 Trademart Drive, Kowloon Bay. \$380-780 from www.cityline.com.

While She Sleeps Asia Tour

UK metalcore quintet While She Sleeps returns to the SAR for a little more metal. Fun fact: Last time they were here, they went hiking and had a bit of a swim. Metal! Sep 20, 8pm. Hang Out, 1/F, Youth Outreach Jockey Club, 2 Holy Cross Path, Sai Wan Ho, 2622-2890. \$420 from Zuk Studio: Two branches including Room 311, Sincere House, 83 Argyle St., Mong Kok.

Clubs



Scooter & Lavelle

Unlike DJ duo Scooter & Lavelle (one looks like an angry rapper, the other has a twisty moustache and a perpetual grin) are bringing their self-proclaimed "bangin' progressive turntablism" back to Club Cubic. Sep 19, 11:30pm. Club Cubic, 2/F, Hard Rock Hotel, City of Dreams, Estrada do Istmo, (+853) 6638-4999. \$250 from www.cubic-cod.com.

I Love Wednesday presents

You Can't Sit With Us feat. DJ Jazzy Jeff

D-i continues its weekly I Love Wednesday parties, this time featuring the creator of the "Fresh Prince" theme song. Although everyone's going to want to sit with Jazzy Jeff. Sep 23, 10pm. Dragon-i, U/G, The Centrium, 60 Wyndham St., Central, 3110-1222. \$300 at the door.

Music Festivals



Don't Let Daddy Know

Throwing the whole concept of filial piety to the wind, the curiously named music festival Don't Let Daddy Know hits Asia for the first time in September, boasting a superstar DJ lineup and Ibiza-style party effects. Get ready to twerk like there's no tomorrow to the likes of Skrillex, The Chainsmokers, Laidback Luke, Sander van Doorn and Sem Vox. Sep 30, 5pm. Hall 10, AsiaWorld-Expo, Chek Lap Kok. \$580-980 from www.hkticketing.com, \$22,000 for VIP table with 10 tickets, including two bottles of bubbly, VIP bar and lounge access, priority entry and giftpack.

Vinai

Forming a DJ duo with your sibling seems to be a thing nowadays. Vinai is the result of Italian brothers Andrea and Alessandro, who together were ranked in DJ Mag's list of Top 100 DJs. Check out their remix of "Starlight (Could You Be Mine)" by Don Diablo and Matt Nash, then head over if you feel like busting a move. Do people still bust moves? Sep 12, 11:30pm. Club Cubic, 2/F, Hard Rock Hotel, City of Dreams, Estrada do Istmo, (+853) 6638-4999. \$250 from www.cubic-cod.com.

Revealed Recordings Tour at Bungalow

Five DJs from Dutch indie label Revealed Recordings in one night: Joey Dale, Julian Calor, Kill The Buzz, Manse and Thomas Newson will all take turns on the decks. Sep 17, 11pm. Bungalow, Shop 2, G/F, The Centrium, 60 Wyndham St., Central, 2623-7868. Price TBC.





Nightlife Events



The Singleton Discovery Series: Hiatus Kaiyote

No, this isn't a singles' exclusive party. House of Mercury teams up with The Singleton Single Malt Whisky to bring us three curated concerts at Ovolo Southside's G.I.G. lounge. First up: Grammy-nominated neo-soul four-piece Hiatus Kaiyote. Doors open 8pm. Sep 23, 9pm. Ovolo Southside, 64 Wong Chuk Hang Rd., Wong Chuk Hang, 2165-1000. \$480-580 from www.ticketflap.com. Access to all three concerts for \$1,080.

Prune Deer Album Launch

Hong Kong instrumental rock band Prune Deer is releasing their first album, "Solid Transparency." They're supported by guest bands Maniac and An Id Signal. Sep 26, 7:30pm. Hidden Agenda, Unit 2A, Wing Fu Industrial Building, 15-17 Tai Yip St., Ngau Tau Kok.

Summer Party 4 - Around the World Tour: Edition Ibiza

The fourth of Ozone's summer party series brings Ibiza straight to the tallest bar in the world: expect Balearic beats courtesy of DJ Nachtbraker and DJ Telephones... and tropical vibes, natch. Sep 12, 10pm. Ozone, 118/F, The Ritz-Carlton, 1 Austin Rd. West, West Kowloon, 2263-2263. \$250 at the door; includes a glass of Veuve Clicquot yellow label.

Tiki Ladies Cocktail Club

Sorry boys: It's ladies only at Honi Honi's new cocktail club. Every day from 7-9pm, groups of up to 10 will get the chance to mingle and learn to mix drinks from the rum masters behind the counter. You might even get a chance to play with some pyrotechnics... and we don't mean hot boys. Honi Honi Tiki Cocktail Lounge, 3/F, Somptueux Central, 52 Wellington St., Central, 2353-0885. \$250 per person includes two cocktails; RSVP essential.

Happy Hours

Dong Wednesdays

Been to Vietnam recently? All night on Wednesdays you can whip out your dong (the currency, you heathen), any amount of dong, and you'll get a glass of Cay Mia Punch, a cocktail made with white wine and sugar cane-infused vodka. Chom Chom, G/F, Block A, 58 Peel St., Central, 2810-0850. Free.



HK PICKS

Kristian Nairn: Rave of Thrones

Hodor from TV's "Game of Thrones" may be a hulking blockhead of one word (it's "Hodor"), but in real life he's actually a seasoned DJ who's been spinning deep house tunes for over 16 years. He's played with the likes of Scissor Sisters, Calvin Harris and Mylo. And now he's on the decks at Zuma. For Winterfell! Sep 19, 10pm. Zuma, 5-6/F, The Landmark, 15 Queen's Rd. Central, Central, 3657-6388. \$200 early bird; \$250 from tiny.cc/hk-raveofthrones.



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September is Film Fest Month

Every night is movie night this September: **Evelyn Lok** rounds up the best of the month's film festivals.

Chinese Documentary Festival (Sep 8-Oct 5)

Lee Po (Sep 13, 18)

Tan Chi-wing's half-hour short gives us a succinct understanding of the livelihood, dignity and wisdom of Grandma Lee, who earns a living by collecting recyclable paper.

Flowing Stories (Sep 27)

Tsang Tsui-shan looks at the meaning of "home," capturing the nostalgia of Cheung Chau villagers who live abroad in England and France.

www.visiblerecord.com. \$65 from www.urbtix.hk.

Cine! Italiano (Sep 16-20)

An Italian Name (Sep 18)

The opening film of this year's Cine! Italiano is a rapidly escalating drama that bubbles from a benign family dinner conversation into the unleashing of each person's insecurities.

The Invisible Boy (Sep 20)

A sci-fi flick from the producers of "The Great Beauty," in which a bullied teen receives the power of invisibility, and takes on the great responsibilities that come with it.

www.cine-italiano.hk. \$80 from www.thegrandcinema.com.hk.

HK Lesbian & Gay Film Festival (Sep 19-Oct 10)

Front Cover (Sep 19)

A Chinese-American fashion stylist disdains his own Chinese heritage, but is tasked to style a Beijing actor. A fledgling friendship soon develops, leading to a romance as they reconcile their differences and prejudices. Plus, they're both really, really good-looking.

I Am Michael (Sep 23, 26)

James Franco, Zachary Quinto, Emma Roberts and Charlie Carver star in the controversial true story of a gay activist who rejects his sexuality and becomes a Christian pastor.
www.hkgff.hk. \$80-180 from www.cinema.com.hk or www.amccinemas.com.hk.

Sundance Film Festival (Sep 17-27)

Dope (Sep 19, 27)

Malcolm and his best friends would much rather spend their time with 90s hip hop vinyls, but they find themselves caught up in a drug sale that Malcolm must pull off... or jeopardize his dreams of going to Harvard.

The Witch (Sep 20, 24)

Set in 1630 at the edge of a formidable forest, Robert Eggers' debut feature is a chilling look at puritanical New England and the unraveling anxieties that follow when a crops fail and a baby goes missing—all told through the eyes of a teenage girl.
hk.sundance.org. \$90 from www.metroplex.com.hk.

Life is Art Film Festival (Through Sep 30)

Iris (Sep 13, 26)

"Iris" pairs legend with legend: The 87-year-old filmmaker and documentarian Albert Maysles with Iris Apfel, the always fantastically dressed 93-year-old fashion icon.

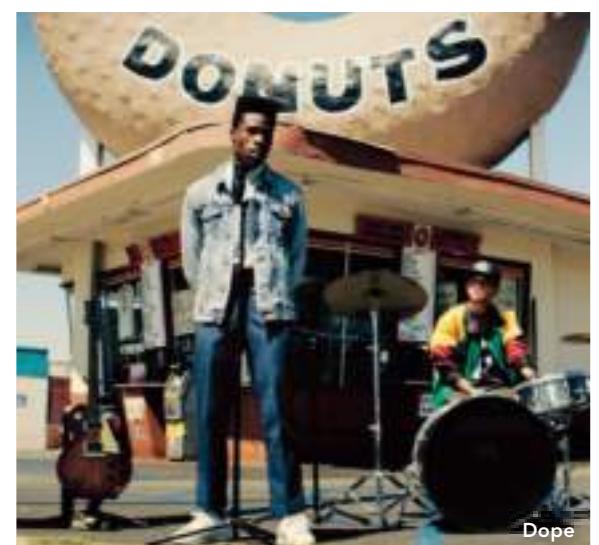
Amy (Sep 18-19, 25)

The definitive biographical film of Amy Winehouse gives glimpses into her teenage aspirations, intimate thoughts, music and battles with substance abuse.

www.movie movie.com.hk/lifeisart. \$65-190 from www.cinema.com.hk.



Flowing Stories



Dope

Coming Soon

American Ultra

(USA) Jesse Eisenberg is Mike, a small-town slacker who spends his days writing his comic book and getting baked with his girlfriend (Kristen Stewart). But he's actually a top-secret deadly CIA sleeper agent, with skills that he doesn't even know exist. Soon he finds himself the target of a rival program gunning to wipe him out. Sounds like a stoner version of "Bourne"—awesome. Opens Sep 17.

Everest ▶

(UK) A story based on the 1996 Mount Everest disaster, in which eight climbers of two expeditions were caught in a blizzard and perished during their attempts to reach the summit. "Everest" sees a star-studded entourages attempt the same: one led by Jake Gyllenhaal as Scott Fischer, and another by Jason Clarke playing Rob Hall. This ain't gonna end well. Opens Sep 17.

Opening

Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials

(USA) It's the long-awaited sequel to the YA-lit sci-fi thriller. This time, Thomas and his fellow amnesiac "Gladers" who survived the magical maze last time continue the search for why they're all there—all while struggling to survive in the next desolate arena that is the Scorch, a desert wasteland full of hidden dangers. Opened Sep 10.

Boychoir

(USA) Dustin Hoffman, Kathy Bates, and Eddie Izzard (!?) manage a prestigious singing academy for young boys. Looks to be a movie celebrating a metaphor for the pre-teen male singing voice: fleeting and gone in the blink of an eye... or is it just Hoffman having another go at the angry offbeat mentor role? Opened Sep 10.

Lady of the Dynasty

(China) The world had it coming: The physically flawless Fan Bingbing takes on the role of Yang Guifei, one of the Four Beauties of Ancient China. Starting out as the concubine to the Imperial prince, she inadvertently rises up the political ladder and becomes involved in a dynastic struggle. Opened Sep 10.



Skin Trade

(USA) Dolph Lundgren is American detective Nick Cassidy, who teams up with a Thai cop (Tony Jaa) in the race to eliminate a Thai human trafficking ring... led by a man who killed Nick's wife and daughter. Angry Swedish American seeking deadly vengeance! Yeah! Opened Sep 10.

A Royal Night Out

(UK) Ever wondered what princessy debauchery would have been like in 1945? The future Queen Elizabeth and teen Princess Margaret get freeaky as they're allowed out on V.E. Day for the night of their lives... Opened Sep 10.

Continuing



The Assassin

(Taiwan/China/Hong Kong) Taiwanese auteur Hou Hsiao-hsien's 2015 Cannes-winning film is finally out. It's Hou's most elegantly made film yet: a slow wuxia epic starring Shu Qi as the protagonist of the Tang dynasty tale "Nie Yinniang." And by slow, we mean sloooow: It's full of impossibly beautiful, impossibly long shots, but the story rambles on without much actual assassination. ★★★

Assassination

(South Korea) Not to be confused with Hou Hsiao-hsien's "The Assassin," which came out in theaters in the same week, "Assassination" stars the indelible Jun Ji-hyun ("My Sassy Girl," TV's "My Love From the Star") and tells a tale of 1930s espionage set in Manchuria. Gear up for pretty celebrity faces, popcorn action and lots of confusing code-switching between Japanese, Korean, and Putonghua. ★★★

The Emperor in August

(Japan) Set at the end of World War II's Pacific theater in 1945, "The Emperor in August" recounts the final days before Japan's unconditional surrender from the point of view of its monarchy.





Edited by Evelyn Lok

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Need to Know

AMC Cinema, 2265-8933
www.amccinemas.com.hk

Broadway Circuit,
2388-3188
www.cinema.com.hk

Golden Harvest Cinema,
2622-6688
www.goldenharvest.com

MCL Cinema, 3413-6688
www.mclcinema.com

UA Cinema,
3516-8811
www.uacinemas.com.hk

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

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



Everything Will Be Fine

(USA) An intimate winter drama from Wim Wenders centers on the repercussions of a road accident caused by novelist Tomas (James Franco), who escapes unblamed and unscathed. As he fails to come to terms with his actions, his relationships with everyone around him crumbles, yet his career takes a turn towards success. Can you smell the angst?

The Gunman

(USA) Pierre Morel ("Taken") is behind this high-octane action with Sean Penn playing former assassin Jim Terrier. Having fled his last hit in Congo and suffering from PTSD, he comes across a mysterious faction in London that wants him dead. His snooping leads him right back to Africa, where it all began...

How to Make Love Like an Englishman

(USA) Inane rom-com coming through: Playboy, hedonist, and Cambridge poetry professor (?) Richard (Pierce Brosnan) has his eye on Olivia (Salma Hayek), but marries Kate (Jessica Alba) once he finds out he's got her pregnant—but the two are step-sisters. Years later, Olivia returns into his life and makes him reevaluate his life choices. A little too late, don'tcha think?

Kidnapping Freddy Heineken

(USA) Daniel Alfredson, who's known for "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" and "The Girl Who Played With Fire" (The better, Swedish versions), is no stranger to bringing crime stories to the screen. He takes on the real-life story of the kidnapping of Dutch beer tycoon Alfred "Freddy" Heineken (played here by Anthony Hopkins), which resulted in the highest ransom ever paid. The thrilling opening sequence may taunt you, but it barely carries through to the rest of the movie, which suffers from underdeveloped characters and clichés. ★★

Knock Knock Who's There

(Hong Kong) Opening in theaters just in time for Hungry Ghost Festival is a classic Hong Kong horror tale set in a funeral home. Babyjohn Choi breaks his innocent façade and takes on the role of funeral host, overseeing affairs as three haunted stories intertwine.

Love Detective

(Hong Kong) A highly accomplished female police detective (Ivana Wong) is suddenly dumped by her boyfriend for a leng mo model. A year later, the members of a leng mo troupe are attacked, one by one. The detective must go undercover to hunt down the perpetrator... and the one who stole her boyfriend's heart. It's basically a Hong Kong "Miss Congeniality."

The Man from U.N.C.L.E.

(USA) Guy Ritchie's sleek take on the 60s spy series stars the beautiful Henry Cavill as CIA Agent Napoleon Solo. When he discovers that a covert criminal organization with access to nuclear weapons has plans to upset the balance of the Cold War, Napoleon is forced to team up with a KGB agent (Armie Hammer) to stop the global threat. A fun, flashy movie that scrapes through on style alone. ★★★★

No Escape

(USA) Who thought it was okay to put Owen Wilson in an action thriller? Starring across Pierce Brosnan, Wilson is an American businessman who relocates his family to Southeast Asia... but is met with life-threatening peril as a violent political uprising kicks off. Bring all your expat friends to this one.



P.K.

(India) Rajkumar Hirani, who was behind the tear-inducing box office hit "3 Idiots," brings us a brand new Bollywood sci-fi flick. It's a lofty comedy of ideas disguised as a benign alien's wacky adventure on earth, in which the search for a lost gadget becomes a hopeful pilgrimage in search of God. Touching and thought-provoking in parts, but you'll be wading through cheesy Bollywood conventions to get there. ★★★



Pixels

(USA) When space aliens begin attacking Earth after misinterpreting a video feed of 8-bit arcade games, four seasoned old-school gamers (Adam Sandler, Kevin James, Josh Gad, Peter Dinklage) band together to save the world. 80s nerds might appreciate the nostalgic appearances of Pac-man et al, but are the cheap Sandler jokes worth it? The answer is: no. ★

A Tale of Three Cities

(China/Hong Kong) Award-winning director duo Mabel Cheung and Alex Law ("Echoes of the Rainbow") base their latest sweeping period romance on a true story. A war-torn couple (Sean Lau Ching-wan and Tang Wei) struggles to stay alive in Anhui, Shanghai and Hong Kong in the midst of the turbulent 40s.

Wild City

(Hong Kong) Veteran director Ringo Lam (best known for "City On Fire," 1987, which won him Best Director at the Hong Kong Film Awards and also influenced Tarantino's "Reservoir Dogs") is back on the scene with a full feature after more than a decade. The premise: a former cop/bar owner (Louis Koo), his half-brother (Shawn Yue), a woman, her triad boss old flame, all vying for a suitcase full of black money. The lackluster spark in Lam's latest offering proves that maybe his talent was best left in the 80s. ★★★

Words and Pictures

(USA) At an expensive East Coast prep school, an art teacher (Juliette Binoche) and disillusioned English teacher (Clive Owen) spark up a light rivalry and flirtation... while hatching a plan to arouse student interest in their respective subjects.

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ROB BREZSNY

VIRGO (Aug 23-Sep 22): I hope it's not too late or too early to give you a slew of birthday presents. You deserve to be inundated with treats, dispensations, and appreciations. Here's your first perk: You are hereby granted a license to break a taboo that is no longer useful or necessary. Second blessing: You are authorized to instigate a wildly constructive departure from tradition. Third boost: I predict that in the next six weeks, you will simultaneously claim new freedom and summon more discipline. Fourth delight: During the next three months, you will discover and uncork a new thrill. Fifth goody: Between now and your birthday in 2016, you will develop a more relaxed relationship with perfectionism.

LIBRA (Sep 23-Oct 22): A "wheady mile" is an obsolete English term I want to revive for use in this horoscope. It refers to what may happen at the end of a long journey, when that last stretch you've got to traverse seems to take forever. You're so close to home; you're imagining the comfort and rest that will soon be yours. But as you cross the "wheady mile," you must navigate your way through one further plot twist or two. There's a delay or complication that demands more effort just when you want to be finished with the story. Be strong, Libra. Keep the faith. The wheady mile will not, in fact, take forever. (Thanks to Mark Forsyth and his book "Horologicon.")

SCORPIO (Oct 23-Nov 21): Trying improbable and unprecedented combinations is your specialty right now. You're willing and able to gamble with blends and juxtapositions that no one else would think of, let alone propose. Bonus: Extra courage is available for you to call on as you proceed. In light of this gift, I suggest you brainstorm about all the unifications that might be possible for you to pull off. What conflicts would you love to defuse? What inequality or lopsidedness do you want to fix? Is there a misunderstanding you can heal or a disjunction you can harmonize?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22-Dec 21): Is feeling good really as fun as everyone seems to think? Is it really so wonderful to be in a groove, in love with life, and in touch with your deeper self? No! Definitely not! And I suspect that as you enter more fully into these altered states, your life will provide evidence of the inconveniences they bring. For example, some people might nag you for extra attention, and others may be jealous of your success. You could be pressured to take on more responsibilities. And you may be haunted by the worry that sooner or later, this grace period will pass. I'M JUST KIDDING, SAGITTARIUS! In truth, the minor problems precipitated by your blessings won't cause any more anguish than a mosquito biting your butt while you're in the throes of ecstatic love-making.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 19): In this horoscope, we will use the Socratic method to stimulate your excitement about projects that fate will favor in the next nine months. Here's how it works: I ask the questions, and you brainstorm the answers. 1. Is there any part of your life where you are an amateur but would like to be a professional? 2. Are you

hesitant to leave a comfort zone even though remaining there tends to inhibit your imagination? 3. Is your ability to fulfill your ambitions limited by any lack of training or deficiency in your education? 4. Is there any way that you are holding on to blissful ignorance at the expense of future possibilities? 5. What new license, credential, diploma, or certification would be most useful to you?

AQUARIUS (Jan 20-Feb 18): The story of my life features more than a few fiascos. For example, I got fired from my first job after two days. One of my girlfriends dumped me without any explanation and never spoke to me again. My record label fired me and my band after we made just one album. Years later, these indignities still carry a sting. But I confess that I am also grateful for them. They keep me humble. They serve as antidotes if I'm ever tempted to deride other people for their failures. They have helped me develop an abundance of compassion. I mention this personal tale in the hope that you, too, might find redemption and healing in your own memories of frustration. The time is right to capitalize on old losses.

PISCES (Feb 19-Mar 20): It's never fun to be in a sticky predicament that seems to have no smart resolution. But the coming days could turn out to be an unexpectedly good time to be in such a predicament. Why? Because I expect that your exasperation will precipitate an emotional cleansing, releasing ingenious intuitions that had been buried under repressed anger and sadness. You may then find a key that enables you to reclaim at least some of your lost power. The predicament that once felt sour and intractable will mutate, providing you with an opportunity to deepen your connection with a valuable resource.

ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 19): "More and more I have come to admire resilience," writes Jane Hirshfield in her poem "Optimism." "Not the simple resistance of a pillow," she adds, "whose foam returns over and over to the same shape, but the sinuous tenacity of a tree: finding the light newly blocked on one side, it turns in another." You have not often had great access to this capacity in the past, Aries. Your specialty has been the fast and fiery style of adjustment. But for the foreseeable future, I'm betting you will be able to summon a supple staying power—a dogged, determined, incremental kind of resilience.

T AURUS (Apr 20-May 20): "The fragrance from your mango groves makes me wild with joy." That's one of the lyrics in the national anthem of Bangladesh. Here's another: "Forever your skies... set my heart in tune as if it were a flute." Elsewhere, addressing Bangladesh as if it were a goddess, the song proclaims, "Words from your lips are like nectar to my ears." I suspect you may be awash with comparable feelings in the coming weeks, Taurus—not toward your country, but rather for the creatures and experiences that rouse your delight and exultation. They are likely to provide even more of the sweet mojo than they usually do. It will be an excellent time to improvise your own hymns of praise.

GEMINI (May 21-Jun 20): There have been times in the past when your potential helpers disappeared just when you wanted more help than usual. In the coming weeks, I believe you will get redress for those sad interludes of yesteryear. A wealth of assistance and guidance will be available. Even people who have previously been less than reliable may offer a tweak or intervention that gives you a boost. Here's a tip for how to ensure that you take full advantage of the possibilities: Ask clearly and gracefully for exactly what you need.

CANCER (Jun 21-Jul 22): Why grab the brain-scrambling moonshine when you may eventually be offered a heart-galvanizing tonic? Why gorge on hors d'oeuvres when a four-course feast will be available sooner than you imagine? According to my analysis of the astrological omens, my fellow Crab, the future will bring unexpected opportunities that are better and brighter than the current choices. This is one of those rare times when procrastination may be in your interest.

LEO (Jul 23-Aug 22): As I hike up San Pedro Ridge, I'm mystified by the madrone trees. The leaves on the short, thin saplings are as big and bold as the leaves on the older, thicker, taller trees. I see this curiosity as an apt metaphor for your current situation, Leo. In one sense, you are in the early stages of a new cycle of growth. In another sense, you are strong and ripe and full-fledged. For you, this is a winning combination: a robust balance of innocence and wisdom, of fresh aspiration and seasoned readiness.



HOMEWORK: What are five conditions you'd need in your world in order to feel you were living in utopia? Testify at FreeWillAstrology.com.

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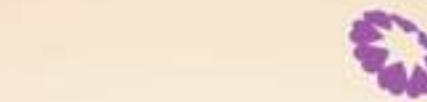
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SAVAGE LOVE

Dan Savage

Is it legal to procure the services of a dominatrix? In the kind of session I have in mind, there's no nudity or sexual activity or contact involved. There's not even any whipping or flogging or caning or hardcore BDSM stuff. I just want to see what it would be like to be bound and gagged. That's it. So is it against the law to pay a woman to tie me up?

- Boy Into Nonsexual Domination

"The short answer is no, he's not likely to be arrested for procuring the services of a dominatrix," said Mistress Justine Cross, a pro-Domme based in Los Angeles. "What BIND desires sounds totally legal and safe—he just needs to find a domme who is reputable (check out her website, read her reviews) and knows what she is doing in the realm of bondage. That said, I'm not a cop or a lawyer."

Cross is, however, a business owner. She runs two dungeons in Los Angeles—and she consulted with a criminal defense attorney before going into the professional domination business. "He assured me that what I do is A-OK," said Cross. "And even though he had practiced for many years, he had never defended, nor did he know any other lawyer who had ever defended, a professional domme. Since dommes rarely find themselves in trouble for their work, it stands to reason that BIND, a future client, will be in the clear as well."

With the Feds going after websites like Rentboy and myRedBook (sites that make sex work safer), and with the never-ending puritanical, punitive crusade to "rescue" adult sex workers from consensual, nonexploitative sex work (by arresting them and giving them criminal records), how is it that professional dominants and their clients aren't routinely harassed by law-enforcement authorities?

"We don't offer sex or nudity in our professional BDSM work," said Cross, "and this keeps us out of the 'criminalized' categories of sex work. However, every state has different laws. NYC and LA both have large professional BDSM communities, but I can't say every state or city welcomes or tolerates this type of sex work. In some places, the scene is more underground, mostly because people still have a hard time understanding that some people just want to get tied up and not get a hand job, too." Follow Mistress Justine Cross on Twitter @Justineplays.

I'm a good-looking, fit, younger guy living in Southern California. I'm getting older, though, and have never been in love or had any kind of serious relationship. I'm straight, but in the past five years I discovered that sexuality is gray, not black or white. I learned this when I accidentally dove into the world of trans. I go on Craigslist and other sites and find local trans girls to engage with in sexual activity. It's hard to describe why I'm into it, but I just am—maybe it satisfies a sexual side of me that women don't? Regardless, I've felt like this is an issue getting in the way of my quest to find a great woman and start a family, which I'd like to do in the next few years. I'm caught between thinking my sexual addiction is hindering my advancement toward a family life and enjoying the rush and sexual gratification I'm inundated with when I meet up with trans girls. Is it something I definitely need to put an end to, or has it become a part of me that I can't deny and hide?

- Rocks And Hard Places

Trans women are women, RAHP, and some of them are great. (And some of them, like some of everybody, are not so great.) You could date a trans woman, you could marry a trans woman,

and you could have kids with a trans woman (through adoption or surrogacy). The only thing that stands between you and being with the kind of person you're most attracted to (a trans woman) and having the other stuff you want out of life (marriage, kids, family life) is you.

Penis puppetry came up on an episode of "Difficult People." I don't want to google it, but I am curious about how it works. I don't want to see pictures. Could you explain it?

- Delicately Interested Person

I couldn't tell you, DIP, but Billy Eichner, one of the stars of "Difficult People," could. "Puppetry of the Penis is a show that tours all over the world, where men use their penis and testicles as puppets, twisting them into all kinds of shapes and characters," said Eichner. "Not sure what about the name Puppetry of the Penis threw you off."

I'm a straight man, age 33. I was in a mutually unsatisfying relationship with a woman in my 20s. I told her not long after we got together that I didn't want to eat her out because I didn't like her smell. I'd eaten other vulvas before and loved them. She wasn't a week-between-showers kind of woman, and she was rightly hurt. Years later, I started listening to you and got religion. (And since she didn't want to hear from me, I made my apologies by treating the women I date now better.) Since then, I've loved the smell of every woman I've been fortunate enough to stick my nose in. But the question haunts me: How could I have handled that situation instead? How would I handle it again? What's a sex-positive way to tell someone their smell turns you off? As someone who feels imbalanced in a sexual relationship if I'm not eating my partners out, should I just quietly end things and say nothing? Seems like there's a middle way. I first thought of your advice for smelly dicks—tell him to take a shower—but for Americans, the smell of a vulva is tied up as much in hygiene as misogyny. I'm not sure how to approach this.

- Wondering How I Fill Females In Now Graciously

Telling someone with a vagina that it smells funky is more complicated and fraught, as you're already aware, than telling the same thing to someone with a dick. The culture has been telling women that their genitals are unclean and stinky since basically forever. But there are legitimate medical issues that can make someone's junk smell funky, WHIFFING, and sometimes we need the people who can actually get their noses into our crotches to give us a heads-up. A bad vaginal odor can be a sign of bacterial vaginosis or even cancer.

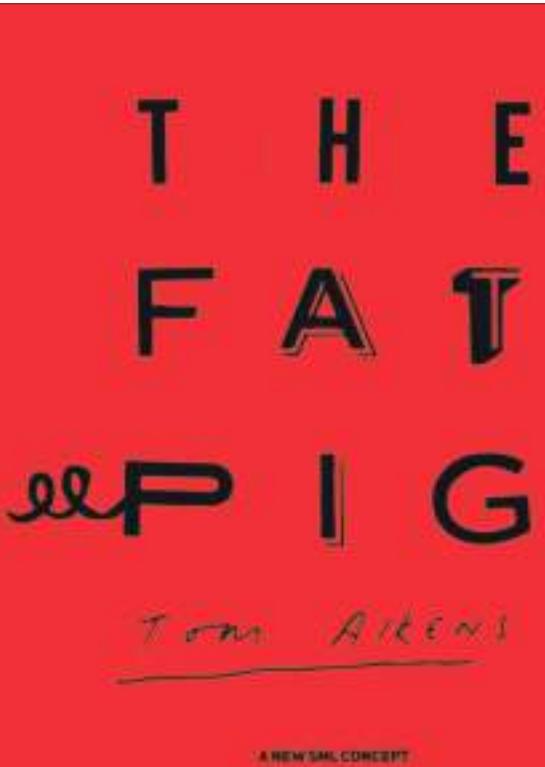
Here's how you approach it: You ask yourself if you're the problem—think they smell bad? You're the problem—and then you ask yourself if sexual chemistry is the problem. (Don't like this person's particular smell and taste? Keep your mouth shut about their smell and taste and end the relationship.) If you think it might actually be a medical issue, you say something like this: "Please don't take this the wrong way, but your vagina and labia smell funky. That's not an easy thing to hear, I know, and it's not an easy thing to say. I know the misogynistic zap the culture puts on women's heads about this—but I'm worried that it might be a medical issue, and I'd rather risk your anger than your health."

Listen to Dan Savage every week at savagecast.com.

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

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The Company

TARTINE

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Bar & Grill

World famous chef Gordon Ramsay will soon open a new restaurant,
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We are looking for career oriented, customer focused professional staff that have a great performance record and are self-motivated team players to join this exciting new restaurant

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Chef de Partie Demi Chef de Partie

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Qualified applicants please forward your resume together with expected salary to:
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Personal information collected is for recruitment purpose only.

Dining Concepts

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e p i c u r e a n g r o u p

Osteria Felice

A new Italian bar and restaurant will soon open at Hutchison House, Central. The word felice, means "happy" in Italian, is a true reflection on the brand's concept. Aiming to become a community hangout, Osteria Felice is a casual dining spot with a spacious bar, offering genuine Italian food, with affordable selections of wines and beverages.

To cope with our expansion, we are looking for an energetic and passionate talent to join us:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Assistant Restaurant Manager | • Pastry Chef |
| • Supervisor | • Chef de Partie |
| • Captain | • Demi Chef de Partie |
| • Host/Hostess | • Senior Cook/Cook |
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Interested parties, please send your resume to Human Resources Department, Epicurean Management Limited, 19/F., Silver Fortune Plaza, 1 Wellington Street, Central, Hong Kong or email to clementngan@eact.com or fax to 2532 6297.

More info click www.epicureanhk.com.hk or call recruitment hotline at 2532 6226

We are an equal opportunity employer. All applications received will be used strictly for selection purposes only. Your application may also be considered for other suitable positions within the Epicurean group. Unsuccessful applications will be destroyed after 6 months.



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epicurean group

EPICUREAN MANAGEMENT LIMITED

Epicurean group is a leading hospitality group in Hong Kong since 1991. We operate a wide spectrum of different styles of cuisine. Some our renowned brands are "Peak Lookout", "Jimmy's Kitchen", "97 Group" etc. To cope with our expansion, we are looking for a high caliber to join our team:

Group Sommelier

Responsibilities

Reporting directly to Head of Food & Beverage, the talent will be in-charge for the group's wine procurement, storage, and wine cellar rotation in every restaurant. He/ She is responsible for the development of wine lists and working alongside the culinary team to pair and suggest wine that best complement various food menu item. Work closely with the marketing team to plan and launch various marketing programs and events to promote the business is another key role. The talent is also engaged in various group projects and budgeting to align with business objectives. Delivery of training to floor staff, maintain relationship with customers and suppliers are also essential for that position.

Requirements

- Minimum 4 years relevant work experience in hospitality and / or F&B industry
- CMS/WSET is highly preferred
- Strong inter-personal, analytical and presentation skills
- Highly self-motivated and able to work under pressure
- Proficient in Cantonese and English

Interested parties, please send your resume to Human Resources Department, Epicurean Management Limited, 10/F, Silver Fortune Plaza, 1 Wellington Street, Central, Hong Kong or email to clementngan@eacl.com or fax to 2532 6207.

We are an equal opportunity employer. All applications received will be used strictly for selection purposes only. Your application may also be considered for other suitable positions within the Epicurean group. Unsuccessful applications will be destroyed after 6 months.



Salon Assistant

- To assist our Hair Stylist to serve our customers
- To perform shampoo services
- Free in-house training is provided
- Candidates with no experience are also welcome
- Monthly salary \$10000 up
- Work location: Central / Admiralty / Taikoo Shing / Diamond Hill / Kwun Tong / Tseung Kwan O
- Travel allowance will be paid to employees who live in Kowloon or New Territories and work at HK Island

Interested parties please send your application to: hrd@lcolpo.com.hk or contact the Human Resources Department at 3970 3333 / 3970 3334 for an interview.



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Ergonomic workplace solutions

Adapt, a global company that provides ergonomic workplace solutions and enhancements.

We are looking for a **Managing Director** to lead and build the sales team.

If you are:

Looking for an opportunity to develop a successful business
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Responsibilities:

- Generate sale revenue, identify new business opportunities to achieve the business goals
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- Work closely with the internal parties to achieve desirable sale result
- Focus on value-added service and customer satisfaction

Requirements:

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- Strong selling, presentation and communication skills
- Proficiency in both written and spoken English, Putonghua is an advantage
- Have strong determination and persistence to achieve the goals of the company through excellent leadership and management skills
- Frequent travel to overseas and mainland China

Please send your CV to the following email address for an interview:
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3 months to 15 years old)
Baby & Kid Products Image
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- Requirements: Cute/Smart/Active/
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If you are interested, please contact
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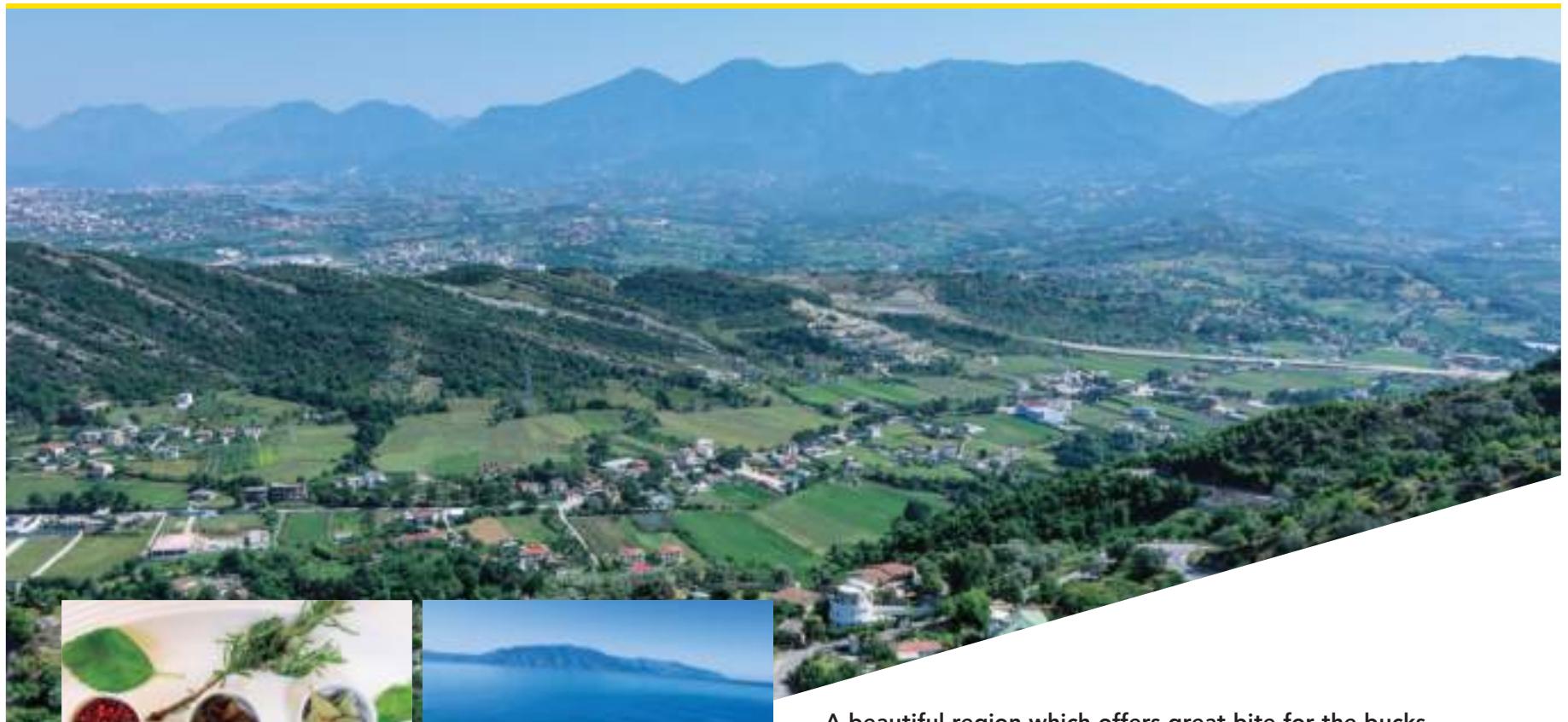
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SPOTLIGHT

The latest news and deals from our partners



Photos: Kirk Kenny / studiozag.com

A beautiful region which offers great bite for the bucks

The Balkans, which is made up of countries on the Balkan Peninsula in the southeast of Europe, is a fascinating and surprisingly affordable location for tourists, offering something to suit all tastes.

For the more adventurous traveler the Balkans definitely falls into the must-visit category. The region boasts a tantalizing array of exciting cities and hundreds of miles of picturesque coastline in Croatia and Albania, which lie along the Adriatic coast, with their beautiful white sand beaches and turquoise waters.

Adventure trips to the Balkans can be tailored to take in the highlights of bustling cities packed with history. Visitors sample vivid scenery as they

trek through the countryside and culture vultures will be astounded by the dramatic architecture and vibrant regional art scene.

And for those who fancy something they can write home about, or post on social media, bear in mind that Transylvania in rural northern Romania is just a short distance away, where you'll be able to snap pictures at Bran Castle, the mythical home of Count Dracula.

Want to win a fabulous holiday package to the Balkans? Just turn the page!



Bon Jovi woos fans with classic love song—in Mandarin

You don't survive for more than 30 years in the music industry without knowing how to please a crowd. For their upcoming performance at the Cotai Arena at The Venetian Macao, Jon Bon Jovi,

the lead singer of rock group **Bon Jovi**, has released his own version of classic romantic Chinese ballad "The Moon Represents My Heart"—sung in Mandarin, no less. Check it out at tiny.cc/hk-bonjovimoon.

Bon Jovi plays the Cotai Arena on Sep 25-26, 8pm. Tickets from \$580: 6333-6660, www.cotaiticketing.com.

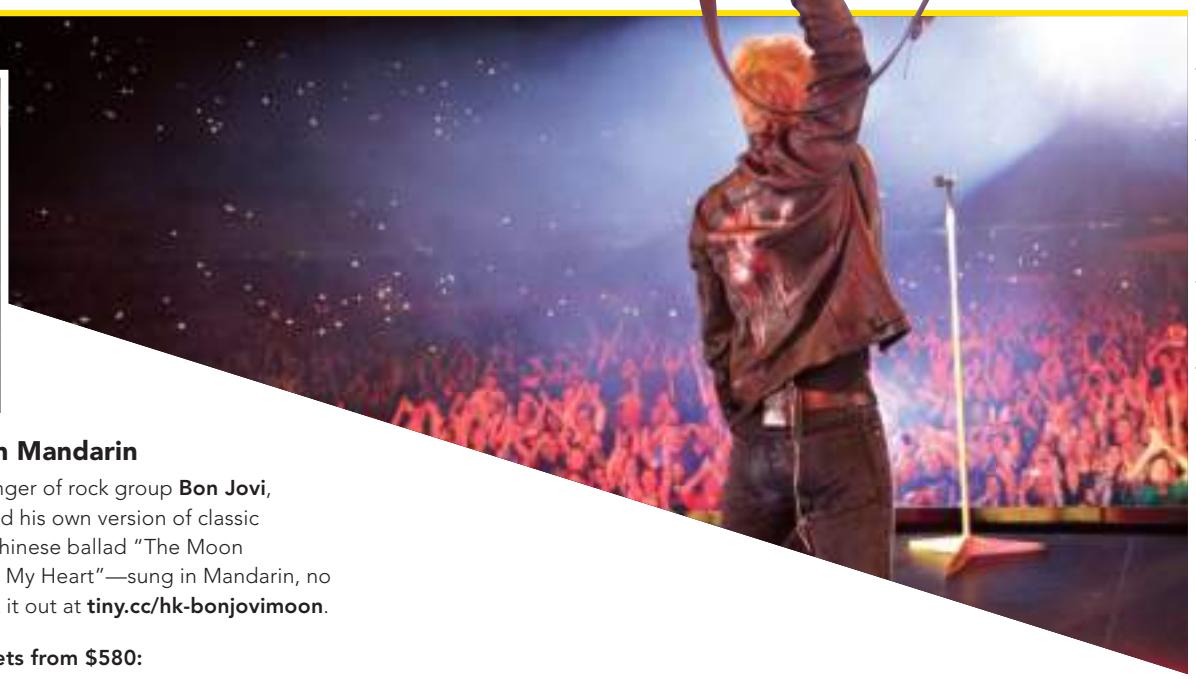


Photo: David Bergman & TourPhotographer.com

HK GIVEAWAYS

Welcome to HK Magazine's Giveaways! To show you how much we care, we've created this awesome page to offer premium trips, tickets and goodies to our avid readers. Don't say we never do nice things for you...

To kickstart this exciting new feature, in September we're offering prizes totaling nearly \$60,000.

But to be a winner, you have to be a go-getter—so go get all the details on how to win.



Win a romantic getaway for two to beautiful Albania and the Balkans, worth more than \$50,000!

Sun, sea and untapped natural wonders: Albania's a beautiful and unvisited corner of the Mediterranean that's just waiting for you to discover it. Don't believe us? Check out our travel story on **p.18** to find out just how perfect it is.

We've got a **two-week trip for two** to Albania and the Balkans to give away worth more than **\$50,000**, courtesy of GGF Globe Syndicate Limited! Want to win? You're going to have to pay attention. In this issue and the next two issues, read the articles on the **Spotlight** page (p.39) carefully. In each issue find the word that's been *italicized* in one of those articles. Once you've got all three, include them in a paragraph of no more than 30 words about how you feel about Hong Kong. Go to hk-magazine.com/hk-giveaways to submit your entry before 10am on **September 28, 2015**. The best, most convincing entry will win the top prize. Good luck! Winner will be announced on October 2. Prize is valid for one year from date of prize announcement.



GGF GLOBE SYNDICATE LIMITED



Win Tickets to Bon Jovi + Ferry and Hotel Stay!

Want to see one of the biggest rock bands in history when they play **The Venetian Macao** on Saturday, September 26? Thanks to The Venetian we've got a **pair of concert tickets** up for grabs, as well as **return ferry tickets** and a **night's stay at the Holiday Inn Macao Cotai Central**, total value \$5,200!

Want to rock out to "It's My Life"? All you need to do is explain in 20 words why you should win. Down on your luck and need a bit of a break? A huge Bon Jovi fan? Both? Whatever your motivation, let us know! Submit your entries to hk-magazine.com/hk-giveaways by 10am on **September 21, 2015**.

The winner will be announced in our September 25 issue.
(Don't worry—we'll let the lucky person know in good time!)





藝術總監：閻惠昌
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR : YAN HUICHANG



Conductor
Chew Hee Chiat



Percussion
Luk Kin-bun

Hand Drum
Abbos Kosimov

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Half-price ticket discount for senior citizens aged 60 or above, people with disabilities and minders, Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Recipients and full-time students.
25% ticket discount for FohKCO. Patrons can only enjoy one of the discount schemes for purchasing tickets. Discount only applies to standard tickets.

For "World Cultures Festival 2015" Group Booking & Package Booking Discount, please refer to www.worldfestival.gov.hk

For latest information, please visit HKCO website. Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra reserves the right to change programme and artists.

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FIRST PERSON

“I love the idea of effortless chic, of fusing business with couture.”

Fashion designer **Susanna Soo** is the force behind womenswear label S.Nine by Susanna Soo, which she founded in 2009. Last year, she launched an eponymous premium eveningwear label. She tells Andrea Lo about learning the ropes and keeping things creative in Hong Kong.



Photo: Kirk Kenny / studiozag.com

I was born and raised in Hong Kong. I went to boarding school here at St. Stephen's in Stanley when I was 9 years old.

I'm an only child, so my mom wanted me to learn how to be independent and hang out with other kids more.

When I was a kid I wanted to be a writer. I was into Chinese literature and read a lot. I would lie in bed and read books by [seminal Chinese writer] Jin Yong.

When I was 15, I went to New Jersey for boarding school. I then went to Carnegie Mellon University. I studied nothing related to fashion, but was always interested in design, the arts and music.

I never thought of fashion as my passion. In Hong Kong, I wasn't really exposed to that kind of career path. It wasn't very traditional. I never thought I would pursue it.

After college, I got a job in New York as a web designer.

New York City exposed me to the fashion world. I went to vintage stores and looked at new trends. I started my own blog for fun.

After work, I went to sewing class as a hobby. My teacher was an instructor at Parsons School of Design, and saw that I was passionate about learning how to make clothes—and not just for the glamor of it. She suggested that I apply to the school.

It was something I wanted to try, so I did it. Of course, it was really, really hard, but it felt natural to me so I ran with it.

I worked at Diane von Fürstenberg and learned a lot about the business process in the fashion industry. I was quietly learning all the bits and pieces: From samples, sourcing, design and production to managing people, putting on a show and getting orders from buyers.

I won an award at a San Francisco arts and fashion competition. After that I went to Paris to work for Anne Valérie Hash, a French couturier. At her atelier, I learned more about the construction and finishing of pieces.

It's very different from the American way. The French care a lot about the artistic side of things and they are not as commercialized, plus the people are quite serious—the air is just different. You would get an old European man sewing a garment for a couple of days, or even a week!

The "S" in S.Nine comes from my initial—it's very simple. Nine is my birth month, September. I tried to make it more casual. What I hoped to create is something a little bit more contemporary, an accessible luxury.

I love the idea of effortless chic, and fusing the commercial side of business with the details of couture.

My husband and I came back to Hong Kong because our parents were here. We happened to know someone who owns a factory in China. We visited it and thought it was suitable for creating garments. I now go back and forth a lot to oversee the production process.

Stylists could use my creations for an editorial [in a magazine]—but nowadays it doesn't get done because they only use the name brands. Editorials have become advertorials.

It's a bit unfortunate for Hong Kong. The creative force needs to be supported. There's less and less of that.

In this sense, Hong Kong is not very happening. You see the same thing over and over again and readers are just going to get bored.

S.Nine is in really good shape right now. We are a small, independent brand still, but people appreciate our creations and are enjoying the journey.

I try to stay relevant. I want to be involved in every facet of the industry and with the people I work with.

Have I thought about giving up? Once in a while, naturally. I wouldn't say I have never thought about it.

I do go through a lot of hard times. But you just need to tell yourself to have direction and clarity.

If you try to stay positive, people who like you will support you—and spread the word.

Sometimes, things can get too intense and fast-paced in Hong Kong. You feel like you can't take a break.

But, you know—you just gotta breathe.

If I could give my 21-year-old self advice, I'd say, "Don't drink too much."

"Retiring" is kind of a weird word for me. I'm not sure what I think about that. When I'm old, maybe I'll think of something else to do.

I'll keep on doing something interesting.



NEED TO KNOW...

S.Nine by Susanna Soo's designs merge style and function, creating clothing that's both feminine and modern. Susanna Soo Atelier creates bespoke evening and bridal wear for updated takes on classic designs. Visit S.Nine by Susanna Soo at Unit S505, 5/F, PMQ, 35 Aberdeen St., Central, 2803-2815, snineonline.com.



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