

Why laundromats are the hot new place to hang out in Hong Kong

Notes & Cues:**Article:**

On a bustling Hong Kong street lined with dried seafood stores, one shop stands out. Amid the pungent smells of dried fish and shrimp, the scents of brewed coffee and freshly laundered clothes come wafting out of the aptly named Coffee & Laundry.

The shop — half laundromat and half cafe — offers customers a variety of drinks and pastries along with 10 self-service washing machines and dryers.

Washing their own clothes at a laundromat is a new experience for Hong Kong residents. The first self-service laundromat is believed to have opened only in 2014. Since then, the number has taken off; more than 180 laundromats had appeared by the beginning of this year.

Why this proliferation of laundromats? The reason is Hong Kong's increasingly acute shortage of affordable housing. As prices keep soaring in what is already the world's most expensive property market, residents have been forced to squeeze into ever smaller apartments, leaving little room for washers and dryers.

Mr. Bolger, a native of Ireland, said that when he first moved to Hong Kong in 2016, his flat was too small to fit a dryer, and the humidity prevented his clothes from drying properly on a line. For a while he used a drop-off laundry, but his clothes would sometimes come back with tears and stains.

"It's nice to just sit and read in a place that's not your apartment, " he said of Coffee & Laundry. "It's kind of therapeutic, sitting here and watching the washing machines."

Summary: