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February-March

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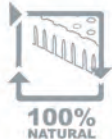
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EDITOR'S NOTE

By the time I left school, I still didn't know what I wanted to do. Dad had put me off doing the one thing that really excited me, which was being a vet – he said I'd be too small to hold the animals down!



I'm not sure if that was the best answer, but it was probably a good call at the time because I don't think I could have gone through all those years of studying.

Perhaps feeling guilty that he had culled my enthusiasm for a career, Dad then suggested I do a two-year photography diploma, at least until I had a better idea. (He'd always been a keen photographer, and we owned a cine-camera from as early as the 50s.) We were moving to Harare, Zimbabwe, at the time and the Polytechnic there offered a British-certified photography course. So off I went, and in the end that's what got me into my first role with video, and then into publishing with *Expat Living*. So it all worked out in the end.

Photography now is so different and so wonderfully easy, mobile and quick. I'm not quite as old as the *camera obscura*, but taking photos was still a lot more complicated in "my day" – we still used external light metres, for one thing. And, of course, after taking the photos you had to wait all that time for them to develop and print. It lacked the fun and spontaneity of today.

Although it's pretty heavy, I love my digital SLR – it does everything for me, even multiple exposures in one image! I didn't take it with me on my recent trip to New Zealand, and I kept seeing fantastic photo opps everywhere I looked, from misty dawns to lovely sunsets. Thank goodness for smart phones.

Have you been gathering some great shots over the holiday period? If you have a story about your travels or family life that you'd like to share, we'd love to hear from you. Just send us a brief description of your idea and a few sample photos to editor@expatliving.hk and you'll go into the pot to be published – and maybe find your own new career path!

Enjoy the issue – and Kung Hei Fat Choi to everyone!

Rebecca

REBECCA BISSET
Editor-in-Chief

STAY UPDATED ONLINE

NEWS – WHAT'S GOING ON?

Read the latest Hong Kong happenings

EVENTS CALENDAR

Having a party or promotional launch? Head to www.expatliving.hk, find the calendar and click to post an event.

WHERE TO BUY

A list of retail outlets where you can buy the latest copy of *Expat Living*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY!

13-15 FEBRUARY Hong Kong Masters at AsiaWorld Expo. mastersgrandslam.com

19-21 FEBRUARY Chinese New Year, various venues. discoverhongkong.com

20 FEBRUARY 8pm, Chinese New Year fireworks.

UNTIL 22 FEBRUARY The Great European Carnival, New Central Harbourfront. tgec.asia

27 FEBRUARY – 29 MARCH 43rd Hong Kong Arts Festival, various locations. hk.artsfestival.org

12-15 MARCH Asia Contemporary Art Show Conrad Hotel, Pacific Place. asiacontemporaryart.com

15-17 MARCH Art Basel at HKCEC. artbasel.com

27-29 MARCH Hong Kong Sevens Hong Kong Stadium. hksevns.com



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★ **Showcase Features:** Each issue, our **home showcase features** provide a through-the-keyhole look into some of our readers' lifestyles and their interior design decisions. If you'd like us to profile your own home – whether it's beautiful, quirky, historic or modern – and you're willing to be interviewed and photographed, drop us a line at info@expatliving.hk.

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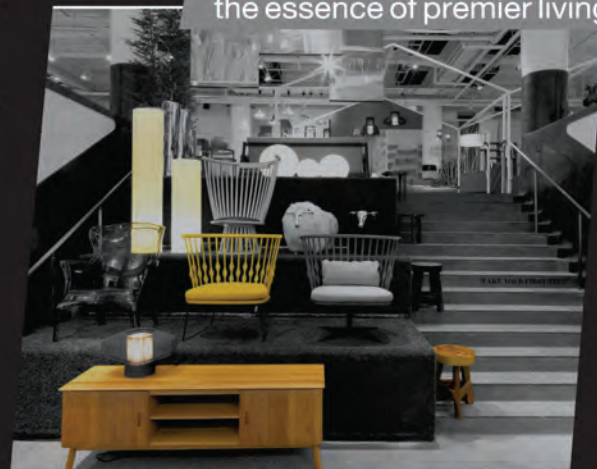
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WHAT'S NEW

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PURE PULSE

The recently opened **Pure South** at The Pulse has so many options under one roof, that southsiders no longer have an excuse to avoid the gym. With yoga, group fitness, lifestyle coaching and more, there's a workout for everyone. As well as the usual programmes, Pure South offers something a little different, with classes like Wall Rope Yoga, Handstands, Aerial Yoga, and Assault Bikes. Need further encouragement? It's the first Pure location offering classes on the beach, with views over Repulse Bay, and a Nood Food juice bar, which all makes working out feel less like work. Level 1, The Pulse, 28 Beach Road, Repulse Bay. **8200 0908 | pure-yoga.com ▼**



PAY LESS FOR PAINTINGS

With the aim of putting more art on the walls of Hong Kong homes, the Affordable Art Fair will be back in town in a few months' time. Running from 22 to 24 May at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, the Fair will house over 130 local and international galleries, giving you the opportunity to get up close and personal with thousands of artworks priced between \$1,000 to \$100,000. For those looking to jump into the art market on a budget, there's the special "Under \$10,000 Wall". While you're shopping for art, the kids can enjoy many of the fun interactive activities also on offer. **affordableartfair.com ▲**

BOUTIQUE BUYING

Discerning shoppers in Hong Kong know that online is where it's at. Why would you pound the pavements and battle the crowds when you can shop from the comfort of your own home? Sooq, an online marketplace for buying and selling unique, handmade and personalised goods made by some of Hong Kong's finest artisans,

has just made it even easier. Like your very own personal shopper, the Sooq team only selects vendors that they would personally want to buy from, and only their best products will feature on their website, saving you time and giving a whole new meaning to the term "window shopping". **9260 7163 | sooqcentral.com**



CNY GIFTING

Whether you celebrate Chinese New Year or not, you'll be coveting the cute range of gifts now in store at **TREE**. Ring in the Year of the Ram with Mariko Jesse's Hong Kong-themed ceramics in a traditional toile pattern with a quirky twist. The collection features everything you need for a Chinese tea party. Also in store, a stunning range of Vietnamese ceramic jars, Tu Textiles cushions in bold red patterns, and TREE's own exclusive *lai see* packets. Kung Hei Fat Choi! **tree.com.hk ▲**



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Better Reading

Most of us take for granted how we learned to read until we have to help our own kids learn, and then we realise we don't know our phonics from our phonemes. **Read Write Inc.** (RWI) is a phonics programme from the UK that is currently used by a number of schools in Hong Kong, and RWI's Trainer for Asia, Rachel Todd, is using her expertise to teach parents how to help their kids while they are learning to read. Her workshops for parents focus on the basics of phonics and sounds, spelling and reading at home. For a 20 percent discount on workshops in February and March, *Expat Living* readers should quote "EXPATABC" when enquiring. racheltodd.phonics@gmail.com ▲

RUN FOR LOVE

Looking for a Valentine's Day date with a difference? Couples will hit the trails again this year for **Lantau Base Camp's Valentine's Day Race**, a 14km team trail race on South Lantau Island. Each team must be made up of two members and teams must complete the whole trail together; how's that for romantic? The race is short enough for beginners and covers enough tough terrain and elevation for anyone looking for a challenge. Enter online and be ready to start 9.30am, Saturday 14 February - after a high-protein breakfast in bed, of course. events.lantaubasecamp.com



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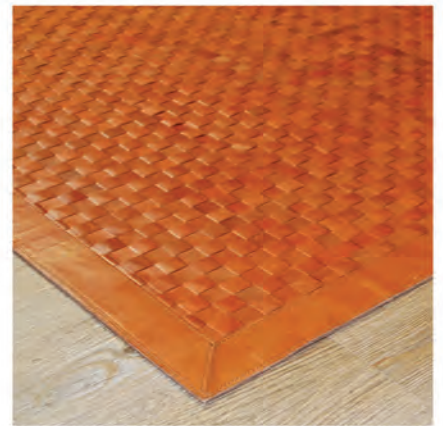
AirBnB has taken the world by storm, offering affordable accommodation for travellers, and the opportunity to make some spare cash for homeowners. But for those who choose to rent out their apartments, the admin side of things can be a little time-consuming. Personal management business **Caroline B** now offers a new service to property owners who let out their apartments on a short-term basis through sites like AirBnB. The services includes airport collection, housekeeping and building maintenance using Caroline B's own in-house qualified technical staff, to take the stress out of short-term renting. caroline-b.hk



MESSAGE AT THE MATILDA

Infant massage has many proven benefits, and if you're a parent of a newborn and you're keen to learn the technique, **Matilda International Hospital** offers courses in English, Cantonese and Japanese. Want to teach infant massage yourself? If you pass an exam at the end of the four-day course, you will be certified as an Infant Massage Instructor. **2849 1566 | matilda.org** ▼





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AROUND TOWN



Jingle Belles

Expats got together in December for a holiday party hosted by Liza and Jim Beighley, Vandi and Ram Krishnan, Marcy and Matt LaRont, and Mina and Steve Martinez at Boujis nightclub in Central. With a theme of "Silent Night, Not Tonight!" and signature drinks such as Candy Cane Martinis, the group danced the night away to tunes from the 80s, 90s and present day. (Photography: Eugene Chan)



School's Out

Over 200 teachers and staff from all 15 campuses of Woodland Pre-Schools came together for an evening of Christmas festivities at the Hong Kong Football Club. There were creative outfits to match the "Red, White & Green" theme, and activities consisting of a dinner buffet, games and raffle draw with prizes, the Long Service Award ceremony, and a disco. (Photography: Miss Sunshine Photography)





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Kids, Choirs and Carols

As part of VEO's 50th anniversary celebrations, the Parents and Teachers Association from Victoria Nurseries and kindergartens organised choirs from all eight kindergartens – around 1,600 children – to participate en-masse in the Carol Singing Festival. The choirs took turns to sing Christmas carols over two days, and the event contributed around HK\$320,000 to the Child Development Matching Fund (CDMF).





Arts Outdoors

Organised by the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, the third edition of Freespace Fest, the two-day outdoor arts festival, welcomed more than 43,000 visitors over a weekend in November, engaging an enthusiastic crowd with a unique and innovative mix of performances and interactive activities on the site of the future park in the West Kowloon Cultural District.



Himalyan Art in HK

TKM Limited hosted a Himalyan Art exhibition, supported by the Consulate General of Nepal in Hong Kong. The exhibition featured artworks indigenous to the Himalayas, predominantly from Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan. Teg Malla, Founder of TKM Limited, has been collecting and promoting Himalyan art in Europe for 14 years and now in Hong Kong for the past three years.



Wine Time

On the first weekend in December over 10,000 braved the cold to visit Hong Kong's largest pop-up wine cellar at Central Harbourfront. With over 800 wines available across 100 booths, Wine HK, presented by Ironmonger Events, offered visitors the opportunity to sample and buy wines at discounted prices in a unique setting.



Zalora Marketplace

E-tailer Zalora held a party in Central recently, where local and international fashion and accessories brands mixed and mingled at the Marketplace Launch. It was an opportunity for all brands associated with Zalora to get together offline.



Party Animals

At the Bear It all fundraiser held at Grappa's Cellar, guests enjoyed a variety of live performances, a vegetarian buffet, and a sponsored head shave. The event raised over \$30,000 for the Animals Asia campaign to end bear bile farming. (Photography: Cheryl Wong)



Row, Row, Row Your Boat!

2014's Hebe Haven 24-hour Charity Dinghy Race once again raised much-needed funds for children's charities, as teams raced around the clock. Back on dry land, spectators enjoyed the carnival atmosphere, with live music and great food on offer.





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WHAT'S NEW Eye-catching designs & inspiring ideas

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Taking inspiration from the designs of the 50s and 60s, **Indigo Living's** new Miller Collection is designed with smaller spaces in mind, and perfect for Hong Kong apartments. The range includes fabulous furniture for living, dining and bedrooms, with clean lines, dark wood and a stylish retro feel, all on a small scale to ensure a great fit. **2580 6519 | indigo-living.com** ▶



Sleep On It

When you want to have guests to stay but you don't have the space for a spare bed, sofa beds are the ideal solution. Available now at **OVOhome**, Innovation is a renowned Danish brand of sofas and sofa beds designed for both space-saving and comfort – whether you're sleeping or sitting. **2526 7226 | ovohome.com.hk** ▲

DRESSING UP

The Venus dressing table from **Giorgetti** is like a giant jewellery box, something you can imagine mothers wanting to own and little girls loving to play with. Made with walnut canaletto wood, it features four soft-closing doors, one with a mirror. The internal compartments of various sizes come with a suede-like lining, available in five colours (light blue, pink, indigo, yellow and light hazel). The top, the shelf and the internal shoulders are covered with saddle leather, making it the perfect place to sit and play dress-ups. 2/F, 3-11 Wing Fung Street, Wanchai. **3105 0599 viahk.biz**



STOCK UP AT STOCKROOM

Well-known for its one-of-a-kind, industrial, loft-style furniture collection and wide range of design classics, **Stockroom** has expanded its showroom and furniture outlet. More space means more stock, and a new collection of sofas, dining tables, and bed frames has just arrived. And they're celebrating in a big way, with up to 80 percent off original prices, until stocks last. **2817 0999 | stockroom.com.hk** ▶

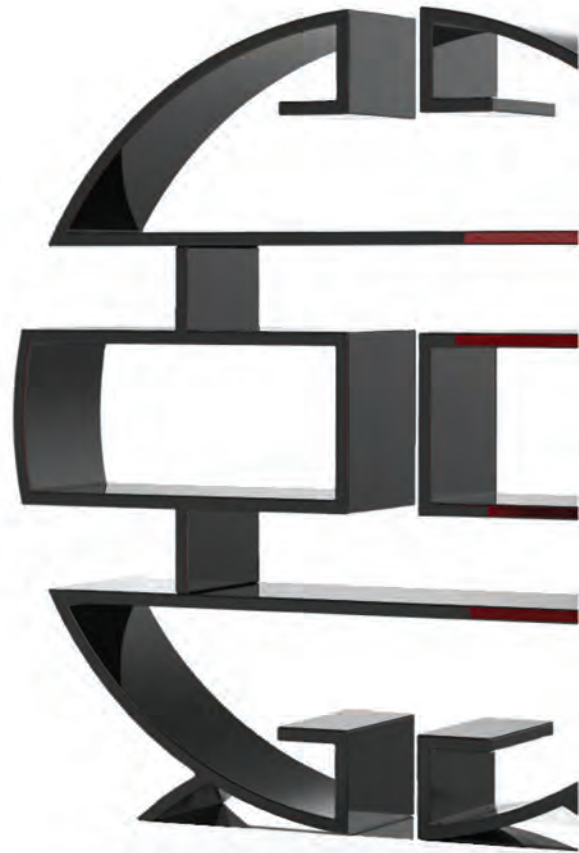




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The NATURAL TOUCH

The green ethos that underpins JUDE BAILEY's life and work is evident in the themes of her family home in Sai Kung.

By Tara Jenkins; photography by Helen Jenkins



When a landslide obliterated the back of Jude Bailey's house in Lamma fifteen years ago, she had to evacuate fast. "It was 2am and although I was half-asleep, I knew I had to grab the most critical things. I picked three: my passport, my underwear, and my makeup!"

This enterprising lady is nothing if not practical – there are all sorts of clever space-saving and functional ideas in her current Sai Kung house – but it's the combination of that practical streak with artistic sensibilities that has resulted in her uniquely creative talents.

Jude trained and worked as an interior architect in the UK, and took a job as Design Director for Asia at BDG McColl when she moved to Hong Kong eighteen





years ago. Fast-forward through a marriage, two children, a short stint in Australia, four different homes and a divorce, and Jude has a good number of creative endeavours under her belt: Innovation, her own successful design consultancy based out of Queen's Road East; BANG, a company selling bio-degradable, fairly-traded bags made by Bangladeshi village women; and now Edge of Desire, her nascent jewellery company.

Gems and jewels

"I decided to take a year off after my divorce and resolved to do something that would make me happy for the rest of my life," she explains. "Actually, it was liberating! I knew it had to be something creative, so I thought about pursuing furniture or fashion design, or photography, but I've longed to design jewellery ever since I was at university. I find the whole process so meditative. I've learnt how to use new design software and how to cast, and

now I'm beginning to work increasingly with precious metals. I've sourced these amazing quartz stones from Brazil that I'm basing my current designs around. It's going to take a while to build the collection, but I know it's the right thing to do."

So far, Jude has been selling to friends of friends and via word of mouth; customers drop by her Sai Kung house, where the jewellery is displayed in a typically innovative way. Jude's creations hang off a large number of chunky, circle-shaped knobs fixed to the wall at the top of her stairwell; she designed them herself, and got a contractor to make them up. The way they've been randomly hung resembles a piece of artwork in a gallery, and the contemporary necklaces glint alluringly as the light from the roof terrace catches them.

Creating space

This marrying of practical with creative is in evidence all around the house. Although Jude bought the property as

a base build, she has made alterations and added clever nooks everywhere to increase storage and hide everyday clutter. On the first floor, she has transformed the usual village-house family room into eleven-year-old Max's bedroom, but by moving the door to the far left and blocking up the original entrance, she has created a spacious hall cupboard panelled with mellow grey oak.

Downstairs, a large mirrored cupboard works as practical storage for DVDs and books, but visually opens up the living area, to make it look twice as big. Throw open the bi-fold glass doors that separate the ground floor from the garden, and the optical illusion is complete: a fantastic, roomy space to throw a party, kick a football, or play with Mr Chips the labradoodle – and a seamless blurring of inside and outside. Fashionable garden furniture from Dedon and a surprisingly realistic astro-turf lawn complete the relaxed, easy-lounging look.

Natural theme

Jude's interiors scheme is all about inviting nature inside: not only via the blurring of the inside/outside areas, but also by the use of charming arboreal decals, or vinyl stickers, that appear all over the house. There are flowering branches on the oak hall cupboard; a wall of magical white trunks in the boudoir-style master bedroom, and a

large tree with waving branches almost entirely covers the kitchen door.

This woodland theme is echoed in the arboreal-inspired print on a couple of huge grey cushions that sit on the oversized sofa, and along with several others covered in silvery fake fur or snowy-grey plush, the effect is curiously Narnia-like. Jude got the sofa custom-made at Simply Casa in

Ap Lei Chau, but she sourced most of the room's furniture from HomeSquare in Shatin, which has a huge variety of interiors shops ranging from Homeless to Kartell. The extendable dining table came from there, and the accompanying Eames DSW dining chairs were from Aluminium.

The living room décor is primarily contemporary, but there are a good few



traditional pieces like Buddha heads and antique ceramics dotted around, as befits someone who's spent most of her adult life in Asia. "There was some antique, older stuff I just couldn't bear to get rid of when I moved, as they are from periods in my life I want to remember – I did a lot of work in Bangkok at one point, and loved it!" Jude says.

As you would imagine, Jude's address

book is overflowing with a host of other home-related addresses in Hong Kong and beyond. She's a big fan of the contemporary furniture warehouses in Shenzhen; the six modern lights that hang above her dining table, and her bed, were both sourced from there. "You can get a taxi from Lo Wu, but if you're planning to buy lots of stuff, it makes more sense to hire a driver. A good one

will help you with translation and even with negotiating prices. My driver is from Shatin and I found him by word of mouth; ask around!"

Most of the fabrics she has used around the house are from Sham Shui Po – the rest came from Canaan Curtain in Sai Kung town – and the paint colours she specified and had mixed herself at a local shop.



Children's bedrooms

Jude has a number of local contractors she commissioned to make built-in furniture, especially in the study and the children's bedrooms. So there are two roomy desks in the study – essential when operating a home business – especially as she has a colleague, a fellow interior architect, who comes by twice a week to bounce around creative ideas.

In each of the children's rooms there is a bed that doubles as wardrobe, storage and sleepover bunk when required. Max's room pays homage to Liverpool FC, with a bold red-and-white striped duvet, and bright red boxing gloves hung casually over a punch bag to complete the colour co-ordinated look. But it's nine-year-old Tia's bedroom you'd choose to sleep in; with more of those dreamy, leafy decals covering the windows, a grass-green rug, lime green walls and botanical print curtains, you could easily believe yourself outside on a spring day. "We talked about themes for her room and she came up with nature," says Jude. "I got the decal for her room online from ETSY, but I ordered more for the rest of the house and the theme ended up defining the décor." Complete with raffia storage boxes and a sweet little woodland rabbit night light, Tia's room is a happy, relaxed place, and in keeping with the vibe of the rest of the house.





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Going green

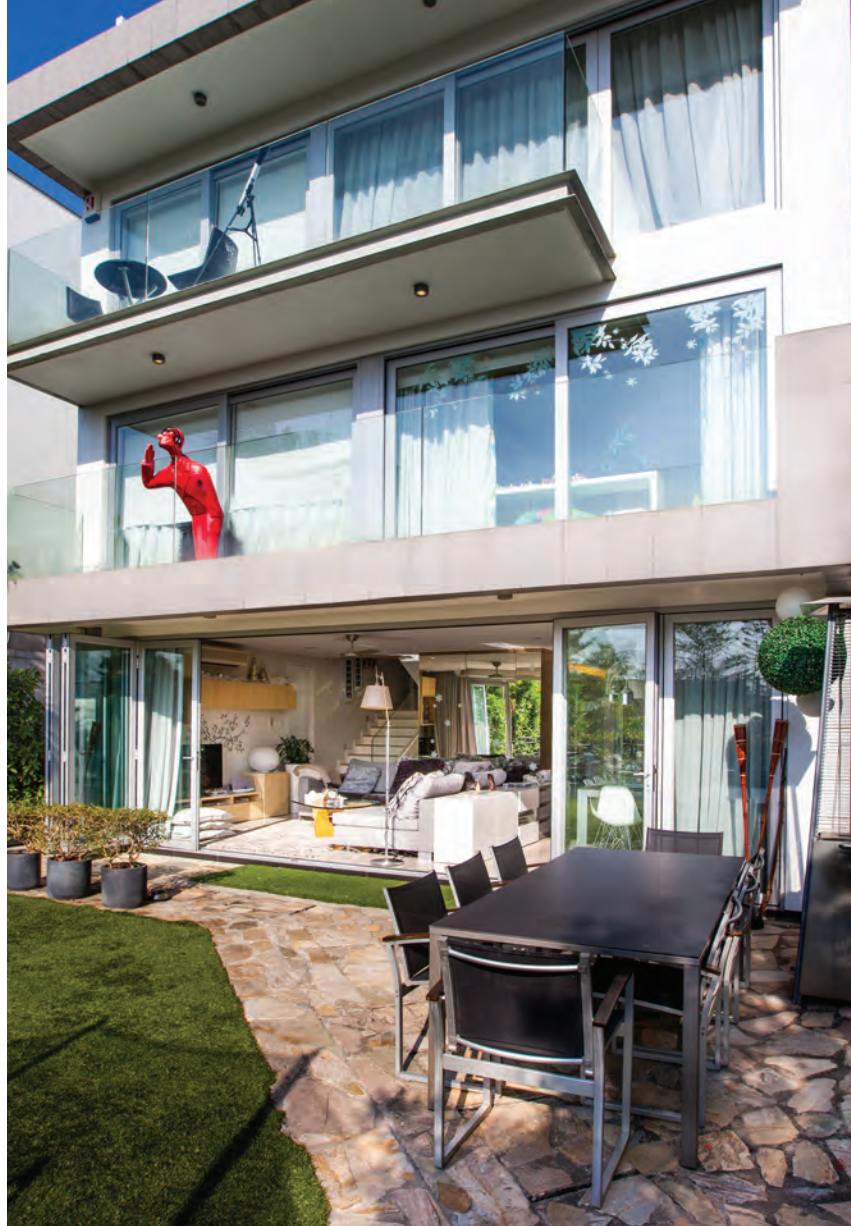
Nature and all things natural are very much part of this family's life; Jude was brought up by a mother who believed you do things for the collective good of people, and not for yourself. So aside from the work she's done with BANG and her fair-trade bags, Jude consciously seeks out fair-trade and organic goods wherever possible. "There's an organisation called Fair Trade Hong Kong which was set up around six years ago. It's quite small, but it has an active education programme; they go into schools and give talks," she says.

Jude has been vegetarian since the age of five, and loves to eat at Life and Mana in Soho, but recently has been spreading her wings: "I just put this fantastic app on my phone called Happy Cow. Wherever I am, it tells me if there's a vegetarian restaurant nearby. I ate at a great little vegetarian place in Chai Wan the other day."

Recycling is also a priority for the Bailey family. "There's still such a long way to go in Hong Kong," laments Jude. "We recycle our household waste, but the public recycling bins are ridiculously tiny. I believe the only way to do it properly is to follow the lead from Japan and the UK, and make it mandatory for people to recycle all household waste".

Despite the city's slow uptake on the green front, Jude is passionate about life in her adopted home. "When I first arrived in Hong Kong I thought the pace here was too much, too fast, too busy. Now when I go back to England, I find everything too slow! Yes, I miss UK pubs, the real fires, ploughman's lunches and proper baked potatoes, but with the fantastic variety of places to source home furnishings here, how could I go back? Everything you need is here, and with the fantastic outdoor lifestyle in Hong Kong, why would you live anywhere else?"

Why, indeed?





Jude's RECOMMENDATIONS

Home

HomeSquare

138 Shatin Rural Committee Road,
Shatin
2828 5187 | homesquare.com.hk

JMStyle

Shop 312, Level 3, The Arcade,
100 Cyberport Road, Pokfulam
2377 9592 | jmstyle.com.hk

Dedon

248 Queen's Road East, Wanchai
2529 7233 | dedon.de

Canaan Curtain

Sai Kung Building
42-56 Fuk Man Road, Sai Kung
2792 9892

ETSY

etsy.com

Restaurants

Mana

92 Wellington Street, Central
2851 1611 | mana.hk

Life

10 Shelley Street, Soho
2810 9777 | lifecafe.com.hk

Other

Edge of Desire

6298 1800

Fair Trade Hong Kong

edu.fairtradehk.org 



Table Talk

By Brooke Chenoweth

With limitless options for dining out, it's easy to avoid cooking at home. For this reason, the dining room or eating area is often the most overlooked part of the house. Hong Kong apartments aren't exactly conducive to hosting huge dinner parties, but with the right kind of furniture – like some of these pieces from Rimba Rhyme – dining in could become your favourite way to eat.

Top Tables

Whether you prefer round or rectangular, or even square, a table that extends is a great option. You can keep it tidily tucked away when you're not using it, or extend it fully for those times when you need a little extra room at the table. The Bailey extendable tables from Rimba Rhyme seat up to 12 when fully extended, with smaller sizes available too.

Glass-top tables are also very popular, and look great in smaller rooms where space is an issue. They give a simple and modern look to a room, and being transparent means they appear to take up less space than they actually do – especially if you keep them free of clutter and simply dressed.

Chic Chairs

These days there's no need to buy the chairs that come with the table; in fact, your dining set may look more interesting if you don't. Experiment with different textures and fabrics, and try lots of different chairs before you decide. Try them at the table to make sure they're the right height, that they meet the needs of your family, and that they'll still feel comfortable by the time dessert is served!



Bailey Extension table in solid carbonised teak, seats up to 12, custom-made to order in a variety of sizes and finishes; shown here with upholstered Bailey chairs.



From left to right:

Bruunmunch Play Series Lame Curve table, extends to seat up to 10, pictured here in solid oak; also available in solid walnut or with laminate top.

Bruunmunch Play Series extendable round table in solid walnut, designed and made in Denmark.

Table J in solid carbonised teak, seats 6 to 8, with Fefe chairs in Harlequin Array removable covers.



The Efficiency range of fabrics, by Spanish brand Crevin, has been designed with families in mind and is available at Rimba Rhyme. They are durable and hardwearing, washable and eco-friendly, but stylish as well – all-important when you have kids with sticky fingers.

Go Bespoke

One of the best ways to get the right furniture to fit your dining space is to have something custom-made. Not only does this allow you to dictate the style, colour, and finish that you want, but each piece can be made to your size specifications. Chairs can be made at different heights and sizes, and with either fixed or loose covers that can be changed when you've had one too many dinner parties. The hardest part is choosing from all the great styles that are available.

Rimba Rhyme has a large selection of chairs and tables in its showroom, so you get the chance to see how the pieces look together, to try the chairs at different tables and really get a good idea of how the finished product will look and feel before you order your bespoke dining set.

On Trend

Following on from last year's trends, the clean-cut Scandinavian look continues to be popular, highlighted by light woods and smooth finishes. Mix and match your styles and add pops of colour in your chair coverings, or choose something a little more plush, like Benjamin button-back chairs.




Table T in dark-stained solid oak with glass top, seats 6 to 8, shown here with Benjamin button-back upholstered chairs in Linden with contrast piping.

Whatever you choose, it's all about personalising the space and making it comfortable for all those shared meals you'll be inspired to prepare!

About Rimba Rhyme

Rimba Rhyme opened its doors in 1999, after the store's founder originally fell in love with the simple beauty of Asian resort style. With its authentic, rustic wooden furniture – including hand-sourced vintage pieces and made-to-measure items – proving popular, the store outgrew its Hollywood Road location and moved to Horizon Plaza in 2003; the extra space has allowed for a broader range of styles to be showcased, from classic to contemporary.

The Rimba Rhyme showroom is at 5/F, Horizon Plaza, 2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau. For more information, call 2544 4011 or visit rimbarhyme.com. 



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BIGASSFANS.HK/ELHK



Happy Dining

The days of families gathering for a group meal around a dining table seem to be disappearing. More commonly, individual family members eat at different times, or in front of the television – even in the office or bedroom. It's a shift that will have an increasing impact on society, according to a BBC report.

We don't want this, do we? So let's make our dining areas as cool, appealing and comfortable as possible.

When it comes to choosing a table, make sure that it's the perfect height for the chairs – even in matching sets this is something that's often not quite right. Buying ad hoc pieces from different outlets can make it even more difficult to achieve this balance.

Many new homes and apartments have smaller dining rooms; if that's the case, be sure to choose something that's not too "heavy". Anything that can have multiple uses or can be shifted easily is good too.

Here are just a few ideas for dining in style.



Teak double dining table,
OVOhome and **OVOstudio**,
 2526 7226 and 2529 6060,
ovo.com.hk



1 Bleu Nature console table, **Tequila Kola**, 2877 3295, tequilakola.com
2 Antique Bakhtiar rug, **Carpet Buyer**, 2850 5508, carpetbuyer.com **3** Antique sideboard, **The Red Cabinet**, 2536 0123, red-cabinet.com.hk
4 Basket, **InsideHK**, 2873 1795, inside.com.hk **5** Standford elm table bench, **Stockroom Furniture Outlet**, 2817 0999, stockroom.com.hk **6** Wooden board, **Indigo Living**, 2555 0540, indigo-living.com **7** Elbow chair, **Stockroom Furniture Outlet**



8 Light, **Lift Lifestyle**, 3907 0386, liftlifestyle.com 9 Dining set, **Lift Lifestyle** 10 Table cloth, **Makaron Home**, 9172 1232, makaron-home.com



11



12



13

11 Art Deco trolley, **Tequila Kola**, 2877 3295, tequilakola.com **12** Bleu Nature chandelier, **Tequila Kola** **13** Tableware, **Indigo Living**, 2555 0540, indigo-living.com **14** Servers, **InsideHK**, 2873 1795, inside.com.hk **15** Round hardwood table, **Forbidden City**, 2556 8968, forbiddencity.com.hk **16** Beijing Opera chairs, **Forbidden City** **17** Howard table and Vertura chairs, **Via - Poliform Varenna**, 3102 3189, viahk.biz



15



14

16







WELCOME TO 2015

The New Year has finally arrived and as usual, bringing many expectations with it. It's a new beginning, a chance to start over, re-set goals, achieve ambitions. Our agendas are filling up with many reminders for New Year resolutions, membership renewals and holiday commitments. Maybe your lease is expiring and you need to find a new apartment or perhaps "PR" day is on the horizon and thoughts are turning to buying a property, either case, HKSIR is here to help.

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you and your family's needs in your language. Our agents speak languages ranging from English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Dutch to Thai, Japanese, Hindi, Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese.

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hksothebysrealty.com

LORRAINE SALT and husband Roger live with their son Woody in a tucked-away corner of Upper Cheung Sha Village on Lantau. As Lorraine explains, they have spent several years transforming their basic village house into an enviable home.

WORTH THE WAIT

*By Brooke Chenoweth;
photography by Ken Wong*



Tell us a bit about yourself and your lovely home.

I'm from Manchester in the UK, and I've been in Hong Kong now for seven years. We bought this house almost five years ago. It was newly built at the time so we didn't need to do anything to it; but we've been adding our own touches and redoing things the way we wanted to ever since.

What was it about the area and this house in particular that appealed to you?

We rented a villa in Cheung Sha for two years before buying; we loved Lantau and the area, and we wanted to stay as close to where we were as possible. The house appealed very much as it had lots of space and rooms for my then toddler. The village has no roads into it, but it's easily accessible and now my boy is

seven, he can play very safely outside with the other children in the village. It's lovely to have that freedom.

Which pieces of furniture or art are your favourites and why?

My favourite furniture has to be the pink chairs; I love that mix of modern and traditional. They're a very expensive American designer brand but I picked



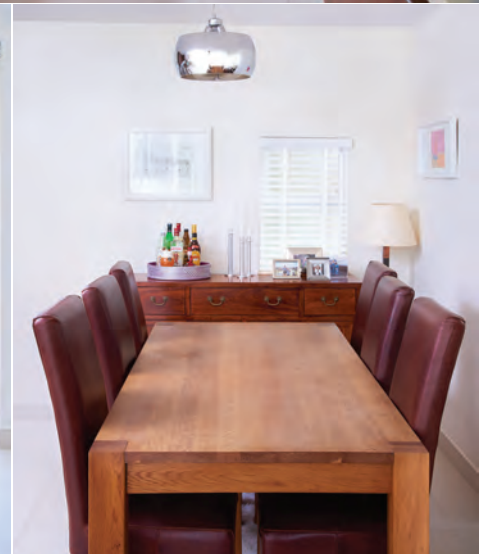
them up from AsiaXpat for an absolute steal, had them re-upholstered and now they are a key feature of this room. My favourite piece of artwork is the one my son did a few years ago. I loved it when he brought it home – especially the colours, but I just put it away in his art drawer with the others, thinking I would get around to framing it one day. About a year later, we revamped the downstairs, changed the sofa and the colour scheme; we tidied his art drawer not long after and found the colours worked perfectly so we finally got it framed – I love it! I also love the original watercolour I bought in Portofino, Italy; with its beautiful harbour, it's the prettiest place on the planet – it never fails to make me smile when I look at it!

At 2,100 square feet, this is a big house; where do you spend most of your time?

My favourite room has to be the ground floor. It's open-plan living/dining/lounge, and like most people's favourite room, it's the heart of the house – where I cook, where we eat and where we entertain. It holds many happy memories of time with family and friends.

Describe your approach to decorating. Where do you get your inspiration?

I would say my approach is fairly eclectic – like my music collection! I like to surround myself with things that matter to me. I miss my friends and family from the UK so I have plenty of pictures of



my nearest and dearest. We love to travel, so of course we have our souvenirs of here and there collected along the way. I like a bargain, and while Hong Kong is sometimes a difficult place for sourcing specific things, it can be fantastic for picking up beautiful second-hand pieces for a snip.

I'm not formally trained, but I've always had a passion for design; I love seeing other people's houses, for real, in print or on TV – anywhere, really! I appreciate all styles: modern, country, traditional and contemporary; but the homes I love most don't have any one specific style – rather, they are homes that are personal and filled with things that the owners obviously love.

In Hong Kong, you can see many beautiful homes but some of them feel cold and lacking in soul. I often appreciate the style of a house but I get no warmth from it, like it's just another show home. I fell in love with Philippa Haydon's home in last month's issue of *Expat Living* – simply stunning!

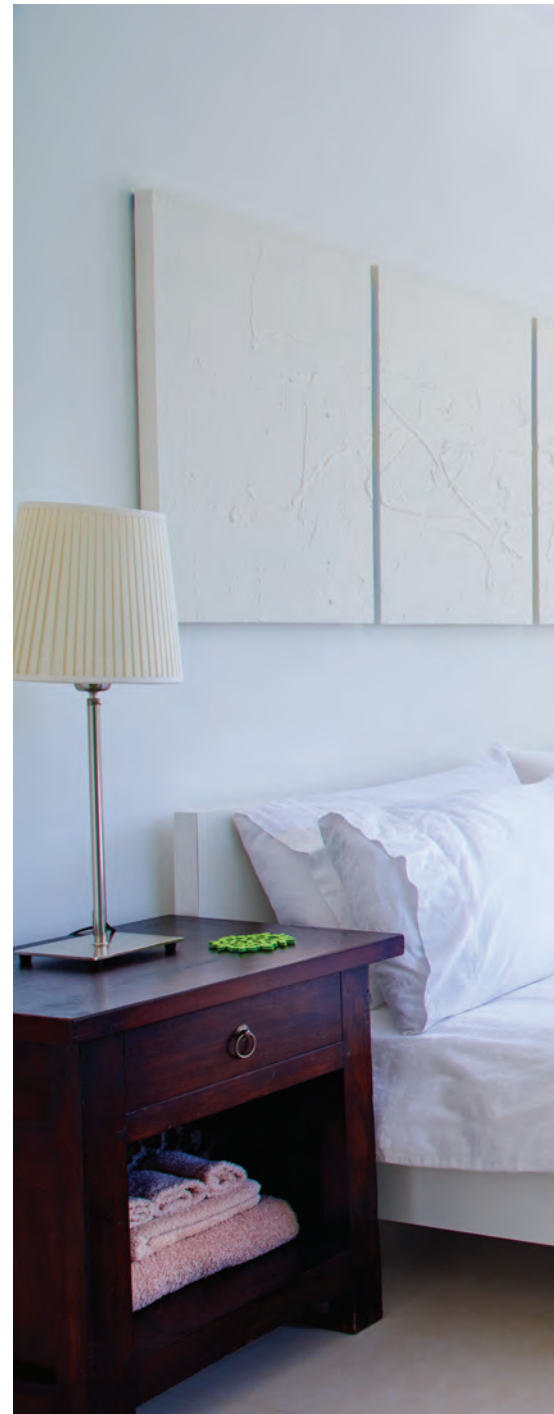
Where do you shop for furniture and homeware?

All over Hong Kong, and also online. Like most people, when I arrived here I hadn't the first clue where to go, and I was on a tight budget. I checked the AsiaXpat website most days, but living in South Lantau can be tricky because collecting used furniture is expensive – it often ends up costing more than the item you purchase.

While it was very hard at first, with the help of good friends, I started to find my "go to" places and things became (a little) easier. Magazines and online sites are a great source of information too. Horizon Plaza is amazing but can be very expensive. My new favourites have to be Bowerbird Home and Zara Home, and an old favourite is Francfranc.

Etsy is great for bits and bobs but sometimes a risk as you can't see and feel before you buy. I recently bought a beautiful Christmas cushion from there; it's lovely and I was very happy with it but my brother spilled a glass of water on the cushion and the jade green dye ran all over my new pale blue sofa, a white rug, and an expensive white cushion, so beware!

I won't lie: making a home in Hong Kong has been very challenging but it's been great fun, and there's something to be said for not getting immediate gratification.





LORRAINE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

HK furniture stores

Francfranc
10/F, Shop 1001-1002, Horizon Plaza
2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau
2941 0055 | francfranc.com.hk


GQ Interiors
Room 214, Oceanic Industrial Centre
2 Lee Lok Street, Ap Lei Chau
gqinteriors.com.hk

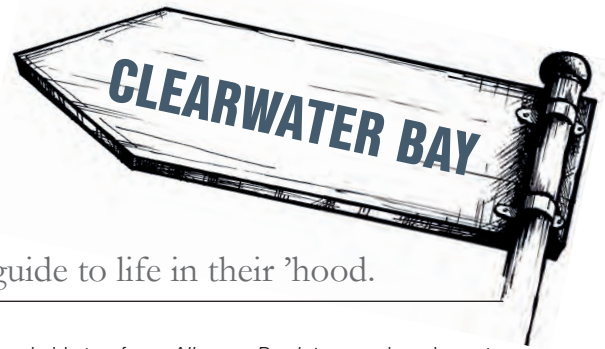
Indigo Living
6/F, Horizon Plaza
2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau
2555 0540 | indigo-living.com

Tequila Kola
1/F, Horizon Plaza
2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau
2877 3295 | tequilakola.com

Other

John Lewis (UK)
johnlewis.com

Online forum for used and antique
furniture
hongkong.asiaxpat.com 



STREET TALK

An insider's guide to life in their 'hood.



NAME: Ally Smyth
ORIGINALLY FROM: UK
OCCUPATION: Marketing & Business Development Consultant

Where do you live?
 Tai Hang Hau, Clearwater Bay.

How long have you lived here?
 Since August 2014.

Why here?
 I lived on Hong Kong Island for eight years, but I always loved this part of HK; I just never wanted to live here on my own. When my fiancé and I decided to move in together, we were both looking for a more

relaxing pace of life. Plus, I'm a rural girl at heart, being from Kent, so I'm far happier waking to a view of sea and mountains than a concrete apartment block.

Describe your Clearwater Bay lifestyle?
 Pretty chilled. I work from home most of the time, so I don't have to run the rat race. I guess it's full of puppy licks, spider-and-stray-dog avoidance and entertaining at home.

When you walk out of your place, the first thing you see is...
 If I walk onto the balcony (not sure if that counts) I see probably the most beautiful bay in the world: green sea, mountains and trees. If I walk out of the front door, there is a large bougainvillea, more trees, a couple of village houses – and spiders hanging in wait.

Closest store to your front door:
 The noodle shop by Tai Hang Hau roundabout.

Your street would make the perfect backdrop for a remake of...
 Ooh, you could be anywhere here, in any time period. I can imagine the *Bounty* sailing into the bay, or maybe the creatures

from *Alien vs Predator* coming down to attack you through the trees!

How are the neighbours?
 Neighbours are good. We are probably the worst for being noisy after a few wines when we have friends over. I got locked out in my first week of living here. I knocked on a neighbour's door and typically in good old Hong Kong style, after a lot of head scratching, the "chief of the village" was called, who translated to my next-door neighbour and we managed to call a locksmith.

The unofficial uniform of your street is:
 Shorts and flipflops. Heels are a bit dangerous on the slopes.

A mandatory stop for guests is:
 Popping to the beach or Clearwater Bay Park, or going for a hike on the nearby trails.

Date night – what and where?
 Either on our roof, or a picnic at the beach, or Hebe One O One.

Best thing for kids in your area?
 Being able to play outside and just be a kid.





You'd swap houses in a second with...
 Nobody! Well, maybe one of the large posh ones in the village...

Favourite places in your area?
 Sai Kung still surprises me for being one of the friendliest places on the planet. Shopkeepers there will help you with everything you need and bring out water bowls for your dogs.

Strangest thing you've seen in your area?
 Spiders. My fiancé got bitten by one while clearing a tree from the road during the last typhoon. I've seen pictures of six-metre long pythons, porcupines and boars (but not in the flesh yet, thankfully), all taken close to where we live. A shark was also spotted recently on the sandbar in the bay. There has also been a praying mantis on our roof and a very strange looking beetle on our balcony. I do sometimes think we live in Jurassic Park!

Guiltiest pleasure in your area?
 Just looking out to sea and trying not to take the amazing view for granted.

What would you never change about your area?
 The peace, the stars at night, and the fact that you are away from it all, but still only 45 minutes from Central by MTR.

Best thing about living in your area?
 Always being surprised about how friendly everybody is, how green everything is and the possibility of seeing an interesting new insect or animal.



We want to know about where you live. Don't be shy! Send an email to contribute@expatliving.hk with "Street Talk" in the subject line. Include your name and street, and we'll be in touch.

**New Year
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Market Update



*Letizia Casalino,
Hong Kong Sotheby's
International Realty*

This year is promising to bring hope to those who could not afford to buy their first home or invest in a property in 2014. With analysts predicting a potential drop in prices due to a slower economy, interest from buyers has grown again.

After a greater impact across more industries was realised as a result of the Occupy Central protests, the market has picked up again. Agencies have been busy with on-site visits, various launches of large development complexes and, of course, meetings with investors who seek guidance in the real estate market.

This year, most of the new developments will still be on the smaller size in terms of scale, where developers might not necessarily drop prices, but rather offer certain benefits to keep attracting buyers. A significant price drop is also expected in the secondary market this year, where the interest of those who were "waiting to see" has risen again.

The rental market is still going strong and prices are as volatile as usual, especially in the middle market. However, the market is hungry for new stock and premises to become vacant.

Hot Properties



EXCEPTIONAL ENTERTAINING

District: Chung Hom Kok
Rent: \$260,000
Size: 2,711 sq. ft
Bedrooms: 4 (2 ensuite)
Bathrooms: 3.5

Beautiful views reach from nearby gardens to the sea. The unique space is newly renovated throughout, and includes a state-of-the-art kitchen.

To view properties, call Hong Kong Sotheby's International Realty at +852 3108 2108



FAMILY APARTMENT

District: Pokfulam
Sale: \$34 million
Size: 2,079 sq. ft
Bedrooms: 4 (1)
Bathrooms: 2
Sole Agent



A four-bedroom apartment that has been tastefully renovated with high-end fixtures. It boasts a great internal space plus a generous balcony.



COLONIAL GEM

District: Mid-levels West
Rent/Sale: \$62,000/\$31.8 million
Size: 1,612 sq. ft
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 1



This spacious colonial apartment is positioned on Robinson Road, and comes with a fully renovated kitchen and bathroom.

To view properties, call Hong Kong Sotheby's International Realty at +852 3108 2108



CLASSY RENO

District: Mid-levels West
Sale: \$30 million
Size: 1,123 sq. ft
Bedrooms: 3 (1)
Bathrooms: 1.5

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6

6 Teak extendable table, **OVOhome and OVStudio**, 2526 7226 and 2529 6060, ovo.com.hk **7** Hybrid Isaura plate, **OVOhome and OVStudio** **8** Serving tray, **Indigo Living**, 2555 0540, indigo-living.com **9** Glass canisters, **Indigo Living** **10** Decorative glasses, **Lift Lifestyle**, 3907 0386, liftlifestyle.com **11** Brocante Cottage bar table and stool, **Tequila Kola**, 2877 3295, tequilakola.com **12** Metal Trivet in red, **Forbidden City**, 2556 8968, forbiddency.com.hk



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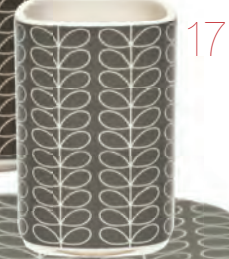
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13 Duravit Blue Moon, **Duravit - Depot**, 3106 6008, massford.com **14** Towel and shoe rack, **Tequila Kola**, 2877 3295, tequilakola.com **15, 16, 17, 18** Orla Kiely bathroom accessories, **Indigo Living**, 2555 0540, indigo-living.com **19** Diffuser, **OVOhome and OVOSTUDIO**, 2526 7226 and 2529 6060, ovo.com.hk **20** Ceramic candle-holder, **OVOhome and OVOSTUDIO**



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21 Monterey jacket hanger, **Tequila Kola**, 2877 3295, tequilakola.com **22, 23, 24** Bathroom accessories, **Indigo Living**, 2555 0540, indigo-living.com **25** Milano mirror, **Tequila Kola** **26** Duravit Vero bathroom, **E.Bon**, 3105 0599, ebon.com.hk



26



Futuristic Fans



DAVID WILLIAMS from **Big Ass Fans** explains the science behind the company's high-tech ceiling fans, and how they can add an extra level of comfort to your home.

Ceiling fans have been doing a great job for a long time now; what prompted the development of the new technology in your fans?

Have you ever woken up sweating in the middle of the night? Your thermostat might be set at 21 or 22 degrees Celsius, but thermostats only detect the temperature right in front of them. So while your hallway is perfectly comfortable, you could be sweltering in a bedroom that's three or four degrees warmer.

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The SenseME technology in our Haiku ceiling fans knows when you enter or leave a room, and it turns Haiku on and off automatically. The "ME" in SenseME is a nod to the Micro Environments that the fan monitors for temperature and humidity changes, adjusting Haiku's speed to optimise comfort. A function called Smart Mode learns your preferences, and tailors future speed adjustments to what you find comfortable.

Tell us a bit more about Smart Mode.

Smart Mode monitors temperature and humidity, adjusting Haiku's speed when conditions change. As the afternoon sun heats up your living room, for example, SenseME will speed up Haiku. Meanwhile, the Haiku in your daughter's stuffy upstairs bedroom is running even faster to keep her comfortable as she plays.


When Smart Mode is engaged, SenseME remembers your manual speed adjustments to better know how to adjust fan speed the next time you're in the space.

And there's an app that can be used with the fans too, right?

Yes, Haiku with SenseME technology is the first fan controlled by a smartphone app. You can use the app to set schedules for both the fan and LED light, or select from control modes including Gradual Awake, which gently increases the fan's speed and turns up the light for a more pleasant wake-up.

Can this system help to reduce cooling costs?

Absolutely. In Smart Mode, SenseME automatically increases Haiku's speed when the room gets warmer, allowing you to raise your thermostat setpoint without sacrificing comfort. You'll save approximately five percent on air-conditioning costs for each degree you raise your setpoint.


For more details about Big Ass Fans, call 2836 5808, go to bigassfans.hk or visit the office/showroom at Room 808, Tai Yau Building, 181 Johnston Road, Wanchai. 





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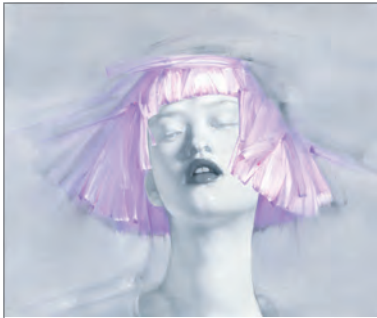
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Life & Family

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ACAS AT THE CONRAD

Investing in art has never been easier, or more popular, thanks to the various art shows that come to town every year. From 12 to 15 March, The Conrad once again hosts the **Asia Contemporary Art Show**, featuring over 3,000 works of art from 18 countries. Browse or buy original paintings, limited editions, sculpture and photography from some of the world's most interesting and promising artists. asiacontemporaryart.com



Fancy Sparklers

Diamonds will always be a popular gift but this year it's all about stones with colour. From pink to chocolate, coloured diamonds have become increasingly popular with fashionable brides-to-be and celebrities, but shades of yellow have been stealing the spotlight lately. With dramatic variations in tone, a yellow diamond deserves a bespoke setting, for a truly unique piece of jewellery. So if you've been dropping some big hints in the lead-up to Valentine's Day then a trip to **Haywards** might be in order. They'll help you (or your other half) understand all you need to know about coloured diamonds, and design a setting just for you. Feel free to leave your copy of *EL* lying around open at this page – we will be! **2545 4400 | bespoke@haywards.com.hk** ▲

WHAT'S NEXT?

Online shoppers, have your trackpads at the ready: UK brand **Next** has just released its spring collection. Stock up on staples for the whole family or make a statement with bold graphic tees for the boys, mix floral dresses for the girls, or a little something for yourself. The best bit is free delivery within four working days on all orders over \$200 (exceptions apply). nextdirect.com ▼



A Gift THAT GROWS

Looking for a unique baby shower gift? Buying clothes is a great idea, but babies grow so quickly that your gift will soon join the pile of the "hardly worn". **TinyBitz** offers a unique solution with the Growing Kit, a set that includes three different-sized onesies, so that your gift will grow as baby grows. Each set follows the seasons too, with kits for bubs born in the winter and summer. All sets are made with 100 percent cotton, and come with TinyBitz's signature gift packaging, making gifting a breeze. tinybitz.com ◀

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STYLE HUNTER

Forget the catwalk, the shop windows and the fashion bloggers. Sometimes the best place for style inspiration is out on the streets. Our style hunter roams the island, camera-in-hand, ready to snap expats who exude individuality and a style of their own.

This month, personal stylist **Ellen Lobler** shares her tips for Valentine's Day prepping.

To get in the mood for Valentine's Day, the obvious colour choices are reds, pinks and purples. I'd suggest trying on some fuchsia-coloured dresses or tops this year – it's a bit more of a mature colour than bright pink or purple, so it's easier to wear for different ages.

To put a romantic spin on your make up, try using a touch of pink powder or cream blush on your cheekbones.

For lips, MAC's Ruby Woo is the perfect matte red and suits a multitude of complexions. For an even more daring red, try Relentlessly Red.

For nails, check out OPI's 2015 Hawaii collection for some great bold shades.



Ellen is a Dutch stylist and personal shopper in Hong Kong who writes about the latest trends for stylebyasia.com, and blogs at loblerdelaney.com.



Model: JoJo, Model and Student at King George V

Dress: Aly and Rachelle, alyandrachelle.com

Clutch: Blind by BW, available at Aly and Rachelle, alyandrachelle.com

Shoes: Prada

Lipstick: Relentlessly Red MAC

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www.bumpstobabes.com



Making it Work

Whether you're a trailing spouse or a stay-at-home mum with hidden talents, Hong Kong offers endless opportunities for reinvention and rewarding work. We spoke to four women who have not only found a new path, but who are now managing to balance the rigours of work with the demands of family.

By Brooke Chenoweth

Stimulating Minds

After moving to Hong Kong in 2006, ANA BENNETT discovered that life as a trailing spouse was very different to life as a television presenter. But a stint at Woodland Montessori and motherhood gave her the new direction she was looking for. Ana now runs **Story Stage** – educational, developmental, energetic and fun classes that aim to nurture the next generation of budding performers.

Tell us a little bit about your background.

In my past life in the UK I was a television presenter; I spent many happy years in the “Broom Cupboard” on CBBC with Otis the Aardvark and a variety of stuffed animals before heading into the world of “grown-up telly” and presenting shows such as *Sky News*, *Inside Out*, and *Top Gear GTI*, to name a few.

When we arrived in Hong Kong in 2006 I changed tack, moving into print journalism, and got a job as the Deputy Editor of a wedding magazine, which I followed with a stint at *Hong Kong Tatler*. I enjoyed both roles but they were vastly different from the hard-news journalism I had become used to in the UK, so I decided to have a complete change and became a Supervisor at The Woodland Montessori Pre-School, which I can honestly say was a blessing in disguise in so many ways, and I loved the job very much.

I had my son in 2008 and decided to work part-time and go back to my journalistic roots, becoming the Editor for Good Schools Guide International HK. After having my second child in 2012, I really struggled to find a role that would allow me to be a mum and to work – and honestly speaking, I felt very much like I hadn’t found my niche.

What was the motivation behind starting Story Stage?

It was while reading an article in *Good Housekeeping* about women who had successfully changed their jobs that I decided to take the plunge. I was inspired to make real an idea I’d had many years ago about combining my love of children, presenting, teaching, and a desire to be my own business woman again. I launched my story-telling and drama classes last June and I have not looked back. I’ve gone from running one class in Stanley to holding classes in six venues around Hong Kong. I’ve also employed another teacher. My oldest son comes to my Book Club class, and my daughter comes to Story Stage.



Tell us about the classes you run; why are they such a hit with kids?

I think they are essentially an indulgence in my quest for giving children the ability to be children, which is something I’m terribly passionate about. We start the classes with around 15 to 20 books on the floor for the children to spend five or so minutes looking through them, choosing what they would like to read. It’s quite amazing how the room goes silent and the children get lost in the pages of the books, without any direction from anyone. For the older ones in particular, the topics of the books can raise some questions that they might not have the chance to ask at school, and we help them work out how to challenge themes, ideas and perceptions.

It’s not just about comprehension and vocabulary though; it’s also about the children growing in confidence – we learn to talk in front of the group, listen when our friends are talking, think about new ideas, and question the ideas that are presented to us in books. There are no other classes like these because they are firmly based on my childhood. My parents were so creative when it came to book reading; no one could do the voices from *The Hobbit* like my dad, and Story Stage was inspired by that.

What’s in store for 2015?

Now that the framework is set up, I’m looking to take the company overseas, expand it in Hong Kong and let it grow naturally, while still retaining what makes it so special, which is the small, secure environment of the classes. I’d also love to get some classes in Kowloon and the New Territories up and running. I feel very much that 2015 is the year for Story Stage!

thestorystage.com

Cool Collections

Making the transition from designing for celebrities to creating clothes for little ones was surprisingly easy for LACIE THORNE, whose line of mummy/daughter outfits **Matchmi** has just started selling like hotcakes in Hong Kong.

Tell us about life before Matchmi.

Before moving to Hong Kong, I studied fashion at Parsons School of Design in New York City. I spent a decade in the city as a fashion designer, creating collections for celebrities like Jennifer Lopez, Nicki Minaj and Adam Levine. The collaboration process was really fun – I would go to their homes and discuss the aesthetic direction of the brand based on the artists' work and personal style. When I moved to Hong Kong a little over a year ago, I was four months' pregnant and wanted to create something for myself, so I started this business.

How did you find the process of starting a business here?

Prior to moving into the fashion industry, I graduated with a business degree, so the interest in mixing a creative endeavour with a business enterprise has always been there. The experience I gained in New York made the transition to an independent brand a natural move. Since I was expecting a baby at the time, I was really intrigued by the idea of creating a cohesive image between mother and child that expressed the closeness and love that relationship represents. So that's where the idea for Matchmi came from.

I found the process of setting up in Hong Kong surprisingly easy. I went to the Immigration Tower in Wanchai to register the business and that was it. Finding my manufacturer was a bit more challenging – I went through three different factories before I found someone that spoke the industry lingo and that I trusted to be capable of doing production. However, I love the people I ended up with – they are very supportive and believe in the long-term growth of the company, which I appreciate immensely.



What makes Matchmi unique, and how is the business going?

Our first collection featured coordinating dresses for mothers and daughters, and we're moving into mothers and sons soon due to demand. It's a unique concept that pairs two silhouettes without looking hokey or unstylish. The pieces are contemporary and can be worn independently, which is important to me. We are wrapping up our first season, and things couldn't be better! The response to the collection has been really amazing, and it seems we've tapped into a unique demand in the market. We're currently working on a distribution agreement to a third-party retailer, and we look forward to bringing the brand to new audiences.

Any advice for aspiring entrepreneurs?

I've found the entrepreneur community in Hong Kong to be incredibly helpful, and I would advise other people interested in starting their own businesses to seek out relevant meet-ups and Facebook groups as useful resources. For example, even though I'm not a big fan of the word "mumtrepreneurs", I belong to the Facebook group HK Mumtrepreneurs that has been a wellspring of support, sales outlets, accounting resources and local know-how. It's awesome. Next on my horizon is to go to a Heels & Deals event here – from what I've heard it's a great community of inspiring women from all backgrounds; I can't wait to attend and network.

matchmiclothing.com

Sleeping in Style

SAMANTHA HARRINGTON and her business partner JULIE DIXON run **Sam's Jams**, a sleepwear brand for children.

Sam is from Sydney, Australia, and moved here in January 2006. In her former life she was a property manager, owning and operating a firm called Quinn Harrington from 1997, when her eldest child Oskar was four months old. Over the ensuing eight years she had three more children: Chloe in 1998, Jesse in 2002 and Arkie in 2004.

Julie is from the UK and worked in fashion design before moving to Hong Kong 20 years ago. She brings her design background and contacts to the business.

What inspired you to start designing pyjamas?

Samantha: When I arrived in Hong Kong, being a stay-at-home mum for the first time was hugely enjoyable and challenging at the same time. It was some time before I started to feel the need to work again. I began by helping a friend in her children's boutique. It was there that I met many mothers searching for children's sleepwear that wasn't emblazoned in Disney characters. I also realised that pyjamas were one of the things on my list of "items to be bought when holidaying at home", along with school shoes and Kraft Peanut Butter. It wasn't long before the idea of Sam's Jams was born.

What does a typical day at work involve?

Samantha: Thankfully, there's no such thing as a typical day at work for me. Some days I designate for admin tasks while Julie helps with design. Other days we spend packaging, posting and delivering pyjamas. Some are spent at fairs meeting our clients face to face and hearing their feedback. Some are spent travelling to and from factories to inspect completed pyjamas. Others are spent fitting pyjamas onto willing models, choosing fabrics or coming up with new designs for our prints. It's this variety that makes the job so interesting.

Any advice for aspiring entrepreneurs?

Samantha: To anyone thinking of starting their own business, my advice is go for it! We're in a remarkable position here in Hong Kong, where

there are still so many opportunities for business. Working for yourself offers so much more freedom and flexibility allowing you to make your own rules. *Julie:* It is not an easy venture so don't expect to see quick results – you need to be patient as it's a climb and is very much dependent on recommendations and keeping your customer happy. You have to know and understand the market you are targeting.

samsjams.com.hk



Fresh Food

LILY HUANG and HELEN SCOTT set up **MM Fresh** a year ago. The company sells sustainable, fresh chilled seafood and grass-fed lamb and meat from New Zealand to homes, hotels and restaurants. While Lily has a background in IT and Helen was formerly a banker, they are both devout foodies who enjoy cooking with the very best ingredients. "A definite perk to the job is bringing home our new produce to sample and cook for my family," says Helen.

Lily was born in Beijing, raised in Australia and now lives in Sai Kung with her Irish husband and four-year-old son. She was in information technology auditing and management consulting before starting MM Fresh. Helen was born in London and lived and worked there until five years ago when she and her Scottish husband moved to Hong Kong with their banking jobs. They have children aged two and three and live in Aberdeen. She answered our questions about MM Fresh.

How did you find the process of setting up here? What were some of the obstacles?

Setting up a business in Hong Kong is infinitely easier in terms of red tape than in most countries, and the strong sense of entrepreneurship among people here makes it easy to form alliances and collaborations with companies and individuals. The language can sometimes be a barrier for some expats, but luckily Lily speaks both Mandarin and Cantonese so we have it covered!

What's a typical day at work involve?

Since we're a small company, we get involved at most stages. We spend a lot of time in our warehouse in Shatin, managing the order process. The rest of the time, we're on the road meeting suppliers for potential new products to add to our range, and meeting head chefs to whom we might introduce our produce. While we spend most evenings and weekends with our families, it's still work (in a way!) as we try out new products on them, and we photograph them in recipes for marketing purposes. Every so often we might take a stand at school fairs to raise awareness of our brand and to give out free samples.

What's next for the business?

Now that sales are growing, we're hiring staff in the back office and expanding the operations team. This will leave us more time to concentrate on our existing clients and meet new clients and chefs to grow the wholesale and retail businesses. We will also strive to educate our customers, old and new, on the benefits of eating sustainable fish to the planet as well as their bodies. Likewise for the health benefits of grass-fed meat.

Any advice for aspiring entrepreneurs?

Follow every lead, no matter how small. Take a meeting with whoever asks: you'll always gain something from it. And be prepared to get your hands dirty – we both mopped the floor in the warehouse at one point!

Deliveries take place on Friday afternoon in Hong Kong (except DB), while self pick-up is available from Shatin. Order online via mmfreshfood.com. 📱



Spa & Resort Easter Camps

This Easter holiday, Hong Kong Parkview Spa & Resort will be offering kids camp programmes with a range of different activities for all ages.

Parkview's Easter programmes offer a wide variety of camps for children from 18 months and up. The camps include favourites such as our 1/2 day multi-sport camps, where kids can try their hands at a number of different sports along with swimming and lunch included, as well as sport specific camps such as tennis and our incredibly popular GLEE movie themed camp.

All camps place a strong emphasis on each child's needs and personal development within a group setting.

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Feng Shui & The Bedroom



SUSANNE SCHUTZ, founder and managing director of **Suzhong Consulting**, reveals tips on getting a better night's sleep by keeping feng shui principles in mind in the bedroom.

In Classical feng shui, the three most important areas in a house or apartment are the main door, the kitchen, and the bedroom. (Sometimes we also include the study.)

The main door is the so-called “qi mouth” – that is, the door through which all energy enters our residence. The kitchen is important because it’s the place where we prepare our food – accordingly, if the qi flow or feng shui in the kitchen is bad, then residents will suffer from poor health.

Lastly, let’s look at the bedroom. Since we spend about one-third of our lives sleeping in this room, it makes sense that it’s one of the key areas for a feng shui consultant to look at when analysing a property.

Sleeping and resting impact our health and vitality. The type of qi that affects our bedroom is therefore very important. The primary concern here is not only to ensure that positive qi enters the room, but the location of the bedroom itself, as well as proper bed positioning. While this is usually based on calculations done by a feng shui consultant, observing certain basic rules of qi flow and internal forms is equally, if not more, important.

Let’s discuss a few feng shui basics for your bedroom to improve your sleep and recuperating abilities.

1. Consider the shape of your bedroom

It’s best if your bedroom shape is square or rectangular. These shapes represent the Earth element, which stands for safety and stability, hence it’s most suitable for

activities that involve sleeping, recovering from an illness, and meditating. Try to avoid using “odd” shaped rooms as bedrooms – this includes round or triangular rooms. The qi flow in these bedrooms tends to be unbalanced and might cause irregular sleep patterns. If your bedroom is L-shaped, make the best of a bad situation and square off one part of the room with a walk-in wardrobe. Problem solved!

2. Place your bed against a solid wall

Sleep is a yin activity. The headboard of the bed should therefore be positioned against a yin feature – for example, a solid wall; the stability of the wall will ensure a good night’s sleep. Sleeping while your head is pointing at a yang feature – an open space or a window, for example – leads to imbalanced sleep, which can ultimately result in health problems.

3. Avoid placing the bed beneath ceiling beams

Ceiling beams create aggressive qi flow. This negative energy is forced downwards and onto the person sleeping underneath it. Aside from nightmares and restless sleep, this can also lead to poor job performance, health and work pressure problems affecting the person sleeping under the beam. The simple solution is to just move your bed from under the beam.

4. Avoid pointing your bed at the bedroom door

If your bedroom door opens up directly onto your bed, the qi entering the room through the door “crashes” into the bed. This is a very aggressive feature causing interrupted or bad sleep. Luckily, it’s also a very easy to solve issue – simply move your bed so that neither your head nor feet are in direct alignment with the bedroom door. If you cannot move the bed to another position, then placing a screen between the door and the bed will also do the trick.

5. Avoid waterbeds

Water is generally associated with yang activities, whereas sleeping is a yin activity. Sleeping in a waterbed may negatively impact your long-term prosperity and harmony with your spouse, which is why these types of beds are generally not recommended by feng shui consultants.

6. Avoid slanted ceilings

Slanted ceilings cause qi in the room to become imbalanced, which leads to uneasy and disrupted sleep. When children sleep under a slanted ceiling, they usually become rebellious, restless and hyperactive – something you obviously want to avoid! The solution is to move the bed so that you sleep at the higher end of the ceiling.

I hope these simple tips and tricks help you create a peaceful and restful bedroom. Sweet dreams. ☺

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Body & Mind

Ask the Skin Specialist

Skin specialist PAULINE SMITH from **Dr Lauren Bramley & Partners** puts her thinking cap on and tackles some of our readers' pressing skin concerns.



Losing the glow

I'm in my early-40s and am dismayed that my skin is looking dull and lifeless. I spend a lot of time up in the air with my job, constantly travelling. I think that it's taking a toll. What can I do to feel and look less lacklustre?

Pauline says:

Most people realise that flying can cause skin dryness and breakouts, but they may not know why. The re-circulated air in a plane cabin does whatever it can to draw moisture out of the skin. Dry skin tends to get drier on planes, and oily skin gets even oilier, to compensate for rehydration.

When a client comes to me with a skin concern and asks how they can improve it, one of the things I always establish is how they are hydrating in their daily routine; water consumption is vital. I always ascertain what products they're using too. Many products simply sit on the surface of the skin and hydrate the superficial layer. This may look good for a couple of hours, but it won't have a lasting effect. There are a few key ingredients that do penetrate and alter the structure of the skin by producing and increasing collagen, and unblocking pores.

Vitamin C, for example, is needed to help produce collagen in general. Retin A (tretinoin – the carboxylic acid form of vitamin A) used topically in the correct manner is also great for skin rejuvenation. Hyaluronic acid – something you naturally have a lot of when you are a baby (it makes your skin look plump) and then gradually depletes as you get older – is also great when applied topically as a serum. By using this as a base layer to a moisturiser cream, you can treat beneath the surface as well as the top layer of skin.

Vitamin C is also used to block the production of melanin (the process that stops sun damage from appearing) and can help to even the skin's tone for an overall healthier look. If you were to come in to see me for a medical facial, normally I would precede a Vitamin C infusion with microdermabrasion (an intense exfoliation of the dead skin cells). Most people get this done every four to six weeks on average. It's addictive though, because it works and it brings on a skin glow!

Sun-kissed

I'm a woman in my late-30s with a paleish complexion and I've started to notice visible sun damage, such as sunspots and broken capillaries on my face, neck and décolletage. I have lots of freckles that have increased over the years and are now beginning to join up. Over-the-counter creams aren't working. Got any advice?

Pauline says:

I'm curious to know what kind of creams you're using. With this kind of skin concern, I'd always be inclined to start with a less-invasive treatment before working up to a more aggressive one (which would require prior doctor's approval) if we weren't achieving the results that you wanted.

A less-evasive treatment consists of topically applied creams that can be used daily at home. I've been having some good results in the area of lightening pigmentation with one patient with a cream containing idebenone, a powerful micronutrient related to CoQ10, another defender against cell damage.

If a topical cream didn't work, I'd advise moving onto treatment using a medical peel. This involves a chemical solution being applied to the skin, which makes it blister and eventually peel off. The new skin is usually smoother and more even than the old skin. Though you could do this at home, having this procedure done with an experienced aesthetician ensures that it's performed evenly and safely. (Leaving a peel on for too long can burn the skin, for instance; or you could have a reaction and not know what to do.)

Medical peels come in different grades of intensity; the type of peel is selected according to the patient – it might be glycolic acid, lactic acid, AHA (alpha hydroxyl) acid or kojic acid, for example, or a Cosmelan peel and idebenone for depigmentation treatment. It depends on the particular patient.



Teenage outbreak

My teenage son has loads of blackheads and he won't let me near him. I'm trying not to be one of those overbearing parents in nagging him to take care of his facial hygiene, but it's hard. Help!

Pauline says:

Send him in to see me, please! It's much better to not be the parent in the consultation room with a self-conscious teen – he'll be much better behaved! Usually when teenage boys see the results from their first session with an aesthetician, this is enough incentive to make them come back.

A blackhead is simply a plug of oil sitting within a skin pore. When the oil meets air, it oxidizes and that's why it turns black. Blackheads won't fall out on their own; they have to be removed manually. For a teenage boy, I would usually only recommend one product (as they tend to be low-maintenance) to try and keep the pores clean in between treatments. A treatment could consist of microdermabrasion (exfoliation of dead skin cells) combined with a mild skin peel.

Taken aback

My southern Italian husband has a really hairy back. Now, I don't want to turn him into a hair-free Adonis, but I could also do without him stroking his spinal rug. Got any pointers?

Pauline says:

I'm not impartial to a hairy Italian myself! Hair removal is not exactly a set science. There are many variables – including hair colour, skin colour, follicle thickness, and even a person's metabolism – that will affect the results. For instance, two sisters who have the same kind of hair will sometimes get different results depending on their hormones; it's weird.

In this case, I'd welcome you to a free consultation to make sure that your husband is a good candidate for laser hair removal. For example, if he's got dark hair and pale skin, then he's perfect for this treatment, which can give about an 85 percent reduction in hair growth. He would be required to shave the day before the treatment. I'd likely use the Lumenis Light Sheer Duet that combines vacuum-assisted technology with a diode laser light to heat up the hair shaft and bulb, impeding its ability to re-grow. The hairiest back could be treated in one lunch hour, and the session would be repeated every four to six weeks until the desired results are achieved. IPL (Intense Pulsed Light) treatment is another technology that can achieve great results. [31](#)

Dr Lauren Bramley & Partners
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STRESS LESS



It's that time of year when our thoughts often turn to self-improvement, and a good place to start is reducing stress levels. Here DR QURATULAIN ZAIDI gives us her thoughts on dealing with stress.

Many people experience stress on a daily basis. Research shows that many of the stressors are universal, including work, relationships, financial issues, health problems and parenting issues, along with daily hassles and busy schedules.

Each of us experiences stress at different levels. A situation may be perceived as “stressful” by one person and merely “challenging” to someone else; this depends on our past experiences, thought patterns, and available resources to cope with the stress.

For most of us, when we find ourselves in situations where there are high demands on us, where we have little control, where we don't feel adequate, where we may be harshly judged by others and where consequences for

failure are high or unpredictable, we tend to get stressed.

Learning to recognise your own stressors, listening to your body signals for stress and investing time in learning effective coping strategies to deal with these stressors can help reduce your experience of stress.

Fight or Flight

Stress refers to the perceived or actual threat to physical and/or psychological danger. A particular physiological response – the fight or flight response – occurs in our minds and bodies to prepare us to respond to that danger. One aspect of this response is the release of cortisol by the adrenal glands.

Cortisol is the hormone that gives humans the jolt of energy when we feel threatened, that enables us to respond. It mobilises the body for action: a faster

heart and breathing rate, increased blood to the muscles of the arms and legs, cold or clammy hands and feet, and upset stomach and/or a sense of dread. But once the danger has passed, there must be a release from the fight or flight reaction; otherwise, cortisol levels build up in the blood and are detrimental to our mind and body.

Elevated cortisol levels from chronic stress can interfere with learning and memory, lower immune function and bone density, increase weight gain, blood pressure and cholesterol, cue heart disease, and disrupt healthy sleep patterns. Over the long term, high cortisol levels also increase the risk of depression and mental illness, and lower life expectancy. Recent studies show that increased cortisol levels are a potential trigger for mental illness and decreased resilience – especially in adolescence.

Assess Your Stress

The first step in effectively managing stress is to know just how much stress you are experiencing. Take the following questionnaire* to better understand where you fall on the perceived stress scale. Answer honestly and objectively as possible about your feelings and thoughts over the last month.

In the last month, how often have you experienced the following? (0=never, 1=almost never, 2=sometimes, 3=fairly often, 4=very often)

1. Been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?
2. Felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
3. Felt nervous and "stressed"?
4. Found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?
5. Been angered because of things that were outside of your control?
6. Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Add up your points for your final score (maximum score: 24)

- **Below 10** Low stress
- **11-15** Moderate stress
- **16-24** Extreme stress
- **Over 20** Consider seeking professional help

10 tools for coping with stress

Our biology, which was designed to insure our survival as hunters and gatherers, is a poor match for the sedentary digital age. Modern living doesn't provide an outlet for the cortisol-mediated fight or flight reaction. What can we do when an email brings on sweaty palms, feelings of dread, and a heart-pumping impulse to run for the hills? Here are ten scientifically proven techniques to help with stress.

1. Deep breathing. Simply choosing to take a deep breath before reacting can change how you feel. Taking a few deep breaths engages the vagus nerve, which triggers your nervous system to slow the heart rate, lower blood pressure and decrease cortisol.

2. Manage time effectively. Allocate different types of personal time into your diary. When you plan your week, make a point to schedule time for yourself, your family, your friends, and activities that help you recharge.

Take stock of activities and relationships that don't enhance your career or personal life, and minimise the time you spend on them (social media, for example). Learn to respond to emails within working hours. After work, allow yourself to go offline. Prioritise your "to do" list and outsource some of the most time-consuming tasks.

3. Tend and befriend. Invest in a network of friends who help you cope in a positive way. The "tend and befriend" response is the exact opposite to "fight or flight". The "tend and befriend" response increases oxytocin and reduces cortisol. Make an effort to spend real face-to-face time with loved ones, close friends and family who are there to listen and support you.

4. Seek optimal physical health. Developing healthy eating habits and getting enough sleep are important to combat the increased levels of cortisol in the body.

5. Exercise regularly. Any aerobic activity, like walking, running, hiking, swimming and biking, will burn cortisol. Research shows that 20 to 30 minutes of activity most days of the week lowers cortisol every day.

6. Get with the programme. Introducing and practicing effective and scientifically proven stress-reduction techniques helps reduce cortisol levels in the body. Examples include Progressive Muscle Relaxation and Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction.

7. Keep a journal. Journaling allows people to clarify their thoughts and feelings, thereby gaining valuable self-knowledge. Research shows that it's a great practice for overall stress reduction as well as self-knowledge and emotional healing.

8. Reflect, talk, listen, repeat. Effective communication skills help reduce stress in all areas of relationships.

9. Stay cool. Learn to respond and not react to situations.

10. Know yourself. Understand your underlying causes of stress (for example, thinking patterns that lead you to self-sabotage) and learn to cope with them effectively.

* Questionnaire adapted from Cohen, S. (1994), *Perceived Stress Scale*

Dr Quratulain Zaidi is a British qualified and registered clinical psychologist who specialises in assisting families with issues from cybersafety to stress and anxiety disorders. **6347 9955 | mindnlife.com**

New Year, New You

Trimming up after the turkey tends to be the number one priority for most of us as we get into the swing of the New Year. Holiday weight is ever-so-easy (and oh so enjoyable!) to put on, but it can prove difficult to shed those extra pounds. We asked the team at **Hypoxi** to explain how its training methods can help.

What is Hypoxi?

It's a targeted fat-burning method that tackles problem areas such as the stomach, hips, legs and buttocks to get your body back into shape. The training regime combines a revolutionary gentle exercise programme – 30 minutes training, three times a week – with sound nutrition in the form of a sensible (but not strict) diet.

What's the general idea behind Hypoxi training?

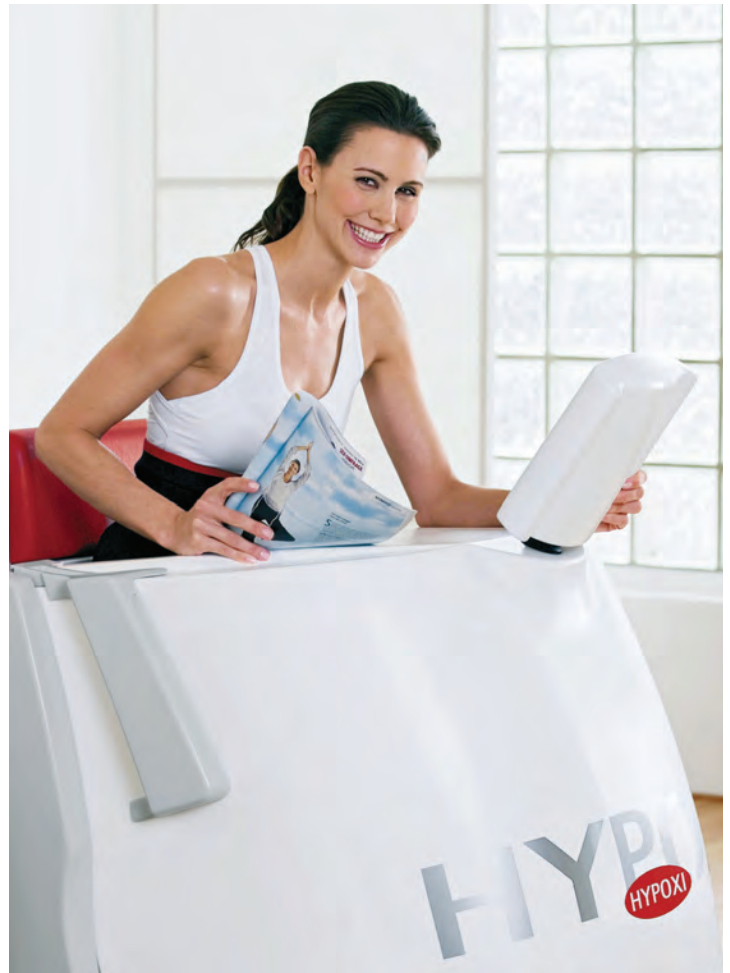
As a rule, the more effectively a specific region in the body is supplied with blood, the more efficiently the fat deposits in this region are released and burned. Have you ever noticed after light cardio exercise how some areas of your body are warm while others, typically the abdomen and buttocks, remain cool? Those cool areas have poor blood supply, which means fat deposits become more long-term and stubborn to shift.

Hypoxi warms the problem areas by increasing blood supply in those areas. During training, a thermometer device is put around your thigh to check the temperature rise. The increase in temperature shows the improvement of blood circulation in that area.

Tell us about the Hypoxi machines.

There are four different machines that target different areas in the body:


- L250
- S120
- HYPOXI Dermology Comfort
- VAC



The special machines are designed specifically to target problem areas in the hips, thighs, bottom and waist. These light cardio machines aid blood circulation while gently exercising, through over- and under-pressure, which in turn helps to burn fat. The Dermology machine helps remove cellulite, reduce water retention and eliminate toxins. So as well as losing circumference, customers using both systems will see a vast improvement in skin tone too. A Hypoxi coach will tailor a training regime to the appropriate machines to meet your fat-loss targets.

How do I see results?

Hypoxi is not just about weight loss but “inch loss” too. On your first consultation with one of our coaches, you will be weighed and measured. Measurements take place at each of six sessions (over two weeks), or 12 sessions, and once the sessions are complete you can calculate how many inches you have lost around your leg, bum and tummy circumference.

Hypoxi training sessions are by appointment, which means there is no waiting for a machine; studios provide changing rooms and shower facilities. 

For a free trial or to find out more, visit hypoxi.hk.
There are two Hypoxi studios in Hong Kong:
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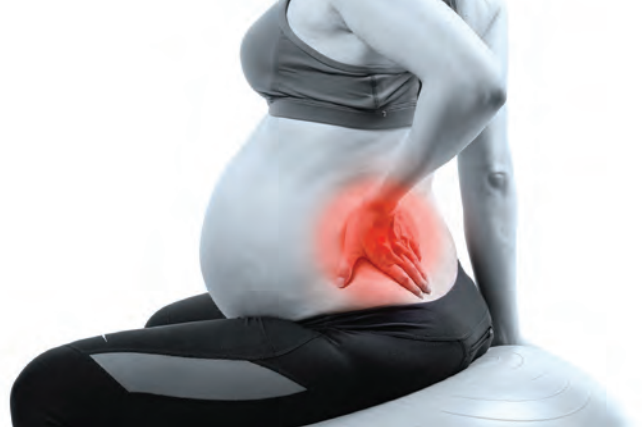
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Is Osteopathy for You?

If you've ever given birth, spent long periods of time sitting, or struggled to find time to stretch, you probably suffer from aches and pains somewhere in your body. I tick all of these boxes, so when I heard that osteopathy could treat all of this and more I was very interested. I sat down with a representative from the **Hong Kong Osteopathic Association (HKOA)** to find out more.

By Brooke Chenoweth

What is osteopathy and how does it differ from other types of therapy?

Osteopaths treat the body as a whole, whereas other therapies tend to focus on individual body parts in isolation. They look at different strain patterns throughout the body that might have been compensating for many years from previous injuries, and treat these compensations and strains in order to regain optimal posture.

What sort of ailments can osteopathy treat?

Osteopathy can treat anything from lower back pain, neck pain, headaches, and sporting injuries to digestive or respiratory problems, colic in newborns and more. Osteopaths are primary health-care practitioners and therefore you can see an osteopath directly for any of your aches and pains. A doctor's referral may be required to claim the consultation cost through insurance.

What does a standard session involve?

For your first consultation, a full medical case history will be taken in order to get a clear idea of your current state of health. The osteopath will then proceed to perform a thorough examination of your musculoskeletal system, including your spine and pelvis. Once they have identified the cause of your pain and established a diagnosis, treatment can start.

Osteopathy is a manual medicine. This means that osteopaths only use their hands to treat rather than machines. Treatment involves mobilisation, stretching, articulation as well as cranial and visceral techniques.

How do I choose a practitioner to suit my needs?

The Hong Kong Osteopathic Association's website lists overseas registered practitioners with qualifications approved by the HKOA board. Each member has a personal bio, which allows the public to view each osteopath's area of specialty.

What can I expect to feel after a treatment? How long does it take to see improvement?

Every case varies, but in general you should feel more mobile and relaxed instantly. Some people may feel a bit of post-treatment soreness for a day and then quickly feel the benefits of the treatment, which are reduced pain and increased mobility. On average, three to four treatments are necessary to experience the full benefits.

Are there any other types of therapy that complement osteopathy?

Osteopathy works extremely well in conjunction with acupuncture. It also works alongside general practice and other modalities; osteopaths can offer patients an alternative perspective and help find the cause of pain, where allopathic medicine often only treats the symptoms; and when treatment is required that is outside an osteopath's expertise, they can recognise what other modalities may help the patient enhance their health.

Putting it to the Test

EMILY McCABE, *EL* contributor, mother of one, and a newcomer to the practice of osteopathy, tried a session recently with an osteopath (a registered member of HKOA). This is what she had to say about it:

To introduce me to this practice, the osteopath and I started with a general consultation, which involved a physical evaluation of my body and its assortment of aches and pains. We started by discussing past injuries and pregnancies whilst doing a full physical body examination. The practitioner felt for what was happening structurally, talking over a list of questions to aid the evaluation. Usually I would go to a masseuse for relief of these sorts of strains and pains, but this now feels too superficial and doesn't address the core of the issue – this was such a different experience and the outcome was far more beneficial. The practitioner immediately pinpointed the exact spots in need of attention, including sciatica from my previous pregnancy, which was a definite cause of pain, and places that were out of alignment, by using a combination of methods, such as physical manipulation, maneuvering and bending the areas using firm pressure. Overall, at the end of the session I definitely noticed a feeling of relief, with far less tightness and discomfort, and a real sense of relaxation.

To find out more about what osteopaths can treat and osteopathy in Hong Kong, visit osteopathy.org.hk.



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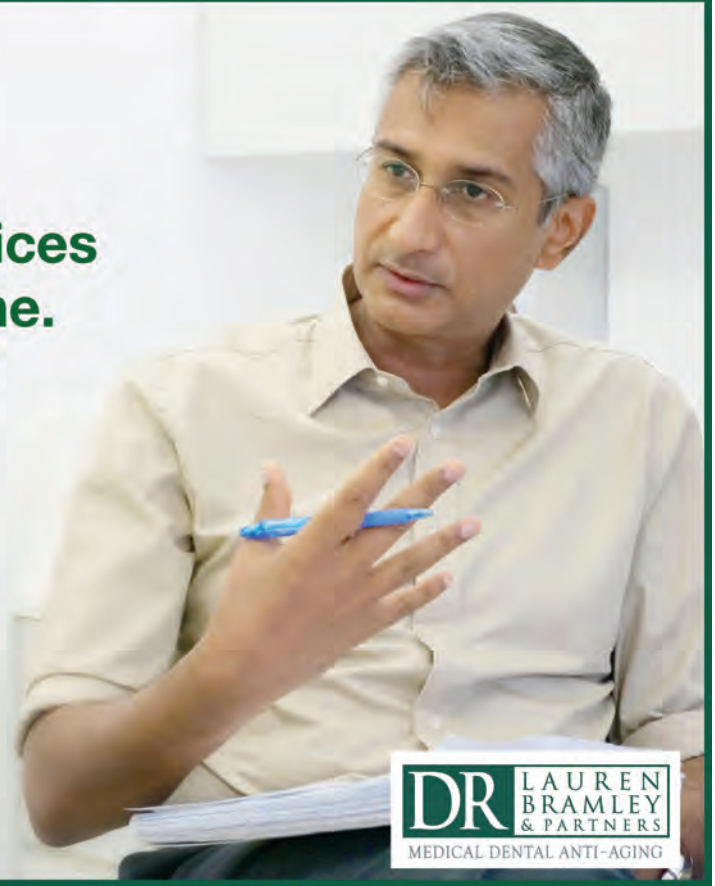
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Contact us for more information.

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What is Osteopathy?

Osteopathy is a form of drug-free, non-invasive manual medicine that focuses on total body health by treating the neuromusculoskeletal system.

Osteopathic treatment is specific to the patient's individual complaint and involves soft tissue and manipulative techniques. You do not need a referral to see an Osteopath.



Hong Kong
Osteopathic
Association



Treatment

An Osteopathic treatment may include massage, stretching, joint mobilization and manipulation. Most Osteopathic treatment is gentle and should not cause undue discomfort.

For more information on Osteopathy and to find your internationally trained Osteopath visit our website:

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a number of its signature drinks. Ever had a bespoke cocktail? Topiary do those too, and you can choose to drink them inside, outside or in the VIP room with its own private garden. Getting your five-a-day has never been more intoxicating! 3/F, Hilltop Plaza, 49-51 Hollywood Road, Central. **2866 6485** | topiaryhk.com



CANTONESE HOSPITALITY

Bringing with him the influence of 10 years as executive chef at Government House, Chung Kin Leung offers diners traditional Chinese cuisine with a modern twist at **Lai Bun Fu**. Having cooked for a number of world leaders and dignitaries, Chef Chung knows how to please the fussiest of diners. Expect high-quality ingredients and exquisite flavours with an East-meets-West ambience. It's where James Bond would eat if he were to visit Hong Kong, and he'd probably have a hard time choosing between Sifu's crispy chicken, Typhoon Shelter Crab, and foie gras prawn cutlets on toast. 5/F, 18 On Lan Street, Central. **2564 3868** | laibunfu.com ▲

SHAKING THINGS UP

After a recent visit to Hong Kong, acclaimed chef Richard Sandoval added some exciting new dishes to the menu at **TORO Steak House & Gastro Bar**. With influences ranging from Mexican and Latin-Asian to Peruvian, the new menu includes dishes like angel prawn *tiradito*, smoked duck carpaccio, a *parrillada* platter, and *queso fundido*, a three-cheese fondue. How do you say "yum!" in Spanish? Shop R008, Rooftop Garden, Civic Square, 3/F, Elements, 1 Austin Road West, Kowloon. **2696 9608** | diningconcepts.com/toro





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The Taste Test

By Brooke Chenoweth

The Pawn

62 Johnston Road, Wanchai
2866 3444 | thepawn.com.hk

After a much anticipated reopening, the marketers behind new eatery The Pawn in Wanchai, promised it would be “worth the wait”. We were excited to check it out; in fact, we held our annual team Christmas party there.

While sticking close to a tried-and-true posh pub-grub formula, the menu looked promising, and since we didn’t sit down to eat until 8.30pm, it meant we were ravenous. After a few drinks at the bar we were more than ready to head upstairs.

The starters looked impressive but left us with mixed feelings. The **house-made ricotta with olive oil, dried herbs and balsamic** had the table engaged in a debate about whether or not it was actually dressed up Philadelphia cheese; it also could have done with more bread to scoop it up with.



The celery and apple soup was a special from the seasonal menu, and it was a nice mix of textures; again, though, some bread on the side would’ve been welcome. The **licorice-smoked mackerel with coriander emulsion and sudachi** was not only very pretty but also very tasty, the sudachi (a small green citrus fruit) adding a clean and tangy touch.

The table was again divided on the mains. The **red-wine risotto with braised red-wine shallot and shallot crisps** was another dish from the seasonal menu. The serving was small but it still could have done with something green on the plate; red wine was the dominant flavour – fortunately it tasted like a quality bottle. The **baked grouper with butternut squash puree and sage** was full of flavour but also small, and arriving in a bowl instead of on a plate, it felt more like an entrée than a main. The **scallop, celeriac puree and black pudding crumb** was too salty, which meant that the beautifully cooked scallops were overpowered.

Two members of the group ordered steaks, which were perfectly cooked – “divine” in the words of one diner. While the chunky chips on the side were undercooked, the side of green beans was crisp and fresh, and eagerly shared amongst those of us who didn’t have the foresight to order a side dish.

Desserts were quite special, and polished off rather quickly. The **sticky toffee pudding** was surprisingly light and complemented beautifully by the date ice cream. The “**textures of chocolate**” looked as good as it tasted.

Despite it being late on a Monday night, and the restaurant not being full, service was a little on the slow side. By the time our desserts arrived it was 10.30pm and the kitchen staff were getting ready to go home. We did get a complimentary Christmassy cocktail, and we were all very impressed by the drinks menu, but had we not been drinking the overall experience may have been a little underwhelming.

As for The Pawn pre-renovation versus post-renovation – well, most of us were firm fans before. The new space is lovely, sleek and cool but the general consensus was that it has lost some of its unique and quirky charm. For those of us who had never been before it was an interesting meal, but it did feel like we were dining in a very new restaurant as opposed to one that is well established. Hopefully, once the team settles in and gets used to the new interior, it will be a nice place for a decent meal any day of the week.

MUST-TRY DISH: Any of the steaks



House-made ricotta



Toffee pudding and date ice cream

Le Bistro Winebeast

G/F, 15 McGregor Street, Wanchai
2479 6833 | wine-beast.com/le-bistro

Part of me really wants to write a bad review of this place. Why? Because I don't want the rest of the city knowing how good it is!

Tucked away in a little street off Queen's Road East, Le Bistro Winebeast is blink-and-you'll-miss-it tiny, and the day we popped in for a late lunch it was packed. Founded by the team behind the Winebeast wine retail store in Wanchai, the restaurant showcases the talents of chef Johan Ducroquet and his wife, sommelier Cristina, while offering an outstanding selection of wine at retail prices.

Greeted by Cristina on our arrival, we were warmly welcomed to sit at the bar. With table seating for 10 and bar seating for another dozen or so, there's a good chance you'll end up at the bar – a perfect spot for sitting and chatting.

The menu is French bistro-style as you would expect, but with a fresh and innovative twist. The menu changes every six weeks or so, and favourites are offered on the blackboard as specials. Chef Johan was more than accommodating when I requested a vegetarian meal, and, despite it being near the end of lunch service, he managed to throw together one of the most exquisite meals I've had in a long time. Risotto is the go-to dish for most chefs when



Dark chocolate tart

confronted by a fussy vegetarian; I've eaten my fair share of generally average risottos. But I would go back again and again for LBW's **creamy mushroom risotto with shaved black truffles**, the perfect balance of creamy and sharp. The wine Cristina chose to accompany it with was light and smooth – a perfect complement. The **fish soup** was a bouillabaisse with a twist, with a generous portion of mackerel giving it some seriously fishy flavour.

My main was a **plate of sautéed vegetables** and unlike any dish of its kind I've ever eaten. It featured a great mix of textures and flavours, and raw and cooked ingredients – radishes, green apple, potatoes and mushrooms among them – on a bed of mustard and wasabi, finished with lemongrass and spices. Not only did it look stunning on the plate, the flavours were nothing short of sensational. My companion Emily had the **lamb shoulder confit with chickpea puree**, a dish that gave a nod to the Moroccan influence on Mediterranean cuisine, with delicately flavoured, tender lamb and hints of sweetness in the dried fruits scattered about the plate. Again, each dish was matched beautifully with a glass of wine.

Dessert was the one dish I ordered off the menu and I wasn't disappointed. The **dark chocolate tart with poached pear and hazelnut mousse** was divine, and our excellent sommelier recommended a blend of tea to go with it (Earl Grey in my case). Emily chose a seasonal option, a **candied chestnut "cappuccino" with vanilla emulsion, coffee ice cream and crispy gingerbread**. We didn't get to sample each other's desserts – they were too good to share and were scooped down before either of us had the chance to suffer dessert envy!

For such a small space, the staff provide attentive and personalised service, and we couldn't fault it. Le Bistro Winebeast feels like a hidden treasure, and our lunch was a memorable meal, on all levels.

MUST-TRY DISH:

Whatever you order, be sure to ask for a wine pairing; you won't regret it 

PLAY

IS ESSENTIAL FOR LIVING and LEARNING

Written by Kate McAlistier, Early Childhood Education Coordinator, YCIS

YCIS's play-based curriculum is led by children's interests, explorations and discoveries.



Yew Chung International School (YCIS) Early Childhood Education (ECE) Section is practicing play-based learning where learning is encouraged through active exploration and investigation.

The big debate in early childhood education today is the 'push down' of academics, robbing children of play. Many professionals are concerned about what this means for young children, and for the future of society as children grow up without the vital learning self-initiated play provides them.

In Hong Kong, we tend to over-fill young children's schedules with formal, planned lessons to provide children with more learning. However, professionals, such as Peter Gray, suggest we must do the opposite. Supporting and encouraging children's inborn drive to play and explore gives them the most valuable skills in living and learning. In Give Childhood Back to Children, Gray states, "If we want our offspring to have happy, productive and moral lives, we must allow more time for play, not less."

Play is defined as voluntary, self-motivated, and engaging. All forms of learning, including physical, social, emotional and cognitive development, are rooted in play. The fundamentals of learning are formed, as children are able to follow their curiosities with natural problems and new ideas unfolding in front of them. Through play children learn crucial lessons, such as the cycle of practice, fail, try again; building in them persistence and resilience. Play provides children with opportunities to build their confidence and creativity as they become risk takers and problem solvers. In this ever-changing world, these skills cannot be learned by memorized answer, but are truly fostered through allowing children to test and try new experiences and ideas. They are consistently strengthening their cognitive thinking as they actively take part in their learning.

Social and emotional skills are also embedded in play. Social skills, with their cues and rules, are explored and experimented with as they engage with peers and explore cooperation. They investigate their relationships and emotions, giving them time and exposure to develop understanding of social behaviours and norms, as well as insight into their own emotional responses. In imaginary play, they are free to experiment with familiar and unfamiliar characters' roles. They gain empathy as they explore others' perspectives. They grow a strong sense of self and belonging as they role play, experimenting

with all the knowledge they are gaining socially in their daily lives. They are able to experiment with the unknown, learning to control and understand their impulses and fears.

Through play, character development is supported, validated and encouraged. Individual children are valued for their strengths and differences. Too often as adults we forget about the importance of the formation of personality within a child and how it needs to be gently nurtured. When adults provide time for play, they show children that they respect and trust in their natural and authentic desire to learn and question their world. Within play, children have the opportunity to develop positive and secure dispositions, allowing stable character formation and unique personality traits. They gain strong self-identity, which carries on with them throughout life.

In YCIS early childhood education programmes, all these skills are highly valued through their play-based curriculum. The curriculum is led by the children's interests, explorations and discoveries. Throughout the classroom, children are researchers engaged in different types of experience, from individual children investigations to small group explorations. Teachers are actively engaged with children, as well as closely observing the various learning on-going of all students. Teachers then creatively extend that learning with further investigations, relevant conversations, and thoughtful settings to deepen children's play. Teachers respect children's view, feelings and knowledge. The uninterrupted play is relished by the learners, as they enthusiastically throw themselves into every moment of the school day.

An education feature brought to you by YCIS

Yew Chung International School (YCIS)

Tel: 2338 7106

Email: admissions@ycef.com

Website: www.ycis-hk.com

Love is in the air!

Whether you're young and newly in love, or an older married couple, take our tips for a date to remember this Valentine's Day.

By Brooke Chenoweth

Love on a Budget

Rug up and take your beloved down to Central Harbourfront where you'll find **Whitebeard** (Pier 7, G/F), and Hong Kong's best fish and chips. Stroll along the harbour hand-in-hand, then take a spin on the Observation Wheel for \$100; if you time it right you can watch the 8pm lightshow from 200 feet in the air. If that isn't enough excitement for one night, the **AIA Great European Carnival** (tgec.asia/carnival) is right next door (Lung Wo Road); nothing says romance like a rollercoaster ride and giant teddy bears.

\$ | ♥♥



The Great Outdoors

For those who would much rather spend their weekends hitting the trails than cuddling on the couch, the **Lantau Base Camp Valentine's Day Run** (lantaubasecamp.com) may be your ideal date. Take a ferry to Mui Wo (nwff.com.hk) to be at the race start by 9.30am, kick butt on the trail as a team, then catch a bus to Pui O for lunch on the beach at **Mavericks** (Pui O Beach, 5662 8552). If you're feeling particularly romantic, hang about to watch the sunset, or pitch a tent under the stars at nearby **Palm Beach** (palmbeach.com.hk).

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The Foodie

If your lover loves food, impress them with the unique culinary coupling happening at private kitchen **The Coterie** (9B Charmhill Centre, 50 Hillwood Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, 3971 0773). They've teamed up with **Secret Ingredient** (secretingredient.com.hk) to bring you two special experiences. Join chefs Pan Li and Kevin James at a special Chef's Table for a four-course meal in an intimate setting at The Coterie, or order everything you need to prepare the main meal from Secret Ingredient and cook it yourself at home (just don't ask your date to do the dishes). Either way, you'll be taking the fast track to someone's heart. Register online at **thecoterie.hk**.

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Hey Big Spender!

For the ultimate indulgence, treat yourselves to a staycation at the **Mandarin Oriental**. The Celebration Retreat package includes a welcome bottle of champagne and chocolates, \$500 hotel credit, breakfast, and a 2pm check-out. On arrival, head straight to the spa for a Couples' Yin and Yang package. When you tear yourself away from the relaxation room, begin the evening with champagne and cocktails on the 25th floor at M Bar, then settle in at Michelin-starred **Pierre** for a five-course Valentine's Day menu. Continue the romance on Sunday after breakfast with a free-flow Rosé Champagne Brunch at Mandarin Grill and Bar – you'll never want to leave.

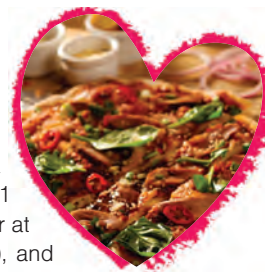
\$\$\$\$\$ | ♥♥♥♥



Family Friendly

Can't get a babysitter for the night? Or maybe you have a besotted tween in the house who's looking to impress a certain boy or girl from school. For a G-rated date head to **Elements Mall** (1 Austin Road, TST). Try lunch or dinner at **Café Deco Pizzeria** (Shop 1005-06), and then go ice-skating at **The Rink** (rink.com.hk), or take in a flick at The **Grand Cinema** (thegrandcinema.com.hk). And if the man of the house has forgotten Valentine's Day, point him in the direction of **Godiva** (Shop 1097) for chocolates. (It's conveniently located on the same floor as **Pandora**...)

\$ \$ | ♥



Dateless and looking for love?

Anteros International is a bespoke matchmaking service that connects like-minded people and spares them the hassle and heartbreak of looking for love in all the wrong places. Visit anterosinternational.com to line up a personal consultation, and maybe next year you'll be happily coupled up on 14 February too. 🍷



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THE GREAT RECIPE SWAP

Most of us have our go-to recipes, be it for a mid-week lunch, a dinner party pleaser or a sumptuous cake that Nigella Lawson would be proud of. In case you're stuck in a food rut, however, here are some of our readers' fail-safe recipes from around the world to add your repertoire. *Bon appétit!*



SUNDAY NIGHT SAUSAGE STEW

Katie Martin-Sperry, British

"This is a perfect recipe for a Sunday night in, tucked up with a glass of red wine and a box set after an exhausting weekend. It's very simple and you can knock it up in less than 30 minutes."



Serves 2 (generously)

Ingredients

- 1 bulb of garlic
- 1 white onion
- 6 Cumberland pork sausages
- 1 can of butter beans or cannellini beans
- 1 glass of white wine
- ½ green cabbage, finely chopped
- 200ml of chicken stock (OXO cube will do)
- A few sprigs of rosemary
- 100ml cooking cream (optional)

Directions:

1. Finely chop the garlic and onion and pop in a pan with a drizzle of olive oil for five minutes. Once softened, add the sausages.
2. Brown the sausages for five minutes, then cut into large bite-size pieces with scissors. Continue cooking for another five minutes or until meat is brown.
3. Add the wine, chicken stock, rosemary, butter beans and cream (if using it), and simmer on a low heat for 10 minutes.
4. Once it is nicely bubbling away, add the cabbage five minutes before serving. As soon as the cabbage is cooked through, it's ready to eat.



DINNER BOBOTIE

Pippa Gresham, British

"This lightly spiced and superbly fruity South African dish used to be a firm favourite in our household during my childhood days in Africa. Push it up with condiments for a dinner party or use as a hearty crowd-pleaser for kids – akin to the ever-popular Shepherd's Pie."



Serves 6

Ingredients

- 1kg minced lamb (or beef, or a mixture)
- ½ onion (diced)
- 25 ml cooking oil
- 10 ml butter
- 25 ml curry powder
- 10 ml salt
- 25 ml peach or apricot chutney
- 15 ml smooth apricot jam
- 15 ml Worcestershire sauce
- 5 ml turmeric
- 25 ml malt vinegar
- 1 handful raisins
- 3 eggs
- 375 ml milk
- 1 slice of bread (crustless)
- 1 pinch of salt
- bay leaves
- 2 bananas (optional)

Directions

1. Put bread into a bowl with milk and leave to soak. Heat oil and butter in a large pan and fry onions. When onions are soft, add curry powder, salt, chutney, Worcestershire sauce, jam, turmeric and vinegar. Mix well.
2. Drain bread, saving the milk. Add bread, raisins and meat to pan. Cook over low heat until meat loses its pinkness. Remove from heat and mix in one beaten egg. Spoon mixture into greased ovenproof dish and level the top.
3. Beat remaining two eggs into the reserved milk, and add turmeric and salt. Pour over meat mixture and place bay leaf on the top. If you like, peel two whole bananas and bake them on top, in the egg mixture. Bake uncovered at 180°C for approximately 1 hour or until set and nicely browned. Serve with yellow rice, sliced banana, dessicated coconut and chutney.



Be Part of THE GREAT RECIPE SWAP!

If you have a fail-safe recipe you'd like to submit for our next issue, please send an email titled "Great Recipe Swap" to info@expatliving.hk with your recipe, a photo of yourself, and a few words about your dish.
Thanks, Chef!



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Date: 17 March 2015, Tuesday

Time: 10:00-11:15am

Venue: Victoria Shanghai Academy - 19 Shum Wan Road, Aberdeen

Registration: <http://portal.vsa.edu.hk/oasis/booking>

19 Shum Wan Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong

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Mount Kinabalu
(photo: Flight Centre)

WHAT'S NEW

Hot destinations & great holiday ideas



Cruise THE ARCTIC

The *National Geographic Explorer* has been described as “the world’s ultimate expedition ship”, and among its 2015 journeys is a 23-day exploration of Greenland, Baffin and Ellesmere Islands – a region of ancient glaciers, polar bears and rare narwhal. Aside from time on the *Explorer* itself, the journey includes opportunities for daily adventures, from exploring fjords via Zodiac and kayak, to hiking in the tundra. The cruise departs from Ottawa, Canada, in August. For more information, speak with a consultant at Concorde Travel, 7/F Galuxe Building, 8-10 On Lan Street, Central. **2526 3391 | concorde-travel.com** ▲



PHUKET GETAWAY

The Himmaphan, an eight-bedroom villa that accommodates up to 22 people, is perfectly located for a tropical Thailand escape. It’s only a stone’s throw from Phuket’s popular Bangtao Beach, and an easy walk to shops, massage salons, cafes and restaurants. And now guests can enjoy spending time at renowned club, Nikki Beach Phuket, which recently opened on Bangtao, a short ride from Himmaphan.

Special offer: Enjoy discounts on beach club packages offered by Himmaphan, and send an enquiry to the villa manager to get a special promotion for rentals in April, May and June this year. **thehimmaphanresort.com** ▲

NEW & NOTABLE

TripAdvisor has announced the winners of its Destinations on the Rise awards, which highlight increasingly popular places according to the TripAdvisor community over the past year. Da Nang in Vietnam was named top destination on the rise in Asia and the world; Cambodia’s Sihanoukville ranked second in both categories; and Ao Nang in Thailand (*pictured*) came third in Asia and fourth in the world. Other increasingly “hot” destinations in Asia include Naha (Japan) and Kandy (Sri Lanka). Included in the world top 10 were Eilat (Israel), Manaus (Brazil) and Limassol (Cyprus). **tripadvisor.com.sg** ▼



GO BANANAS

Newly opened in Doha, Qatar, is Banana Island Resort, an Anantara property that boasts 141 luxury rooms, including the first and only over-water villas in Qatar, a dedicated wellness centre, and a fully equipped dive centre. Located in the Arabian Gulf off the coast of Doha, the island setting is ideal for everyone from honeymooners to families, with a natural harbour framed by an 800-metre private beach and calm turquoise waters. Banana Island Resort is 20 minutes by luxury ferry from the city (or a 10-minute helicopter ride from the airport). Introductory offers are currently available. **doha.anantara.com** ▲



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We know that happy children means happy parents, which is why we run our Explorers children's clubs for children aged from 4 months to 13 years in Thailand, the Maldives, the Mediterranean and the French Alps. Staffed by teams of highly-trained childcare professionals, we have some of the best adult-to-child ratios in the business. The English-speaking nannies will plan an action-packed programme full of fun, both on and off-site, which are tailored around each age-group. We also offer private nannies at our Mediterranean villas and Alpine chalets to look after little ones whilst you kick back and relax or hit the slopes.



Let us start planning your family holiday today. Visit scottdunn.com or call toll free on **5808 3118**

Away & Active

4 holiday ideas for health and fitness

The new year is here, and many of us are hitting the gym daily, swearing off booze or certain foods, and generally doing whatever we can to uphold our resolutions. Why not consider an active holiday instead? Combine your passion for travel with an emphasis on sports and fitness, and you'll come back fitter and full of energy. Here's a list of suggested destinations from the team at **Flight Centre**.

1. *Climb* a mountain

Kota Kinabalu is the capital of Sabah state and renowned as the modern gateway to Malaysian Borneo. The city sits against a backdrop of tropical hills and faces the emerald waters of the South China Sea. Adventurers head to Kota Kinabalu to scale one of the most popular climbing mountains in Asia, Mount Kinabalu. At 4,095 metres, Mount Kinabalu is the highest mountain in Malaysia and the fifth highest in Southeast Asia, and offers amazing sunrise views. It normally takes two days to climb the mountain, with Day 1 covering six kilometres of hiking, involving mostly steps, and Day 2 covering a three-kilometre stretch to the summit for sunrise.





2. Run a marathon

The **Paris Marathon**, scheduled for 12 April 2015, is one of the most popular marathons in Europe – it's a scenic run through a beautiful city, beginning on the Avenue des Champs-Élysées and running past many of the city's iconic sites, including the Louvre and the Seine. Once you've rested those legs, there's a wealth of sightseeing, shopping and wonderful food to be experienced. Hotel Waldorf Arc de Triomphe provides the perfect base for the marathon as well as all that Paris has to offer.




3. Train at high intensity

Ninja Camp Bali is a retreat designed to stimulate and nourish the mind and body. Training is a lifestyle at this camp, which combines various forms of physical fitness training, tailored nutrition and exciting adventure, including weightlifting and gymnastics skills to build strength, endurance, agility and mobility, yoga, and activities such as surfing, canyoning and free-diving.



4. Detox at a yoga retreat

Yoga at destination spa, **Ananda in the Himalayas**, is completely pure and traditional in form, stemming from the roots of Hatha yoga and adapted to suit individual needs. Ananda's seven-night Yoga Detox programme uses the different Hatha yogic cleansing techniques to detox in a natural and effective way. In yogic detoxification, aspects of asana, pranayama, meditation and yogic/Ayurvedic diet are incorporated, along with the practice of Shatkriya, with the aim of giving profound experiences of vitalisation and harmony.

To secure a great deal on any of these destinations, call one of Flight Centre's Active Travel consultants on 2830 2864 or visit flightcentre.com.hk for more information. 

Luxury Getaways, *Sorted!*

For some fresh travel ideas and perspectives for 2015, we spoke with GRAHAM HORNER, Director of Sales and Marketing for luxury tour operator **Scott Dunn**, and father of three well-travelled children, Leo, Ginny and Rufus.



Give us a background to the Scott Dunn brand; when and where did it launch? What does it offer?

We're a luxury tour operator that has been creating tailor-made holidays for over 28 years.

The story began in 1986 when our founder, Andrew Dunn, had the idea of organising better ski chalet holidays. That idea became a reality, and before long, Andrew was leading a team and crafting luxury ski experiences for guests.

Since then, we've taken our expertise and focus on service worldwide, and we can now organise luxury holidays to almost anywhere – we're rarely defeated by an enquiry! All our holidays are tailored to our guests' requirements and budget.

Our consultants won't sell properties or experiences they haven't tried themselves, and they spend at least a month a year travelling in their specialist destinations, which I think is a real point of differentiation from other operators. I'm proud to say that in 2014 we were again voted by readers of *Conde Nast Traveller* in the UK as their favourite specialist tour operator.

What types of trips can Scott Dunn help arrange for our readers in Hong Kong?

Pretty much anything required, from exploring Borneo's caves, rivers and mountains before heading to the beaches of Langkawi. Or taking a journey across Japan, from Tokyo to Hakone National Park's volcanic valley and hot springs. Maybe you want to head to the Alps for a stay in one of our wonderful catered ski chalets or have some time on the beach at Soneva Kiri in Thailand or NIYAMA in the Maldives where your children can enjoy our Explorers children's clubs. Anything is possible.

Tell us about the children's clubs that are a feature of Scott Dunn trips.

We run wonderful Explorers children's clubs at luxury hotels in Europe, Thailand and the Maldives that are available for children aged from four months to 13 years. All our clubs are staffed by fully qualified childcare professionals who provide an exciting, tailor-made programme of on- and off-site activities. The children are divided into four age groups, and we offer one of the best nanny-to-child ratios in the industry, so the children get plenty of individual attention. For those who want more private childcare, our villas in the Mediterranean and ski chalets in the Alps can come with a fully qualified nanny if required, alongside the Scott Dunn private chef and host which come as standard. These great childcare options ensure that everyone has an enjoyable and relaxing holiday.

What's been your most memorable travel destination or experience to date?

Difficult question! It sounds predictable but it's hard to beat my first sight of the Taj Mahal. I'd seen a thousand pictures but when I finally got there in person there it surpassed all my expectations. I was utterly mesmerised. The fact that it is surrounded by the chaos and dirt of Agra only adds to its serenity and magnificence.

Have you travelled much in Asia? Got a favourite city, sight or experience in the region?

Asia is my favourite region of the world to travel in. More than anything it's the food – give me something hot and salty from a street stall and I am a happy man! I spent my honeymoon in Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.

Laos really captured my imagination – the people were gentle and welcoming; and it felt less frantic than the other places we visited. We were there during Songkran; I remember being repeatedly doused by kids with buckets of water, which was the perfect antidote to the humidity.

You're a father of three children who you've travelled with quite widely. What's the secret to successful family travel?

Don't stop! A lot of people think exotic holidays are over the minute their first baby is born. But that needn't be the case. Kids love to travel; and the more you keep travelling with them, the more relaxed you become. You just need to adjust your habits: don't try and cram so much in; fly overnight if you're going long-haul; and make sure you've always got the next meal planned.

What's the one item you'd never leave out of your suitcase, and out of your children's suitcase?


My suitcase: my swimming trunks. I can't imagine being in the presence of a swimming pool and not being able to dive straight in. My children's suitcase: iPads. What did we ever do before?



Three hot travel destinations for 2015

We asked Graham to peer into the crystal ball and tell us which three destinations would be the "big thing" among travellers this year.

- New Zealand – perfect for couples and parents with older children; so many amazing adventures to be had and a wide range of activities for all ages.
- Sri Lanka – a wonderful destination for couples and families alike; twinning with the Maldives makes for a great culture and beach itinerary.
- NIYAMA, the Maldives – with our new Explorers children's club launching in Spring this year, this is a fantastic place for those families looking for a relaxing island getaway.

For more information about destinations, trips, bookings, Explorers children's clubs and more, visit scottdunn.com. 

TRAVEL



Island of
WONDERS

BROOKE CHENOWETH seizes a rare opportunity to travel sans children, and checks in to three deluxe Sri Lanka destinations in the process.



When the boss asks if you're interested in spending a week in Sri Lanka in boutique hotels it's hard to say no. I have wanted to visit this mysterious island for a long time, and the idea of a week in paradise by myself was an opportunity I couldn't turn down.

We've been living in Asia for a number of years now and haven't ventured too much further than Thailand and Bali for short holidays. I was keen to see what Sri Lanka had to offer and treated my trip as a bit of a reconnaissance mission, scoping it out for future family getaways. The fact that I had to stay in luxury destinations by myself to do all this research was one I was willing to take for the team. What I found didn't disappoint.

The Wallawwa

I landed at Colombo International Airport at 2am local time, a ridiculous hour to be arriving anywhere, but happily

I was greeted at the gate and escorted through immigration to the lounge, where I waited as a porter collected my bags. I highly recommend this service if it's your first visit to Sri Lanka or if you're travelling with small children who will likely be tired and crotchety at that time of night.

After meeting my wonderful private chauffeur Prasad, we drove the 20 minutes to the first point on my itinerary, The Wallawwa. This is an "airport hotel" like no other. A boutique guesthouse set on five acres of verdant jungle, it's the ideal spot to catch your breath and take stock before venturing further into the heart of Sri Lanka. Despite the unsociable hour, the staff were attentive and welcoming upon my arrival. Safely ensconced in my garden suite, I spent a blissful night and woke to the sounds of the birds outside.

The Wallawwa has its own organic garden and many of the ingredients on the menu are grown right there, from

the papaya and passionfruit that I ate for breakfast, to the herbs and vegetables used. I ate breakfast at a leisurely pace, then retreated to the spa for a morning of pampering. I usually find it difficult to unwind when I'm on holidays but after 90 minutes I was putty in therapist Maggie's expert hands.

Naturally, I followed this with lunch. The menu is a great mix of Sri Lankan favourites and Western dishes, all freshly prepared, and of the highest quality. The extensive tea and coffee menu, with a story behind each blend, was a delight to behold. My only complaint is that I didn't have time to try it all.

It's worth mentioning the genuine effort made by The Wallawwa to reduce its carbon footprint. For example, solar panels heat the water, filtered water from wells is used in all the rooms, and there is plenty of additional "green" activity that goes beyond just reusing your towels each day.

Kahanda Kanda

The next leg of my trip took me from Colombo to Galle. The newly built highway, while not exactly scenic, makes the trip safer and quicker (around three hours) than it once was; the drive also gave me the opportunity to learn more about Sri Lanka from Prasad. A stop at the Kelaniya Temple was an unexpected bonus, as my expert guide took the time to explain the temple's history and the Sri Lankan-style of Buddhist worship.

Kahanda Kanda, in Angulugaha near Galle, was my home for the following two nights, and about as far removed from Hong Kong as you can possibly get. Despite being 10 minutes away from the coast, it feels like it's in the middle of nowhere. Set in a tea plantation on a hill overlooking Koggala Lake, this private, luxury resort doesn't allow guests under the age of 12, making it a perfect escape for couples seeking quiet seclusion. As a party of one I had no choice but to spend the afternoon reading and taking tea with the resident chipmunk. I was the only swimmer in the pool later in the day, and there were times when I felt like the only person in the world.

The hotel's owner, George Cooper, came to Sri Lanka a number of years ago as an interior designer, and each of the suites is individually decorated with curios and furnishings that reflect George's unique fusion of British and Asian styles – old-school colonial meets modern Sri Lankan cool. Each suite is completely separate and as a result very private. I felt more like a guest in someone's exquisite home, and kept taking photos of lovely furnishings and creative décor to try and imitate George's style at home.

The private verandah was the perfect place to lay back with a good book, or to sit and watch the abundant wildlife on the large property – from the peacocks in the gardens to the chirping geckos overhead, the natives were ever-present. The morning I left, there was a family of bear monkeys playing in the trees and eating papaya and bananas from the garden outside my room, while the ladies picked tea below. It was quite simply paradise, and I enjoyed it all the more for the fact that I won't be able to go back until my kids have grown up.





Why House

After two days of doing a lot of nothing at “KK” I moved on to Why House, just down the road in Thalpe. As soon as I arrived and was greeted by Nigella, the exuberant resident dachshund, and the affable manager, Henrietta Cottam, Why House had won me over.

This beautiful manor house is surrounded by garden and overlooks a very tempting sea-green pool. You can rent the entire four-bedroom house, or just one of the rooms. For families or couples who may want a little more privacy, there are also garden suites on the estate, and a beachfront Villa, Palm 23, is a five-minute drive away. There’s a pavilion for dining in, or you can take your meals, beautifully prepared, in the main house’s kitchen, on the verandah.

I was lucky enough to have the house to myself and had the pleasure of dining with Henrietta and the owner of Why House, Gia Gotta. Again I felt like a guest in someone’s home, and the attention to detail in the guest rooms, and the personal touches, made all the difference. It’s crisp and clean but also very, very comfortable, and the staff could not have been more helpful. The property is completely fenced in so children can run amok safely, and you get the sense that the staff would be more than happy to meet the demands of little guests.

This accommodation also serves as a great base for the region. It’s close enough to Galle that I was able to venture out and explore, and yet far enough away that I could completely escape at the end of the day. Why House is the perfect blend of colonial luxury and off-the-beaten-track cultural adventure. The only downside was the monsoon rain that arrived on my last day, forcing me to do nothing but sit on the verandah and drink tea. (There’s definitely a theme here!)

Heading Home

For me, Sri Lanka proved unexpectedly beautiful. It still feels as if the rest of the world hasn’t discovered it yet, but that won’t last long. Cathay Pacific recently started a direct service from Hong Kong (five hours, 50 minutes), which makes it much more accessible, and even a great alternative for long weekends.

I especially loved seeing wildlife actually in the wild, and having a really genuine experience of a place and its culture – as opposed to one that’s simply put on for the tourist; there was nothing contrived or forced, and I found this aspect of the place very charming and appealing. I relished the opportunity to travel in style, to stay in boutique hotels and just bathe in the silence and stillness that is travel without children. What I had forgotten was that grown-up travel gives you a chance to listen and learn about the history and culture of a place, too – and Sri Lanka is so rich and diverse in that sense.


I will definitely be back, and I might even take the family next time ... maybe.

Things to do in the area

Lightfoot Travel can help you plan your trip, and book not only the accommodation but the “meet and greet” service I mentioned, and also a driver. Why House also organised a *tuk-tuk* driver for me and he was on call for the days I was there. It was fantastic to have someone pick me up, take me wherever I wanted to go and then be back to collect me when I was done – really reassuring as a solo traveller.

Here are some other must-sees and must-dos:

- Don't miss a tour of historic Galle Fort, especially if you can hire a guide. The UNESCO heritage site dates back to the 16th century and is a living history lesson, with many examples of Portuguese, Dutch and British architecture and the influence these three separate colonisers had on the island.
- At home I love to cook so I was delighted to get the opportunity to learn some local recipes in the kitchen at Kahanda Kanda.
- After becoming an expert in Sri Lankan cooking, I was desperate to pick up some spices so I ventured to the Main Street markets in Galle, where beyond the fruit and vegetable stalls and the fish markets I found a wonderful shop selling dozens of different varieties of locally grown spices and teas, fresher and for a fraction of the price than I would find them in Hong Kong.
- Many of the beaches on the south coast are actually too rough to swim in, but Wijaya Beach at Unawatuna is a protected lagoon, where you can swim, watch the sea turtles popping up for air, or have sunset drinks and a pizza at either WB or Wijaya Beach Restaurant.
- Shopping in both Galle and Colombo makes for a refreshing change from the chain stores of Hong Kong. For local handicrafts and unique homeware, check out Barefoot and Paradise Road. The hotels will be more than happy to give you guidance if you're after some Sri Lankan gems or local specialties.
- Just outside of Galle I hooked up with Idle Tours for a bike ride through local villages. It was hard work but a lot of fun! We rode through rice paddies and spotted buffalo and an incredible array of birds, and we stopped halfway for a drink straight from a coconut and quick tour through a spice garden. It's also a great workout if you succumb to the charms of the coconut cake at Why House!

For more information about family holidays, honeymoons, corporate travel and private villas in Sri Lanka and other destinations across six continents, contact Lightfoot Travel at 2815 0068 or visit lightfoottravel.com. 





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Expert Guide to **LATIN**

OLIE LEVER, Lightfoot Travel's new Head of the Americas and Antarctica, has travelled to the region multiple times and brings you his Latin America bucket list. Time to start ticking off some of these amazing sites!



1

Rio de Janeiro

One of the world's greatest cities, Rio has it all: vibrant nightlife, iconic sights, beaches and, of course, Carnival. Head up to Sugarloaf Mountain and Corcovado's Christ the Redeemer for magnificent views of Guanabara Bay and the famous beaches of Ipanema and Copacabana below.



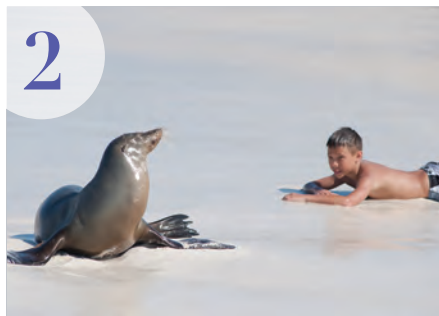
3

Chichen Itza Mayan Ruins, Mexico

Discover your inner Indiana Jones by exploring Chichen Itza, one of the new Seven Wonders of the World. This ancient Mayan capital is the most famous in Mexico; temples such as the imposing El Castillo are aligned to astronomical events such as the spring and autumn equinoxes.

Galapagos Islands

There are few places on earth that rival the wildlife of the Galapagos Islands. Snorkel with playful sea lions, watch the amusing mating dance of the blue-footed booby and see wild giant tortoises in the Highlands. The Galapagos works fantastically well for couples and families alike, especially from the comfort of a luxury yacht!



2



4

Iguazu Falls, Argentina and Brazil

Taller and wider than Niagara, the thunderous Iguazu Falls is one of the most spectacular sights in South America. The 275 individual waterfalls are spread across more than three kilometres and should be seen from numerous vantage points: the Argentine and Brazilian sides for contrasting vistas, and by boat from the choppy waters below.



5

Torres del Paine, Chile

The Torres del Paine National Park in Chilean Patagonia is a stunning area of snow-capped granite peaks, glaciers and wildlife, easily explored from our favourite luxury lodges. For the more adventurous, world-class trekking and horse riding across the Pampas are not to be missed.

AMERICA

Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia

As you travel by 4x4 across the vast and shimmering Uyuni salt flats, the landscape of brilliant white contrasts beautifully with the deep-blue sky above. The Salar, nearby volcanoes, desert and multi-coloured lagoons teeming with flamingos make this region the ultimate off-the-beaten-track destination.



6



Pantanal, Brazil

7

The largest wetlands area in the world and the top wildlife destination in Latin America, the Pantanal's grasslands, swamps, forests, lakes and rivers offer incredible diversity. Spot hundreds of bird species, reptiles and rare mammals such as giant anteaters, giant otters and tapirs, not forgetting the elusive jaguar.



8

Havana, Cuba

Havana, capital of one of the last remaining communist regimes, has to be one of the most evocative of cities. It oozes character with crumbling colonial architecture, brightly coloured classic American cars and old ladies puffing away on homemade cigars. Chilling out in the lively bars and sipping ice-cold mojitos isn't a bad way to spend an afternoon, either!

9

Amazon Rainforest

The world's largest rainforest, the Amazon covers a huge area of Brazil as well as Peru and Ecuador. Cruise up little-explored tributaries of the mighty Amazon River or stay at a boutique eco-lodge to explore with an expert Indian guide, fish for piranhas and look out for birds, monkeys and caiman crocodiles.



10

Machu Picchu, Peru

Explore the temples and palaces of this magnificent Incan citadel, perched atop a jungle-covered mountain in the heart of the Andes. Our clients consistently say that despite having thought they'd be underwhelmed by the well-known site, it was simply astounding to see it in person. 📸

Call 2815 0068 or visit lightfoottravel.com to plan your journey to Latin America now.

STYLISH STAYS

SAMPLING SINGAPORE'S
NEW BOUTIQUE HOTELS

There has been plenty of new-opening activity on the Singapore hotel scene in the past year or so; we check into three of the most recent arrivals to see what they have to offer.

By Shamus Sillar

SOFITEL SO SINGAPORE

35 Robinson Road
+65 6701 6800 | sofitel.com

Standout feature: DESIGN

I flick an innocuous-looking switch labelled "light box" in my room at the Sofitel So and – *voilà!* – the ceiling above the bed is illuminated with an image of a great glass cupola, so it feels like I'm inside European palace. It's just one of the countless ultra-cool touches you'll find in this impressive and often entertaining 134-room hotel in the heart of Singapore's CBD.

It helps that the ceiling is three-metres high; this is a heritage building with almost a hundred years of history, so there's none of the space-saving pokiness you find in many modern buildings. Chanel's creative director Karl Lagerfeld assisted with the design, which combines Parisian elegance with some impressive contemporary touches, and more than a little bit of bling: the rooftop pool is lined with gold tiles, and the front-of-house staff wear couture – no wonder I found myself sharing a lift with Aussie fashion designer (and *Asia's Next Top Model* judge), Alex Perry.

With this kind of design aesthetic, it's little surprise the hotel has opted for Apple-based technology in rooms. Everything from lights to music to room service to messages is coordinated through a supplied iPad – or you can use your own device if you prefer. There's no button for opening the minibar (which is free, by the way), but you can't have everything.

Other highlights:

- Among Singapore's best hawker centres – certainly its most atmospheric – is Lau Pa Sat, an octagonal-shaped, Victorian-style gazebo of wrought iron. At night it plays host to "Satay Street", a pedestrian-only alley where delicious food is barbecued on charcoal fires and the cold Tigers flow freely. Happily, all of this is directly adjacent to the Sofitel – so close, in fact, that I could watch the flames being fanned from my window.
- If you do eat Lau Pa Sat satay one night, be sure to eat at Xperience Restaurant & Bar the next. The Sofitel's in-house restaurant shares some of the avant-garde flourishes of the hotel's design, including dishes listed not by size or order but rather by taste and texture. Try the foie gras and truffle *siew mai*.





AMOY BY FAR EAST HOSPITALITY

76 Telok Ayer Street
+65 6580 2888 | stayfareast.com/amoyn

Standout feature: PEOPLE

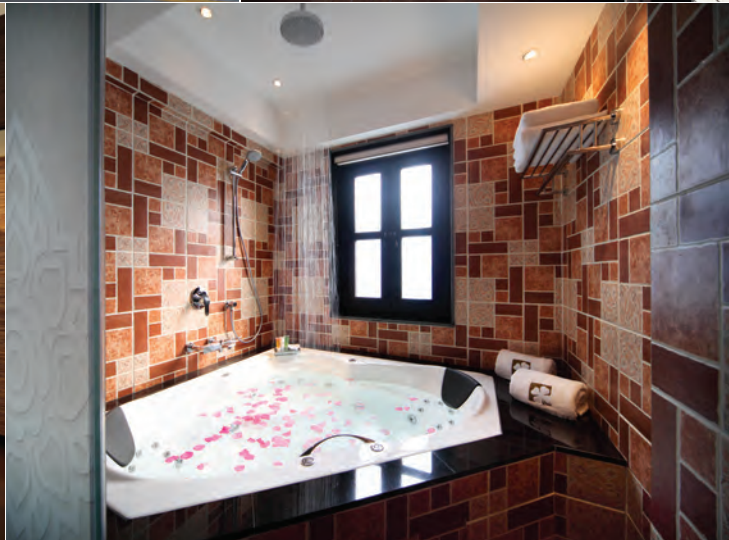
The 37-room AMOY has plenty going for it, but perhaps the single-most important factor in its very healthy ranking on TripAdvisor (second among all Singapore hotels at the time of writing) is the friendliness of its people. Scroll through the reviews and you'll see repeat mentions of the "kind" and "accommodating" staff.

This was my experience, too. One night after coming in from some work meetings I made a casual request for a room-service order from the in-house Japanese restaurant, Jin, which I knew had been closed for 20 minutes or more. (Worth a go, I thought.) After a brief conversation between concierge and restaurant manager, I got the green light, and 15 minutes later a winning *chirashi* bowl (HK\$115) was delivered to my room.

The tone set by the staff is reflected in a feeling of generosity that pervades the AMOY; there's a welcome drink at check-in, a free fridge of drinks and snacks in the rooms, free airport pickup, handwritten notes left in your room from time to time, and discounts galore at the many nearby restaurants and bars when you show your hotel room card.

Other highlights:

- The entranceway to the AMOY is unlike any other hotel: to reach the lobby, you walk through the oldest Chinese temple in Singapore (now the Fuk Tak Chi Museum), built on this spot because it was the landing site of Chinese immigrants who sought their fortunes on the island. (Many of them came from Amoy, now Xiamen, in China.) Note: this museum entranceway is closed for renovations to the old building; it will reopen later this year.
- The design of the two room types, Cosy Single and Deluxe Double, reflects this Chinese history; touches include blue-and-white porcelain sinks and the use of the geometric motif from Chinese folding screens. There's also a slight Japanese feel to things, from the *tatami*-mat style of the corridors leading to the rooms, to the wooden slatted floor of the bathroom.



HOTEL CLOVER 33 JALAN SULTAN

33 Jalan Sultan #01-01

+65 6830 7888 | hotelclover33jalansultan.com

Standout feature: **LOCATION**

Guidebooks to Singapore once focussed largely on the likes of glitzy Orchard Road and Sentosa; increasingly, they point tourists in the direction of more quaint historic neighbourhoods like Tiong Bahru and the Kampong Glam.

The latter is one of my favourite parts of Singapore, and Hotel Clover 33 Jalan Sultan is perfectly located to provide access to it. Leave the lobby and turn left then left again, and you're immediately in the heart of the Arab quarter. From there, it's a three-minute walk to the atmospheric old Malay cemetery, and a similarly short stroll to the Masjid Sultan mosque, built in 1826. Just a little further is Haji Lane, full of hipster boutiques, top-notch coffee joints and more.

Not surprisingly, Malay, Indonesian and Middle Eastern food is the order of the day in this grid of narrow streets, and though the quality can vary, there's a happy, lively feel to the eateries here. Excellent contemporary restaurants are cropping up too: don't miss Symmetry on Jalan Kubor.

Head for five minutes in the opposite direction from the hotel lobby (right not left), and it brings you to an entirely different setting: the palm-lined banks of the Kallang River. This is a superb spot for an early morning jog or an early evening stroll.

Other highlights:

- Like the rest of the Hotel Clover collection (there are currently four hotels in the group in Singapore), the 33 Jalan Sultan property consists of a row of restored shophouses – 17 of them, in this case. This not only adds a welcome heritage appeal but it means the hotel has plenty of quirky touches, reflecting the architectural differences in the original buildings.
- For this same reason, the 88 rooms of the hotel come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. My Loft Suite has a living area downstairs, and two plush beds on raised platforms upstairs, all under an A-shaped roof. The Garden Rooms, for instance, are entirely different, and have small outdoor patios with vertical gardens. There's an equally varied range of price points for rooms, which is good for those on a budget or others who'd prefer to splurge. **31**

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Photos by: Ralph Lee Hopkins

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Hong Kong Post (enquiry hotline) | 2921 2222

MTR Train Service & Airport Express (24-hr passenger hotline)
2881 8888 | mtr.com.hk

24hr HK Electric Company Ltd (HK Island & Lamma)
2555 4000 | hec.com.hk

24hr China Light & Power Co Ltd (NT & outlying islands)
2728 8333 | clponline.com.hk

LOCAL TIME & WEATHER

HK OBSERVATORY

hko.gov.hk

- General Enquiries | 2926 8200
- Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal Enquiries | 1878 200
- Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal (No 3 & above) | 2835 1473

TAXIS

td.gov.hk

- Hong Kong Island | 2574 7311
- Hong Kong Island | 2527 6324
- Kowloon | 2760 0411
- New Territories | 2457 2266
- New Territories | 2697 4333
- Lantau | 2984 1328

Road Co-op Taxi Lost and Found (Government) | 1872 920

PUBLIC HOSPITALS

HONG KONG

- Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital (Chai Wan) | 2595 6111
- Queen Mary Hospital (Pokfulam) | 2255 3111

KOWLOON

- Kowloon Hospital (Mongkok) | 3129 6033
- Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Jordan) | 2958 8888
- Princess Margaret Hospital (Cheung Sha Wan) | 2990 1210
- Tseung Kwan O Hospital (Tseung Kwan) | 2208 0111

NEW TERRITORIES

- Prince of Wales Hospital (Sha Tin) | 2632 2211
- Tuen Mun Hospital (Tuen Mun) | 2468 5111

PRIVATE HOSPITALS

- The Canossa Hospital (The Peak) | 2522 2181
- Hong Kong Adventist Hospital (Stubbs Road) | 3651 8888
- Hong Kong Baptist Hospital (Kowloon Tong) | 2339 8888

- Hong Kong Central Hospital (Central) | 2522 3141
- Hong Kong Sanitarium & Hospital (Happy Valley) | 2572 0211
- Matilda International Hospital (The Peak) | 2849 1500
- St Paul's Hospital (Causeway Bay) | 2890 6008
- St Teresa's Hospital (Kowloon City) | 2200 3434

SUPERMARKETS

- City Super | 2956 2668 | citysuper.com.hk
- Market Place by Jasons | 2299 1133 | marketplacebyjasons.com
- Oliver's The Delicatessen | 2810 7710 | oliversthe Deli.com.hk
- PARKnSHOP | 2606 8658 | parknshop.com
- Three Sixty | 2111 4480 | threesixtyhk.com
- Wellcome | 2299 1133 | wellcome.com.hk

TRAVEL AGENTS

- Country Holidays | 2525 9199 | countryholidays.com.sg
- Flight Centre | 2830 2866 | flightcentre.com.hk
- New Holidays | 3118 1688 | newholidays.com.hk
- Concorde Travel | 2526 3391 | concorde-travel.com

ASSOCIATIONS, COMMUNITY & VOLUNTEER ORGANISATIONS

- American Women's Association of Hong Kong | 2527 2961 | awa.org.hk
- Around DB Magazine | arounddb.com
- The Australian Association | 2530 4461 | ozhongkong.com
- Community Advice Bureau (CAB) | 2815 5444 | cab.org.hk
- Christina Noble Children's Foundation (CNCF) | 2832 2186 | cnfc.org.hk
- Crossroads International | 2984 9309 | crossroads.org.hk
- DB Living | db-living.com
- Dyslexia Association Hong Kong | 2872 5489 | dyslexia.org.hk
- Life On Lantau Magazine | lifeonlantau.com
- The Friends of the Art Museum (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) | cuhk.edu.hk/ics/friends/
- Hong Kong Dog Rescue | 9448 1128 | hongkongdogrescue.com
- The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association | 2332 5523 | hkgsa.org.hk
- India Association | 2311 6358 | indiaassociationhk.com
- Riding for the Disabled Association of Hong Kong | 2875 7711 | rda.org.hk
- Sai Kung Magazine | saikung.com
- Scout Association of Hong Kong | 2377 3300 | scout.org.hk
- Southside Magazine | southside.hk
- YWCA | 3476 1340 | esmddywca.org.hk

PETS

- Creature Comforts | 2915 3999 | creaturecomforts.com.hk
- Hong Kong Dog Rescue | 3480 0061 | hongkongdogrescue.com
- Valley Veterinary Centre | 2575 2389 | valleyvetcentre.com.hk

MOVING & RELOCATION

- AGS Four Winds International Movers | 2885 9666 | agsfourwinds.com
- Allied Pickfords | 2736 6032 | alliedpickfords.com.hk
- Asian Express International Movers Ltd (AE Movers) | 2893 1000 | aemovers.com.hk
- Asian Tigers K. C. Dat Ltd | 2528 1384 | asiantigers-hongkong.com
- BALtrans International Moving Ltd. | 2756 2882 | bim.com.hk
- BaggageX, Moving Small Shipments Worldwide | 3167 4000 | baggagexs.com
- Brookfield Global Relocation Services Hong Kong Limited | 2804 6790 | hongkong.brookfieldgrs.com
- Crown Relocations | 2636 8388 | crownrelo.com
- Links Relocations | 2366 6700 | linksmoving.asia
- Orientations Hong Kong | 2899 0759 | orientations.asia
- Relocasia, The Moving Company | 2976 9969 | relocasia.com
- Santa Fe Relocation Services | 2574 6204 | santaferelo.com
- SIRVA Relocation | 2104 6668 | sirva.com
- SwiftRelo, The International Movers | 2363 4008 | swiftrelo.com
- UniGroup Relocation | 2418 4333 | unigrouprelocation.com

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

STARTING A BUSINESS

- Compass Offices | 3975 1390
- Encore Professional Services | 3975 1390
- InvestHK | 3107 1000 | investhk.gov.hk

ENTERTAINMENT

- HK Ticketing | 3128 8288 | hkticketing.com
- CotalTicketing | +853 2882 8818 (Macau) 6333 6660 (HK) | cotalticketing.com

CREDIT CARDS (LOST/STOLEN)

- AMEX | 2811 6122
- AMEX - PLATINUM ASSIST | 2277 2028
- ANZ Bank | +613 9683 7043
- Bank of East Asia (BEA) | 3608 6628
- Citibank | 2860 0333
- DBS Bank | 2832 6603
- Diners Club | 2860 1888
- Heng Seng Bank | 2836 0838
- HSBC | 2233 3000
- Mastercard Global Service | 800 966677
- National Australia Bank (NAB) | +613 8641 9121
- Shanghai Commercial Bank | 2818 6328
- Standard Chartered Bank | 2886 4111
- Wing Hang Bank | 3199 9000

SCHOOL SEARCH CONSULTANTS

- Top Schools | 3565 5867 | topschools.hk

SERVICED APARTMENTS

FAMILY

- Four Seasons Place | 3196 8228 | fsphk.com | enquiries@fsphk.com
- Harbour Grand Serviced Suite | 2121 2616 | harbourgrand.com | servicedsuite@harbourgrand.com
- Hong Kong Gold Coast Residences | 2457 0789 | goldcoast.com.hk | galycowen@sino.com
- Hong Kong Parkview | 2812 3456 | hongkongparkview.com | pvsales@hongkongparkview.com
- Pacific Place Apartments | 2844 8361 | pacificplace.com.hk/ppa ppapartments@swireproperties.com.hk
- The Lily Serviced Apartments | 3982 2888 | thelily.hk | concierge@thelily.hk
- The Repulse Bay | 2292 2879 | therepulsebay.com | leasingtrb@peninsula.com

GENERAL

- Ovolo Serviced Apartments | 2165 1000 | ovologroup.com | leasing@ovologroup.com
- Yin Serviced Apartments | 2846 5777 | xin.com.hk | leasing@xin.com.hk
- V Serviced Apartments | 3602 2388 | thev.hk | reservations@thev.hk
- Gateway Apartments | 2119 3038 | gatewayapartments.com.hk | enquiry@gatewayapartments.com.hk
- Presidential Apartments | 2521 3405 | presidentialapartments.hk | info@presidentialapartments.hk
- Shama Serviced Apartments | 3100 8555 | shama.com | info@shama.com
- CHI Serviced Apartments | 3443 6888 | chi-residences.com | stay@chi-residences.com
- 218 Apartment | 3665 3066 | 218apartment.com | info@218apartment.com
- 338 Apartment | 2338 6388 | 338apartment.com | info@338apartment.com
- Central 88 Serviced Apartment | 3472 2288 | 88servicedapartments.com enquiry@88servicedapartments.com
- The Harbour View Place | 3718 8000 | harbourviewplace.com | enquiries@harbourviewplace.com

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Legend: (*) IFC - Inside Front Cover IBC - Inside Back Cover OBC - Outside Back Cover (†) Also has leasing options



A SOCIAL GUIDEBOOK FOR EXPATS

By Bruce Cairnduff

Christy photo | Dreamstime.com

For most expats, Hong Kong is a transient location. Very few Westerners call it home; most of us are here for a limited period of time before the next posting, or a permanent move elsewhere.

This creates a unique camaraderie within the expat community – with our time in the city limited, we make the very best of it. People throw themselves into new friendships and unexpected social situations; for example, we attend school plays and children’s birthday parties with expectations for our own social gratification as well as that of the little ones.

I’ve always enjoyed my son’s friend’s birthday parties, because I enjoy watching him bouncing off the walls with his friends, and throwing himself into whatever theme has been chosen for the event. But since arriving in Hong Kong, I now have more selfish reasons for attending these occasions: parents make an effort to socialise with other parents, and there are usually a couple of bottles of wine open next to the apple juice and water. This was not our experience in London, where parents stuck to separate corners and studiously avoided any inter-adult communication other than polite greetings.

As new arrivals, you can rely on more than just your children to find common ground with other expats. Your building

complex is generally a good source of like-minded souls – most with similar problems getting settled, and replicating the comforts of some previous non-Asian lifestyle. Shared frustration with acclimatisation is as good a basis for a new friendship as shared enthusiasm for the positives of expat life in Hong Kong.

It helps that there is an unfortunate, but probably inevitable, barrier between the Western expats and the locals and mainlanders. It’s not just a barrier based on language and cultural differences; it is also based on the shared experience of being a foreigner in a city where the deteriorating Western influence is succumbing to the overwhelming tsunami of Chinese political and economic control. We gravitate towards each other not only because it is easier, but because – even though we are trying to assimilate – we like to hold on to the individuality of our own culture.

We respect the local festivals, and those of our mainland neighbours, but we also embrace celebrations that we might have ignored at home; St Patrick’s Day, Oktoberfest, every rugby match involving European teams – and we do so surrounded by new and old friends on the same wavelength. Thankfully, there is no tax on wine in Hong Kong, so the lubrication of these friendships is a little cheaper than it would be in other expat locations!

I am still a relative “newbie” to expat life in Hong Kong (just over two years; you need to be here at least 10 years to be considered “established”), and as such I feel entitled to offer advice to any new arrivals: accept every invitation, and attend every organised activity, especially those that you would have pointedly shunned at home. Definitely immerse yourself in local culture and customs, but don’t let them overwhelm you: as an expat in Hong Kong you have a proud social tradition to uphold – do justice to the institution!

Here’s your chance to get published.

We’re looking for 500-word written contributions on any funny, poignant, practical or even controversial

topic that touches on expat life in Hong Kong. Simply email your stories in a Word document to editor@expatliving.hk and we’ll consider them for inclusion in an upcoming issue. 📧

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| Repulse Bay Montessori | T: 2803 1885 |
| Woodland Montessori Academy (Caine Road) | T: 2549 1211 |
| Happy Valley | T: 2575 0042 |
| Pokfulam | T: 2551 7177 |
| Harbourside (Aberdeen) | T: 2559 1377 |
| Sai Kung | T: 2813 0290 |
| Waterfall (Pokfulam) | T: 2872 6138 |
| Peak | T: 2849 6192 |

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