



THE HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI HOTELS, LIMITED  
香港上海大酒店有限公司

THE HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI HOTELS, LIMITED  
CELEBRATES 150 YEARS OF THE GLAMOUR OF TRAVEL

*The parent company behind Hong Kong's most attractive tourist icons – The Peninsula Hotel, The Peak Tram and The Repulse Bay – reflects on a century and a half of travel*

**HONG KONG, 25 November 2016** The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited (HSH) is celebrating 150 years at the forefront of world travel, glamour and adventure. From the nostalgia of a bygone era to the modern conveniences of today's seamless high-tech efficiency, HSH's Peninsula Hotels and properties stand as an enduring testament to a golden age of warm hospitality, luxury and elegance, creating unforgettable memories and inspiring unique experiences for discerning travellers, from Hong Kong to the world's most dynamic cities.

**Setting sail – the steamship era**

HSH was established in an era when travelling was a privilege for an elite few. Following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 – just a few years after the company was founded in 1866 – adventurous European and American leisure travellers began to seek new experiences on the high seas in the form of cruise liners, which afforded an unprecedented level of luxury and hospitality. Opulent first-class hotels began to appear along the shipping route to cater for the needs of these travellers. The magic of the Orient held a particular allure, and Hong Kong became a connecting port for many important Europe-Asia sea routes.

*<Photo release #1 – Hong Kong in the early 1900s >*



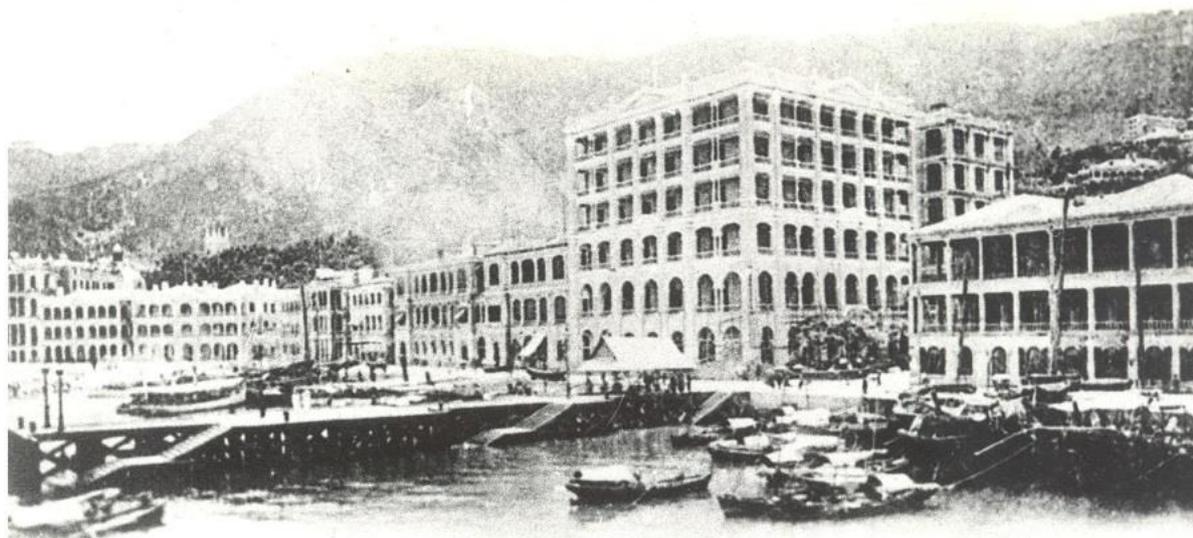


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Entrepreneurs such as Thomas Cook helped facilitate the expansion of tourism by providing early tour services for independent travellers. Packages included transport, hotels and even meal coupons for one convenient price. Thomas Cook organised its first Round the World Tour in 1872, which included stop-overs in China and India, including Hong Kong.

Before the 1860s, Hong Kong had relatively little to offer by way of tourist accommodation, with short-term stays arranged in small guest houses and hotels which offered only basic conveniences. The Hongkong Hotel Company, incorporated in 1866, signified a turning point in the port's nascent tourist trade and provided Hong Kong with its first luxury hotel in 1868. Situated directly on the waterfront at the heart of the city's bustling business and shipping district, The Hongkong Hotel was soon recognised as 'the most commodious and best-appointed hotel in the Far East' following its opening in 1868. The hotel became one of Hong Kong's most favoured institutions and was home to the famous 'Gripps' bar, a hot spot for balls, tea and dinner dances where dignitaries, businessmen, stockbrokers and international travellers of the day would meet.

*<Photo release #2 – The Hong Kong Hotel in 1868>*



*Hongkong Hotel, 1868*



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### **Shanghai: Paris of the East**

In the nineteenth century, the port of Shanghai was the commercial capital of China and the largest port and industrial centre in the Far East. With its rich trade, Shanghai attracted budding tycoons and adventurers from around the world as well as visitors enticed by the city's famous dance halls, theatres and the majestic Bund. All European and American steamship lines trading to the East made Shanghai a port of call for their steamers, and consequently it was from here that many visitors from Europe and America had their first glimpse of China.

Central Stores Limited was established in 1896 and marked a revolution in the nature of hotel-keeping in Shanghai. In 1909 the Company opened the Palace Hotel, majestically situated on the Bund and Nanking Road, known as the 'Oxford Street of the East'. The Palace was considered one of the most 'homelike' hotels for visitors to the Far East and offered city tour guides arranged through the hotel office. In 1915, the Company, later renamed The Shanghai Hotels, Limited, purchased the Astor House Hotel. The hotel was considered the most luxurious hotel in Shanghai during its heyday, with a famed ballroom that played host to new Jazz Age dances and the popular Argentinian 'tango teas' craze of the early 1900s. *The Herald* touted the ballroom as the finest in Shanghai, with murals in cream and white matte highlighted with gold, and a polished oak floor 'in beautiful condition for dancing'.

### **The Riviera of the Orient**

The Hongkong Hotel Company's new Managing Director James Taggart had previously managed the Hongkong Hotel and was again selected by the Company to build a new hotel in Repulse Bay, to be opened by 1920. Taggart's idea was to provide an opportunity for sun-weary travellers to rest and relax in the calm, clear waters of the Repulse Bay and to enjoy the full benefits of a luxurious hotel sited nearby. The Repulse Bay opened on New Year's Day 1920 at an event attended by Hong Kong's elite including Governor Sir Reginald Stubbs and nearly every motor car in the city.

By the 1930s, Hong Kong had acquired the reputation of 'The Riviera of the Orient', a place where travellers could enjoy a perfect winter climate of sunny days and cool, peaceful nights. This new-found status was in part thanks to the gracious surroundings of the Repulse Bay Hotel and later, the Repulse Bay Lido which opened in 1935 to much fanfare and excitement. The addition of seashore pastimes during the day and open-air dancing to the exotic sounds of a South Seas orchestra at night provided the city's residents with a much-anticipated new destination. In the years that followed the Second World War, the Lido's reputation as a swinging night spot only increased, as travel writer Sydney Clark noted: 'the Lido, on Repulse Bay, is an out-and-out nightclub, with an orchestra that purveys its contagious rhythms until 1am'. The Repulse Bay Hotel continued to win the hearts and minds of the literati until it finally closed its doors in 1982.



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<Photo release #3 – Early Days in The Repulse Bay>



Following the sudden passing of Board member Ellis Kadoorie in 1922, The Hongkong Hotel Company acquired The Shanghai Hotels, Limited - marking the historic birth of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels (HSH) in 1923. The Company now controlled some of the most exceptional hotel properties in China and Hong Kong, and with the arrival of The Peninsula Hotel in 1928, the Company's reputation for luxury and excellence was cemented.

**The Finest Hotel East of Suez**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Hong Kong, like Shanghai, was facing a serious shortage of hotel accommodation. To meet this demand, the Hong Kong Government decided to build a new hotel at the tip of the Kowloon peninsula, opposite the railway terminus and close to the quays of Kowloon. It was the railway station, with its steam engines connecting Hong Kong to Europe via Beijing or Moscow, which ultimately made the site an ideal location for a grand railway hotel.

Envisaged as a catalyst for the wider development of Kowloon, the project was soon open to outside investment and in 1922 HSH Company Chairman A.R. Lewis announced his intention to build 'an up-to-date hotel with accommodation for 500 guests'. Following years of protracted construction work, the Peninsula Hotel finally opened its doors on 11 December 1928 to the greatest party of the decade. James Taggart gave a cheerful welcoming address remarking that 'this edifice may justly be regarded as not only a worthy addition to the everyday life of the residents of the Colony, but also (in view of its location as a gateway of this great port) as an establishment which may be fairly expected to enhance the popularity of the Colony by affording to transient visitors.' The evening's festivities continued apace with a Carnival Dinner Dance in the Roof Garden Ballroom catering to hundreds of guests, all marvelling at this new hotel standing proud as the tallest edifice in Kowloon.



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### **The Talk of the Town**

The arrival of the Peninsula hailed a new era in Hong Kong's social calendar as the hotel became the focal point for the city's dances and balls, with Sunday concerts, nightly dinners on the terrace and twice weekly dinners in the Rose Room quickly filling the diaries of Hong Kong's rich and powerful. The opulent surroundings and beautiful interiors of the hotel lured many guests away from long established local haunts. Dinner dances were held every night to the music of a riotous Jazz orchestra, with Afternoon Tea Dances for those more inclined to a leisurely day-time spin.

The hosting of royalty – the Duke of Gloucester - in 1929 put the Peninsula firmly on the top rung of Hong Kong's social calendar from its earliest years of operation. For the banquet in honour of the Duke of Gloucester, A decade later – royalty of a different genre arrived at the hotel – in the form of Hollywood's golden boy Charlie Chaplin and Paulette Goddard, stars of the 1936 classic *Modern Times*.

*<Photo release #4 – The Arrival of Peninsula Hong Kong>*





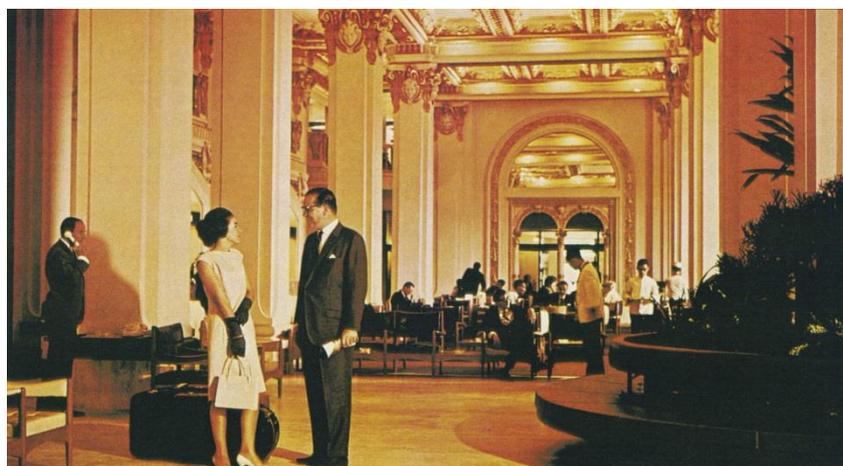
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**Tales from the Lobby**

The Lobby quickly became the place to see and be seen. Having started life as a tea lounge, the Lobby became a popular rendezvous for locals and travellers alike. Graceful Romanesque arches with slender columns, hand wrought bronze grill work, delicate marble-carvings and heavy velvet drapes extended from ceiling to floor across the entire frontage of the Lobby. The Lobby was Hong Kong's arena for society ladies, businessmen, travellers and residents: a meeting place for the rich from both East and West. It was where society gossip was relayed and Peninsula legends were made. One famous Lobby character was John 'Jock' Prosser-Inglis, who occupied table number 44 as his personal office space and meeting point for friends and clients. One of Jock's many friends was the famous movie star Clark Gable who was at the hotel on location for *Soldier of Fortune*. Legend has it that reunion drinks at Jock's table became so frequent that the film's producer banned Gable from this magic table until his work was done.

*<Photo release #5 – The Famous Lobby at the Peninsula Hong Kong>*





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### Flying high into the jet era

Lord Lawrence Kadoorie, together with other businessmen, successfully petitioned the government to grant Pan American landing rights in Hong Kong in 1936, with the first passenger service commencing in 1937. The Philippine Clipper, the first Clipper to land in Hong Kong on 23 October 1936, was greeted with jubilation.

Charles Hoover, the United States Consul General, emphasised the importance of the event: *“I regard this as the beginning of a service that will make Hong Kong a port for air-service as important as it has been for shipping in the past. It is a logical crossroads for air traffic of every description between the Orient, Europe and Americas.”* Lawrence Kadoorie echoed this sentiment in 1945, and outlined his view on the importance of the aviation industry: *“to a great extent, Hong Kong owes its prosperity to it being a transit port. Ships of all nations were able to use its harbour and the facilities afforded. The same should, in my opinion, apply to aircraft”*.

With the Kadoorie Family’s long-standing support for the Pan American airline, it was only apt that the passengers and crew of the Philippine Clipper, including Juan Trippe and his wife Betty, stayed overnight at The Peninsula on their arrival in 1936, beginning a long and historical association with the hotel. It was said that once upon a time, the purchase of an airfare ticket was accompanied by one night’s stay at “The Pen” as it was then affectionately known, cementing the close ties between the hotel and Hong Kong’s burgeoning aviation industry.



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With the inception of efficient, comfortable and speedy mass air travel in the post-war years, the Lobby became the natural home for the major airline companies of the day. The Peninsula became the world's first city-centre check-in terminal – and was ready once again to welcome a new clientele of international travellers. Britain's Imperial Airways, Pan American Airways, China National Aviation Corporation, Hong Kong Airways and Cathay Pacific Airways all used The Peninsula's ground floor lobby as their check-in terminals.

<Photo release #8 – Cathay Pacific at the Peninsula>



As well as providing a base for the major airline companies, The Peninsula's reputation for fine dining was cemented in the post-war years with the opening of Gaddi's in 1953 and Chesa in 1965. It was around this time that aviation and fine dining were brought together – when the hotel became the world's first air caterer.

The Peninsula, the Kadoories and Swissair enjoyed a close friendship for many years, with the hotel providing accommodation for the airline's crews, and Swissair's Hong Kong manager asked whether the Hotel might provide hot meals for its flights out of the territory. Catering for the airline began in 1958, when The Peninsula's chefs prepared gourmet meals in Gaddi's kitchen for the delighted passengers on board Swissair's DC6Bs.

In 1968, The Hongkong & Shanghai Hotels Limited (HSH) entered into a joint venture with Swires to create Swire Air Caterers, at which point the kitchen moved from The Peninsula to Kai Tak. Felix was its first General Manager back in January 1968, when HSH was a 25%



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stakeholder. This partnership lasted until 1998, when Hong Kong's airport moved to Chep Lap Kok, and Swire Air Caterers became Cathay Catering.

Today, the pioneering spirit and romance of the fabled Clipper flying boats, which brought together cultures, commerce and changed man's perception of time, are commemorated in a unique homage by The Peninsula in the hotel's rooftop China Clipper, which showcases rare photos and artefacts from that adventurous era.

*<Photo release #10 – The China Clipper>*



Following the relocation of Hong Kong's international airport to Chek Lap Kok in 1997, The Peninsula worked with the Civil Aviation Department to provide a helicopter link to meet the needs of certain Peninsula clientele for whom time would be of major consideration, and The Peninsula became the first hotel in Hong Kong to offer a helicopter service.



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<Photo release #11 – Flights over Hong Kong >



**The Glamour of Travel continues today in The Peninsula Hotels**

Today, HSH ensures the glamour of the past continues with seamless transportation services to suit the needs of the modern traveller.

The Peninsula Hotels' record-breaking **fleet of luxury vehicles** includes an immaculately restored classic 1934 Rolls-Royce Phantom II - a popular choice for weddings and special occasions. Many of our hotels feature Rolls-Royce Phantom Extended Wheelbase vehicles and sporty MINI Cooper S Clubmans, all of which have been painted the signature Peninsula Brewster Green and customised with minibars, iphone connections and more for our guests' comfort.

At The Peninsula Shanghai, guests can enjoy an unsurpassed luxurious experience on the Princess 54, a spectacular **yacht** for scenic private cruises along the Huangpu River. This 16.5-metre long yacht enables up to 10 guests to set sail for a unique waterborne perspective of The Bund and Shanghai's spectacular Pudong skyline.



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For a fun local experience in Bangkok, adventurous travellers can explore the city Thai style in The Peninsula Bangkok's customised three-wheel **tuk-tuk**. **Jeepneys** are the most popular means of public transport in the Philippines. Originally made from WW II US military jeeps, these flamboyant symbols of Philippine pop culture are known for their crowded seating. The Peninsula Manila will soon welcome its own bespoke jeepney.

<Link to transportation video?>

<Photo release #12 – A Mighty Fleet>





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**About The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited (HSH)**

Incorporated in 1866 and listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange (00045), The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited is the holding company of a Group which is engaged in the ownership, development, and management of prestigious hotels and commercial and residential properties in key locations in Asia, the United States and Europe, as well as the provision of tourism and leisure, club management and other services. The Peninsula Hotels portfolio comprises The Peninsula Hong Kong, The Peninsula Shanghai, The Peninsula Beijing, The Peninsula Tokyo, The Peninsula Bangkok, The Peninsula Manila, The Peninsula New York, The Peninsula Chicago, The Peninsula Beverly Hills, and The Peninsula Paris. Projects under development include The Peninsula London and The Peninsula Yangon. The property portfolio of the Group includes The Repulse Bay Complex, The Peak Tower, The Peninsula Office Tower and St. John's Building in Hong Kong; The Landmark in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; 1-5 Grosvenor Place in London, UK, and 21 avenue Kléber in Paris, France. The clubs and services portfolio of the Group includes The Peak Tram in Hong Kong; Thai Country Club in Bangkok, Thailand; Quail Lodge & Golf Club in Carmel, California; Peninsula Clubs and Consultancy Services, Peninsula Merchandising, and Tai Pan Laundry in Hong Kong.

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