

# TRADITION WELL SERVED



THE HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI HOTELS, LIMITED: CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF TRADITION WELL SERVED



CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

IN HONG KONG  
DISCERNING PEOPLE MEET AT

# THE PENINSULA

CROSSROADS OF THE WORLD



## A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Anniversaries are a time to pause and reflect. As we review our past, it is important to recognise the many milestones that have shaped our company, and to remember the individuals whose legacies have ensured the beneficial role that we have played in Hong Kong's success story.

Our history begins in the latter part of the nineteenth century: six years after Kowloon was ceded to Great Britain, and 32 years before the New Territories were leased. Sedan chairs and rickshaws were the transport of the day.

The 1860s were a period of growing interest in the Far East and, thanks to popular literature at the time, Hong Kong held a particular fascination for travellers attracted to the orient. The growth of tourism was facilitated by entrepreneurs such as Thomas Cook who arranged fledging tour services for independent travellers via a rail link through Siberia. This was also the age of the great ocean liners and, with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, a faster passage between Europe and Asia was established. Americans and Europeans alike soon found themselves journeying towards Hong Kong in increasing numbers.

The colony became the centre for tourism in the Far East and affluent travellers expected their usual luxury accommodation. To cater for this, The Hongkong Hotel Company was established in 1866. The Hong Kong Hotel was located at the corner of Queen's Road and Pedder Street and opened in 1868. It rapidly became the most favoured place to stay, playing host to visiting celebrities as well as businessmen and international travellers alike. Described by the Hong Kong press as "the greatest enterprise of its kind in China and Japan" it set the standards of the day.

A few years later came the next important chapter in our group's history. Asia's first funicular railway, the Peak Tram, was established in 1888 with wooden carriages shuttling passengers between the lower Garden Road terminus and the upper terminus located next to The Peak Hotel. What had taken up to an hour by sedan chair would now be a journey of less than ten minutes.

In 1880, my grandfather, Sir Elly Kadoorie, arrived in Hong Kong from Baghdad as a teenager and, in 1891, he purchased 25 shares in The Hongkong Hotel Company. Thus began the long history of family association with the company which continues to this day. He was soon joined by his brother, Sir Ellis, who became the major shareholder in 1906. Both served long tenures on the company's board, setting in motion plans that would create a hotel empire that spanned Hong Kong, Shanghai and Peking.

In the early twentieth century, booming tourism created a shortage of hotel rooms. Then, as now, our company was a pioneer in finding solutions. James Taggart, the successful manager of The Hongkong Hotel and chief executive officer of the company, initiated plans for an entirely new enterprise. He held a deep appreciation for the natural beauty of the south side of Hong Kong Island, particularly Repulse Bay, which then could only be reached on foot or by boat. Taggart understood that this beach-front vista would be the ideal location for a resort hotel - one to rival the very best in Europe. Thus The Repulse Bay Hotel was constructed and duly opened in 1920, and along with its famous Lido, helped cement Hong Kong's reputation as the 'Riviera of the Orient'.

Sir Ellis Kadoorie passed away in 1922, at which time James Taggart became managing director of the company. Taggart acquired 85 percent of The Shanghai Hotels, Limited and, in 1923, merged the two companies to become The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels.

The new company, as well as owning hotels in Hong Kong, now had full control over Shanghai's Astor House and Palace Hotel. Later additions were The Majestic in Shanghai and the Grand Hotel des Wagons-Lits in Peking.

Plans were soon afoot for a third hotel to be built on the Kowloon peninsula - at the time a sleepy backwater. Although originally a government project to take advantage of the transport links afforded by the railway terminus and the nearby quays of Kowloon, it was Taggart's vision and determination that ensured The Peninsula Hotel, when opened, would become "the finest hotel east of Suez". Due to a number of construction challenges, this project was nearly abandoned, but Taggart persisted despite objections from shareholders who believed any hotel built in Kowloon would be a "white elephant". The detractors were soon proved wrong when shortly after its opening in 1928, royalty and celebrities including Charlie Chaplin and Paulette Goddard were regular visitors.

Following the end of World War II, The Peninsula Hotel was requisitioned as the headquarters of the Kowloon military administration. My father, Lord Kadoorie, was the first civilian internee to return from Shanghai to Hong Kong. From his base at The Peninsula he served as chairman of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels and on various government committees to help the territory get back on its feet.

In 1950, my uncle, Sir Horace Kadoorie, became company Chairman, a role he held for some 35 years. Horace was the driving force behind the company's post-war success and oversaw the renovation of The Peninsula in the 1960's and the development of the first Peak Tower in 1972. He inspired management to pursue the highest standards of quality and service that continue to this day.

The future is built on the past, and the events that shaped our history also govern our current operations. Behind our international reputation lies our ethos of community responsibility and a belief in the importance of integrity and sustainability. In this anniversary year, our team reminds Hong Kong of its rich history, thereby hoping to enable the whole community to share in our heritage.

More than a century after they were established, The Peninsula Hotel, the Peak Complex, the Peak Tram, and the Repulse Bay, remain some of Hong Kong's most iconic tourist attractions. Our brand has been established world-wide with hotels in Asia, the United States and most recently Europe. During our long history, we have always combined the graciousness of the past with the most modern innovations of the day.

As part of the celebrations on this momentous occasion, we have commissioned a series of giant helium balloons shaped in the form of classic HSH icons, representing our long association with travel, adventure and fun.

Throughout the pages of this magazine, you will read all of these stories and more, as we celebrate a century and a half of unforgettable memories and the glamour of travel in all its forms.

I hope you will enjoy the read.

The Hon. Sir Michael Kadoorie

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# *A* PHILANTHROPIC *Tradition*

*During the 1880s, two scions of a wealthy Baghdad family of merchants travelled East. The elder brother Ellis, settled in Hong Kong and the younger brother, Elly, in Shanghai. Together they made the Kadoorie name synonymous as much for their generosity towards those less fortunate, as for the wealth they accumulated.*



Sir Henry May, Hong Kong Governor, opens the new wing of the Ellis Kadoorie School for Chinese Boys, 1913

Elly Kadoorie came to Shanghai in 1880 and joined the first Iraqi Jewish firm in the city, David Sassoon & Sons. He soon struck out on his own and became a successful merchant banker, owner of real estate, hotels and rubber plantations.

Ellis Kadoorie was just 18 years-old when he arrived in Hong Kong in 1883. He first set up as a broker, then a merchant and a financier, proving exceedingly successful in all of his ventures, eventually acquiring control of the China Light & Power Company, Limited.

In 1906, Ellis set in motion a plan which would occupy not only his brother, but succeeding generations of Kadoories. He purchased a major holding of some 20,000 shares in The Hongkong Hotels Limited, and in 1914 was invited to take a seat on the company's board.

Having made his fortune in the early 1900s, Ellis settled down to a life of philanthropy - focusing on education and welfare for women. He founded the Ellis Kadoorie Chinese Schools Society in China at the turn of the 20th Century, which established six non-denominational free schools for Chinese, and he supported the University of Hong Kong. In the same year, he was instrumental in establishing Hong Kong's Helena May Institute for women living and working away from home. He contributed towards a new school for the colony's Indian children and endowed scholarships for underprivileged Indian children. He also assisted the building fund for a European YMCA, and when World War I broke out, he spearheaded support for a War Fund appeal to buy planes.

In 1917, when Ellis was knighted, the *South China Morning Post* paid him warm tribute, saying: "It is pleasing indeed, to see

that recognition of his benefactions has come - and all the more pleasing to his many friends for the reason that Sir Ellis Kadoorie's generous courteous nature has made him well liked by all."

During his eight-year term, The Hongkong Hotels Limited made great strides towards becoming a major Far East Hotel chain. In 1922, upon the company's acquisition of an 85 percent controlling interest in The Shanghai Hotels Limited, which owned The Astor House and The Palace Hotel in Shanghai and approximately 60 percent of the grand Hotel des Wagons-Lits in Peking, its name was changed to The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited.

On February 24th, 1922, Sir Ellis sadly succumbed to a heart attack at the age of 57. Under the headline, "A Loveable Man and a Generous Benefactor", the *South China Morning Post* spoke for countless members of the community when it wrote: "...in every quarter there was the sincerest expression of regret, coupled with genuine appreciation of Sir Ellis for his unassuming personal qualities, his ability, and for his generous benefactions and hospitality. Few of the community have not enjoyed at one time or another his kindly thought...In Hong Kong, Shanghai, Canton and elsewhere, he was held in high respect and more."

In his will, Ellis arranged for his fortune to be divided into three parts - one third to the British Government for funding schools in "Palestine or Mesopotamia", one third to the Anglo-Jewish Association, and the final third to his brother Elly. This bequest was the foundation of many important charitable institutions across the globe.

Known in his day as the 'Prince of Philanthropists', Elly Kadoorie once commented that his own experiences with poverty had led him to the firm belief that "wealth is a sacred trust to be administered for the good of society". He made a pact with his brother by which he was to focus on philanthropy abroad. As an early supporter of women's rights, Elly was among the first to provide educational facilities for women in many parts of the Middle East, and went on to build schools and hospitals across the world.

Elly held many important positions within the community, but always ensured that his philanthropic endeavours were operated without recourse to creed, religion or race.

In 1927, Elly's older son Lawrence became a partner in his father's company, and he also shared his family's interest in the promotion of education and relief work in all parts of the world. Together with his brother Horace, he was responsible for founding the New Territories Benevolent Society, which established small hospitals and clinics in Hong Kong's rural districts. However, what was possibly their most impactful project for the colony was yet to come.

In 1941, there were 1.25 million people living in Hong Kong, but by the end of the Japanese occupation in 1945, the population had shrunk to about 600,000. In that same year, the flood of refugees fleeing the Civil War on the Mainland began, and by the end of 1946, the population had once again swollen to 1.5 million, rising yet further to 2.3 million by 1949 with the mass influx of immigrants from Mainland China.

Many of the immigrants settled in overcrowded tenements, squatter villages, or whatever form of shelter they could find in the city or the New Territories. Housing facilities were inadequate and jobs were scarce during the first few years of the immigrant influx. As industry and commerce developed, skilled and semi-skilled workers found jobs in factories, and there was also a demand for labourers and coolies. However, many of the new immigrants were unsuited for city life.

China was basically a nation of farmers, and some of those concerned with the plight of the poor and jobless felt it best to help these people to help themselves, so Lawrence and Horace Kadoorie decided to do just that. The brothers wanted to help these destitute refugees become self-supporting and independent; they wanted to help them regain their dignity and find security in their new lives in Hong Kong.

An ambitious agricultural aid project was thus conceived, and on September 28th, 1951 the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association (KAAA) was formed by the Kadoorie brothers, together with Norman Wright and Woo Ting Sang.

The projected cost of the programme involved millions of dollars, which was contributed by the Kadoorie brothers. "We will finance the project," they told Government officials at the time, "if you make unused Crown Land available and give us the aid of your agriculture experts."

Guests at the opening ceremony of The Helena May, 1916



With the co-operation of the Government, the KAAA gave 14 refugee families a plot one three-and-a-half acres of rocky, arid hillside, whose only shelter was a bombed out structure. Some of the refugees protested that the land was nothing but stones, and so Horace suggested that they use the stones to build pigsties while clearing the land. "I'll supply cement, and for every pigsty you build, I'll give you two pigs."

Through hard work and determination, the villagers were soon raising pigs. They filled and terraced the rocky slope, constructed irrigation channels and built up the fertility of the soil by adding loam and manure. In their first year, not only did they produce enough food for their own consumption, but they made a gross profit of HK\$11,370.

At Nim Shue Wan, another village in the New Territories, several families were settled on land reclaimed from the sea. The KAAA supplied them with cement, wells, pumps, a sailing junk for transport, and a number of pigs. It also loaned them, interest free, HK\$16,300 for expansion purposes.

At first KAAA's contributions were mainly in the form of gifts, but in 1955 the Government joined the Association in a mutually financed fund which made interest-free loans available to needy villages and individuals. Aid in the form of gifts however, still reflects the programme's greatest accomplishments. The projects

completed as a result of gifts of cement, iron bars, steel girders, wood and other construction materials included 195 miles of roads and paths, 52 miles of irrigation channels, 316 dams, 33 reservoirs, 8,635 retaining walls, as well as numerous fences, school playing fields, piers, wells and other constructions vital to the prosperity and well-being of villages.

Village houses and thousands of pigsties, chicken sheds, pigs, cattle, chickens, ducks, geese, goats, fertiliser and farming materials were donated by the KAAA to the needy. The Association also distributed large sums of money for feed, as well as cash grants for medicine, clothes and blankets.

The Kadoories took a scientific approach to the question of whether or not some of the wasteland, mostly at higher elevations, could be farmed. They were also concerned with local animal husbandry and the fact that further expansion of their assistance programme might be limited by the lack of good breeding stock for distribution.

So in 1956, the KAAA established an experimental and extension farm at Pak Ngau Shek, one of the highest mountains in Hong Kong, and today the present site of the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden (KFBG). Previously the mountain had been considered too steep and stony to be of any agricultural use, but nevertheless, the Kadoorie brothers leased 360 acres.



Horace Kadoorie demonstrating the use of a thresher, 1950s



Lawrence and Horace Kadoorie, 1950s

Within a relatively short time, much to the Government's amazement, a small group of 110 refugees transformed this area into one of the most impressive agricultural experimental stations in Asia. Where others said that nothing could possibly grow, hundreds and then thousands of apple, orange, grapefruit, papaya, banana and lemon trees successfully flourished

Special hybrids of pigs and chickens were selectively bred, and these made a major contribution towards food security. At the outset of the breeding programme, it was decided to improve the local *fa yuen* breed of pig, which, through centuries of neglect and malnutrition, had become sway-backed and their meat was of low grade. However, its resilience to many diseases, its fecundity (16 piglets per sow per year was the norm), and the fact that the sows were good mothers, able to suckle their young until they were weaned, were points which made it more desirable for farming than other more exotic breeds.

The result of all of the KAAA's efforts was a revitalisation, not only of the local economy, but also of the hopes and dreams of the people of the New Territories and Outlying Islands. Over just two decades, Hong Kong's farm production more than tripled, thousands of farmers were educated best practices, and measures were taken to conserve many species of Hong Kong flora, with the gardens of Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden being planned and planted from the 1960s onwards.

The Farm was Horace Kadoorie's major avocation and his interest in gardening was clearly evident in the colourful flowers and plants which still to this day line the roads leading to the area.

Lord Lawrence Kadoorie and Sir Horace Kadoorie remained actively engaged in civic and philanthropic activities throughout their lifetimes, most notably in Hong Kong, their home. The brothers were very close, sharing not only a single bank account, but also a committed view on the Family's philanthropic legacy. It was therefore with their joint wishes that when Sir Horace passed away in 1995, two years after Lord Lawrence, a considerable portion of his fortune was designated for charitable purposes, with the wish that there be a special focus on education, healthcare, and the arts, but all within the overriding principle of "helping others to help themselves".

Thus the Sir Horace Kadoorie International Foundation (SHKIF) was born, which in tandem with the New Kadoorie Foundation, supports many of the Family's current philanthropic endeavours.

The SHKIF is also a source of discretionary funding which allows The Honourable Sir Michael Kadoorie and his sister The Honourable Mrs. Rita Kadoorie McAulay to support other philanthropic initiatives and those of the next generation. Sir Michael and his wife Lady Betty Kadoorie specifically support philanthropic programmes developed by their children, Natalie, Bettina and Philip, as well as healthcare initiatives in selected countries.

For more than 150 years, the Kadoorie Family's reputation for and attitude towards public benefaction, coupled with their innate warmth and graciousness, have undoubtedly won them a special place in the hearts of the people of Hong Kong and around the world. 



# DIRECTING A LEGACY

*For 15 years, Clement Kwok has been the CEO of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited (HSH), leading the group into an exciting new era while maintaining the rich traditions that continue to make HSH a true legend in luxury hospitality.*

“I equate my role to being like the conductor of an orchestra,” says Clement Kwok, CEO of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Ltd. “I have people who are good at playing the violin, or playing the bass. Those are the hoteliers who know how to run the hotel, the marketing people, the finance people. My role is to lead them, to give them guidance and to communicate with them.”

Kwok has been orchestrating the magic behind HSH for the last 15 years, leading the Company through multiple hotel openings, and weathering storms like SARs and the global financial crisis.

“I hope the music is still playing,” he quips with a chuckle.

Born in Hong Kong, Kwok came to know the Kadoorie Family following his return to the territory in 1986. After graduating from the London School of Economics with first class honours, and qualifying as a Chartered Accountant with first and fourth place in the Institute’s Order of Merit, Kwok joined Schroders Asia. It was during this time that he got to know Sir Michael Kadoorie and his father, Lord Lawrence Kadoorie.

From 1996, Kwok gained valuable corporate management experience as the Finance Director of the MTR Corporation, and in 2001, he was contacted by the Kadoorie family and invited to take up the position of CEO of HSH.

As HSH approaches 150 years, I ask the soft-spoken CEO what makes him proud to represent the Company, to which he quickly responds, “that’s an easy question to answer.”

“I have always been someone who wants to work with products that you can be proud of the quality of,” he elaborates. “What we’ve been able to do with this brand is create an entity which is globally recognised as one of the best luxury brands in the world, while still having a relatively small number of properties. We believe in quality over quantity, and that is something that resonates very well with me. If you look at an artist like Gaudi – throughout his career he didn’t produce a large number of works, but the amazing creativity and quality of what he did is what left a lasting impact.”

HSH continues to be a company that takes the time to do things right, that makes no compromises on quality, and that places more emphasis on creating a legacy rather than making a quick profit – or as Kwok says, “we are not thinking of the next few years, we are thinking about the long-term, and of future generations.”

A perfect example is the development of a new Peninsula hotel in Yangon, Myanmar, where HSH has acquired a magnificent three-storey colonial building that once housed the headquarters of Burma Railways.

“If you look our history, HSH always been a very adventurous and pioneering company. Building The Peninsula Hong Kong in Kowloon, which was essentially a backwater in those days, was a risk. The company took that risk, and it proved to be immensely successful. Even The Peak Tram was a very courageous venture at the time. It is due to that pioneering spirit that we now have these amazing assets in both Hong Kong and overseas,” Kwok explains. “I had a meeting with my staff, and we said to ourselves, we are

building some fantastic hotels but they are already in well-established, mature cities like Tokyo, Shanghai, and Paris... so we thought, why don’t we relive some of that pioneering spirit? The potential of Myanmar is enormous and we are very excited. The hotel will be relatively smaller than our other properties, but we see this project as a little jewel, a piece of that pioneering spirit.”

Kwok commends the HSH team, and the incredible teamwork that makes his ‘orchestra’ play in tune. “The long service ratio within the company is amazingly high, and we have incredible staff who do their jobs with such passion and commitment,” he says. “That makes me feel very proud of these people for the attitude that they bring, and it also makes me want to look after them and do the best I can for the company.”

Kwok has also been at the forefront of the group’s Sustainable Luxury Vision 2020, which sets out over 50 economic, social and environmental goals that HSH is committed to achieving by the year 2020.

“Our group has always been a very responsible corporate citizen. Even before we put a formal group-wide strategy in place, the hotels and operations were already doing a great deal of work; they had energy saving plans, they were recycling waste, and they have been involved charity and community service,” says Kwok, who personally chairs the Group’s Sustainability Committee. “But the efforts were doing more at an individual proxy level, and we felt that what we needed was a more consistent group-wide policy.”

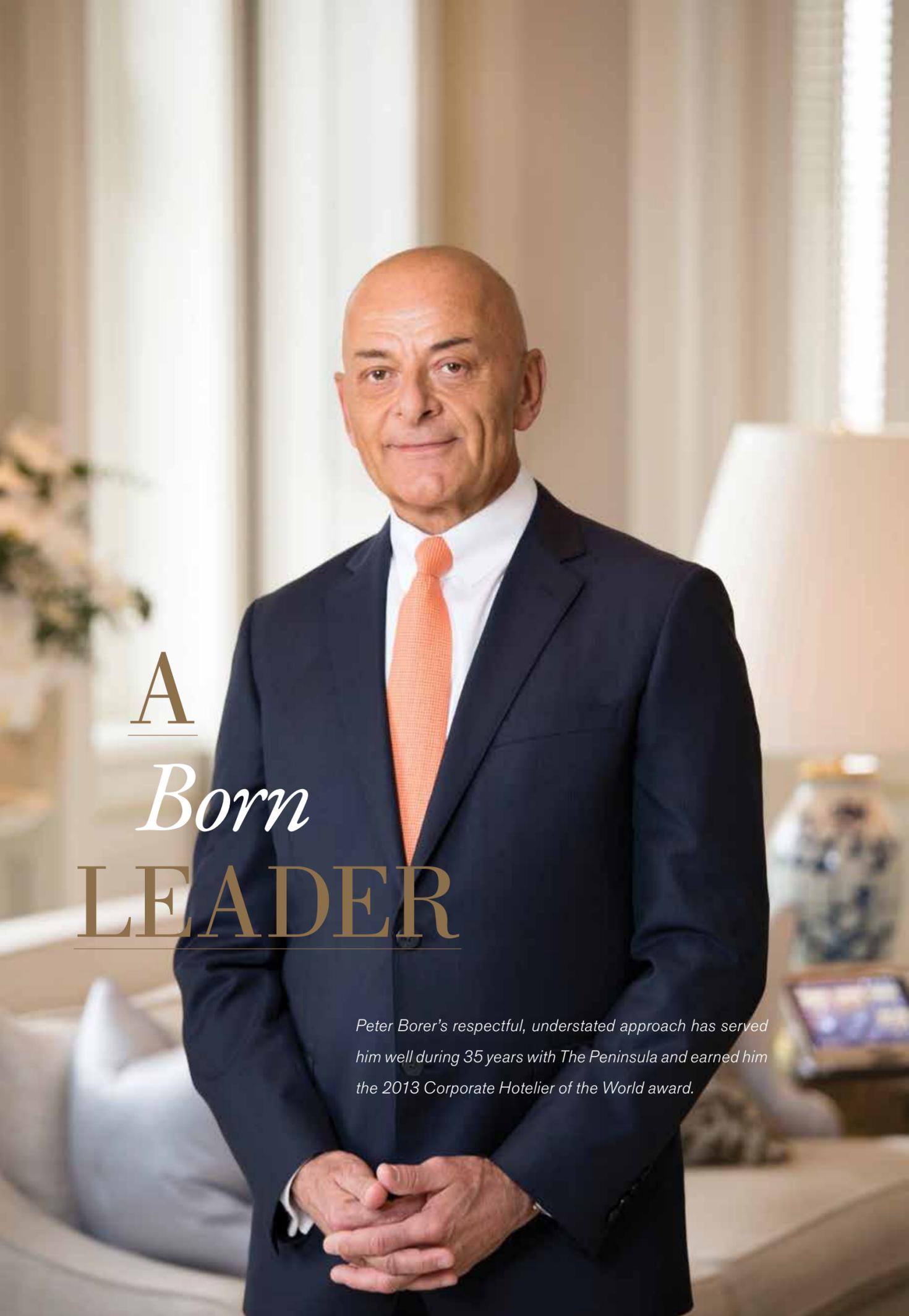
Vision 2020, established roughly eight years ago, puts sustainability at the heart of the company’s business model and brand, focusing on seven areas that cover all divisions of the business; from governance and management to guest experience, employees, operation, new build and fit, supply chain and community.

“You know, you can write policies until you’re blue in the face. But the most important thing is that we have made a great deal of progress in terms of changing the hearts and minds of people,” Kwok continues. “Part of what our group policy has managed to do is reinforce the importance of this topic, in a way that people now live and breathe it within their operations, and I’m really pleased to see that.”

His hard work certainly has not gone unrecognised. In 2013, The Peninsula New York unveiled a new restaurant – Clement – named in his honour. Two years later, Kwok was the recipient of France’s prestigious Knight of the Ordre National de la Legion d’Honneur.

Acting as a proud custodian of the Company’s storied history and heritage, and at the same time enthusiastically leading HSH into a new era – Kwok has indeed found harmony between a storied past and an exciting future.

“We are effectively in the same business now as we were 150 years ago, which is the provision of hospitality,” he concludes. “That means giving people an experience that they treasure and enjoy, and not only to meet, but to exceed, people’s expectations.” 



**A**  
*Born*  
**LEADER**

*Peter Borer's respectful, understated approach has served him well during 35 years with The Peninsula and earned him the 2013 Corporate Hotelier of the World award.*

The defining moment in Peter Borer's career came early – even before his career began. He convinced the dean at the *Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne* to admit him to the programme, even though he feared he wouldn't pass his final prep exam. "I promised Mr. Gerber I would become a good hotelier," Borer recalls. "When I was named GM of The Peninsula in Hong Kong I wrote him a note and said, 'I kept my promise.'"

Likely, what Borer was able to show Mr. Gerber on that fateful day in 1972 was his sincerity, humility and his love and respect for the business – qualities that remain these 43 years later, and traits that surely charged the readers of HOTELS to choose him as 2013 Corporate Hotelier of the World.

"It is said that an excellent hotelier requires the ability to work in different environments, cultures and cities," says the Honourable Sir Michael Kadoorie, Chairman of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Borer's employer for the past 35 years. "Peter has not only successfully navigated these environments but has forged the strong brand profile and quality services we see today."

With a career that has spanned the globe and kept him loyal to The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Borer's roots are firmly entrenched in the hotel business, as he grew up watching and helping both of his parents run a Swiss country inn about 60 kilometres from Zurich. Borer very much liked his early taste of the hospitality lifestyle when he travelled with his parents and watched his father order Oysters Rockefeller at the Ritz-Carlton in Chicago, and when he studied his father, a gifted cook, respectfully entertain family and friends at home.

"Hospitality really came from my father's heart, and that inspired me," Borer reflects. "Both of my parents had this very hospitable approach. We always ate lunch and dinner as a family – even if we were busy, we found 20 minutes to sit, and it was always a good meal filled with conversation. My sister and brother still continue our tradition of hosting big family dinners, and they both have children who are in the hospitality business. I am also the proud uncle of a Professor in Physics."

Borer is blessed with an abundance of energy, and has the ability to work hard, travel like crazy and rarely feel tired.

"Peter is a fast thinker, a fast traveller, a fast eater – if it is not fast enough, he could become slightly dispassionate," says Emanuel Berger, President of the International Advisory Board of the *Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne*. He is always on time, or a few minutes early. He has a tendency for perfection in every respect of management, and he strongly believes in sustainability, cleanliness, respect, modesty and high ethics."

After interning during his school years, which was followed by a stint in the Swiss Army, in 1976 Borer went to the United States to take courses at Cornell. During that time, he was also fortunate to have a very impressionable experience spending three months under the tutelage of hotel legend Jim Nassikas at the Stanford Court in San Francisco, witnessing his "enormous style" as well as the display of mutual respect between line staff and management.

After a summer of wearing blue Bermuda shorts working at the Hamilton Princess in Bermuda, Borer headed back to Europe, where he learned another lesson, which was that mass marketing at the InterContinental in Frankfurt was not his style. He then spent three years at a Swiss mountain resort in Davos, honing his administrative skills and starting to develop his own management style. When an eager Borer decided it was time to head east to Asia, he fortuitously landed in 1981 as the F&B Manager at The Peninsula Manila.

After at times challenging – but always inspiring – stints with The Peninsula hotels in Hong Kong and Bangkok, in 1985 Borer was promoted to Director of Sales and Marketing at the company's head office. By 1990, after several more promotions, he was named Senior Vice President, responsible for planning the renovation of The Peninsula Hong Kong and the construction of its new tower.

In 1994, he returned to operations with the plum assignment as general manager of The Peninsula Hong Kong, charged with opening the hotel extension, and by 1999 Borer had assumed wider responsibility for The Peninsula Hotels' portfolio of Asian properties. Fast forward to April 2004, and he was appointed Chief Operating Officer of The Peninsula Hotels and an Executive Director of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels Ltd.

Along the way, Borer played an instrumental role in multiple decisions that helped change the way the small luxury hotel company operated and grew. When he was named Head of Marketing, he decided to study with a professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and subsequently wrote a plan asking for an unprecedented US\$1 million for corporate advertising, public relations and regional sales offices. Eventually, he won approval and appointed Saatchi & Saatchi and Burson-Marsteller to help portray the Peninsula hotels in a new light and develop a more structured sales approach that delivered more business.

After a few years in the marketing role, then-Peninsula President Onno Poortier asked Borer to work in his office, managing multiple projects – perhaps most importantly working on the plan for what would become The Peninsula Beverly Hills, the brand's first foray outside Asia. "I was in Onno's office one evening when a packet arrived with the brochure about the Belvedere Hotel in Beverly Hills," Borer says. "I told him we had to get this hotel. We started negotiating, made an agreement and helped the owners build it."

Borer says the Beverly Hills hotel gave The Peninsula Hotels' owners, the Kadoorie family, the courage to buy the New York hotel as well. "We also changed the business model and decided we would have a stake in each hotel, or buy them outright," he adds.

All along the way, Borer had one eye on the company flagship – The Peninsula in Hong Kong – and after a series of events caused the company to make plans to better utilise its hometown hotel, he decided the time was right to make his play to run the flagship and be an integral part of developing the new 30-storey tower alongside active owner Sir Michael Kadoorie.

"The most fun was changing the way we ran this hotel," says Borer of the hotel that in the late 1980s was still predominantly managed and run by men. "I found wonderful people like Rainy Chan, who now runs the hotel. We brought in a different culture."

Now at the traditional retirement age, Borer has been asked to stay on and has gladly accepted. "I am very happy to continue to do what I am doing," he says. "My biggest dream is to really be a small global company that has representation in the three most important cities in the world – New York City, Tokyo and London. We have announced a deal for London, which is a major milestone that makes me very happy."

For Borer, that recipe has been the right mix for the past 35 years with The Peninsula Hotels. Why so long with one company? Borer responds, "Because the values of this family are what inspires me and what I can respect. In return, I think I have earned their respect. So why change a good thing?"

*Article printed courtesy of HOTELS, an MTG Media Group publication*



# UP, UP and AWAY

You have to have balloons at a party, right? The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited has been organising parties for 150 years and knows all about hosting the very best, and to celebrate this auspicious milestone, will fly eight spectacular, custom-made balloons for its anniversary party that should stand out from the crowd. We look back at the long history of hot air balloons.



November 6th, 1828: Balloon raising by Francesco Orlandi in Bologna

Human beings have been fascinated with flight, it seems, for millennia. Not the fight-or-flight reaction that stimulates the hypothalamus via our sympathetic nervous system when faced with danger, but the ethereal dream of soaring into the skies like birds on the wing – which, one must admit, could also be rather useful in a tricky situation.

For almost as long, the caveat, ‘If we were meant to fly, God would have given us wings’, was an admonition against the hubris of allowing one’s ego to supercede that of perceived and actual doctrine, and was interpreted as the sin of pride in many religions. The basis for this analogy is steeped in Greek mythology and the impetuosity of a young son against the sage advice of his father.

This particular father, Daedalus, was by all accounts a marvellous and renowned inventor, artist and craftsman. So much so that Minos, the King of Crete, summoned him to build a Labyrinth to incarcerate the Minotaur (a monster, part-man, part-bull, and also his wife’s son – hence the name and another story altogether). The Labyrinth was built so cunningly that Daedalus could barely extricate himself once he had built it. Escape he did, but he was ‘rewarded’ for his efforts by being locked in a tower with his son and apprentice, Icarus. Here the story actually starts to return to our theme of flight.

King Minos wanted to keep the plans of his Labyrinth secret, so he imprisoned Daedalus and, as a formidable ruler of land and sea, he also kept a close watch on all vessels leaving the island, just in case, to ensure that Daedalus and his son would not escape. As with most fables, we are not privy as to how he managed to procure the materials needed to make not just one pair of wings, but also a set for Icarus whilst locked up and under scrutiny. But according to legend, Daedalus did manage to fabricate his wings using feathers arranged similarly to that of birds, affixing the base quills to a curved frame with wax, and securing their midpoints with string. He duly tested his handiwork and found that they could sufficiently buoy him and facilitate their escape.

Icarus was similarly accoutred and, as any self-respecting father would do, Daedalus taught his son how to fly. Whilst awaiting clearance, Daedalus warned his ebullient son not to fly too high, because the heat of the sun would melt the wax, nor fly too low because the sea foam would soak the feathers, making them too heavy.

As with any flight of fancy, the boy got caught up in the moment, exhilarated at being aloft and defying the natural order. And as a young man, fanciful of his own prowess, he proceeded perilously to disregard his father’s predicatory caution. Thus Icarus soared higher, unheeded of his father’s cries and inevitably the heat of the sun thwarted his pride and down he fell into the sea below. Daedalus had to carry on unable to go too low and suffer the same fate. Some accounts record that sometime much later in his life he was given real wings from the goddess Athena.

Icarus’ demise has appeared in many iterations in early Greek and Roman writings and seemed to have put a few people off trying to emulate him for a while. But as the western world was battling its way toward an age of enlightenment, a few did try (Michelangelo included), but there were no principles defined yet to explain flight

and thus gravity and the solid fact that humans, fake wings and other contraptions were just heavier than air.

These were the days before the definition of thrust came into the picture with Isaac Newton’s second and third laws, which if known at the time could have been a momentous discovery if anyone was considering powered flight, but with the advent of artillery, parabolic arcs and projectiles became the rule of propulsion for several centuries to come.

Let time fly forward a bit to France and midway into the reign of King Louis XVI. Here is where historians tend to agree that the modern era of man-made flight really took off – or maybe ‘floated off’ is a more accurate description.

Two brothers, Joseph-Michel and Jacques-Étienne Montgolfier, had been experimenting with lighter-than-air devices after observing that paper ash rose in heated air and when directed to flow into a paper or fabric bag, the hot air would cause the bag to rise. Joseph-Michel believed that contained within the smoke was a special gas, which he humbly called “Montgolfier gas”, with a special property he called “levity”.

With reference to levity, what does a rooster, a duck, and a sheep have to do with wallpaper? This isn’t a set up for a corny punchline - indeed they were all instrumental to the success of the first hot air balloon flight. The Montgolfiers were prosperous paper manufacturers, which in the 18th Century was a reasonably high-tech industry. The brothers assembled a crowd of dignitaries in the marketplace of their hometown of Annonay on June 4th, 1793 for the first public demonstration of their latest invention.

The balloon was 10 metres (33 feet) in diameter, made of silk and lined with (of all things) paper. With nobody aboard, the balloon rose to a height of 1,600 - 2,000 metres (5,200 - 6,600 feet), staying aloft for about 10 minutes and travelling about two kilometres (just over a mile). This caused a sensation and word of their success quickly spread, reaching the ears of the King himself. Étienne, the most presentable and assiduous of the two (Joseph-Michel’s extreme shyness and general dishevelled appearance meant he stayed at home), travelled to Paris to give more demonstrations of their *globe aérostatique* and assure their claim as inventors of flight.

For their proposed flight for Louis XVI, the Montgolfiers turned to their friend, wallpaper manufacturer Jean-Baptiste Réveillon, who lined the 1,060 cubic-metre (37,500 cubic-foot) sky blue envelope of taffeta with three layers of thick paper coated with a varnish of alum for its fireproofing properties. In what could be construed as the first ever advertising on a hot air balloon (the Goodyear blimp springs to mind), Réveillon decorated the canopy with zodiac symbols and medallions depicting the visage of the King, as well as sun motifs that alluded to the Bourbon dynastic ‘Sun King’ heritage - inspired marketing for his wallpaper business which spawned a sensation for all things balloon-related, from chairs and crockery to gilt-bronze mantle clocks.

Having explained the significance of wallpaper, the two birds and a sheep mentioned above were substituted over the King’s suggestion that convicted criminals be used to test the effects of rising into the atmosphere.

Thus in front the King, his wife Queen Marie Antoinette, his court retinue and a host of invited dignitaries, the Aérostat Réveillon ascended into the sky from the gardens of the royal palace of Versailles carrying live sheep, and making history on September 19th, 1793. The flight lasted approximately eight minutes, covered three kilometres (two miles), and obtained an altitude of about 460 metres (1,500 feet). The craft landed safely after flying without any physical damage to its occupants, albeit some cleaning may have been necessary due to the obvious distress the animals must have endured.

Following the success of this maiden flight, it is fitting that Jacques-Étienne Montgolfier was the first human to lift off the earth, making at least one tethered flight from the yard of the Réveillon workshop in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine about a month later. Not exactly a giant leap for mankind, rather a gentle hop whose significance should not be underestimated nor laughed at. A little while later on that same day, Jean-François Pilâtre de Rozier became the second person to ascend into the air to the heady altitude of 24 metres (80 feet), which was the length of the tether.

On November 21st, 1783, the first untethered (free flight) by humans was made by Pilâtre, together with an army officer, the Marquis d'Arlandes. They flew aloft at about 910 metres (3,000 feet) above Paris for a distance of nine kilometres (5.5 miles), causing quite a stir on the ground in their wake. After 25 minutes, the balloon landed between the windmills, outside the city ramparts, on the Butte-aux-Cailles.

It seems that ballooning was in the air at the time, as only a few days later, on December 1st, Professor Jacques Charles and the Robert brothers (Les Frères Robert) launched a new, manned hydrogen balloon from the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris, amidst a vast excited crowd estimated to be in the region of 400,000. Among the invited (paying) guests was Benjamin Franklin, the diplomatic representative of the United States of America and Joseph-Michel Montgolfier, whom Charles honoured by asking him to release a small, bright green pilot balloon to assess the wind and weather conditions.

Charles was accompanied by Nicolas-Louis Robert as co-pilot of the 380 cubic-metre, hydrogen-filled balloon, ascending to a height of about 550 metres (1,800 feet) landing after a flight of two hours and five minutes, covering 36 kilometres (22 miles). They set another 'first' by carrying a barometer and a thermometer on board to measure the pressure and the temperature of the air, making this the first balloon flight to provide meteorological measurements of the atmosphere above the Earth's surface.

Charles then decided to ascend once more, alone this time because the balloon had lost some of its hydrogen, and rising rapidly to an altitude of about 3,000 metres (9,843 feet), he began suffering from an aching pain in his ears so he 'valved' to release gas and descended to land gently. He could ostensibly be the first person to suffer the rigours of ear barotrauma caused by sudden changes in air pressure affecting the Eustachian tube in the inner ear.

The excitement generated by these two pioneering ascents and their subsequent sold-out tours spurred a flurry of ballooning firsts

during the following few years. Not all were without incident and playing with fire proved fatal for some.

Our intrepid aviation pioneer, Pilâtre de Rozier, sadly earned his elevation by being the first person to die in an air crash, aged 31, along with his companion, Pierre Romain, when attempting to fly across the English Channel on June 15th, 1785. A chemistry and physics teacher, he had been known for risking his safety while researching the flammability of hydrogen. He would gulp a mouthful of this volatile gas and blow it across an open flame causing one commentator to remark that Pilâtre proved at a stroke that, "hydrogen is indeed explosively combustible and that eyebrows are not necessarily a permanent feature of one's face."

Overcoming the challenge of flying across the English Channel had been accomplished by Jean-Pierre Blanchard earlier that year on January 7th, 1785, who went on to become the first person to pilot a balloon in America in 1793.

The first aircraft disaster occurred in May 1785 when the town of Tullamore, County Offaly, Ireland was seriously damaged when the crash of a balloon resulted in a fire that burned down about 100 houses, making the town home to the world's first aviation disaster. To this day, the town's coat-of-arms depicts a phoenix rising from the ashes.

Gas balloons became the most common type from the 1790s until the 1960s. Hydrogen was originally used extensively as having a brazier of hot coals caused all sorts of problems but, since the Hindenburg disaster in 1937, is now seldom used due to its high flammability and combustibility in high oxygen atmospheres. Modifications and improvements of the basic Montgolfier design were incorporated in the construction of larger balloons that, in later years, opened the way to exploration of the upper atmosphere using helium instead of hydrogen.

Helium, the second most abundant element in the universe, was discovered on the sun before it was found on the earth by French astronomer, Pierre-Jules-César Janssen, who noticed a yellow line in the sun's spectrum while studying a total solar eclipse in 1868, discovering the gaseous nature of the solar chromosphere. Helium, was the first of the Noble Gases (put simply, which don't burn) to be discovered, and takes its name from the Greek word 'helios' meaning 'the sun', an ironic modern day twist to Icarus' nemesis.

Still a rare gas, world supplies have been running out, so it is fortuitous that geologists from Britain's Durham and Oxford Universities have hailed the recent discovery of a large helium gas deposit in Tanzania's Rift Valley as a "game-changer". Helium's inert properties are in high demand as a filler-gas for thermometers to the latest MRI machines. It is also mixed with oxygen for scuba diving and for treating extreme asthma conditions.

1868, incidentally, was the same year that the Hong Kong Hotel opened, the first Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels' property, and thus helium shares a significant anniversary with the world's oldest hotel company.

FIGURE EXACTE  
DU GLOBE  
Qui, le premier,  
des Hommes  
ET PROPORTIONS,  
AÉROSTATIQUE,  
a enlevé  
dans les Airs.



Hauteur du Globe.....70. pieds. | Poids du Globe.....1600. Liv.  
Diamètre.....46. pieds | Poids qu'il a enlevé 16. à 1700 Liv.  
Capacité.....60000. pieds cubes | La Gallerie avoit 3. pieds de largeur.

*La partie supérieure étoit entourée de Fleurs-de-lys; au-dessous les 12 Signes du Zodiaque. Au milieu les Chiffres du Roi, entremêlés de Soleils. Le bas, étoit garni de Mas carons et de Guirlandes; plusieurs Aigles à ailes éployées paroissoient supporter en l'air cette puissante Machine. Tous ces ornemens étoient de couleur d'or sur un beau fond bleu, ensorte que ce superbe Globe paroissoit être d'or et d'azur. La Gallerie circulaire, dans laquelle on voyoit M. le Marquis D'ARLANDES et M. PILATRE DE ROZIER, étoit peinte en Draperies cramoisi à franges d'or.*

1783: Montgolfier balloon. Image courtesy of US Library of Congress



Modern hot air balloons, with a more sophisticated onboard heat source than the Montgolfier brothers' basket of hot coals, were pioneered by Ed Yost beginning in the 1950s, which resulted in his first successful flight on October 22nd, 1960 with the aid of heat generated by a propane burner. Yost is referred to as the 'Father of the Modern Day Hot Air Balloon' and his improved design for hot air balloons triggered the modern sport balloon movement, allowing balloon design to unleash any shape from cartoon characters to chateaux. In 1963, Yost piloted the first modern balloon flight across the English Channel with crew member Don Piccard in a balloon later named the 'Channel Champ'.

The English Channel has always inspired Europeans to attempt record-breaking achievements, some serious and others just downright silly. More records and firsts were to follow as technology pushed the barriers of human endurance.

The world is a big place and like their naval counterparts centuries earlier, the sky was not the limit when, on August 16th, 1960, Captain Joseph Kittinger of the United States Air Force ascended into the stratosphere in a helium balloon to 31,300 metres (102,800 feet or almost 20 miles), setting the record for the highest manned balloon flight and (some would think the craziest record of all) the highest parachute jump.

In 1999, Bertrand Piccard and Brian Jones achieved the first non-stop balloon circumnavigation in Breitling Orbiter 3 powered by propane gas. They landed in the Egyptian desert after being aloft for 19 days, 21 hours, and 55 minutes on March 21st, having travelled a distance of 40,814 kilometres (25,361 miles).

On July 3rd, 2002, Steve Fossett became the first person to fly non-stop around the world alone by hot air balloon – in fact, in any kind of aircraft. Fossett launched his attempt from Western Australia aboard the balloon Spirit of Freedom on June 19th landing back in Queensland after 13 days, 8 hours and 33 minutes, racking up 33,195.10 km (20,626 statute miles). The trip set a number of records for ballooning: Fastest Speed (320 kmh/200 mph), breaking his own previous record of 270 kmh/166 mph; Fastest Around the World (13.5 days); Longest Distance Flown Solo in a Balloon, and 24-Hour Balloon Distance record 5,128.66 km (3,186.80 miles).

At the age of 84, Kittinger went on to mentor Felix Baumgartner, who in 2012 broke his mentor's height record and also became the fastest person to freefall without a drogue (a parachute used to control speed and control stability) from a height of 39 km (24 miles) on the outer limits of the Earth's atmosphere, reaching a skydiving speed record of 1,357.64 km per hour (843.6 miles per hour). He also became the first person to break the sound barrier without the aid of a vehicle. Baumgartner's formidable altitude feat was bested when in October 2014, Alan Eustace jumped from 41.42 km (135,890 feet or 25.74 miles) with a drogue, though not beating the speed record.

Today, hot air balloons are much more common than gas balloons, with some 8,000 used for recreation, sightseeing and stunts throughout the world, with several major regattas thrilling thousands of enthusiasts. With the boundaries of ballooning reaching the aether - the classical fifth element that was beyond the grasp of the unfortunate Icarus - who knows what's next when we fly up, up and away in a beautiful balloon...💡

# DAY

## One

On 2 March, 1866, The Hongkong Hotel Company was incorporated with limited liability. The Board consisted of Douglas Lapraik, a Scotsman; Englishman C. H. M. Bosman, a director of the Hong Kong and Whampoa Dock Company; and German national Baron Gustav van Overbeck, Consul for Prussia and Austria in Hong Kong, who became the first Chairman. In the same year, the Company acquired the Oriental Hotel and its adjoining building, Keying and Marine House in Pedder Street.

Two years later, in 1868, The Hongkong Hotel held its soft opening, presided over by C. H. M. Bosman, and with the Governor, His Excellency Sir Richard MacDonnell, as guest of honour. The hotel was dubbed by the media the “greatest enterprise of the kind in China and Japan”. Charles Duggan was recruited from The Langham in London to be the hotel’s manager.

In 1886, the hotel company bought a site at Pedder Wharf, at the end of the Praya (now the site of Gloucester Tower in The Landmark), where a five-storey north wing of the Hongkong Hotel was built.

Across from the hotel at No.12 Pedder Street, the Pedder Building was completed in 1924, and today remains as the last surviving pre-War building in the area. Because of its historical significance, the building was declared a ‘Grade II Historic Building’ by the Hong Kong Antiquities and Monuments Office in 1981. Sandwiched between the modern day temples to wealth and development, the Pedder Building is one of the very few remaining symbols of Hong Kong’s colonial past. 🇬🇧



# Setting SAIL

The development of upmarket hotels across Asia was a response to the growing popularity of steamship travel in the mid- to late-19th Century. With the expansion of industrial production, the development of overseas markets promoted travel for business and pleasure. Great ocean liners transported a new breed of leisure traveller across the world, eagerly seeking adventure whilst cocooned in the same luxury and hospitality afforded to guests in a first class hotel. Following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which provided a speedier passage between Europe and Asia, opulent first-class hotels began to appear along the shipping route. Hong Kong soon became a centre for Asian travel and a connecting port for several important Europe-Asia sea routes.

Far from being just a means of transportation, cruise liners themselves became an attraction of around-the-world travel and the Peninsular & Oriental (P&O) company began to operate a regular steamer service between Hong Kong and Singapore in 1845.

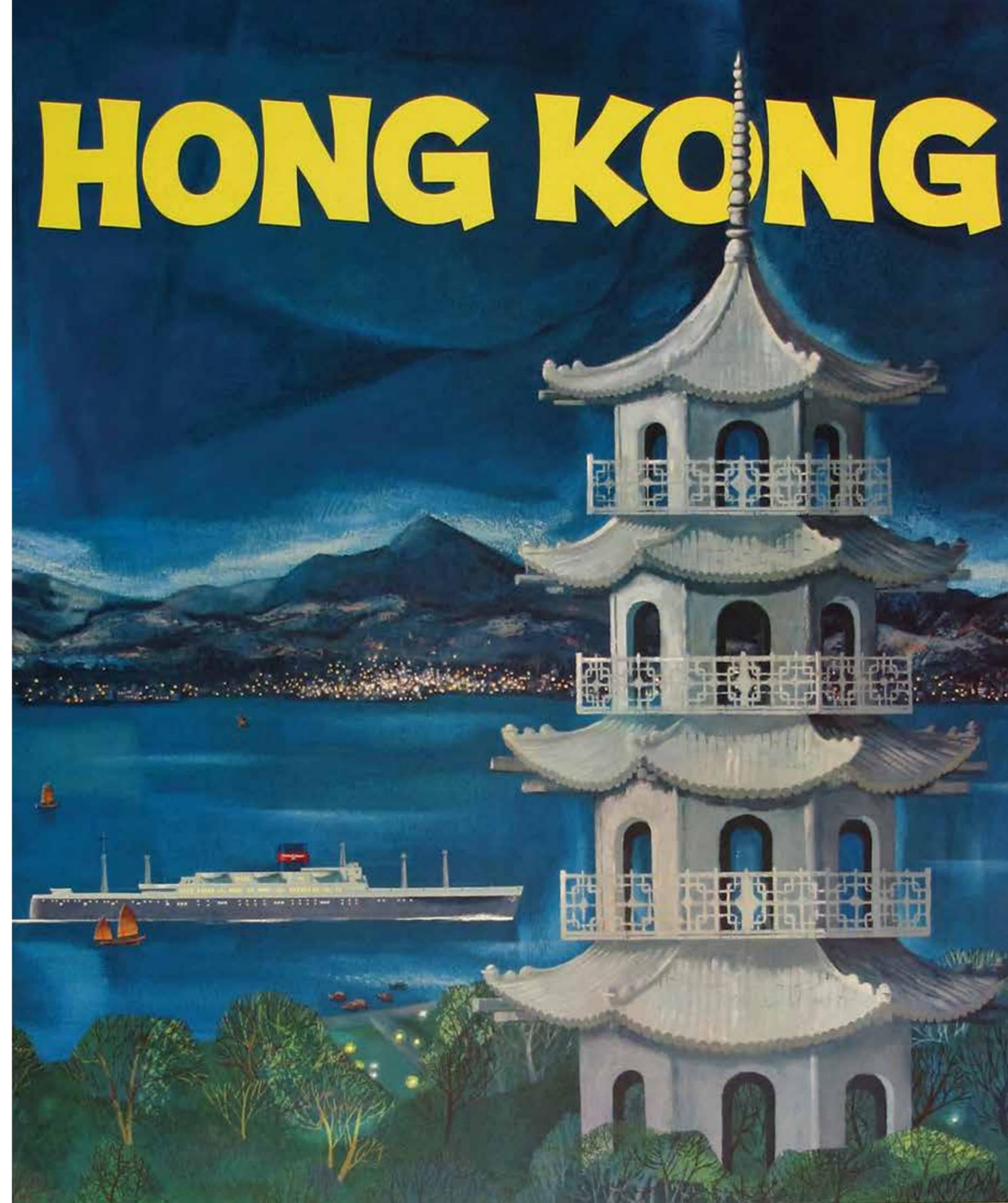
The Ocean Steamship Co., founded by Alfred Holt in 1866, managed the Blue Funnel Line and provided services from China via Hong Kong to Britain, primarily as a cargo line, as passenger loads remained small until the 1930s. Entrepreneurs such as Thomas Cook helped facilitate the expansion of tourism by providing early tour services for independent travellers. Packages included transport, hotels and even meal coupons for one convenient price. The company organised its first Round the World Tour in 1872, which included stop-overs in China and India.

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. The hotel was severely damaged by fire in 1926, but continued its business within the original building until 1952.

In the immediate post-war years and prior to mass commercial aviation, Hong Kong's communication channels with the outside world were largely restored by international passenger shipping lines. Until the mid-1960s, the principal means of transporting colonial civil servants, businessmen and their families to Hong Kong was by the P&O line. Sir William Purves, the first Group Chairman of HSBC Holdings, remembers his arrival from Hamburg, Germany by P&O ship in 1955: "It (the harbour) was of course, much quieter than it is today. It was also very much wider than it is today. One tied up at what is now the Ocean Terminal, but of course there was nothing there; there was just a wooden platform down ... we came off the P&O ship and got onto the Wayfoong, came across to Blake's Pier as it then was and the bearers took the luggage up to the junior mess at the top of the Peak, and my colleague and myself went straight into the bank and within an hour were at work."

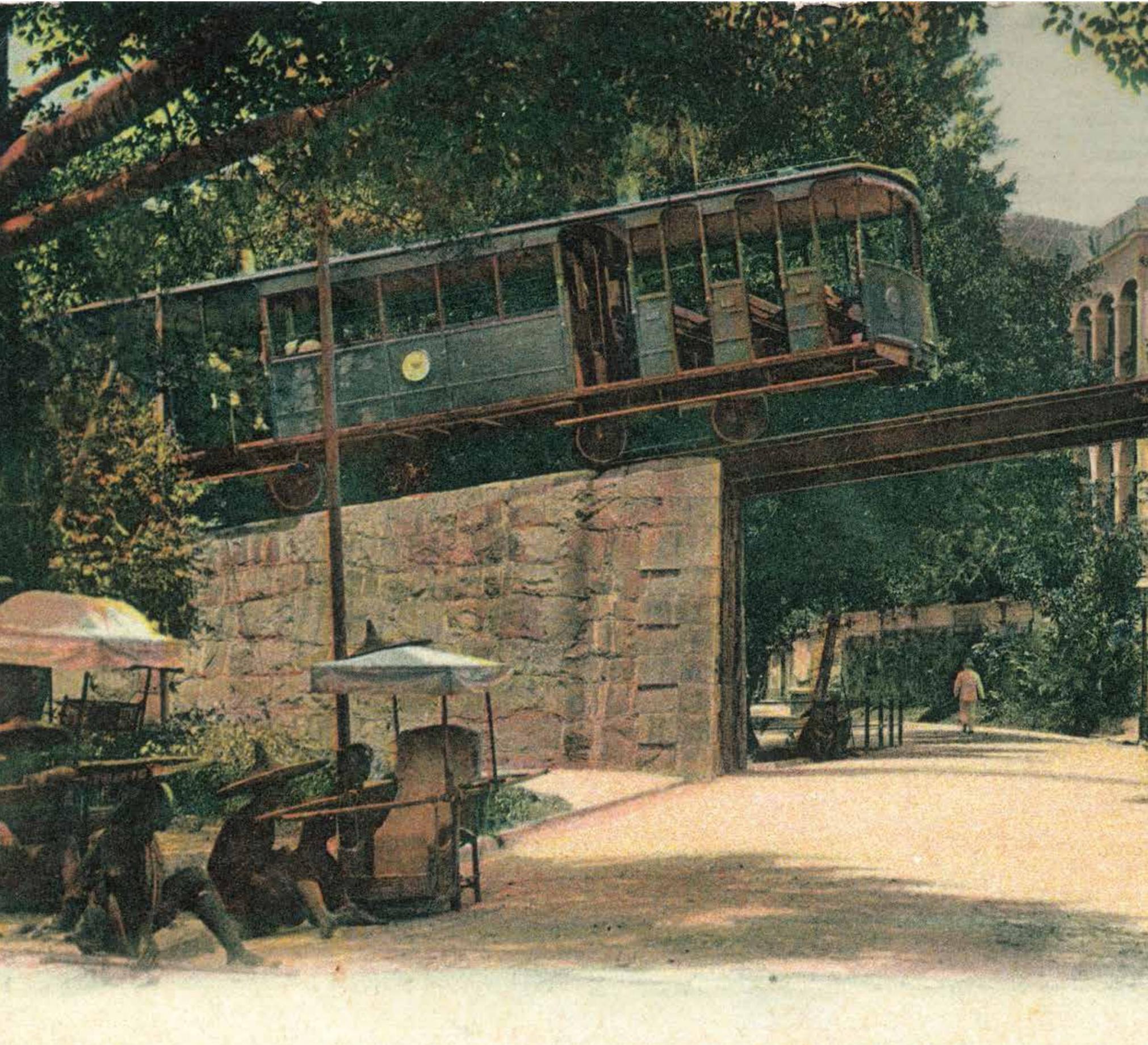
Others travelled to Hong Kong to work within religious institutions and organisations. Sister Debrecht Rose arrived in Hong Kong in 1946 to work as a teacher and missionary in the Maryknoll Convent School. She remembers her emotional departure from San Francisco nearly 70 years ago: "It was right after World War Two and the signing of the Treaty of Peace on August 15th 1945, but it took a bit of time to get transport. And we came on an American President liner, which had not been converted back to a passenger ship. We were on the deck, waving to the Sisters who were staying in California and the music was 'Til We Meet Again' and all of a sudden there were torrents of tears from every one of us because we were holding onto these ribbons and eventually of course – it was a crepe paper ribbon – it snapped and that was your termination of your contact with your own country. Well, that was a bit difficult." 



## AMERICAN PRESIDENT LINES

SERVING 50 PORTS ON 4 MAJOR TRADE ROUTES

1957: Image courtesy of Picture This Gallery



# POWERED *by* HUMANS

*Nothing used to say 'The Far East' quite as clearly as the image of a rickshaw, being pulled through the busy streets of Hong Kong or China, often with a glamorous female passenger in the back.*

Kennedy Road, Peak Tram Stop

Classic movies of a bygone era, such as 'The World of Suzie Wong', 'Love Is A Many Splendored Thing', as well as countless gangster movies from the time that China was undergoing revolutionary change, depict a time when the streets were teeming with rickshaws, clearly the most popular, if not the only, form of transportation. Sadly in today's Hong Kong, the single-seater rickshaws, with their iconic green and red colours, are nowhere to be found any more, except perhaps for one or two, still lying idly at the old Hong Kong Star Ferry terminal, un-manned and adorned with large 'For Sale' signs. Advances in less strenuous, more energy-efficient and faster modes of transportation (and arguably safer!) have put paid to this icon, although it can still be found in many countries of Asia and Africa, albeit in far more advanced versions.

Although its exact origins are vague, it is believed that the rickshaw was originally a Japanese invention which emerged in the late 1860s when a ban on wheeled vehicles was lifted. The name itself comes from *jinrikisha*, *jin* meaning human in Japanese, *riki* meaning power or force, and *sha*, a vehicle, literally a 'human-powered vehicle'. This was a huge advancement on the rickshaw's forefather, the sedan chair, allowing for only one 'driver' to man the operation, rather than the two or even four people previously required. The wheels made for a lighter burden on the driver, taking much of the physical weight of his passengers off his shoulders, and also made for faster journeys. With human labour at the time being cheaper than the maintenance of horses, the rickshaw became a quintessential form of transportation until motorised vehicles became affordable.

Soon after its invention, this modern means of transportation became popular and was quickly introduced to Shanghai and nearby cities. In the larger Asian cities such as Shanghai and Tokyo, rickshaws were on the streets in the tens, if not hundreds, of thousands. Hong Kong received its first rickshaw in 1874, and by the 1920s boasted 3,000 of them, at a time when the population was about 700,000. It was largely migrant peasants who moved to the large Asian cities, who became rickshaw runners or 'coolies'. The job was extremely dangerous, exhausting, and considered highly degrading, and runners often did upwards of 40 kilometres a day for very meagre wages. In return, they were able to navigate the winding and narrow city streets which were not accessible by buses or trams, and offered door-to-door transportation for their passengers, who could be carried onto the rickshaws during the rainy season to prevent their shoes from getting wet.

The first rickshaws were rudimentary, with wooden wheels and hard, flat seats. By the late 19th and early 20th Centuries,

rubber tyres and springs made for a more comfortable ride, as did cushioned seats and backrests. Wealthier families could afford their own drivers and private rickshaws, which were adorned with upholstered seats, rain protection, elaborate decorations and even lights.

The impact of the rickshaw on urban development in early 20th Century China is unmistakable. It provided not only a mode of transportation, but allowed for the migration of workers from the countryside in hard times, when they were almost certain to find a source of income in the city. It was said that in Beijing, a city of just over one million people, 60,000 men took as many as half a million fares a day. The sociologist, Li Jing Han estimated that close to 20 percent of males between the ages of 16 and 50 were rickshaw pullers and that they and their families made up about 20 percent of the total population at the time.

The introduction of the Peak Tram in 1888 marked the arrival of the first mechanically powered means of transport in Hong Kong, heralding a new transportation era in the Colony's history. The first private motor car appeared in the early 20th Century, and Hong Kong tramways commenced operation in 1904.

With motorised transportation offering faster, safer and more comfortable travel, the glory days of human-powered rickshaws were numbered. By the 1930s, their numbers had dwindled in creating concern for the welfare of the rickshaw runners, especially in the countries that started to officially outlaw the use of traditional rickshaws.

That said, there was something that the rickshaw offered that buses, trams and cars could not. Whereas the latter had to use main roads and follow traffic regulations, the rickshaw was able to manoeuvre back roads and small alleys swiftly and nimbly, often resulting in arriving at a destination faster than by the more modern forms of transportation. If they could not be pulled by humans any more, then developments would be made to allow for them to be powered by some other sort of locomotion, and as a result of this, a whole new generation of transportation was born.

Today, the legacy of the rickshaw lives on in many countries of not only Asia, but across all the continents, from the Americas to Europe through to Africa. Pedicabs or cycle-rickshaws, where a cabin for two or three passengers is pulled by a bicycle mechanism, or auto-rickshaws, such as the iconic tuk-tuk of Thailand, where the cabin is powered by a simple motorcycle engine and can seat three to four people in the back, are the next generation. Sometimes they offer a purely touristic ride through scenic city centres, but elsewhere, they offer a legitimate alternative to getting somewhere on time through secondary routes, rather than sitting for hours in gridlocked traffic! 

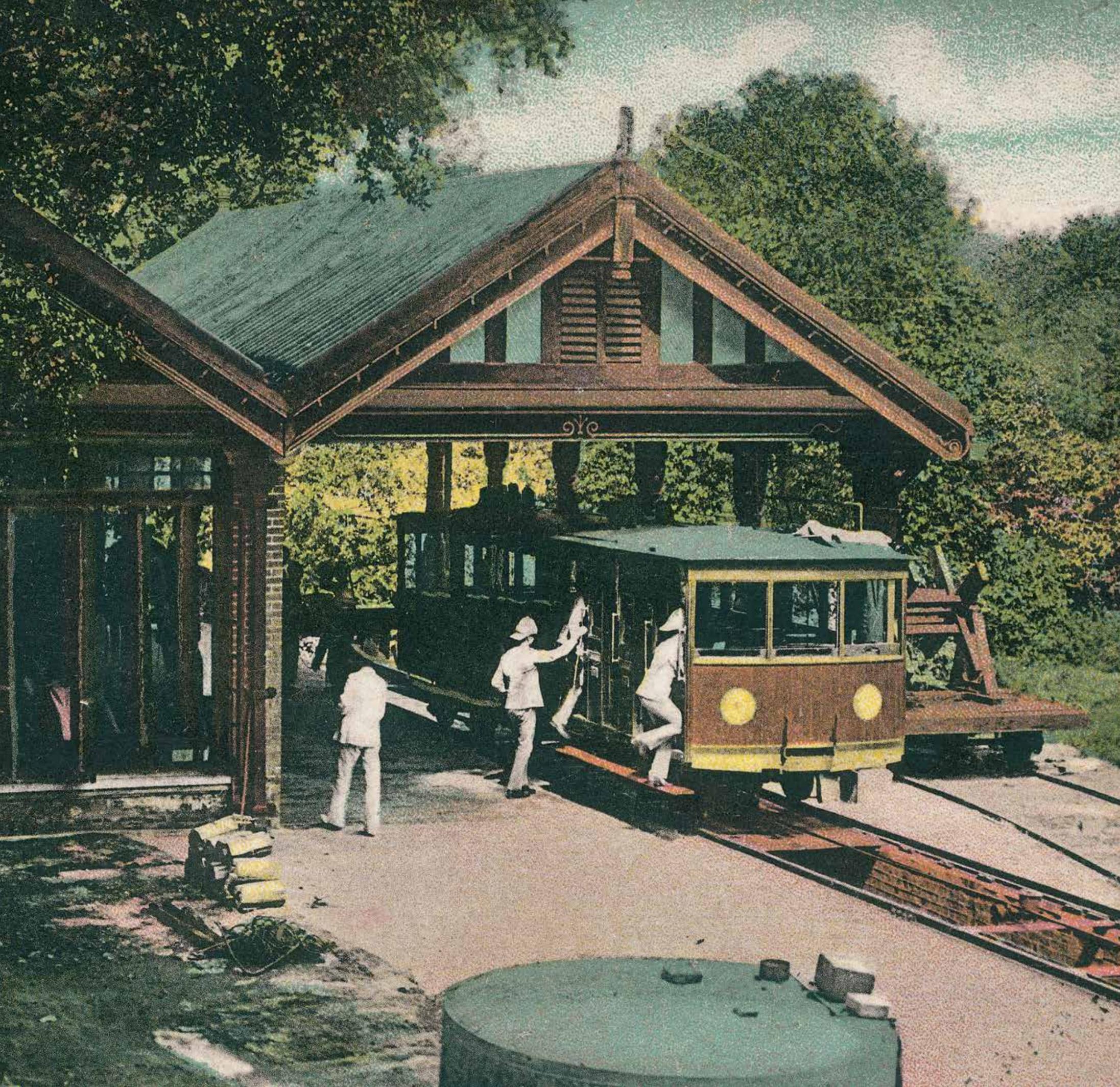
# SEE HONGKONG



## The RIVIERA of the ORIENT

Image: S.D. Panaiotaky, circa 1930. Courtesy of Picture This Gallery

1888



A  
*New*  
ASCENT



Bell Punch with Tickets: Courtesy of The Peak Tramways Co. Ltd

In Hong Kong's early days, Victoria Peak was used as a signalling post for incoming cargo ships. Later, 'The Peak' as it came to be known, was used by privileged residents of Hong Kong to escape the stifling heat of the summer months spent in Central. Before the Peak Tramway was inaugurated in 1888, sedan chairs carried by 'coolies' (porters) were the only mode of transportation to and from town, and that remained the case until 1924 when Stubbs Road was completed. A few Hong Kong residents, including the Governor, Sir Richard MacDonnell, had set up their summer residences on the Peak in the late 1860s. As Hong Kong became established as a strategic military and commercial outpost, there were increasing demands for the opening up of new luxury residential districts.

Alexander Findlay Smith, an enterprising young Scot who arrived in Hong Kong in 1860, purchased a site at the top of Victoria Peak where he opened the Peak Hotel in 1873. As a former employee of Scotland's Highland Railway, Findlay appears to have been fascinated by the potential of combining rails and wheels for maximum efficiency in moving goods and people. He proposed the introduction of six tram lines in Hong Kong, and his most ambitious proposal was for a funicular railway to scale the vertical heights of The Peak, thereby attracting more business for his hotel. The scheme was approved in 1882 and construction work started in September 1885. It took three years to build, as much of the heavy equipment had to be carried uphill by brute manpower alone.

Once the tram cars started carrying their first passengers in 1888, the business was deemed a huge success. What had taken up to an hour by sedan chair could now be achieved in less than 10 minutes. The Peak Tramway was the first cable railway in Asia (soon followed by another on Penang Hill), and remains one of the steepest in the world. Its old timetables reveal some interesting facts about the society of that era. The 'down' cars between 8:00am and 10:00am, for example, were reserved for first-class passengers only – for of course at that time one supposes that the exalted business gentlemen, the taipans, were descending to their offices. Anyone of any social pretension still kept a sedan and bearers to take them from whatever stop they alighted, along the paths to their residences. And the wealthy kept other sedans at the 'down' end to convey them effortlessly to their offices and around town.

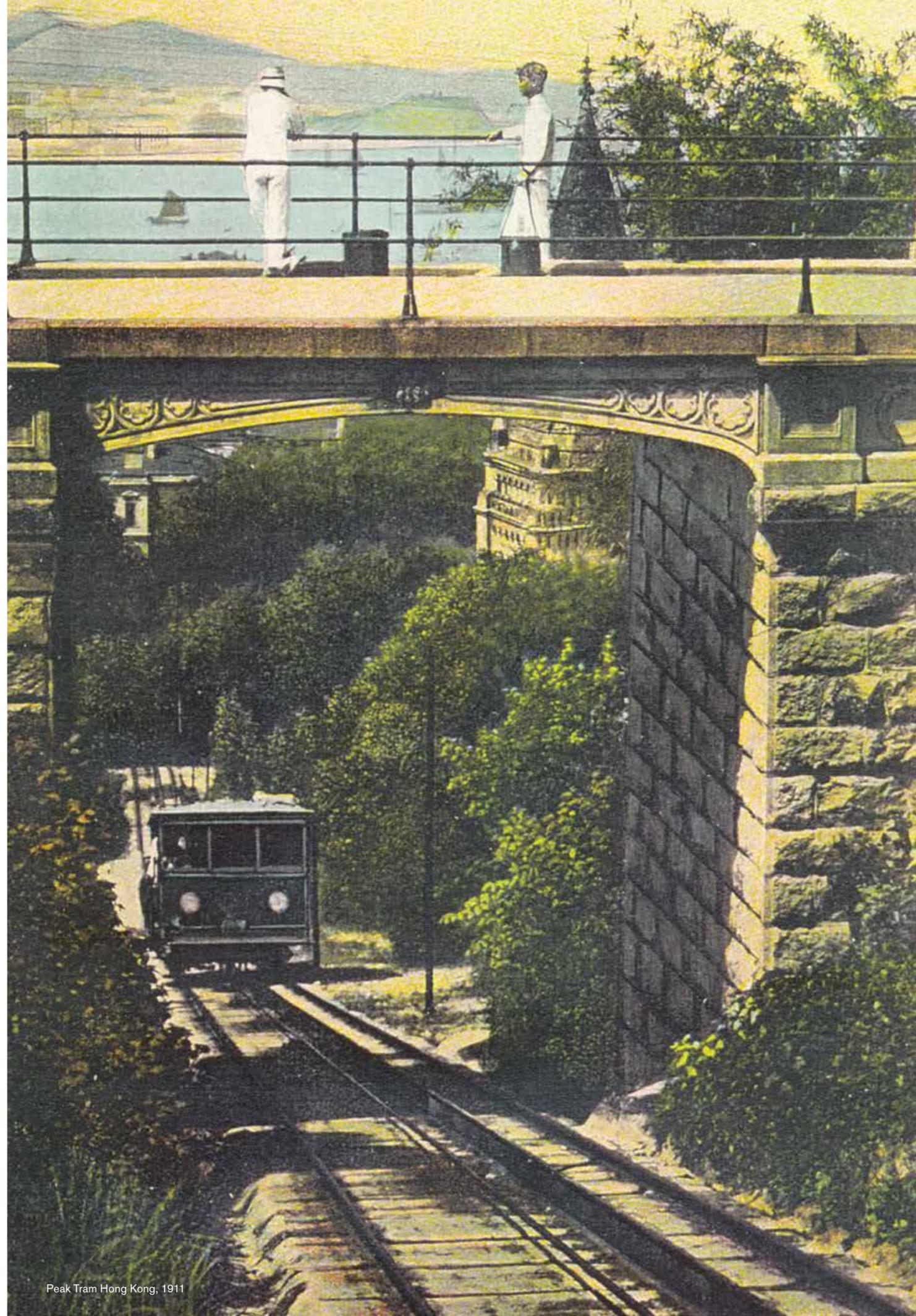
From 1908 until 1949, the first two seats were reserved for the use of the Governor, and could not be occupied by anyone else until two minutes before departure time. A brass plaque affixed to the back read: 'This seat is reserved for His Excellency, The Governor'.

When it first opened, the Peak Tram used a static coal-fired steam engine to power the haulage cable. In 1926, the steam engine was upgraded to an electric motor. At that time the rate charged was based on demand. This was shown on a graph and engine drivers were given a bonus to start the tram slowly, thus keeping the pointer to the lowest level consistent with proper operation. In December 1941, during the Battle of Hong Kong, the engine room was damaged by Japanese shelling, and following extensive repairs, a limited service resumed in December 1945, maintaining a continuous service until the severe floods of 1966, when the track was completely washed away from the Bowen Road to Kennedy Road stations as a result of a retaining wall collapsing at Bowen Road Bridge. Once repaired, the tramway service was the only means of public transport to the Peak area in the following few days.

The Kadoorie family has a long-standing association with the Peak Tramway which dates back to 1905, when Sir Elly Kadoorie played an active role in transforming the former private company into a public limited company, along with fellow entrepreneurs Sir Paul Chater and H.N. Mody. One of the early subscribers of the new company was Dr. J.W. Noble, a dental surgeon (incidentally he was also the first Chairman of The Hongkong Engineering & Construction Co., Ltd., a Kadoorie company). He was the owner of one of the first cars in Hong Kong which was housed in a shed adjacent to the Lower Peak Tram Terminus. As boys, Lawrence and Horace Kadoorie used to walk down to Garden Road as a special treat to have a look at the new 'wonder machine'.

Sir Horace Kadoorie fondly remembered the station in a speech made in the late 1960s: 'especially the carbide lights in the trams and the thousands of insects that gathered around them. I also recall the puffing of steam used to haul the trams during those days'. The old wooden station was demolished in 1935 and replaced with a new station which incorporated St John's Apartments. In 1966, a new Lower Peak Tram Terminus was unveiled, designed by famous Hong Kong architects Messrs. Palmer & Turner. Following the acquisition of The Peak Tramway by HSH in 1971, the Lower Terminus was again later re-developed and the distinctive architecture of the present 22-storey commercial building (St. John's Building) was awarded the Silver Medal of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects in 1983.

*On its first day of operation, the Peak Tram carried 800 passengers, almost exclusively residents. Today, over 6 million passengers ride on the tram every year, an average of 17,000 per day.* 🚃



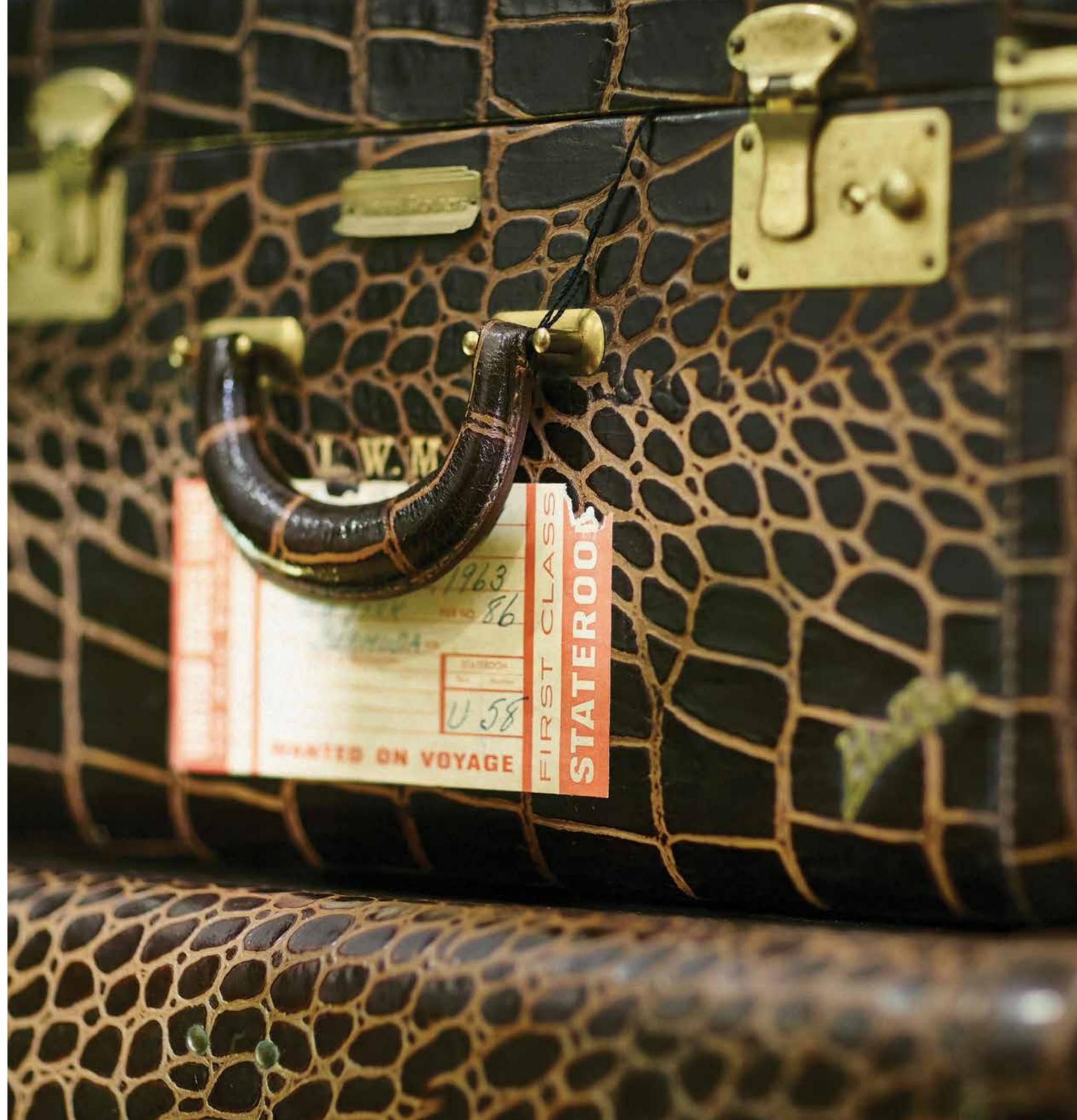
Peak Tram Hong Kong, 1911



1891

*The*  
ART  
*of the*  
JOURNEY

*The story of Belber which, founded in 1891, became one of America's most iconic brands for revolutionising the way people travel.*



It's a classic tale of the American dream; in 1891, two Romanian immigrant brothers – Aaron and Henry Belber – took the US\$200 they had in their pockets and turned it into not just a family business, but a legacy that has transcended generations.

Belber was born into humble beginnings, with the two brothers handcrafting luggage in a South Philadelphia basement. In 1903, they opened their first factory.

True to their motto, “as modern as tomorrow”, the Belber brothers were pioneers in creating travel accessories and luggage pieces that were not only functional but also fashionable, adding details like zephyr-light fabrics, quality leather and hardware, and state-of-the-art locking systems.

Determined to redefine the idea of the journey, the brothers were credited for developing ‘luggage consciousness’ amongst consumers – and soon enough, a suitcase became more than just a bag, but an expression of individuality, of adventure and style.

As travel became more accessible than ever, Belber made sure that quality travel goods were as well – from doctor bags, vanity cases and suitcases, to larger pieces such as wardrobe trunks with built in drawers, hangers mounted on a pull-out trolley, and garment sections lined with Cordova silk – all at affordable price points.

“It wasn't just the products – the brothers had a vision of society. They created luggage consciousness. People in the early 20th Century would buy very basic, practical trunks, but Belber pushed people to travel in style,” explains Fabrice Figaret, who acquired Belber three years ago and is behind the brand's current revival. “This was a luxury that only the super rich could afford, but Belber brought to the middle class the ability to purchase luggage and trunks that were functional but also looked good. They inspired the idea that the way you travel says a lot about your personality and your status.”

By 1919, the brothers acquired the Oshkosh Trunk Company and Belber, at the peak of its success, was officially the largest trunk and luggage company in the world.

Following this success – and realising they were going to need a bigger factory – Belber bought the Larkin Building on Arch Street in Philadelphia, which housed everything from the Belber factory, to a showroom, and offices. Now known as the Larkin-Belber Building, the iconic structure was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.

Not only had they created a new market, the Belber brothers also had an eye for innovation, particularly when it came to marketing. For one, the company's ads were beautifully written and

designed to inspire a certain lifestyle; selling the American dream that made Belber a reality for the brothers in the first place.

One print ad from the early 1900s read: “Those who travel much or come in contact with travellers learn to recognise instinctively Belber trunks, bags and suit cases, much as they recognise the breeding of a lady or gentleman – by that indefinable poise, bearing, atmosphere, style – that thing that cannot be ‘dressed on’ in a person or ‘veneered on’ in a piece of luggage.”

“Back then, everywhere you looked, Belber and Tiffany & Co. advertisements dominated publications,” says Figaret, who has accumulated an impressive archive of the company's print advertisements that date as far back as 1915. “Belber was even producing ads in Egyptian because back in those days, Egypt was one of the richest countries in the world and a major port. Cruise ships passed through regularly, with mainly the French and the British on board, and Belber was selling like crazy.”

Belber also pioneered the concept of celebrity endorsements and product placement, with its products featured in ‘New York, New York’ with Liza Minnelli, ‘Saigon’ with Alan Ladd, and ‘The Big Clock’ with Ray Milland. “Belber was very modern and ahead of its time in this respect,” says Figaret.

The brand was also one of the first to introduce unisex accessories, as well as to promote equality in the workplace at a time when business was strictly a man's world. “At the time there were no women working in these kinds of companies, and if they were, their roles were always limited to small manufacturing jobs or admin. As early as the 1920s, Belber wanted women to have meaningful roles in the company,” Figaret explains. “They included women in the creation of patents and innovations; there are patents registered by women from the 1920s through to the 70s. The women at Belber were inventors, and the company didn't strip them of what they did or what they achieved, they proudly put their names on it.”

As air travel slowly took over in the 1950s, Belber began to lose momentum – after all, its signature trunks were designed for long voyages by sea – and the brand eventually went dormant in the 1970s. Today, Belber is seeing a revival under the direction of Figaret, who isn't just looking to make and sell bags; he's a man with a mission – and great storytelling skills, I should add – who wants people today to understand the importance and impact Belber had in transforming the way people travel.

“We are going back to the basics of what the company stands for,” says Figaret, who is passionately keeping Belber's legacy of inspiring a sense of adventure, affordable luxury and impeccably crafted bags, alive. ▲

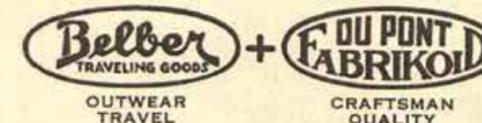


The Name  
**Belber**

on trunks, bags and suitcases is significant of honest materials and honest workmanship. It is our guarantee and your assurance of quality. Look for it always.



THE completeness of a wardrobe – the convenience of a chiffonier – the beauty and service of Du Pont Fabrikoid, Craftsman Quality – the trunk-building skill of Belber – combined in a trunk de luxe and doubly guaranteed:



It is the final word of two manufacturers supreme in their respective fields. Superb in strength. Exquisite in beauty. Inwardly, a harmony of hand-polished, bird's-eye maple and soft, buff Fabrikoid. Outwardly, a patrician, covered with the best quality Moorish brown Craftsman; bound with genuine rawhide; reinforced with polished brassed steel trimmings.

The finest trunk built – made to *outwear travel*. Constructed of three-ply veneer, doubly reinforced with extra rivets and glued-on heavy duck. A turn of the solid brass tumbler lock and the automatic Belber Boltless Interlocker securely fastens the trunk in three places. Supplied with heavy duck cover for use while traveling.

45 inches high, 22 inches wide, 23 1/8 inches deep. Price \$300.00

Other sturdy styles from \$25.00 to \$300.00

BROCHURE UPON REQUEST

**The Belber Trunk and Bag Co.**  
Oxford Street Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1904

ROLLS-ROYCE CARS

ROLLS-ROYCE LTD  
LONDON & DERBY  
INDIAN DEPÔT.

A  
PERFECT  
Match

*Rolls-Royce was founded in 1904 by engineer Henry Royce, and renowned racing driver, pilot and pioneer aviator Charles Rolls, who also owned a car dealership. Three years later they had launched their first car, the Silver Ghost which, after completing an almost non-stop run of 14,371 miles, was given the perpetual moniker by one journalist of, 'the best car in the world', to which it continues to live up to today.*



Eight Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow saloons at The Peninsula Hong Kong, 1976

“I would choose the Rolls. I like the engineering, I like the style, I absolutely adore the looks, but most of all I love the sensation that you’re inside something that was designed to be ‘the best car in the world.’” Jeremy Clarkson has always raved about Rolls-Royce and there are few who would disagree with his favourable sentiments. Rolls-Royce represents the finest of the fine when it comes to the automotive industry and throughout its illustrious history it has produced some of the world’s greatest motor cars which continue to stand the test of time.

In 1925, the age of the Phantom began, and over the years that followed, a series of the popular cars would be released to wide acclaim, favoured by pop stars and celebrities as well as royalty and Heads of State. The Phantom proved to be such a success that when the company launched into a new era in 2003, it was with the release of a new model, the Extended Wheelbase Phantom, which has proved to be one of the most successful super-luxury cars in the world.

While Rolls-Royce continually looks forward, its traditions, classic style and attention to detail have been behind its success, values that it shares with The Peninsula Hotels. Since 1970, the two brands have had a strong relationship, with The Peninsula

using Rolls-Royce cars for its guests almost continuously and setting several records over time for its various fleet orders.

“The Rolls-Royce fleet initially came about from an increasingly apparent need to transport our guests from Kai Tak to the hotel [The Peninsula Hong Kong],” says Sir Michael Kadoorie. “We initially had Fords and then we upgraded to Lincolns. One day when we were looking to renew the fleet [for the third time], my father suggested that we consider having Rolls-Royces instead. I replied that they were far too expensive, to which he said, ‘Have you asked?’, and of course I hadn’t. When I did eventually ask, it transpired that there was only a 20 percent cost difference between the Rolls-Royce and the Lincoln, much of it due to the fact that there was no Commonwealth tax on the importation of British vehicles. That coupled with the cost of steering conversions that we had to make for the Lincolns from left to right hand drive made the price difference marginal.”

And thus began The Peninsula/Rolls-Royce record-breaking partnership, with the hotel’s first order for seven Silver Shadows in 1970, which made history for being the largest ever single order for Rolls-Royce motor cars, an event that caused a stir in the motoring world as well as within the hotel industry.



1934 Phantom II Sedan de Ville at The Peninsula Paris, 2015

Six years later, on June 15th, 1976, eight Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow saloons rolled out of the factory at Crewe in England, destined for The Peninsula Hong Kong. It was the largest single order the English firm had received since The Peninsula purchased seven of its vehicles in 1970.

The order made international news, and in the following day’s Daily Telegraph, it was hailed as a “£250,000 shopping spree.” But for The Peninsula, it was more a matter of course – and convenience. “The kind of people who stay at our hotel expect a Rolls-Royce. It is the least we can offer them,” said Chairman of the Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels at the time, Horace Kadoorie. “And,” he added, “it is simpler to buy in quantity.”

Seven weeks later, on August 4th, the Rolls-Royces arrived at The Peninsula to replace the Lincoln Continentals and the two remaining Rolls-Royces from the older fleet, which had been conveying guests to and from the airport. Painted in smart Astrakhan Brown, each new Rolls carried the crest of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels on its rear doors. The vehicles were chauffeured by drivers dressed in forest-green livery.

In December 2006, The Peninsula Hong Kong made it into Rolls-Royce’s history books yet again when it unveiled its fleet of 14 new Extended Wheelbase Phantoms, each handmade to bespoke specifications. It was the largest ever single order of new Rolls-Royce Phantoms, all finished in the signature Peninsula green and adding to a fleet which to this day continues to expand.

The Peninsula Hotels in Hong Kong, Tokyo, Shanghai and Paris also all have their own vintage 1934 Phantom II Sedan de Villes, exquisitely restored to their former glory with modern, bespoke additions. With a roof that folds back so the driver is able

to sit in the open air, in a style typical to the period, the cars give the impression of old horse-drawn coaches, harking back to bygone days.

These four vintage cars were lovingly restored at Keith Bowley’s Ashton Keynes Vintage Restorations, where a team of craftsmen has specialised in the renovation and recreation of veteran, vintage and classic cars since 1969 at their workshop in Wiltshire, England. All work is done in-house, from chassis and engine rebuilding to timber work, electrical wiring and upholstery, and the craftsmen pay particular attention to the authenticity of all aspects of their restoration, be it aesthetic or mechanical.

Bowley and his team completed their first vintage Phantom II restoration for The Peninsula Hong Kong in 1994, and prior to that had been entrusted with Sir Michael Kadoorie’s own pair of Rolls-Royce Phantoms.

The 1934 Phantom proved one of the more difficult of the cars to restore. With more variations than any of the other Rolls-Royce models, obtaining spare parts isn’t always straightforward. However, through years of experience working with Phantoms, knowledge has been accrued and the workshop is perfectly capable of making new parts, which in many cases can prove more successful as modern metals are often stronger and more suitable. Bespoke additions were commonplace in the 1930s, and each Rolls-Royce was made to owner specifications, however, passenger demands have significantly changed since.

Through the combination of The Peninsula’s attention to detail and Rolls-Royce’s immaculate precision, all the transportation needs of The Peninsula hotels are met to a unsurpassed standard. The Group’s extensive, bespoke and utterly unique fleet is matched by nothing but the perfection of its hotels. 🍷



Fifth Avenue in the early 1900s

# A GOTHAM *Evolution*



LOBBY, HOTEL GOTHAM, NEW YORK CITY



RED ROOM, HOTEL GOTHAM, NEW YORK CITY.

The early 1900s saw major construction on one of the most iconic streets in the world - Fifth Avenue in New York City. There was the new site for the University Club - whose Mediterranean Revival Italian Renaissance palazzo-style exterior was arguably the first to set Fifth Avenue's patrician tone - as well as the New York Public Library's main branch and the St. Regis hotel which, at 18 storeys, was the tallest in the city at the time of its completion in 1904. Also joining this league of legends was The Gotham - now The Peninsula New York.

The Fifty-Fifth Street Company purchased and demolished a row of mansions across the avenue from the St. Regis in 1902 and began construction almost immediately. The initial concept for what was to become The Gotham was described as a 'family hotel' for wealthy New Yorkers who didn't want the work involved in maintaining a private home, and which also served as a second home for out-of-towners who spent a substantial amount of time in the city.

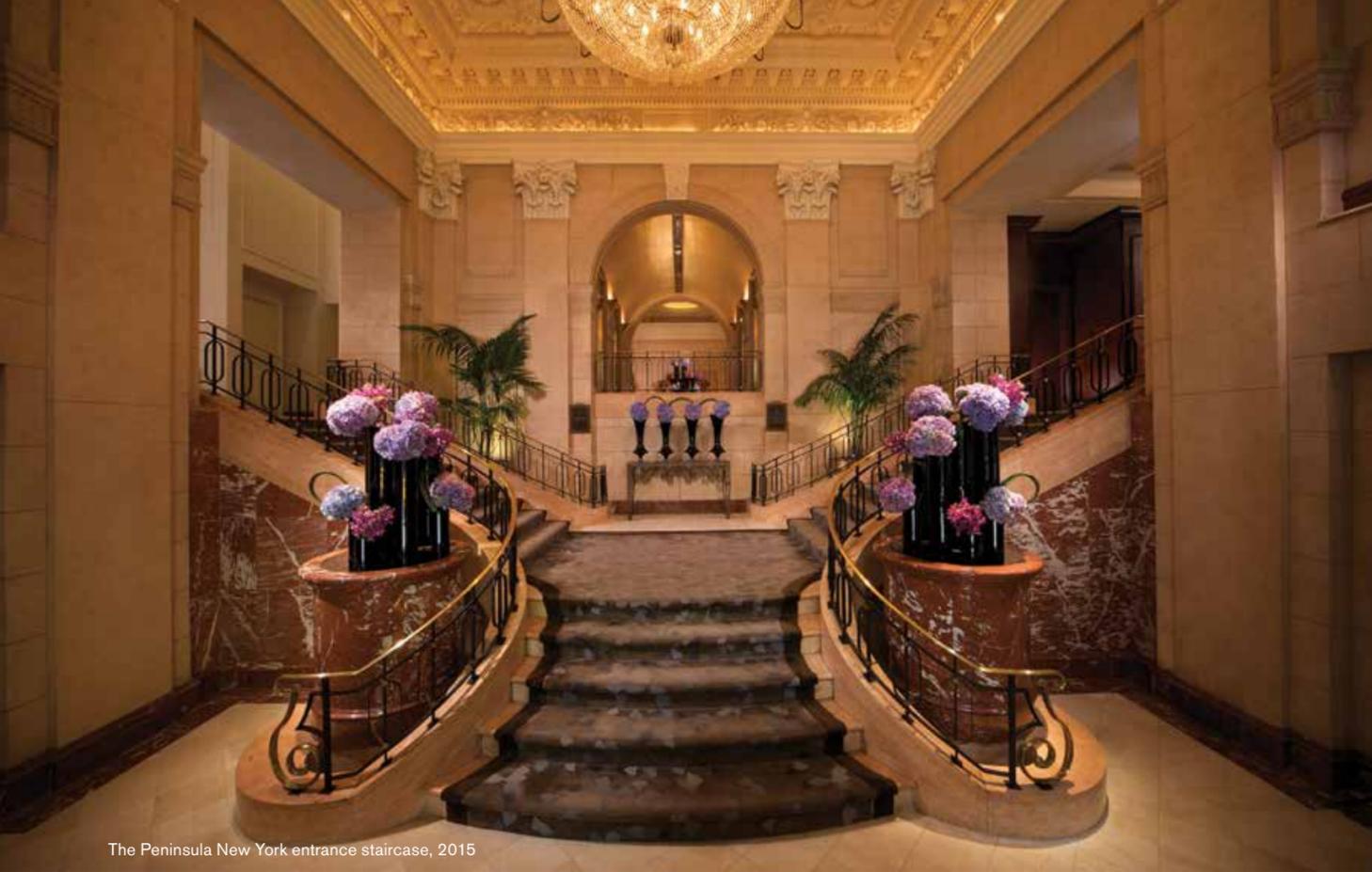
The Fifty-Fifth Street Company took architects Hiss & Weekes on board - famous for their buildings in the Beaux Arts, academic neoclassical architectural style - to design the building.

"The Gotham was arranged in the shape of a C, with the light court facing south over the University Club, insuring a protected view... The Gotham was arranged with single rooms at the core and suites of apartment scale on the outside," wrote Christopher Gray in the New York Times.

Sculptures of ancient Roman Goddesses Pomona and Diana still adorn the entrance of the building today. Pomona, Goddess of Orchards, is seen carrying a cornucopia while Diana, Goddess of the Hunt, carries her signature bow and arrow, acting as symbols that represent agriculture and commerce respectively. In the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, agriculture formed the basis for much of the wealth at the time, while commerce was, and still is, a perpetual hunt for profits and advantage.

The Beaux Arts characteristics of these sculptures - Diana naturally rests her hand upon the more formal building decorations - have been interpreted as a more modern representation of life as opposed to mere decoration.

While the St. Regis across the street donned a lavish French-style façade, The Gotham's Belle Epoque design was more subdued.



The Peninsula New York entrance staircase, 2015

“The furnishings of The Gotham, while extremely rich, are far from garish. There is not the slightest striving after gaudy effects, the whole atmosphere being one of good taste,” gushed The New York Times shortly after the hotel’s opening.

On the day The Gotham opened, October 2nd in 1905, every room with a 5th Avenue frontage was occupied, with Mrs. Charlotte Augusta Hanna (Rhodes), widow of Senator Hanna, being the first ever resident.

The Gotham’s success was short-lived, however, primarily due to the strict laws that followed prohibition. One such law forbade any liquor sales within 200 feet of a church. The Gotham, sitting directly across 55th Street from The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, was directly in violation of that law.

The hotel found a loophole, however, and hired young boys who would rush to a supply base one block from the hotel to fulfil guests’ orders for wine or liquor using wicker baskets or milliners’ boxes. Since the money was turned over to the off-site vendor and not the hotel directly, the liquor law was skirted – despite the hotel’s protests that there was “no attempt to evade the law.”

“We are in the hotel business and if our guests ask us for anything we don’t have, there is nothing to prevent us from sending out and getting it,” explained the Hotel Manager at the time, Frank V. Bennett. “Suppose a man likes wine with his dinner, or a cocktail beforehand. Is there any law to stop us from getting it for him? Well, I rather think not.”

Unfortunately, it wasn’t enough and The Gotham went into foreclosure in 1908. The hotel, which cost US\$4 million to build, was sold for just US\$2.45 million to Benjamin P. Cheney, President of the Hotel Holding Company, who resolved the financial problems and in 1914 sold the hotel to Franklin Pettit.

Refurbished and redecorated, the hotel sold once again in 1920 to brothers Julius and William Manges who were on a buying frenzy of hotels in Manhattan – they had also purchased the Hotel Cumberland and owned The Netherland, The Edicott, The Martha Washington, The Great Northern and The Grand – but following the Great Depression, The Gotham underwent a US\$2 million foreclosure in 1932.

The Gotham continued to be sold and resold until it was taken over by Swiss hotel owner Rene Hatt in 1979, who initiated an epic renovation, spanning nearly a decade and costing US\$200 million. The renovation included the construction of the hotel’s iconic rooftop health club and pool and, Hatt being an avid lover of discos and jazz, New York’s first ever public discotheque, ‘L’interdit’, in the basement.

Handed down more times than a family heirloom and soldiering through numerous foreclosures and financial meltdowns, it wasn’t until 1988 that the building fell into the stable hands of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited, who opened The Peninsula New York that same year, and in 1998 closed the building for renovation once again, to the tune of US\$45 million.

Teresa Delaney, a spokeswoman for The Peninsula Hotels at the time, said that the 241 guest rooms were gutted and rebuilt to a “new standard” – think luxurious oversized bathrooms with televisions over the bath tubs - which would place The Peninsula in competition with the most elite, expensive hotels in New York.

But even after countless dramatic renovations, hints of the original Gotham remain, including the heavily figured lobby ceiling and rear fire stairs, proving that old certainly doesn’t always read as outdated. Ms. Delaney certainly guessed right and The Peninsula, still sitting proudly on Fifth Avenue, is without a doubt a New York landmark. 



The Peninsula New York today



# Remembering JAMES Taggart

*On May 12th, 1922, The Hongkong Hotel Company purchased an 85 percent controlling interest in The Shanghai Hotels Limited. The mastermind of this acquisition was James Harper Taggart, the then Managing Director of The Hongkong Hotel Company. The following story is a combination of memories contributed by Sister Francis de Sales Taggart, O.P., the stepdaughter of James Taggart, recalled in 2015, about her stepfather, a key figure in the early development of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited.*



The original Hongkong Hotel

James Harper Taggart was born in Australia in 1885. His father was of Scottish descent who emigrated from the United Kingdom to Australia to pursue an employment opportunity or possibly a military assignment. There was at least one other son in the family.

Taggart first arrived in Hong Kong sometime in 1907, at the age of 22, and went on to become Manager of The Hongkong Hotel, which had opened in 1868. Recognised for his successful management of Hong Kong's first luxury hotel, which was commended as the "greatest enterprise of its kind in China and Japan", Taggart was pinpointed by The Hongkong Hotel Company to commence plans for an entirely new hotel, as rooms in the Colony were becoming scarce due to an increased influx of international travellers.

Accustomed to long walks and camping holidays along Hong Kong Island's south side, Taggart had become increasingly attracted to the natural beauty of Shallow Water Bay, as Repulse Bay was then known. With a vision that was perhaps ahead of its time, Taggart proposed that this would be the perfect location for a resort hotel of a style and setting that would rival anything in Europe. His idea was to provide an opportunity for sun weary travellers to rest and relax in the calm, clear waters of the Bay and to enjoy the full benefits of a luxurious hotel nearby.

And so The Repulse Bay opened on New Year's Day 1920 with a spectacular event attended by Hong Kong's elite, including Governor Sir Reginald Stubbs and nearly every motor car in the city.

At some unknown date prior to the opening of The Repulse Bay, Taggart married his fiancée, Lillian. Another couple, George Turner and Mary Bowen, also wed around the same time, and on September 22nd, 1919, Mary gave birth to a daughter in San Francisco.

Tragically, early in both marriages, two of the spouses died: Lillian Taggart and George Turner.

Meanwhile, in October 1923, Taggart helped engineer the merger of The Shanghai Hotels Limited and The Hongkong Hotel

Company, to create The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited, and remained in his position as Managing Director.

Taggart played a leading role in revolutionising the modern hotel business in Shanghai by introducing novel concepts, such as dinner dances and European-style grill rooms.

Taggart, a short dapper man, was known as being highly competent, a visionary who could appreciate the Company's plans to expand, a tough operator, and a man who usually got what he wanted.

He presided as Managing Director over that was possibly the most eventful period in the Company's history - an era that began with the announcement at the April 1923 annual meeting that its expansion had now taken it well into China. It had taken up the controlling interest of 85 percent of the issued capital of The Shanghai Hotels Limited, owners of the Palace and Astor House hotels in Shanghai. And another major hotel in China had been acquired with the Shanghai deal. "As The Shanghai Hotels Ltd. holds approximately 60 percent of the issued capital of the Grand Hotel des Wagons-Lits, Peking," the meeting was told, "your company is placed in the very favourable position of controlling the leading hotels in North China as well as retaining the premier position in the South. I feel sure you will agree that the Company is to be congratulated upon becoming allied with the other leading hotel enterprises in this section of the Far East."

It is not known when or where, but eventually James Taggart and Mary Bowen met. It may have been in San Francisco on Taggart's way back to China after his visit to the British Isles in 1926, or it could possibly have been on a trans-Pacific steamship bound for the Orient.

Regardless, sometime around 1927, they were married, each for the second time. The wedding took place in a Catholic church in Shanghai, a two-day trip by ship from The Repulse Bay. Mary's daughter, who was seven or eight at the time, was the flower girl



A typical bungalow at The Repulse Bay Hotel in the 1920s

wearing a pink dress and apparently "was beaming from ear to ear!" The reception was held at The Majestic, where the bride and groom also spent their honeymoon.

When still a baby in San Francisco where she was born, Mary's daughter, whose given name was Mary Patricia, was called "Patsy" rather than Mary, so as not to be confused with her mother, and when Mary wed James, Patsy's surname was legally changed from Turner to Taggart.

Patsy remembers her stepfather, whom her mother called "Jimmie" and Patsy called "Daddy", with great fondness and affection. One of her first memories is of how he loved to joke around, but it was a side, she said, "that not many people had the pleasure of seeing." He had a great love for popular music which he often played often on the Victrola (a record player with the horn inside the cabinet instead of outside it). Apparently, his favourite song was 'Valencia', a pasodoble song composed by José Padilla. Jimmie also loved to dance, especially the Charleston.

Patsy recalls that as a professional, her "Daddy" was always courteous, as well as generous, toward his business associates. He was punctual and "never missed an appointment." Above all, he was gifted with unusual creative ingenuity. His imagination for the design of luxury hotels was the gift that he shared with the world, a story that is remembered and credited to him in the book 'The Repulse Bay: A Life of Elegance and Charm', by Scott Minick.

Patsy also remembers that San Franciscans who visited China in later years compared The Repulse Bay to the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, whose construction in 1902 was fashioned after Europe's grand hotels in Berlin, Vienna, Monaco, London and Paris.

To enhance the elegant ambience of The Repulse Bay, Jimmie introduced a touch of England into the Oriental scene. In the warm afternoons, tea dancing, which originated among the wealthy classes in England in the 1800s, became a popular pastime for social gatherings. In the evenings after dinner, tribute was paid to British Royalty, as King George was honoured when guests stood up and sang the British National Anthem. The Queen, too, received special recognition during the Trooping of the Colour. Patsy was most impressed by these displays.

Jimmie, Mary and Patsy lived in a lovely residence in The Repulse Bay. A private entrance on the side of the hotel was carpeted with lush lawns and surrounded by pretty gardens, fruit trees and orchids, and included two tennis courts framed with scenic pillars. The charming home included a spacious living room, a dining room, and two bedrooms which looked out on verandahs that faced the garden. Since Hong Kong had such a humid climate, clothes closets were equipped with a heating system to protect clothing from mildew. Natural furs, which were very popular before the era of animal conservation, were kept in cold storage when not in use to provide the same protection from ruin.



James Taggart and Patsy (centre) swimming at Repulse Bay

Summers in Hong Kong were extremely hot, so Mary and Patsy would go swimming early in the morning when it was cool and they had the beach to themselves. When he could, Jimmie would join them. One day when the family went to the beach, Jimmie challenged Patsy to swim out to a distant raft, and offered her a reward that she could not refuse. She swam to the raft and back again, making herself \$100 richer! Jimmie was also very generous to his stepdaughter when the family went on trips, giving her pocket money to spend as she wished.

When Patsy was enrolled in school in Hong Kong, she began her education at a private school in Kowloon, a city which developers were then enlarging and upgrading. However, her parents eventually withdrew her from the school in favour of a private tutor whose name was Miss Daisy Ness. In addition to formal academics and creative teaching methods (such as outlining geography on Patsy's back!), Miss Daisy was a vivid storyteller. She had two brothers who had been in World War I, and she would share many of their adventures with Patsy. Miss Daisy also shared pieces of wisdom with her, such as: "One should never put anything larger than a matchbox in one's ear!"

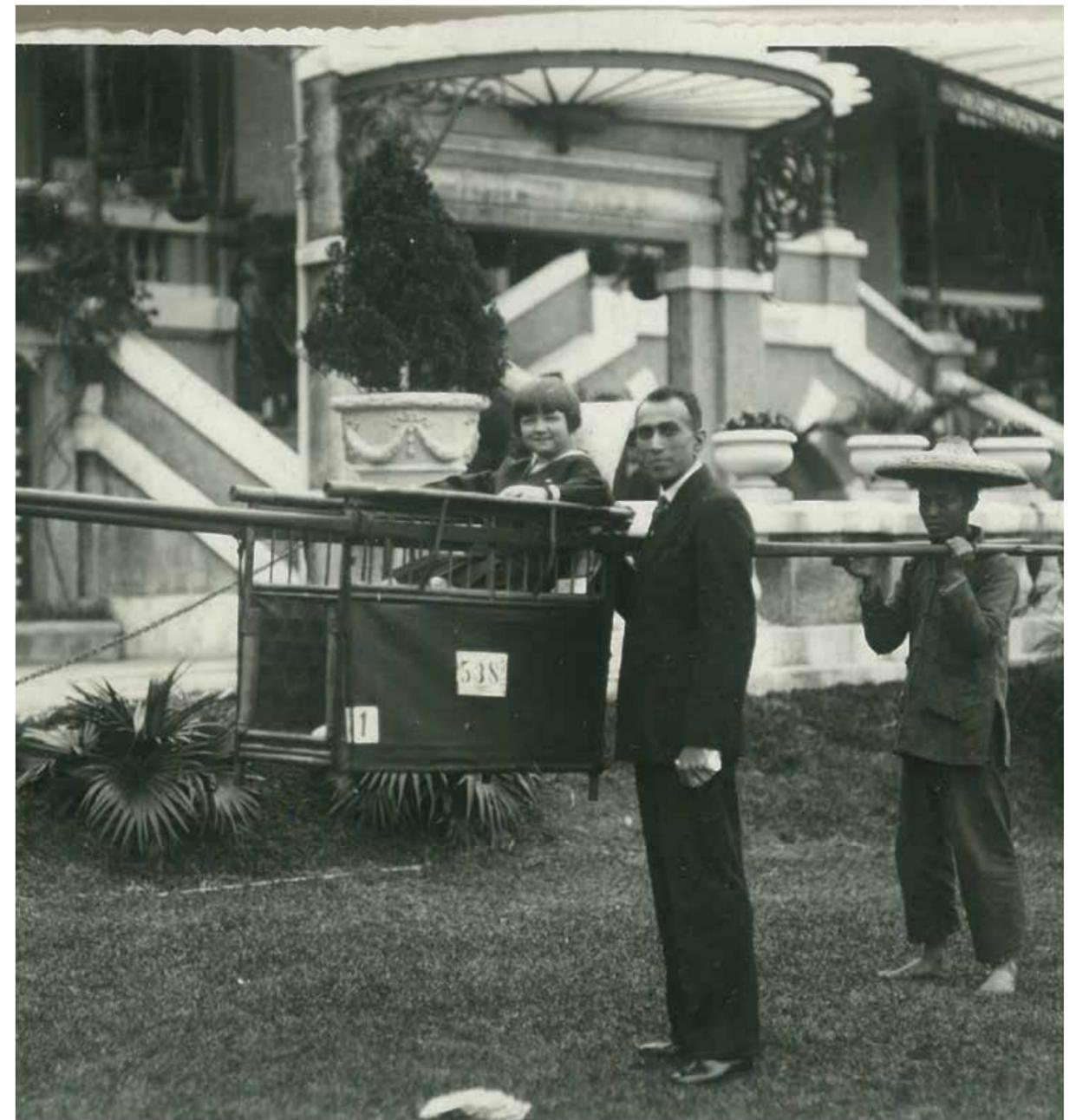
Patsy remembers one particular weekend in Macau. The gamblers were raised on a platform for greater visibility. She took great enjoyment, as did everyone, watching their excitement as they cast their lots. This adventure was considered "a big trip".

Whenever they travelled, the family was chauffeured, and Patsy sat in an "auto chair" and sometimes, she said, "the chauffeur invited me to sit in his lap for the trip!"

Around 1932 or so, when Patsy was about 10 years-old, Jimmie and Mary temporarily returned to California to enrol her in 5th grade at the Dominican Convent in San Rafael, California, an all-girls' school operated by the Dominican Sisters of the Congregation, which Patsy would eventually join. Her parents returned to China, but visited California every vacation and summer with Miss Daisy, and took Patsy on an excursion.

Patsy remained a student at the Dominican Convent, graduating from both the grammar school and the upper school, after which she attended two years at the Dominican College before transferring to and graduating from the University of California in Berkeley, where she received her BA in history. Following her graduation, Patsy went to work for Pan American Airways on Treasure Island, an artificial island in San Francisco Bay.

Meanwhile Mary, like most other women, left Hong Kong during World War II, fearing the impending approach of the Japanese. She moved back to San Francisco, while Jimmie remained in Hong Kong for as long as possible until he, too, was compelled to depart during the time of the capitulation of Hong Kong by the Japanese which, ironically, was carried out at The Repulse Bay.



Patsy in a sedan chair at The Repulse Bay, circa 1927

When the Japanese surrendered, Jimmie and Mary returned for what turned out to be a brief period in order to assist in the rehabilitation of The Repulse Bay, which the Japanese had taken over during the occupation. Patsy said that "he knew down to the penny what the government spent along the way", and he was anxious to recover what had been lost both financially and aesthetically.

Also following World War II, Patsy entered the Foreign Service of the State Department, and upon completion of her training, she was assigned to work in Africa. Excited almost to bursting point about her trip, she discovered that she was to be the only passenger on the Constellation and told the captain that he need not fly "just for me." He subsequently assured her that the mail and cargo that they were carrying were more valuable than she was.

After a year in Tripoli, Patsy applied for a position with the Central Intelligence Agency in Washington DC. Following three

years with the CIA, she entered the novitiate on August 4th, 1954, becoming Sister M. Francis de Sales Taggart, O.P.

Jimmie and Mary continued to live in Hong Kong for approximately 14 years. However the high humidity took its toll on Jimmie's lungs and his physician advised him to move to a fairer climate. So he and Mary relocated to Northern California where they enjoyed the company of friends and occasional excursions. Jimmie's lungs, however, continued to deteriorate, and eventually he was hospitalised in a sanitarium. He succumbed four days after Christmas in 1972 at the age of 87, and is buried at the Cross Catholic Cemetery in Colma, California, in the Bowen family plot. Mary, who died in 1985, is buried next to him.

*Sister Francis de Sales Taggart, a Dominican Sister of San Rafael, died on May 8th, 2016 at Our Lady of Lourdes Convent in San Rafael, California at the age of 97.* 

# *A* PALACE *Reborn*

TEXT: ANN TSANG & TONY SMYTH

IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE HONG KONG HERITAGE PROJECT

*Axes, picks and shovels came into full effect on a fateful Tuesday morning in February 1906, making an unsightly ruin of a beautiful structure at 19 Avenue Kléber in Paris, formerly the Hôtel Basilewski and then the Palais de Castille, the residence of the exiled Bourbon, Queen Isabella II of Spain, who lived there from 1868 until her death in 1904. The prestigious address is now the home of The Peninsula Paris.*





In 1906, a notable building located in the 16th arrondissement of Paris at 19 Avenue Kléber was completely destroyed, in order to make way for a grand modern hotel. A crowd of spectators watched workmen pull down the roof, dismantle the porch and break great holes in the walls, so that in a moment, the edifice looked as if it had withstood a siege of shots, and shells had pierced it from all sides. Not only was the building pulled down, but everything on the grounds, including the iron gate, the stables, extending over a surface of 90 yards, were also destroyed, in order to make way for an even greater building, a grand edifice named the Hotel Majestic.

The Majestic was the brainchild of hoteliers and entrepreneurs Monsieur Leonard Tauber and Constant Bavarez. Architect Armand Sibien's grand design for the hotel was approved in 1905 and construction commenced on the site between 1906 and 1908, when Paris life was spent in the limelight, the stage a café. The thespian court was installed at Maxim's under the auspices of owner, Eugene Cornuché. An Art Nouveau châteline, a rendezvous of wealthy internationals, and a cacophonous babel of lamps and mirrors, Maxim's was a vaudeville of champagne, caviar and cigars, a veritable supper society. Walking by, there were always beautiful women sipping coffee or an aperitif in one of the window seats, never empty.

Tauber and Bavarez wanted to appropriate this set of frivolous princes and sybaritic princesses, and to settle them into The Majestic. Maxim's, they thought, had become a parody of itself, overrun with sightseers and tourists made popular by Franz Lehar's 1905 comedic operetta 'The Merry Widow', and music from its score, 'You'll Find Me at Maxim's' and 'The Merry Widow Waltz'.

The Majestic opened in 1908, and the 'Series 1' hotel soon became a renowned place in Paris for the spectacular happenings that occurred there, as well as for the beauty of its construction.

Following the intervening war years, in 1919, The Majestic housed the British delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. Journalists hustled through the corridors after stories and secretaries scurried about with papers. Diplomats from a score of countries loitered in the ornate lobby, and businessmen tried to pull strings or jostle for advantage. So intense were the intrigues that British servants temporarily replaced the regular hotel staff so as to reduce the risk of leaks and espionage. Augustus John and Sir William Orpen, the official painters to the British delegation during the Conference, stayed at The Majestic, and recorded the scenes there. "The Hotel Majestic is a very lively place," Sir Maurice Hankey, the Secretary of the British delegation, told his wife. "All the most beautiful and well-dressed society ladies appear to have been brought over by the various departments. I do not know how they do their work, but in the evening they dance and sing and play bridge!"

The lavish evening parties shocked some British officials. "The dance at The Majestic last night was an amazing affair – a most cosmopolitan crowd – the last touch was put on it when Lord Wimborne arrived with a crowd of wonderful ladies," one member

of the British delegation noted in 1919. "People rather resent this invasion of The Majestic on Saturday nights, and steps are being taken to put a stop to it, otherwise the thing will become a scandal."

Margaret Macmillan, in her book 'Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World', states that it took five hotels to accommodate the 400 officials, advisors, and clerical assistants in the British Empire delegation, but the hub of British activity was The Majestic, and the Brits went to the trouble of replacing all the French staff there with English hotel workers. Macmillan wrote: "The food [at The Majestic] became that of a respectable railway hotel: porridge and eggs and bacon in the mornings, lots of meat and vegetables at lunch and dinner and bad coffee all day. The sacrifice was pointless, [Harold] Nicolson and his colleagues grumbled, because all their offices, full of confidential papers, were in the Hotel Astoria, where the staff was still French."

The diplomatic fête went on for six months before the usual anonymously wealthy guests moved back in.

On May 18th, 1922, a dinner party in a private dining room at the Hotel Majestic became a legend. Igor Stravinsky, James Joyce, Sergei Diaghilev, Pablo Picasso and Marcel Proust all attended. The hosts, Violet and Sydney Schiff, were a rich English couple; the occasion was the after party for the premiere of Stravinsky's ballet 'Le Renard', performed by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.

Picasso apparently arrived in a brightly coloured Catalan headband, but there are no records of what he said. Proust, a semi-recluse for a decade, made an eye-catching entrance in white gloves and a fur coat, and tried to engage Stravinsky in a conversation about Beethoven, to which the composer retorted, "I detest Beethoven!" Joyce arrived drunk, and either fell asleep at the table or pretended to. One version has he and Proust saying they had not read each other's books, whilst another, heard by William Carlos Williams on a trip to Paris in 1924, has them discussing their physical ailments: "My eyes are terrible," said Joyce. "My poor stomach," said Proust. "It's killing me."

As Richard Davenport-Hines reveals in his book, 'A Night at the Majestic', the gathering was much more than an 'after party' and it came to represent the high point of European Modernism, and one of Paris' defining moments as a cultural capital.

Davenport-Hines uses the party to "bookend" his study of the evening's guest of honour, Marcel Proust, and his seven-volume collection of novels, 'A la recherche du temps perdu'. "The party took place exactly six months before the death of Proust, and both the prelude and the sequel to the party really make sense of the whole of Proust's life and his creative effort," he states.

Despite the artistic backbiting and amusing gossip of the party, Davenport-Hines saw it as a seminal moment in world culture. "Paris in the 1920s is the centre, not just of European culture but of Western civilisation. It is the place where the daily exchange of ideas between creative people, the real small talk of creative ideas, actually matters more than anything that is going on artistically anywhere else in the world for decades."



Dîner sur la Terrasse

Another luminary, George Gershwin, arrived in Paris with his brother Ira for an extended stay on March 25th, 1928. They resided at The Majestic, where Gershwin began serious work on 'An American In Paris'. When the young duo-pianists Mario Braggiotti and Jacques Fray visited the composer, they were surprised to see on top of the piano, a collection of taxi horns. Gershwin had been on several shopping trips down the nearby Avenue de la Grande Armée to acquire them.

Braggiotti later recalled what followed: "Oh," Gershwin said. "You're looking at these horns. Well, in the opening scene of 'An American In Paris' I would like to get the traffic sound of the Place de la Concorde during rush hour, and I'd like to see if it works. I've written the first two pages of the opening. Jacques, you take this horn - this is in A flat. Mario, you take this - it's in F sharp. Now, I'll sit down and play, and when I go this way with my head, you go "quack, quack, quack" like that in the rhythm.' So we took the horns, and for the first time we heard the opening bars of 'An American In Paris'. Gershwin had captured the atmosphere, the feeling, the movement, and the rhythm so perfectly. When we came to the horn parts, he nodded and we came in. That was the first and last time that I ever played French taxi horns accompanied by such an illustrious composer."

In 1931, David Mackenzie Ogilvy, following a stint at Oxford (although he didn't graduate), went to Paris, where he worked in the kitchen of the Hotel Majestic. There he learned discipline, management - and when to move on: "If I stayed at the Majestic I would have faced years of slave wages, fiendish pressure, and perpetual exhaustion." He returned to England where he sold cooking stoves, door-to-door, before going on to found his own advertising agency and become widely known as 'The Father of Advertising'.

The French State acquired the Hotel Majestic in 1936, and in 1944, after Paris was liberated, the building reverted to the country. From its World War II bunker, a bellicose tomb, the majestic phoenix rose from the inferno of combat, transformed into a venerable institution proclaiming peace and harmony, a new acronym to abolish acrimony, UNESCO, a mission of commissioners, brokers of broken places, and heralds of unity. A make-do ambience that prevailed after liberation befell those who worked at the Majestic; the chambers of diplomacy and transcription were just so - bedrooms and bathrooms. Wardrobes were the keepers of secrets and treaties, and accords and ententes were awash in the bathtubs.

In 1973 the US and Vietnam signed the Paris Peace Accord in one of the ballrooms at the Hotel Majestic. Reformatted, rebooted, and rendered consummate, it was a place for life and living, for modern minds and intelligences, a CPU network of ether, connectivity swathed in gold leaf, crystal and felicity.

The plane trees on Avenue Kléber still bear witness to this plethora of historical events in silence. Allied with the city, some have withstood the excesses and privations of time, whereas others have succumbed. Nevertheless the legacy of new growth, regeneration and reinvention, the Seine is an interminable source of sustenance and inspiration. Now we look at the rejuvenated Kléber and the magnificence of The Peninsula hotel and reminisce on the extraordinary circumstances that No. 19 has borne testament to as palace, hotel, hospital, military command and a diplomatic mission. The future is bright, a Belle Époque for a new era. This now, is The Peninsula Paris... 🇫🇷



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## The AGE of STEAM

Since the early 20th Century, the southern tip of Tsim Sha Tsui has served as an important transport interchange for the Kowloon-Canton Railway, as well as bus and ferry services. Supplementing its existing wharf facilities, the area took on a vital transportation role, carrying both people and goods on land and sea.

Much of the credit for the grand railway scheme can be given to Sir Matthew Nathan, Governor of Hong Kong from 1904 to 1907. Thanks to his tireless efforts, construction began on the Kowloon-Canton Railway in 1906. After several years of protracted construction work, the hard graft was finally complete, and on October 1st, 1910, the single-tracked British section, covering just over 22 miles, was formally opened by the Administering Government Officer, Sir Henry May.

A few years after its opening, travellers could arrive at the grand railway terminus, a red brick and granite building completed in 1916, ready to embark on the first stage of their adventures; crossing China and the entire length of Russia to distant destinations in Europe via a connection on the Trans-Siberian Railway.

For many in the early 1900s, rail travel was still a novelty. The Kowloon-Canton Railway rapidly became a popular mode of transportation for a day-trip into the New Territories (stopping off at Sha Tin, Tai Po and Fan Ling) or for city dwellers visiting ancestral homes across the border. Specially designed express trains were later introduced to transport golfing enthusiasts to the greens at Fan

Ling. During festivals such as Chinese New Year, the train terminus would be extremely crowded and the queue could run up to a mile long – it was not uncommon for passengers to be pushed from the pier and into the sea, only to be rescued soon afterwards!

For the greater part of the century, the railway served a vital function as Hong Kong's principal lifeline to Mainland China. Situated next to the Star Ferry Pier and the bus terminus of the late 1920s, the Kowloon-Canton Railway terminus may have been the world's first multimodal passenger interchange.

The railway was an important step in the wider development of Kowloon. With the serious shortage of hotel accommodation in the early 20th Century, the Hong Kong Government decided to build a new hotel at the tip of the peninsula, opposite the railway terminus and close to the quays of Kowloon. Envisaged as a catalyst for future development, the project was soon open to outside investment and in 1922 The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels Company Chairman A.R. Lewis announced his intention to build "an up-to-date hotel with accommodation for 500 guests".

The hotel was built in the tradition of the great railway hotels of Europe and designed by prominent architects and civil engineers from the Hong Kong Realty and Trust Company Ltd. with Arts & Crafts Limited of Shanghai taking care of much of its decoration. Opened in 1928, The Peninsula was a most welcome sight for many weary guests disembarking from a long journey by rail. 

# ENDURING

## *The*

# TIMES

The form-hugging *qi pao* or cheongsam, first immortalised by Nancy Kwan in 'The World of Suzie Wong', then latterly by Maggie Cheung in Wong Kar-Wai's 'In The Mood for Love', has its roots in the Han Chinese clothing of the 19th Century. The *qi pao* remains today as an elegant and iconic garment.

We can trace the evolution of today's *qi pao* from the Han Chinese tunic of the 19th Century, the *ao*. The women's *ao* of the Qing period was a loose tunic, with a curved neck opening fastened on the right. Married women wore the *ao* with a long skirt, while unmarried women wore it with pants. *Aos* assumed many forms, from elaborately embroidered silk ones to an unembellished, simple cotton variety, depending on the occasion and the social and economic standing of the wearer.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, the silhouette of the *ao* narrowed considerably. The straight collar attained unprecedented, even exaggerated heights, in order to accentuate the oval shape of the Chinese female face. At some point during the 1920s, the *ao* and the long skirt were stitched together, creating the very first incarnation of the *qi pao*.

At its inception, the *qi pao* was as loose as its predecessor, the *ao*. But over time, it became more and more fitted and alluring in its appearance, especially with the addition of a long side slit up to the thigh. In both Hong Kong and Shanghai, the *qi pao* eventually replaced the *ao* as the uniform of choice among Chinese women.

From the end of 1920s to the beginning of 1930s, the *qi pao* also became shorter. This not only liberated women's legs but also their arms, as the garment became sleeveless. For a period of time, it was fashionable to edge and lace the *qi pao* or to embellish the

front with embroidery, and it consequently became the dress for new women in new times.

The 1930s was a golden time for the *qi pao*, and stories from fashion magazines imported from abroad encouraged new innovations. The fitted *qi pao* was highly esteemed in Shanghai, where upper class women lived lives of luxury, following fashion, and aspiring to a Western lifestyle. The garment then became even more figure-hugging, blending Western and Chinese fashion, whilst at the same time being a symbol of stylish Chinese glamour.

During the Cultural Revolution, the government banned the *qi pao* in favour of a sack-like 'proletarian' two-piece pantsuit for women, but following the death of Mao Tse Tung, the garment resurfaced once more in Chinese society.

The *qi pao* made its biggest return in the 1980s, when it was used as a uniform worn mainly by female attendants and waitresses in hotels or restaurants or young ladies at ceremonies, and it was mostly made of synthetic fabric or imitation silk. It also became the perfect evening dress for social functions and brides chose it for their wedding dresses.

In 1999, Hong Kong director Wong Kar-Wei's highly-acclaimed 'In the Mood for Love' nothing short of immortalised the garment. Set in 1960s Shanghai, the film started a brand new trend in Chinese-inspired fashion, which even extended to many a Western woman donning a *qi pao* in the world's most cosmopolitan cities.

Never has one specific garment been so enduring, living on through drastically changing times, only to emerge triumphant and still ever-so-fashionable more than 200 years on... 1

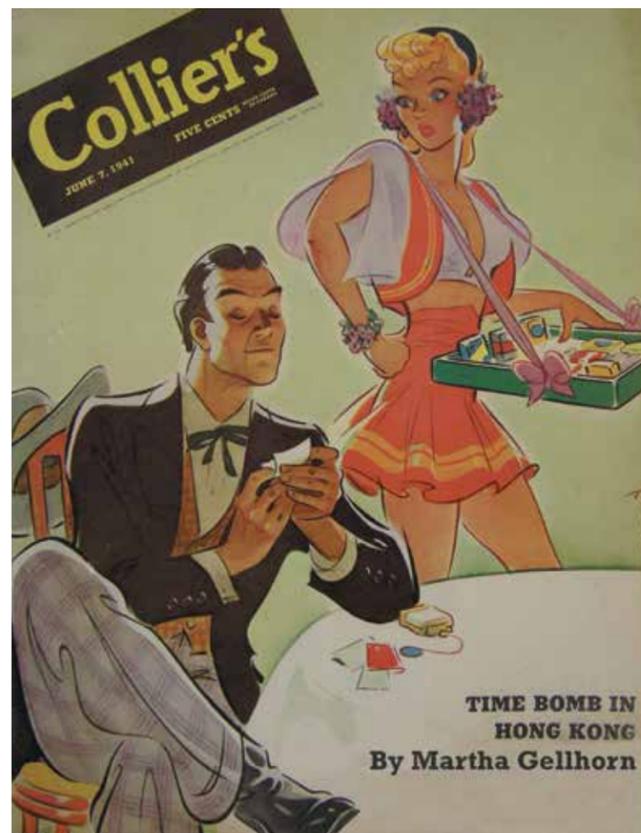
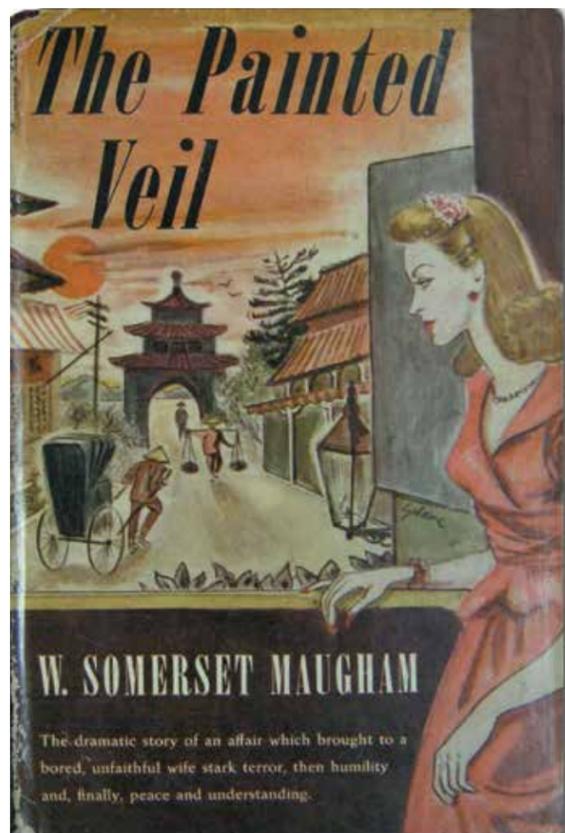


Hong Kong Travel Association poster, 1938. Frederic Schiff

1920

*Tales of*  
LOVE  
*and*  
WAR

*If the walls of The Repulse Bay Hotel, which served as a playground for the jet setting rich and famous from the 1920s until the 1980s, could talk...*



Images: Courtesy of The Repulse Bay Hotel

Time stands still at The Repulse Bay. Yet from its proud and serene exterior, you would never guess that it has such a colourful – and, for a while, tumultuous – history.

The Repulse Bay Hotel opened its doors on New Year's Day in 1920. In a lavish opening ceremony, then-Hong Kong Governor Sir Edward Stubbs wittily remarked that: "From the point of view of the tourist it was a great advantage to have a place of that kind, but whether, from the point of view of the colony, it was a great advantage to have tourists was a matter on which there was a little difference of opinion."

At the time, Hong Kong lagged far behind countries like Japan in promoting tourism, and the opening of the hotel was not only an important day in the history of the Hong Kong Hotels Company, Limited, but also a milestone in the development of the former Colony's rise as an international tourism destination.

Following its opening, The HongKong Telegraph described The Repulse Bay Hotel as "The hotel of the Three S's – site, sanitation, and service. Hong Kong, notorious for its scenery and beautiful views, could not have provided a better spot..." adding that, "the hotel, far from being a disfigurement of the natural beauty, admirably fits in with the scheme of things and stands out as an artistic structure in an artistic setting."

The Repulse Bay Hotel – also commonly described as part of 'The Riviera of the Orient' for its lush seaside surroundings and exquisite world-class hospitality – soon established itself as a haven that catered to Hong Kong's elite, as well as being a destination for dignitaries, Hollywood stars and literary icons.

"Repulse Bay is the seaside resort of the colony, and has a hotel with all the surroundings of a beautiful villa. There are gardens of

semi-tropical flowers, porches that look out over the sea, and below a fine bathing beach," wrote Frank George Carpenter in his book 'China', which was published in 1925. Carpenter was just one of many novelists, playwrights, directors and composers who sought and found inspiration at The Repulse Bay Hotel.

William Somerset Maugham was inspired not only by its exotic setting, but also by the culture and upper echelons of society of Hong Kong, which prompted him to write 'On a Chinese Screen' in 1922, and one of his most iconic works, 'The Painted Veil', in 1925. The latter was a salacious tale, one that so accurately portrayed well-known Hong Kong residents that they eventually sued the publisher to have their names removed from the manuscript.

English playwright, composer, director, actor and singer, Noel Coward, whose work was once described by *Time* magazine as "a combination of cheek and chic, pose and poise", visited The Repulse Bay Hotel for the first time in 1929. It was there that he wrote the comedic play 'Private Lives', as well as one of his best-known songs, 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen', which included the line "in Hong Kong they strike a gong and fire off the Noon Day Gun." On a visit in 1968, Coward was invited to pull the trigger of the Noon Day Gun, but – arriving characteristically late – caused the gun to miss its otherwise flawlessly prompt firing.

As the situation in the Sino-Japanese war grew more perilous from the late 1930s to 1941, The Repulse Bay Hotel became a home away from home for many notable literary figures – including William Empson, Christopher Isherwood, Agnes Smedley, Theodore H. White and Henry Luce – who came to report on and write about the war. The most notable, however, were Ernest Hemingway and his wife and celebrated war correspondent, Martha Gellhorn.



Ernest Hemingway at The Repulse Bay Hotel

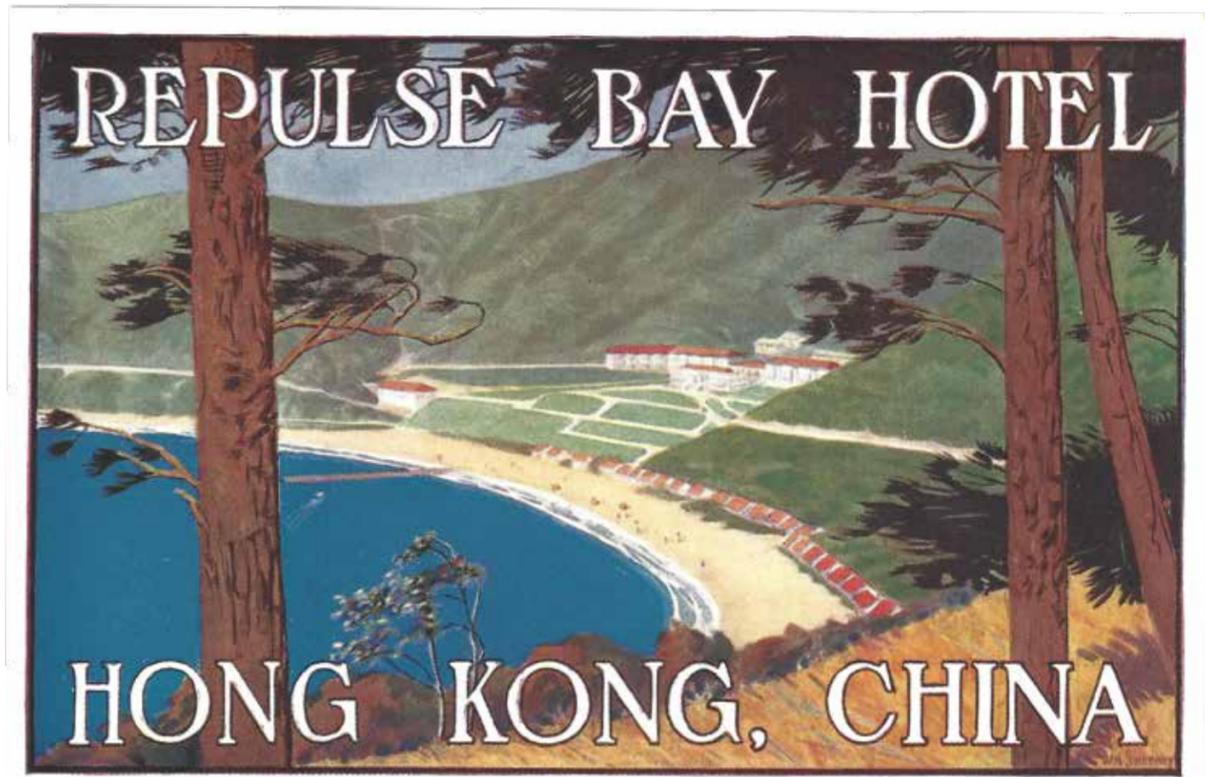


Image: Courtesy of Picture This Gallery

Gellhorn was eager to report on the war and see first-hand the conditions throughout Asia, and eventually convinced Hemingway that a trip to the Far East would be a great adventure. Hemingway went on to describe this 100-day Asia adventure as their ‘honeymoon’.

The couple arrived in Hong Kong on February 22nd, 1941, when they first stayed at The Hongkong Hotel on Pedder Street for its central location. There, Hemingway ensconced himself at the hotel bar – known then as ‘Gripps’ – where the drinks flowed as freely and as often as the rogues and raconteurs who came to meet and talk with him about the war - including the likes of Morris ‘Two-Gun’ Cohen, an adventurer, arms trader and former bodyguard to Dr. Sun Yat-Sen.

“Morale was high and morals were low,” Hemingway wrote of Hong Kong in a letter to his editor, Ralph Ingersoll of the American tabloid, *PM*.

Gellhorn, while falling in love with the people she met and their spellbinding stories, was actually appalled at the city’s less than adequate sanitation and housing in the heart of the city. “To newcomers, Hong Kong seems like a combination of Times Square on New Year’s Eve, the subway at five-thirty in the afternoon, a three-alarm fire, a public auction and a country fair,” she wrote in her piece titled ‘Time Bomb’ for *Collier’s*, before drawing attention to the Colony’s extreme polarisation of wealth.

It is also safe to say Gellhorn was less than impressed with her husband’s many long, late nights at ‘Gripps’. In fact, it was after a particularly raucous night, which ended with Hemingway setting off firecrackers in the hotel room, that Gellhorn insisted they move to The Repulse Bay Hotel, where they could enjoy fresh air, long walks, and the company of its well-heeled guests who were well-informed on matters of the war.

It was at The Repulse Bay Hotel that Hemingway and Gellhorn met and spent time with journalist and author Emily Hahn and Major Charles Boxer, who was head of British intelligence in Hong Kong. They also enjoyed the company of writer and social reformer Rewi Alley, and the esteemed Soong sisters, Madame Sun Yat-sen (Soong Chin-Ling) and Mrs. H. H. Kung (Soong Ai-ling).

It was through these reputable contacts, who provided Hemingway and Gellhorn with letters of introduction, that the couple was able to meet with high-ranking officials on their arrival in China in March 1941, where they reported on the war from what was then known as the ‘Canton Front’.

During the Japanese occupation, The Repulse Bay Hotel served as headquarters for 46 British troops posted to keep the road open between Stanley and Aberdeen, as well as a refuge for over 150 civilians. Repulse Bay was successfully defended for three days before the Imperial Japanese Army, under the command of General Takashi Sakai, seized the hotel on December 23rd, 1941.

Image: Courtesy of The Repulse Bay Hotel

During the occupation, the hotel served as a convalescent hospital for the Japanese. After the war, it continued to be used as a place of recuperation for allied troops in the Colony. The *Industrial and Commercial Daily* reported in 1946, in an article titled 'Soldiers Paradise – Convalescence at the Repulse Bay Hotel' that "the pre-War entertainment centre – the hotel - has been used as a military convalescence home since November last year. Any military personnel entitled to wounded leave can stay here and enjoy the seawater, swimming and all outdoor sports. It is also used as a recovery centre for those injured or suffering from mental stress from Burma and other Far East fronts. There are 18 staff on duty and among them are four nurses. The hotel provides football, badminton, theatre and dancing for those who wish to enjoy them."

Reporting and writing on war and romance, often both, continued long after the Sino-Japanese war. The subjects were vividly captured by Eileen Chang, considered one of the most influential modern Chinese writers, in her 1943 novel 'Love in a Fallen City', which was set at The Repulse Bay Hotel. Scenes for the novel's film adaptation, which starred Chow Yun-fat and Cora Miao, were also filmed on site.

The Repulse Bay Hotel has appeared on the silver screen a number of times. In 1954, William Holden and Jennifer Jones stayed at the hotel while filming the wildly successful film 'Love is a Many Splendored Thing'. Based on the autobiographical novel 'A Many-Splendored Thing' by Han Suyin, it tells the tale of an American reporter covering the Chinese civil war. Married but separated, he meets and falls in love with a Eurasian doctor – Han Suyin – only to face prejudice from her family and from Hong Kong society.

The Oscar-winning 1978 film 'Coming Home', starring Jane Fonda and Jon Voight, was partly filmed in the hotel's Reading Room.

As the fog of war began to lift, the talented, rich and famous began to find their way back to The Repulse Bay. During the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, it was a favourite destination for high-rolling jet setters for its superb service, fine European cuisine, and serene setting, yet easy proximity to the city – luxuries still enjoyed by Hong Kong residents and visitors today.

Clarke Gable, Tyrone Power, Ava Gardner, Sophia Loren and Marlon Brando all came to enjoy 'The Riviera of the Orient'. Crown Prince Don Carlos and Princess Sophie of Spain spent their honeymoon there. Other royal patrons included Prince Axel, Prince Joachim and Princess Marie of Denmark, as well as Princess Birgitta

of Sweden and Hohenzollern. In 1957, His Royal Highness the Sultan of Pahang visited with his new 20 year-old bride, Hathifah.

Hong Kong screen siren Tina Leung Kwok-hing, more widely known as Ti Na, was a regular at The Repulse Bay's famous afternoon tea, moving freely between the entertainment and political circles that were part of the hotel. Often referred to as 'Hong Kong's Marilyn Monroe' for her voluptuous figure, free spirit and risqué on-screen performances, Ti Na later revealed that she had been recruited as a spy by the Chinese government.

The Repulse Bay Hotel became known internationally as the place in Hong Kong to see and be seen – a haven where stars and stories were abundant.

Naval intelligence officer, journalist and author of James Bond fame, Ian Fleming, was particularly enamoured by the hotel's glamorous mix of visitors, describing it in his 1963 non-fiction book, 'Thrilling Cities': "If you are holidaying, the Hong Kong Hotel-Repulse Bay, across the island and fronting a reasonable beach... is set in lovely gardens, and the local beauties, wives and concubines offer a dazzling display at the Sunday afternoon tea dances."

When the hotel was demolished in 1982, the public outcry was so great that HSH rebuilt it partially in replica. It is no longer a hotel, but The Repulse Bay continues to serve as a sanctuary from the madness of the city, and its enduring charm continued to attract Hong Kong's highbrow and visiting VIPs, including Prince Charles and the late Princess Diana.

Pieces of The Repulse Bay Hotel exist throughout, including original elements such as the 1930s stained glass in the Art Deco inspired Bamboo Bar, or the menu at The Verandah, which features dishes that date back to the 1920s such as the Black Pepper Steak Flambé, Baked Alaska, and of course, the hotel's celebrated afternoon tea.

Echoes of its storied past exist in The History Gallery, which features various exhibits throughout the building. In the Reading Room, sepia-toned photographs, a vintage typewriter, books and memos showcase Hemingway and Gellhorn's stay, while The Arcade displays vintage photos of musicians such as Buck Clayton who performed at the venerable insititution.

The legacy of The Repulse Bay Hotel lives on through timeless style, impeccable service and a charming dose of nostalgia. And like other iconic hotels that catered to the *crème de la crème* of society, it remains as legendary as those who have walked through its doors. 🍸



# ASTOR HOUSE HOTEL SHANGHAI

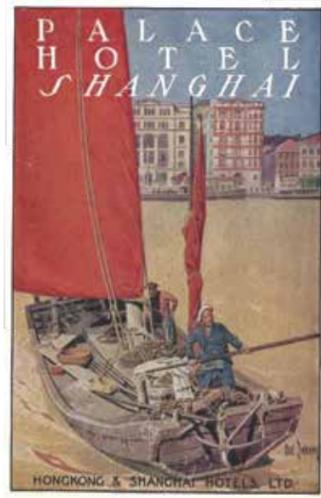


HONGKONG & SHANGHAI HOTELS, LTD.

## ONCE Upon A Time...

IMAGES: COURTESY OF PICTURE THIS GALLERY

*In 2010, The Peninsula Shanghai became the first new building on Shanghai's famous Bund in more than 60 years. But The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited (HSH) goes back much further in Shanghai's history to 1858, when the renowned Astor House Hotel was established just north of The Bund. From here, a glittering history would be carved as the company went on to open its first hotel on The Bund in 1896.*



Shanghai for many years during the mid-19th Century was home to several foreign settlements and as a result became a destination to which foreigners began to travel, both to reside and work, as well as to visit. Understandably the tourism industry leapt at the rising visitor numbers and so began the development of hotels. The 1850s and 60s were one of the first significant periods in Shanghai's urban expansion. "Shanghai was booming like nowhere else on earth," states author and historian Peter Hibbard of this period. The second boom period came a little later, but it was a highly significant one, during which the city underwent almost total reinvention. "In the 1920s and 30s the city was virtually rebuilt," explains Hibbard. "It was during this period that Shanghai became the world's fifth largest city, with a high proportion of foreigners living in its midst."

The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited was founded in 1923 after The Hong Kong Hotel Company, which Sir Elly Kadoorie originally held shares in, acquired a controlling interest in The Shanghai Hotels Ltd. the previous year. It was a time of expansion for the group as 1922 had seen the laying of the foundations for the first Peninsula hotel in Hong Kong.

But the Company's history in both Hong Kong and Shanghai goes back much further. The Hong Kong Hotel Company was founded in 1866 while The Shanghai Hotels Ltd., though not named as such until 1917, went under the name of Central Stores Ltd. between 1896 and 1917, but can be dated back to the establishment of the Astor House Hotel in 1858. Central Stores Ltd. first established itself on The Bund in 1896 when it purchased the Central Hotel, a property which itself had been built in 1875 and sat in a prime position right at the heart of The Bund.

When the turn of the 20th Century came, it seemed that the whole world was coming to Shanghai. The demand for hotels rose rapidly, and with so many foreign visitors to Asia's centre of trade, they expected the luxury to which they were accustomed from their stays in Europe and in America. In 1904, Central Stores Limited undertook the rebuilding of the Central Hotel with the aim of making it the largest and most modern hotel in China, akin to its European counterparts. It would be renamed The Palace Hotel and in 1909 opened with 110 en-suite guestrooms, a dining room seating 300, and a banqueting hall for 200 with a roof garden above. "It was like nothing else in Shanghai," notes Hibbard. However, it wasn't long before competition presented itself in the form of the Astor House.

Set on the North Bund across Garden Bridge, the Astor House, occupying an entire city block, advertised itself as the 'Waldorf Astoria of the Orient', opening its 211-room building with a 500-seat dining room, in 1911, almost as a response to The Palace Hotel. In fact, so impressive was the new Astor House that four years later, it was purchased by Central Stores Ltd., and by 1920, alongside The Palace Hotel, the two prestigious properties were drawing in tourists and fully reaping the benefits of Shanghai's booming tourist scene.

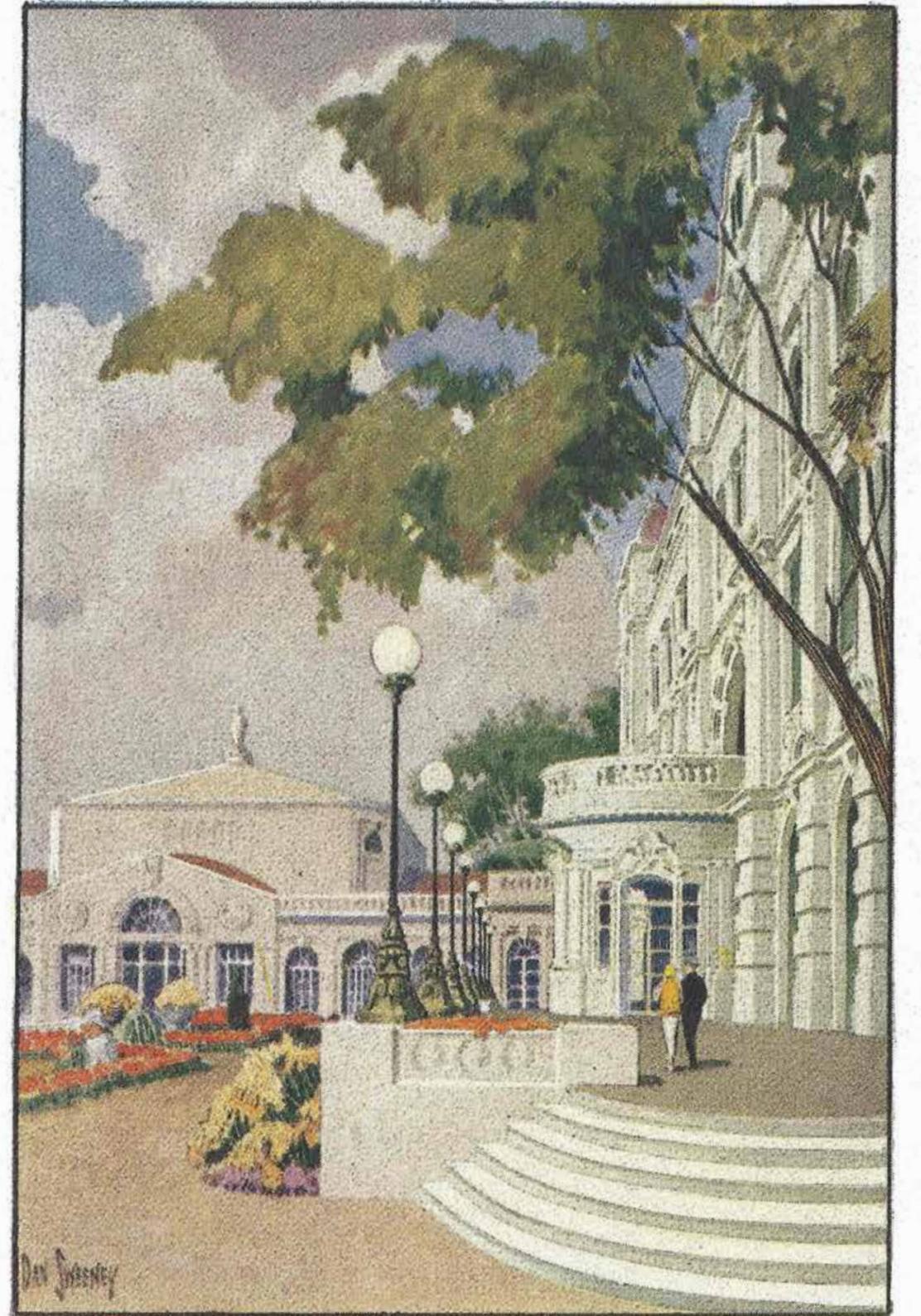
With this taste of success, Central Stores Ltd. which had since become The Shanghai Hotels Ltd., embarked on an expansion programme, purchasing the majority of shares in Beijing's premier hostelry, the Grand Hotel des Wagons-Lits, as well as acquiring property closer to home in the form of The Kalee hotel in 1920.

On May 12th, 1922, The Hongkong Hotel Company purchased the 85 percent controlling interest in The Shanghai Hotels Limited. The architect of this acquisition was James Harper Taggart, the then Managing Director of The Hongkong Hotel Company. Subsequently, in October 1923, Taggart helped engineer the merger of The Shanghai Hotels Limited and The Hongkong Hotel Company, to create The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited, and remained in his position as Managing Director.

The group then bought a 10-acre private estate on Bubbling Well Road in Shanghai and converted it into The Majestic hotel, a 32-suite hotel which opened in 1924, helping to further accommodate the high foreign visitor numbers which continued to rapidly increase after cruise liners began to call into Shanghai more frequently during the early 1920s.

With four leading hotels now under its control in Shanghai, HSH focused on implementing novel concepts to encourage visitors, such as dinner dances and European-style grill rooms. In 1926, the group relinquished control of both The Kalee, a short-lived acquisition, and in 1930 of The Majestic, which just three years later was torn down. In the years that followed, HSH focused on the jewels in its crown - the Astor House and The Palace Hotel, both of which were remodelled during this period, but which were taken under Japanese control when the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937. The Astor House never fell back into the hands of HSH following World War II, but still exists as a hotel today, while The Palace Hotel was sold in 1948 and today makes up the southern wing of The Peace Hotel on The Bund.

# MAJESTIC HOTEL SHANGHAI



HONGKONG & SHANGHAI HOTELS. LTD.



Having played such a pivotal role during the golden age of travel in Shanghai, it was with a great feeling of nostalgia that the Company returned to the city in 2010 with the opening of The Peninsula Shanghai, technically the group's fifth property in the Chinese metropolis. Set partly in the grounds of the former British Consulate, here The Peninsula continues HSH's illustrious history and heritage which already spans 150 years. It was indeed a grand homecoming... 

# Shall WE Dance...

*Shanghai's tradition of tea dances was originally initiated by The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels Managing Director James Taggart at the Astor House hotel in 1924. Taggart himself loved to dance, his favourite style being the Charleston.*

The Astor House was the finest hotel in Shanghai during its time, and following the remodelling of the hotel's ballroom in 1917, the concept of tea dances which originated in Europe was introduced to the city by the visionary Managing Director of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, James Taggart.

Held every afternoon from 4:00pm to 6:00pm both in the Ballroom and the Grill Room on the second floor, the custom rapidly spread to The Palace and Majestic Hotels, and soon became the most glamorous way for Shanghai's European and wealthy Chinese communities to spend their afternoons. These high society events were a fixture of Shanghai's social calendar and the well-heeled came in droves to dance the waltz, the foxtrot, the tango, and Taggart's personal favourite, the Charleston, to live tunes played by a big band. Tea dances were also held at The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels' Beijing property, The Grand Hotel des Wagon-Lits.

When it opened in 1928, The Peninsula Hong Kong rapidly established itself as the city's foremost social meeting place and tea dances were held daily except Sundays from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm in the Rose Room. The dances were reportedly "constantly

filled to overflowing, being the scene of Hong Kong's daily fashion parade."

Dancing and tea of course were the perfect partners, and The Peninsula Afternoon Tea today is a celebrated and much-loved signature feature in The Lobby of every Peninsula hotel around the world. The Peninsula's rituals are rooted in British custom as The Duchess of Bedford is credited with launching the fashion of afternoon tea in 1830. By the 1840s, wafer-thin slivers of bread encasing thinly sliced cucumber and platters of light sponge cakes were served in the new tea gardens of Vauxhall and Marylebone and by later Victorian years, tea was a well-established meal with its own distinctive array of foods, including savoury sandwiches, hot teacakes, English muffins or scones. Tea was a time to share gossip and show off one's prettiest teapots and china, so hostesses vied with each other to produce the most refined sweetmeats and elegant table settings.

The Peninsula extended this tradition in its early days by serving tea in cups of eggshell-thin bond china, with crisp white linens. The inaugural mid-afternoon feast at The Peninsula Hong Kong set customers back all of HK\$4 (US50 cents). 



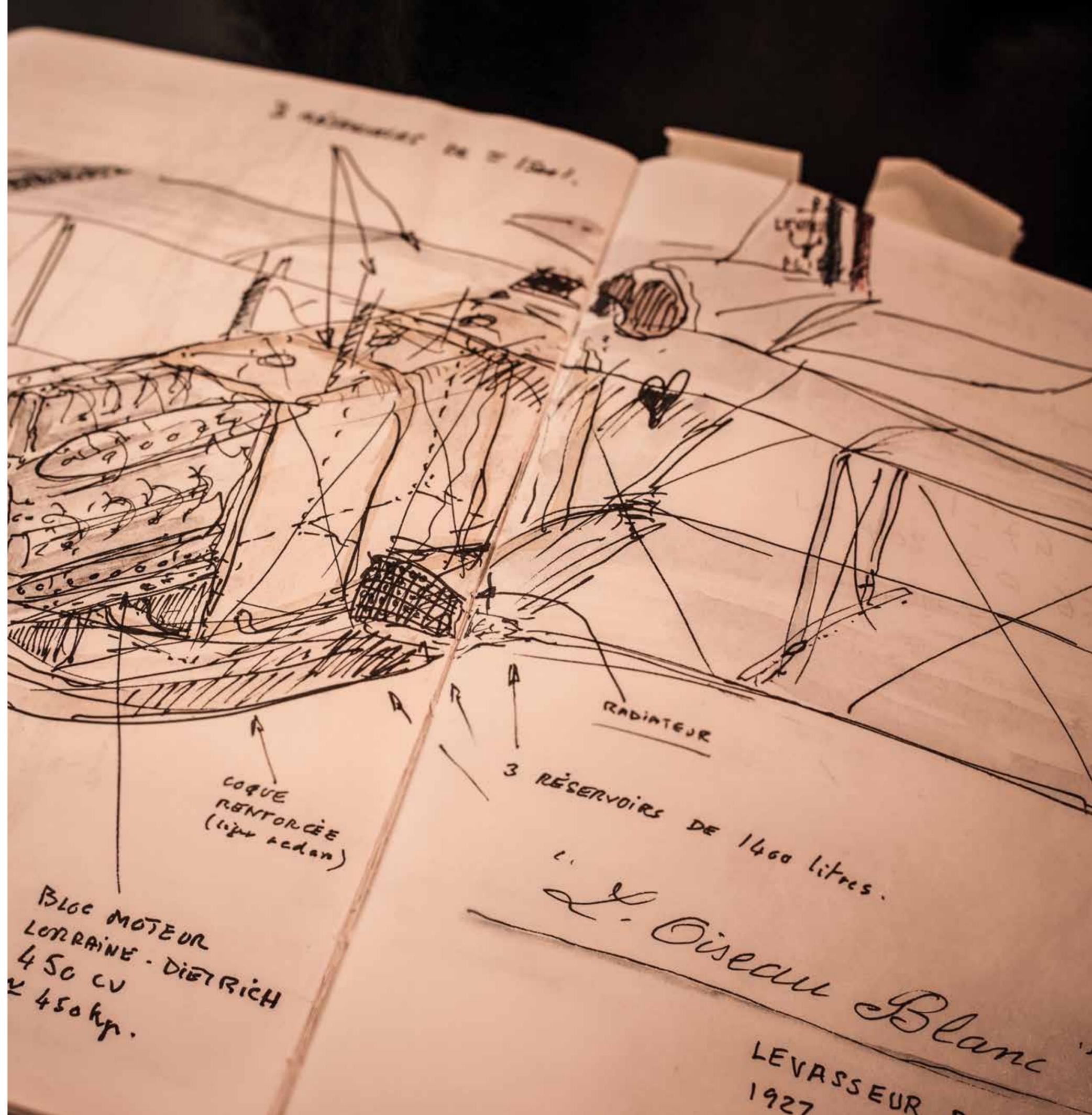
Image: William Furniss

1927

# Men ON A MISSION

IMAGES: ANTONIO SABA

On May 8th 1927 at 5:17am, the two First World War heroes, Charles Nungesser, a daredevil flying ace rated third highest in the country for air combat victories during World War 1, and Francois Coli, a one-eyed pilot and navigator, took off from Le Bourget airport near Paris, aiming to make the crossing to New York in 36 hours.



COQUE  
RENTORCÉE  
(light sedan)

BLOC MOTEUR  
LORRAINE - DIETRICH  
450 CV  
450 hp.

RADIATEUR

3 RÉSERVOIRS DE 1400 litres.

L. Oiseau Blanc

LEVASSEUR  
1927

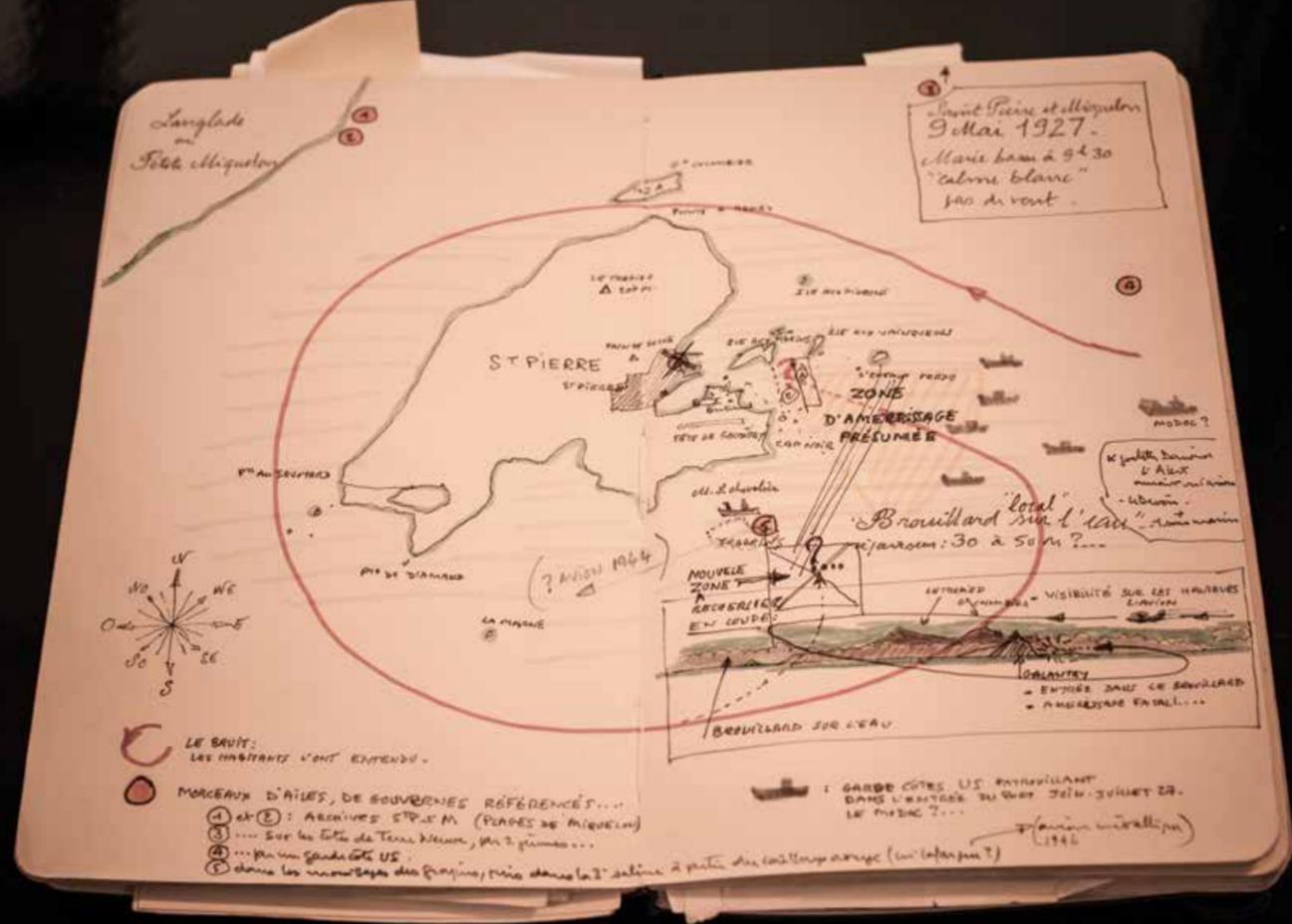


Image: Courtesy of The Peninsula Paris

For the past eight years of his life, Bernard Decré has devoted himself tirelessly to searching for the wreck of a plane in which two French aviators, Charles Nungesser and Francois Coli, might have made the first non-stop Atlantic crossing 12 days before Charles Lindbergh's record-breaking solo flight. The biplane was known as 'L'Oiseau Blanc'.

Loaded with 3,800 litres of fuel, L'Oiseau Blanc – a PL.8-01 seaplane weighing 5,000 kilos, made of wood and cloth, took off in the direction of the English Channel.

"The pilots intended to fly across the Channel, over the southwestern part of England and Ireland, across the Atlantic to Newfoundland, then south over Nova Scotia, to Boston, and finally to a water landing in New York planned beside the Statue of Liberty," recounts Decré. "They really needed to have a tail wind the whole way to make it, but these men were gamblers."

Decré's use of the word "gamblers" is probably accurate, certainly in terms of Nungesser, who was seemingly undefeatable, as during World War I, he destroyed a total of 47 Dutch aircraft, making him the first aviator to be honoured by the French Government. Decré goes on to reveal that each evening upon landing after his daily missions, Nungesser would reportedly head straight to Fouquet's bar on the Champs-Élysées, which from 1916 on, became the preferred haunt of pilots and heroes of French aviation, who would spend every evening there, and as a result was subsequently renamed the 'Bar de l'Escadrille' (the squadron bar). Each morning, following his champagne-fuelled escapades of the previous evening, Nungesser would take off on yet another fighting mission.

Decré's well-studied theory is that during the attempted Trans-Atlantic crossing, the pilots switched off the engine during the night, with a view to making a water landing off Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, due to dangerously low levels of fuel in the aircraft's tank. However the plan went wrong and amidst heavy fog, the plane is thought to have crashed and broken up on landing, killing both men. Ocean currents could have then carried the aircraft and its pilots away from the crash location and out to sea.

Decré began his personal mission to investigate the mystery in 2007, beginning with extensive research. "By 2012, I had collected a consistent 30 clues that suggest that L'Oiseau Blanc did in fact cross the Atlantic, including the testimony of a fisherman by the name of Pierre-Marie Chevalier, who was out in his dinghy with his Labrador on the morning of May 9th, 1927 near the suspected crash site. He said that he clearly heard the sound of an airplane and a crash followed by cries for help. His dog also barked frantically upon hearing the noises. A further piece of evidence is a telegram from the U.S. Coast Guard dated August 18th, 1927, in which they declared that two connected wings were found 300 kilometres from New York and 800 kilometres from Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, and stated clearly that they could very well be those of the French aircraft."

Decré is convinced that the U.S. Coast Guard is still in possession of a least a piece of the wings, and that such may be lying idle in a warehouse somewhere.

In 2011, Decré received an extremely encouraging e-mail from Erik Lindbergh, the grandson of Charles Lindbergh, stating the following:

Dear Bernard,

*I congratulate you on your excellent research! While I hesitate to speak for the rest of my family or the Lindbergh Foundation – it is safe to say that we would all be delighted by finding the answer to my grandfather's question or even better yet – finding hard evidence of the White Bird and its two brave pilots on or near the coast of North America – or anywhere for that matter. This is just one of the great unanswered questions of aviation history and it seems like you are getting very close!*

*I am too busy with my LEAP program to be able to offer much in the way of assistance, but please don't hesitate to ask. I also have a great number of contacts in the aviation industry. This includes people who have participated in aircraft recovery operations, historical organizations and the press. So if you think it is helpful I can introduce you to some of these folks. It would be helpful if you can put together all of the information you outline below into a website with visual maps and documentation for people to stimulate further interest.*

Best Regards,  
Erik

In 2012, Decré secured further support from Safran, a leading international high-technology group specialising in aerospace, defence and security, which signed a two-year partnership agreement in 2012 with La Recherche de L'Oiseau Blanc, providing technical and financial resources to search for the aircraft's wreckage. The relationship with Safran enabled Decré to rent more sophisticated equipment for his search, including a higher power magnetometer, a multi-beam sonar, and a winch compatible with a 350 metre-long cable.

In May 2013, Decré set out on his fourth annual expedition to find the plane's engine, accompanied by none other than Erik Lindbergh and 30 boats carrying members of the media and a television crew. This time, the mission was to fine comb a half-circle area off the Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon coast of about two kilometres, but sadly it again turned up nothing, although a special tribute was made to the flight and its pilots when Safran Chairman and CEO Jean-Paul Herteman joined Decré and Lindbergh to drop flowers in the bay of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon.

Undeterred, Decré refuses to give up his search. Whether the elusive engine will ever be recovered is anyone's guess, but his efforts have not gone unnoticed. Back in 2009, when the story of L'Oiseau Blanc was told in a French television documentary, Decré was asked to meet with The Honourable Sir Michael Kadoorie, Chairman of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited. The outcome of that meeting is now on permanent show as a focal point of The Peninsula Paris in the form of a spectacular full replica of the L'Oiseau Blanc Levasseur PL8 biplane at 75 percent of its original size with a wingspan of 11 metres sitting proudly on metal struts on the exterior of the building. The replica was built in Newquay, England.

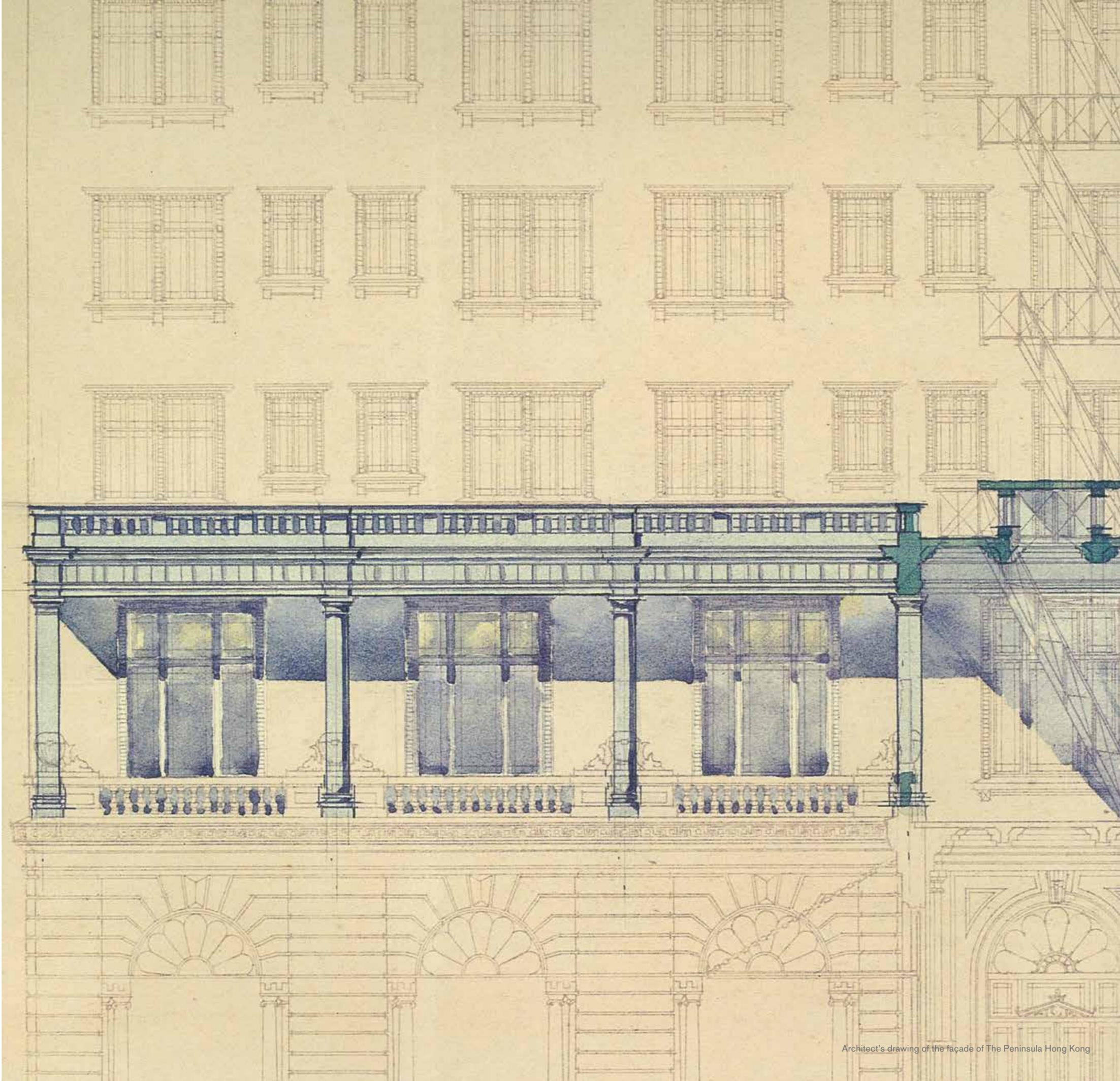
The hotel's rooftop restaurant is also named after the aircraft, and a restored 1927 Levasseur engine takes pride of place within. The engine was restored and rebuilt from parts of three original engines at Le Bourget - a labour of love undertaken by a group of enthusiastic volunteers comprising retired aviation engineers, who worked one day a week on the project.

Whatever the outcome of the continued search, Decré still hopes to be able to rewrite the history of aviation. "We just want to recognise that they accomplished a fantastic crossing," words that echo the sentiments of Charles Lindbergh, who said, "They may not have succeeded, but their daring ought to be celebrated."

1928

# *A* VISION --- Realised

*In the 150th year of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels Limited, we delve into the archives of The Peninsula Hong Kong and take a nostalgic look at some of the now rarely-seen historical footage from her long and fascinating history.*





The Lobby of The Peninsula Hong Kong, 1950s

When The Peninsula Hong Kong first opened her doors on December 11th, 1928, the first guests were awestruck by her 7,500 square-foot *cinquecento* Lobby – so described because the classical design recalled the style which predominated in 16th Century Italy. They marvelled at the soaring marble pillars, the elaborate chandeliers, and the perfect staircase which inspired grand entrances from perfectly coiffed and coutured women. They were also intrigued by the incredible variety of dining and imbibing possibilities afforded by the Moorish Bar, the domed Main Banqueting Hall, the Children’s Dining Room, the Tea Lounge, the Roof Garden and the Rose Room, and furiously scribbling newspaper reporters summoned up every adjective in their repertoire in an effort to convey the splendour that stood before them.

The opening of The Peninsula saw a steady stream of elegantly dressed men and women travelling across the Fragrant Harbour by Star Ferry, junk or sampan, and then onwards to the hotel by rickshaw or on beautifully shod foot. In the forecourt, the fragrance of lingering perfume blended with the sultry sea breeze and the sound of music and laughter poured from windows ablaze with light. Pageboys clad in neat black uniforms and distinctive pillbox hats opened the great doors with a flourish, welcoming Hong Kong to the greatest party of the decade. Folk sipped tea under the sky-blue dome of the Main Banqueting Hall; danced to live music among the Doric columns of the Roof Garden; enjoyed cocktails in the Moorish Bar; gentlemen tried out the seats in the Barber Shop, and the band of the King’s Own Scottish Borderers entertained

on the first floor Terrace. One American guest was overheard saying: “It makes me feel like a million dollars; I’d feel rich here even if I hadn’t a dime in my bag.”

Following its spectacular opening, The Peninsula’s renown rapidly spread beyond Hong Kong; it was added to the itinerary of entertainers and tourists. In 1936, Hollywood arrived in the form of Charlie Chaplin and Paulette Goddard, stars of ‘Modern Times’. Before leaving his ship’s quarters for a suite in the more gracious Peninsula, Chaplin held court for the local press, deflecting questions about his rumoured engagement to Miss Goddard and satisfying the entreaties of a group of excited young autograph seekers. The stars graciously granted a similar request from The Peninsula and the hotel’s celebrated guest comments book bore the first – and by no means the last – praises penned by stars of stage and screen.

Ella Fitzgerald, Peter O’Toole, Kirk Douglas, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Rex Harrison, William Holden, Elizabeth Taylor and The Supremes have all stayed at The Pen, as have countless others. Shirley MacLaine objected when Marco Polo maître d’ Ricky Vaterlaus added to her bill the cost of the silver chopstick holders that disappeared from her table as she dined, then laughed as she tipped her bag to show the disputed goods tucked inside. The Peninsula was firmly entrenched as the film set and celebrity haven, and as jet travel became more affordable, Americans sought out the hotel made famous by its movie-star guests.



Douglas Fairbanks Jr.



Sean Connery



Elizabeth Taylor



Diana Ross and The Supremes



An early arrival

The Pen has always loved a party, and in the early days, when Hong Kong had the reputation as being a colonial backwater, the rich and bored were attracted to The Peninsula's never-ending medley of balls, dances, teas and recitals like bees to honey. The hotel put on breathtaking Christmas and New Year programmes of dinner dances and buffet lunches, and invitations to the annual fête of the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club, the Fanling Hunt Club, the Hong Kong Automobile Association and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, among others, lured guests in. People flocked to St. Patrick's nights, Chinese New Year carnivals, balls and galas for just about any occasion.

Of course it takes more than an elegant façade and tasteful deco to inspire the loyalty and affection that people feel for The Peninsula Hong Kong. The reassurance of the hotel's continual presence is an important factor, but it is the people who are the heart and soul of the hotel, and it is they who infuse the place with a generous spirit and pride. "Whenever we come back, they say 'Welcome home'," said one long-time guest. "And they mean it." In the words of a former staff member, "The Peninsula reaches out, grabs hold of you and hugs you." Rare comfort, indeed... 



# PENINSULA HOTEL

*Opening day—11th. December, 1928,  
4.30 to 6 p.m.*

The Management take pleasure in announcing  
(By kind permission of Lieut-Colonel L. J. Comyn,  
C.M.G., D.S.O. and Officers)

## The Full Military Band

of the

### 2nd Battalion the King's Own Scottish Borderers.

#### PROGRAMME:

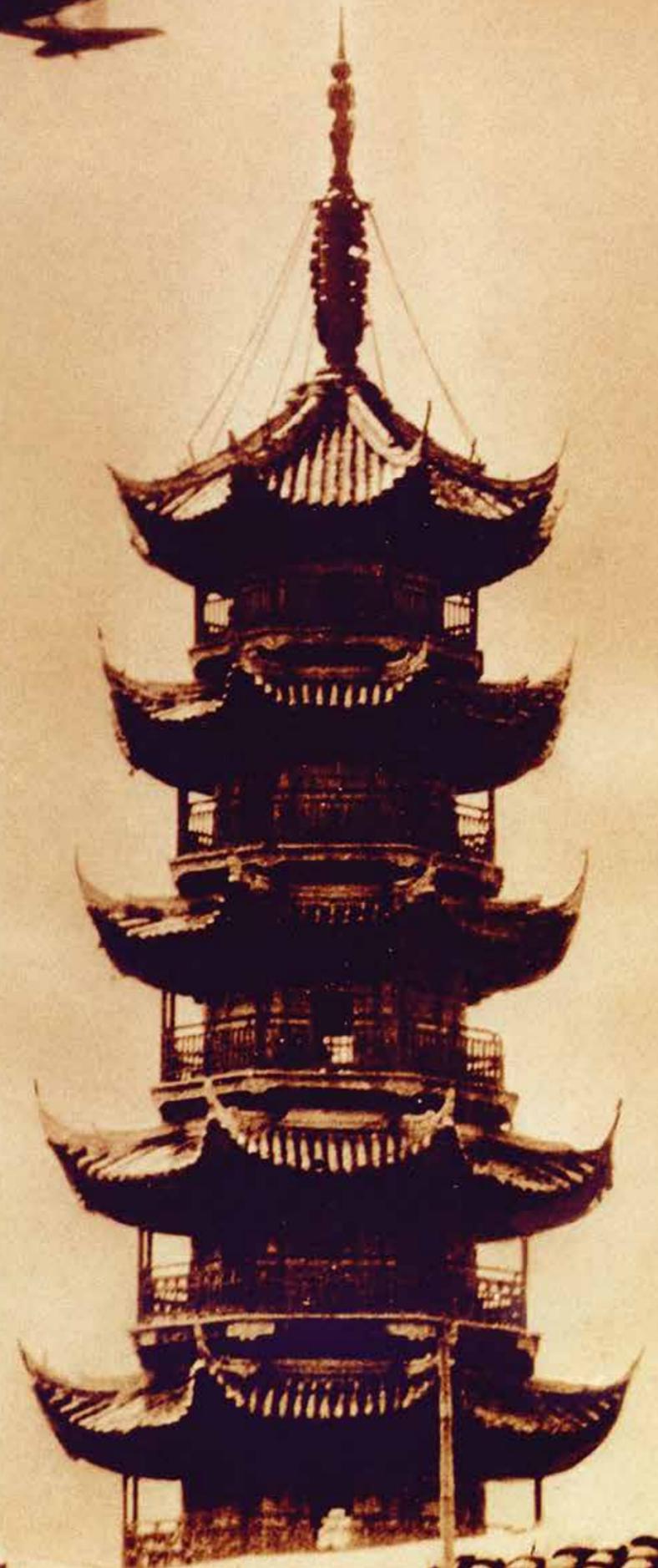
1. March ... .. "STEADFAST AND TRUE" ... *Teike*
2. Overture... .. "MARINARELLA" ... .. *Fucik*
3. Selection ... .. "ROMEO AND JULIET" .. .. *Gounod*  
(a) INTERMEZZO "AISHA" ... .. *Lindsay*
4. Excerpts  
(b) SERENADE "BABY'S SWEETHEART" *Corri*
5. Musical Comedy "THIS YEAR OF GRACE" ... *Coward*
6. Three Dale Dances ... .. *Wood*
7. Selection ... .. "IOLANTHE" ... .. *Sullivan*
8. Suite ... .. "BALLET EGYPTIEN" ... .. *Luigini*  
"BLUE BONNETS O'ER THE BORDER"  
"GOD SAVE THE KING"

Conductor ..... *Mr. W.H. Fitz-Earle. A.R.C.M.*

# *An* AVIATION *Hero*



*In 1929, the China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) was first established as China Airways by Curtiss Wright, under the leadership of U.S. airline magnate Clement Melville Keys. Four years later, a young man of Chinese descent, Moon Fun Chin, at the mere age of 20, began his flying career as a co-pilot in a Loening. In 1942, Captain Moon set a world record by using a 22-seater aircraft to transport 76 people, and went on to become one of the most decorated civilian pilots in history by the US military.*



CNAC DC-3 over Longhua Pagoda

**M**oon Fun Chin was born in 1913, Zhongshan, Guangdong Province in China. His father, who was an American citizen of Chinese descent, took his son to Seattle, and the family later moved to Baltimore where Moon completed his high school education.

At a very young age, Moon had already exhibited a keen interest in aviation. Soon after completing his high school education, he decided to enrol at the Curtiss Wright Flying School and graduated with a Commercial Pilot Licence.

As luck would have it, Curtiss Wright had a joint-venture with the Chinese Nationalist Government to operate a major airline in China. Also by chance, Moon's uncle had a friend by the name of William Langhorne Bond, who in 1931 was the Operations Manager for the China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC), a joint venture airline operated by Curtiss Wright and the Chinese Nationalist Government. However, Pan-Am took over from Curtiss Wright in 1933. Upon hearing that CNAC intended to expand its operations that same year, Moon's uncle coaxed his young, energetic nephew to come to China to meet with Bond.

Bond decided to hire Moon for CNAC, and he commenced work as an aviation mechanic due to his prior work experience. Just two weeks later, Moon was given the opportunity to co-pilot an aircraft on a Shanghai to Beijing route. Whilst on the ground, he still multi-tasked as a mechanic.

Moon was a mere 20 years old when he began his flying career as a co-pilot in the Loening. The Loening Seaplane was one of the first of the 'shoehorn-float' civilian aircraft that could land and float on sea water.

In 1936, Moon was promoted to captain and he flew a Stinson which was based in Chengdu. Every day, he flew the Chengdu to Chongqing route. En route, he picked up tourists who had been visiting the Yangtze River and other passengers who wished to continue on their journey to Chengdu. He also flew transport missions that included flights over the Himalayas, and from time to time, he would fly to Rangoon in Burma and Hanoi, Vietnam when required, flying on several types of aircraft, including the Stinson, the Douglas Dolphin, the Sikorsky S-38, the DC-2 and also the DC-3.

During the World War II (1939 - 1945), even though Moon was only a civilian aviation pilot, he volunteered actively in frequent military rescue missions and subsequently saved the lives of many US military personnel. Among those that he daringly rescued was Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle, who led the US Air Force Squadron in the bombing of Tokyo following the attack on Pearl Harbour in 1942. He rescued Doolittle and transported him from Kuming to Myitkyina, a city in northern Burma. Moon also carried

many American navy personnel in his aircraft to and from the Gobi Desert where the American Navy had a weather station. He was also actively involved in rescue missions to evacuate civilians from distress regions to safety. In one particular incident at Myitkyina, after loading 80 passengers onto his aircraft, he flew non stop to Calcutta with Doolittle also on board.

Moon's most extraordinary heroic act of rescue occurred during the post-war year of 1954, when he had become Chairman of the Board for Foshing Airlines, when a US Air Force C-119 crew bailed out over the stormy sea between Taiwan and Guam. There were already two US Air Force amphibious aircrafts near the location, but the pilots and crew were reluctant to risk their own lives to execute a rescue operation. Upon hearing the news of the distress situation, Moon personally took the risk upon himself and flew a PBY Catalina 'flying boat' to locate the distressed crew, landing in the turbulent water, and rescuing all of the six personnel.

In recognition of his heroic acts and achievements during the Second World War and his post-war rescue efforts, Moon was duly decorated by the United States Government with four notable awards: the Distinguished Flying Cross, a military medal awarded for his "heroism or extraordinary achievement" in aerial flight; the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal (Silver Star), a military service decoration for his participation and contributions to America's Asia Pacific campaign during World War II; the Air Medal, a military decoration for serving with the US Air Force, distinguishing himself with heroic or meritorious achievements in aerial flight; and the Presidential Unit Citation, granted to him for being part of the military unit that performed an extremely heroic act, usually in the face of an armed enemy. Bearing in mind that he was never officially a military personnel, Moon Fun Chin became one of the most decorated civilian pilots by the US military.

Soon after the war, in 1946, Moon left the CNAC to work for China's Central Aviation Transport Corporation (CATC) as Head of Operations, a role which saw him initiating the purchase of new aircraft and recruiting and training pilots and other flight crew personnel. Moreover, he oversaw operations in mainland China when the CATC became part of the Civil Air Transport (CAT) of Tai-wan in 1947.

Eventually, due to his vast experience in civil aviation, Moon started his own airline called Foshing Airlines in 1951, providing aviation services from Taipei to Taichung in Taiwan. In 1992, Foshing Airlines changed its name to TransAsia Airways and began operating flights around Taiwan in its fleet of Airbus A320 jets.

Many years later, Captain Moon Fun Chin retired as Chairman of the airline company he founded and returned to the USA where he is still an American citizen.



CNAC DC-3 over the Bund

**What navigational tools did you use in 1933?**

We didn't have any! I learned by myself what we called "one-two-three". I only looked at three instruments: the air speed, the climb indicator, and the bank and turn. That's all I needed. I had a compass, of course, which I looked at once in a while to see which direction I was going in (laughs).

**What were the various planes that you flew?**

The first plane I flew for CNAC was the Stinson. It was the biggest plane I had flown at that time - five passengers plus the pilot and copilot. The next plane I flew was the seaplane, an amphibian Loening that flew from Shanghai along the Yangtze River. I later flew the Dolphin, which had 8 seats, flew 140 miles per hour, and had a range of 720 miles. Then at the end of 1943, we had the C-46 Commando, which could go for about 1,500 miles.

**What was your most dangerous flying experience?**

My most dangerous mission was during World War II on a secret mission delivering communications equipment to monitor Japanese movement and intelligence gathering in early 1945. I delivered the equipment to an inaccessible place north of Hong Kong and west of Amoy. It was particularly dangerous because the Japanese controlled the airspace and there were no roads.

**Why did you choose to return to China to realise your aviation dream rather than remain in the United States?**

The main reason was that I could not get a commercial flying job

in the US. In the 1930s the Americans were not hiring Chinese pilots, so that is why many Chinese pilots from both Canada and the US went to China.

**Do you still remember carrying 78 passengers on the DC-3 with a load of 21 passengers, which far exceeded capacity?**

Yes, very clearly as we were going to Myitkyina to pick up radioman and communication equipment. When we landed, people surrounded the plane. People kept coming on board and Doolittle said you know what you are doing? I said yes. But until the plane was "fully loaded" no one would leave the outside of the airplane and the engines could not start. When I look back everyone was standing so they closed the door. Then everybody else outside went away and they were able to start the engine and take off.

**What is the most memorable moment in your life?**

April, 1936 when I was given the status of Captain. This allowed me to make enough money to live on. It was on the Chengdu to Chungking route in the Stinson.

**Why is flying so attractive to you?**

I just enjoyed it so much. I was nervous until I got into the cockpit where I felt I was in control and had a job to do.

**How you would like to be remembered?**

As a person that enjoyed flying and who always wanted to fly. ✈️

# Hong Kong's AIRLINE



Cathay Pacific's elegant Hong Kong ticket office (1955), was located in The Lobby of The Peninsula Hong Kong

Cathay Pacific Airways was initially formed in 1946 by two ex-wartime pilots, Roy Farrell and Sydney de Kantzow. When the war ended, like all the other airmen, soldiers and sailors who had got used to fighting, their life was completely disrupted and somehow they had to begin again.

The two founders were quick to realise that there was a shortage of luxury items in the Far East, and so initially they began carrying freight between Sydney and Shanghai. Business boomed, but in 1947, the British Government told Farrell that as an American he could not hold a major stake in an airline based on British soil, and so Butterfield & Swire, one of Hong Kong's major trading companies, which operated cargo worldwide, came in to take control of the airline.

On October 18th, 1948, the new company was registered as Cathay Pacific Airways Limited with nominal capital of HK\$10 million. By 1954, the main services were between Hong Kong, Bangkok, Singapore, Borneo, Vietnam and The Philippines, using one DC4, two DC3s and a DC6.

New services were introduced as the demand grew, and in 1959, apart from purchasing two Lockheed Prop-Jet Electras, the company took over the routes of Hong Kong Airways and extended its operations further, taking in Taipei, Tokyo and Seoul. It would soon thereafter become the first international carrier to operate

Back in the day, "Cathay Pacific – Hong Kong's Airline" is what the advertisements proclaimed about the company. Having been founded in 1946, Cathay Pacific Airways commenced its passenger jet services in 1962, becoming the only all-turbine airline in the Far East, and one of the few in the world.

services from Fukuoka and Nagoya with connections through Hong Kong and South East Asia. By the 1960s, the company had firmly established itself as one of the most successful carriers in the region. It was in the Spring of 1962 that Cathay started jet services, and the company trained and recruited crews to fly Convair 880s. In the same year, it became the only all-turbine airline in the Far East, and one of the few in the world.

The Peninsula played an integral role in the growth of commercial aviation in Hong Kong in more ways than one. The hotel became the natural home for the major airline companies of the day, with Cathay Pacific and many others all using the hotel's ground floor lobby as their check-in terminals. In 1968, The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels teamed up with Cathay Pacific in a joint-venture, and so Swire Air Caterers was born.

In April 1986, Cathay Pacific was listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, and the following year, the airline's status as one of the world's premier carriers was recognised when it received one of the industry's most coveted awards: Air Transport World magazine's 'Airline of the Year Award'.

From its humble beginnings as the dream of two World War II pilots, Cathay Pacific has come a long way to become one of today's leading airlines in the world. ✈️



# HONG KONG

FLY THERE BY  
**CATHAY PACIFIC**

SPANNING THE ORIENT



Cathay Pacific advertisement circa 1962



Leo Gaddi with his wife Frankie, Tsui Tim and Ricky Vaterlaus, 1958

# SETTING *A* TREND

*Hong Kong and the rest of the world has been wining and dining at Gaddi's for over 60 years; from its early days with a menu that included borsch along with sardines on toast, all the way through its evolution to the gourmet French cuisine served today. We dust off the first edition menu and relive life throughout the years at Gaddi's.*





Dining has long been an industry that more often than not thrives on novelty and innovation. But what of the grand restaurants, the classics as it were? What about the places with staying power, the establishments that have been dishing up fine fare for decades? It is in this spirit that we pay tribute to Gaddi's; the first establishment in the Far East to serve up exquisite European cuisine, with a dining room replete with opulent trappings that constitute a restaurant of indisputable excellence.

It may have had a chequered history, but what it can boast, beyond a shadow of a doubt, is the girth of its heart. Gaddi's has been witness to countless remarkable moments, be it of great love or triumph. It's a stark contrast to the rest of the culinary world that has been increasingly overwrought with homogeneity.

Through the ages, even as wars have waged and economies have boomed and crashed, Gaddi's has always aspired to be the very best. "It's difficult to explain to people who haven't been to Gaddi's how it isn't just another restaurant serving fine French food," muses Florian Trento, the current Peninsula Hotels' Group Executive Chef and former Executive Chef of The Peninsula Hong Kong. "It's about the generations of families, the owners, as well as the managers' commitment to the restaurant. People underestimate the emotional attachment to the place. That first dance, the proposals. After all, how many other restaurants can claim they have been here for over 60 years?"

"The best restaurant East of the Suez" is a mantra that rings true within the hallowed walls of a restaurant regarded as an institution in every sense of the word. We take a stroll down memory lane, dust off the old photographs, hear tales of days gone by, relish and bask in its history, and relive an era when high society first adored its Crown Prince.

When Gaddi's opened in 1953, the expression "worlds apart" would be an apt one. Interrupted by war and strife, Hong Kong was shaking off its post-war stupor, and one Leo Gaddi had just been welcomed into the folds of The Peninsula in 1948. Still shining from success fresh off a posting at The Palace Hotel in Shanghai, Gaddi dove straight into putting his stamp on the hotel. Under his leadership, new discipline was instilled and standards of service were raised to the impeccable, but perhaps the single most defining facet immortalising the hotelier was a Peninsula signature restaurant named after him.

It would be years before the concept of fine dining took a foothold in Hong Kong, but The Peninsula, ever unrelenting in its quest for the finer things in life, was forging a new chapter in hotel history. In a move that is now enshrined in hotel tradition, Sir Horace Kadoorie named the eatery after Leo Gaddi to ensure that every single enticement was on the table to keep his General Manager motivated and the dining stakes sufficiently high. With that, taking the place of Max' Coffee, which was the Studebaker dealership prior to that, was the brand spanking new Gaddi's.



Legendary Maitre d', Rolf Heiniger, 1978

A great deal was invested in Gaddi's in terms of time, energy and resources, both on the part of hotel management and the owners, and in fact Lord Kadoorie himself designed the distinctive menus adorned with cloth figures. Indeed, many a guest has been unable to resist going home without one tucked under their arm. Lady Kadoorie also lent a hand, bearing treasures from London in the form of bone china in a red and gold theme, commemorating the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. As for the fare, Gaddi's cuisine circa 1953 was a far cry from what we know it as today.

When the restaurant's legendary Maitre d' Rolf Heiniger, who has since retired, arrived in 1966, the menu included curry and Chinese cuisine to cater to local residents, as well as European fare, in an effort to court diners from around the world. A first edition menu from 1953 reveals that Chicken Curry was a house special and was rather pricey at HK\$9.00 (US\$1.15). Aside from talented European chefs, Gaddi, being mindful of the hotel's two Russian chefs from North China, ensured that the menu also carried a range of Russian dishes, from Borsch, available for an economical HK\$3.50 (US\$4 cents) or a Zakuska for two to share at HK\$16.00 (US\$2.00). The priciest item on the menu was a Chateaubriand Sauce Bearnaise for two, at HK\$21.00 (US\$2.69). For the truly indulgent, Caviar Malosol or Foie Gras could be had for HK\$15.00 (US\$1.92), whereas a Consommé or Sardines on Toast was offered for as little as HK\$2.00 (US\$2 cents) and \$2.50 (US 3 cents) respectively.

Having laid down a solid framework, Gaddi then took part at the gastronomic festival in Bern on behalf of his pride and joy.

There he swept the medal board, returning with a gold award for menu design and another for a sweet and sour pork dish. By the late 50s, Gaddi had unwittingly set a benchmark with The Peninsula, endowing it with a sterling reputation for inspired food. Doing two seatings in the evening and full to brim when cruise ships were docked, Gaddi's was often booked solid for months in advance. Soon following in its footsteps, were the Marco Polo restaurant and Chesa, compounding the hotel's reputation for standing at the vanguard in the world of fine cuisine.

As the 50s turned into the 60s, Gaddi's grew increasingly comfortable within its skin. Felix Bieger, former General Manager of The Peninsula Hong speaks with extreme fondness of his time at Gaddi's. Arriving in the seaport of Hong Kong in 1954, he was inducted into the world of The Peninsula by way of the Gaddi's kitchen. "I had great fun," he recounts, going to great lengths to explain that the times were vastly different. To begin with, he explains that the fashion statement of choice in the day was the *qi pao* or cheongsam, and he was earning HK\$550 (US\$70.50) as a monthly wage, living with the other 900 staff on the roof of the hotel. Pre-dating the advent of affordable air freight, produce was shipped in frozen by sea or sourced locally. Even then, the restaurant was fraught with all manner of challenges. "Cream and butter were scarce; Dairy Farm had a monopoly on butter, so if you didn't buy ice-cream from them, you wouldn't get butter."

Between 1957 and 1958, Gaddi's made a change in its food concept, ceding the Chinese portion of its menu to the Marco Polo restaurant downstairs. And this would not be the first adjustment or alteration made as it evolved. Its home on the ground floor was redecorated in the 60s, with champagne coloured walls, rust velvet chairs and gold carpets replacing the previous shades of red. In honour of the hotel's 50th Anniversary in 1978, Gaddi's was relocated to the first floor, taking over the former ballroom space.

Since then, aside from a minor facelift in 1994, the restaurant has retained the elegance, style and charm that has seen it welcome the great and the good, from Presidents to Hollywood Royalty. Michael Todd has danced with Elizabeth Taylor, as has Clarke Gable with Ava Gardner; and Danny Kaye donned a tie to dine there, as did Richard Nixon.

Through all its incarnations, Gaddi's has always had a live band and a dance floor. After all, nothing speaks to a romantic *tête-à-tête* like a spot of post-dinner dancing. The priceless 17th Century Coromandel screen is yet another invaluable fixture in the dining room. Depicting Emperor K'ang Hsi and his consort in the Summer Palace, it remains on loan to the restaurant by the late Lord Kadoorie and is one of a pair made in 1690 by Fong Long Kon for the Imperial Palace in Beijing. The second screen is a part of the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Beyond the elegant décor, Gaddi's has always aspired to feed its patrons well. Through the decades, looking back through the development of the menus and how the dining experience has changed, is as Trento says, "not only a fascinating glimpse at how culinary trends have changed over the years, but also Hong Kong's social history throughout the decades."

"In the 50s and 60s, the now strictly ornamental duck press stood in the spotlight," recounts Bieger. "To make *canard à la presse*, you had to carve the duck, crush the bones, make the juice, and

then create the sauce. It was hard, physical work." Table side serving on silver platters was the norm, and the maitre d' would carve with a flourish. Soufflés and flambé dishes were also a huge hit, and it's little wonder that flaming Baked Alaska was a staple during banquets. And most surprisingly, so was Mateus Rose. Whether it was the St. George's Ball or the St Andrew's Ball or any other equally highbrow social occasion, half the room would opt to imbibe in this Portuguese libation and the men would inevitably have a cigar in hand.

Gaddi's excellence and far-reaching reputation for being one of the finest restaurants in Asia must be largely attributed to its long-serving and legendary Maitre d', Rolf Heiniger, who took up his position in 1966.

Precise and always immaculately dressed, Heiniger was a consummate perfectionist who set extremely high standards for his restaurant and his staff, most of whom were trained by him personally. He also had a flair for the culinary arts and many patrons ignored the bounteous menu opting instead to ask Heiniger to prepare a creation from his own repertoire of gourmet specialities. "Watching him skilfully handling ingredients at the table while producing a dish causes that pleasurable thrill one gets when being privileged to observe a dedicated maestro at the peak of his profession," said one loyal patron of Gaddi's in the early 70s.

The beauty of Gaddi's is its evolution as a restaurant. With the installation of each Chef de Cuisine, something new is brought to the table. For example, Beiger brought his flambé pepper steak, and Phillip Sedgwick was the first ever British head chef at the restaurant.

Even as we continue to get wrapped up in the bustle of everyday life, take pause and recall what life used to be like, whilst still relishing the present. And the best place to do it is undoubtedly Gaddi's. 🍷



Ornamental duck press



*A*  
LIFE  
*Less*  
ORDINARY

*Ask Felix Bieger about The Peninsula Hong Kong and you know that you are in for a treat. His eyes take on a sparkle and the cheeky smile appears – there are so many memories, so many anecdotes and so much experience that he has to share. Having not only made his way through the ranks to hold the title General Manager of Hong Kong's Grand Dame of the hospitality trade three times, he has devoted himself to a career spanning 62 years at The Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited, and is without a doubt its 'Honorary Historian'.*





Felix Bieger greets Danny Kaye

Felix Bieger embarked on his extensive hotelier career as an apprentice cook at a restaurant in Zurich - which he promptly walked out on after just seven weeks. The idea had been to learn to cook and then head off to Ghana with his friend, whose uncle owned a hotel and several restaurants. However, that didn't materialise and next up was a nine-week stint on a building site as a labourer pouring concrete, a job which he says served him extremely well when the time came for major renovations at The Peninsula Hong Kong in 1962, but then the kitchen somehow beckoned again.

There was a big wide world out there and Bieger found himself on board a cruise liner bound for Asia - he was working as a sous-chef and the ship in question was the first British passenger liner to sail to Japan after the War. With a mission to serve a particular dessert to the then-Prince Akihito, which required some research, Bieger and his friend Hans took advantage of their stop in Hong Kong to see if anyone at the revered Peninsula hotel could help them out. The rest, as they say, is history. Both 'boys' found themselves with a job offer on their next sail through the Fragrant Harbour, and on the Saturday that Germany won the World Cup in 1954, they left Switzerland.

For his first five-year contract, Bieger was positioned at The Repulse Bay Hotel - a haven in those days for those wishing to escape the cold of winter in Europe, and also for the expats assigned to the more tropical spots in Asia, who would come over to 'cool down'. A good handful of government servants were also housed there whilst waiting for their allocated accommodation to become available. One such family came with their pet parrot, which met an untimely demise at the hands of Bieger's cat - not the best of situations...

The Repulse Bay was also one of two places for a gentleman to show his lady-friend that he was very interested. "You only went to The Repulse Bay with your girlfriend when it was serious - or the PG (Parisian Grill). If you took her to Jimmy's Kitchen, it perhaps wasn't so serious..."

Upon the completion of his contract, Bieger embarked on a personal tour of Asia before heading back to Switzerland to complete his Accounting diploma at the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne. By November 1959, he was back in Hong Kong and in charge of the Front Desk at The Peninsula Court (now the Kowloon Hotel), which had recently opened and had previously served as staff quarters for The Peninsula itself and an underground car park.

The Peninsula Court provided 103 rooms for longer staying guests. Each floor had four one-bedroom suites, four rooms with kitchenettes, while the rest were two connecting bedroom accommodations. Many of the guests were expats who had to give up their apartments before they went on leave and were waiting to be rehoused - in those days, many contracts were for five years with six months paid leave at the end of the contract. There were also a good handful of entrepreneurs who settled at The Peninsula Court whilst starting their businesses, such as Ira Kaye - one of the pioneers of the Asian cinema scene.

When Swissair started flying to Hong Kong in 1958, The Peninsula provided the airline's on-board catering for the first 10 years. The crews in those days would stay at The Pen and they would bring specialities from home with them - sausages, air-dried meats, cheeses, and the like.

The Peninsula's chefs prepared gourmet meals in Gaddi's kitchen for the delighted passengers on board Swissair's DC6Bs. Under the supervision of Chan Ching, the food was transported from The Peninsula's lobby to Kai Tak by lorry, and kept fresh during the journey with dry ice. As the schedule was too tight to afford journeys back to the hotel for extra meals, The Peninsula over-catered, an expensive venture which ensured that everyone on board was served a meal. It was also quite a coup in technical terms. The Peninsula catered for the first two legs of the westbound journey: the first part, from Hong Kong to Bangkok, took five-and-a-half hours, while Bangkok to India was another four hours. All meals were served from a miniscule kitchen at 15,000 feet.



The Peninsula Court, 1950s

Over time, the Swissair crews became familiar faces and very good friends. Bieger elaborates: “The Peninsula and Swissair were friends before Swissair flew out of Hong Kong, and when they did, the relationship grew even stronger. I still keep in touch with retired captains and air stewardesses from the 1950s and 60s. It’s not an exaggeration to say that The Peninsula was home for Swissair in Hong Kong”.

Then in 1967, The Peninsula teamed up with Cathay Pacific in a joint-venture, and Swire Air Caterers was born. Bieger became its first General Manager in 1968, whilst maintaining his role at The Pen by choice. He would juggle being at the hotel from 6:00 to 8:00am every morning, before rushing of to the airport to oversee the catering activities during the day, and then returning to his Front Desk by early evening. Many nights, he would even go back to the hotel after finishing dinner with his wife. Returning to The Pen full-time in 1969, Bieger was promoted to General Manager in 1970.

During his days off, he enjoyed visiting the Kadoorie Farm, taking the bus up there along Route Twisk (a private military road at the time for which a special pass was needed) and armed with a picnic. The Farm’s objective, together with the government, was to show local villagers and farmers that crops could be grown on a hillside and to teach them how to farm. They had piglets and chickens, and when a farmer’s wife found herself widowed, the Farm would give her a few of these to give her a chance to sustain herself and her family. It was also an experimental farm, where the cross-breeding of pigs gave rise to more hardy and suitable breeds for the local climate and needs. Day-old chicks were flown in from the US and actually spent the first night in Bieger’s office at The Pen before being handed over to the manager of the Farm the next day!

The Kadoorie Farm also functioned as an animal hospital, and was home to an eagle with a broken wing that Sir Michael Kadoorie was particularly fond of. After rehabilitation, it was released, but was known to always come back to the Farm.

Bieger notes how different work ethics have since changed. He talks of an era when ‘work’ was not interrupted by the gadgets of today, putting constant stress and pressure on people. There was also a certain camaraderie and sense of sharing. The ‘boys’ would take a moment out of work every Sunday at 11:00am, and meet at the back of Gaddi’s to share a Campari together with Leo Gaddi who had returned from his swim at Big Wave Bay. Bieger recalls the time when ‘Ah Kee’, the Senior Captain in the dining room asked him for one dollar to go half share on a cash-win ticket when it was still offered by the Jockey Club. Winning top prize, they walked away with HK\$5,500 each – quite a sum at the time!

When someone new came from abroad to work at The Pen, Bieger would always invite them for a drink at the end of The Long Bar at Gaddi’s, taking time get to know them, put them at ease, and help them settle into their new adventure in the Far East. He would also tell them that working for him, they would have to take

their watches off. “This was not a job where they needed to look at the time and not a job where they simply just worked for their salary; their heart and soul had to be in it,” he recalls.

When asked what he thinks of the hotel industry today, Bieger says that many hotels have no soul. “You walk into the lobby and it feels like you just entered a refrigerator. Even though they have spent a fortune on renovation and decoration, they are just cold marble palaces.”

This description clearly does not refer to The Peninsula. Walking into The Lobby at The Pen, you can literally feel the warmth as soon as you walk through the door. The ambience, the manner in which you are greeted and received, what the staff talk about when they escort guests up to their rooms, is integral to The Peninsula philosophy. Much activity goes on behind the scenes to ensure that the guest history is updated with full details of their preferences, clear communication to allow this information to be passed through all the ranks and departments, and making sure all guests are taken care of as best possible. “First and last impressions are so important,” states Bieger. “This is ultimately what makes the difference.”

There are countless anecdotes, and a guest list that reads like a ‘who’s who’ of famous people, many of whom Bieger was on a first name basis with. He shows me a hand-written note from Frank Sinatra, thanking him for his care during his visit to The Peninsula and who returned the hospitality by inviting him to stay at his hotel in Las Vegas in 1963.

He also visited Danny Kaye, who took care to cook his favourite meal for him, and the Biegers spent an entire night in Kaye’s home theatre watching highlights from all his shows.

There’s also the photo taken together with John Wayne at the front of The Pen, standing six steps below him so that they appeared the same height – “a fabulous man”, he recalls.

The detail of Bieger’s memories is impeccable. He knows which rooms were occupied by certain guests, he remembers the order in which renovations were done and which rooms had which décor, he recalls guests names and dates of their stays, and his adventures and experiences in living detail. As he himself says, “I don’t keep a scrapbook of memories. I had one once, but I was devastated when it was lost and so never wanted to go through such an experience again. I thought it would be simply better to keep everything in my mind,” he says with just a hint of nostalgia. “You should live like a sun-dial – it only shows the time when the sun shines. When it is dark, you don’t see the shadow of the arrow on the dial. You only see and remember the good times, and you forget about the bad ones. Put the bad things to the back of your memory, and keep the good ones at the front”.

Listening to his tales, it is clear that Felix Bieger is very much living by this wisdom.

*Felix Bieger was bestowed with the Lifetime Achievement Award 2016 by the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne.* 



Felix restaurant at The Peninsula Hong Kong

1964

# CALIFORNIA

## *Dreaming*

*1964 was the year when the Beatles were taking America by storm, the Civil Rights Act was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson, and a legend was born in Carmel Valley – the Carmel Valley Golf & Country Club as it was then called – that would reinvent the image of golf in the surrounding region.*



The original Quail Lodge & Golf Club was founded by Sir Michael Kadoorie's friend Edgar Haber, and back in 1964, the property was a simple dairy farm, but Edgar and his wife Terry's vision and hard work helped to create a remarkable place in Carmel Valley, and it is mainly thanks to the Habers that it has been so well preserved and has retained its natural beauty over the years.

Sir Michael and Edgar Haber first met in 1978. "He had an amazing generosity of spirit, a commitment to the local community that was second-to-none, and a fun sense of humour that made him a delight to be around," recalled Sir Michael during his speech at the 50th Anniversary of Quail Lodge in 2014. "His passion for Quail Lodge is still apparent today and his legacy of deeply integrating with the local community lives on."

World War II veteran, golf champion, philanthropist and environmental developer Haber passed away in 2005 at the age of 93. In a tribute in the Monterey County Weekly published on September 22nd, 2005, Ryan Masters wrote: "Fondly called Ed, Edgar, or Chief Quail, Haber was a local icon who changed the face of Carmel Valley and the greater Monterey Peninsula."

"He was one of the largest spirits to ever live on the Monterey Peninsula, and one of the most generous," said Gary Koepfel, who knew Haber for 30 years and is currently working on a biography of his friend. "He touched thousands of people personally, tens of thousands with Quail Lodge and tens of thousands more with his multitude of charities. He's had an absolutely unfathomable impact on a large number of people."

According to his obituary, Edgar and his wife, Terry, worked as a team to develop the property. Edgar planned and oversaw projects and Terry created the interiors and the landscaping. From those efforts grew Quail Lodge, which for 20 years received the prestigious Mobil Five Star Award for quality and excellence.

The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels Limited bought Quail Lodge in 1997 and has played a significant role in the development and tradition of the property. "It hasn't always been an easy path – we have learned many lessons along the way – but like any couple celebrating their golden anniversary, the good times have outweighed

the hard times. We are committed to always doing the right thing for Quail Lodge and making it a success not only as a business in its own right, but for the entire community," notes Sir Michael.

Nestled on 850 acres of lush fairways, oak-studded meadows and sparkling lakes and surrounded by the rolling hills of Carmel Valley, the 93-room property was revitalised in March 2013 through a resort-wide US\$28 million renovation.

A golf club with a Robert Muir Graves designed 18-hole championship golf course, tennis courts, swimming pools, bocce court, a movie/presentation room, restaurant, expansive meeting and banquet space and nature trails, all combine to create a true destination experience.

Santa Monica-based Barry Design Associates was the firm selected to undertake the renovation, and all guestrooms, meeting and public spaces now sport a look inspired by historic California ranch and Spanish colonial design elements. Interior colour tones of warm golds and oranges reflect the beauty of the sun-drenched Carmel Valley, and each guestroom offers a private deck or patio that overlooks the lakes, golf course or lush gardens. Some guest suites also boast cozy fireplaces, perfect for enjoying a cool Carmel Valley evening.

Guests can also enjoy an array of resort amenities at Quail Lodge including 'Edgar's' (named after the Founder), located in the Clubhouse, which offers lunch and dinner with eclectic and savoury California cuisine. The golf course is now managed by KemperSports Management, which operates golf, resort and sports facilities in 26 States and internationally.

Through the decades, many professional golfers have embraced the Quail Lodge & Golf Club and some, like Bobby Clampett, even grew up playing on the course. Over the years the property has hosted concerts by Tony Bennett, fundraisers with Clint Eastwood, and of course The Quail: A Motorsports Gathering, which has become an extremely popular gathering of more than 4,000 people every August, and next year (2017) will celebrate its 15th edition. With the majestic Santa Lucia Mountains as a backdrop, every event at Quail Lodge will undoubtedly continue to be memorable. 🦋



# MAKING *A* SCENE

*In 1966, the first discotheque opened in Hong Kong, in the basement of The Peninsula, called The Scene. Two former employees remember its heyday.*



Beth Smith – the swinging young manageress of The Scene, circa 1968



Sir Michael Kadoorie and guests at the opening night of The Scene, 1966

“If you survived until midnight or so you would inevitably find your way down to The Scene,” recalls Andrew Bull, one of the DJs at Hong Kong’s first discotheque, which was located in the basement of The Peninsula Hong Kong.

“It’s quite a swinging place. A dimly glowing fish tank at one end filters a soft green light past finny things and shows up a round dance floor tucked in against the wall,” wrote *The Peninsula Group Magazine* in December 1966. “Those who feel their way through the mysterious dark beyond the floor find plushy green chairs, little tables, a long white bar, and a large brown junk.”

The Scene was an innovation by the youngest member of the board at the time, Sir Michael Kadoorie.

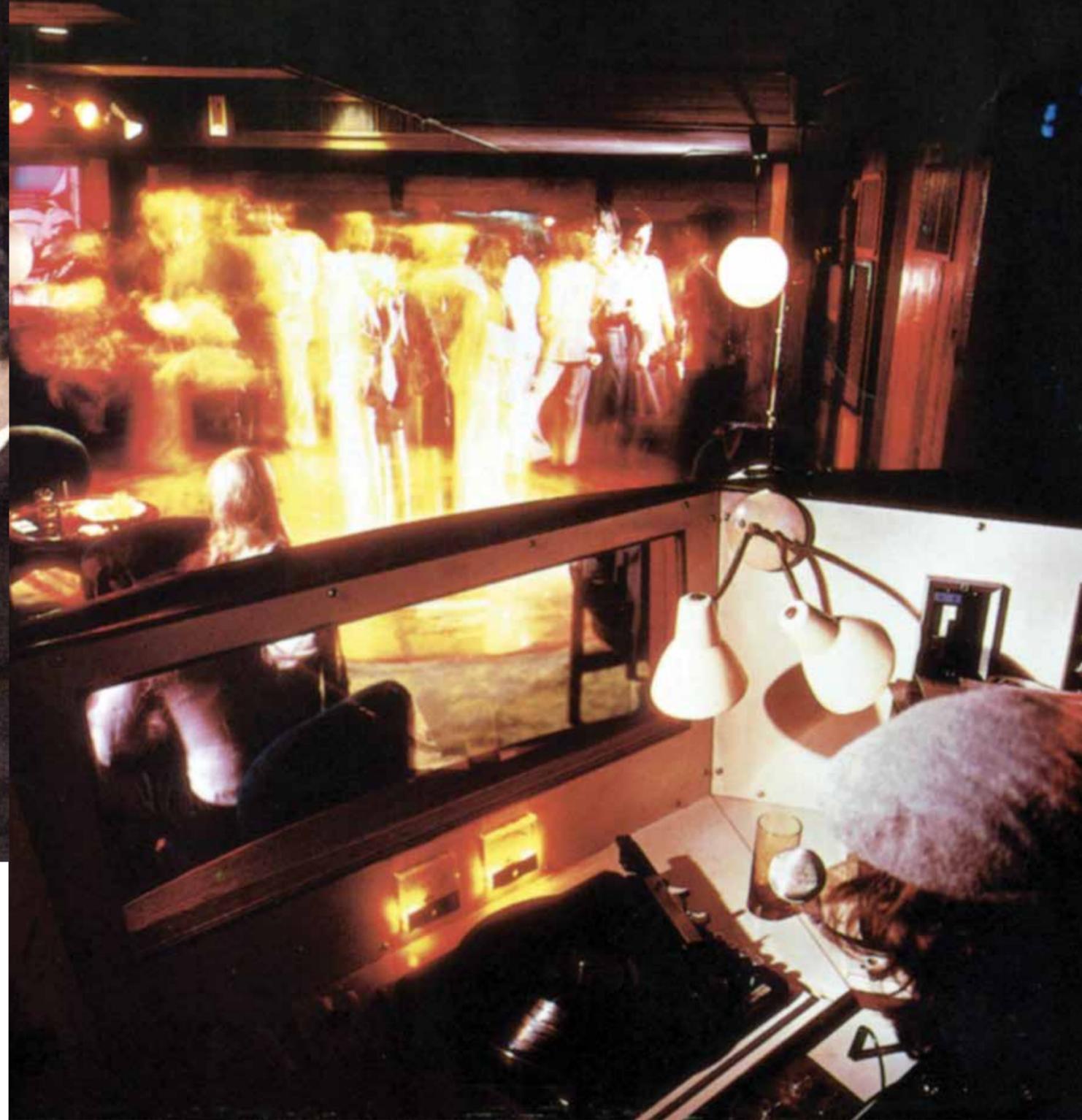
30 years after making his first proposal to the board, Sir Michael recalled that, “Half the directors didn’t know what a discotheque meant and the other half didn’t wish to know. One director looked me in the eye and said, ‘every young director is allowed one mistake.’” Even after the approval had been given, Sir Horace told him, “There’s still time to back out.” His nephew stood firm and the basement discotheque was a roaring success.

“Sir Michael pioneered the hotel nightclub/discotheque concept in Hong Kong,” says Bull. “He was a contemporary of the swinging 60s in London, and was no doubt inspired by sophisticated nightclubs like *Tramp* and *Annabel’s*.”

With its own outside entrance, The Scene was about as far as possible from the formality that reigned in other establishments within the hotel, such as *Gaddi’s*, which suited Hong Kong youth perfectly. Located in the basement on the Middle Road side of the hotel, it was initially run under, in Bull’s words, “the chicly swinging management of DJ Beth Smith.”

Smith herself recalls the opening night. “I went wearing a silver dress from Biba and the girl who was running it at that time asked me to come and work there playing records.” This put Smith on the map as Hong Kong’s first female DJ. “I thought it was fantastic because I had been working in Europe at night, so I was used to working late and sleeping during the day. I took the job and then became manageress.”

Guests in the fashion industry who were used to partying in New York pre-Studio 54 were always seen at The Scene in the evenings whilst passing through town. Design icons Kenzo Takada, Pinky Wolman and Dianne Beaudry and menswear author Alan Flusser were all among the international jet set that passed through the club. “Imelda Marcos, George Hamilton, singer Matt Munro or visiting actors like George Burns would drop in after dinner at *Gaddi’s*, often accompanied by the larger-than-life figure of Rolf Heiniger, the legendary *Maitre d’* of the *Gaddi’s*,” remembers Bull.



DJ Andrew Bull spinning at The Scene, circa 1976

“International cool cats interacted with local socialites and made The Scene happen,” continues Bull. “The Hong Kong crowd was represented by designers like Eddie Lau and Bobby To, newly arrived hairstylist Kim Robinson, A-list local models like Grace Yu, and football legend Derek “Jesus” Currie. Even Sir Run Run Shaw was occasionally seen holding court at the largest VIP table.”

Until The Scene was closed in 1977 to make way for new arcade shops, it lived up to its name. Its first anniversary was celebrated with a wild ‘San Francisco Night’, creating “a resounding bang in Hong Kong’s social whirl”. Make-believe hippies kitted out in flowers, beads, bells, tablecloths, kaftans and shawls came to dance and compete for prizes. At first a band alternated with a disc jockey, but for the last six years of its existence, The Scene was Hong Kong’s only true discotheque. 🎧

1972

# ROOM *For A* VIEW

*In 1972, HSH opened a new venture situated within yards of The Peak Tram - The Peak Tower Restaurants Complex. Housed in what was then a futuristic looking building perched on a plateau, the restaurants were located on three levels. Uppermost was the Tower Restaurant, sitting 1,380 feet above sea level. The Peak Tower Coffee Shop was situated one level below, while the exotic red and gold Lo Fung was located on the lowest floor of the complex and served authentic Chinese food.*





When The Peak Tower first opened in 1972, it brought with it the only restaurant in the Orient where one could eat well and at the same time look out over a panorama of both city and harbour, right through to the hills of Mainland China. From the Peak Tower Restaurant, or for that matter from the Coffee Shop just a floor below, one of Hong Kong's matchless views was there for all who dined there to behold – a panorama extending round the full 360 degrees of the circular shaped spaces.

Raised on stilts in Victoria Gap, between Victoria Peak and another lesser rise, the Peak Tower was originally a building shaped like a elongated letter O, rather like the shape of an old Roman circus, or most modern racetracks. The restaurant and the coffee shop extended all the way round, their windows of slightly tinted glass protecting patrons from the tropical glare of the sun.

Depending on exactly where you chose to sit in the restaurant, the view ranged over at least half of the total circle. On the south side lay grassy ravines, little hills, falling pleasingly beyond footpaths (one of which was a favourite of Governor Clementi's wife) down toward the Colony's first reservoir above Pokfulam, and downward to the coast – to the glittering South China Sea. This green country and seascape view has changed little for many a year, and Lady Clementi, whose bridle path went down that way in the late 1920s and remains today, might still recognise it!

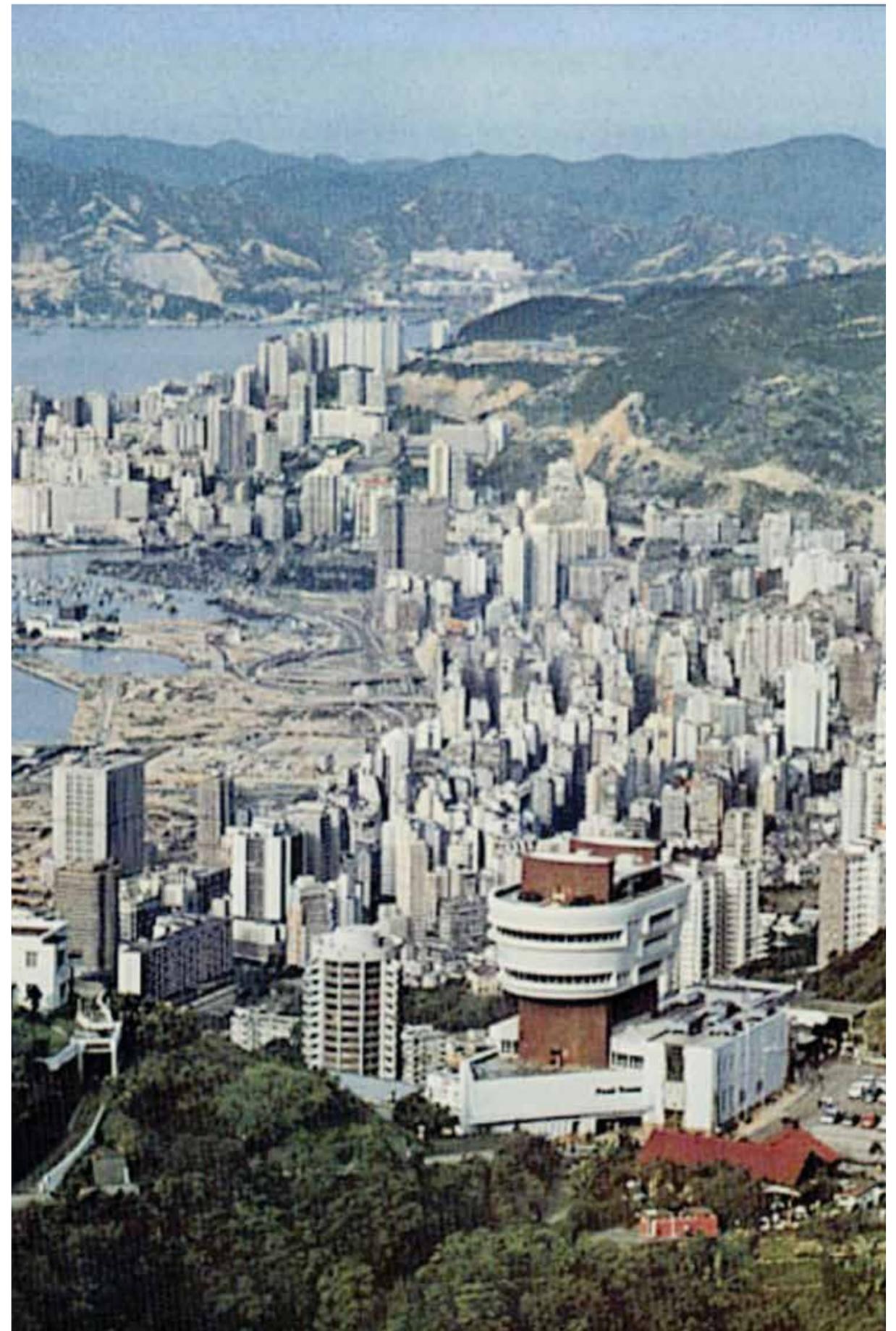
The other side of the restaurant showed a different side of Hong Kong life – country calm was replaced by the drama of the city and its grand harbour. From here the whole stretch of the ship-

studded waters from the western reaches far along to the east was spread out below. And closer, the towers and jutting blocks of the city, its gardens, its little areas of surviving green and trees, swept upwards. The shoreline of Victoria with its skyscraper blocks, its jetties from which the green and white ferries scuttled across the harbour, formed one of the most spectacular views of any maritime city in the world.

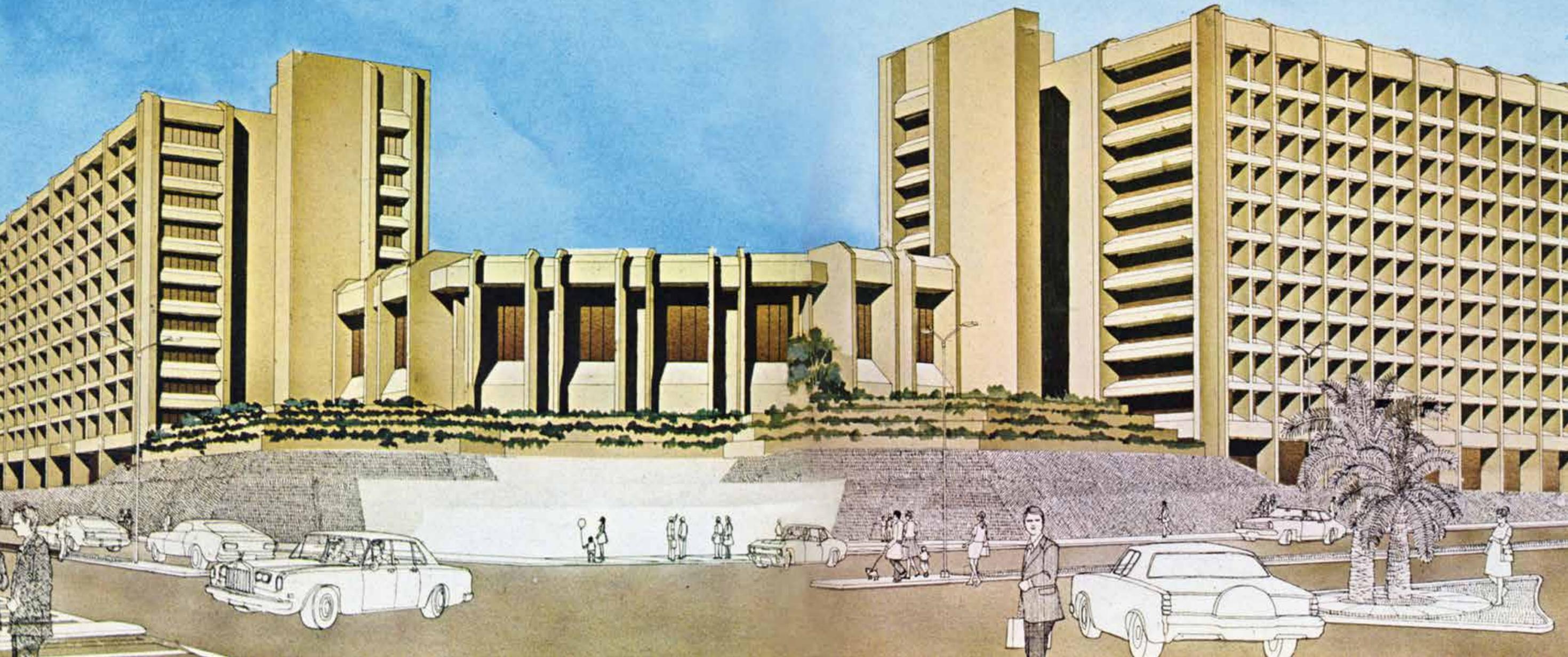
While the relentless Hong Kong sun beat down during the day, one could sit happily enjoying the beauty of the history around the Peak Tower, but when night fell and the golden sun quenched its heat in a blaze of orange and flames over the scene, thoughts turned to the evening meal.

And with that meal at the Peak Tower came another scene. As if by massive *son et lumière*, the world below changed from history and real estate, from water and ships and mountains, to a universe of lights. There are slightly under seven thousand stars in the skies, visible to the naked eye, but Hong Kong had considerably more lights, their colours unquestionably more various. The only kind it didn't have were those that go on and off – flashing signs being prohibited back then. By dusk every Hong Kong light, each Chinese calligraphic squiggle in neon, and every other variety announcing the merchandise of the world, glittered below.

Sitting at the Peak Tower Restaurant in the 1970s and 80s was rather like being a safe and entirely comfortable astronaut, poised in some orbiting capsule whose only purpose was pleasure... 



View from the Peak, late 1970s



Architect's rendition of The Peninsula Manila

# BUILDING

## An ICON

*In 1976, The Peninsula Manila became the second Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited property to bear the iconic Peninsula name after its namesake in Hong Kong. The hotel has been a witness to much of the nation's history over four decades.*

When President Ferdinand Marcos set out in early 1973 in his bid to host the International Monetary Fund-World Bank Conference (generally referred to as IMF), he realised that the country's capital would need to undergo a dramatic transformation in order to host the thousands of international delegates that were anticipated to flock to Manila. The Philippines was experiencing an unprecedented seven percent growth in GNP at a time when the rest of the world was facing an economic slowdown. This growth led, in part, to Marcos' plan to put the country and its capital firmly on the tourist and investment map.

The First Lady, Imelda Marcos, had for some time nurtured an expansive ambition to see the Philippines, and particularly Manila, grow into an international oasis for the luxury traveller. Her interest in the arts, as well as the general cultural life of the city, led to the creation of a dedicated department of tourism to aggressively attract international gatherings of global appeal.

Having successfully secured several high-profile events, a frenetic phase of building began that would transform the skyline of the Manila

metropolis. In order to host international events including the Miss Universe pageant in 1974, Marcos gave the green light for the 77-day construction of the massive Folk Arts Theater. Another world media event in 1975, the 'Thrilla in Manila' that pitted Mohammed Ali against Joe Frazier in one of the greatest boxing matches of all time, was a definitive publicity coup, intended to showcase the country's hospitality and its readiness to host huge events that would garner worldwide media attention.

In late 1974, Marcos found out that the IMF had indeed chosen Manila for its convention. All pretence of an orderly and phased development went out of the window and there ensued a rush to build hotels for the estimated 5,000 delegates who were expected to descend on the city. Makati was still a fledgling business centre, mostly high-end residential enclaves, but its proximity to the convention facilities on the Manila Bay reclamation made it an ideal spot to build luxury hotels that would accommodate the delegates and facilitate the expected growth of the new business district going forward.

The seductive allure of hosting these VIPs, even if just for a week, led to the building of 12 luxury hotels in just 18 months, in spite of the fact that this growth was supposed to be staggered as tourism grew. In 1974, there were only a couple of luxury hotels in the city: the ever-reliable Manila Hotel; Mrs Marcos' Philippine Plaza hotel - a Leandro Locsin gem conveniently located next to the convention centre; and the relatively new InterContinental hotel in Makati. Marcos turned to the business elite in the city, encouraging them to fill the gap and build hospitality masterpieces that would illustrate the stability, prosperity and beauty of the Philippines.

Two such businessmen had been toying with the idea of building a luxury hotel in Manila for some time. The hardworking, self-made textile taipan, Patricio Luis 'P.L.' Lim with his best friend and industrialist Carlos 'Charlie' Palanca, Jr., were already considering bringing the famed Peninsula brand to the country. Both Lim and Palanca were of a generation that had seen the country endure times of isolation, war, devastation, and eventually prosperity.

Lim had built a successful textile empire during the pre- and post-war periods, supplying uniforms for the Philippines Army, as well as establishing a handmade carpet industry. It was the latter that brought him into the sphere of the Kadoories, owners of The Peninsula Hotel in Hong Kong as well as other businesses. It was through a joint-venture with them that Lim became familiar with The Peninsula Hong Kong, which was his home-away-from-home when visiting the city.

Palanca was the scion of a wealthy family that owned the La Tondeña Distillery and Lepanto Consolidated Mining. It was during the building of the Bank of America (BA)-Lepanto Building on Roxas Boulevard that the two friends became business partners.

It was Lim who approached Lord Lawrence Kadoorie to open a Peninsula Hotel in Manila. The family was reticent at first, as there was also the matter of funding to consider, as well as whether they had the right resources and people needed to open a second Peninsula to the standards that would be expected of such an iconic institution. However, Lim was persuasive, telling Lord Kadoorie not to worry: "When you come to the Philippines, I'll take care of all that - your board, your partners, the land - you name it!"

His cajolery worked. The Honourable Sir Michael Kadoorie espoused in a speech during the inauguration of the P.L. Lim Boardroom at The Peninsula Manila in April 2015 that, "P.L. was a great partner and he would fulfil his side of the bargain".

Lim kept to his word with Palanca by his side, his best friend and ally would serve as Chairman of the Board of Manila Peninsula Hotel, Inc., and so the first overseas Peninsula was built. The aim was to embody the best of The Peninsula Hong Kong, whilst imbuing it with a distinctive Filipino aesthetic. As such, the leading architects, interior designers and landscapers of the day were called upon to fulfil this vision. With the land having been secured from the Ayala family, the international hospitality architectural firm, Wimberly, Whisenand, Allison, Tong & Goo (now known as WATG) came on board.

There was only an 18-month agenda for completion with a definite opening date set in stone to coincide with the IMF convention.

Due to the IMF, there were many buildings under construction at that time. The tight schedule required that everybody involved had to work long days, seven days a week, to support the construction. The upcoming IMF meeting also created a number of challenges and difficulties for the owners and contractor. There were special security precautions which made it difficult to visit sites and there was a limited number of skilled construction workers which resulted in a constant threat of them being poached.

"The design and construction of The Peninsula was a fantastic opportunity to participate in the critically important transition from design to reality, and a very exciting time in my professional career; it was a very positive experience," recalls Fairweather.

The design of the hotel was influenced by the size and shape of the site, which resulted in a main building with two flanking guest room wings. An important factor of WATG's design intent was to celebrate the sense of entry, with a large lobby as the centrepiece of the project. The Lobby's soaring three-storey space contained a number of restaurants and lounge spaces that provided ample opportunities for guest dining and entertainment experiences which would become the hub for Manila's business elite and high society.

"During the early to middle phases of construction there was an event, if not typical though it was telling, that took place," says Fairweather. "I had been so tied to the office making sure we kept on schedule that I didn't visit the project site nearly often enough. The contractor arranged for a detailed tour - from the basement to the top floor of the property. As we went through The Lobby, I saw the grand stairways leading to the balcony above - they looked terrible! The contractor heard me comment and as we returned through The Lobby about an hour later the stairs had been reduced to a pile of rubble! The contractor was great; he asked me what I wanted to do, so we had people bring us lots of paper. We worked out, in sketch form, a solution that was built pretty much before our eyes. They are the current stairways which, if I may say so, are quite successful."

The landscaping of the property was entrusted to Ildefonso P. Santos, Jr., a man who pioneered the practice of landscape architecture in the Philippines and who was acknowledged as the 'Father of Modern Philippine Landscape Architecture'. He is credited with making The Pen a tropical oasis in the centre of the city. Ironically, the original design of the hotel, with Santos' Brutalist fountain is now famous for its Neo-Classical fountain that starkly contrasts with the original structure. First built as a simple double-deck waterfall, it was replaced in 1994 when the hotel underwent a massive US\$50 million renovation and has become, throughout the years, one of the most famous public fountains in the city.

The property stands out in a city where a classically elegant hotel with international standards is highly appreciated. A reliable haven of luxury accommodation and popular restaurants, the hotel is as much a favourite with the local cognoscenti as it is with visiting guests. The Peninsula Manila is exceptional amongst its peers, its imposing architecture reflecting the impressive service within. And likewise, the impressions and foresight of two best friends are still an inseparable part of the hotel and indeed the city's DNA. 

# WE'RE CARVING A NAME



HERE IN THE PHILIPPINES  
..... Just like we did in Hong Kong

The whole world knows the prestigious name of The Peninsula in Hongkong. Now we're carving it right here in the Philippines. At The Manila Peninsula - The Peninsula Group's latest overseas venture in luxury class hotels. It is situated at the corner of Makati and Ayala Avenues, in the heart of the country's exclusive residential and business district.

Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Our guests at The Manila Peninsula will receive the same gracious service in the old-world tradition of luxury which is the hallmark of The Peninsula Group hotels.

The Manila Peninsula. A reputation in a name.

For further information please contact:

The Manila Peninsula  
Corner Makati and Ayala Avenues  
Telephone: 85-7711

The Manila Peninsula is now partially open. Just in time for the delegates to the joint conference of the International



The Manila Peninsula

A member of The Peninsula Group

1976

*The*  
**FINER**  
*Things*  
**IN**  
*Life*





In 1976, The Peninsula Group took steps to expand the company's retail interest, establishing a wholly-owned subsidiary company by the name of Lucullus Food & Wines Ltd.

Lucullus was named after Lucius Licinius Lucullus, a Roman general (circa 110-57 BC) famous for his self-indulgence and giving lavish banquets. He was so widely known for such that he is the name behind the term 'Lucullan' which in modern times means 'lavish, luxurious and gourmet'.

True to its namesake, Lucullus Food & Wines supplied The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels' properties with fine food products prepared daily by a skilled team of bakers, butchers and packers and using only the best ingredients – hazelnuts from Turkey, icing from Spain, butter from Australia and smoked salmon from Denmark, and much more.

It was, to say the least, an Olympian operation. The monthly meat order included 5,000 pounds of tenderloin, 8,000 pounds of striploin, and enough ham for 14,000 breakfasts per week. Not to mention that Lucullus ordered one ton of flour every day, which was used to produce an array of baked goods ranging from rolls and buns to French croissants and pastries.

Working alongside the talented bakers were expert chocolate makers who created over 30 varieties of mouth-watering treats, including fresh truffles, chocolates, nougat, marzipan and more, utilising about 3,000 pounds worth of chocolate per month.

Aside from providing premium foods to the group's hotels and restaurants, Lucullus supplied cakes and chocolates to over a dozen airlines, and distributed its products to supermarkets and other food outlets across Hong Kong.

Following 25 years of successful operations, HSH sold Lucullus in 2001 and two years later in 2003, Peninsula Merchandising Limited was born, as the company had a new vision for its own branded products.

In 1928, when The Peninsula Hong Kong first opened, chocolate played an important role in the hotel's first culinary exploits. Local pastry cooks were fascinated by this delicacy from the west, and yearned to learn more about this bitter yet sweet candy.

Over the years, the hotel's pastry team has learned and experimented with the production of homemade chocolates, and soon began making their own chocolates for the dining pleasure of hotel guests.

Techniques evolved and became more sophisticated over the years, and in 1954, Peninsula chocolates were launched for sale to the general public, both in the hotel and its first cake shop located on Nathan Road. However, initially sales were limited – in 1955 only 100 kilogrammes of chocolates were sold in the entire year, compared with over 30 kilogrammes per day today!

Following the launch of The Peninsula's chocolates, the hotel management decided to appoint and train a chocolatier – a member of the patisserie team, expert in confectionery and chocolate making – to be in charge of all the hotel's chocolate creations. Since then, many have taken on this challenge, and have each created their own unique recipes for what today are known as The Peninsula Signature Chocolates.



Recipes, tips and techniques have been handed down from one Peninsula chocolatier to the next, and on through generations. Today Peninsula Chocolatier confections are made in Hong Kong and Switzerland to The Peninsula's various secret recipes, developed over the years.

In addition to its famed chocolates, The Peninsula's gourmet mooncakes have achieved an equal amount of fame, and can be traced back to 1986 with the introduction of mini egg custard mooncakes. Based on an exclusive recipe originating from Spring Moon, the egg custard mooncake is a contemporary take on the traditional filling of lotus seed paste and duck egg yolk.

From their introduction at a single retail location, The Peninsula mooncakes are now available at more than 30 retail outlets worldwide and are a consistent sell out. To maintain the quality of the mooncakes, Chef Yip Wing Wah, Dim Sum Ambassador and Mooncake Master for The Peninsula Hotels oversees the

production of The Peninsula mooncakes and ensures that they are of premium quality.

Chef Yip started his apprenticeship in 1966, and joined Spring Moon upon its opening in 1986. Together with his team of five dim sum chefs, he produced around 10,000 to 12,000 pieces of dim sum each day prior to his retirement in 2013. In the run-up to the Mid-Autumn Festival, he ensures that the hundreds of thousands of mooncakes are carefully produced according to the secret recipes and are worthy of The Peninsula brand.

Peninsula Merchandising Limited showcases the legendary excellence of The Peninsula, taking it beyond the hotel walls to bring the finest gourmet delights and gifts for all occasions. From artisanal chocolates to its now world-famous selection of Chinese and Western teas and traditional Hong Kong treats, The Peninsula Boutique has something for everyone to take a piece of The Peninsula home. 



# HUMBLE

## *Beginnings*

*A visit to the Tai Pan Laundry reveals huge developments since the humble beginnings of the traditional Chinese laundries that were developed as a major occupation for the first wave of immigrants who landed in the United States during the mid-19th Century.*

According to the book 'The Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation', the first Chinese laundry was established in the spring of 1851. A man by the name of Wah Lee Hung a sign over his door at Grant Avenue and Washington Street which read "Wash'ng and Iron'ng". The authors of 'The Chinese Laundryman' Paul C.P. Siu and John Kuo Wei Chen ask, "where did Wah Lee learn the trade?"

The answer is apparently unknown, yet the authors speculate. "As Wah Lee was an unsuccessful gold miner...losing his livelihood, he might have gone to San Francisco where he founded the first Chinese laundry at the heart of present-day Chinatown...The social and economic condition of the times in San Francisco provided an opening for this kind of personal service."

According to writer Alice Myers on the website immigration-tounitedstates.org, "Within a few weeks, the business had expanded to twenty washermen working three shifts daily. A laundry was an ideal business for Chinese immigrants, since it required no special skills or venture capital, and Euro-American men considered it undesirable work. Typically, laundry work required long days of exhausting manual labor over kettles of boiling water and hand irons heated on stoves. By the 1870s, Chinese laundries were operating in all towns with Chinese populations."

The proliferation of Chinese laundries was simultaneous with a new awareness among the population about the diseases caused by germs, which in turn increased the desire for clean clothes. "In addition, being able to afford clean clothes became a marker of

higher social standing," notes Myers. "Finally, from a moral view, cleanliness became a virtue 'next to Godliness'. All of these factors served to create an increasing need for laundry services."

The Chinese laundryman became something of a stereotype and was used to advertise laundry-related products such as detergents. An advertisement for Lavine soap showed small, cute, pig-tailed Chinese men alongside the product.

"The old comedic associations were carried into television," states Myers. "A television commercial for Calgon water softener that was popular during the 1970s featured a white woman asking a laundry owner named Lee how he gets his shirts so very clean. He replies, "Ancient Chinese secret." The secret is exposed when Lee's wife sticks her head out from the back room and shouts that they need more Calgon!"

According to Myers, "The Chinese laundryman stereotype persisted, but by the 1950's the actual traditional Chinese laundries were becoming obsolete. Self-service laundromats proliferated and generations of children who grew up in laundries pursued higher education and entered other occupations. With the end of the civil war in China in 1949, a new wave of Chinese immigration had begun. These immigrants often came from upper- and middle-class families searching for a better life in America or were well-educated intellectuals pursuing advanced degrees. In 1993, writer Alvin Ang and composer John Dunbar presented the musical 'The Last Hand Laundry in Chinatown (A Requiem for American Independents)' as an homage to Chinese laundries.



Scene outside a Chinese laundry in North America, 1884

The concept of laundry has far evolved since its humble beginnings and in Hong Kong, The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels took it to a whole new level in 1980 when it first established Tai Pan Laundry & Dry Cleaning Services Ltd. Since then, the company has significantly evolved to become one of the leading operators in its field. In the early days, its operations were based in an industrial premises in the Kowloon Wharf Godown. In 1994 the building was demolished and the company moved to a new premises in Tsuen Wan, from where it continues to operate today.

In 2007, the company purchased an adjacent premises, expanding from 20,000 to 36,000 square feet and installed additional machinery, thus allowing it to increase its business volume. Tai Pan Laundry now serves a number of 5-star hotels in Hong Kong, including The Peninsula, as well as private clubs and restaurants, and a leading fitness chain in the city. "Our aim is to provide the very best service to our customers, from our valet shop in The Repulse Bay Complex to our home collection and delivery service," says long-term employee Chang Wai Yip, who has served the company for more than a quarter of a century.

180 staff are employed by Tai Pan Laundry, in operations, sales, customer service, human resources and transportation. Since the company started operating, technology has radically changed the laundry processes in ways that could probably never have been imagined by the traditional Chinese laundry operators of yesteryear. Today, tunnel washers, comprising 12 separate compartments to clean and dry laundry are fully automated, thus saving energy and manpower. These mighty machines are capable of washing up to 3,600 pounds of laundry at one time, whilst allowing a 30 percent reduction in water use.

Flatwork ironers are another 21st Century development, which can dry, iron and fold a bed sheet in just 22 seconds! If Mr. Wah Lee Hung were still alive today, no doubt he would be amazed at how far the simple Chinese laundry concept has come... 🇮🇪

# A THAI *Evolution*



Artist's renderings of the first Bangkok Peninsula

In 1979, HSH took a one-third equity stake in the Bangkok Peninsula, which opened in 1982, at a time of heightened competition in the form of four new hotels, as well as a sharp decline in visitor numbers. Situated on Rajadamri Road in the heart of the modern centre of Bangkok, the hotel was designed to blend harmoniously with the verdant and residential setting of the surrounding area. Built on a similar design to its namesake, The Peninsula Hong Kong, the Bangkok Peninsula was the work of not only technicians, but also artists and scholars. The property's architects were careful to select a design that was both elegant and classical featuring Thai concepts that ensured the hotel was a reflection of the city.

From the exterior, the first noticeable Thai influence was the traditional Thai blue tiled roof, which contrasted starkly with the pure white façade. At the entrance two enormous hand carved sandstone elephants stood guard alongside the tranquility of two lotus ponds.

Again, reminiscent of its sister hotel in Hong Kong, the Lobby was both sophisticated and spacious, but the unique feature was its ceiling of silk. Some 800 square metres of hand painted murals, each intricately designed, were created by Thailand's most famous artist, Acharn Paiboon Suwanakudt, with each panel depicting scenes from Thai mythology with abstract Buddhist symbols, ancient flowers, birds, animals and highly stylised sunbursts, all interspersed with delicate tracings of fine gold leaf.

Despite the company's best efforts to maintain the success of the hotel, a decision was made to liquidate its interest in the Bangkok Peninsula in 1985.

However, it wasn't long before the company made a triumphant return to Thailand, as 1989 saw it entering into three joint-venture agreements in the country. Apart from taking a half equity stake in a Bangkok office building known as 208 Wireless Road, the company acquired a similar holding in the Thai Country Club, managed by Peninsula Clubs and Consultancy Services. The jewel in the crown however, was the manifestation of The Peninsula Bangkok in 1999 in partnership with the Phataraprasit family.

With the number 9 symbolising luck in Thai culture, the date and time of the soft opening of The Peninsula Bangkok - on November 19th, 1999 at 9:09am - was meticulously timed, with celebrations featuring a traditional Chinese lion dance and a blessing of the lions at the front entrance. The then Prime Minister of Thailand, Mr. Chuan Leapai, was the Guest of Honour for the grand opening in May, 2000, and the hotel was the talk of the town as 2,500 guests and celebrities attended the spectacular event.

The property presented a picture of class and distinction, and numerous international awards flooded in, including the prestigious 'Best Hotel in the World' from Travel + Leisure magazine, which was first given to the hotel in 2003.

Good fortune indeed blessed The Peninsula Bangkok, as the property rapidly established itself as one of Asia's finest city-resort hotels. 🍵

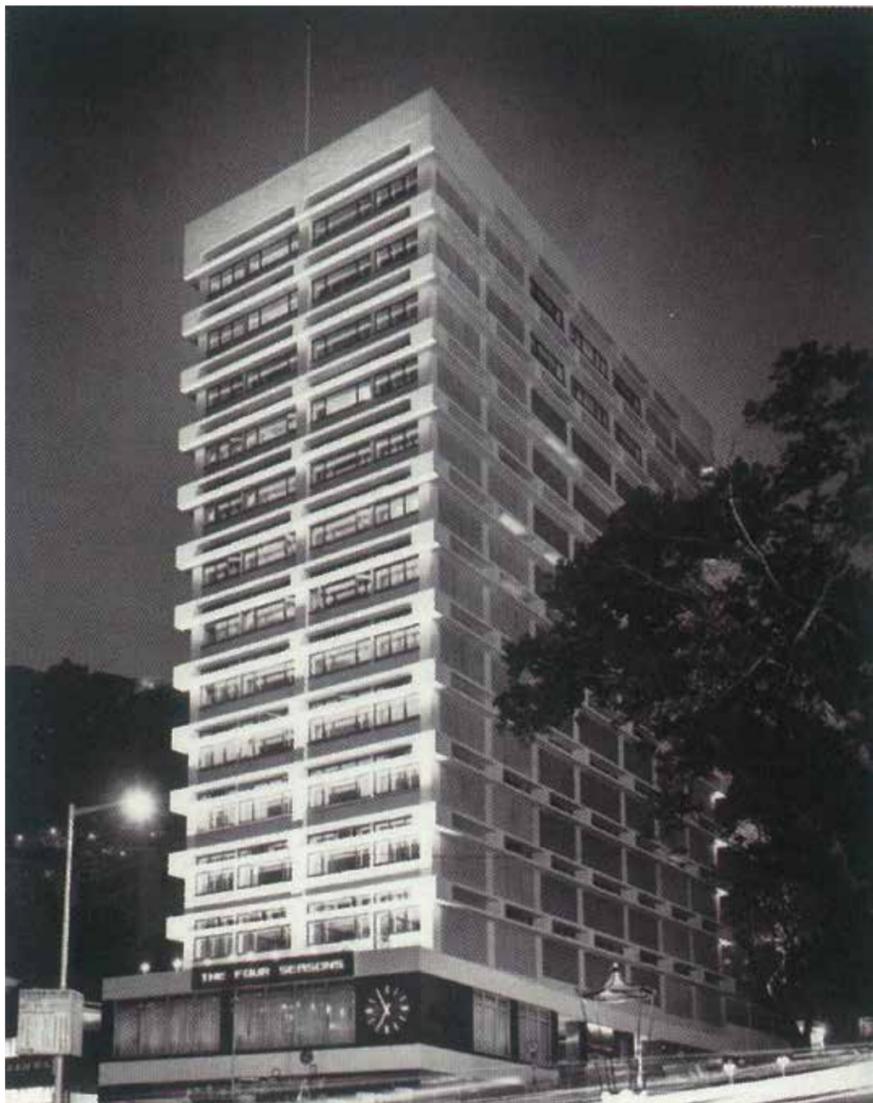


The Peninsula Bangkok today

# GROWING

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## *Up*



**N**amed due to the proximity of The Cathedral Church of St John the Evangelist, and rebuilt in 1983, St John's Building is a 21-storey office tower owned and operated by The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited that sits atop the Garden Road lower terminus of the Peak Tram, which tens of thousands of tourists flock to daily to enjoy one of the city's most iconic tourist attractions. Originally built in 1889, a new lower terminus was built in 1935, in conjunction with the construction of St John's Apartments - a stylish, Art Deco three-storey block of apartments that housed eight studio apartments and a luxurious two-bedroom penthouse that sat directly above the terminus.

In 1964, St John's Apartments was demolished and replaced by the first incarnation of St John's Building - a 14-storey commercial and residential building. The building was demolished again in 1981 to make way for its futuristic-looking 21-storey successor, along with a brand new Peak Tram terminus, which was completed in 1983. Proud and prominent on Garden Road, St John's Building is surrounded by local and overseas government institutions, including the Consulate General of the United States, Hong Kong and Macau.

Designed by Ng, Kwan, Wong & Associates and built by Hip Hing Construction, St John's Building received the Silver Medal of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects in the same year that it was built. 

1986

# *A NEW Beginning*

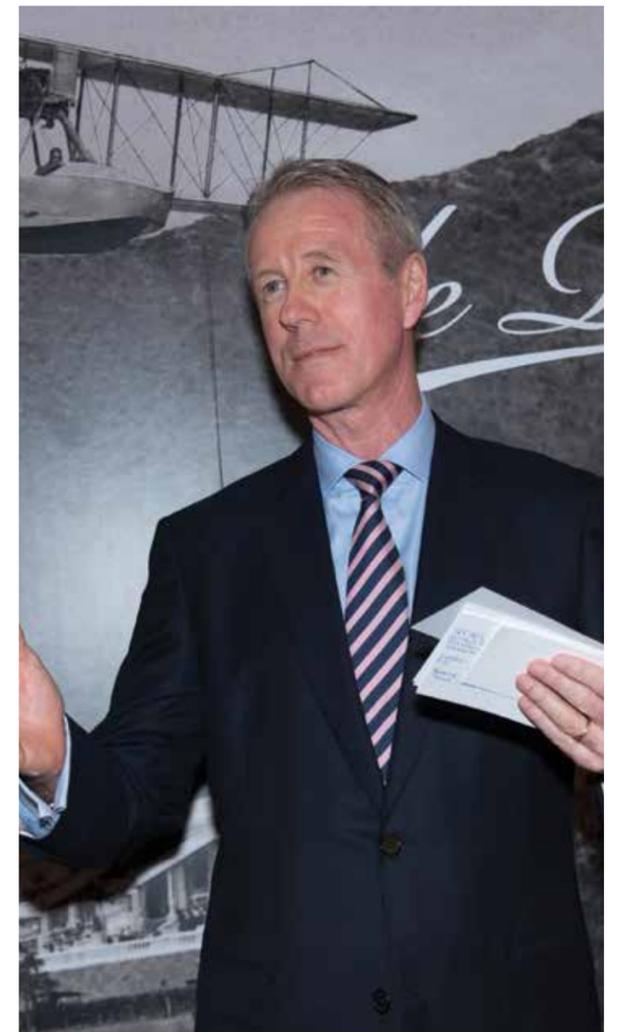
IMAGES: ANTONIO SABA

At 6:00pm on Wednesday, June 23rd, 1982, guests crowded into the ballroom of The Repulse Bay to say a fond farewell to one of Asia's great hotels after a triumphant 62 years of service.

Over the next seven years, the property was rebuilt to include four residential towers known as The Repulse Bay, and a stylistically faithful, albeit smaller version of the 1920 reception building which would serve as the centrepiece for this new South side community.

The complex opened in December 1986 and guests were pleasantly surprised by the faithful attention to detail of the recreated building. Many features from the old hotel had been packed and stored on-site during the construction process and were now proudly reinstalled. These included such signature details as the entrance fountain, the Reading Room fireplace, the original doors, lighting fixtures, and even the dining room candlesticks.





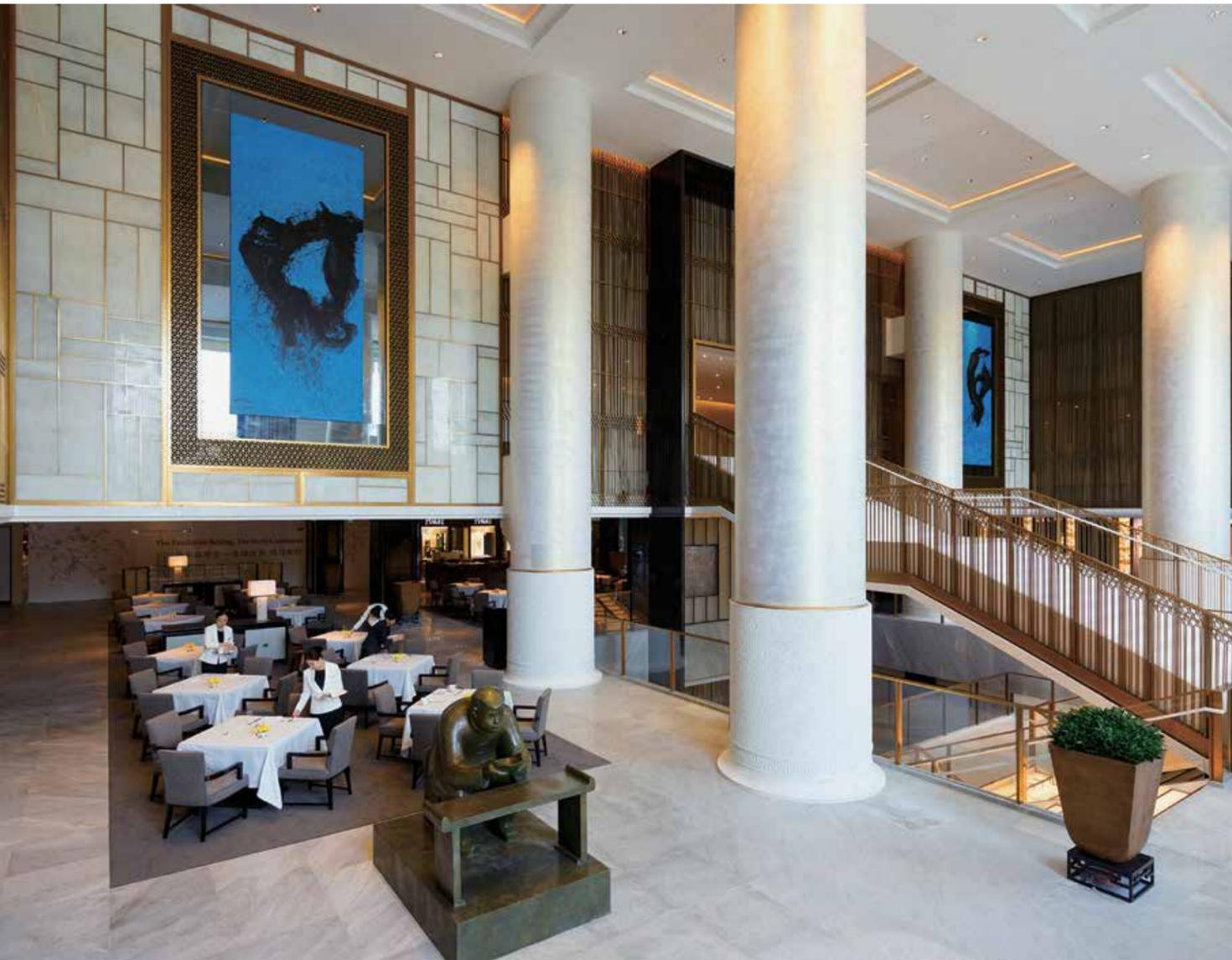
Martyn P. Sawyer, Group Director HSH Properties

What puzzled many at the time was the design of the residential apartments, one block of which is named 'de Ricou', after Charles de Ricou, whose company made transportation history in Hong Kong in 1920 by launching the first flying boat service between Macau and Repulse Bay, features an undulating facade with an eight-storey portal exposing the rugged mountains behind. The explanation lies in the exceptional setting of the property in the minds of the city's fung shui experts and the belief by long-term residents that a family of dragons lives in the surrounding hills. Local lore tells of a mother dragon who takes her children down to the sea to bathe each morning in the cool blue waters. In order not to block the family of dragons and risk bringing bad luck to the site, the building was designed with a large open archway through which the dragons could easily pass.

While the feature was a costly nod to what many believe to be ancient superstition, this distinctive hole has kept both the apartments and its residents safe since it opened and has also become an integral part of The Repulse Bay history. 🏠

# An IMPERIAL Rebirth

*First opened in 1989 as The Palace Hotel and rebranded as The Peninsula Beijing in 2006, the hotel has always been at the forefront of contemporary design of its era. 2016 saw the completion of the magnificent transformation of China's first luxury hotel.*



It's the break of dawn in Beijing and in the heart of Wangfujing, rays of sunlight cast a warm glow over The Peninsula as more than 500 construction workers don neon yellow vests and hard hats to begin their shift. Welders fire up their blowtorches, bricklayers mix their cement and marble workers plug in their drills. Downstairs in the staff restaurant, a blackboard indicates the number of days left until "handover".

There is a palpable sense of urgency, as following more than three years of planning and six months of on-site construction, the unveiling of the new Peninsula Beijing is imminent.

The magnitude of this project is one of the largest that The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited (HSH) has undertaken, especially as it maintained continued operations throughout the renovation period. And the results are unquestionably impressive. The renovation of The Peninsula Beijing also marks the latest chapter in HSH's long tradition of hospitality excellence in the Chinese capital. The Company took over the management of the Grand Hotel des Wagons-Lits in 1922, and was honoured in 1981 by the Chinese Government with an invitation to manage the country's first ever joint-venture hotel, which would become the celebrated Palace Hotel.

Project planning commenced in 2012 with proposed designs, timing, energy-saving initiatives and compliance issues, with construction beginning in late 2015 and scheduled to be fully completed by early 2017. The RMB890 million (US\$123 million) renovation project has resulted in the hotel's original 525 rooms being combined to create just 230, and starting at 60 square metres, they are now the largest guestroom accommodations in Beijing.

The first phase of the renovation was to reinvent The Lobby, which had become dated and lacked the panache and awe-inspiring grandeur that typifies entering a Peninsula hotel worldwide. The 1980s style red and black granite and marble stone bridge are gone, replaced with a grand white marble staircase up to the second level surrounded by three-storey high Imperial columns topped with gold leaf.

Designer and long-time Peninsula collaborator Henry Leung took his inspiration for The Peninsula Beijing's rebirth from The Middle Kingdom's opulent Imperial palaces and tranquil gardens, which provided a serene oasis for Chinese emperors and nobility to meditate and relax.

The reworked entrance and impressive Lobby conveys guests seamlessly into a modern Dynastic interpretation of traditional Chinese celestial motifs and classic materials. The design incorporates local cultural images married to the Peninsula style

to create a refreshing oasis from the city with a sense of formality, solidity and substance on a Beijing scale.

Large-scale art pieces by renowned Chinese contemporary artists decorate The Lobby, whilst other up-and-coming artists have created works for the guestrooms and other public spaces through a partnership with Beijing's Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA). Leung has revived Chinese architecture, design and artisanal techniques that span the centuries creating an Imperial image with the use of precious stones, jade, lacquer, bronze detailing and rosewood, providing guests with an authentic sense of destination.

Noticeably missing from The Lobby are the traditional hotel-style check-in desks, now replaced by less intrusive and officious rosewood desks and chairs. The staff have been trained to bring guests to their rooms with a mobile and seamless check-in using the proprietary Peninsula electronic tablets – no paper necessary.

The use of marble and brass grills is reminiscent of the nearby Forbidden City with intricate motifs taken from traditional Chinese art and literature. The floor in The Lobby has been replaced by a grey Pallisandro marble from Italy with subtle flecks of gold, and its pearlescent quality is similar to the onyx used on the walls in the lift lobbies and as detailing in the rooms.

"It was important to have a modern interpretation of Chinese culture," says Leung. "Having details appearing throughout the hotel, from public areas and into the guestrooms, ties the concept together. It's sort of a contemporary interpretation of Chinoiserie, a mixture of East and West that is at the core of the Peninsula ethos."

Throughout the property, there are hexagonal elements that establish a continuous flow, connecting The Lobby to the rest of the hotel. These hexagons are carved into the marble pillars in The Lobby, feature in the brass screens, and are evident in the room and corridor carpets, created by Tai Ping.

"Most patterns, similar to many Asian cultures, have some symbolic meaning behind them," says Leung. "The hexagon is styled on the tortoiseshell and the tortoise symbolises longevity and prosperity. We have also incorporated phoenix, dragons and floral patterns to recreate the celestial imagery found in the ancient palaces."

The whole concept of the new design style is Imperial Beijing that very much typified the hierarchical system and the importance of status and influence. The new Lobby restaurant, whilst sure to retain its fame for The Peninsula Afternoon Tea, is undoubtedly the nucleus of the hotel around which all the other components revolve. Guest can dine in understated elegance between the rising columns and grand staircase surrounded by the boutiques of luxury retail brands. It remains as a place where guests can see and be seen.

From The Lobby, patrons can see through the glass stairs to the new Jing, all-day Western dining restaurant on the lower level, where Leung has again contemporised various artistic scenes inspired from the secret gardens of the Emperors. The use of murals in the cobalt blue of Ming porcelain with the subsequent Qing patterns that were exported extensively to the West adorn the walls and hand embroidered silk screens depicting flowers from across the country add a bucolic air accented by subtle lighting.

The Chinese restaurant, Huang Ting, epitomises the timeless style that Leung has incorporated in other parts of the hotel. The venue is styled on a Beijing courtyard house typical during the Ming Dynasty. Leung wanted Ming styling as this period had a more refined with feel muted grey brick and dark wood, whereas the Qing Dynasty incorporated more colourful elements that he felt would detract from the dining experience.

“In terms of the style, as well as the look and feel, we were not designing something really trendy that will fade out and become passé after just a few years,” says Leung. “We designed Huang Ting more than 10 years ago and it has remained timeless. That’s why we didn’t need to change too much, just a minor upgrade of facilities.”

Ascending the grand staircase from The Lobby to the upper level meeting and banqueting spaces is meant to symbolise elevating oneself to the status of an Emperor. Leung has pared back the grand designs that once adorned the ballroom, upgrading the carpet and lighting with modest yet sophisticated patterns and styling to ensure that the emphasis remains on the function and the guests. He removed the old chandeliers and reused their panels, repurposing them to make the crystal dragon screen that is situated halfway down the glass staircase behind the grand piano on the way to Jing.

The bright and spacious guestrooms and 17 Beijing Suites, have been styled using new materials and fabrics with an elegant composition using greys, blues and white, with elements of brass and onyx that tie back to The Lobby and public areas in keeping

with the Imperial theme. The rooms on the top floor have also been fully refurbished as spacious duplex ‘loft’ style guestrooms with airy interiors and tall windows that disguise the fact that these are still the original single-room width.

“Being on the 14th floor, these rooms are higher than the normal levels,” says Leung. “With their large windows, you can see the space outside, as you’re not hemmed in by other buildings. That also makes the room seem bigger. As we say in Chinese, it’s like ‘borrowing space from outside’. Even though it is a single bay wide, it feels very different.”

There has always been a specific demographic that has usually been attracted to The Peninsula but that is changing now as we see the Millennials coming into the picture. Our lifestyles have changed with the advent of computers and now the proliferation of personal electronic gadgets. The Peninsula has been preparing for this with its own innovative approach to technology. Each room at The Peninsula Beijing has more than 900 metres of wiring concealed behind its walls to ensure that all of the guests environmental and connectivity needs are met.

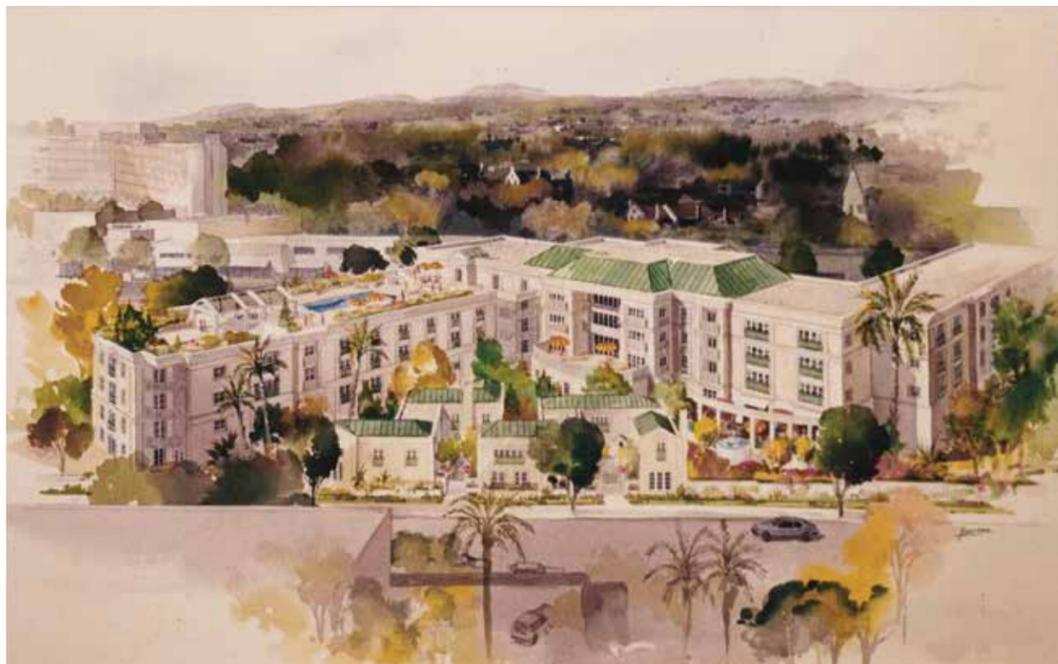
This project, once started was on the fast track. Leung has had his hands full, both literally and figuratively, with managing the implementation of his ideas and those at the core of The Peninsula. Ensuring that these ideas transferred to reality has been arduous – juggling the need for phases to become operational, whilst allowing for materials to settle, to dry out or even be delivered and fitted in time for the many operational deadlines. Leung credits this being made easier through the hard work and cooperation that he has found with The Peninsula design and project teams, the contractor and the stakeholders.

Leung has brought to The Peninsula Beijing a contemporary and multipurpose design infused with the brush strokes of history and has overlaid them with Chinese characteristics that have stood and should well stand the test of many, many years to come. 🍵



# A LABOUR *of* LOVE

*Brothers Robert and Bo Zarnegin spent a total of 16 years planning and building their dream in Beverly Hills: a residential scale hotel that would be elegant, classic and discreet, yet would capture the relaxed, resort-like ambience of Southern California living at its finest. When The Peninsula Beverly Hills opened its doors for business in 1991, the brothers could not have imagined that over the next 25 years it would become a highly respected icon of luxury hospitality throughout the world.*



Rendering of The Peninsula Beverly Hills, 1988



Robert Zarnegin, Mayor Vicki Reynolds and Sir Michael Kadoorie at the opening of The Peninsula Beverly Hills, 1991

The Peninsula Beverly Hills opened its doors at 8:08 am on August 8, 1991, a labour of love for the Zarnegin family and a perfect pairing with the Kadoorie family of Hong Kong. In the 25 years since its opening, the hotel has become a world-class icon of luxurious hospitality. “The project was absolutely amazing - a true miracle in so many ways,” recalls co-owner Robert Zarnegin. “So many things could have gone wrong, but we’ve been extremely blessed throughout this journey.”

The Zarnegin family originated from Iran, and Robert and Bo’s entrepreneurial spirit undoubtedly came from their late father, Mr. R.S. Zarnegin, who at the young age of 12, left home to work at one of the first consumer electronics shops in Tehran. By the age of 17, he was already a successful young entrepreneur, then owning several retail outlets of his own, as well as overseeing the manufacturing, import and wholesale distribution of a multitude of consumer electronic product lines.

In the early 1940s, at the age of 23, R.S. expanded into the mining business, purchasing three mines yielding lead, zinc and silver, and employing a staff of over 2,000, including expert geologists and engineers. The mines continued to operate prosperously for the next 35 years with the Zarnegin family’s companies providing free housing, medical care, education and other basic necessities to all of the employees and their immediate families.

1969 saw Robert and Bo arrive in the United States, where they attended high school and then college. Whilst in his senior year of high school, Robert started toying with the idea of buying real estate, which he says he did “just for the fun of learning.”

“One day, our father sent us some money from Iran, so I went to the local Union Bank intending to put the funds into an interest bearing account. When I repeatedly tried to negotiate for a higher interest rate, the bank officer got upset and angrily threw a business card at me and told me to get out and call the person whose name was on the card,” recalls Robert with a smile. “So I then called a man named Charles McMicken in Orange County and he asked me to come and meet with him. His business was lending money to homeowners, and he showed me a number of properties, so I ended up lending US\$8,800 to a family. Unfortunately they were late with their payments, so I called my father in Iran to ask for his advice. He simply told me to forget about it and to move on, but by now my interest in real estate had really piqued.”

The next stop for Robert was a real estate brokerage office that he knew of in Brentwood. A week later, he purchased a prime piece of land on Marguerita Avenue, Santa Monica, which he sold a few years later, making a substantial profit.

In 1975, Robert and Bo purchased their first 6,000 square foot parcel of land on South Santa Monica Boulevard in Beverly Hills. It would take them another 14 years to purchase enough adjoining parcels to assemble the necessary 2.2-acre site for what would eventually become The Peninsula Beverly Hills.

At first the Zarnegins did not consider building a hotel; they imagined using the land to expand the existing medical building on the site. However, when a study revealed that the best use for the land would be the creation of a luxury, world-class hotel, the two brothers set off to visit the finest hotels in the world to learn what made them tick.

“Bo and I would be in these fancy hotels, measuring rooms and closet sizes, figuring out sound attenuation and lighting systems, and talking to chefs,” recalls Robert. “It was a crash course in becoming luxury hoteliers!”

One of the hotels that the Zarnegins admired the most was The Mansion on Turtle Creek in Dallas, Texas. “The Mansion was not only luxurious, but it had the residential scale and the beautiful gardens that we envisioned for our hotel,” says Robert.

To build their hotel, they hired Gary Koerner, who had worked on the design of The Mansion on Turtle Creek a few years earlier, before starting his own firm, Three Architecture Inc. “Gary was such an incredibly talented design architect, that we asked him and a number of his draftspeople to move to L.A. and set up shop in our offices,” recalls Robert, who became intricately involved in the design process.

The Zarnegins hired Jim Northcutt, of James Northcutt & Associates as their interior designer, whose work included major hotels and resorts worldwide, who was known for his classic interior designs and for introducing tasteful residential concepts for luxury hotels.

When construction began in the summer of 1989, the Zarnegins’ hotel was to be named The Belvedere Beverly Hills, an homage to the scenic lookout point that Robert and Bo remembered fondly in Mont-Pelerin, Switzerland, where they had spent their childhood. Just as they had scoured the world for hotels to inspire their own, the brothers searched for a world-class hotel company to manage it. They chose The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited (HSH).

“We felt a real kinship with Sir Michael Kadoorie,” says Robert. “The Kadoories and our family share a Middle Eastern Jewish heritage. The Kadoories built their businesses and prospered after they left their native country, Iraq, for India, China and finally Hong Kong, while we did the same after leaving our native Iran for Switzerland and then the U.S.”

Within several months of the groundbreaking of The Belvedere Beverly Hills, the Zarnegins sold a 20 percent interest in the hotel to HSH and renamed it The Peninsula Beverly Hills. The hotel’s elegant dining room was subsequently named The Belvedere, and its ballroom, The Verandah, after The Verandah restaurant at The Peninsula Hong Kong.

The Peninsula Beverly Hills quietly opened its doors at 8:08 am on August 8, 1991, a most auspicious date and time according to the Chinese lunar calendar.

The hotel’s development cost made it, on a per-room basis, the most expensive new hotel to be opened in Los Angeles. It was also the first hotel to be built in Beverly Hills since the Beverly Pavilion, on Wilshire Boulevard, in 1963.

The first guest that was welcomed to the hotel at the “soft opening” was Miss Yuko Kubo (then in her early 20s) of Yokohama, Japan, the daughter of Mr. Yoshiaki Kubo, a senior executive and Director of Aiwa Co. Ltd., who Mr. R. S. Zarnegin worked with until the Iranian revolution in 1979. “Our family’s good luck tradition has always been to welcome a Japanese person as our first guest/customer entering any property we build, including at The Peninsula Beverly Hills,” says Robert.

Following a ribbon cutting ceremony officiated by the then Beverly Hills Mayor, the Hon. Vicki Reynolds, The Peninsula Beverly Hills celebrated its Grand Opening over three days and nights of festivities on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 1991. Hundreds of local residents, neighbours, guests, and dignitaries attended. Musicians of many cultural styles serenaded the attendees, while sumptuous food and libations were served. The Grand Opening ceremonies also included a traditional Chinese lion dance.

The Peninsula Beverly Hills rapidly established itself as a hotspot for high society and the entertainment industry, as well as a leader in California’s hospitality industry. The hotel achieved the Mobil (now Forbes) Five Star Award and the AAA Five Diamond Award in 1993, and it has enjoyed that distinction for 23 consecutive years. The Belvedere earned an AAA Five Diamond Award in 1995, the first hotel restaurant in California to do so, and also has the honour of being the only AAA Five Diamond restaurant in Los Angeles for 21 consecutive years. As important a measure of the success of The Peninsula Beverly Hills, however, is its rate of return guests – more than 70 percent.

In 1975, when the then 18 year-old Robert Zarnegin bought his first parcel of land in Beverly Hills, he had no idea what the future would hold. “During the past 25 years, I’ve been filled with great pride in seeing the staff grow and prosper. I have also been incredibly happy to see so many of our gratified guests being treated to the incomparable service of the Peninsula team. I can’t wait to see what the next 25 years will bring.”





*An*  
**HOMAGE**  
*To*  
**TRAVEL**

*A signature feature of Peninsula hotels in Hong Kong, Bangkok, Tokyo, Shanghai and Paris are these properties' aviation-themed venues, located at the top of each hotel. Filled with unique and nostalgic memorabilia, they pay homage to the development of air travel throughout history. Serving as arrival/departure lounges for helicopters, or as exclusive private entertaining and dining venues, these aviation-inspired settings evoke a nostalgia for an early, elegant and adventurous era of grand voyages.*



Pan American's Martin M-130 above Victoria Harbour, October 26th, 1936

The China Clipper, The Paribatra, The Seven Seas, The Rosamonde, and L'Oiseau Blanc. These uniquely Peninsula venues are among the finest locations in their cities, for romantic travellers and aviation aficionados alike. Faded black-and-white photographs, historic radial engines and jet engine parts, cockpit mockups, model aircraft, tourism posters and early aviation memorabilia decorate these rooms that are part-museum, part-stylish salon. Maps of early air routes provide fascinating insights into just how limited air travel was just a few decades ago.

These settings are so artistically done, so rich with artefacts and memorabilia, that they are destinations in themselves. Those fortunate enough to visit can spend hours wandering around, soaking in the information and atmosphere of an earlier, more romantic age of travel.

Chairman of The Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels, Ltd., Sir Michael Kadoorie, created the first such space in 1994, The Peninsula Hong Kong's China Clipper, as an arrival/departure lounge for the hotel's helipad. Thus the theme of celebrating a country's aviation history was born.

During his speech at the opening of The China Clipper on November 23rd 1994, Sir Michael commented: "Designed to recapture the glorious days of the late 1930s, when travel by transoceanic Clipper was at its height, this venue commemorates the history of Hong Kong's commercial aviation from its earliest days, until the end of the piston era..."

The first commercial flight to land in Hong Kong was that of an Imperial Airways, De Havilland DH86 Express airliner, named

'Dorado', which carried one passenger and 16 bags of mail into Kai Tak, on March 24th, 1936. It was, however, the arrival of the 'Philippine' Clipper, a Martin M130, which landed in our harbour on November 23rd, 1936, piloted by Pan American's colourful and dynamic President, Juan Trippe, which caused the greatest excitement in the community and marked the inauguration of passenger travel between North America and Asia. The ensuing opening up of commercial air routes ultimately made Hong Kong what it is today – the business and trading heart of Asia."

In the early development of the China Clipper lounge, the designers were overwhelmed by contributions from aviation enthusiasts. Architect Darren Kindrachuk of Hong Kong-based Denton, Corker, Marshall Interiors Ltd. remembers, "Boxes of engine parts would land on my desk and the propeller arrived just eight months before the opening."

Stepping out of the private elevator, the entrance hall recalls the morning docks that Clipper passengers would have entered. TV screens on the walls display early newsreels of the great, lumbering, four-engined flying boats landing on the harbour just in front of The Peninsula, with the then sparsely built Hong Kong Island in the background.

The main lounge area mirrors a cabin interior, complete with large armchairs and vaulted aluminium ceiling. Another contributor, Rolex, developed a special 24-hour movement set of world clocks which are displayed on one wall. Nearby, the atmosphere of an aviator's study is recreated with rosewood panelling, aluminium cabinets and a small library.

Beautifully sculptural pieces such as the Pratt & Whitney radial engine from a DC-3 (which was also used on flying boats) and the Hamilton Standard propeller embedded in one of the walls, could almost be mistaken for works of modern art, but are authentic down to the decals. Sir Michael remembers that the propeller arrived with three decals, but, "A gentleman who had worked at Hamilton Standard for years came to the lounge and said, 'those aren't the right ones,' and gave us his own pre-war decals. The retired riveter who installed the aluminium dome head rivet fixings donated his rivet gun at the end of the job, in case we might need it later."

The 30th floor China Clipper's unique collection of historic photographs and aeronautical memorabilia, donated by former airline employees and other collectors, recalls the early days of the grand Pan Am China Clipper flying boats. The seaplanes, which traversed the Pacific between San Francisco and Hong Kong from 1935 to 1945, landed and took off in Hong Kong. TV screens on the walls display early newsreels of the great, lumbering, four-engined flying boats landing on the harbour just in front of The Peninsula, with the then sparsely built Hong Kong Island in the background.

There are three aircraft specifically noted in the lounge: the Martin M-130 Clipper, which is the signature Clipper, the DC-3 and the Catalina flying boat.

It is only fitting that The Peninsula should be home to such a historic tribute, playing as it did throughout those early years a central role in the development of Hong Kong's aviation industry,

this unique collection of aeronautical artefacts and photographs on display has been assembled from far and wide, from old friends of The Peninsula, former airline pilots and engineers and avid collectors, some of whom can still recall with great affection, those memorable times when air travel was the privilege of the few, and the Clipper plans epitomised glamour and adventure.

If the China Clipper were a regular bar, it would certainly be one of Hong Kong's finest, with its wonderful evocation of those grand days of privileged travel.

The Peninsula Bangkok's Paribatra helicopter departure lounge opened in 1998, dedicated to the spirit and history of Thai aviation. High above the city on the 37th floor, it honours the first aircraft designed and built in Thailand, the Paribatra bomber. A fully restored and highly polished 1927 Bristol Jupiter radial aircraft engine, as used in the Paribatra bomber, is on display in this exclusive venue.

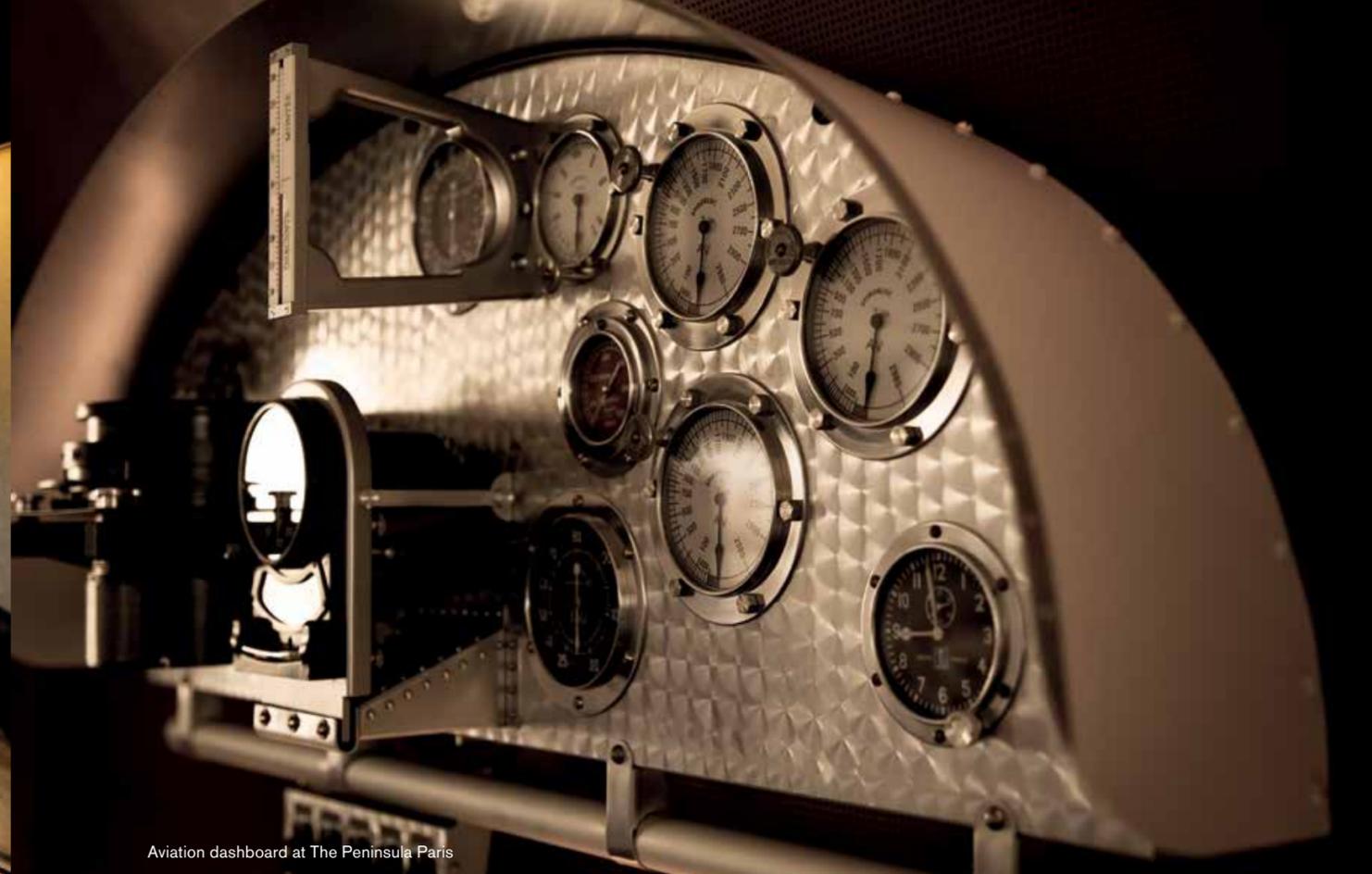
A grainy photograph of the first flight in Thailand, on January 31, 1911, by the Belgian aviator Charles Van den Born, shows an aircraft that looks like a box kite on bicycle wheels. Meanwhile, a cutaway model of an Imperial Airways C-Class flying boat illustrates luxurious pre-World War II travel, when only the wealthy could afford to fly. Jet engine parts, antiques and other aviation souvenirs decorate the walls. A map of the Empire Air Routes to the Far East in 1936, logos of famous early airlines and early tourist posters indicate how quickly air travel grew in those pioneer days – and how far it had yet to come.



A colourful 1938 illustration of the Pan American Clipper depicts a scene in Hong Kong Harbour, with Victoria Peak in the background



Replica of a Loening Air Yacht at The Peninsula Shanghai



Aviation dashboard at The Peninsula Paris

A full-size display of a Breguet 14 aircraft's instruments and flying controls shows the latest technology of 1925, seemingly primitive compared to today. By contrast, a replica "glass" cockpit from a Thai Airways International B-747-400 represents contemporary Thai aviation, whilst CRT screens display major flight, navigation and engine instruments. A full-size section of the B-747 cockpit including the captain's control column and an illuminated instrument panel is displayed.

The Peninsula Tokyo's Seven Seas Pacific Aviation Lounge, which opened in 2007, is a tribute to the history and development of Japan's civil and commercial aviation. The lounge traces this history from the first powered flight in 1910 to the pioneers of trans-Pacific air travel of the 1950s and on to the vibrant contemporary aviation industry.

Set on the edge of the vast Pacific Ocean, Japan was a natural destination for early world air travellers and was also the destination for many round-the-world demonstration flights from numerous foreign countries.

The Seven Seas is named after the legendary DC-7 airliner of the 1950s, the last of Douglas Aircraft's propeller-driven planes. With four engines, the DC-7, which carried passengers in first class comfort and luxury across the oceans, was among the last great propeller aircraft before the advent of the jet age and mass tourism. The 'C' model, with its increased fuel capacity, was nicknamed the 'Seven Seas' in a tribute to its special capabilities as a long-range aircraft.

An informative cutaway model of the DC-7C in the lounge illustrates the luxury accommodation it provided the privileged few, for whom crossing the Pacific was an exciting adventure. An open-air promenade offers stunning views over Tokyo.

In December 1903 the Wright Brothers achieved the first successful flight and one that was to change the world forever. Just over seven years later, in January 1911, Frenchman Rene Vallon was the first man to fly a plane to and in China, basing himself in Shanghai where he often ventured into exhibition flying, a daring hobby which only several months later sadly took his life. But the Shanghai community had already become fascinated by his flying feats and were often out in force to watch as he flew over the city. This period, although short, marked the beginning of aviation in China.

It was not until several years later, in 1929, that the China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) was established. It was one of the first joint ventures between the Americans and the Chinese and sought to bring commercial aviation to China. The main reason for developing aviation in China was to fly China's post and air mail to its various destinations. Aviation and tourism soon partnered and carrying passengers, though secondary, also became important as exhibited by the various brochures and booklets which encouraged visitors to see the country by plane.

During the 1930s several significant aircraft were flying in China, but the first CNAC plane was the Loening Air Yacht, which initiated its service in 1929, and was one of the first of the 'shoehorn-float' civilian aircraft that could land and float on sea water. Six Loenings featured in the CNAC fleet, each of which was named after a Chinese city along the Yangtze River route that the plane flew.

As a tribute, The Peninsula Shanghai chose to feature a life-size replica of a Loening in its Rosemonde Aviation Lounge. However, building such a piece would prove to be no easy task, as even though hundreds of examples of the aircraft were built in the United States during the 1930s, very little documentation of their existence remained.

"There was almost no information," explains Cliff Dunnaway, President of Tiger Bay Enterprises which is behind the design, model building and historical aspects of both the Rosemonde, named after the first aircraft to be designed and built in China in 1923. "There are no blueprints in existence except one general three view blueprint which was a 1928 outline and formed the basis for our own design. We studied numerous photographs too, but no matter how many you have, you could always do with just one more!" says Dunnaway. That said, he successfully completed the task of building a scale model from very little information and a full size copy of a Loening Air Yacht now sits on the 14th floor at The Peninsula Shanghai.

It is the interior of the Loening that is a true feat of design as it is primarily based on just four photographs. A real 1929 Loening Air Yacht survives at The Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology and is the only genuine example still in existence today. However it was wrecked in a landing accident in the 1930s and when rebuilt for display purposes, not only was accuracy not a key concern, but the plane's interior was never rebuilt. The few existing photographs show the aircraft to have carried two pilots, each of whom would have had a wooden steering wheel, both of which have been faithfully reproduced, as well as four passengers on their own swivel seats and a bench for two further passengers. From the outside too the plane is an accurate replica with a real engine and real propeller, as well as being built from true materials.

While an impressive piece in itself that took two years to complete, the Loening's presence in the aviation lounge is further augmented by other additions from the history of aviation in China including a map which traces the routes which the Loening flew,

up to Peiping (Beijing) in the North and down to Canton (Guangdong) and Hong Kong in the South, and reproductions of a 1930 souvenir booklet called 'See China by Plane', originally given to every passenger who flew with CNAC and signed by the pilots. "This is real aviation history," asserts Dunnaway.

The most recent addition to the Company's impressive collection of aviation related treasures is at The Peninsula Paris, where the aviation-themed L'Oiseau Blanc restaurant celebrates the venture of ex-World War flying aces Charles Nungesser and François Coli who attempted to cross the Atlantic in 1927 from Le Bourget.

L'Oiseau Blanc was named following Charles Nungesser's appearances in flying circuses around the USA demonstrating his World War 1 fighter prowess. A Native American chief refused to let him fly over his reservation, and so Nungesser offered to take him up in his plane. Amazed by his flight, he relented and Nungesser named his next plane after him - 'The White Bird'.

A replica of the L'Oiseau Blanc Levasseur PL8 biplane, 75 percent of the original size and with a wingspan of 11 metres, which was built in Newquay, England, hangs in the L'Oiseau Blanc courtyard, while a restored 1927 Levasseur engine takes pride of place in the restaurant. The engine was rebuilt from parts of three original engines at Le Bourget airport in Paris - a labour of love undertaken by a group of enthusiastic volunteers comprising retired aviation engineers, working one day a week on the project.

These five Peninsula hotels feature items and documentation true to history and visiting these spectacular repositories of aviation history is a singular, exciting experience.

1995

# GOOD *Morning* VIETNAM!



Opened in 1995 in the heart of the business quarter of Ho Chi Minh City, The Landmark is a 16-storey combined residential and office complex located on a prime river waterfront site. The Landmark was one of the first buildings to offer purpose-built serviced apartments in Ho Chi Minh City as Vietnam opened up to global business.

Today, it maintains its popularity and leadership in a competitive market, and continues to attract awards for its management and facilities. The complex has 65 serviced apartments, a fully equipped business centre and a health club, as well as 100,000 square feet of first class office space for leasing. The complex affords a retreat from the daily hustle and bustle and convenience due to its prime location, minutes away from most major office buildings and with easy access to the nearby lively café scene. 🏰

# PAR For THE Course

*The Thai Country Club opened in 1996 and is a haven to enjoy the ultimate golf experience. Tucked away on the outskirts of Bangkok, and managed under the auspices of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, the Thai Country Club delivers exquisite service, star quality food and world-class facilities. There is full satisfaction guaranteed to the golfer on all levels.*



The Thai Country Club, a joint venture between the Phataraprasit Group and the The Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited has earned a reputation for being one of Thailand's premier golfing venues and is a founding member of The Finest Golf Clubs of the World. Its golf course, designed by Denis Griffiths, former President of the world-renowned American Society of Golf Course Architects, under USPGA international standards, it has since attracted the attention of serious golfers who have been greatly impressed with the course layout and unique range of challenges from all tees. The venue for the 1997 Asian Honda Classic, won by Tiger Woods, and the second leg of the 1998 Johnnie Walker Super Tour, won by Vijay Singh, the course utilises weather-resistant paspalum grass from Hawaii. This demanding course, with both water and sand hazards, is a true test of golfers' proficiency at all levels. The design of the 7,157-yard course adapts to everyday member use up to a very tough challenge for major international tournaments featuring the finest players in the world.

The high-tech computer designed greens make for many interesting pin placements and the entire course features immaculate conditions, a neo-classic design and variety from hole to hole. Off the course, the friendliest staff of professionals in the Kingdom of Thailand are committed to making every individual's golf experience a memorable one.

The Thai Country Club is held in high esteem within the golfing world, helped largely by continued televised tournaments, but also by an acquired reputation as a smooth running perfect golfing machine. The club makes an invaluable contribution to the game of golf in Thailand.

Thailand is fortunate to have so many wonderful courses for aficionados to play in their golfing lifetime, and it would be a crying

shame not to experience the Thai Country Club. It is impossible to generalise about Thai golf courses, but what is certain is that the Thai Country Club is green, consistent, and fair because those are the things that all members and guests demand.

Strategically it offers an excellent course, as almost every hole presents a variety of options and like all great courses, it has excellent short holes and epitomises the old golf course architects belief that a course, where possible, should be arranged in two loops of nine holes and that there should be a large proportion of good two-shot holes, and at least four one-shot holes. There is little walking distance between the greens and the tees; the greens and fairways are sufficiently undulating, there is no hill climbing involved, every hole is different in character, and there is a minimum of blindness for approach shots. So, whether you play from the tees for 7,157 yards, or prefer a more leisurely round at 6,105 yards, or somewhere in between, the Thai Country Club offers all options.

Voted Best Course in Thailand (2001-2007), Best Par-Three in Asia (2001-2003) and Best Clubhouse in Asia (2000-2007) by Asian Golf Monthly Magazine, the Thai Country Club has an impressive 4,000 square metre Clubhouse to complement the highly-acclaimed course.

Most recently, the Club was recognised with four major awards at the 2016 Asian Golf Awards Ceremony, namely: Best Managed Golf Club in Asia Pacific, Best Food and Beverage Experience in Asia Pacific, Best Food & Beverage Manager of The Year (Jintana Zinn), and First Runner Up Best Locker Room (Male & Female) in Asia Pacific.

All in all, the Thai Country Club is a golfer's paradise, and a round on one of Asia's favourite courses is a must in this lifetime.

# AN Overnight SUCCESS

*When The Peninsula Chicago opened in 2001, it became the most exclusive luxury hotel in Chicago almost overnight. 2015 marked the 14th Anniversary of the hotel, a Five Star, Five Diamond property located on the Magnificent Mile at 108 East Superior Street in the heart of the city.*



“When I joined the hotel in 2002, we had just come out of a very difficult time due to 9/11 and a subsequent very tough six months. Occupancy was down and we were somewhat low on the totem pole compared to our competitors,” says Maria Razumich-Zec, Regional Vice President - USA East Coast and General Manager of The Peninsula Chicago. “However, the turning point for us came with the first Zagat hotel survey in which we were named the Number One Hotel in North America, which really put us on the map. The media picked it up and the Chicago Sun Times put us on the front page. From then on, people really started to take notice of us. We were then named by Travel + Leisure as the Number One Hotel in North America, which was a huge coup, and after that, the awards just kept coming. Fast forward to today and we’re still getting the accolades, so I think we have truly made our mark in the city of Chicago and in the United States.”

Indeed, under Razumich-Zec’s leadership, The Peninsula Chicago achieved the Mobil Five-Star and AAA Five Diamond awards within her first year as General Manager of the property, and the hotel has continued to receive these coveted awards every year since.

In a city renowned for its legacy of forward-thinking design and world-class architecture, The Peninsula Chicago is continuing this tradition with a comprehensive guest room redesign that has once again set a new benchmark for luxury accommodation in the city.

2015 marked the 14th Anniversary of the 339-room property as well as the unveiling of the first phase of its spectacular guest room redesign, which seamlessly combines luxury, technology and sustainability to offer its guests the ultimate in luxury accommodation.

Carefully and thoughtfully designed with the luxury traveller in mind, the guest rooms are the most technologically advanced in the world. Designer Bill Rooney of Bill Rooney Studio, Inc., a leading New York-based interior design firm that provides services for select hospitality and residential commissions that require one-of-a-kind solutions, was commissioned to undertake the guest room redesign project.

Rooney and his team, in close collaboration with Razumich-Zec, have conceived contemporary interiors with a cosmopolitan attitude that syncs perfectly with The Peninsula’s vibrant setting in the heart of Chicago. Drawing influences from the French Deco style of the hotel’s public spaces, the guestrooms are intentionally suited for both the business and leisure traveller.

The environment is spacious, unrestrained and offers panoramic views of the city skyline. A hand-crafted floral art element on the wall, created by David Qian, anchors each guestroom. By combining the latest design trends with classic Chinoiserie art, Qian used authentic techniques based on 5,000 years of Chinese art history to produce wall embellishments that are hand painted.

The motif created by Qian features the official flower of Chicago since 1966, the chrysanthemum, which is also one of the four ‘noble flowers’ of Asia, further solidifying the marriage of the brand’s Asian heritage with a Chicago influence. The chrysanthemum is also closely associated with the Fall season, which many consider the best time of the year to visit the city.

The 74 newly redesigned suites at The Peninsula Chicago also feature the chrysanthemum theme on a hand-embroidered silk art wall, along with hand-painted floral artisan glass elements (in junior suites) that provide a decidedly chic yet residential feel to each space.

The colour blue features prominently within the design scheme, a nod to the waters of the mighty Lake Michigan and the Chicago River, both iconic to Chicagoans and visitors alike.

In the realm of technology, once again The Peninsula Hotels led the way, introducing its latest proprietary advanced guest room technology to the United States via The Peninsula Chicago.

Fully customised interactive digital bedside and desk tablets are preset in one of 11 languages (English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Russian, Korean, Japanese, Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese), and full control of all in-room functions is just a touch away, enabling control of all room lighting, room temperature controls, access to restaurant menus, hotel services, city information and attractions and TV channels. In addition, LED touch-screen wall panels feature weather details, language and privacy options. Rooms are designed so that every control is located precisely where it is required without guests having to think or search.

A significant goal for Chicago’s Mayor Rahm Emanuel for the city of Chicago is to welcome 55 million visitors by 2020. The introduction of complimentary local and long distance Internet calls and Wi-Fi, tablets with 11 languages, 24-hour check in, and a constantly updated online city guide, are all evidence of The Peninsula Chicago’s commitment to the city and respond to the Mayor’s goal with these visionary initiatives.

Razumich-Zec’s zeal for her job never wanes, and her passion is clearly evidenced through The Peninsula Chicago’s guest room redesign. “Our renovation has re-launched The Peninsula as the heart – both literally and metaphorically – of Chicago, and has cemented the hotel’s place firmly for the future,” she states.

Of course, The Peninsula would not be The Peninsula without its legendary service and its family of dedicated staff, as acknowledged fully by Razumich-Zec. “Our staff know our guests by name, their likes and dislikes, and offer them a sense of family. We really make an effort to be exclusive and to create memorable moments. Our goal has always been to combine Eastern graciousness with Midwestern hospitality, and when people stay with us, they know they are going to have a great experience because its The Peninsula and we’re known for always trying to raise the bar.”

2002

A  
*Four-Wheeled*  
GATHERING





Sir Michael and Lady Kadoorie with Sir Stirling Moss and his wife Lady Susie



It has been 14 years since a group met in The Honourable Sir Michael Kadoorie's garage and discussed prospective details of an automotive event that had earlier been proposed to Sir Michael by Gordon McCall. The intended site was the driving range of the Quail Lodge Golf Club.

The meeting included people with the range of expertise to mount such an undertaking. The collector community was represented by Chip Connor and Bruce Meyer. Quail personnel included Sir Michael, whose company owned the property, Lawson Little, Head of the Quail Lodge Golf Club, and Amy Williams, Special Events Coordinator. Gordon McCall and Michael T. Lynch spoke for the enthusiast community and both had experience with other events. McCall had his own event, the McCall Motorsports Reunion, which was, and continues to be, the official kick-off party for the Monterey Peninsula automotive 'Holy Week' held each August. Lynch is a well-known author, historian and commentator.

As the discussion began, Sir Michael stated that he wanted a garden party ambience, where guests would feel welcome and enjoy exceptional hospitality. Connor and Meyer suggested that during a week that had so much going on, it would be a good idea if there was a respite from the competitive atmosphere at the various shows and races. McCall and Lynch wanted to present a display of the finest in automotive design and engineering, with the primary focus on sporting and racing machinery, rather than the grand classics. Williams, who had organised the 'Tomato Fest', one of the area's most respected culinary events, was both confident and a little apprehensive about achieving the seamless kind of event she

traditionally presented, including appropriate cuisine. McCall took the organisational leadership position and has since been the Quail's lead motorsports consultant.

What coalesced from the original meeting was the establishment of *The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering*, an event that immediately became one of the most important of the Monterey Peninsula's August automotive festival week and established an ambience like no other. Because of its limited attendance, demand outstripped ticket supply right from the beginning.

The garden party atmosphere was certainly achieved, and since the original discussion had mentioned the over-commercialisation of some events, there were only hand-picked vendors presenting merchandise that was appropriate for the attendees. A luxury touch was that once on the grounds, a guest would not pay for the luncheon, nor the wines and other beverages that were there for the tasting. There were other amenities for the guests, including a magazine rack offering an array of the world's best car magazines as gifts, and there were many other enticing complimentary goodies with which to pack one's bag.

The culinary aspect of the event received a great deal of attention. Finding the ingredients was fairly easy. The Quail Lodge Golf Club adjoins property farmed by Earthbound Farm, the world's largest supplier of organic produce. Other local vendors provided free-range chicken, grass-fed beef and pork, artisanal cheeses and other delicacies. These were expertly prepared and a large part of The Quail's reputation grew from what was universally conceded to be the finest food experience of the week. Part of this came from

the unique presentation. There were four luncheon areas, all replete with tables, chairs, tablecloths, ceramic plates and metal utensils. Three of these represented the cuisine of major automobile manufacturing countries and the final one was a showcase for the products of local vendors. These themes were often enhanced by regional foods related to the special displays on the field. When there was a class for cars from Florida's Sebring 12-Hour race, there were Florida/Cuban-inspired dishes woven into the menu.

Another result of the original meeting was the determination to achieve a collegial rather than competitive entrant experience. This resulted in a unique judging and awards programme. Rather than being subjected to a stern group of straw-hatted, blue blazer-wearing judges looking for burned out tail lights, the participants in each class would discuss the cars in their class and pick a winner. The reasoning for this was the belief of the organisers that entrants would know the cars well, having competed against them in the past. The class winners would then join the 'Rolex Circle of Champions', from which the Best of Show would be chosen. This practice has continued from the beginning.

The regular classes have always included motorcycles, a practice since adopted by the other major shows of the week. Besides the continuing classes, there have been special displays each year. Some of the most memorable included the 'Cars of the Carrera Panamericana' in 2005. These were interesting because of their sometimes garish advertising. The race was run in a period when other events did not allow such commercialisation and Carrera cars are always recognisable when presented in their original livery. In 2007, there was a wonderful

gathering of cars associated with Briggs Cunningham during a 100th Birthday remembrance. These, of course, included Cunninghams as well as other marques that Briggs' team raced. Completing that day, Fred Simeone's Cunningham C-4 won Best of Show. That same year, there was a remarkable display of Ferrari 250 GT Series 1 Cabriolets. Almost half of the 40-car production of these elegant open Ferraris was present, an unprecedented occurrence.

Bonham's holds the longest running auction during the week at The Quail. It began even before *The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering* came into existence. Other notable happenings have included flyovers and Porsche building what appeared to be a permanent dealership building to create an appropriate setting for the introduction of their Panamera sedan and guest test drives of many sporting and luxury models.

2016 witnessed the introduction of 'The Peninsula Classics Best of the Best Award', a Peninsula Signature Event founded by The Peninsula Hotels together with motoring enthusiasts William E. Connor, Sir Michael Kadoorie, Bruce Meyer and Christian Philippsen. The event chose one car as the finest motor vehicle of the year from a selection of best of show winners from some of the world's premiere *Concours d'Elegance* through a judging team of international motoring personalities.

While 14 years have passed quickly, it is gratifying to reflect on the Gatherings that have taken place. What is amazing is how well the original concept has endured. Certainly, there have been some changes around the edges, but the principles established at that meeting 14 years ago have unquestionably proven to have had substance. 🏎️

# SET In STONE

In October 2002, plans for HSH's first new hotel for the Millennium were sealed when a partnership agreement was made with the Mitsubishi Estate Company (MEC) to develop The Peninsula Tokyo on a prime site in the prestigious Marunuchi district of the city, close to the Imperial Gardens. It was envisioned that the hotel would become a key component of a long-term revitalisation plan for the area, as part of an urban redevelopment project spearheaded by MEC.

The commencement of construction of The Peninsula Tokyo was celebrated in October 2004 by a traditional Shinto ceremony at the site of the hotel. Officiating at the event were the respective chairmen and board members of HSH and its partner MEC.

With most luxury hotels in Tokyo opting to a part of high-rise office buildings or multi-use complexes, The Peninsula Tokyo was different - it would be the only free-standing luxury hotel to be built in the city in more than a decade. With celebrated architect Kazukiyo Sato's vision of the hotel as a traditional Japanese lantern standing at 24 storeys high and covering a total floor area of over 59,000 square metres, it was poised to become Tokyo's newest destination landmark, offering commanding city views, luxurious comfort, sophisticated facilities, extraordinary dining experiences, and the legendary Peninsula service.

The hotel's creation was an exhaustive and exhilarating exercise in aesthetics, melding Peninsula grandeur and elegance with Japanese design elements. Local craftsmen were appointed to various tasks and were given the challenge of preserving traditional techniques whilst at the same time creating a modern feel for Tokyo's newest landmark destination.

60 artists, 90 percent of them Japanese, created over 1,000 pieces of work exclusively for The Peninsula Tokyo, including Keisen Hama, a renowned female sculptor who created the magnificent

bamboo masterpiece known as 'Garyu no mon', a dragon-shaped sculpture in the heart of The Lobby.

One lesser known piece of art at The Peninsula Tokyo is a sculpture that can only be seen from outside the hotel, peering off into the northwest on the seventh floor. Head bowed, crouched over with its hands cusped, the gargoyle with the face of a bird, a human torso, and a pair of wings on its back, has always been an enigma. First installed in 1952 on the roof of the nine-storey Mikkatsu Hokusai Kaikan building overlooking the JR Yurakucho station, legend has it that the gargoyle could ward off evil as it stared to the northwest where the '*kimon*' or demon gate is located.

Sculpted by the late Yoshiharu Kuroda, the talisman was his personal contribution in attempting to enliven a Japanese society mired in post-War depression. The gargoyle, in his mind, was shouting out encouragement to the droves of people carving out some form of livelihood under the railroad tracks. Soon the economy took off again, and skyscrapers rose around the gargoyle that silently watched, slowly slipping from the public's memory as they scurried about their own lives.

In 1983, the Asahi Shimbun, Japan's largest daily newspaper, ran a popular story on the gargoyle, highlighting the fact that despite a recent renovation of the Mikkatsu Hokusai Kaikan building, the good luck charm had been preserved.

It was in this spirit that architect Sato allowed the gargoyle another reincarnation at The Peninsula Tokyo, and to continue to stand guard; an item of news that the newspaper covered again nearly two-and-a-half decades down the road. Says Sato, "We're very lucky to have the gargoyle that lends us a link to history." And indeed it seems that it has brought good fortune to The Peninsula Tokyo since it opened in September 2007. 



# *A* MEETING *of* LEGENDS

*Annie Leibovitz is the most prolific and in demand portrait photographers of our time. Renowned for her revealing, eye-catching portraits of celebrities, Leibovitz has photographed everyone who is anyone, from royalty to rock stars, politicians to performers, actors to athletes, and dancers to debutantes. Leibovitz is also the woman behind the two groundbreaking 'Portraits of Peninsula' campaigns, a stunning collection of black and white photographs that perfectly captured the essence of the people that make The Peninsula Hotels tick.*





Image: Annie Leibovitz

It's 8:30 am in New York and Annie Leibovitz is in her car on the way to shoot a group of 50 substantial philanthropic women at the behest of American feminist icon Gloria Steinem. "Normally these types of women prefer to remain anonymous," says Leibovitz, "but Gloria enticed them to go public with a photograph taken by me."

It's unlikely that anyone would turn down the opportunity to be photographed by Annie Leibovitz, the most celebrated female photographer of our time. And there's hardly anyone who's anyone that Leibovitz has not photographed. From Barack Obama to Bill Gates, Queen Elizabeth II to Queen Rania of Jordan, Andy Warhol to Angelina Jolie, Mikhail Baryshnikov to Muhammed Ali, and Jeff Koons to Jack Nicholson, the list would undoubtedly fill an entire book. In fact, numerous books bearing the Leibovitz name have been published to date, from 1973's 'Shooting Stars', a Rolling Stone book of portraits, to her own 'Annie Leibovitz At Work', in which the photographer tells the stories of how some of her most recognised images came to be, and 'A Photographer's Life: 1990-2005'.

Born in 1949 in Waterbury, Connecticut, Leibovitz enrolled in the San Francisco Art Institute as a painting major in 1967. During the summer following her freshman year, whilst staying at the Clark Air Base in the Philippines where her father had been posted, the young Leibovitz travelled to Japan with her mother and some of her siblings, and it was there that she purchased what she refers to as her "first real camera...a Minolta SRT 101." In her book 'Annie Leibovitz At Work', the photographer recalls climbing Mount Fuji, and upon reaching the summit at sunrise, a moment she describes as "spiritually significant", Leibovitz also realised that the only film she had was the roll in her newly-purchased camera, and so proceeded to photograph the sunrise with the two or three frames that she had left. Of this experience, she states in her book: "I took this, my first experience with a camera on the road, or path, as a lesson in determination and moderation, although it would be fair to ask if I took the moderation part to heart. But it was certainly a lesson in respecting your camera. If I was going to live with this thing, I was going to have to think about what that meant. There weren't going to be any pictures without it."



Image: Annie Leibovitz

And countless pictures there have been since - seminal moments captured on film for *Rolling Stone* magazine; elaborate fashion sittings for *Vogue*; commissions for *The New York Times Magazine* and *The New Yorker*; advertising campaigns for American Express, The Gap and The Milk Board; and of course, the *Vanity Fair* portraits, not to mention many other high profile assignments.

Fast forward to 2009, when Leibovitz found herself back in Japan, the country where she bought her first camera and home of Mount Fuji, the mountain she climbed more than 40 years ago. This time she had a very different reason for being there.

'Portraits of Peninsula', the award-winning global advertising campaign shot by Leibovitz for The Peninsula Hotels, originally debuted in October 2004, and featured a collection of black-and-white images conceived to portray the heart of the guest experience that distinguishes The Peninsula hotels as the finest in the world. With the images, Leibovitz departed from her tradition of celebrity portraiture to focus on the people and personalities behind The Peninsula brand. Although not famous, the faces of Peninsula pageboys, housekeepers and bellmen were just as compelling as those of celebrities when seen through her lens.

This first collection of images was shot on location at The Peninsula hotels in Hong Kong and New York and marked a dramatic departure from traditional hotel advertising. "There were no models or staged images in these photos, and the only celebrity was the one behind the camera," says Peter Borer, Chief Operating Officer, The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited, of the campaign. "We gave Ms. Leibovitz a virtual blank canvas and an invitation to interpret the Peninsula experience with complete freedom. She responded with images that captured the essence of Peninsula service, while also conveying the luxury, style and glamour of our properties."

The second 'Portraits of Peninsula' campaign showcased the staff at The Peninsula hotels in Chicago and Tokyo.

Again Leibovitz was given free rein to roam the hotels, through public spaces and back-of-house areas, shooting wherever she wished, and choosing scenes or staff members that she believed best represented the heart and soul of the hotels. Leibovitz's images celebrated the chefs, pages, doormen, room attendants and other staff who bring life, personality and warmth to the hotels' sumptuous surroundings.

Several of the shots at The Peninsula Tokyo were taken through windows - in one, a fire-eater performs on the terrace of Peter, the hotel's spectacular rooftop restaurant, whilst in another a housekeeper cleans a window overlooking the expansive gardens of the Imperial Palace opposite the hotel. Other images show the windscreen of the hotel's vintage 1934 Rolls-Royce Phantom II being lovingly polished by its driver, chefs shopping at the city's historic Tsukiji fish market, and a page welcoming guests from a shinkansen bullet train.

"I love the stories behind what people do, and in portraiture, you need to know the stories and then the image comes to life for you," enthuses Leibovitz. "After shooting at four Peninsula hotels for the campaigns, I truly understood the significance of what we are shooting - the real stars of The Peninsula hotels - the wonderful, caring staff. It was really moving photographing them, and by the time I had finished, I felt that I had a real insight into the people who work for The Pen and the pride they take in their work. I had been looking for stories like that for years."

Leibovitz says she was intrigued by her observations of life at The Peninsula Tokyo. "It's a hotel that is so luxurious, so functional, and it was truly fascinating to observe the way that it works. It's not overwhelming, there's no pretence and it really is a spectacular hotel to walk into. It was incredible to be able to interact with and photograph so many different people. Each hotel has its own family, who are integral to its environment and each of these families is a really wonderful group of people who are totally and genuinely dedicated to what they do."

The photographer revelled in her freedom to find the people and stories that she felt best represented the hotel and experimented with many different scenarios in order to capture the defining images. "With the staircase in Tokyo for example, I tried all kinds of ideas because it was so architecturally interesting. I tried with the pages carrying luggage, a newlywed bride on the stairs...situations that I thought could work."

For both the Tokyo and Chicago shots, Leibovitz ventured beyond the hotels themselves to locations including Tokyo's famed Tsujiki fish market, where she captured an image of one of the hotel's chefs proudly holding a just-purchased, whole tuna fish as if it were a prize. "I like that image particularly because the Tsujiki fish market doesn't officially allow photography any more as they're afraid people will get run over by the trucks!" laughs Leibovitz. "Just to see that very traditional and colourful fish market life with its big blocks of ice and all the activity was an experience in itself."

Following her cultural immersion into life in Tokyo, Leibovitz's next stop was Chicago, where she found another "family" awaiting her with open arms. "The Peninsula Chicago has a truly cosmopolitan mix of staff who really take care of their guests. Chicago itself is a melting pot of all kinds of cultures and nationalities and I was very proud to have been able to reflect that through the pictures."

In one endearing shot, which Leibovitz is particularly fond of, The Peninsula Chicago's doorman welcomes a young guest to the hotel. "That shot to me is totally emblematic of The Peninsula. The staff are genuinely happy people and there's nothing pretentious about them. There is sincerity in their authenticity."

In another shot, the hotel's chefs stand in the midst of an organic city farm with Chicago's dramatic skyline in the background, and in a third, the reservations team is poised to welcome guests' calls, beaming smiles all around. On the subject of smiling, Leibovitz wrote in her book 'Annie Leibovitz At Work' that she has never asked anyone to smile when taking their photograph, so I ask whether she broke this self-imposed rule for The Peninsula campaign, as almost everyone in the images is smiling very happily. "The reason I don't like to ask people to smile is because in all my family pictures as I was growing up I was asked to smile. I have to give The Peninsula credit. The people in the photographs smiled because that is who they are and that is genuinely how they felt. I actually don't consider myself a very good director believe it or not, and it wasn't particularly necessary for me to direct because what happened just came naturally."

"As much as I love pictures that have been set up, I'd rather photograph something that occurs on its own," states the author/photographer in the same book, which prompts the question as to which direction the Peninsula pictures went in. Did things occur on their own? "To be honest, I didn't exert that much control over many of the pictures. I just tried to mix it up. It was more about having conceptual ideas and seeing how they evolved...the nature of the Peninsula work is portraits, but they are loose portraits in that they stem from an idea, but the subjects are not just sitting there looking at the camera. For example, with the waiter portrait in Chicago, I literally just saw them and on the spur of the moment said to them that I just had to take their picture."

So how different it was it to shoot The Peninsula campaign compared to the iconic American Express and GAP campaigns of the late 80s and early 90s which featured major international celebrities? "With The Peninsula campaigns, I was photographing people who are famous in their own right as part of a hotel family, and through the pictures you find out about them and what their roles are. There's a great deal of pride involved in what they do, whether it be washing a window, carrying a dish, buying a fish...I was very suspicious of advertising work when I first started and asked myself whether I really wanted to do it, probably because I came from a fine arts background and I thought it might taint my credibility. But I have learned to use my campaigns to try different things that I might not necessarily have the freedom to do editorially. But ultimately it's the people that make it all possible...the people on the other side of the camera." 🏨

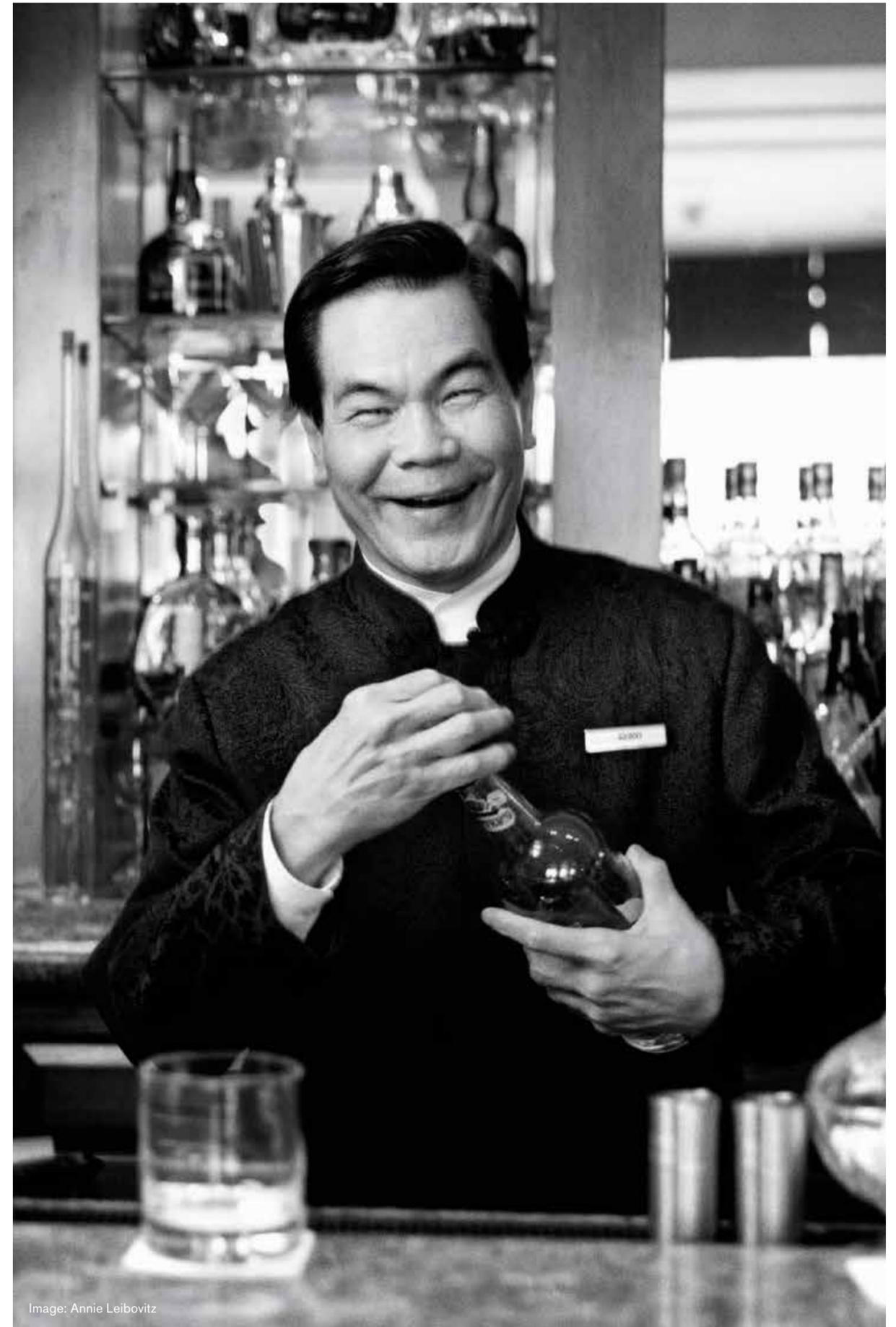
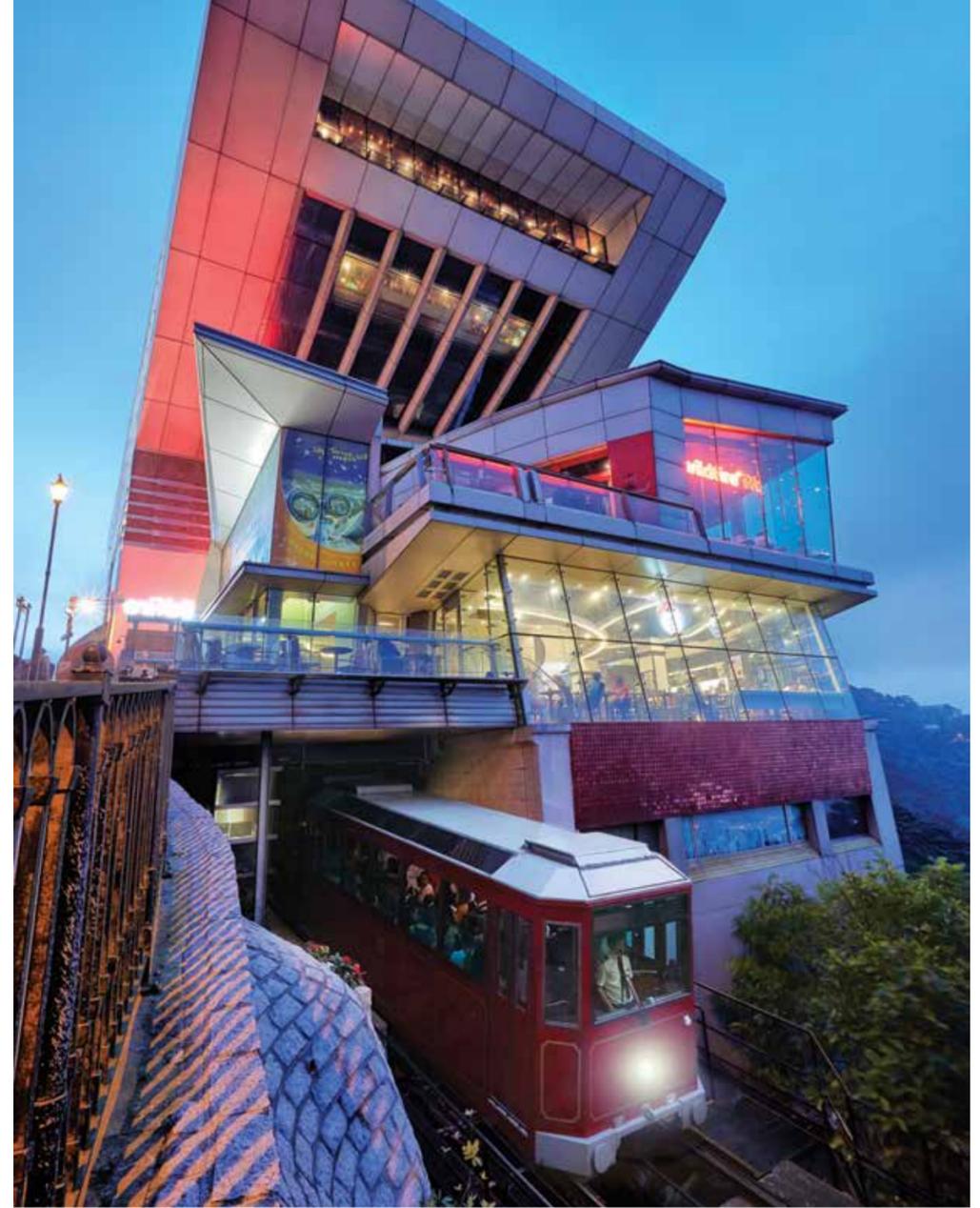


Image: Annie Leibovitz

# STAYING

## *On*

# TOP



The Peak has for long been the number one tourist attraction in Hong Kong, and in 1993, the Peak Tower underwent a HK\$500 million redevelopment into a new retail and entertainment complex, designed by renowned British architect Terry Farrell. It was officially opened to the public in May 1997 with a number of top attractions, including Ripley's Odditorium and Mini Motion Theatre.

The architects sought a design which would be prominent on the skyline but which would not interrupt the natural line of the hills. The site is in a dip along the line of the hills, and the tower's height was restricted to 428 metres above sea level. A floating form, rising from a solid base, was thus established as the best way to reinforce the site contours and achieve the necessary prominence.

The bowl shape was selected for its wealth of associations. It is reminiscent of the upturned eaves of traditional Chinese architecture, or a rice bowl or even a wok. Its curved outline also creates a formal contrast to the rectilinear blocks of the city below.

There are three distinct elements in the design. The solid podium refers to the past, the foundation of both the territory and the structure. The present is represented by the 13-metre open space

between the podium and the bowl. The roof of the podium is an expansive observation deck, where visitors can experience the panoramic views. The bowl structure represents the future, rising above the skyline on four centrally positioned core pillars. It is rendered in clean, contemporary lines and is clad in modern, technologically advanced materials: anodised aluminium panels and large expanses of glass.

Work on a second revitalisation of the Peak Tower began in March 2005, overseen by Martyn P. Sawyer, Group Director of HSH's Properties division. This extensive programme transformed the landmark into the major leisure destination that it is today, offering an enticing variety of dining, specialty shopping and interactive entertainment for local residents and tourists alike.

Today's Peak Tower is home to Sky Terrace 428, Madame Tussauds, shopping at the Peak Market, and a wide diversity of restaurants. Perched at 396 metres above sea level, the building is one of the most stylish architectural icons in Hong Kong. With an avant-garde design representing the epitomé of modern architecture, the spectacular tower has been featured in millions of photographs and postcards across the world, as it has been since its beginnings. 

*The*  
ART  
*of*  
INFLATION



IMAGES: SCOTT CABELL PHOTO

*To commemorate the 150th Anniversary of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited, the company commissioned eight breathtaking balloons from Ken Moody of Big Ideas Parade Giants Studio in Arizona to represent the core components of the group's business units which were unveiled for the celebrations.*



There is nothing like a parade to brighten up any rainy day, and there is little more fun as a child to see one of your favourite characters represented by huge balloons soaring above the crowd. This was the case for a young Ken Moody when brought to watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City as a boy. This early encounter eventually led to a latent rise in interest in the art of making balloons himself.

And indeed it is an art. Moody's passion for replicating our favourite characters, magnificent animal species, and even some off-beat humans, has made him one of the most well-known balloon artists in the world. His is an all-American story of trial and error, u-turns and tribulations that led him to creating Big Ideas Parade Giants Studio with Chip Schilling, designing and building their own balloons and working as independent contractors for several major balloon companies. But it all started in a round about way when he was at school.

"I remember as a kid at the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade and seeing the balloons and wondering how they were made and how great it would be to be able to do that," Moody recalls. "And lo and behold I was able to it; it was a long time coming, but it finally happened."

At first it was literally a pie-in-the-sky dream. Moody studied sculpture and oil painting in high school and went on to The Art Institute of Seattle with the aim of entering the world of advertising. It so happened that an instructor from the Institute was sponsored by the State to visit high schools, showing students how to build balloons out of plastic and two inch-wide plastic tape. It probably had something to do with physics...

"I was 16 years-old when I built my first balloon in advanced art class. It was an orange and yellow popsicle. That's when I learned

about the pressure inside of a balloon whereby it expands," explains Moody. "A popsicle is basically rectangular, but when it is inflated it becomes a cylinder. I found out about the effects of pressure from within expanding the materials out and changing the inherent shape."

Fast-forward three years and Moody was at the Institute and found that his professor, John Holding, was the same person who had built the balloons at his school and who remembered the young student from that time. "We teamed up and did some artwork for the Bumpershoot Festival in Seattle," says Moody. "That's when I created a 20-foot Lego brick."

Holding had helped start Bumpershoot in the 1990s, which has since grown into one of the biggest art and music festivals held in Seattle every August. Working with Holding, Moody then created another art piece where he installed a zipper on the side of the Coliseum Theatre so when people looked down from the Space Needle it looked like it was being zipped up.

After college, Moody tried to land a job in advertising, but this was at a time when computers were beginning to come onto the scene. Having learned to do layouts by hand on cardboard, doing overlays, then going to a typesetter and literally cutting and pasting onto the board with an Exacto blade, he felt like a dinosaur just three months after graduating.

"I went back into hardware and was assistant manager at a store for a while. I'd work a full day and then go back home and work on my art projects, which were sculpting, mould-making and balloons."

Whilst working at the store, Moody's then-girlfriend, now wife Tracie, moved back East and called him up and told him about a work idea she had.

"I went and interviewed for this job that Tracie had talked about, which was for Kemp Balloons who built the balloons for Macy's from 1980 to 1982," he explains. "They had made Popeye, Olive Oyl and Woody Woodpecker."

In those days balloons were made in the old-fashioned way, just like Goodyear used to do. They were made from ripstop nylon with a Neoprene rubber coating on each side – and they were heavy. The way the seams were joined was by using rubber contact cement which had to be coated three times with 15 minutes between each coat. It took seven people six months to build a Mighty Mouse when Moody was there in his first year – which was actually pretty fast at that time.

"We were trying to find other ways of doing it, but it was really hard work to develop a new fabric," says Moody. "We had some chemicals and other adhesives and one day, just by chance, I took one chemical and applied it to a seam and it adhered right away. So we can now do a seam in two minutes instead of 45, cutting down the production time for the company considerably."

The process for building a balloon begins with a line drawing, which is presented to the client who can then ask for modifications, after which the elevation drawings are executed. Nowadays this can be done on computer using 3D software, but Moody still uses his drawing skills to prepare each of his balloon renderings by hand.

He then makes a scale model in proportion of one inch to one foot. The model is coated with the company's proprietary paint and once dry, Moody can then figure out the best way to utilise the pattern by pulling off the paint in sections. He then makes a transparency and projects the pattern on the wall, hanging up the lengths of fabric and tracing the outline. Each section of the pattern is registered with a numbering system that aligns each section to whatever area it is to be placed on.

Moody likes to build his balloons with a series of chambers so that if there is any escape of gas the rest of the balloon will not deflate.

The last balloons that Moody created for Macy's were the Angry Birds and Chloe the Clown. He constructed a B.Boy balloon for Tim Burton for the 80th Macy's Parade in 2011 and the Museum of Natural History in Chicago has his rendition of a full size humpback whale which has been wafting on high above the thousands of visitors since 1995. He was also the first person to construct a balloon inside a balloon in 1994 when he created a 10 foot-tall snow-globe for a friend's Christmas yard decoration.

"My favourite balloon was Mr Potato Head. I designed it in the old style where you can actually remove certain features whilst on parade," says Ken. "Now my favourite as far as complexity of design and how it has turned out is The Peninsula's Rolls-Royce. It has so many details and an extraordinary number of chambers and it's the one that I'm most proud of."

The amount of detail and the number of chambers that give the Roller its structural integrity means that this is truly massive. "The tricky thing about doing something like the Rolls-Royce is that you have to be extremely accurate, as the car is so well known. It had to be exactly right and there was a lot of pressure to make it. One of these balloons would normally take six months to create, but we were challenged to make all eight balloons in 30 days - which we did!"

In addition to the Rolls-Royce, Moody also created seven other Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels icons, including the Pageboy, The Peninsula Hong Kong, The Peak Tram, The Peak Tower, and others.

Working in a family business ensures that there are no inflated egos and any hot air produced is devoted to the characters that bring so much pleasure to any parade. 💡





# Looking TO The FUTURE

“Why don’t you open a Peninsula in .....?” is a frequently asked question of the HSH executive team. There is no shortage of opportunities to expand, but as an owner-operator, the company is highly selective and truly exceptional locations which befit a Peninsula hotel - that will stand the test of time from century to century – are difficult to come by. Three magnificent new projects are currently under development.



## **The Peninsula London**

The Peninsula London hotel and residences is situated in a spectacular location at the gateway to Belgravia, just steps away from Buckingham Palace and Hyde Park Corner. The design is inspired by the area’s heritage, befitting one of London’s most celebrated addresses, and includes plans to replace the existing 1960s offices with a 189-room hotel and residential apartments. The development will be rich in references to local architecture, artwork and ambience. Given the importance of London as a business and tourism destination, this project reflects HSH’s long-term philosophy and optimism for the UK market.



## **The Peninsula Yangon**

Myanmar is one of the world’s most exciting emerging markets and HSH sees good potential for its future as a luxury travel and tourism destination. Partnering with Yoma, The Peninsula Yangon will involve the redevelopment and restoration of the former Burma Railway headquarters, a heritage building which dates from the 1880s and is one of the oldest existing colonial buildings in Yangon.



## **The Peninsula Istanbul**

Located in the historic Karaköy area overlooking the Bosphorus, the location of The Peninsula Istanbul project is truly exceptional, with views across the Bosphorus to the Topkapi palace. Despite short-term security concerns, HSH remains optimistic for the development of the high-end tourism market in Istanbul, which is one of the world’s most beautiful and exotic cities at the crossroads of Asia and Europe.

# Illustrating A GOLDEN Age



**D**an Sweeney was born in 1880 in Sacramento, California. Details of his early years are unknown, but it is thought that he embarked upon his illustration work around the turn of the century. By 1914 he had become sufficiently well-known to be hired to illustrate a book, but most of his work as a book illustrator seems to have been done in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

For the most part, Sweeney's illustrations were done for newspapers and magazines such as the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Collier's*, *Overboard Monthly*, *World Traveler* and others. He also created theatre and travel posters, as well as other illustrations.

Clearly intrigued by travel, Sweeney's illustrations of exotic scenes of far-off lands caught the eye of a senior employee of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited and he was commissioned to design luggage labels for the several of the Group's hotels in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Peking. His commissions may have been received during a trip to the Orient because he also created labels for a number of other Asian hotels, all datable to a short period during the late 1920s.

The labels that Sweeney created for HSH include The Hong Kong Hotel, The Peak Hotel, The Peninsula Hong Kong, The Repulse Bay Hotel, the Grand Hotel des Wagons-Lits, The Astor House, The Majestic and The Palace Hotel. The artist often incorporated careful and beautifully drawn images of local people from each hotel destination.

Each label has exactly the same dimensions (9 cm x 14 cm), and they bear the name of each hotel in a serif-type of the Times News Roman family. They were all printed using a four-colour process on a variety of granular papers that offered the best colour reproduction. The same illustrations used for the luggage labels were also used in public relations materials, cards (the same size as labels but printed on heavier stock), and postcards.

Sweeney was a remarkable illustrator who, fortunately, signed his work and in his lifetime obtained enough recognition to be mentioned today in a number of 'who's who in art' books.

The artist passed away in 1958, but his labels remain, and in their time they were among the finest to adorn wealthy travellers' luggage... 🚢



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