

information

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MANDARIN ORIENTAL, HONG KONG – THE MANDARIN STORY

In 1958, the Honourable Hugh Barton, Chairman of the Hong Kong Land Company, had a dream that Hong Kong’s Central district needed a world-class hotel. His dream became reality on 1 September 1963 when the iconic Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong (formerly The Mandarin) was launched with a soft opening. When the hotel officially opened on 25 October 1963, the 650-room, 27-storey hotel was the tallest building on Hong Kong Island and instantly became a historic landmark – a status it still holds today.

Built on the former site of the colonial Queen’s Building, the cost of construction came to HKD42 million, whilst the cost of interior design amounted to HKD66 million. John Howarth of the Leigh & Orange architectural firm was appointed architect, whilst interior design responsibility fell on Don Ashton, art director for such films as “Bridge Over the River Kwai”, “Indiscreet” and “Billy Budd”.

Upon its opening, the *South China Morning Post* enthused over the space-age lifts that seemingly catapulted guests to the top floor in just 21 seconds. Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong was the first hotel to have direct-dial telephones and was also the first in Asia to have a bathtub in every room – leading the architect of the hotel to ask, “Are the guests amphibious?”

Following a USD150 million renovation in 2006 (more than double what was spent on building and furnishing the original hotel), this landmark hotel was completely transformed and was able to offer guests 21st-century oriental luxury and modern technology, whilst retaining its much-loved character and soul. This new 501-room hotel was the first to have Technology Butlers available 24-hours a day and the first in Hong Kong to employ someone to oversee social media. The hotel has enjoyed continued success throughout the last 50 years and since 1963 has repeatedly been voted the world’s best hotel. Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong is also home to three Michelin-starred restaurants.

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One of the things the hotel is most famed and loved for is its staff, most members of which have been with the hotel for years, some for over 50 years. Each of these colleagues works closely with the new, younger members of the team to ensure that they learn from the past experiences of the senior staff, whilst continuing to embrace the future.

This special hotel, which is the flagship of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, is situated in the heart of Hong Kong and holds a special place in the hearts of the local community. It is home to a legendary staff, 10 outstanding restaurants and bars, an award-winning spa, barbershop, salon, 13 meeting rooms and a 24-hour business centre and fitness centre. With round-the-clock services, the hotel pulsates at all times and functions smoothly living up to its legendary world-renowned status with General Manager Pierre Barthes at the forefront of operations.

Developing a Legend

A living hotel requires constant additions, redecoration and refurbishment, and Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong has undergone a number of changes since its opening. The following are just some of the significant milestones in the hotel's history.

1963: The Saddle & Sirloin opens on the first floor and is destined to become Hong Kong's best-loved grill room – Mandarin Grill + Bar. The Captain's Bar is described in the *South China Morning Post* as the city's "fashionable new rendezvous" and The Chinnery Bar opens as a gentlemen-only club.

1965: The Prince's Building shopping arcade opens. It is connected to the mezzanine of the hotel by a covered bridge, making it the most comprehensive shopping complex on Hong Kong Island.

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1968: The top and 25th floor of the hotel is redecorated to create a new restaurant and bar, and the Button Supper Club is replaced by [Man Wah restaurant](#).

1969: The Connaught Room's meeting and banqueting area is created to take advantage of the growing needs of the Hong Kong business community. Some of the city's most important receptions and business meetings are still held here.

1973: The Harbour Restaurant is renamed the Harbour Room and given a glowing new golden look and a stage for cabaret performances. Eartha Kitt opens the season, coinciding with the first Hong Kong Arts Festival. This area is now the M bar.

1974: Mandarin International Hotels Limited is established for the development and operation of deluxe hotels worldwide.

1980: The Lobby is restyled and a Business Centre is opened, the first in Hong Kong.

1985: Through the management of The Mandarin in Hong Kong and The Oriental in Bangkok, the company rationalises its corporate structure to form the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group.

1987: The Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group is floated on The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong. The well-recognised fan logo that is the symbol of Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group is launched.

1990: The Chinnery Bar is redesigned and re-opened to receive both men and women. The Health Centre emerges with a brand new design with a 1,500-square-foot gymnasium and spa facilities.

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2005: The hotel closes for nine months for a comprehensive USD150-million renovation.

2006: On 28 September, the hotel re-opens having undergone a complete refurbishment. Fewer rooms and suites are offered and balconies are enclosed, providing guests with larger and more luxurious rooms and suites. State-of-the-art technology is integrated throughout the property.

[Mandarin Grill + Bar](#) is redesigned by Sir Terence Conran and the windows are re-opened for the first time in 40 years to offer views over Statue Square. Vong is replaced by [Pierre](#) – Michelin-star chef, Pierre Gagnaire’s first Hong Kong venture – and M bar replaces Vong bar on the 25th floor.

The Mandarin Cake Shop moves to a new location on the mezzanine and The Café becomes Café Causette. The Krug Room, located in the heart of the hotel, opens as Hong Kong’s most exclusive dining room and is now the only Krug Room in the world.

2007: The Mandarin Spa, covering three floors, is unveiled and incorporates a holistic spa, an indoor swimming pool, a fitness centre including a Kinesis Studio, an enlarged Mandarin Barber on the second floor and the contemporary Mandarin Salon on the 24th floor overlooking Victoria Harbour.

The Lichfield Suite, inspired by the world-renowned photographer, Lord Lichfield, is unveiled on the 20th floor. It is designed by Nicky Haslam and features an array of iconic photographs and mementos from Lord Lichfield’s London studio.

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2018: Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong is awarded with 30 Forbes Travel Guide stars for the hotel, The Mandarin Spa, Pierre, Mandarin Grill + Bar, Man Wah and The Krug Room – the most in any city hotel in the world.

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