

# A City is Born



Victoria Harbour 1860s (HSBC Archives)

## The Port City

Hong Kong was born out of the foreign clamour for trade with China.

The British Empire's flag went up in 1841 - quickly followed by all manner of people. Key to it all was the harbour, a sheltered wonder of seemingly bottomless sea. Ships anchored as floating warehouses. Crews raced each other to deliver news, tea, opium, silk - and more people. A cosmopolitan city was born.

One of the first British trading houses to establish itself in the new colony was Jardine, Matheson & Co. William Jardine and James Matheson were two Scotsmen who, in 1832, had co-founded their firm - or hong - in Canton (now called Guangzhou). They quickly became dominant, and so known as the 'Princely Hong'.

## Where to stay?

Boarding houses and taverns, seaside bars and huts - none offered lodging for more monied merchants. The first trading houses - such as Jardine, Matheson & Co - had mansions with beds for their own. Well-connected travellers might be a guest of the Bishop or the Governor.

Not until 1868 was the Hongkong Hotel built in the heart of the city right on the waterfront. Hong Kong's first five-star hotel, it was just in time. The Suez Canal opened the next year and Hong Kong became a destination.



Hongkong Hotel 1890s (Special Collections, University of Bristol Library - www.hpcbristol.net)

## Hong Kong's first artery

The original waterfront was Queen's Road. Everything now seaward of Queen's Road came later - thanks to Catchick Paul Chater.

Back in the 1880s, he took a sampan out night after night, dropping a plumbline over the side to measure the depths. He courted both merchants and the government with a plan to reshape Hong Kong. The Praya Reclamation Scheme would enable a whole new generation of buildings and public spaces to arise.

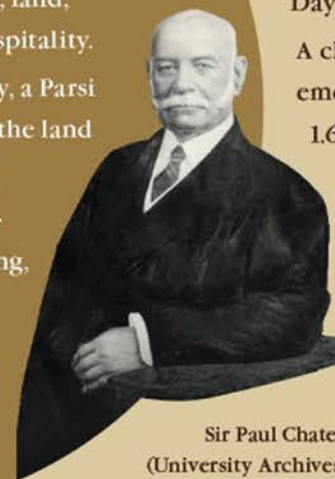


Statue Square with Queen's Building on right and Prince's Building on left (HSBC Archives)

## Who were Chater and Mody?

Chater was born in 1846 to a respectable Armenian family in Calcutta. He became Hong Kong's leading man, at the head of every new venture in docks, land, manufacturing, food, philanthropy and hospitality. With his best friend Hormusji Nowroji Mody, a Parsi businessman philanthropist, Chater owned the land beneath the Prince's and Queen's Buildings, the future location of The Mandarin Hotel.

With another good friend, John Bell-Irving, who was then taipan (top boss) of Jardines, Chater co-founded the Hongkong Land Investment & Agency Company Limited.



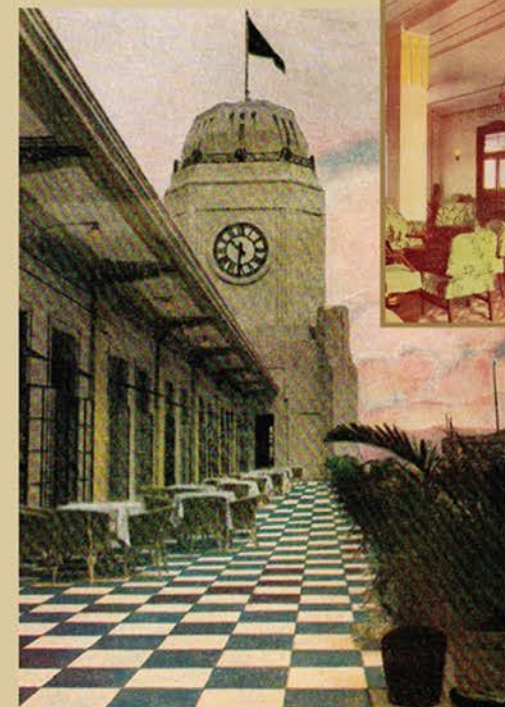
Sir Paul Chater (University Archives, The University of Hong Kong)

## The Gloucester Hotel rises

On New Year's Day, 1926, fire gutted the Hongkong Hotel. Hongkong Land bought and extended the site, opening The Gloucester Hotel in 1932. This became a hub of style, fashion and fun times - with its dance floor and spacious tea lounges and outdoor terraces for sundown aperitifs.



Gloucester Hotel luggage label



The Gloucester Hotel was the height of style in the 1930s (Hongkong Land Corporate Archives)



## Hong Kong, devastated by war, rises again

As World War II approached, party-girls and spies cavedropped in the Gloucester as soldiers gathered.

After two weeks of heavy fighting, Hong Kong surrendered to Japanese occupation on Christmas Day, 1941.

A changed, impoverished, gritty Hong Kong emerged in August 1945. Its pre-war population of 1.6 million had shrunk to just 600,000.

The Gloucester Hotel's high times had passed. It had, however, initiated Hongkong Land into the art of hotel ownership and management.

As for Hong Kong, who could imagine what a glittering magnet to world trade, finance and tourism our city would soon become?

18  
80s Paul Catchick Chater plans Praya Reclamation Scheme



(HSBC Archives)

18  
89 Birth of Hongkong Land Company

18  
99 Queen's Building is built, designed by Leigh & Orange



(HSBC Archives)

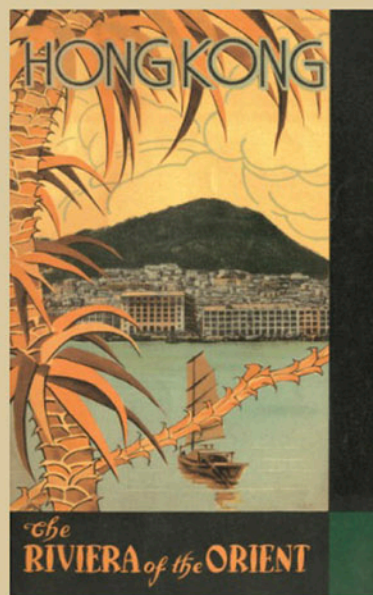
19  
26 Hongkong Hotel Fire the 1st of January

19  
32 The Gloucester Hotel opens (Hongkong Land Corporate Archives)



# The Beginning Of The Mandarin

## Hong Kong rediscovers its magic in record time



Hong Kong as tourist destination (The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited collection, The Hong Kong Heritage Project archive)

Within days of Japan's surrender on 15 August 1945, Hong Kongers surged back to tidy up, rebuild, restart. They were joined by many new arrivals from the Mainland following the rise of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949.

Hugh Barton, the charming, decisive chairman of Hongkong Land from 1955 to 1963, had the imagination to see that Hong Kong would soon be a tourist destination like no other in Asia. What it clearly needed was a world-class hotel.



Central circa 1960, as City Hall emerges (HSBC Archives)

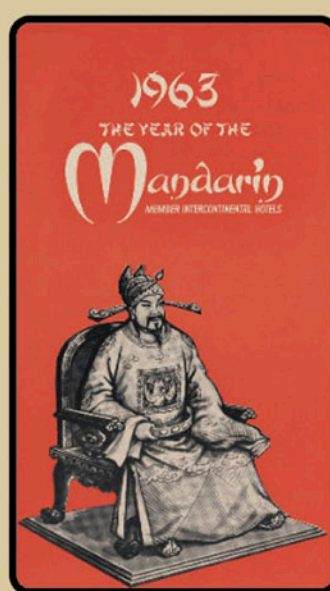
## Boardroom battles

He thought Hongkong Land should diversify away from offices. The company's close ties to Jardines and leading airlines offered a ready client base for luxury hotels.

His manager, Bevan Field, disagreed: 'We have no special interest in the hotel business, apart from the Gloucester Hotel, from which our main lesson is that we should leave hotels to the experts and concentrate on real estate...

We are not a hotel Company...'

## What's in a name?



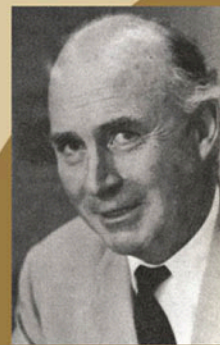
A shift in identity led a Queen to become a Mandarin. How did it happen?

In 1961, a public appeal invited suggestions and over 2,700 names came in. But the Directors chose to stick with the Queen's name, originally given to the building that formerly stood on the site in commemoration of Queen Victoria.

But by June 1962, it was declared:

'After further consideration the Board of Directors... feel that THE MANDARIN more satisfactorily reflects the oriental setting and atmosphere which will be part of its attraction, especially to visitors from Western lands.'

Once the name was chosen, a scholar, Dr S.I. Hsiung, was called upon to expound its meaning. Mandarin originally meant 'Senior Grand Secretary', then grew to denote proper rank and duty in China, he noted. It also refers to the language used by those officials - and even the fruit to match the colour of the Chinese officials' gowns!



Hugh Barton, Jardine's taipan and visionary behind The Mandarin Hotel

## It's mad, but let's do it!

Even Barton admitted 'there is a far greater measure of uncertainty and speculation...' in the hotel business. But Barton's enthusiasm won. Demolition of Queen's Building was announced in June 1960, and the plan to build the 500-600 room Queen's Hotel was revealed. It was wrongly dubbed 'Barton's Folly'.

'The thing that always amazed me about Hong Kong,' said Barton, 'was that you could do twice as much in the same time as you could in the City of London, for the simple reason that the people you wanted to see were all around you, at most a five-minute walk away. That was one of my most pressing arguments for building a top-class hotel.'

Central now has a City Hall and, soon, The Mandarin Hotel



## Cooling down

The steaminess of Hong Kong is renowned. Back in the day, punkah-wallahs - people who sat all day pulling a string attached to fabric fans near the ceiling - made air move. Not until the 1930s could whole buildings be air-conditioned.

In 1961, as more new land was reclaimed on the waterfront, Hongkong Land secured space under which it laid pipes to bring in seawater to cool its central air conditioning systems - the first was for The Mandarin.

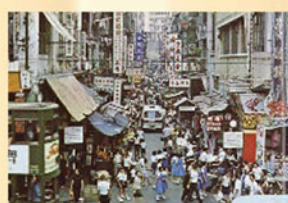


Designs - for what was first called Queen's Hotel - epitomised luxury

1949 Hongkong Land engineers find air conditioning 'peculiar and interesting'

1959 Chairman Hugh Barton proposes Queen's Hotel

1960 Hong Kong's population is now up to 3 million and the port is booming, exporting goods to the world



1960 'Unanimous' agreement to expand into hotels. Hongkong Land establishes City Hotels Ltd

1962 'Queen's Hotel' becomes The Mandarin Hotel (Hongkong Land Corporate Archives)



# A Style Icon Opens



Henderson's three goddesses still grace the lobby

## The Mandarin sets new standards of style

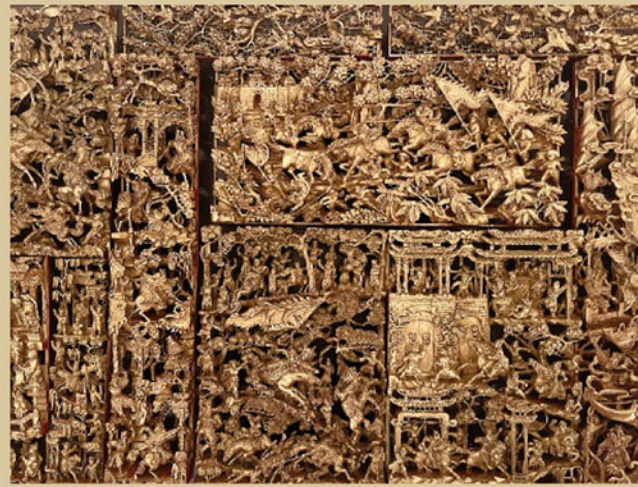
Bold, dashing, and supremely practical, The Mandarin offered everything from Venetian glass mosaics to ethereal etchings of Chinese goddesses.



## Building Barton's Folly

Architecture firm, Leigh & Orange, founded here in 1874, had designed the Queen's Building and The Gloucester. Senior partner John Howorth now designed The Mandarin.

The Mandarin was the first hotel in Asia offering a bath in every room. Just before opening, Hong Kong's water ran out, as drought emptied reservoirs. People all over town planned their weeks around when and where they could wash. So essential was water that the roof-top swimming pool became an instant reservoir.



Ashton sourced carved door portals across the region

## Don Ashton swaps Hollywood for Hong Kong

Don Ashton, acclaimed art director for a series of hugely successful Hollywood films - Peter Ustinov's *Billy Budd*, *Indiscreet* with Cary Grant and Ingmar Bergman, and *Bridge on the River Kwai* - was engaged to set the tone.

The figurehead of Justice from the clipper ship in the film *Billy Budd* gave the Clipper Lounge its name. Runners were sent to antique dealers far and wide for the carved and gilded door portals used to clad the lobby walls.



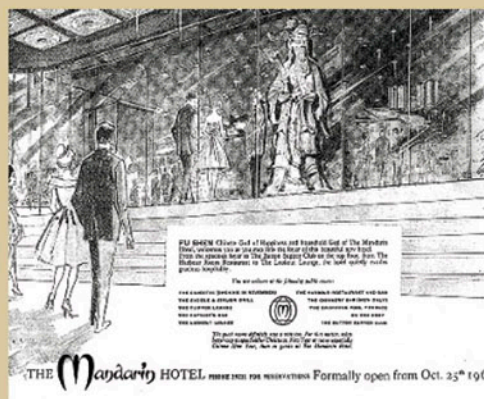
Ashton's sketch of the Mezzanine Foyer



Don Ashton sketched a resort of high elegance



Ashton's vision for the 'Function Room'



The South China Morning Post reported "The Mandarin a new luxury hotel in the heart of Hong Kong opened quietly today to receive guests of the Gloucester, which ends 30 years of service."

## Antonio Casadei

Renowned Italian ceramicist Casadei engraved glass tables with gold for the Clipper Lounge, carved panels for stone rubbings in the bedrooms, and produced vast bas-reliefs of sunflowers for the ceilings of the Lookout Lounge. His Chinese shadow puppets graced the ground floor coffee shop.



Antonio Casadei carved sunflowers for the Lookout Lounge

## Gerard D'Alton Henderson

The eccentric, flamboyant artist, Gerard D'Alton Henderson, set lapis lazuli mosaic in and around the pool. His brilliant swirls of colour graced the Grill with prancing horses and Mongol princes. Finally he projected an enormous mural of three Chinese goddesses on to the lobby wall to score their outlines in the wet cement, before layering them with gold leaf.



Henderson's mosaics stretched from pool to sky

## The Mandarin arrives

The Mandarin opened on 1st September 1963, quietly and elegantly with no grand flourish. Each level opened as it was ready and suites were sold from HK\$40 per night. With its 25 stories and the original curved M logo, it

stood out against the backdrop of Hong Kong Island.

On 25th October 1963, Governor Sir Robert Black and Lady Black hosted the Red Cross Centenary Ball at The Mandarin alongside their Royal Highnesses, The Duke and Duchess of Kent.

Everyone who was anyone was there - setting the tone for a hotel which has become home to the local elite as well as international travellers.



Deity of Happiness Fu Shen, a Mandarin judge, was the obvious choice of House God

1963 The Mandarin Hotel opens on the 1st of September



1963 1st General Manager: Tony Ross (1963-1969)

# An Instant Hit



Back when cars could park in Central, The Mandarin's Rolls Royce fleet stood out

## We have built it and they will come!

Back in June 1960, the powers that be at Hongkong Land had wondered if tourism would be the next big thing. Those doubts were quickly set aside. Visitor numbers arriving at Kai Tak Airport rose from 315,000 in 1963 to 2,775,014 by 1983.

The Mandarin had timed it just right.

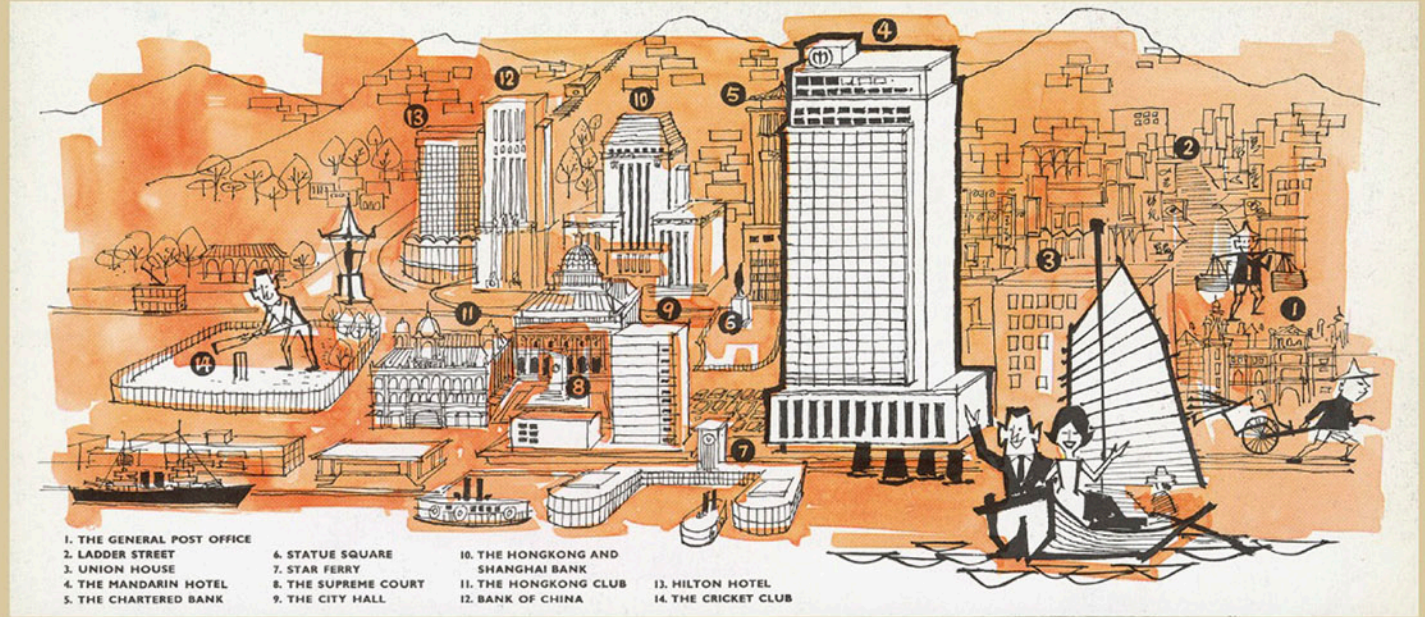


Illustration for guests showing city attractions

## The Mandarin is a magnet

It was just what the international jet-set had been waiting for. Early guest lists reflect the rich and famous, and are peppered with European royalty, aristocracy, politics and business figures from Nixon to Onassis, and media stars Peter O'Toole, Vera Lynn, Kirk Douglas and Gina Lollobrigida.



The world's rich and famous have kept on coming

## Legends grow fast in The Mandarin

The hotel's reputation as the central hub of activity was sealed by the Button Supper Club with its great dance bands and gourmet delicacies, or the Lookout Lounge offering views of landing aeroplanes and the hills towards China.

The famous Captain's Bar is still with us, just off the welcoming lobby, as is the Clipper Lounge where socialites and secret traders still sink into its armchairs to plot, play or regroup. The Mandarin Grill still provides the best ballast to underpin any important moment.



The Button Supper Club



Guide for guests to Hong Kong's hidden treasures

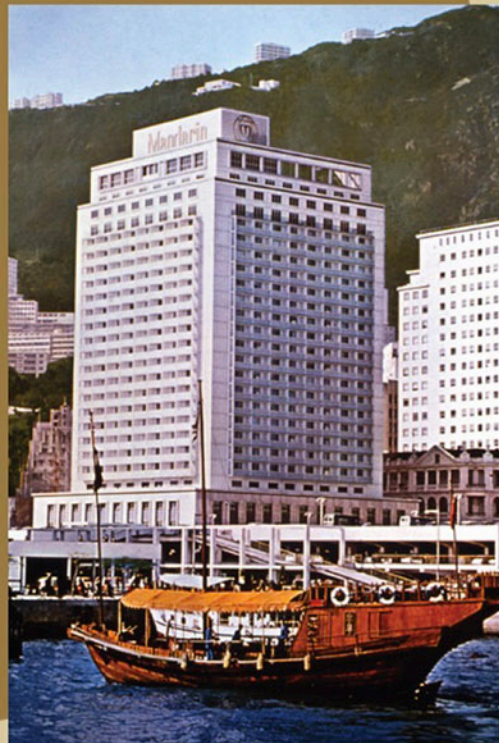
## Reaching new shores

Tourists traditionally stayed in Kowloon, where the airport was. The Mandarin was the first top class hotel on this side of the harbour since the Hongkong Hotel of the nineteenth century.

In those days, with the hotel on the waterfront, cross-harbour late nights or tourist trips could be done by wallah-wallah - the rolling sampans found just by the front door. Early Mandarin hotel brochures claimed:

'Hong Kong is world famous as a shopper's paradise, but the busy tourist, flitting from tailor to curio shop, often misses the more relaxing aspects of the Island. Twenty minutes from the teeming streets and crowded shops of the Central District lie the golden sands and cooling seas of a dozen beaches...' The Mandarin junk would take you there.

The Mandarin with its sampan in the foreground in the 1970s



The Lookout Lounge lived up to its name



The Captain's Bar opened with The Mandarin

## Imperturbable in a crazy world

In 1967, Fortune magazine listed The Mandarin as one of the 11 great hotels in the world, one of the 'imperturbable oases in a clamorous world' and the only contender in Asia.

Many put that early success down to the first General Manager Tony Ross. An early secretary to Ross was heard to say 'He was a fantastic hotelier. Nothing escaped him.'

Thanks to Harold Lee, The Mandarin's first chairman and son of legendary Lee Hysan, the hotel's fame spread quickly. When in the United States, Britain or Europe, he dined with senior figures in government and diplomacy.

1965 1st Central footbridge links The Mandarin to Prince's Building

1967 Fortune magazine lists The Mandarin as one of the 11 great hotels in the world



1968 Newly decorated Harbour Restaurant opens, and Button Club becomes Man Wah Restaurant



# Celebrating The '60s And '70s



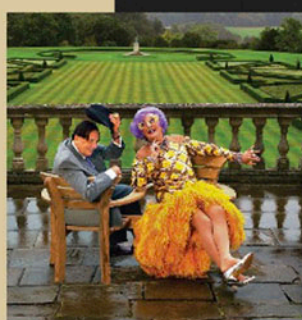
Looking east from The Mandarin at night

## Time to Party, Party, Party

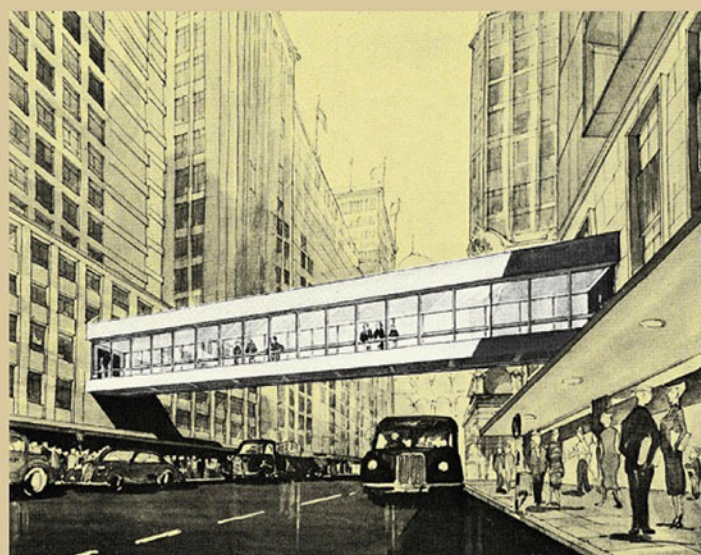
From 1968 the Harbour Restaurant on the top floor rocked to the laughter and tears offered by great stars: Dave Allen, Les Dawson, Barry Humphries, Bob Monkhouse, Max Bygraves and more. In 1973 it was renamed the Harbour Room and opened by Eartha Kitt. Renowned 'megastar' Barry Humphries recalls a moment when his impersonation was too good. He was wearing the powder blue suit, buck teeth and nicotine-stained fingers of his persona, Sir Les Patterson, Australian Cultural Attaché to the Far East. The Maître d'hôtel stepped in and refused him entry, sending him back to his room for being too drunk! On another occasion, when visiting as Dame Edna Everage, The Mandarin placed gladioli in the star's room, knowing they were her (fictional) favourite. 'Of course other hotels have copied... they've tried to get it right, but they've failed, they've failed! They'll never capture the class, the style, the ambience, the mood, the intimacy, the care, the LOVE...', Dame Edna breathily exclaimed. Fashion changed and in time The Harbour Room closed its doors to make way for fine dining, with the opening of the intimate Pierrot French restaurant, while the Lookout Lounge became the jewel-box known as the Harlequin Bar. People lined up to get in.



Eartha Kitt wowed crowds at the Harbour Room, 1973



Barry Humphries and his alter ego Dame Edna Everage are Fans



## CHATER ROAD BRIDGE

which links the Mandarin Hotel shopping area with the Prince's Building shopping arcades.

The innovative footbridge connects The Mandarin to a shopper's paradise in Prince's Building (Hongkong Land Corporate Archives)

## Shop 'till you drop

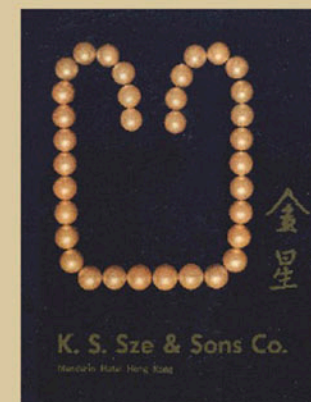
One of the many secrets of The Mandarin's success lies in the deceptively simple footbridge, linking the hotel to Prince's Building. When the air-conditioned passageway opened in 1965, the glamorous new Prince's Mandarin Shopping Galleries offered more than 100 shops, including those on the mezzanine floor in the hotel. It was such a popular destination that retailers clamoured to pay the massive rent of HK\$5,600 a year.



The Mandarin set the fashion - and showed it - this time it was Christian Dior

Now hotel guests and residents had easy access to shops carrying high-quality tailoring, cameras, electronic items, antiques, jewellery and more. Global brands - Christian Dior, Gérald Piaget, Salvatore Ferragamo, John Lobb, Harry Winston - all launched collections or opened flagships there.

K.S. Sze is the longest-standing tenant of The Mandarin. From humble beginnings in the 1920s, when orphan Sze Kong Shun began evaluating gemstones, it has grown into a venerable purveyor of fine jewels. As soon as The Mandarin opened, the luscious K.S. Sze boutique found its home.



Long-standing tenant K.S. Sze



Introducing the Shopping Galleries (Hongkong Land Corporate Archives)

## Feeding frenzy

The Mandarin hosted its first three-day Chinese Imperial Banquet in 1972, inspired by the ancient tradition of honouring travelling emperors.

Held at the newly opened restaurant, Man Wah (The Mandarin's name in Chinese), it was a triumph. The culinary cognoscenti asked to return each sitting for more. Leading food journalists called it the best eating experience they had ever had.

In 1985, the hotel did it again, offering three occasions to sample a total of 36 courses. Food critics and gourmets came from all over the world.



## Stars and the serious converge



Princess Alexandra receives The Mandarin welcome

The Mandarin was home to the glitterati. Princess Diana bought gold earrings at K.S. Sze which she wore on a return trip in 1995. Other royal guests included Thailand's Queen Mother, the Sultan of Brunei and

The Shah of Iran. Prime ministers, earls, foreign ministers and fashionistas, all stayed in this famous hotel. So did giants of business, and the stars, including William Holden of the epochal Hong Kong films, *The World of Suzie Wong* and *Love is a Many-Splendored Thing*, Charlton Heston, James Michener, Mary Quant, Yehudi Menuhin, Maria Callas and Dame Margot Fonteyn.



Charlton Heston is greeted by General Manager Andreas Hofer

1970 2nd General Manager: Peter Stafford [1970-1975]



1970 Cake shop opens

1972 Three-day Chinese Imperial Banquet held at Man Wah Restaurant



1973 Hongkong Land acquires stake in The Oriental, Bangkok. Mandarin International Hotels Limited forms in 1974

1975 3rd General Manager: Andreas Hofer [1975-1982]



# Mandarin Oriental Debuts

## From the Fan to Fans

In 1973, Hongkong Land bought 49 percent of The Oriental Hotel, the famous luxury property on Bangkok's majestic Chao Phraya River, Thailand. The next year, Mandarin International Hotels Limited was established to develop and run the growing number of hotels in the Group. By 1985, with seven hotels in the portfolio, the company changed its name to Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group.



The Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong's 'own' fan - an 1870 Canton fan showing scenes of royal courts and social life



Yesterday's Oriental is today's Mandarin Oriental Bangkok

The new era unfurled with an iconic new logo for the Group. Pentagram, the international design agency from London, was commissioned to create a golden fan, giving an elegantly oriental flavour to the brand. As the founding hotel for this now famed brand, Hong Kong's own Mandarin Oriental chose red for its fan, symbolising prosperity and joy.



Designers from Pentagram create the Fan in red for Hong Kong

John Lennon's choice of accommodation was the Mandarin Oriental



## Fun for all

Celebrities continued to visit the famous hotel. In 1979, John Lennon and his son Sean stayed on their way to Japan to meet Yoko Ono. David Bowie was also in town with Iggy Pop and serious partying ensued.

As a supporter of the annual Hong Kong Arts Festival (founded in 1973), the hotel also played host to a bevy of international musicians, dancers, actors and artists. Andy Warhol stayed in 1982. It was a memorable experience - he took photographs and collected hotel paraphernalia, which was showcased in a 2013 exhibition.

On its 21st birthday in 1974, the Mandarin Oriental was voted the best hotel in the world by both the Financial Times and Executive Travel magazine.



Andy Warhol found inspiration on his Mandarin Oriental balcony

## "Discipline at The Mandarin makes the army look like kindergarten"



Karam Singh guides guests to a great night out

So said Sandhurst-trained officer in the Fourth Royal Tank Regiment and future marketing services head for the hotel Group, Martin Spurrer.

From the earliest days, Mandarin Oriental management has also insisted on keeping its colleagues happy, well-fed and perfectly in tune with the needs of guests. 'Legendary Quality Experience' is the gold standard of customer service worldwide.

So many characters have graced the hotel over the past 60 years with their discreet, intuitive and personal service.

Doorman Karam Singh greeted each arrival in his famous red coat and turban, Moghul horseman boots and gold braid. Chauffeur Ah Wing polished

the hotel's Silver Phantom Rolls Royce, and the hotel's first concierge was 'Our man from Amalfi', Luigi Gambardella, whose index cards carried each guest's preferences for next time.

Danny Lai, hired in 1972, was a core figure in hotel operations for 49 years. His passing in September 2022 was a very sad moment for many in Hong Kong. Another legend from 1983 until his retirement was Italian concierge, Giovanni Valenti. As he told celebrants of the Mandarin's 40th birthday (in 2003) about his domain, the hotel lobby: 'it's got Soul...!'

These individuals, together with hundreds more have focused relentlessly on delighting guests with absolute



service excellence. Some colleagues have taken the concept of working with heart to multi-generational extremes, with parents, spouses and siblings all working together.

General Manager Peter French and Chief Concierge Giovanni Valenti celebrate being the 'Best Hotel in the World'



Mandarin Oriental staff have style, and charm



1982 4th General Manager: Peter French [1982-1986]

1984 Voted best hotel in the world by The Financial Times and Executive Travel

1985 The 24k gold fan logo is launched and The Mandarin is renamed Mandarin Oriental

1986 5th General Manager: Jürg Tüscher [1986-1990]

1987 Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group floats on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, separating from Hongkong Land

1988 Major remodelling by the hotel's original designer, Don Ashton, costing more than HK\$100 million



# The Handover Decade

## George Chinnery rolls in his grave

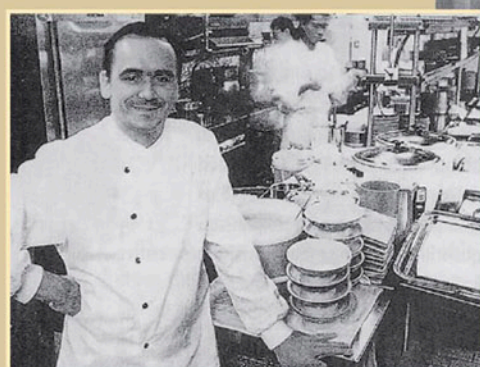
George Chinnery has been described as that 'misogynist painter', but also the only major Western artist to record 19th century life on the China Coast. How fitting, then, that The Chinnery Bar was created just for men, back when this was seen as acceptable. But Hong Kong's women were not to be so lightly disregarded. In the 1990s, they stormed the citadel, with humour and style.

## Caviar and cigars

Creativity and innovation are integral to Hong Kong and to Mandarin Oriental style. One day the hotel installed the then-new Facsimile (Fax) machines in every suite and was first to offer 24-hour, on-demand video entertainment. Next, it sponsored the all-Chinese Hong Kong Dragons rugby team. Barely catching its breath, it opened the sumptuously wicked Cohiba Cigar Divan and then a multi-million-dollar refitted Gymnasium offering 16 fully-trained instructors and masseurs. Asia's first Caviar Bar served specialty Beluga, Ossetra, Sevruga and pressed caviar from the Petrossian caviar house - previously only available in Paris and New York. Another treat formerly reserved only for the cognoscenti of New York and London was the cooking of Jean-Georges Vongerichten. He brought contemporary French cuisine with subtle oriental influences to Mandarin Oriental's new restaurant, Vong. The Awards kept coming too. In 1992, Mandarin Oriental was the first to receive the American Express "Awards for Excellence" Grand Prix for Best Hotel in the World.



(Special Collection, the University of Hong Kong Libraries)



Chef Jean Georges Vongerichten (Hongkong Land Corporate Archives/Jardine Matheson)



Fireworks mark the handover in 1997 (Special Collection, the University of Hong Kong Libraries)

## The 1997 handover

The handover of sovereignty over Hong Kong from Britain to China was an event 99 years in the making. It was a major global news story - and one that was partly covered from the roof of the Mandarin Oriental.

All day, the rain poured down, fun-lovers partied, and history was made. At the stroke of midnight, the British Flag was lowered and China's People's Liberation Army arrived. Through it all, the Mandarin Oriental gave sanctuary and solemnity to the occasion. Well-known UK news anchor, Trevor MacDonald, reported for ITV's News at Ten from a temporary studio on the roof. He channelled Rudyard Kipling who once said that if one stopped at Port Said at the top of the Suez Canal, one saw everyone passing by. For MacDonald, the same was true of the lobby of the Mandarin Oriental hotel: 'if you sat there long enough, the world would go by'.

The handover ceremony brought in 40,000 visitors who found that Hong Kong's hidden delights remained. The country parks and outlying islands were joined now by a huge new airport and the massive new Buddha on Lantau Island. Amid major trade fairs and film festivals, the new Disneyland and old Dragon Boats, Hong Kong now offered a frisson of history in the making.



The newly built Convention Centre, site of the 1997 handover (Special Collection, the University of Hong Kong Libraries)



Danny Lai greets British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, 1997



Cheers as the Mandarin Oriental wins the first ever American Express 'Awards for Excellence', 1992 (Hongkong Land Corporate Archives/Jardine Matheson)



Princess Diana was a repeat guest at the Mandarin Oriental (Jardine Matheson)

1990 6th General Manager: Gian Carlo Balanieri [1990-1992]

1990s Women conquered The Chinnery Bar, Asia's first caviar restaurant opens, together with Havana Cigar Divan and Vong



1992 7th General Manager: Seamus McManus [1992-1995]

1995 8th General Manager: Liam Lambert [1995-2000]



1996 The Last Emperor's Banquet was held at Man Wah Restaurant

# 60 fantastic years



The Mandarin Oriental remains at the centre of it all



The Grill with natural light

A refurbished Man Wah Restaurant



## Giving back to Hong Kong

With much of the hotel a work of art in itself, it's no wonder that The Mandarin was a pioneer in putting Hong Kong on to the international art map. Long before today's international art fairs, The Mandarin held auctions conducted by Sotheby's with proceeds often going to local charities - and the idea of Hong Kong as a global art hub was seeded.

Throughout all the ups and downs, the Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong has always remembered the community in which it sits. In 2022, it donated almost 5,000 hours to Hong Kong charities and has further pledged 21,900 hours in partnership with Jardine Matheson in celebration of the hotel's 60th anniversary in 2023 (356 days x 60 years).

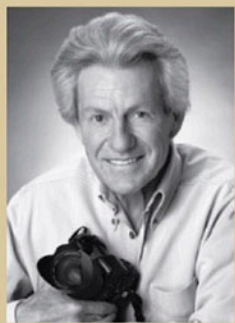
It has also been a trailblazer in Sustainability - eliminating all single-use plastics from its operations, ensuring the origins of key items - coffee, tea, paper and seafood - are sustainable, and meeting monthly targets on energy-consumption and waste management.



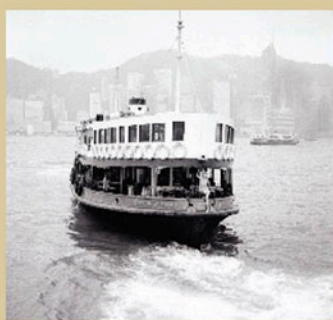
The Aubrey, the latest top-floor hideaway with a view

## Fans at heart

Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong is where it all began. The first hotel was the original flagship of the now global Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group. It is also the hotel that engendered the wildly successful advertising campaign - *I'm a Fan*.



Lord Lichfield was the first official Fan photographer and a Mandarin Oriental regular



Lichfield photographs show his love for Hong Kong

The Group simply connected its fan logo with its most celebrated guests from around the

world, by calling them 'Fans'. Celebrities were asked to share their love of the hotels - not for payment but for donations to their chosen charities. The very first Fan was Hong Kong's own Sir David Tang who was passionate about the Hong Kong property and went on to share his contacts book of other Fans with the Group. He said:



Fans of the Mandarin Oriental at the 50th Anniversary Gala

'It's near perfection. The name itself conjures up where one should stay, a kind of onomatopoeia. And it's got location, location, location. And coupled with that, immaculate service, it's hard to beat when you're away from home. And they remember you're away from home so they try to treat you as if you're at home.'

The first photographer of the Fan campaign was Lord Lichfield, cousin to Queen Elizabeth II and friend to a wide circle of celebrities. Patrick Lichfield's passing in 2006



Mary McCartney

prompted the creation of a suite in his name. The Fan campaign's current photographer is Mary McCartney.



Sir David Tang was the first Fan

## Culinary evolution

The hotel completely closed for nine months and reopened in 2006 following a significant renovation - enhancing its services to maintain its top ranking in the world while recognising the appeal of some of its classic venues such as the timeless Captain's Bar, Café Causette, Clipper Lounge, The Mandarin Grill, Mandarin Cake Shop and The Chinnery. The Mandarin Grill + Bar was redesigned by Sir Terence Conran, offering peerless views of Statue Square and Chater Garden. In 2021, The Krug Room was opened with an innovative tasting menu and the largest selection of Krug Champagne outside France. Vong was replaced by the two-Michelin-star Pierre - Pierre Gagnaire's first Hong Kong venue - later replaced by The Aubrey, an eccentric Japanese izayaka.

Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong is now home to nine highly individual bars and restaurants, including much-loved greats, two



The new Krug Room

Michelin-stars and one of Asia's 50 Best Bars.

The hotel has also received five Five-Star ratings by Forbes Travel Guide across all three categories: hotel, restaurants and spa.

## We see the best of people in the worst of times

As with Hong Kong, so with Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong. During 2003, there was SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). In 2009 there was Bird Flu (H1N1). Then Covid came. With each new challenge, the hotel not only survived but prospered.

## We are legendary, you are legendary

The Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong, promises 'Legendary Service From the Heart' - but mere slogans are not enough. Colleagues regularly demonstrate how they engage with empathy, attention and kindness, to provide genuine, personalised service.

It is a long way from the hotel's early days when a heartfelt question was whether this luxury hotel would be good enough to lead the crowd. The answer, in The Mandarin's 60th year, is undoubtedly a resounding yes. Happy Birthday!



Thanks are due to HISTORY INK LIMITED, SUGAR HK and Martin Spurrier for the creation of The Mandarin at 60.

2000 9th General Manager:  
Peter Lowe  
[2000-2003]

2004 10th General Manager:  
Peter French  
[2004-2009]

2009 11th General Manager:  
Jonas Schuermann  
[2009-2016]

2013 The Mandarin Oriental  
turns 50

2016 12th General Manager:  
Anthony Costa  
[2016-2017]

2017 13th General Manager:  
Pierre Barthes  
[2017-2021]

2021 14th General Manager:  
Amanda Hyndman