

TIME TO TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT HONG KONG



Hong Kong is a high-functioning, sophisticated and layered ecosystem. We meet some of the most interesting players from the worlds of business, technology, the arts and more – and find out why they love their city. The natural environment is high on many lists but some of their answers will surprise you: from a hotel chief's love of tennis to a gallerist's favourite ferry route. brandhk.gov.hk



ASIA'S TOWERING CITY BRANCHES OUT.

Hong Kong has always provided a unique platform for businesses looking to build a presence in Asia and this decade will be no different. The four core pillars of the economy (see 1 to 4) are powering ahead with the rapid adoption of technology and the rollout of reforms. Meanwhile, a creative set of pillars has arisen (see 5 to 8) that leverage the city’s traditional strengths and lead to broad opportunities.



1

Financial services
Hong Kong is first and foremost an international financial centre. This dynamic city of some 7.5 million people is a global banking giant with a deep pool of investment capital and a chart-topping global stock exchange. A combination of this rich financial pedigree with new technology has created the framework for a growing fintech industry. Banking and insurance start-ups are benefitting from regulatory reforms and the ability to hire talent from all over the world, leading one CEO to describe Hong Kong as “the city for digital banking”.



2

Trading and logistics
Hong Kong made its name as a trading entrepôt and that import-export ethos continues to this day. Everything and everyone is on the move and this city knows how to transport goods around the world. Cargo enters and leaves one of the busiest airports in the world, while lorries drive in and out of the container port at all hours. Even the ships themselves are up for sale: Hong Kong is the regional port of call for the buying and selling of luxury yachts. Geography continues to pay dividends: half of the world’s population lives within five hours by air.

3

Tourism
Hong Kong’s hospitality experts have been keeping residents and office workers well looked after while they wait for the safe return of overseas tourists. Myriad international chefs and restaurateurs are cooking up a storm in Hong Kong, where local palates are both uncompromising and hungry for fresh concepts. Five-star service has always been one of Hong Kong’s specialties. The city’s heavyweight hotel sector has the red carpet ready to roll out and plans in place to wow new guests and diners in the years ahead.



4

Business and professional services
Not everyone in Hong Kong works in finance; there are also plenty of lawyers, accountants, engineers and architects too. Hong Kong’s professional-services sector stands out in Asia for its expertise and overseas companies looking to invest or expand in mainland China come to Hong Kong for its trusted legal system. Students, meanwhile, are drawn to its top-ranked universities. Hong Kong invests heavily in education and its natural environment provides opportunities for learning beyond the classroom.



5

Science and technology
Hong Kong has a strong science and technology background; hidden-away laboratories just tend to be overshadowed by the bright lights of banking and finance. Now the industries are being brought closer together. Biotechnology companies are funding research by listing on the stock market, while entrepreneurs are working with academics to take inventions from the lab to the market. Manufacturing and hardware have always been among Hong Kong’s strengths and robotics is a new growth area.

6

Design
Hong Kong’s current crop of designers is starting to make a name for themselves around the region and their expertise extends far beyond hospitality interiors. The city is home to one of the world’s largest workplace design firms, where creative teams are collaborating to create safe, clean and inspiring office environments. There’s also plenty of fun to be had along with the hard work. Exploring Hong Kong’s great outdoors is a natural source of inspiration and provides the city’s creatives with fresh ideas.



7

Fashion and textiles
Many Hong Kong fortunes (and business yarns) have been made in the textile industry and the garment industry is stitched into the fabric of this city. Alongside international brands sourcing materials and manufacturing, local creatives are developing their own brands and fashion graduates are getting a commercial leg-up before launching their designs on the global catwalk schedule. Members of the younger generation are helming classic labels, while new arrivals are giving luxury a second life. Nevertheless, some fashions never change: in Hong Kong, it always pays to look the part.



8

Arts and culture
Hong Kong is adding a few more layers to its established reputation as an international art market. A variety of artists’ spaces and creative enclaves are springing up across the city and art lovers around the region are eagerly awaiting the opening of a world-class contemporary art and design museum in Kowloon. International curators and other industry professionals are building a home as well as a career in Hong Kong, while developing a strong appreciation for its culture. In this modern skyscraper city, heritage appreciation is on a high and an old ferry is the real star.

FINTECH WINS

Hong Kong's growing fintech sector has a clear edge over other markets – thanks to the unique combination of the clout of its prestigious financial institutions and its full-throttle entrepreneurial attitude. Here are some highlights.



Trust blue

Mox's bank card is a specially created Pantone colour called "trust blue", a nod to Hong Kong's neon lights and the corporate colours of Mox's parent, Standard Chartered.



Old bank, new tricks

Mox

Standard Chartered is banking royalty in Hong Kong. It's the oldest issuer of Hong Kong banknotes still in existence and also founder of a start-up. Mox launched in September 2020 – one of eight virtual banks launched in 12 months. "We are building a future operating model for Standard Chartered," says Mox CEO Deniz Güven (*pictured*), a Turkish banker and former basketball player.

Hong Kong's clutch of new internet-only lenders follows sweeping reforms in 2017 by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. "Hong Kong is pioneering in Asia," says Güven, who transferred from Singapore to set up Mox. "It is going to be the market in digital banking."

Payment plan

Octopus

Octopus started out in 1997 as a world-leading payment method for public transport before expanding to convenience stores, fast food and other retailers. "It has always been our dream to take Octopus outside Hong Kong," says CEO Angus Lee (*pictured*). Travellers might soon be using Octopus to pay on mainland China's subway network and deals with smart-card transport systems around Asia are also on the cards.



Pay as you go

Some 15 million Octopus transactions take place every day in Hong Kong, either by card or via smartphone. Fast and convenient "tap and go" technology continues to be preferred to scanning QR codes and a new initiative, rolled out in July 2020, should help the company penetrate the city's final few cash holdouts, mainly taxis and traditional wet markets.

Dog days

OneDegree

Insurance start-up OneDegree occupies a floor in Fun Tower, a pet-friendly building in Kwun Tong. The former industrial area, now an alternative business district, is currently home to a cluster of insurance companies, from long-standing players Axa and AIA to a new batch of online-only insurers such as OneDegree. CEO and co-founder Alvin Kwok (*pictured*), a former banker, is keen to explore emerging lifestyle trends such as e-commerce; coverage for the return shipping costs of unwanted orders is a popular policy. Pet insurance, launched in April 2020, is another growth area. "There are more dogs and cats in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan than there are kindergarten and primary school kids," says Kwok, while playing with golden retriever QQ. OneDegree has also opened a Taipei office (where cats are more common pets among staff) and it's in the process of expanding into mainland China, Singapore and Thailand.



Talent show

OneDegree staff come from as far afield as the US and Australia. "That is the strength of Hong Kong," says Alvin Kwok, who has built the firm from scratch with fintech talent from all over the world.



My Hong Kong

Lawrence Chu, co-founder, Oriente

Oriente, which allows SMEs to provide credit to customers without a bank account, is expanding throughout southeast Asia. Co-founder Lawrence Chu (*pictured*) is based at its HQ in Hong Kong, where he is also a keen collector of contemporary art. Chu and his wife Natalie recently decided to sell some of their art to fund a series of grants and an artist-residency programme. "We are looking for new ways to engage in art," says Chu on the morning of the Sotheby's auction. The 40-year-old began collecting while living in London and kept it up after moving back to Hong Kong in 2005. Young artists feature heavily in his gallery at home, which displays Hong Kong's Firenze Lai, Stephen Wong and an early Chris Huen (alongside work by even younger painters: the four Chu children).

LOADING ZONE

A long-standing trade nexus, Hong Kong is geographically blessed – as a port, an aviation hub and a terminus for goods travelling by land across Asia. It’s also well placed to direct the digital movement of people and goods. We meet some key players.



Plane view

Hong Kong International Airport

Judging by the number of cranes at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA), the world’s busiest air-cargo hub is building for an even busier future. A suite of projects is due to complete over the next few years, from a major existing Central Asia Hub to a giant new logistics centre backed by e-commerce giant Alibaba. Cissy Chan, executive director, commercial, Airport Authority Hong Kong, says that the new three-runway system in 2024 will be a “quantum leap in terms of capacity”. Cargo volumes have stayed robust during the pandemic. Operators such as Cathay Pacific have been shuttling essentials around the world, contributing to a recent increase in cargo flights. Hong Kong’s aviation hub is also upping the cool stakes in the transport of fresh food and pharmaceuticals, another long-term growth area alongside e-commerce. “Within a five-hour flight of Hong Kong you can reach half of the world’s population,” says Chan.

Cool runnings

HKIA has received several accreditations from the International Air Transport Association for its handling of temperature-controlled products and produce. Out on the cargo apron, a fleet of new cool dollies (caravan-style fridges-on-wheels) take care of high-value pharmaceuticals and other perishables on the journey between plane and terminal.



My Hong Kong

Mike Simpson, Simpson Marine

Originally from the UK, Mike Simpson first came ashore in Hong Kong on a 38-foot yacht that he had built himself. More than 35 years later, the ex-army adventurer continues to arrive in a similar form, steering his Windy 22, a 1970s daycruiser, from his home on Lamma Island to his office in Aberdeen. The commute takes 20 minutes, from dock to dock. “In fair weather,” he says. “If there’s a typhoon in the offing, it takes a little longer.”

Simpson’s company, one of Asia’s largest yacht dealers, has offices around the region, representing European yacht brands, such as Beneteau and Sanlorenzo. The 76-year-old is excited at the growth prospects of Sanya on the island of Hainan, recently declared a free-trade zone. “That could make a huge difference to the development of the China market,” he says.



Safe harbour

Simpson christened his new sailing yacht *Domino 2* in a nod to the boat he sailed here in 1984, when he dropped anchor in the city. “Hong Kong is the biggest market by far for us and it has the longest tradition,” he says.



Port of call

Waterside dining

Hong Kong’s most exclusive new restaurant is not where you’d expect – inside a Tsing Yi warehouse. The Rambler, opened in October, serves Cantonese classics, healthy salads and flat whites amid the cranes of one of the world’s busiest ports. The diners at this handsome cafeteria, designed by A Work of Substance, are the 1,000 or so lorry drivers, forklift operators and other workers at Goodman Interlink. This warehouse is one of 11 in Hong Kong belonging to Goodman, an Australian property developer. Another two are in development; Goodman Westlink in Tuen Mun will connect directly to the airport via a new underwater tunnel.



SUPER FOOD

Epicurean delights can be found around every corner in Hong Kong. Top restaurant and hotel chefs work hard to please the city's discerning diners – and casual options are equally exciting. Hong Kong proves that there's no such thing as too many cooks.

Team players

BaseHall

Basement food halls are a popular lunchtime spot around Asia but BaseHall is taking the communal concept to new culinary heights. The tasty new food hall sits at the bottom of Jardine House in the central business district and brings together a who's who of Hong Kong's hottest independent restaurateurs.

Soho's Treehouse brings its veggie wraps to Central, while Roti Tori is a rotisserie chicken concept by the Sheung Wan yakitori specialists Yardbird. The globe-spanning food stalls range from Korean cuisine at Moyo Sik to tacos from Westside Taqueria and Mexican chef Esdras Ochoa. New Yorker Will Fang provides something sweet at the Cookie Department, and, to top it all off, there's a coffee-to-cocktail bar staffed by the Mandarin Oriental, which keeps pouring until late.

"Our aim was to create a platform to reduce the barriers to entry for F&B operators to try out creative concepts in a prime location," says Tom Andrews, a senior asset manager at Hongkong Land (HKL) and the brains behind BaseHall.



BaseHall team

1. **Nick Chan**
Co-founder, Roti Tori
2. **Alex Huels**
Director of F&B, Mandarin Oriental & BaseHall Bar
3. **Lindsay Jang**
Co-founder, Roti Tori
4. **Matt Abergel**
Co-founder, Roti Tori
5. **Tom Andrews**
Senior asset manager, HKL
6. **Pamela Yeung**
Asset management officer, HKL
7. **Melody Ho**
Assistant property analyst, HKL
8. **Wil Fang**
Owner, Cookie DPT
9. **Francesco Lee**
Owner, Moyo Sik
10. **Jon Chan**
Co-founder, Westside Taqueria
11. **Alice Stevenson**
Assistant asset manager, HKL
12. **Brian Woo**
Owner, Co Thanh
13. **Christian Mongendre**
Owner, Treehouse



My Hong Kong

Toby Smith, deputy chairman, Swire Hotels

Launched in 2008, Swire Hotels has two Hong Kong sites: its luxury Upper House in Admiralty and the larger, more leisurely East in Taikoo Shing. "We wanted to create hotels that were full of soul," says deputy chairman Toby Smith, who joined the Swire conglomerate in 1991. The Englishman took up tennis during his first post in Sydney and, after working around the world, has brought his racquet to Hong Kong. Smith is now searching for hotel sites in Japan, Korea and Australia. "We have a great brand and we want to introduce it to more people," he says.



Windows on the world

Three F&B businesses

Hong Kong's hospitality entrepreneurs are as well travelled as the customers they serve. Take a seat at these three international imports for a taste of why Asia's world city is a recipe for success.

1. **Breakfast: Baked, Sheung Wan**
Sixth-generation South-African baker Zahir Mohamed moved to Hong Kong with his jar of 50-year-old sourdough starter and opened Baked in 2018.
2. **Coffee: Fineprint, Tai Hang**
Co-founded by veteran Aussie barista Scottie Callaghan, Fineprint opens early for Hong Kong's fitness fanatics and later turns into an intimate bar.
3. **Dinner: Hansik Goo, Central**
Hansik Goo honours Korean's home-style and street-food classics created by chef Mingoo Kang, who made his name at Seoul's Mingles restaurant.

Meat market

Feather & Bone

Feather & Bone is staking a claim to be Hong Kong's neighbourhood butcher, having recently expanded across the New Territories. Founder Paul Daley set out to replicate the butchers from his native UK. "We wanted a quality butcher where you could have a glass of wine or a coffee," says Daley, who has since broadened the business to include a delicatessen, grocery shop and an all-day-dining restaurant. "We want to reach 15 stores in Hong Kong," says Daley who also has an eye for expansion to Thailand, Vietnam and mainland China. Sai Kung is the latest opening and a cooking studio designed by Sean Dix is on the boil.

Made to order

"One of the signature things we offer is that in any of our restaurants, people can choose their steak from the butcher's counter and have it cooked in front of them," says director of operations Mark Chan (pictured). "In many ways that's a reframing of a very local concept with the seafood restaurants. Diners can pick their fish or oysters, have it cooked in front of them and see the provenance of those products."

SHARP MINDS

From research to law, Hong Kong is a vital centre that draws some of the brightest from around the world. Its professionals are valued for their expertise, experience and judgement. We meet a few to learn about their work and global connections.

Education and research

Swire Institute of Marine Science

Hong Kong has half a dozen marine parks but only one marine reserve, set aside for scientific study. This protected spot at Cape D'Aguilar, a rocky outcrop on the southeastern tip of Hong Kong Island, is home to the University of Hong Kong's Swire Institute of Marine Science (Swims for short). First opened in 1990, Swims is currently undergoing an expansion. A new-look building will be unveiled by the beginning of 2021 with an indoor and outdoor aquarium, wet and dry labs, a dive locker and the key ingredient: a copious supply of fresh, high-quality seawater. "There are very few marine-research centres of this quality in the tropics," says Gray A Williams, director of Swims. Williams (*pictured*) has worked at Swims since it opened – his motivation for moving from the UK in 1989 – and he took over as director in 2003. Right now, his group is studying thermal effects on molluscs in extreme environments – an area of global interest amid rising sea

temperatures. "It's a really dynamic and biodiverse environment," says Williams. Hong Kong is home to about 25 per cent of marine species in China, despite only accounting for 0.03 per cent of the marine area. Some postgraduate students live on site and the current cohort hails from many countries. "During summer our residences are crammed with overseas visitors," says Williams. Thirty years after joining Swims, he is focused on turning it into an Asian hub by working with labs and stations around the region.



Rewriting the rulebook

Three legal updates

Innovation and the legal profession might not be obvious bedfellows but Hong Kong's trusted legal system is moving with the times.

1. ODR: *Let's settle this online*

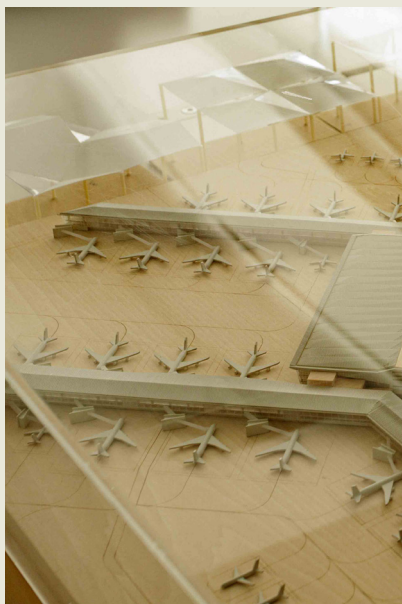
Hong Kong is one of Asia's leading dispute-resolution centres and now the process has moved online. Ebram Centre launched an online dispute-resolution (ODR) platform in June that removes the need for businesses to travel abroad to settle cross-border commercial disputes. Virtual mediation or arbitration hearings reduce costs and time, while enhancing access to justice.

2. New patent system: *Novel idea*

Hong Kong's new patent system was launched in December 2019. Applicants can now apply directly for a standard patent in Hong Kong instead of having to first register their patents in a designated patent office outside Hong Kong. The system makes it easier for inventors to secure legal protection for their inventions in Hong Kong and promotes the city as an intellectual-property trading hub.

3. Gateway to mainland China: *Open sesame*

Hong Kong's unique role as a gateway to mainland China has always been attractive to foreign businesses. The door to the mainland market has been kept wide open under the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) since 2003. A recent amendment to the services agreement under CEPA has further liberalised the trade in services between the two places.



Architecture

Integrated Design Associates

When Cebu's Terminal 2 opened in 2018, the tropical timber structure wowed visitors to the Philippines and won a number of awards. For its architect, Hong Kong's Winston Shu (*pictured*), it also ushered in a new look for airports around Asia. "Before Cebu, the way to incorporate local culture was to get local artists to put in artwork. But the building still doesn't say anything about where you are," says Shu, who worked under Norman Foster before establishing his specialist airport-design practice in 1999. "We started to think, what if airports were to put something unique about the regional character into the building," he says.

My Hong Kong

Jenny Quinton *Founder, Ark Eden*

Jenny Quinton came to Hong Kong in 1989 on her way to Tibet – and never left. She fell in love with a remote valley on the northern side of Mui Wo on Lantau island and made it her home. A teacher, Quinton (*pictured*) left the school system 14 years ago to start her own environmental education initiative from her Lantau forest house. Ark Eden is her eco-education and permaculture centre and forest school. "We're not going to save the planet unless we scale up eco-education," says Quinton, who has planted more than 34,000 native trees in the past 25 years. "I see Hong Kong as a game-changing place."



REALITY TECH

Scientists might tend to shy away from the spotlight but Hong Kong's strong commercial sectors are teaming up with laboratory scientists to get their useful inventions out in the world. We find out more about a few of their impactful projects.

Hot listing *SinoMab Bioscience*

Biotechnology is becoming big business in Hong Kong. In 2019, SinoMab Bioscience became the first local biotech firm to list on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. The company benefited from a rule change the previous year that allows companies to go public before generating any revenue and use the injection of fresh capital to fund further research and development. "This was the missing piece of the puzzle," says Dr Shawn Leung (*pictured, far right*), who founded SinoMab in 2001. Leung now sits on the stock exchange's biotech advisory panel, assisting the review of applications to go public under the new listing regime. "Hong Kong will be a biotech powerhouse in Asia," he says from his laboratory at Hong Kong Science Park. Scientists at

SinoMab are exploring therapeutics for cancers and other diseases. Its flagship product is a rheumatoid arthritis treatment. SM03 is currently in phase three clinical trials; if its efficacy is proven, the treatment could become a global first. "We are the only ones to do what we do," says Leung, who wants to grow his company into a global leader in the innovation of therapeutics for immunological diseases.



Q&A
Hugh Chow
CEO, Astri

The Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute (Astri) celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2020. The body was established by the government to turn Hong Kong into a smart city and give companies an edge in technology-based fields, such as artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. Hugh Chow, an engineer by training, became CEO in 2018.

What smart city initiatives are you working on?

We have created a Joint Railway Innovation Laboratory with the MTR. There's no bigger public transport system so it's only right for us to really apply our technology in making the MTR faster, safer and more efficient. One project involves developing a 5G network that can help it connect all of its sensors, cameras and detectors.

When will the average Hong Konger come into contact with one of your projects?

People will encounter our work via Industrial and Commercial Bank of China's mobile banking portal, and more specifically its chatbot. Chatbots are everywhere but ours is designed for mixed languages.

Why is that?

There are a lot of mixed languages in Hong Kong. If you walk in the street, most Cantonese speakers would actually mix in English, right? So it really renders some of these chatbots or speech-recognition tools useless.



Smart packaging *Ecoinno*

George Chen believes that enjoying a nice cup of coffee or slurping through a bowl of ramen shouldn't happen at the expense of the planet. "People don't know where their garbage goes, nobody knows and nobody cares," says Chen, co-founder of Ecoinno, a Hong Kong-based manufacturer of compostable food packaging that is seeking to reduce the need for single-use plastics. "I saw a tremendous

problem that people accepted and asked myself, 'Is there a better way?'".

There was: to develop a green, cellulose-based material at its laboratory at Hong Kong Science Park. A natural, plant-based fibre, Ecoinno's "Green Composite Material" (GCM) has a superior temperature tolerance to plastic and it is 100 per cent biodegradable in less than 75 days. The resulting food containers and coffee capsules made from this GCM are also made in Hong Kong at a production facility in Tai Po. Ecoinno was one of five winners of Alibaba's annual Jumpstarter competition in 2020 and the company has also secured funding from the Alibaba Entrepreneurs Fund. Chen (*pictured*) and his team are currently working with the largest coffee supplier in Italy and partnering with Hong Kong's leading airline to supply biodegradable food containers for in-flight meals. "There's nothing that science cannot do," says Chen. "You just have to think outside the box."



My Hong Kong *Rice*

When guests describe the service at L'hotel Island South as robotic, the feedback is a compliment. Named for its similarity to a rice cooker, Rice joined the staff earlier this year and the waist-high robot has been winning fans with its delivery of cappuccinos and warm croissants, safely stowed inside its flip-top head. Work days begin with pre-dawn room service, Rice's favourite task: whizzing along quiet corridors and going up and down in empty lifts is easier than when the hotel springs to life. A sensitive outer shell and 360-degree vision really come in handy while zigzagging around guests, suitcases and the occasional out-of-control child. After a two-hour power nap to recharge, it's time to deliver refreshments and greetings to arriving guests and pose for the odd photo. Guests loved Rice so much that the hotel launched a robot-themed summer staycation.



Robotic delivery

Victor Lee, founder of Rice Robotics, wants to build a fleet of autonomous robots to work across the service industries, from hotels to hospitals.

Innovation hub

The Hong Kong Science Park opened a Robotics Catalysing Centre in 2020 to support the industry. After Rice Robotics moved in, Rice signed up for a front of house role.



In tune with Hong Kong's global outlook, its design firms are sought-after by clients from around the world. We get to know three of the city's creative founders: a Californian, a Czech and a native Hong Konger who previously worked in New York.



Office building

Moira Moser usually shuttles between overseas offices but, lately, she has been overseeing operations from Wan Chai in Hong Kong – the firm's fifth address in the city and a lab for testing concepts before they're introduced to clients.



Coming clean

M Moser Associates

M Moser Associates is one of the world's largest office designers, with more than 1,000 staff spread across 21 cities. Moira Moser (*pictured*), a Californian, founded her firm in Hong Kong in 1981 – back when cubicles were in fashion. These days, the latest innovations in office wellbeing are invisible. "This is one of the cleanest offices in Hong Kong," says Moser, as she talks through her office's high-grade air-filtration and purification system. An architect by training, Moser prides herself on taking an integrated approach where interior designers and strategists work with engineers and technicians. Air quality has risen up the agenda with clients investing in creating safe environments. Moser is convinced about the future of the physical workplace and, no, the cubicle will not be making a comeback. "What has not gone from the workplace is the interaction of people, who need to come up with ideas and innovations."



Lightbulb moment

Lasvit

Lighting-design specialist Lasvit's Czech founder Leon Jakimic came to Hong Kong in 1999 to study. He stayed on to start his own business – a combination of modern technology and contemporary design based on his family's five generations of glass-making. "It was natural for me to stay in Hong Kong and use what I had learned," says Jakimic. The company's bespoke light installations and glass art can be found in some of Hong Kong's shiniest venues, from the Peninsula hotel to the K11 Musea shopping mall.



My Hong Kong

Nelson Chow, founder, NC Design & Architecture

Sai Kung's bays, coves and islands are a playground for water sports. First-timers fall off paddle boards while the more adventurous whizz around on wind foils, a type of hybrid surfboard and windsurfer. Designer Nelson Chow (*pictured*) took to sea kayaking in Sai Kung two years ago. "I love exploring new things," says Chow, who paddles on weekends throughout the year. "There are so many different pockets to discover and I can do it at my own pace." Salt Island is a favourite destination – roughly a three-hour return paddle. The 43-year-old took his studio there for the company's latest team-building expedition. Chow set up NC Design & Architecture in 2011 after working in New York and the studio is responsible for some of downtown Hong Kong's signature hangouts, from bar and restaurant Foxglove to coffee shop Fuel Espresso. NC Design & Architecture turns 10 in 2021 and there will be plenty of openings to celebrate, including new hospitality projects in mainland China and Macau, as well as a circus-themed nightclub in his home city.



STYLE FIXES

From its rich and skilled history in tailoring to its excellent support systems for young designers, Hong Kong has all the ingredients to help fashion businesses thrive. Of course, the style-savvy populace is key too.



Vintage finds *Vestiaire Collective*

Vestiaire Collective is an unlikely trendsetter in the fashion world, pioneering the online sale of secondhand luxury clothing. President Fanny Moizant moved to Hong Kong in 2017 to launch the Asia expansion of the company she co-founded in Paris in 2009. “Hong Kong is a hub of luxury in Asia, so it was interesting for us to be in that ecosystem,” says Moizant (*pictured*) from her office and warehouse in Wong Chuk Hang. Vestiaire Collective has since launched in Australia and Moizant plans to rummage around in South Korea and Japan. “We wanted to disrupt the world of secondhand by bringing trust and inspiration,” she says. “All of a sudden, we created something cool; a community that people wanted to be part of.”



Pre-loved luxury
Vestiaire Collective sells pre-owned designer labels, saving consumers money and extending the life of clothes.



Stepping out
Brand picks from three retail shops that are worth a visit

1. Womenswear: *B/major*

“People rarely think of Hong Kong when it comes to shoe design,” says designer Grace Lai, who co-founded B/major with husband Leo Chan in 2019. “We wanted to challenge this perception and make beautiful, high-quality and affordable shoes.”
The Mills, Tsuen Wan

2. Menswear: *ONS*

“Hong Kong has a lot of cool brands but they were never really able to get a spotlight,” says ONS founder Brian Chung, who has just opened a shop in New York. “My vision is to cultivate these talents for a global arena.”
Landmark Men, Central

3. Unisex: *Lane Eight*

“I’d wear four different pairs of shoes on the same day,” says Josh Shorrock, who, with his brother James, designed a versatile shoe using sustainable materials that performs just as well on the track as in the office.
St Francis Street, Wan Chai



Making the cut *Tailoring history*

Justin Chang (*above*) is the third generation of his family to run Ascot Chang. Try it or one of these outfitters.

- 1. Attire House**
8 Wyndham Street, Asia Pacific Centre, attire-house.com
- 2. WW Chan & Sons**
30 Queen’s Road Central, Entertainment Building wwchan.com
- 3. The Armoury**
12 Pedder Street, Pedder Building thearmoury.com

My Hong Kong *Christopher Owen, co-founder, Thirty30 Creative*

Christopher Owen (*pictured, right*) founded design studio Thirty30 Creative with his wife in 2015, creating brand identities and marketing campaigns for businesses across Asia. The Brit has also been investing in his own style with the help of his friend Justin Chang of Ascot Chang, a dyed-in-the-wool Hong Kong tailor that was founded in the 1950s and has shops in the US and mainland China. During Hong Kong’s hot summers, linen trousers are a wardrobe must-have for Owen, a keen cricketer, who captains one of Hong Kong’s 12 teams. “There is this sense of confidence you get from putting on a suit that you know fits you well,” he says. When not wearing his work uniform, or cricket whites, Owen and his young family can be found buying plants from the flower market in Prince Edward or exploring Sham Shui Po’s alleys and shops.



Label to watch *Ffixxed Studios*

Fashion designers Fiona Lau and Kain Picken founded Ffixxed Studios in Hong Kong in 2010, soon after moving to the city from Berlin. “That cultural shift was the source of a lot of inspiration,” says Picken. “Hong Kong’s very strong character set the tone of our brand. That density, that old and new pushed up against each other, the ad-hoc nature.” In 2012, Lau won the Hong Kong young design talent award and the duo recently completed an incubation programme run by the Hong Kong Design Centre. “There’s a lot of opportunities and support for small businesses,” says Picken. Government funding allowed Ffixxed Studios to show at Paris Fashion Week for six consecutive years. “No matter where we are physically, we are still very tied to Hong Kong,” he says from Shanghai, where the couple recently showcased their spring/summer 2021 menswear and womenswear collections.



Talent shows
Ffixxed Studios won the very first Creative Call-out in 2015. This annual competition to discover emerging creative talent is organised by Lane Crawford, a fashion-forward Hong Kong retailer that turned 170 years old in 2020.

CREATIVE HUB

Not just a city of skyscrapers, Hong Kong has plenty of galleries and industrial buildings that are being turned into cosy artists' studios. We drop by a few for a visit and speak to the curator of the hotly anticipated new museum of visual culture, M+.



Work in progress
UK artist Damian Boylan (left), Hart director Jeannie Wu (centre), and American artist Shane Aspegren (right)



Creative conversion *Hart Haus*

A former industrial building, Hart Haus in Kennedy Town is home to 21 artists. Manchester-born multidisciplinary artist Damian Boylan draws on his background as an aircraft engineer, while American Shane Aspegren sits at his keyboard composing music. Aspegren was one of four “Hausians” to take part in an inaugural exhibition at Hart Hall, a sister gallery in Central. “Our main criteria is diversity, both in culture and art medium,” says Jeannie Wu, director of the not-for-profit art organisation behind Hart Haus. Cassie Liu, a Chinese visual and sound artist, joined after she graduated in 2019. “The most amazing thing is the people here,” she says.



My Hong Kong *Nadia Ng, director, Perrotin*

French contemporary art gallery Perrotin relocated to Kowloon, from the other side of Victoria Harbour, in the middle of 2020. The change of address has meant a change of transport for gallery director Nadia Ng, who swapped the century-old tram for an even older and more quaint form of commute: the Star Ferry.

“I’ve been very lucky to enjoy the best of these old forms of public transport,” says Ng (pictured). “We don’t have anything like this in Singapore.” The native Singaporean usually takes the 10.00 ferry from the Wan Chai pier. The most direct route is also the best value, at about €0.30 a trip, although the harbour crossing only takes a few minutes. “I wish the ferry ride was longer,” says Ng, who moved to Hong Kong in 2017 to take up the position with Perrotin.

Grand opening *M+*

Asia’s art landscape is set to change dramatically in 2021 with the opening of M+, Hong Kong’s new museum of visual culture. Doryun Chong moved to Hong Kong from New York’s Museum of Modern Art in 2013. “Part of our mission is to be a museum with global perspectives,” says Chong, who was born in Seoul. “The other part of the mission is to be rooted in Hong Kong and inspired by Hong Kong because this is such an international and cosmopolitan city”.

Chong and his team will have some 17,000 square metres of display space to show off the museum’s growing permanent collection: close to 8,000 works cover visual art, moving image, design and architecture from the 1950s to the present. Pride of place will go to the M+ Sigg Collection, a private donation of about 1,500 works and one of the most important collections of Chinese contemporary art.



Long view
Designed by Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron, the layout of M+ is dramatic. Doryun Chong, deputy director, curatorial, and chief curator, M+, describes it as “radically horizontal”. Almost all of the museum’s 33 galleries sit on one floor, a departure from the usual gallery model.



Art and coffee *Shophouse*

Tai Hang’s grid of low-rise walk-up buildings, or *tong lau*, make this quiet, residential neighbourhood, tucked behind Causeway Bay, a popular spot for an afternoon coffee or early evening tipple. Shophouse has added an extra dimension by converting a *tong lau* into a gallery and shop. Opened in May 2020, it hosts a revolving programme of solo and group shows, straddling art, fashion, design and collectables. Founder Alex Chan remembers being dragged around flea markets as a child before falling under the spell of antiques. Previous exhibitions have included vintage typewriters and 1980s Apple uniforms. Regardless of what’s on, it’s worth popping by Second Lane simply to have a peek upstairs for a rare glimpse at Hong Kong’s pre-war architecture. Original features have been faithfully restored and the terrazzo flooring feels like an artwork in itself.



Monocle's bureau and shop in Wan Chai turned 10 in 2020. Here are 10 things about Hong Kong that we've celebrated during the last decade.

2010

A growing sense of community

We got to know the residents of Sheung Wan in issue 37. It's still a colourful neighbourhood and has rubbed off on nearby Sai Ying Pun and Kennedy Town.

2014

Built on craft and culture

Every skyscraper starts with one length of bamboo tied to another by a team of scaffolding specialists. We featured a master and apprentice in issue 76.

2011

Wall-to-wall art

Art Basel Hong Kong debuted in 2013 and draws collectors and dealers from around the world. In issue 44, we interviewed founder Magnus Renfrew.

2015

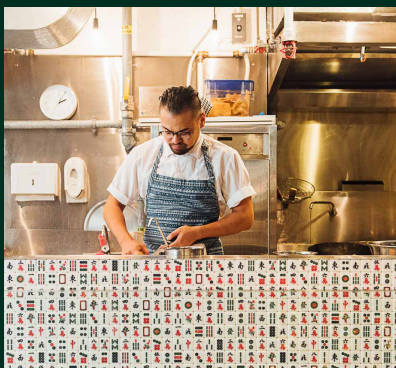
A city marches on its stomach

Lunch hours are respected and eating out is central to Hong Kong's way of life. Ho Lee Fook (*in issue 82*) offers a modern take on Cantonese cuisine.

2012

Heritage has found a home

The former Tai O police station-turned-hotel was one of the first in a growing list of restoration projects in Hong Kong this century. We checked in for issue 56.



2016

It works on multiple levels

Tai Hang (*in issue 93*) is a village next to the corporate towers of Causeway Bay. Its low rise *tong lau* architecture appeals to creatives, while families find village houses in the New Territories.

2013

Family is big business

Family firms are getting fresh ideas from a new generation, such as Adrian Cheng, CEO of New World Development, who we interviewed in issue 64.

2017

'Tis the season to be merry

As we observed in issue 109, harbourfront high-rises put up Christmas lights at the end of year and keep them until after Chinese New Year.

2018

Safety is sky high

Children going to school alone on the subway are just one sign of the city's safety record. Another is the chopper teams from the Government Flying Service (*see issue 113*) that lift injured hikers down from the mountains.



2019

Full of bright ideas

To use space efficiently, architects of a primary school (*see issue 121*), elevated classrooms to make room for a playground and parking bay.



2020

Attracts plenty of eyeballs

Issue 132 noted that few advertising opportunities are as quintessentially Hong Kong as the century-old tram as it trundles through the business districts.