

Asia's world city

Progressive

Free

Stable

Opportunity

High Quality

December 2008

City of Sport and Entertainment

Overview

Hong Kong is a regional sports hub and has one of the liveliest arts and entertainment scenes in Asia. There is something for everyone throughout the year, from Cantonese opera to golf, and contemporary art exhibitions to pop concerts, ballet and international rugby.

Asia's Sporting Arena

With its multicultural population and superb location, Hong Kong has become a popular stage for a wide variety of world-class sporting events. Indeed, in 2008 Hong Kong joined the ranks of Olympian cities, staging the equestrian events as a co-host of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

Hong Kong's best known annual sports event is the Hong Kong Sevens international rugby tournament, held in the Hong Kong Stadium every March, which attracts top rugby teams and thousands of rugby enthusiasts from around the globe. Hong Kong is the only city to have hosted the Rugby Sevens World Cup twice – in 1997 and 2005.

Other major sports events include the Hong Kong Marathon, the Hong Kong International Cricket Sixes, the Hong Kong Open (golf), International Tennis Champions Challenge, Hong Kong Squash

Open, the Hong Kong Open Badminton Super Series and Hong Kong World Grand Prix (volleyball).

Football is the most popular sport, with strong grassroots support and a well-supported local league. Football giants Liverpool, Manchester United, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, Sao Paulo and the Brazil national team have played in Hong Kong in recent years.

Host of 2009 East Asian Games

The Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games (EAG) will be held in December 2009. This is one of Asia's showpiece multi-sport competitions, featuring top-class athletes from across the region: The People's Republic of China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Hong Kong China, Japan, Korea, Macao China, Mongolia, Chinese Taipei and Guam. More than 3 500 athletes, the largest number of athletes ever to compete in the EAG, will compete for 290 Gold medals in a record 23 sporting events.

Arts and Culture

A rich variety of arts festivals and cultural events featuring local and international performers, players and artists ensure that all tastes are catered for, ranging from the premier arts event, the annual Hong Kong Arts Festival, to the Hong Kong International Film Festival, Le French May Arts Festival, the International Arts Carnival and the New Vision/World's Cultures Arts Festival. Big open-air fiestas also take place

during the major holiday periods, including the Lunar New Year Lantern Carnivals, the Mid-Autumn Lantern Carnivals and the New Year's Eve Countdown Carnival.

For its compact size, Hong Kong has excellent facilities, from intimate theatre settings to large concert halls and stadiums. The combination of a multicultural, urbane population, world-class facilities and venues ensures that Hong Kong is an important stop for international artists, world-class performances and major exhibitions.

Recent performances have included the Royal Ballet (U.K.), Peking Opera Theatre of Shanghai, National Ballet of China, American Repertory Theatre, National Theatre of Great Britain, Yo-yo Ma, Placido Domingo, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic and the 2nd Hong Kong International Piano Competition, with a jury panel headed by Maestro Ashkenazy. Major pop concerts during 2007-08 have included Elton John, Avril Lavigne and Bjork. To preserve local cultural traditions, the last Sunday of November each year is designated as Cantonese Opera Day.

The Man Hong Kong International Literary Festival (launched in 2001) has become one of the biggest celebrations of creative English writing in Asia, and has attracted literary figures such as Booker prize winner John Banville and Nobel winner Seamus Heaney to Hong Kong. In 2007 the Man Asian Literary Prize was inaugurated to recognise unpublished Asian literature in English. The biennial Hong Kong Literature Festival and the Hong Kong Biennial



Awards for Chinese Literature are among the leading regional events dedicated to the appreciation of Chinese literature.

The Hong Kong Museum of Art presents regular and special exhibitions of both Chinese and Western art. The Hong Kong Museum of History stages the popular permanent exhibition "The Hong Kong Story", tracing Hong Kong's history from the distant past. The Dr. Sun Yat-sen Museum, housed within the renovated splendour of historic Kom Tong Hall and devoted to the founder of modern China, opened in 2006. The Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence are also popular. To encourage local talent in the visual arts, the Hong Kong Museum of Art has hosted the Hong Kong Contemporary Art Biennial Awards Exhibitions since 1975, including awards for artistic excellence.

A new cultural landmark – the City Art Square – was inaugurated in Sha Tin in July 2008, where 19 world-class installations showcase the work of famed local and international artists and designers.

West Kowloon Cultural District

In a bold and visionary move, the Government plans to spend HK\$21.6 billion (US\$2.8 billion) to develop a prime 40-hectare waterfront site in West Kowloon into a world-class integrated arts, cultural, entertainment and tourism district. Proposals for the West Kowloon Cultural District include a large-scale performance venue, a Xiqu centre (traditional Chinese opera), two grand theatres, two concert halls, four medium-sized theatres and four black-box theatres, a cultural centre accommodating museum/s and an exhibition centre.

Local Artistic Talent

The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, established in 1984, is both a performance venue and training institute. It offers courses in music, dance, drama, Cantonese opera, theatre and entertainment arts, film and television, from Foundation level to Master's degree, providing a steady stream of artistic and thespian talent. Professional and amateur theatre companies of all shapes and sizes perform across the city, of which the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, the Chung Ying Theatre Company and Zuni Icosahedron, are among the best-known.

Well-established professional orchestras include the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta and the City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong. All perform regularly to sell-out audiences.

The Hong Kong Ballet is one of Asia's leading classical ballet companies, while the Hong Kong Dance Company focuses on Chinese traditional and folk dance. Besides performing locally, City Contemporary Dance Company often tours overseas, where its distinctive style and original approach has received much critical acclaim.

Films

For decades, Hong Kong was home to the third largest movie industry in the world, and its significant contribution to world cinema is preserved and promoted by the Hong Kong Film Archive, which organises regular exhibitions and retrospectives at home and overseas.

The Hong Kong International Film Festival, established in 1977, has become one of Asia's leading cinematic platforms. It is part of Entertainment Expo Hong Kong, which brings together nine key events in the entertainment calendar, including the Hong Kong Film Awards and FILMART, Asia's largest market for film, TV and entertainment-related products.

Hong Kong's actors and film industry have won many international awards: Tony Leung and Maggie Cheung won Cannes Film Festival Best Actor Awards for *In the Mood for Love* (2000) and *Clean* (2004); *Everlasting Regret* won the Open Prize at the Venice Film Festival (2005) and composer Peter Kam was awarded a Silver Bear for Best Film Music in *Isabella* at the 2006 Berlin International Film Festival; Tim Yip and Peter Pau netted Oscar awards for Best Art Direction and Best Cinematography for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* in 2000.

Hong Kong has been the setting for many famous movies, such as *Love is a Many Splendored Thing* (1955), *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960) and *Way of the Dragon* (1972). The city's unique qualities have also provided spectacular scenes in various Hollywood blockbusters, recently including *Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life*, Jackie Chan's *Rush Hour* movies and in 2008, *Batman: The Dark Knight*.

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