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THE PENINSULA

TSIM SHA TSUI, HONG KONG

Over the course of its 93-year history, this classic has always stood tall. From its opening, billed as “the finest hotel east of the Suez”, through the World War II Japanese invasion to a 30-storey tower extension in the mid-Nineties, recent pro-democracy protests and the trials of Covid-19, it has never once closed its doors. Doors revealing a bedazzling Hong Kong in all its international glory, attended by pages in white pillbox hats. A bronze Fu dog sculpture and matching drawing decorate the gold-trimmed lobby, and Roman-inspired columns frame the harbour-view swimming pool. There are ancient Chinese therapies in the spa and futuristic Philippe Starck design at Felix bar – on a Sunday, senior bartender Johnny Chung Kam Hung, who’s been here for more than 60 years, might even be shaking the drinks. Ask him to tell you about the time he learnt how to make a Screwdriver from Clark Gable. The restaurants trot the globe, too: Spring Moon for silver baskets of delicate dim sum and hard-to-find sesame-toffee apples; Gaddi’s for fine French cooking and marriage proposals; and Swiss dining room Chesa, which serves gooey fondue to loyal locals inside what looks like the workings of a cuckoo clock. The effortless blend of traditional and tranquil, cool and cosmopolitan, continues in monochrome rooms decked out with the kind of stealth tech NASA might envy and special little touches that are not easily forgotten: lacquered boxes of soap to take home, telescopes to gaze in wonder at Victoria Harbour. May these doors always remain open.

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