

Bel-Air

ISSUE 26 | 2019

Residents' Magazine

**FESTIVALS
AROUND
THE WORLD**

SPARKLE JOY
**'TIS THE SEASON TO
SIP CHAMPAGNE**

CONTENTS

www.bel-air-hk.com

26



Cover:
Art Direction:
Grace Ma
Photography:
Terence Man
Styling:
Kenneth Wong
Hair and Make-Up:
Jolin Ng
Wardrobe:
Dress: Shiatzy Chen, Paule Ka @ The Swank



08



FESTIVALS AROUND THE WORLD



SPARKLE JOY

4	NEWS	36	ART
6	LIFESTYLE	52	COMMUNITY
14	TRAVEL	58	KNOWLEDGE
26	GOURMET		

This publication is fully funded by Pacific Century Premium Developments Limited

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without the written permission of the Pacific Century Premium Developments Limited.

BEL-AIR WELCOME

Season's Greetings

As 2019 draws to a close, *Bel-Air* magazine would like to take this opportunity to wish our readers a prosperous, fruitful new year — and decade. In this high time of celebration, Bel-Air is spreading the festive joy by decorating our home.

This year's Christmas theme is "Our Story: Sharing Joy", with decorations designed to connect each other. The interactive lighting installations shine even more brightly when activated by two people, underlining the main theme. Residents may also have noticed the vast, illuminated bouquet-inspired decoration near the fountain in Phase 4-6 and the main entrance of Phase 1-3. Hopefully, everyone will spend some time to stroll around Bel-Air with loved ones, as these decorations are created to bring people closer together.

The cover story, *Festivals Around the World*, echoes the holiday spirit. By taking readers to famous celebrations around the world, the feature delves into some time-honoured traditions. From Sapporo to Russia, people celebrate the passage of winter and look forward to spring, a synonym for hope.

Hope is not only fuelled by the new season — our individual acts are also the source of positive change. There are lots of volunteering opportunities (*see page 52*) in town where our residents can make a difference.

There is no better time than the holiday season to explore how an individual can positively impact the world, starting with family.

Season's greetings from all at



Published on behalf of Bel-Air by John Brown Novus
johnbrownnovus.com
27th floor, 625 King's Road, North Point, Hong Kong
+852 3962 4503

Dress Up with Holiday Lights



All the glitz and glamour makes the end-of-year festivities beautiful, but the true spirit of Christmas goes far beyond: it's about love and sharing the celebration. With this in mind, Bel-Air is elaborately adorned with a shimmering installation this winter, with the theme "Our Story: Sharing Joy".

A multitude of lights marks any festive season, wherever in the world you may be. Every year thousands of visitors flock to Madrid's streets, lit by a twinkling overhead display. Some also choose to head to Japan to visit the Kobe Luminarie to admire the stunning hand-painted bulbs that hang

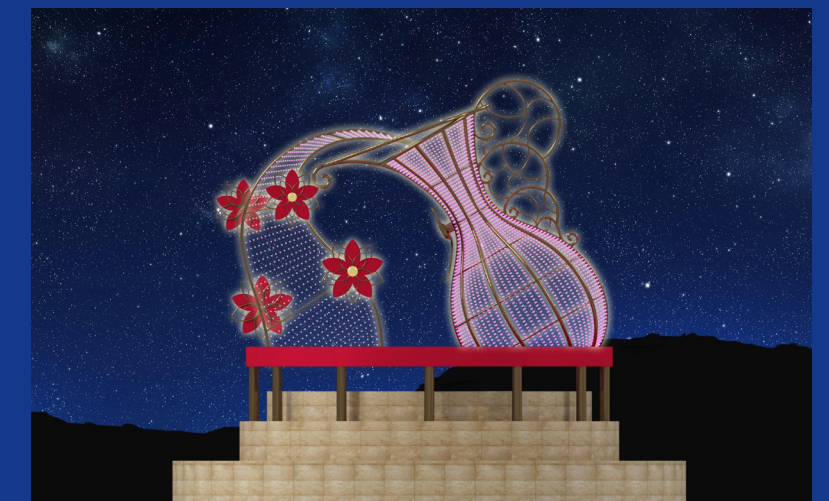
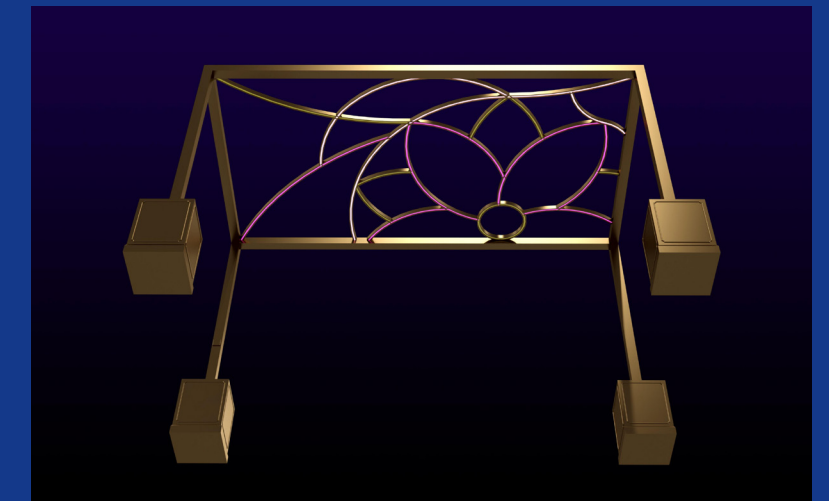
over the thoroughfares. If you are planning to stay in Hong Kong and indulge in a relaxing staycation, look no further as we're here to brighten up your holiday.

Our luminous decorations are inspired by the spirit of love and sharing. The interactive installations in Club Bel-Air are designed to shine more vibrantly when activated by two people. For the very first time, our property will be decorated with overhead Christmas lights bathing everything below in a warm glow. The lights create different patterns resembling colourful mosaics, twinkling under the sky.

An illuminated bouquet has been built on the fountain in Phase 4. The concept of this installation is to show the joy in receiving beautiful flowers. The geometric style adds a modern touch to this romantic adornment, which surely will

become the most Instagrammable spot in Bel-Air this season.

Wrap up warm and stroll along to appreciate the light displays. Discover joy and happiness, even in the most familiar places. Wherever you are, may happiness shine upon you and your loved ones.



FESTIVALS

AROUND THE WORLD

WHILE WE ARE IMMERSED IN THE SPIRIT OF CELEBRATION FROM CHRISTMAS THROUGH TO LUNAR NEW YEAR, LET'S DELVE INTO SOME OF THE MOST BREATHTAKING FESTIVALS AROUND THE GLOBE.





RUSSIA

ILLUMINATING THE WHITE NIGHTS

White Nights Festival, St Petersburg, Russia

In the land of extreme frostiness, Russians celebrate the never-setting sun at the height of summer. Known as the White Nights of St Petersburg, this natural phenomenon means the sky never reaches complete darkness,

and the glow of the sun remains visible all night long. The festival spans a few short weeks in June and July every year and the former Russian capital comes alive in the most glamorous manner. Packed with concerts,

carnivals and fireworks, the celebration in St Petersburg is utterly incomparable.

A Night at the Museum

Indulge in a two-month long-feast of the arts, during which the grand



Mariinsky Theatre and the Hermitage Theatre host a series of ballet, opera and classical music performances. St Petersburg's most prestigious museums and art galleries also open late or even

overnight, for what is known as the Night of the Museums.

Scarlet Sails

Paying homage to the Russian children's tale Scarlet Sails, this riverside concert is the highlight of the

festival and features extraordinary fireworks. Marvel at the massive illuminated red ship, an emblem of the festival, as it sails along the Neva River, wishing high-school graduates a smooth voyage to adulthood.



JAPAN

ICE SCULPTURE SPECTACLE

Sapporo Snow Festival, Japan

One of the most popular winter attractions in Japan, the Sapporo Snow Festival showcases the art of ice sculpture, and unmatched creativity. A week-long event held every February in Sapporo, the capital of Hokkaido, its 2020 edition will run from 4 to 11 February, turning the city into a frozen wonderland.

Snow Fun for Students and Soldiers

It all began in the winter of 1950 when high school students built six snow statues in Odori Park. This unexpectedly attracted more than 50,000 visitors and marked the inaugural Sapporo Snow Festival. Members of the Japan Self-Defense Forces



joined in the fun in 1955, creating bigger and taller ice sculptures. Ever since, the works of art at the festival have only become more complex. The epic *Star Wars* snow sculpture (23 metres wide and 15 metres tall), which was a highlight of the 2015 festival, was one such masterpiece. The event is now in its 70th year, and attracts some two million visitors annually.

Illuminate the Snow

The ice statues look even more charming when lit up after nightfall. Visitors

can admire the effect in close proximity, or climb the Sapporo TV Tower for a sweeping view. The 2020 festival will take place across different parts of Sapporo. Live concerts (some staged on the ice sculptures!) and numerous food stalls can be enjoyed at the Odori Site; Tsudome Site offers activities such as snow slides and snow rafting, which will surely thrill young visitors. Bonus: the Tsudome Site opens slightly earlier than the rest of the festival, on 31 January.

INDIA

FESTIVAL OF COLOURS

Holi, India

When spring arrives, Hindus commemorate the turning of the seasons with the vibrant festival of Holi — also known as the Festival of Colours. The origin of Holi is rooted in various ancient Hindu legends and is a jubilant occasion celebrating fertility, colour, love and the triumph of good over evil.

The exact date of Holi changes from year to

year, as it is based on the lunar calendar. In 2020, the festival will fall on 10 March. While the various parts of India may celebrate Holi differently, it's always a joyous day — a day for fun!

Bonfires and Gulal

Split into two main events, it all begins with Holika Dahan and the burning of pyres during the night. This is followed the next day

by Rangwali Holi and the tossing of colourful *gulal* powder at family, friends and other revellers — one reason Holi is known as the Festival of Colours, and also what the festival is most famous for around the world.

Good Food, Good Company — Best Party!

The celebration is not complete without visiting friends and

family, and feasting on traditional foods and beverages such as *bhang thandai*, a spiced cannabis-infused drink. Holi is associated with a number of dishes, both sweet and savoury, but in the spirit of the season, this bounty will probably taste best when shared with loved ones.



Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono

— WELCOMES YOU —

THE LONG-AWAITED GRAND OPENING
OF PARK HYATT NISEKO HANAZONO IS
FINALLY HERE. WELCOME TO YOUR LUXURY
RETREAT IN THE MOUNTAINS.

Set in the sprawling expanse of the prestigious Hanazono area of Niseko, Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono embodies the spirit of a mountain village, where man and nature meet in harmony.

Built to encourage guests to forge a relationship with their surroundings no matter the season, Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono can play host to a high-intensity ski holiday, a summer golf retreat or simply an escape

from the bustle of the city and a chance to unwind in nature.

Whether it's a quest for adventure or the need for a relaxing retreat, global travellers can expect their time here to be unforgettable.



A Resort for Every Season

Hanazono is known for its pristine powder snow, something the hotel helps you make the most of with ski-in/ski-out connections and a dedicated ski valet service. If you prefer the indoors, take a dip in the 25-metre swimming pool, rejuvenate at the spa or relax in the natural hot spring, which allows guests to be close to nature while enjoying the therapeutic qualities of the soothing spring waters.

In the warmer months, Niseko brims with outdoor activity options that are easily accessible



from Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono, making for a perfect family adventure. Go mountain biking, traverse the thrilling rapids of Niseko's Shiribetsu river on a raft or pit your skills against the course at Hanazono Golf, to which hotel

guests have exclusive access. A stroll through Fukidashi Park to admire its exceptionally stunning autumn foliage is highly recommended, and offers the perfect opportunity to take part in *shinrin-yoku*, the Japanese art of 'forest bathing'.



Elegant living spaces overlook Niseko's tranquil scenery.

Japanese Living in the Finest Lodgings

Inviting guest rooms pay homage to Japanese craftsmanship, from carpets that are based on the designs of Japanese *boro* (patched textiles) to *shoji*-inspired glass and timber screens that separate the living and bedroom areas and give a nod to traditional paper sliding screens. Bathrooms each feature an oversized built-in bath overlooking tranquil scenery.

Elegant residences bear a similar aesthetic but with additional kitchen facilities. Most

residents can also immerse themselves in their private balcony onsen and unwind with gorgeous panoramas starring the epic Mount Yotei. Taking this exclusive property to another level are select ski-in/ski-out duplexes, as well as penthouses with generous balconies and exceptional panoramas. Though privately owned, residences remain synonymous with the Park Hyatt standard and owners benefit from a rental management programme while they are away.



A Gastronomic Experience Like No Other

The experience would not be complete without Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono's diverse

range of culinary offerings that promise to delight connoisseurs.

Adjacent to the ski slopes is The Living Room, a mountain

lodge-inspired dining space that provides magnificent scenes of the outdoors, anchored by a cosy central fireplace. The Lounge offers all-day dining

with one key feature: the intimate chef's kitchen. Complemented by a Champagne and dessert bar, whisky bar and cigar lounge, guests can expect a highly sensorial culinary affair.

For a more intimate dining experience, adjourn to your pick of restaurants that offer amazing views of Mount Yotei and the ski slopes.

It's a culinary journey from the ground floor all the way to the loft, with dining options that include a Japanese grill, Michelin-star sushi and French restaurants, teppanyaki and Chinese cuisine.



About Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono Residences

From one of the most prestigious names in hospitality and the developer

of Hong Kong's Bel-Air Residence comes a premium first-class development at

the heart of the pristine Hanazono area of Niseko. Scheduled to open this winter, Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono Residences will be the legendary first residence in Japan under the exquisite Park Hyatt name – a privilege granted only to a handful of properties located in the world's most desirable locations. The 113 luxury residences will set a new benchmark in Niseko, with world-class gourmet dining, wellness and spa facilities, five-star services and amenities such as Park Hyatt's first ever private hot-spring, access to some of Asia's best ski runs and the 18-hole Hanazono Golf Course.



Owners of Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono Residences will be pampered with a world of privileges, including the esteemed **World of Hyatt** Globalist Membership, the highest tier of Hyatt's loyalty programme only accessible to an elite few. Members will be able to access benefits at participating Hyatt hotels and resorts and their affiliates. At the Residences, a dedicated fleet of dream cars will be on standby to transport owners to their preferred destinations within Niseko**.

This material is intended to be issued to Professional Investors only, not to Hong Kong public in general.*

*Notes:
 1. In so far as Hong Kong is concerned, units in the Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono Residences ("Units") will be sold or disposed of exclusively to "professional investors" as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Chapter 571 of the Laws of Hong Kong) and/or as prescribed in section 3 of the Securities and Futures (Professional Investor) Rules (Chapter 571D of the Laws of Hong Kong) ("Professional Investors"). 2. Before the signing of any sale and purchase agreement for any Units, the intended purchaser will be required to duly sign a declaration in such form and include such particulars as the Seller requires to declare that he/she/it is a Professional Investor. He/She/It may also be requested to provide relevant documents in support if the Seller considers necessary. 3. In addition, the agreement for sale and purchase of any Units will contain a warranty from the purchaser that he/she/it is a Professional Investor. 4. If in doubt, you are advised to consult your own solicitor, consultant or financial adviser as to whether you are a Professional Investor.

**The service may be subject to change and is provided at the discretion of the Developer. Terms and Conditions apply.

For enquiry:
 Pacific Century Premium
 Developments: +852 2878 8878
www.hanazono-residences.com





A LEGENDARY *first*

HANAZONO-RESIDENCES.COM

+852-2878-8878

 Pacific Century
Premium Developments

PARK HYATT NISEKO™

HANAZONO
RESIDENCES

This material is intended to be issued to Professional Investors only, not to Hong Kong public in general.*

*Notes: 1. In so far as Hong Kong is concerned, units in the Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono Residences ("Units") will be sold or disposed of exclusively to "professional investors" as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Chapter 571 of the Laws of Hong Kong) and/or as prescribed in section 3 of the Securities and Futures (Professional Investor) Rules (Chapter 571D of the Laws of Hong Kong) ("Professional Investor"). 2. Before the signing of any sale and purchase agreement for any Units, the intended purchaser will be required to duly sign a declaration in such form and include such particulars as the Seller requires to declare that he/she/it is a Professional Investor. He/She/It may also be requested to provide relevant documents in support if the Seller considers necessary. 3. In addition, the agreement for sale and purchase of any Units will contain a warranty from the purchaser that he/she/it is a Professional Investor. 4. If in doubt, you are advised to consult your own solicitor, consultant or financial adviser as to whether you are a Professional Investor.

Copyright © 2019 Pacific Century Premium Developments Limited. All rights reserved.

Any descriptions and photos herein are for illustration purposes only. It is not intended to be relied upon as advice to potential investors. No representation or warranty, express or implied, is made herein and no reliance should be placed on the accuracy, fairness or completeness of any messages or information presented herein. This material does not constitute an offer or invitation to subscribe for or purchase any assets, and nothing contained herein shall form the basis of any contract or commitment whatsoever. Harmony TMK ("Developer") and its affiliates are solely responsible for the marketing and sale of the Residences. Hyatt International Corporation has granted Developer and its affiliates the right to offer and sell the Residences using the Hyatt name and trademarks pursuant to a Marketing License Agreement. None of Hyatt International Corporation, Hyatt International - Asia Pacific, Limited or any of their affiliates is responsible for, or makes any representation or warranty concerning the development, marketing, sale or operation of the Residences.

An Unforgettable
**DINNER
PARTY**

FEASTING, WINE, LIVELY
CONVERSATION, LAUGHTER AND
HEART-WARMING MEMORIES —
THIS IS WHAT A DINNER PARTY
SHOULD BE ABOUT.



BEL-AIR | GOURMET



Hosting a dinner party can be both enjoyable and stressful, so a little help from the experts is appreciated! Club Bel-Air's Executive Sous Chef Hugo shares his professional tips on throwing a party that your guests will talk about for years.

Plan Early for a Stress-free Party

Planning ahead can greatly reduce your stress, says Chef Hugo. "Confirm the number of guests, menu and rundown at least two weeks before the party. If you're not hosting a home party, reserve

the venue around 60 to 90 days in advance, and book your vendors 30 days before."

Menu Ideas for All

What makes the right party menu? Chef Hugo believes recipes using seasonal produce and taking into account guests' preferences are equally important. "Turkey and bone-in ham are great choices for wintertime. I would also recommend gingerbread and a log cake for dessert." Don't forget the little ones when planning the drinks menu. "Prepare juices, non-alcoholic fruit punch and hot chocolate for the kids while their parents enjoy a sip of Champagne, wine and sangria."

Food and wine pairings add another dimension to a dinner party, harmonising textures and flavours. But they don't have to



be complicated. Chef Hugo offers some basics that can satisfy even the most discerning bon vivant. "Light-bodied, low-acidity dry white wine goes well with seafood and poultry," Chef Hugo suggests, "while red wine complements beef, lamb and strong-flavoured dishes perfectly."

For your next party, impress your guests with Chef Hugo's showstopping Salmon in Brioche recipe; it's simple to prepare, but looks impressive!

SALMON IN BRIOCHE

4 servings

Ingredients

Brioche

10g dried yeast
50g sugar
150ml warm water
450g plain flour
3 eggs, 1 beaten
1 tbsp salt
40g butter
(softened to room temperature)

100ml milk

Pancake

125g flour
300ml milk
1 egg
Good pinch of salt
1 tbsp chopped fresh dill

Spinach Pâté

260g spinach
1 egg white
1–2 tbsp double cream
15g cornflour
1 large centre-cut salmon fillet, about 500g

Saffron Garlic Sauce

2 tbsp hot water
Large pinch of saffron threads
1–2 garlic cloves, minced
2 tsp lemon juice or white wine vinegar
1 tsp salt
2 egg yolks
¾ cup olive oil

Method

Step 1: Brioche

- Mix the yeast, sugar and water in a jug and stand for 15 minutes for fermentation.
- Mix the flour, two of the eggs and salt until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.
- Place the flour mixture in a stand mixer. Set the mixer to low speed, using the hook attachment.
- Add the yeast mix, then slowly and steadily pour in the milk. Mix until it is all well incorporated.

- Add the soft butter and beat the mixture for two minutes more, which should result in a very wet dough.

Step 2: Pancake

- Put the flour into a large bowl, make a well in the centre and pour in the milk and egg.

- Whisk the mixture before incorporating the salt and dill.
- Continue to whisk until you have a smooth batter.
- Cook the pancake in a pan and set aside.

Step 3: Pâté

- Place the spinach in a food processor

- with the egg white, cream and cornflour, and process until homogenous.
- Microwave the mixture for 15 seconds, stir well and repeat one more time.
- Place in the fridge to chill until set.





Step 4: Saffron Garlic Sauce

- Crumble the saffron threads into the hot water in a small bowl and steep for 10 minutes.
- In the bowl of a blender, briefly buzz the garlic, lemon juice, salt and egg yolks to combine. Add the saffron and the water and buzz until smooth.
- With the motor running, drizzle in the olive oil until the mixture emulsifies into a mayonnaise-like consistency. Taste for salt and acid, adding a little lemon juice and salt if needed.

To assemble:

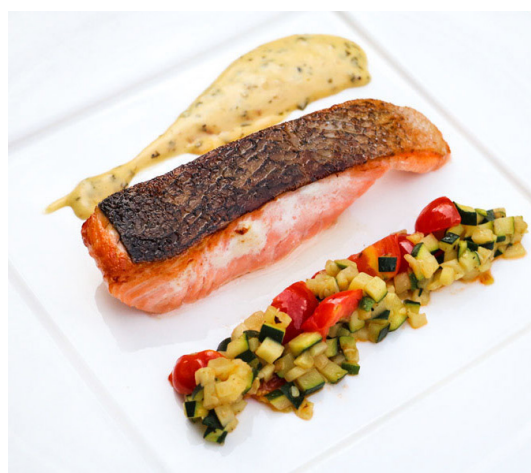
1. Leave the brioche dough in a covered bowl in a warm spot for two hours until it doubles in size.
2. Punch down the dough. Roll it out to a large square about 12'x12' and lay the pancake on top.
3. Place the salmon in the middle and spread the pâté over the brioche dough. Now roll up the brioche dough like a parcel. Let the dough parcel proof for half an hour.
4. Preheat the oven to 80°C on fan setting. Bake the parcel for 10 minutes. Brush with a beaten whole egg, then reduce the heat to 160°C and bake for 20 minutes more.
5. Remove from oven and let it stand for 10 minutes before cutting into individual servings. Serve with the saffron garlic sauce and a green salad on the side.

Fresh Feasts at Le Meridien Cyberport



French Bistro

Experience the authentic taste of France at Prompt restaurant. Helmed by Chef Nicolas Borteyru, the restaurant has transformed its dining concept to French bistro-style. Classic dishes such as Burgundy snails, sole meunière and traditional steak-frites are on offer. End your meal on a sweet note with Chef Borteyru's signature Napoleon cake, or decadent chocolate fondant with raspberry sorbet.



Prompt Restaurant (L4)

Mon to Sun: 6.30am–10.00pm
Tel: 2980 7417



Nam Fong Chinese Restaurant (L3)

Mon to Sat:
12.00pm–2.30pm/6.30pm–10.30pm
Sun and PH:
11.30pm–2.30pm/6.30pm–10.30pm
Tel: 2980 7410

Cantonese Feast

Chinese food lovers have much to look forward to as Nam Fong Chinese restaurant head chef Bosco Li has refreshed its menu with scrumptious offerings. Treat yourself to barbecued Iberico char siu, made with premium Iberico pork, or the new set lunch menu featuring double-boiled sea whelk soup with fish maw, braised abalone and dim sum.

Japanese Flavours

Umami Restaurant & Bar brings Japanese flavours to Cyberport. Retreat to Umami's terraced garden and explore artfully prepared dishes made with the freshest ingredients. Discover premium seafood offerings presented in the set menu. Umami has recently adjusted its opening hours to the below:



Umami Restaurant & Bar (L1)

Mon and Tue: 12.00pm–2.30pm
Wed, Thu and Sun: 12.00pm–10.30pm
Fri, Sat and PH: 12.00pm–11.00pm
Tel: 2980 7406

Bel-Air residents enjoy an exclusive **20 percent discount**

(Terms & Conditions apply)

Heritage Rejuvenated

HOME TO ONE OF THE WORLD'S ANCIENT PERFORMING ARTS, XIQU CENTRE IS HONG KONG'S LATEST LANDMARK BOASTING CAPTIVATING ARCHITECTURE. BLENDING AN INSPIRING AESTHETIC, THEATRE, PUBLIC SPACE AND RICH CHINESE CULTURE, THIS WORLD-CLASS VENUE IS A GATEWAY TO THE LEGACIES OF CHINESE OPERA.

It is impossible to overlook this eight-storey cultural sanctuary sitting on the edge of the West Kowloon Cultural District. Its shimmering façade resembles a beaded stage curtain. The lines of the curved metal panels flow like water, revealing the interior atrium where visitors are greeted by exhibitions, art installations and ample public spaces.

A Journey of *Qi*

This design was brought to life by Revery Architecture (formerly Bing Thom Architects) and Ronald Lu & Partners, who captured the essence of *xiqu* — as an art



form and culture. Four design elements are integral to reflecting the richness of this heritage: the sense of the gateway and performance pavilion in the traditional theatre, the cultural significance of the

courtyard in the Chinese community, embracing nature and the urban landscape, and a journey of *qi* — the concept of energy flow in Chinese culture. The openness of Xiqu Centre gives a sense



of space. The complex is free of doors, welcoming visitors from all corners. The ground space underneath its 1,073-seat Grand Theatre mirrors a courtyard, as a community hub for performance

and celebration. Three-dimensional landscapes on different levels are connected seamlessly, bringing together nature and the urban landscape. The curvilinear façade and arched entrance

create a feeling of fluidity, dedicated to the *qi* concept.

Tradition in a Modern Brew
Xiqu Centre is a place where Chinese theatre can be preserved

The curvilinear façade and arched entrance create a feeling of fluidity, dedicated to the qi concept.



and promoted, so recruiting a new audience is essential. In the Tea House Theatre, which pays homage to 20th century Hong Kong tea houses, the audience can enjoy a 90-minute performance accompanied by dim sum and tea. If you are new to Chinese traditional theatre you'll appreciate that narration is provided. Family packages are available, so why not consider this option as a delicious heritage experience for your next family day out?

Hands-on Xiqu

Xiqu Centre offers a series of workshops to appeal to the younger



Workshops run at Xiqu Centre the third weekend of each month. Visit the website to find out about upcoming events: www.westkowloon.hk/en/whats-on/current-forthcoming/workshops-at-the-xiqu-centre/

generation. Active children can take part in the Spear Sparring workshop — martial arts and sparring are common in *xiqu* performances. For a

gentler alternative, jewellery workshops offer the chance to craft some coveted *xiqu*-inspired jewellery such as a resin stone brooch or hairpin.

5 Facts About Chinese Opera

Astonishingly, most Hong Kongers know little about Chinese opera, even though it is deeply rooted in our culture. Here are some quick facts to give you an insight into this traditional art.



Variety :

There are more than 300 kinds of Chinese opera. The first 'opera school' in Chinese history is thought to be Liyuan, or 'Pear Garden', founded in the Tang dynasty.

Heritage:

In 2009 Cantonese opera was included in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Colours:

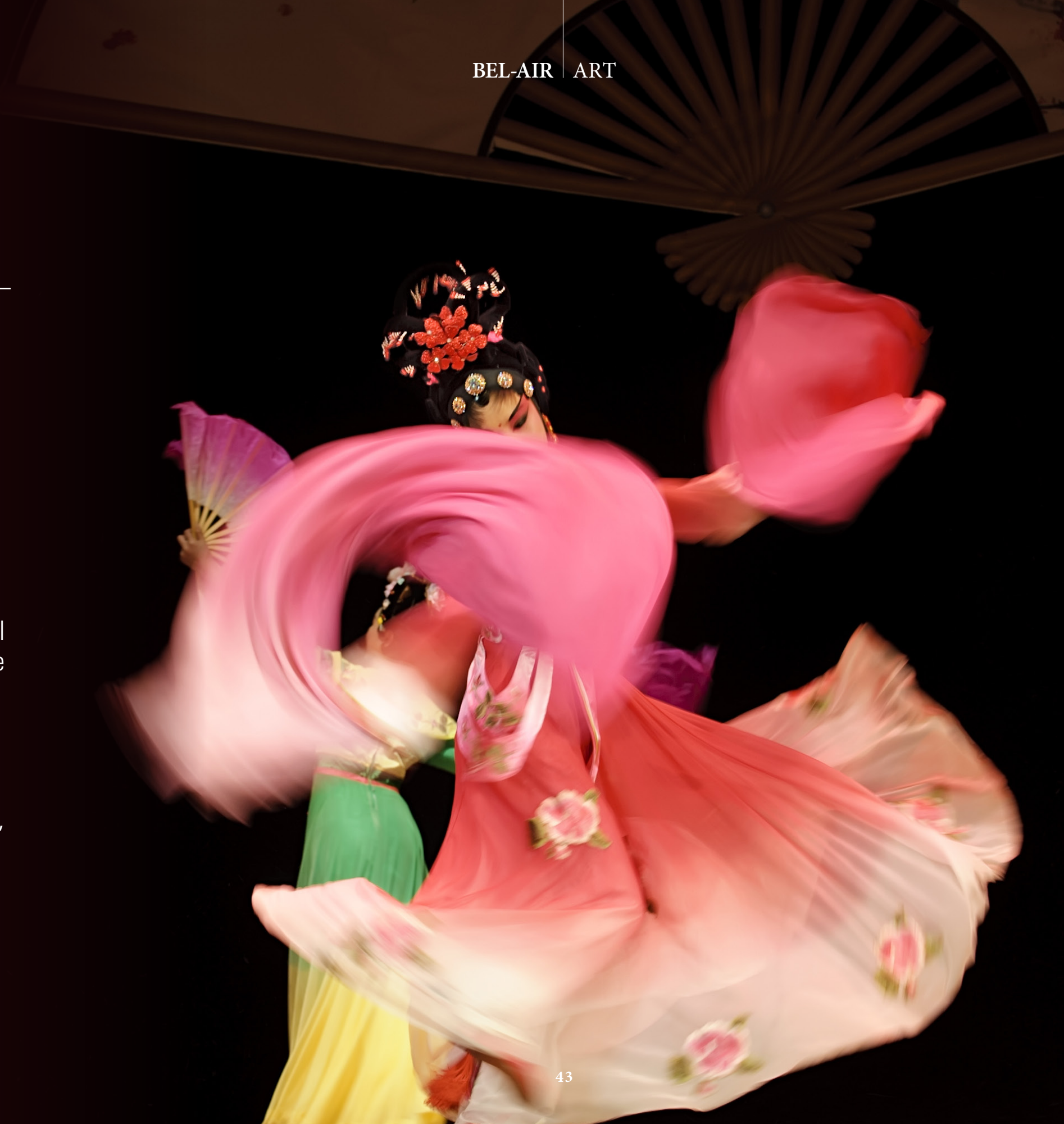
In Peking opera, the colour of a character's make-up represents their identity and feelings. For example, red signifies loyalty and courage; white is worn by villains; and gold and silver are the colours of immortals or demons.

Tricks:

Shanxi opera may sometimes include special effects (more so than other types of Chinese opera) such as fire-breathing, acrobatics and juggling.

Female Impersonation:

In Peking opera, female roles, known as *dan*, were played solely by men for centuries, when women were banned from performing in theatre. This role gave birth to *nandan*, where a male actor must immaculately represent the feminine.





Sparkle Joy:
**‘TIS THE
SEASON TO SIP
CHAMPAGNE**

IT'S THE SYNONYM FOR CELEBRATION,
THE OFFICIAL DRINK OF WIMBLEDON, AND
A TIPPLE WITH A LONG LOVE AFFAIR WITH
ROYALTY; CHAMPAGNE HAS LONG BEEN
ASSOCIATED WITH LUXURY AND EXCLUSIVITY.



Pop! Nothing says that a party has started quite like popping a bottle of Champagne. So what is it exactly that makes this bottle of bubbles so adored?

A Tongue-tingling Accident

First of all, not all sparkling wines are created equal; only those produced in the French region of Champagne can be called Champagne. The region lies in northeast France, about 160 kilometres from Paris, at the 49th parallel, which also means the edge of the wine regions between the 30th and 50th parallel (thanks to their temperate climates).

Consequently, wines from the relatively cool Champagne region tended to ferment prematurely due to the early frost. Traditionally, bubbles in wine were a sign of this incomplete fermentation. Spring sees the yeast wake up in the sealed



tank to consume the residual sugar, resulting in ‘secondary fermentation’ and — *voilà* — the by-product is fizzy carbon dioxide gas.

A Cultural Icon

“Champagne! In victory, one deserves it, in defeat, one needs it.” This famous quote by Napoleon hints at Champagne’s prestigious place in history. Loved by royalty and the aristocracy in Europe, it was obligatory at the lavish parties

of Philippe, Duke of Orleans, the French regent from 1715 to 1723.

This effervescent alcohol has now become a mass-market luxury, a symbol of glamour — and a bottle of fizz is essential for jubilant occasions, from wedding toasts to Formula 1 podiums. Visually, Champagne overflows to represent abundance and joy; even the act of corkage — the ‘pop and pour’ — signifies celebration.

Champagne Uncorked

The vast varieties of Champagne are fascinating: here are some terms, such as grape varieties, flavour profiles, sweetness levels and producers, to look out for.



Blanc de Blancs

Literally “white of whites”, this is the 100 percent white grape — usually Chardonnay — Champagne. It tastes refreshingly fruity with lemon and apple notes.

Blanc de Noirs

Don’t be fooled by the name, “white of blacks” is made only with black grapes, usually mixing Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier, and is known for its red fruit character.

Rosé

This dreamy pink fizz is a fashionable member of the Champagne family. Winemakers blend a small amount of red wine, usually Pinot Noir or Pinot Meunier, with Blanc Champagne to bring out the taste of various berries.

Sweetness

The sweetness in Champagne comes from a blend of sugar and wine — namely ‘dosage’. Sparkling wine is highly acidic, and without the dosage it would be too sour. The degree of sweetness in Champagne is measured in *brut*.

Extra Brut

The driest among the sparkling wines, as sugar is mostly consumed by the yeast.

Brut

The most popular flavour; dry and slightly sweet.

Extra Dry

Noticeably sweeter and less dry than the above two.

Demi-Sec

The sweetest, best enjoyed with dessert.

Notable Champagne Producers

The established maisons or Champagne houses, also known as the Grande Marques, are the largest producers of Champagne, sourcing grapes from the whole of the region.

There are also cooperatives, located in specific villages, that work with local growers, and vigneron, grower-producers who make wine from their own grapes. Some advocate organic and biodynamic farming and are gaining recognition and strong followings.



5 Tips for Exploring the Champagne Region as a Family

A UNESCO World Heritage site within easy reach of Paris (just 45 minutes by train, or 90 minutes by car), Champagne spoils its visitors with its tranquil hinterland, rich heritage and charming stays. It would be remiss to leave your young kids at home. Here we share the top five child-friendly activities in Champagne, so the whole family can relish a tasteful journey without boring the little ones.

Champagne Mercier:

Take your children on the underground train that travels across 18-kilometre-long cellars.

Nigloland Theme Park:

A day of adventures with more than 30 thrilling rides.

La Cave aux Coquillages:

A cave of archaeological interest to discover magnificent fossils.

The Trans-Ardenne Bike Path:

Enjoy easy cycling along the traffic-free trail through the Ardennes valley and forest to the Belgian border.

Le Chêne Perché:

Unleash your inner monkey; surfing on the treetops or experience a night in tree houses to discover the French forest.





For a GOOD CAUSE

EVEN IN AFFLUENT CITIES SUCH AS HONG KONG, THERE ARE STILL UNDERPRIVILEGED GROUPS AND SOCIAL ISSUES THAT REQUIRE OUR ATTENTION. GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY, AS A FAMILY, INSPIRES CHILDREN AND HELPS THEM REALISE THAT THEY CAN BE A FORCE OF POSITIVE CHANGE — NO MATTER THEIR AGE.



Be a Book Buddy

For those with a love of books and storytelling, join the Kids4Kids Buddy Reading Programme, which aims to improve the English language skills of children from low-income families. Family volunteers — parents and children aged eight or above — are welcome to read English stories to small groups of children during weekends. Volunteers are required to attend a training workshop beforehand, which covers the programme’s objectives and basic reading skills. This meaningful kids-to-kids activity fosters an interest in reading for all participants.

kids4kids.org.hk/en/buddy-reading-program

Rescue Surplus Food

Hong Kong has a food waste problem that cannot be ignored, and Food Angel is making the effort to be part of the solution. The organisation collects perfectly good surplus food from suppliers and supermarkets that would otherwise go to waste, for use in meal boxes for the elderly, low-income families and the homeless. Volunteers aged 16 and up are needed to prepare meals in their kitchens. This volunteer activity serves as a powerful reminder to cherish and save food in daily life.

www.foodangel.org.hk



Flag Day

This is often the first volunteering experience for many Hong Kongers. Fancy stickers, known as “flags” in Cantonese, are proffered on the street to raise funds for charity projects, from elderly services to animal welfare. Hundreds to thousands of voluntary flag sellers are required each Flag Day. Young children, accompanied by parents, are particularly welcome — after all, who can resist the lovely smile from a little flag seller?

For upcoming Flag Days in 2020 and details on how to participate, contact the Social Welfare Department.

www.swd.gov.hk



Craft for Kids

Got a creative side? Social enterprise Bizzie Bee raises funds with an original model: craft workshops and activities in a box! Spend an afternoon at a parent-child workshop and unleash your child’s imagination; or simply purchase a DIY craft kit to have some fun at home. Proceeds from the sale of Bizzie Bee’s products support arts programmes for the underprivileged in the community.

www.bizziebee.org

COMMUNITY SERVICES IN BEL-AIR



A Second Life for Toys

For those families with an abundance of toys in their home, here's the chance in the season of giving to donate them to children who are not as lucky. The Toy Bank of YMCA is collecting toys, stationery, small sports equipment

and musical instruments for those in need. Make sure they are clean and in good condition (no soft toys, hair accessories or incomplete sets, please) before leaving them at our clubhouse reception before 13 January 2020.

Spread the Chinese New Year Joy

This Chinese New Year, donate your time to bring some joy and smiles to the residents in the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association. A volunteer visit is scheduled for mid-January 2020, welcoming all residents aged over 12 years. Transportation will be provided. Expect an afternoon packed with games, a singalong of Chinese New Year songs and heartwarming memories. For event details, please visit the Bel-Air website www.bel-air.hk.com.



Spark your Wanderlust



It is more than having a passport full of stamps; being a globetrotter is a state of mind. Marcel Proust once said, “The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.” To inspire your wanderlust, *Bel-Air* magazine selects a host of online content, movies and travel literature to take you through time and space.

Instagram

@natgeotravel

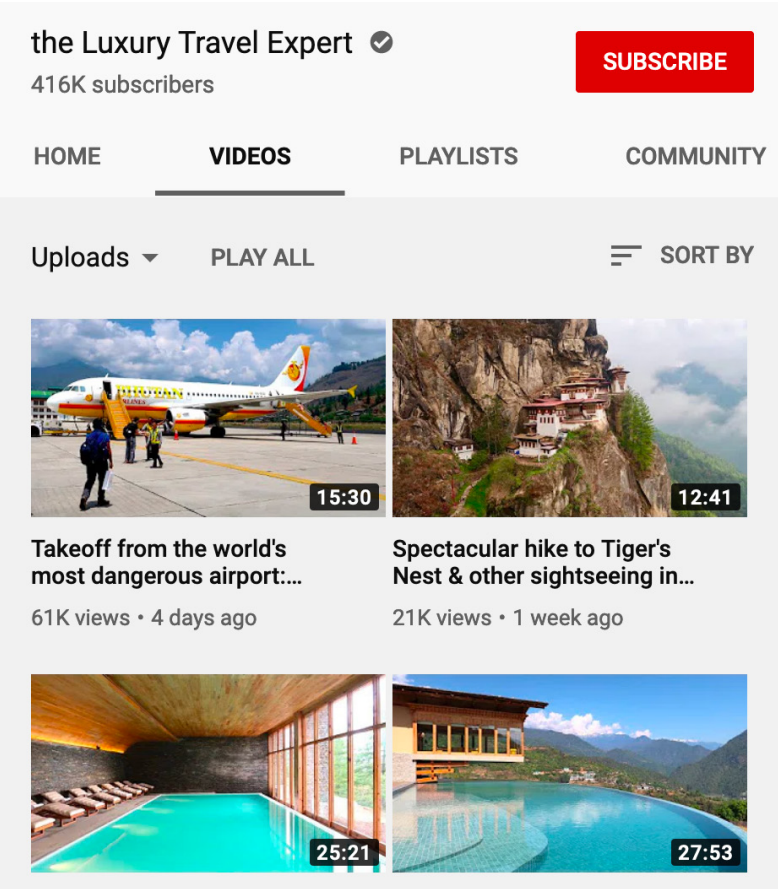


From hand-hewn ancient temples in Jordan to the rare white Kermode bear in the wilds of Canada, experience the world of wonder through the lens of professional photographers.

YouTube

@The Luxury Travel Expert

For travellers who are only satisfied with the best, follow in the footsteps of this vlogger who lives the high life. Every week the anonymous vlogger, who’s only known as ‘a doctor and travel enthusiast’, uploads new exploits in ultra-luxury stays, first-class flights, epic train trips and fine dining.



Movie

Amélie (2001)



Set in moody Montmartre, a bohemian enclave in Paris, is this French film, starring Audrey Tautou. The quirky tale of good-natured Amélie, who spreads love and kindness in her neighbourhood, will have you booking a voyage to the City of Lights right away.

Books



Geronimo Stilton and Thea Stilton series

by Geronimo Stilton

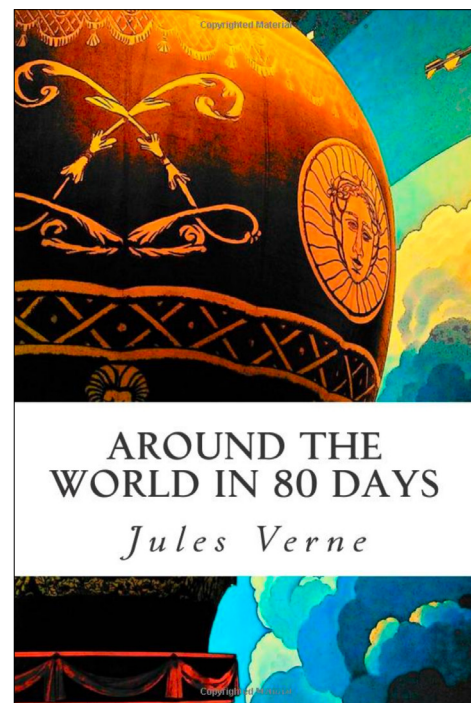
Case-cracking journalist (and mouse) Geronimo Stilton finds himself in different adventures, from The Wild Wild West to fantasy islands with dragons — though he hates to travel. This kids-approved series, full of excitement, action and history, has sold over 140 million copies worldwide.

Around the World in 80 Days

by Jules Verne

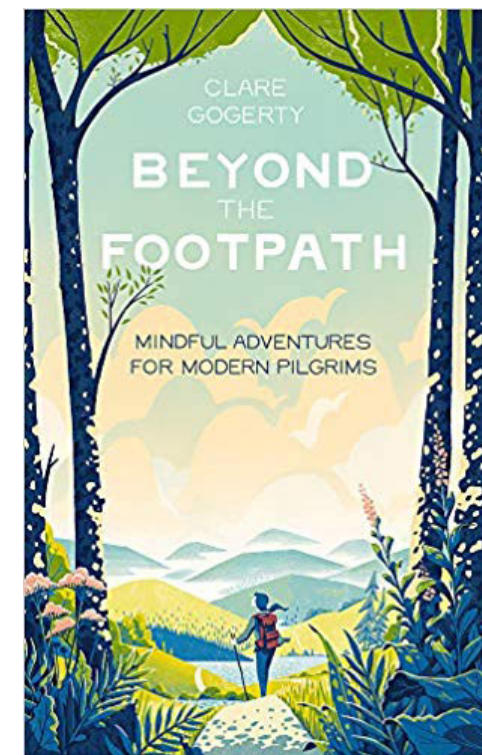
A classic that has inspired wanderlust across generations. Protagonist Phileas Fogg of Victorian-era London takes up a challenge to circumnavigate the globe over 80 days, on a journey by rail, boat and even elephants, in destinations such as Egypt, India, Singapore and Japan.

This is a timeless tale that celebrates the spirit of adventure, and provides a curious glimpse into the ‘innovative’ technology of its time.



Beyond the Footpath: Mindful Adventures for Modern Pilgrims

by Clare Gogerty

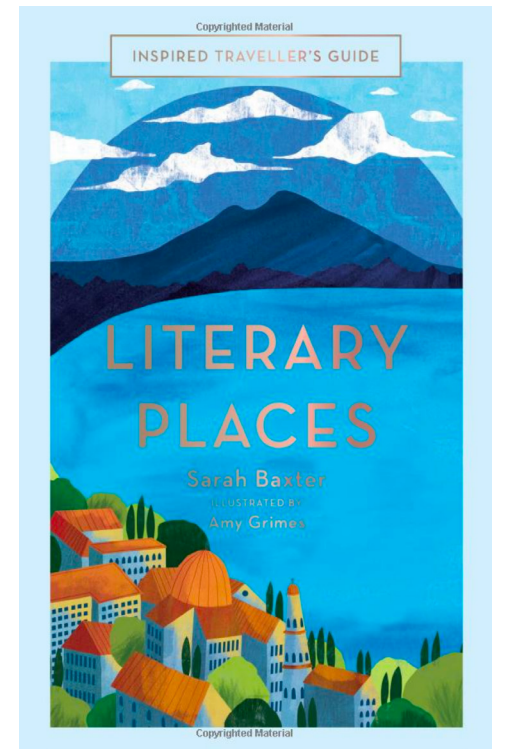


Dedicated to walkers, this is an inspirational guide to modern pilgrimages. Practical and beautifully written, it takes you to an ancient temple, sacred garden or just a casual walk in your neighbourhood so you can connect with yourself.

Literary Places (Inspired Traveller's Guides)

by Sarah Baxter (Author), Amy Grimes (Illustrator)

A colourful atlas that teleports you to fascinating places in the literary world. Travel journalist Sarah Baxter and illustrator Amy Grimes reimagine La Mancha in *Don Quixote* and Dublin, where *Ulysses* protagonist Leopold Bloom wandered, through researched text and stunning strokes.





Bel-Air
GRAND FUNCTION ROOM

Celebrate in Style



貝沙灣

Bel-Air
ISLAND SOUTH