



MEETING

It's the rare executive who doesn't have business in Hong Kong these days—this sparkling waterfront city attracts power brokers from all over the world to take advantage of the explosive growth in Asia. But where to stay and where to meet when you're in town? As any experienced dealmaker knows, not all business is done in meeting rooms, and in a city as food-centric as Hong Kong, where better to show yourself a tastemaker than the city's top restaurants?

French has long been the dominant European cuisine in Hong Kong, and the city's own Michelin guide was launched last year. It handed out three stars to just two restaurants, including French classic Caprice, in the Four Seasons, and two stars to seven restaurants in Hong Kong, among them Amber, in the Mandarin Oriental, for Chef Richard Ekkebus' contemporary cuisine, and Petrus in the Shangri-La, all notable

for their opulent yet individual styles as well as their incredible cuisine. Other notable European destinations include CÉPAGE, noted for their excellent 2,100 bottle cellar and wine pairing recommendations to go with their French cuisine, Gaddi's in the Peninsula Hotel, where French food first became the byword in fine dining in 1953, and Grissini in the Grand Hyatt, traditional Italian food done with a light, fresh touch. These restaurants are frequently at home in hotels to take advantage of their high traffic and excellent views of the harbor, and sometimes it can be an embarrassment of riches in one building;



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for example, the Intercontinental, where The Steak House winebar and grill and the Harbourside's international buffet receive accolades alongside SPOON by Alain Ducasse, where the best of French cuisine is combined with the freedom and flexibility of less-formal Western dining, to increase enjoyment of the modern sensation on your plate and the dramatic backdrop of the Hong Kong skyline, a visual feast in and of itself.

Other inroads have of course been made from the east, as Japanese cuisine continues to exert an influence on Hong Kong's foodie style. Aqua, an Italian/Japanese blend in the Tsim Sha Tsui shopping district, and Zuma, a Japanese restaurant in The Landmark hotel and office complex both benefit from their central locations, but stand on their own drawing diners at every meal to experience their modern décor and light, fresh food. There is also an outpost of Nobu Matsuhisa's empire at the Intercontinental, and at this location of NOBU they've blended his signature visual and taste experiences with local ingredients and visuals—the stunning ceiling evokes an ocean floor covered in sea urchins, while the bamboo-studded walls and black river stone bar frames Nobu's trademark Japanese cherry blossoms, for a pan-Asian experience all around you, including on your plate.

Chinese cuisine itself has become more elevated in recent years, with the awarding of Michelin stars to Lung King Heen, led by Chef Chan Yan Tak at the Four Seasons in the inaugural guide, as well as to Yan Toh Heen, the Michelin-starred Cantonese restaurant in the Intercontinental, which is a popular power-lunch spot for locals as well as travelers where top-quality, fresh ingredients are transformed into incredible delicacies by the talented Chef Lau Yiu Fai.

For gatherings larger than a single table can provide, many restaurants can be rented out privately or have private dining rooms, but the big name in business meetings here for the last 30 years has been the Intercontinental Hong Kong. In addition to arranging transportation and access to top private golf and country clubs for daytime outings, the hotel's top of the line facilities and unfailingly excellent service, including 24-hour concierge and business services, serve the 495 contemporary guest rooms. Spacious and plush, they're designed to welcome weary travelers and get them ready for action with high-speed broadband internet access, LCD televisions, and iPod docking stations. While the rooms are equally adapted to business and leisure, the operations team is able to pull off meetings and conferences with seamless aplomb in a variety of spaces, to suit the most particular needs.

"Our catering operation is the largest in Hong Kong," said Carole Klein, Director of Public Relations at the InterContinental Hong Kong, as she showed off the facilities advantages. The hotel's capacious and versatile ballroom space can host up to 200 for dinner or 300 for cocktails, while 11 harborview rooms contain a full audiovisual setup, high-



speed broadband connection, and wireless internet access. To really make the facilities work for you, however, the events managers and banquet team who assist behind the scenes assign a personal Meeting Butler to each room, who is fully trained to handle food and beverage, audio-visual, temperature control, as well as miscellaneous tasks that arise—no more fumbling with speakerphones at a crucial moment!

And to maximize that view even further, the hotel now offers a truly unique experience, tailored to either personal or professional needs—the Terrace Suites. The Presidential Suite, 7,000 square feet of penthouse and 2,500 square feet of terrace with the most incredible view in the city, has long been considered one of the top luxury suites in the world, the infinity pool alone a truly unique experience. In light of their success with that suite, the hotel has recently added two new specialty suites in the same vein. Both boast broad terraces and outdoor Jacuzzis, but in slightly different styles. The Terrace Suite is a honeymooner's paradise, with capacious bedrooms and bathrooms, and a luxurious outdoor bedroom setup, with a white-curtained bed positioned to catch the sunrise, and en-suite treatments from the hotel's luxurious I-Spa a phone call away. The CEO Suite, meanwhile, is just as it sounds—dark glossy wood and masculine décor are artfully mixed with state-of-the-

art technology to please any executive. And in this case, it can please their guests, too—these suites are a unique venue for private cocktail receptions for up to 50 people.

The hotel's central location and impressive reputation have made it the choice of travelers in Hong Kong for many years, but as with all great hotels, it's the service that makes or breaks the experience, and at the Intercontinental Hong Kong, it's a class apart. From the first welcome in the lobby to the last bite of dim sum, the hotel works behind the scenes to make your experience both special and seamless. Standing on the terrace of the CEO Suite with a glass of champagne overlooking the harbour, we were immediately impressed by the power the view provides, as uniformed servers glide silently from guest to guest: it's a situation any dealmaker should take advantage of. ■

