

Post



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Apr 27, 2023 · 5 min read

Groundhog Day, Hong Kong style - April 28, 2023

Updated: May 1, 2023

SUMMARY

Our first destination on this morning's shore excursion is Victoria Peak. Again. We did go up on the tram which afforded a different view. Drove from the peak to the fishing village of Aberdeen and took a sampan boat tour through the harbor. Lots of fishing vessels there but also lots of smallish yachts. On to Repulse Bay (which was in the least repulsive but quite beautiful) and Stanley Bay, also beautiful. Time for shopping at Stanley Market which was much more upscale than others we'd been to. Still, we came away empty handed due to traveling with carryon luggage. Not much room for souvenirs! Lunch, pool time, cocktails and dinner at

the onboard steakhouse rounded out the day. We departed Victoria Harbor headed for Viet Nam viewing the nightly laser light show. - Karen

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DETAIL

It's our second of two days in Hong Kong. After the ship was cleared yesterday, by immigration, it's almost like we're in a hotel, albeit one that's floating and lashed to the dock. Going ashore is quick and easy. We get off the boat for our third and final excursion in Hong Kong. Three excursions, three trips to the top of Victoria Peak. Oh well, this one will be via the tram, at least.

The tram has been around for a long time and has had at least three incarnations. The most recent change was two years ago, when Covid was going in high gear. No tourists, so why not? Getting to and getting on the tram is quite modern, with a huge screen covering the walls on either side and one on the ceiling. You're going up hill not on an escalator, which has stairs, but on what they call a travelator. We maybe don't have a better word for it, but it's a conveyor belt for pedestrians. All the movement underfoot, and on the walls and ceiling might make some people queasy.

The old tram carried you all the way to the top in 12 minutes. This one does it in 5 with twice the passenger capacity. They now say it's not called a tram, but rather a roller coaster. I wouldn't go that far, but it's nice. The pitch/incline changes as needed and at points, when you compare our pitch to the adjacent buildings, we're pretty steep.

Having been up twice already we skip the view and head to the three story mall, which is closed, but has good walking, window shopping, and bathrooms.

At Victoria Peak in addition to our big groups, there were big groups of Elementary Students. Today's Friday and tomorrow is the start of Golden Week. It's a huge holiday in China and these students are getting a jump on their period of not learning.

On the drive back down from Victoria Peak Chicken Wing again tells us about life in Hong Kong. Before 1997 people from China would swim to Hong Kong. If you made it you could be put into a holding camp where maybe you'll get the OK to immigrate to US, Canada, Europe, etc. If no, you would be given \$100 and sent home. You could collect the \$100 six times in a year. It's a living.

We drive on a little further and see a cricket match going on, very exciting I must say. Chicken Wing is telling us about protests here in Hong Kong now. They're allowed but you're not permitted to protest AND wear a mask. I guess they don't want the sounds of your chants muffled by the mask (wink, wink).

We also hear about how people save their money here. You can keep it in cash, under your mattress, but many people buy Rolexes. Not to have the watches, but as an investment. How much are you worth? I have these Rolexes. Need to buy something expensive? Sell a Rolex.

We're on our way to Aberdeen, on the far side of Hong Kong Island. They have some space here, so things aren't quite as expensive. There's a pretty harbor, with tall apartment houses all around, all shiny and new. And in the harbor, where there just to just be junks and sampans, there are now huge yachts fit for a Russian oligarch.

Here too, used to be the iconic floating Jumbo restaurant. It was hauled out to sea and sunk a couple of years back. The gang way, and somewhere the kitchens, are all that's left. When it sunk it made big news. There is still one similar big floating 'could be a Chinese restaurant' looking thing. It's still afloat but not in good repair. How it's not at the bottom of the marina is a bit of a mystery to us.

We hear about stuff they used to make over here, those silk jackets that were so popular in the 70s. The textile factories would work around the clock, 24/7, and the locals were happy to have the jobs. Now they're sewn in Myanmar or mainland China or somewhere.

When people here do make money, where does it go? A fair portion goes to your parents. That's what you do. American's on the bus laugh and say in the US it goes the other direction.

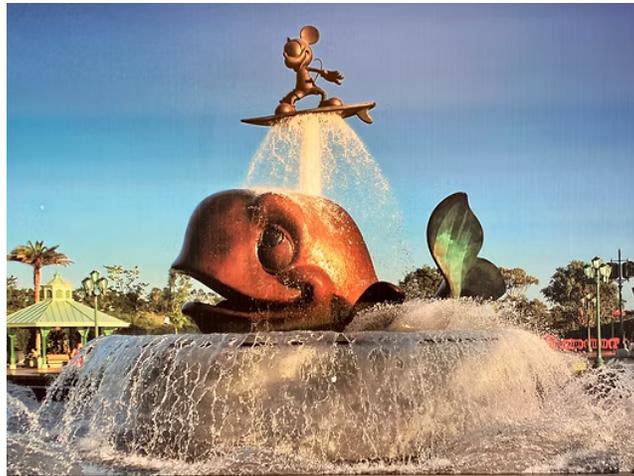
Our last stop is to another Market, the Stanley Market. This one has been around a long time, and it's in fairly good repair. There are deep booths off either side of the long walkway leading to the bay. The stalls are well lit. We're told to offer 90% or 80% of asking and see if they bite. We don't see anything we need. We were told that if we do see something we like and it has a label that says "100% pure silk" that's absolutely true. The label is, for sure, 100% pure silk. (The rest of the garment? Not sure.)

At one point an American 40-something year old lady, carrying a shopping bag and a bouquet of flowers, exclaims how nice it is to see tourists here again. She says that for the past time and years it's been almost dead. She's been here for many years, but they're moving back to the states soon. We were sad to tell her that with the coming typhoon season ours was the last cruise ship til August or maybe October.

We have our last dinner in the Prime C steakhouse, where we don't have steak. We have Glazed Miso Sea Bass and Caesar salad with chicken. Our friends at the next table talk us into trying a bit of the lamb from Australia (where they're from). It's good. It's fine.

We were supposed to depart at 5:30 according to the original plan, but each night around 8 pm there's a light and laser show on and coming from the building around Victoria Harbor. So the captain figures out a way to delay our departure. What we don't know is that once outside the harbor, in the black of night, there's all kinds of freighters, cargo ships, container ships, fishing vessels, and the like. Our ship had to carefully zigzag our way through. Apparently we did it.

Photos



We always pass this picture when leaving the boat. Maybe from Disneyland Hong Kong or some such place?



Again we play "which is the tallest building". This is the tallest.



We did find a mirror we liked. Makes us look thinner.



Also found Johnny Depp (or waxy copy thereof)



On the new tram looking at cars from the previous two iterations of this same tram



Looking out the window the nearby buildings let us know on how steep an incline we are. Yikes.



Clear and sunny in Victoria Harbor? Not right now.



Moving on. Headed over to Aberdeen.
Lots of buildings, boats, and money.



The pier (almost all that's left) of Jumbo
Chinese Restaurant (at least above the
surface of the water)



The type of sampan (three panel boat) in which we'll be riding



Us on our sampan, looking at another giant Chinese Restaurant still floating in the marina



Not great examples, but there were so many huge, expensive yachts



Before it sank, the Jumbo Chinese Food Floating Restaurant

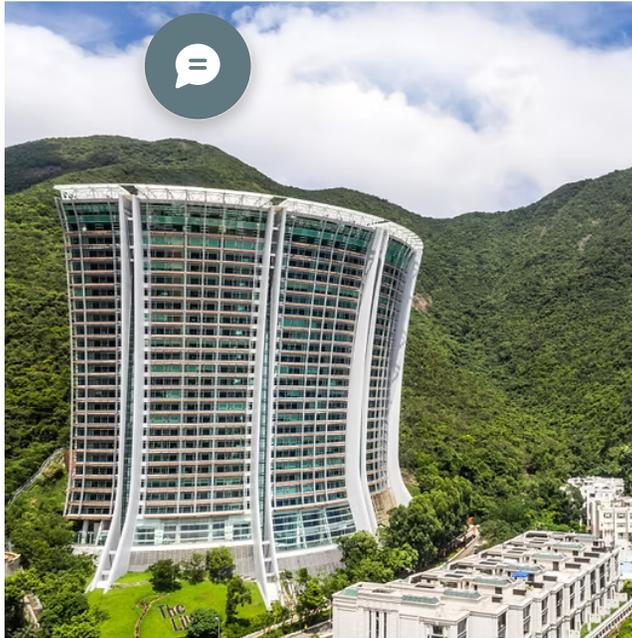


Another view of the new gong restaurant

FARNSNIENTE



Building built in an area known for having dragons who regularly fly down from the mountains to the water. The architects adjusting, accordingly.



Never wash your buildings in hot water.
They'll shrink!



Koala Buildings. It looks like there are
Koalas hugging the buildings.



No Photo! Signs with writing in English and Chinese. Magnets. I so should have bought you some of these!



Getting a covid shot in China? Not so easy? The solution? Hotels offering packages. A nice room, dinner, a show, a covid shot. All for one low price. (This is the Covid bus where you get that shot.)



The day ended gloriously sunny and blue.

Yay!

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