

Chapter Five

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HONG KONG RESOURCES A TO Z

ANTIQUES

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While there are many places to buy art and antiques in Hong Kong, remember:

- There are internationally famous dealers in London, New York, Tokyo, Vancouver, Taipei, Brussels, and places other than Hong Kong; buy from reputation and trust, not location.
- The amount of fakes and frauds in the art business is infamous and truly frightening, especially in Hong Kong.

Buy what you know; if you don't know much, buy what you love, regardless of its real value. Bring your own expert with you, if you are truly serious, or hire one in Hong Kong. If you think you are serious about something pricey, but can't sleep at night because you're not certain if it's real, get a second opinion. Many dealers on Hollywood Road will appraise an item (from another source) for you on a flat-fee basis.

Bear in mind that the truly wonderful pieces are usually put away. Most dealers have warehouses or back rooms where they keep their best wares; many are open only by appointment.

Note: Once a year *Where Magazine Hong Kong* publishes an *Art & Antiques* guide. E-mail wlundin@asia-city.com.hk

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for information or write Asia City Publishing, GPO Box 12618, Hong Kong. Fax orders to 852/2543-4964. There is a charge for the booklet and an additional charge for postage. Ask.

HONEYCHURCH ANTIQUES

29 Hollywood Rd. (MTR: Central).

Honeychurch Antiques has been home base on Hollywood Road since the beginning of the *Born to Shop* series, so forgive me if I guide you here; but I know you will be well taken care of by American expat owners Glenn and Lucille.

Honeychurch is located in the beginning part of the antiques run on Hollywood Road, which makes it a convenient first stop. The Vessas have held court for over 25 years; they know everything and everyone; stop by and ask whatever pops into your mind . . . but don't ask if you can call home.

The store carries a wide variety of merchandise; eclectic is the best summary. The look is sort of Oriental Country; there are goods from Japan and other exotic locations besides your basic Chinese antiques. Try both floors in the main shop and then a warehouse floor next door (ask to be taken over), with larger pieces of furniture and a few other goodies. Yes, they have blue-and-white; yes, they'll let you smell the opium pipes.

P.C. LU & SONS LTD.

Harbour City/Ocean Terminal, The Silk Road, Canton Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

A fine antiques dealer with showrooms in the major hotels, P. C. Lu's family has been in the business for four generations and runs one of the finest resources for antique ivory and jade, porcelain, and decorative work. The three sons, who now run the business, work closely together. Stop in at any of the galleries and browse or get a look when you're prowling The Silk Road.

SCHOENI

27 Hollywood Rd. (MTR: Central).

You have officially begun to “do” Hollywood Road when you stop in here, one of Hong Kong’s toniest dealers. They carry art and *objets d’art* from all over the Orient, so that only a portion of the selection is Chinese, but all of it is serious and expensive. There is also a store in Beijing. See www.schoeni.com.hk.

TAI SING CO.

122 Hollywood Rd. (MTR: Central).

A leading dealer in important Han, Tang, and Sung porcelains, as well as imperial porcelain (which is outrageously expensive), since 1957. They also sell Chinese export porcelain (which while less expensive is still only for the serious collector).

ART

I try not to cover art in these pages because it is such a subjective thing, however, you will soon notice that Hong Kong—and a lot of the world—has gone bonkers for Vietnam’s artists. One of the best galleries at which to see some examples is **Arch Angel Art**, 38 Peel St., off Hollywood Road; (☎ 852/2854-4255).

BATH

There’s more information in the “Spas” section (p. 133), but remember that this is a city where the **Inter-Continental Hotel** has a 24-hour **Bath Butler**, so all sorts of bath and beauty products for the tub are readily available. My room at **The Peninsula Hotel** had a box from Tiffany & Co. wrapped

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up next to the sink. I might have been expecting diamonds, but it turned out to be a bar of Tiffany & Co. bath soap. All the town's spas—in and out of hotels—sell bath and aromatherapy products as do most of the cosmetics stores. One of the most popular imports is LUSH, from London, with branches in many big malls, including in the LCX department store concept area of Harbour City.

BOOKS

Because English is still a second language in Hong Kong, it isn't hard to find books in English; and while they are pricey, they are not as expensive as in other cities in China. If you need books for the long haul flights or your cruise, this is the place to load up.

DYMOCKS

Star Ferry Terminal, Central (MTR: Central).

There are a few branches of this store around town, but the most fun is to wander the small shop's aisles right before you board the ferry for Kowloon. You'll find international magazines, some stationery items, and plenty of books in English—both fiction and nonfiction. Excellent selection of guide books and reads on local history and culture.

MANDARIN ORIENTAL GIFT SHOP

Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Central (MTR: Central).

This is more of a newsstand than a gift shop, but it has an excellent (but small) collection of books in English.

COSMETICS & FRAGRANCES

Best buys are in terms of availability, not price—check out scents that have been introduced in Europe, but not in the U.S.

Cosmetics & Fragrances 99

Whether you save or not becomes meaningless because you'll be the first on your block to have the new scent. If you care.

Take note: Many big-name cosmetic companies manufacture for the Far East in and around Hong Kong; often they will have a product with the same name as the product you use at home, but it will be slightly different. They may also have a product or shade that you have never heard of and will never find again anywhere else in the world.

Finally, if you just wander through any of the malls, most especially **Harbour City**, you will find tons of little shops selling brands that may interest you—a few are local brands, some are Euro brands that don't have good distribution in the U.S., and many are Japanese brands.

Designer Brands

MADINA

*Shop 2412 Harbour City, TST (MTR: TST); Times Sq.
(MTR: Causeway Bay).*

Madina is an Italian makeup brand that is actually marketed as a slightly upmarket mass market brand—something for everyone. Those in the know are aware that the *createur* of the brand is the makeup artist at La Scala opera house and that her husband owns the largest makeup-producing factories in Italy, where many designer makeups are actually produced.

Prices on Madina brand are fair; colors are glorious; and those who are looking for something new and different and not easily found at their local mall in the U.S. will love this line.

Mass Market Opportunities

BONJOUR

Addresses all over town.

This is a chain possibly devised for teenaged girls; I'm not crazy for it, but your 12-year-old might enjoy it. It's a knockoff of the SaSa concept (see below).

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RED EARTH

Addresses all over town.

Australian brand that now just does color cosmetics—moderate prices geared for a young customer.

SASA COSMETIC COMPANY

Addresses all over town.

SaSa has emerged as one of the leading discounters in Hong Kong with branch stores everywhere. Note that all branches are not created equally—some have more stock than others.

Many of their goods come directly from the sources in the U.S., which makes them much cheaper on a local front. But not cheaper than at home, if you are American. So shop carefully. Also note that some items are closeouts and discontinued lines.

SHU UEMURA

The Landmark, 16 Des Voeux Rd. (MTR: Central); Pacific Place, 88 Queensway (MTR: Admiralty); Ocean Terminal (MTR: Tsim Sha Tsui), among others.

Makeup junkies shouldn't miss the opportunity to buy from the Japanese maven of cosmetics and color, although this line is sold in the U.S. and in Europe also. There is even a kiosk at the HKG airport.

WATSON'S, THE CHEMIST

24–28 Queen's Rd. (MTR: Central), and in many other locations.

There's a Watson's on almost every big busy block and mall in Hong Kong; I stop in all of them because all Watson's are not the same. Selected stores (such as the one listed above) have a Boots department where they sell several of the private label makeup brands from Boots in London. Watson's is actually a drugstore cum general store that sells many things.

CAMERAS

Forget it. Buy at home. And for heaven's sake, avoid those guys on Nathan Road.

CASHMERE

Cashmere from the Orient is not of the same quality as that which comes out of Scotland or Italy, not because of the quality of the goats but because of how it is combed and milled. Meanwhile, the market is being used to dump Iranian cashmere, which is of even less quality than Chinese. You can usually tell the quality in not only the hand (feel) but in the way it knits. Price should also be related to the number of ply per skein; 2 is the usual number available in Hong Kong although the ply can range from 1 to 4.

Indeed, you can find cashmere in many of the outlet stores in Pedder Building, in several different stores at **The Peninsula Hotel's shopping gallery**, at **Stanley Market**, and even at the Chinese department stores. Quality will be a big issue here—it affects the hand as well as the price. Most likely, you can get cashmeres at home for prices similar to those in Hong Kong.

PEARLS AND CASHMERE

The Peninsula Hotel, Salisbury Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

The selection of colors is excellent. Prices are not dirt cheap but are competitive with low-end prices in the U.S. so that you get more quality than usual at this price, which is close to \$200 per sweater. Some sweaters cost less; there are also other items.

CASSETTES, CDS & VCDs

CDs and VCDs (Video Compact Discs) are sold on the streets, in the usual music stores and chains (such as **HMV**), and in

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Shenzen. If you buy in legit stores, they are legal and usually more expensive; on the streets or in Shenzen, usually bootleg. Note that there is a difference between a VCD and a DVD—DVDs are more expensive and are said to have better quality, although I have had no problem with the quality of VCDs. The average price for a VCD in Hong Kong is HK\$35 (US\$4.50). I buy mine either in markets (Temple Street Market or Ladies' Market) or in one of the many stores on the shopping side of Haiphong Road in Kowloon, right near the Mosque, where it abuts Nathan Road.

CHINESE CERAMICS & PORCELAINS

There are retail stores, there are museums, there's plenty to buy, but the factories are the most fun, even though they are not overly easy or convenient to get to. I suggest that you plan your day around the visit, leave plenty of time, and remember that most factories close for lunch, usually between 1 and 2pm.

Also note: Chinese crafts stores have a selection of china. And yes, assume that blue-and-white is fake unless guaranteed otherwise.

Final word: Ancient Chinese porcelain is one of the latest collecting rages because it's old but so minimalist in lines that it has a Zen-Armani feel to it, which some people like. A Sing vase from the Song Dynasty recently sold in London for about \$800,000. The tip from Christies is this is a good time to be buying Song, Jin, and Yuan dynasties. Just make sure they are real.

Mass Market Sources

OVERJOY

Kwai Hing Industrial Building (Block B, 1st floor), 10–18 Chun Pin St., Kwai Chung, New Territories (no nearby MTR; take a taxi).

Located in the heart of Hong Kong's shipping and container district, where there are a few other porcelain showrooms,

Chops 103

Overjoy is the single most famous source to those who have been living here for years. Grab a taxi to this industrial area, walk up one flight of stairs; the selection includes both Western and Chinese patterns. Shipping rates are posted; delivery to your hotel in Hong Kong is free. There is also a showroom in Wan Chai.

WAH TUNG CHINA COMPANY

Grand Marine Industrial Building, 3 Yue Fung St., Tin Wan, Aberdeen (no nearby MTR; take a taxi); 148 Hollywood Rd. (MTR: Sheung Wan); 57 Hollywood Rd. (MTR: Central).

This is the single largest source for Chinese porcelain in Hong Kong. While they have two very nice showrooms on Hollywood Road, I really far prefer the Aberdeen addresses where there are floors of showrooms and prices seem to be rather negotiable, depending on how much you buy and how aggressive you feel.

I've bought tons from here and loved every minute of it. I rate this the single best porcelain resource in town. I've bought giant ginger jars that now sit on my mantle; I've bought smalls for home and for gifts.

All three showrooms are packed with new pieces and new antiques; they make no fuss about showing you how they antique pieces. Usually an artisan is working so you can watch. Many U.S. department stores use this as a resource; I think it's a must-do. They will send a van to bring you to Aberdeen if you want (☎ 852/2873-2272). All three shops are open on Sundays from 11am to 5pm.

CHOPS

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In China, a *chop* is a form of signature stamp (not made of rubber) on which a symbol for a person's name is carved. The chop is dipped in dry dye (instead of an ink pad) and then placed on paper to create a signature stamp, much like a rubber stamp.

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Antique chops are quite pricey, depending on age, importance of the carving, materials used, and maybe even the autograph that is engraved. New chops have little historic importance, but make great gifts. Some come ready-made in a standard set of Western names, or you can have your own carved.

Although chops vary in size, they are traditionally the size of a chess piece, with a square or round base. Up to four Chinese characters or three Western initials can be inscribed on the base.

The quality of a chop varies greatly, based on the ability of the person who does the carving. We have done enough chop shopping to know that the very best place to get a chop, if you crave atmosphere, lies in **Man Wa Lane**, deep inside the Western District. It's also the worst place because it is so confusing—you may never find your way back to the proper vendor when you need to pick up your finished chop.

Every hotel has at least one gift shop that will have your chop engraved. (You must allow at least 24 hr.) Many shops will provide 1-hour service. At **Stanley Market** you can get while-you-wait service from a variety of dealers.

You may buy the chop a la carte or in a set or gift box. The boxed set comes with your chop and the ink pot in a silk-covered (or faux silk) box with adorable clasp; expect to pay about HK\$100 (US\$13) for the boxed set in Stanley.

COMPUTERS & SMALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

For the most part, I am nervous about buying computers and other electronics in Hong Kong—too much can go wrong. On the other hand, my greatest delight is my new DVD player (brand name: Shinco), which cost about \$100 in Hong Kong and was easy to bring home. The instructions are in English, and there are three different plugs included for international play. Voltage is 110–220.

Department Stores 105

My new toy came from **Wing Ming Audio & Video Center**, ground floor, 77 Sai Yess St., Mong Kok (MTR: Mong Kok). The local phone is ☎ 852/2399-7991 . . . I mention this because this is a local store and there may not be a lot of back-up support. You could get your hotel concierge to call ahead for you.

DEPARTMENT STORES

European-style

LANE CRAWFORD

70 *Queen's Rd.* (MTR: *Central*); *The Mall at Pacific Place*,
88 *Queensway* (MTR: *Admiralty*); *Times Sq.* (MTR:
Causeway Bay).

Lane Crawford is the most prestigious Western-style department store in Hong Kong and a jewel to those who work and live here, but who crave the elegance of old-world charm in a retail setting. Lane Crawford is not huge by American standards, but it's comfortable and you'll find all the familiar brands of quality merchandise. It is not really there for tourists, but it does offer the guarantee that you are not getting fakes, seconds, or inferior merchandise. Snobs often like to buy their jewelry and their lifestyle here.

LCX

Ocean Terminal, *Harbour City*, *Tsim Sha Tsui* (MTR: *TST*).

This is the department store of the future—an amazing space inside the **Ocean Terminal** shopping mall and very well marked so that you can find it. This mall is so large and meanders so easily along the waterfront that you can easily get lost inside it as I have. Follow signs specifically for LCX if that is your destination. Don't expect to fall upon it by accident.

The concept is one big warehouse, so it's a department store within a mall—and one that has no walls. Brands have different

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identity areas, clearly delineated, but you wander from one to the next as if sailing from island to island. A few of them are names you may have heard of (Gap, Banana Republic); some of them are names you have been dying to meet (like **LUSH** from London), and others are totally unknown even to the most savvy shopper. One of the lines I liked was **MTM Japan**, a skin-care line that I had not seen before. Several friends have recently asked me about whitening creams to remove age spots—this line has several whiter-than-thou creams.

The space is very young and hip, but also academically interesting if you just want to see something very different from an old-fashioned department store or mall. There's an organizing factor to the groups, such as Trend X with brands like **Miss Sixty**, **Miss Sofi**, and **azona ao2**; there's American Casuals—brands you've heard of—and then what they call Bloxoms, which are makeup brands that even include the French brand **Caudalie**, made from grape-seed extract. There are also places for coffee and snacks; there's a disco (!); and there's a branch of **California Pizza Kitchen**.

MARKS & SPENCER

Harbour City Ocean Galleries, 25–27 Canton Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST); Pacific Place, Central (MTR: Admiralty); The Landmark, 16 Des Voeux Rd. (MTR: Central); Cityplaza III, 1111 King's Rd., Quarry Bay (MTR: Taikoo Shing).

I love M&S, but there are no great Hong Kong bargains here. Being in the store, especially the grocery department, is just fun. It also offers a chance to buy Western sizes and larger sizes. Need a brassiere? Can't get a fit elsewhere? This is your source.

Chinese-style

CHINESE ARTS & CRAFTS STORES (H.K.) LTD.

Star House, Canton Rd., Kowloon (next to Star Ferry).

By American standards, the prices are good, although the David Tang look-alike merchandise is just as expensive as his! Ouch!

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The silk-fabric (yard goods) department is fun, although the prices are cheaper in Jardine's or The Lanes. I love the porcelain, baskets, and tablecloths. I've been told this is a reputable place to buy jade. There's no imitation passed off as real here. **Be warned, however:** Real jade is quite pricey.

The store will ship for you; sales help has been very pleasant to me—unusual for some Chinese stores. This is a good place for souvenirs. This is the most Western of the various Chinese department stores. Hours in all stores are basically Monday to Saturday from 10am to 6:30pm; Sunday hours vary with the location. Branch stores also exist.

YUE HWA CHINESE PRODUCTS EMPORIUM

Main store: 301–309 Nathan Rd., Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon (MTR: Jordan Rd.); Park Lane Shopper's Blvd., 143–161 Nathan Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

This is a real Chinese department store, with many convenient branches. Unfortunately, the newer the store, the more Western it is, which is not my favorite style for a real Chinese department store. Buy from the “Great Wall of China” as I call their china department; get silk pj's; get silk by the yard.

The main store is rather jam-packed and junky and absolutely divine. If this is too hard for your system to digest, the newer Park Lane store is almost as nice as Macy's. Ignore the Western goods and buy Chinese. They mail to the U.S. Hours are daily from 9:30 or 10am to 8 or 9pm.

Japanese-style

Most of the large Japanese department stores—located in Causeway Bay—have closed their doors. The real estate was worth too much money. Seibu, the most upscale of all Japanese department stores, bucked the trend by opening in Pacific Place. Hard times have forced them to cut back but the store is still open.

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SEIBU

The Mall at Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Central (MTR: Admiralty).

Once one of the best department stores in the world, Seibu is now cutting back a tad. Perhaps the most interesting part of the store is the lower-level grocery store (p. 111) but the store still has many brands and strives to introduce brands that no one else has. The store likes to have the Belgian designers who get so much coverage in the fashion press but also has the first **Diesel StyleLab** in town.

DESIGNER GOODS

Hong Kong gets more and more designer shops every day; I cannot come to town without being annoyed that so many new shops have opened. Who in the world is shopping at these places? Did any of us come to Hong Kong to buy big-name designer clothes at regular retail prices? Or to buy at prices higher than at home? I mean, *really*.

Every now and then you can get a break on designer goods, but not often. Some Chanel items (such as makeup) are cheaper. Most items are not cheaper than at home. Therefore, if you are interested in a certain designer line, I suggest you shop the line at home and come to Hong Kong with notes in hand. Don't be surprised if designer prices are totally out of line; Ferragamo may just give you heart failure.

However, it is possible that you will find designer lines in Hong Kong that have not yet come to the U.S., or that you do not know . . . so you can be the first on your block to wear a certain style. Note that the stores seem to be staying in business because rich Chinese shoppers come over from the mainland.

Up-and-Coming Talent

More and more young designers are finding that Hong Kong is a fine place to be discovered. Although many of the young designers in town are not yet represented in boutiques, they are busy designing private-label goods for large stores. You may have never heard their names, but you may dig their designs.

Find the latest and wildest designs by these hot young talents in the shops that line **Kimberley Road** and **Austin Avenue**. These two streets, in the northern end of Tsim Sha Tsui, have become the SoHo of Hong Kong. The decor of the shops is avant-garde; the prices are affordable. Start at the corner of Austin and Nathan roads, walking east. Austin Road turns a corner and becomes Austin Avenue, which will turn again and become Kimberley Road, heading back toward Nathan Road. There's also the **Rise Commercial Building** on Granville Circuit, which is a small hard-to-find alley off of Granville Road.

DISCOUNT

Most manufacturing is done outside of Hong Kong, so there are few genuine factory outlets these days. Still, there are some jobbers in **The Pedder Building** (p. 117) and a handful of good sources elsewhere.

JOYCE WAREHOUSE

*Horizons Plaza, 2 Li Wing St., 21 Floor, Ap Lei Chau
(no nearby MTR; take a taxi).*

Joyce has been the most famous name in European luxury brands in Hong Kong for over 25 years. She's had a number of stores and has suffered the usual ups and downs of retail

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in hard times. Accordingly, she has a warehouse/outlet store that sells off those goods that don't move out of her stores. I saw an Armani blazer for \$50 (US!) and other designer bargains that left me breathless. Sizes tend to run small.

KAISER ESTATES

Phases 1, 2 & 3, Man Yue Rd., Hung Hom (no nearby MTR; take a taxi).

Most of the outlets are in Phase 1 with a few in Phase 2—this is a formerly famous shopping district that I find very boring and somewhat overpriced. A Donna Karan DKNY blazer for US\$250 is not my idea of a bargain. I did, however, luck into the Adidas outlet sale—shoes at \$30 a pair were a good bargain. Frankly, I think you can give this area a miss but I got a note from readers who loved it here. Go figure.

SPACE

Marina Sq. E., 2F Commercial Block, South Horizons, Ap Lei Chau, near Aberdeen (no nearby MTR; take a taxi).

Shoppers who know their Italian factory outlet scene already know that Space is the name given by the Prada Group to its warehouses selling all its lines—Prada, MuiMui, Jil Sander, Helmut Lang, and so on. This is slightly in the middle of nowhere and it's hard to get a taxi when you are ready to leave. With all the fake Prada in China, it's hard to suggest you visit, but then, this is the real thing and there are clothes, shoes, and accessories, too. Ask your hotel concierge to call ☎ 852/2814-9576 for specific directions, then have him write them in Chinese.

GROCERY STORES

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The best grocery stores in Hong Kong are more like department stores. Indeed, one of my favorite stores in town is called

Jewelry & Gemstones 111

City Super—they sell everything. Some packaged (not fresh) foodstuffs are sold in **Marks & Spencer** stores; the local grocery store chains are either **Wellcome** or **Park 'N Shop**—they have small branches all over.

CITY SUPER

Times Sq. (MTR: Causeway Bay); Ocean Terminal (MTR: TST).

I'm not sure if I am more in love with the wide selection of Japanese bath products, or the gadgets department, or the international selection of foodstuffs, or simply the people who shop here—but this is a great business and a really fun concept. This is the modern version of the general store with a plethora of gourmet goodies and smart shoppers.

GrEAT

The Mall at Pacific Place, downstairs from Seibu (MTR: Admiralty).

I don't like GrEAT as much as City Super because it's more of a gourmet grocery and less of a department store. But baby, what a grocery store. There's a fancy food court and all sorts of international grocery and gourmet products. Branch stores are opening in Kowloon.

JEWELRY & GEMSTONES

The jewelry and gemstone businesses are separate and converge only at the wholesale level, where you will never be admitted without a bona fide dealer. If you are serious about buying stones, you should be introduced to the wholesale dealers. This requires personal contact from a dealer here or from a friend who is Chinese and living in Hong Kong. It is a very tight business. Don't expect to just walk into a shop off the street and see the best stones or get the best prices.

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There is risk in every purchase, but if you are dealing with a reputable jeweler, that risk is minimized. Reputation is everything. If you are looking for good pearls, diamonds, opals, jade, or ivory, educate yourself first. Take the time to learn before you leap.

The Good Stuff

GEMSLAND

The Mandarin Oriental Hotel, 5 Connaught Rd. (MTR: Central).

Richard Chen and his mother, Helen, run this family business; they carry many classic ready-made pieces suitable for international clientele, or will custom-make your order in 5 to 7 days. It's hard to give you an idea of price because that really depends on what you have made. All the work I have done with them has been with unset gemstones I brought with me; I just paid \$540 to have a ring made in 14-karat gold.

THE SHOWROOM

Central Building, 12th floor, Pedder St. (MTR: Central).

I run with an expatriate crowd in Hong Kong that seems to do everything in groups; everyone knows everyone and shares the same resources. Many of those resources have become regulars in these pages. According to my sources, the place for jewelry these days is a small place simply called The Showroom, where a woman named Claire Wadsworth holds court. Good work at excellent prices is the general opinion, backed up by many I trust.

Jewelry, Not-So-Expensive

ORIENTAL ARTS JEWELRY LTD.

ME9, mezzanine, Peninsula Hotel, Kowloon (MTR: TST).

If you are into the ethnic chunky look, this store will leave you drooling. Now then, a warning: If you are a do-it-yourselfer,

Leather Goods 113

you can get ideas here and make a lot of this stuff yourself. Prices are not low, style is high, and the looks are downright stunning—but a lot of the basics can be found for less money in street markets. If you aren't the type to be bothered stringing and twisting and collecting and making it up, you will find semiprecious stones in necklaces, drops, earrings, and all that jazz.

PAN AM PEARLS

9 Lock Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

This is where I sometimes buy my faux pearls. I have seen fluctuations in quality according to stock. I have yet to match the quality of my double-strand, 8-millimeter set that cost me \$40 3 years ago. However, all the faux pearls I've bought here are about the best I've seen at these prices, and I still think this is one of my single best sources in Hong Kong. A strand of pearls runs about \$20; they will string together several strands into a single necklace with a new clasp as you wait. Baroque pearls are also available.

LEATHER GOODS

Hong Kong is a big handbag destination for several reasons:

- If you go to Shenzhen, you will possibly buy a dozen handbags—fakes but also inspirations; see p. 141.
- Almost all American and European designer brands have shops in Hong Kong.
- If you go for quality but don't need a brand name, you will be floored by the number of Kelly, Birkin, and Bollido bags in Hong Kong, usually in the \$100-to-\$300 price range. Hotel arcades are a good source for these makers.

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ASHNEIL

*Far East Mansion (1st floor), 5-6 Middle Rd., Kowloon
(MTR: TST).*

If you'd ask me to list my 10 best shopping moments in my lifetime, one of them would be my last trip to Ashneil, where I all but drooled over the merchandise and came away with way too much. But how could a person resist? There are handbags of the highest quality that seem to match many of the designer bags at half the price. These are not copies in terms of being fake—they do not have designer logos or anything illegal. Bags are not cheap, but they are less than the designer versions.

The location is easy, right off Nathan Road a half block from the Interconti and right behind the Sheraton. There are day bags, dress-up bags, and best of all, they travel to the U.S. and can mail to you from the U.S. All sorts of classical styles are available, few fakes—mostly inspirations. Best quality in town.

LOCAL HEROES

JOYCE

2106 Canton Rd., Kowloon (MTR:TST).

Poor Joyce—the most brilliant and successful woman in Hong Kong retail has had her share of headaches with this nutsy economy. Still, the show must go on. The Nathan Road showcase has closed but this new store has opened and it's just as eye-catching and fabulous as any other Joyce project.

WALTER MA

49A Kimberley Rd. (MTR: TST).

Ma is in the category of designers who have been up and coming for 20 years. Nonetheless, his clothing is easy to wear and different from other brands where you feel you look like everyone else. Much of it is for the young, but a lot of it is so imaginative that you have to grin.

MALLS

Hong Kong is totally overrun with shopping centers. It's like a contagious disease spreading to all architects, who now feel compelled to equip a hotel or an office building with three floors of retail shops before they get to the actual offices. Somewhere, somehow, they find tenants for all those shops. I doubt there will be shoppers. Many of these malls are for locals and are in far-flung places. Below are the ones in locations easiest for tourists to use.

Central

CHATER HOUSE

Chater Road, Central (MTR: Central).

Another of the almost look-alike office high-rises surrounding the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, this one is the talk of the town because **Giorgio Armani** moved in. His enormous store, complete with cafe (called a *caffè* here), is his largest store outside of Milan. Along with The Landmark and Prince's Building, this is meant to be the final point in a triangle of must-do buildings for shopping thrills.

THE GALLERIA AT 9 QUEEN'S

9 Queen's Rd. (MTR: Central).

There are numerous stores in the building as well as branches of famous-name shops such as **Hermès**, **Alexandre De Paris** (the hairdresser who owns a few accessories shops that sell hair bands for \$50 each), and others.

THE LANDMARK

16 Des Voeux Rd. (MTR: Central).

The most famous of the Central malls, The Landmark has the reputation and the big names in luxury retail, but is having to fight to stay ahead of the game. Many of the big names that started here have remained but have opened other shops

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around town, so they are no longer exclusively in The Landmark. The multilevel mall is topped by Gloucester and Edinburgh towers. I suggest this mall as a jumping-off place for Westerners who want to see something but aren't quite ready for Kowloon. After a quick survey, you'll probably find that everything is gorgeous but very expensive and that you are ready to move on. There are a few cafes here for lunch, including **Fountainside**.

THE MALL AT PACIFIC PLACE

88 *Queensway* (MTR: *Admiralty*).

If you are staying in one of the many hotels built next to the mall, this place is a natural for you. If you are not staying nearby, you may want to come by if you are in a hurry, because you can pack a lot in.

Please note that the official name of this place is the Mall at Pacific Place, but everyone calls it **Pacific Place**. Technically speaking, Pacific Place includes the office tower above the mall and the congregation of fancy hotels grouped around the tower (Marriott, Conrad, Island Shangri-La).

This upscale mall offers a hefty dose of everything you want to see. Most stores are open from 10am to 8pm Monday through Saturday; not every store is open on Sunday, and the stores that do open on Sunday usually open at 1pm.

There are a few gourmet food stores; some antiques shops; some eateries, including an American barbecue restaurant; and the usual big names in luxury brands and in mass market.

PEAK GALLERIA

118 *Peak Rd.* (no nearby MTR; take a taxi or the *Peak Tram*).

I hate this mall! There is no reason for you to set foot in it; go to the Peak Café across the way and pretend the mall was never built.

PEDDER BUILDING

12 Pedder St. (MTR: Central).

Well, the Pedder Building is looking cleaner and safer these days, but it's still not swank. Although it's across the street from **The Landmark**, it offers the opposite in shopping appeal—outlet stores on one side and the famed **Shanghai Tang** on the street level. Most of the outlets in the Pedder Building have dried up, but you might want to poke around and see.

PRINCE'S BUILDING

Chater Rd. (MTR: Central).

This office building with five levels of shopping has so many big names now that it competes with **The Landmark** and the **Central Building**, both of which are across the street. The Prince's Building is easy to shop because it is perfectly square! It connects by bridge to the Mandarin Oriental Hotel (don't miss shopping there, either) and may be more fun than The Landmark for you. It is not mind-boggling like The Landmark, so you can shop and enjoy yourself, and it houses many other big names in international deluxe brands.

TIMES SQUARE

1 Matheson Rd. (MTR: Causeway Bay).

The mall is divided by category of goods, which simplifies life for someone shopping for a specific item or wish list; it combines Western chains and big names with local dealers and small firms. There are four floors of restaurants; this is a destination and a lifestyle choice—not merely a mall—and attracts a lot of young people. My favorite shop here is **City Super**, a grocery store and department store rolled into one . . . enter through **Lane Crawford** and go down.

Kowloon

HARBOUR CITY

Canton Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

The shopping complex that occupies most of Tsim Sha Tsui's western shore is generally known as Harbour City. It includes **Ocean Terminal**, **Ocean Centre**, and **Ocean Galleries** along with **The Hong Kong Hotel**, the **Marco Polo Hotel**, and the **Prince Hotel**. There are four levels of shopping from end to end, and if you can successfully negotiate your way from one end to the other, you won't even have to come up for air. All luxury brands have stores here as do most chains and multiples.

NEW WORLD CENTRE

18–24 Salisbury Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

The New World Centre is yet another massive, multilevel, spic-and-span, concrete-and-cold-floor shopping center filled with little shops, 1-hour photo stands, and ice-cream vendors. It has a cute Japanese department store (**Tokyu**—open 10am–9pm; closed Thurs) on the street level, but really, don't waste your time on my account.

ONE PEKING

1 Peking Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

Newest mall in town, with five floors of retail in a tower.

PALACE MALL

12 Salisbury Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

This mall is underground, so from the street it looks more like a metro station than a mall—nonetheless, the mall connects with the malls at **The Pen** and **Inter-Continental** hotels. Located right on Salisbury Road, the mall consists of four levels with two levels of stores and the Teddy Bear Museum.

PARK LANE SHOPPER'S BOULEVARD

Nathan Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

This is a strip mall of unique architectural proportions that will certainly catch your eye (and maybe your credit card) as you stroll the infamous Nathan Road—about half of the space is occupied by **Yue Hwa**, a Chinese department store. There's also an **American Express**.

Hotel Arcades/Hotel Malls

The fanciest, most deluxe hotels have the most trustworthy shops. Certainly the shops in **The Peninsula** are the most expensive and most exclusive. But that doesn't mean there's anything wrong with the shops in the **Holiday Inn**, which happen to be touristy but fine if you want a TT. And get a look at what's going on underneath the **Kowloon Hotel**: You'll find some big names like **Tommy Hilfiger** as well as the **Jurlique Day Spa**.

THE MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL

5 Connaught Rd. (MTR: Central).

The glitziest stores in town fight to get space in the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, not only because the hotel is so fabulous and its clientele so tony, but because the location is prime. Part of your Central shopping spree must include a visit to the stores, which include **Ferragamo**, **Fendi**, **David's Shirts**, and **Gemsland**, which is the jeweler I happen to use. The hotel also has one of the best hotel gift shops in the world—not the news kiosk on the lobby floor but the store marked **GIFTS & FLOWERS** in the shopping arcade, marked **SH** on the elevator panel.

THE INTER-CONTINENTAL HOTEL

18 Salisbury Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

As the hotel arcade/shopping center/mall sweepstakes heat up, and the economy sinks, this small mall cum arcade isn't

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in great shape. It does have a Chanel store and many other big brands; it additionally adjoins the New World Centre.

THE PENINSULA HOTEL

Salisbury Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

Small shops fill the eastern and western wings of the hotel, with more on the mezzanine and still more in the basement. Every big name in the world has a shop here.

There are also several cashmere shops and several leather-goods shops that make handbags and shoes. If you ever want to go into Kelly-bag overload, step this way. There's a very glitzy and modern pharmacy in the basement loaded with Western and Chinese goods and European perfume brands and more handbags. Local prescriptions are filled here as well. There is a branch of **Shanghai Tang**; the Pen has its own store, too.

KOWLOON HOTEL

19–21 Nathan Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

A small, underground arcade you reach by escalator directly from the street. There are two levels of basement stores, all small but uncrowded. Because of its association with the Peninsula Hotel, the hotel has a classy retail arcade with big-name designer tenants.

MARKETS

Markets offer a very real slice of life and one of the few less-than-glamorous looks at the real China. Some are not pretty or fancy. If you have a squeamish stomach, avoid the food markets that sell live chickens or ducks and slaughter them on the spot.

Merchandise markets are busy and hectic, but have their own clientele and their own personalities. There are no spacious aisles or racks of organized clothing. Some markets exist

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only during certain hours of the day or night. At a preappointed time, people appear from nowhere, pushing carts laden with merchandise. They set up shop along the street, selling their goods until the crowds start to dissipate, at which time they disappear into the night.

Most markets have no specific street address, but are known by the streets that are boundaries or intersect in the middle of the market area. The majority of cab drivers know where the markets are by name. However, it is always a good precaution to have your concierge write the name of the market and location in Chinese before you leave. You probably won't need it, but it can't hurt. Buses, trolleys, and the MTR usually service the markets as well. Take a hotel business card with you, so you'll have the address in Chinese in case you need directions back home.

BIRD MARKET

Yuen Po St. Bird Garden, located next to the Mong Kok stadium (MTR: Prince Edward).

The Bird Market is really just an alley that sells birds and bird supplies, but it's also an experience you will never forget. The sound of the chirping is overwhelming. I just want to know if the noise is made by birds chirping or grasshoppers chirping. The vendors sell bird supplies (obviously this includes grasshoppers); you will be surprised at how many bird cages you suddenly want to buy. You won't buy much here, but it is fun.

CAT STREET MARKET

Cat St., just below Hollywood Rd. (MTR: Central).

Cat Street Market is Hong Kong's answer to a flea market: Used merchandise of the tag sale variety is sold from blankets and a few stalls on a 2-block street of pedestrian pavement just below Hollywood Road. One guy sells only used typewriters and used sewing machines. A few dealers sell old jade I like;

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one vendor has old Chinese sunglasses from the 1930s. The shops behind and around the market specialize in formal antiques; some of these stores are reputable and even famous.

JADE MARKET

Kansu and Battery sts. (MTR: Jordan Rd. or take a taxi).

The market is located in two free-standing tents under the overfly of the highway at Kansu and Battery streets.

The Jade Market is an official market organized by the Hong Kong and Kowloon Jade Merchants Workers' and Hawkers' Union Association. Each merchant inside the fence is licensed to sell jade and should display his or her license above the stall. It is a good idea when buying to note the number next to your purchase, just in case you have a problem later on and the jade turns out to be plastic.

If you are not willing to bargain here, don't buy. The merchants in the Jade Market expect to lower their price by 20% to 40%, depending on your bargaining skill and their need to sell. Market hours are 10am to 3pm, although many of the vendors close up shop at 2pm. Go early rather than late.

LADIES' MARKET (MONG KOK MARKET)

Argyle St. and Nathan Rd. (MTR: Mong Kok).

The market sets up a short distance away from the Mong Kok MTR station; it begins around 4pm and goes into the evening, until about 10pm or so. It really gets going after work and seems to be a date spot. Watch your handbag.

The streets have the feeling of a carnival, with lots of people parading by the stands, stopping to examine shirts, socks, sewing sets, buttons, and bras. There are some toys and sunglasses, but mostly lots of trinkets, shirts, socks, and everyday goods and the usual ringing alarm clocks, fake designer goods, electrical doodads that flash and whirr—no live snakes or chickens.

STANLEY MARKET

Stanley Main St., Stanley Village, Hong Kong (no nearby MTR; take bus no. 6 from Exchange Sq. in Central).

Any tourist coming to Hong Kong knows about Stanley: Shopping legends abound about bargains in this village cum market cum tourist trap. Some people love Stanley; I find that they are mostly first-timers. Stanley has become so touristy that I can barely cope—and I go there often, just to make sure I am up-to-date. I found no retail stock and no fake designer merchandise (Oh woe!). All I found were tourist goods—white linens, Chinese pajamas, knickknacks, and cheapie gift items. Not bad if you want that sort of thing, but I wanted deals. Actually, I bought three “van Gogh” oil paintings for \$6.50 each here. Market hours are 7 days a week from 10am to 7pm. A taxi will cost about \$15 each way; you can take the bus (no. 20 from Star Ferry on the Hong Kong side), but it will take about an hour.

TEMPLE STREET MARKET

Temple St. and Jordan Rd., Kowloon (MTR: Jordan Rd.).

It's a night market and has grown a lot over the years, so that as it spreads, some of the charm is diluted, making it yet just another street market. You have to know where the Chinese opera singers and the fortune-tellers are in order to find them.

Take the MTR to the Jordan Road station. Exit onto Nathan Road toward **Yue Hwa Chinese Products Emporium**. You will see Yue Hwa; you can't miss it. Stay on the Yue Hwa side of the street (yes, it's still Nathan Rd.), which, if the harbor is to your back, is the left-hand side. Walk north on Nathan Road for 2 or 3 blocks. Keep looking to your left. You are looking for a tiny entranceway, a small alley crammed with people. This is where the opera singers do their thing on little patios. When you spot the alley, turn left into the crowd.

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This alley is only about 45m (150 ft.) long. When you emerge from the alley, you will be on Temple Street and at the corner of a real temple, hence the name of the market. Walk forward 1 block, so that you have the sidewalk that borders the grounds of the temple yard on your right side. On this sidewalk you'll see a long row of fortune-tellers, each with his (they're all men) own gimmick. One or two may speak English. The market itself begins thereafter.

Li Yuen Street East (The Lanes)

If you're looking for an inexpensive look-alike designer handbag, Li Yuen Street East is just the place. There are not a lot of inexpensive, high-quality leather goods available in Hong Kong, and while Li Yuen Street East is not Neiman Marcus, it is the location of choice for locals who need handbags or briefcases. Expect to pay between \$40 and \$50 for a nice leather handbag of the current fashion rage, or of the Hermès flavor. If you look hard, you can even find a nice Chanel-style bag. It won't have the CCs, but the styling and design will be exact. Assorted versions of the Louis Vuitton-colored leather tote bags are also a viable choice. Li Yuen Street East is also famous for its knitting shops, fabric stores, notions, and padded brassieres.

Li Yuen Street West (The Lanes)

Perhaps you want one of those satin-quilted happy coats or vests that you associate with a trip to China. Li Yuen Street West is crammed with them. Be sure to try them on, as the shoulders sometimes run small. Whatever you didn't see on Li Yuen Street East will be on Li Yuen Street West. To get to these two streets, follow the signs as you exit the Central MTR stop.

Men's Shirts: Made-to-Measure 125**LUEN WO MARKET**

Luen Wo, New Territories (no nearby MTR; taxi to KCR, KCR to Fanling, bus no. 78 or taxi to Luen Wo).

The market at Luen Wo, in the New Territories, is a very authentic local food market quite near the border to China. It is not enormously different from markets you can see in town, so the trip may not be worth your time. On the other hand, if you crave a peek into the real China or a world gone by, this is your Sunday adventure. The market fills 1 square city block. The people who are shopping are far more rural-looking than those you might find in downtown Central, but the goods for sale are not that different. You go here for the total experience, for the fact that it's real.

WESTERN MARKET

323 Des Voeux Rd., Central (MTR: Sheung Wan).

Once upon a time, Western Market was a dump. Then along came a developer who turned the space into a festival market. There's a branch of **Fook Ming Tong**, the fancy tea brokers; there are toy soldiers and plenty for kids to see and buy. Many of the cloth merchants who were disenfranchised when Cloth Alley was destroyed have taken space on the second floor of Western Market. Flags fly, banners flap, people shop. There's a lot of energy in the space and a number of unique stalls that sell merchandise I haven't seen anywhere else in town. True to its name, this market is far more west than the rest of Central's basic shopping areas.

MEN'S SHIRTS: MADE-TO-MEASURE

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There are a lot of choices to be made: the fit of the body, the type of collar and cuffs, the fabric, and the possible use of

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contrast fabric. Prices usually depend on the fabrications: 100% cotton fabric costs more than a poly blend; Sea Island cotton costs more than regular cotton. Expect to pay about \$75 for a Sea Island custom-made cotton shirt, although such a shirt can cost more, depending on the maker.

Many shirt houses have a minimum order on shirts; most tailors make shirts as well as suits. If you are buying the shirt and the suit from the same tailor, there is usually no minimum order on shirts. Most shirt houses make pajamas and boxer shorts as well as shirts.

ASCOT CHANG CO. LTD.

*The Peninsula Hotel, Salisbury Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST);
The Intercontinental Hotel, 18 Salisbury Rd., Kowloon
(MTR: TST); Prince's Building, Chater Rd. (MTR: Central).*

Perhaps the best known of the internationally famous shirt dealers, Ascot Chang advertises heavily in the U.S. and stresses their quality and devotion to fit. This shirt maker has many branches in Hong Kong and Kowloon. The shops are filled with wonderful fabrics imported from Switzerland and France. Prices are competitive with **David's** (see below); they offer mail order once your measurements have been taken. Shirts run between \$40 and \$125, depending upon the fabric and style. Top of the line. They also have a shop in Manhattan.

DAVID'S SHIRTS

Victoria Hotel (unit 201), Shun Tak Centre (MTR: Sheung Wan); The Mandarin Oriental Hotel, 5 Connaught Rd. (MTR: Central); Wing Lee Building (ground floor), 33 Kimberley Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

David's is the other most popular and famous of the custom shirt shops in Hong Kong. (They also have a branch in New York City.) The main shop in Hong Kong is in Kowloon, on Kimberley Road. But there are more-conveniently placed branch shops, mostly in hotels like The Regent or The

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Mandarin Oriental. David's is less glitzy than **Ascot Chang** but just as famous to those in the know.

For custom shirts, two fittings are necessary—one for the measurements and then one with the garment. David's will copy any favorite shirt you may have. Just bring it with you and plan to leave it. They also have a framed illustration of collar and cuff styles you can choose from. Mail order is not only possible but common with repeat customers. If you cannot get to Hong Kong, ask for a current swatch and price list. Return a shirt that fits you perfectly and a check, along with fabric and collar/cuff choices. Approximately 4 to 6 weeks later, a box of new shirts will arrive.

MEN'S SUITS: MADE-TO-MEASURE

Probably the most famous Hong Kong fantasy is that made-to-measure suits grow on trees or that they are easily and inexpensively obtained with a snap of the fingers and a few hundred dollars. No way. Remember the first law of Hong Kong custom-made suits: A bargain is not a bargain if it doesn't fit. Furthermore, the whole point of a bespoke suit is psychological—you must feel (and look) like a king in it. Its impact derives from the fact that it was made for your body, that it moves with your body as no off-the-rack garment can.

- Start your search for a tailor the minute you arrive. Leave yourself time for three fittings while in Hong Kong. The first will be for measurements and choice of fabrics; the second fitting will be a partially finished suit with only one sleeve in place; the third will be to detail the finished garment, if it is not perfect. Good tailors usually have everything wrapped up by the third fitting.
- If at all possible, choose your tailor before you leave home and fax ahead for an appointment so you can meet shortly after arrival in Hong Kong. For the top three men's tailors

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in Hong Kong, see below. After you check in to your hotel, the tailor should be your first stop. While it is not difficult to get across the harbor in Hong Kong, you may want to choose your hotel based on the convenience to your tailor.

- Most tailors carry a full line of imported fabrics from Italy, England, and France. If your tailor is not one of the Big Three, ask whether the thread they use is imported also. If it is not, ask to see the quality, and test it for durability. Remember all those horror stories you have heard about suits falling apart? It wasn't the fabric; it was the thread. You do not need to worry about quality at the Big Three tailors.
- Well-made suits from a Hong Kong tailor are not inexpensive. Imported fabrics run about \$20 to \$80 per yard, and an average-size suit will take 3½ yards. The silk/wool blends and cashmeres cost more. The finished price for a top quality, killer suit will run in the area of \$550 to \$800. You could do better in some cases with an off-the-rack suit in the U.S., but the quality would not be the same. Your suit should be the equal of a \$3,000 Savile Road suit.
- The tailor will want a 50% deposit to start the work. You may be able to pay with a check in U.S. dollars or pounds sterling. Ask ahead of time.
- If you are having the tailor ship the suits to you, remember to figure in the customs charges and shipping. On average, it costs \$20 per suit for air-freight. Shirts can be shipped for \$30 per dozen. U.S. customs charges about \$75 in duty on a single new suit. Once you have established an account with a tailor or a shirt maker and he or she has your measurements on file, you can simply get the fabric swatches sent to you for the new season and do your shopping through the mail—or in a local hotel, if your tailor visits major U.S. cities.
- Check to see if the tailor you have chosen makes trips to the U.S. to visit customers. Chances are, if you live in a major city (New York; Washington, D.C.; San Francisco; Los Angeles; or Chicago), he or she will. Most of the

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tailors I recommend either come in person once a year or send a representative with fabric books and order forms. At that time, new measurements can be taken in case you have lost or gained weight.

The Big Three: Hong Kong's Finest Tailors**A-MAN HING CHEONG CO. LTD.**

The Mandarin Oriental Hotel, 5 Connaught Rd. (MTR: Central).

Fondly referred to as "Ah-men," this tailor shop in the Mandarin Oriental Hotel turns out quite a few garments for the rich-tourist-and-businessman trade and, therefore, has become very adept at relating to the European-cut suit. They don't even blink twice when you ask for an extra pair of trousers. They just smile and ask for more money. The prices here are on the higher side, with a suit beginning around \$650.

A-Man will also do custom shirts for approximately \$50 to \$150. ☎ 852/2522-3336; fax 852/2523-4707.

H. BAROMON LTD.

Swire House, Connaught Rd. (MTR: Central).

Tycoon alert: This is a No. 8 warning! If you wonder where the real financial heavyweights have their clothing made, wonder no more. H. Baromon has been in the business for 40 years, serving the elite.

When you go to choose suit fabric from H. Baromon, you receive a little booklet containing a photo of the shop, a brief description of the H. Baromon philosophy, a page where you can paste your sample cutting, a memo page for notes, a dollar conversion chart, and a very nice map to help you find your way back.

A made-to-order suit takes at least 7 days. The average suit price is well over \$750. Shirts average \$100. H. Baromon does not send representatives to the U.S.

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W. W. CHAN & SONS TAILOR LTD.

*Burlington House (2nd floor), 92–94 Nathan Rd., Kowloon
(MTR: TST).*

Peter Chan carries on a family business, which he has built and expanded over the years, with a new shop in Shanghai (p. 212). He is the only Big Three tailor with offices in Kowloon. The average price for a suit is \$650 to \$800; the mink/cashmere blends can cost more. The W. W. Chan showroom is decidedly more relaxed than the other two big-time contenders. The showroom itself is neat, clean, modern, and even spacious, which is hard to find in Hong Kong. But the location in Kowloon and the approach to the actual showroom are not so swank; businessmen who are used to wall-to-wall carpet may need a moment to adjust, until they are inside the showroom.

PEARLS

If you are searching for pearls and pearls alone, you will have many options. Every jewelry store has them in the window. The question is: Whom do you trust?

You see, the value of a really good pearl is based on size and color and evenness . . . but more importantly it's based on the number of layers of nacre. The untrained eye cannot see the layers of nacre and cannot guess if there's only a layer or two that will quickly wear off with use. That's why you pay money and go to a reputable jeweler.

The bigger jewelry shops are a safe bet for buying quality pearls. The price tag will be higher than on the street, but you have some assurance that, should you have a problem with your second appraisal back home, they will make amends.

Remember that part of the value of the pearls is based on color and that different cultures prize different colors; also because there are so many skin tones in America's melting pot—various women may prefer differing shades of pearls to

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complement their skin tone. I happen to like my pearls on the pink side; most prefer their pearls very white. The English like their pearls to be creamy.

Size of the pearl and length of the strand are other factors in price; if the strand has graduated pearls in varying sizes it will probably cost less than a strand with pearls of all the same size. To check on the uniformity of the size of the pearls, roll the strand with your palms and fingertips along the black velvet mat provided by the jeweler. You'll feel every bump and inconsistency as you roll those pearly whites back and forth.

The clasp is usually sold separately from the pearls for two reasons:

- Pearls without a clasp enter the U.S. with less duty, making this an attractive product to many Americans;
- The clasp is essentially a piece of jewelry and can cost as much or more than the pearls, depending on size and the inclusion of gemstones.

Negotiating for the clasp, or the change of clasps on any given strand of pearls, should be a separate piece of business from buying the strand or strands of pearls, but should be included in your general knowledge so that you understand you are dealing with what are really two different elements here.

To help you get ready for your pearl purchase, you may want to call or write **Tiffany & Co.**, which publishes a free brochure on buying pearls (☎ 800/526-0649).

RESALE

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This is somewhat of a new category of stores in Hong Kong (and Kowloon) and follows a major trend in London, Paris, and New York where many socialites take their year-old designer clothes and accessories to resale shops so they can be sold to the public for less than the full cost.

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PARIS STATION

Metropole Building, 12 Hankow Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

This is one shop in a growing chain—other stores have names such as Milan Station, and so on. Paris Station sells designer handbags and accessories. It's around the corner from the Kowloon Hotel and behind the Pen, so you're going to be in the area anyway. There are no bargains, but it's fun to poke around. To find out their latest shops and the locations, call ☎ 852/8200-7588.

SEX TOYS

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This is a new subject for this book, but someone asked me to make a purchase for her, so here's what I've learned. As it turns out, of all the Asian destinations, Hong Kong is one of the most prudish, and finding a sex district (where is Suzie Wong when you need her?) or silly shop was not easy. Finally, at **Temple Street Night Market** in Kowloon, I found what I was looking for—several vendors selling vibrators of all sorts. Batteries included. Demonstrations free. Oh my. I'm having what she's having.

SOUVENIRS

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It's not hard to find gifts or souvenirs in Hong Kong—they are everywhere. Actually giving the gifts to your friends will be harder; I always want to keep everything for myself. I included some gift suggestions in chapter 1, but below are a few stores that specifically sell great gifts.

CITY SUPER

*Times Sq. Mall, Causeway Bay (MTR: Causeway Bay);
Harbour City (MTR: TST).*

I have listed this source under food, but it is really a department store of goodies with a complete section of dry goods separated from the foodstuffs. Tons of inexpensive novelty items—especially beauty supplies and bath items—make great souvenirs and gifts. I bought many in packaging that I could not even understand.

MANDARIN ORIENTAL FLOWER SHOP

Mandarin Oriental Hotel, 5 Connaught Rd., Central (MTR: Central).

I am not sure why this is the flower shop when it's one of the best hotel gift shops I have ever seen. Note that this is not the ground-floor shop, but a store in the shopping mall on the mezzanine. If you shop a lot in Hong Kong, you will recognize that a lot of the merchandise comes from Wah Tung and other local sources for porcelain; a lot of it also comes from Vietnam. The prices here are higher than what you would pay if you went out and found this stuff. But you're paying for the good eye of the buyer and the fact that everything in this shop is stunning and easily at your fingertips.

SPAS

While most of the swank hotels in Hong Kong have had spas for quite some time—they have all refurbished their spas to take on the competition as the day spa trip hits town. Especially with the problems caused by jet lag—or the general need for detoxification—a trip to Honkers is no longer complete without some sort of treatment. **Note:** Most of the hotels now let nonguests test the spa waters.

134 HONG KONG RESOURCES A TO Z**ACUPRESSURE & MASSAGE CENTRE OF THE BLIND**

*Dragon Seed Building, 39 Queen's Road, 7th F, Central
(MTR: Central).*

My husband used a blind massage therapist and swore by her; now you can try out the concept . . . and at very fair prices. The 1-hour treatments cost about \$40. ☎ 852/2810-6666.

CLARINS AT THE PENINSULA

Salisbury Road, Kowloon (MTR: TST).

Although I was not a guest at the Pen, I was allowed to book an Energy Massage at Clarins. I arrived half dead and can truly say this was one of the first times in my years of treatments that I could really notice a difference. The treatment began with a careful personal history, then a discussion of my health and needs at that time, then a steamy shower with aromatherapy products. The 1-hour treatment cost just under US\$100; I added a tip for a job well done. ☎ 852/2315-3271.

DK AROMATHERAPY

16A Staunton St., Central (MTR: Central).

This is more of an insider's local kind of place for Aussie and British expats. Treatments are meant to be continual; still a jet lag pick-me-up can be booked. Call ☎ 852/2771-2847.

JURLIQUE WELLNESS DAY SPA

Kowloon Hotel, Basement Units 106 & 107, 19-21 Nathan Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST).

There is a free-standing Jurlique store about a block from this hotel, so don't get confused. The spa itself is buried in the rear of the mall beneath the Kowloon Hotel. The brand is from Australia and includes a wide range of skin-care and body potions—most with natural scents. I am addicted to the rose dusting powder for summer sweats. The treatments are state

of the art and include a full-body travel treatment meant to combat stress, jet lag, and fatigue. ☎ 852/2368-3500.

TEA

Some of the best tea in China is sold in Hong Kong—in fact, it’s sold everywhere and makes a great gift. The packaging seems to be the main attraction (to me, anyway), but there are many tastes you won’t find at home and they’re far more exotic than Lipton Black Label.

FOOK MING TONG

Western Market, Ocean Terminal, and addresses all over town.

This is the leading chain of tourist-oriented (excuse me) tea shops, selling tea and teapots. The shops are adorable, the selection is exotic, and there is nothing too unusual about it. The packaging is so perfect that you will be comfortable and willing to buy all your gifts here.

YING KEE TEA CO.

151 Queen’s Rd. Central (MTR: Central); Shop G8, 28 Hankow Rd., TST (MTR: TST); among others.

This is actually a small chain with a store in just about every major shopping district in Hong Kong.

TEENS & TWEENS

THE ALLEY

MTR: Lai Chi Kok.

A garmento friend from the U.S. brought me here—I never would have found it on my own! It’s possible that “The Alley”

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is the name given to it by Americans who work this space looking for hot new ideas—there are no signs that say THE ALLEY. Do we care? This is a trade building with a ground-level floor filled with stall after stall of shops selling teen/tween fashions at *grrrrreat* prices. It's an amazing social phenom just to be here and watch it going on swirling around you, but it's not for princesses. You walk down a center aisle that gives you the feeling of being in an alley, hence the name. It is indoors; it is truly incredible.

To get there, take the B2 exit from the Metro, walk away from the green and yellow towers, and turn right at the Hong Kong Industrial Center. Enter through parts B/C.

WATCHES

As they say on the street, "Copy watch, lady?" Indeed, you can buy a real watch (and save money on a Rolex) or a fake Rolex. The trick is finding the right watch at the right price. You can pay anything from US\$50 to US\$10,000 and still not know what you have bought. Furthermore, the savings seem to be on very high-end merchandise, so yes, you can save \$3,000 on a \$15,000 Rolex but, really, did you want a \$15,000 Rolex in the first place?

If you are looking to buy a watch, but don't care if it's a name brand, there are some things to be aware of before you buy:

- Check to see that the whole watch and not just the movement was made by the manufacturer. A common practice in Hong Kong is to sell a Swiss watch face and movement with a Hong Kong-made bracelet. The bracelet is probably silver with a gold plating. This can work to your advantage if you do not want to spend US\$5,000 for a solid-gold watch but want the look. A reputable dealer will tell you

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that this is what you are buying, and price the watch accordingly. These watches can cost anywhere from US\$150 to US\$400.

- Check the serial number on the inside movement with the serial number of your guarantee. If you do not receive a worldwide guarantee, don't buy the watch.
- If you are buying from a brand-name dealer, do the same careful checking as if you were buying from a small no-name shop on the street. We know of someone who bought a brand-name watch from a reputable dealer, got the watch home, and had problems. When she went to the U.S. dealer for that name, they told her that yes, indeed, she had bought one of their name watches, but the movement was 5 years old. She had bought a current body with a used movement!
- If it's not necessary that you find a brand-name watch, and you are simply looking for something unusual and fun, try the following: **City Chain:** This is a popular chain that carries Seiko, Bulova, and Zenith among their name brands. They also carry fashion watches like Smash (a takeoff of Swatch). There's a branch of this huge chain in every mall and shopping district.

Copy watches are sold in every market and on the streets of Nathan Road. There are far better copies sold in Shenzhen, although they are of varying qualities and the whole process can be overwhelming. Expect a Triple A quality (the best fake possible) of a Cartier watch to cost about \$150. There are watches in Shenzhen beginning at \$10, so don't fret.

WOMEN'S CLOTHING: MADE-TO-MEASURE

I started going to **W. W. Chan** for the simple reason that Peter Chan made my husband's clothes. Of the Big Three tailors, only W. W. Chan has a women's division.

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Women are charged a flat rate for the making of the garment (no matter what size or how complicated); you pay for the fabric by the yard (or provide your own). A woman's suit totals about \$500, depending on the fabric. French wools (the same ones used at Chanel, and so on) bring the cost up. A dress costs about \$170 for labor alone; a jacket, \$175. See p. 130 for the W. W. Chan address and coordinates.