

Chapter Five

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HONG KONG RESOURCES A TO Z

ANTIQUES

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Hong Kong is home to many places to buy art and antiques. Two important things to remember:

- Internationally famous dealers do business in London, New York, Tokyo, Vancouver, Taipei, Brussels, and other places besides Hong Kong; buy according to reputation and trust, not location.
- The number 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 if you are truly serious, or hire one in Hong Kong. If you are considering something pricey, get a second opinion. Many dealers on Hollywood Road will appraise an item (from another source) for a flat fee.

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.

ARCH ANGEL

53–55 *Hollywood Rd., Central (MTR: Central)*

I can't tell you how many personal recommendations I have received from readers who love this source. Prices are high, but the name can be trusted. Open daily for furniture, statuary, and tabletop items. A second shop sells art.

HONEYCHURCH ANTIQUES

29 *Hollywood Rd. (MTR: Central)*

Honeychurch Antiques has been my home base on Hollywood Road since the beginning of the *Born to Shop* series; I know you will be well taken care of by American expat owners Glenn and Lucille Vessa. They have held court for over 25 years and 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. The look is sort of Oriental Country; there are goods from Japan and other exotic locations besides basic Chinese antiques. Try both floors in the main shop and 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.

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

A fine antiques dealer with showrooms in the major hotels, P. C. Lu is owned by a family that has been in the business for four generations. It's one of the finest resources for antique ivory and jade, porcelain, and decorative work. The three sons who 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.

ART

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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. (For information about shopping in Hanoi, see chapter 7.) One of the best Hong Kong galleries at which to see examples is **Arch Angel Art**, 38 Peel St., off Hollywood Road (☎ 852/2854-4255).

ARTS & CRAFTS

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The Chinese look hasn’t been so fashionable in years, certainly not since the Beatles took to wearing Mao jackets. Now everything’s coming up ethnic, so Chinese classics are more chic than ever. You can buy them in markets, at souvenir shops, and at **Chinese Arts & Crafts**, the department store (p. 104). I have a few specialty sources.

KENKI

Bear Kingdom, Salisbury Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST)

This store has a few other branches; I go to this one because of its location (between the InterConti and the Pen). It sells embroidered shirts and blouses, reversible silk-to-velvet or cotton and silk Chinese coolie shirts, brocade vests with and without fur, handbags, shoes, and an amazing selection of dramatic goods. Prices are excellent—about \$40 for a shirt, \$100 for an elaborately embroidered jacket.

X-QUISIT

Shop L141, Mall Place, InterContinental Hotel, Salisbury Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST)

This store is behind the hotel’s grand staircase and therefore may seem to be hiding from you. It also seems to have several

names in the front window. The selection of crafted goods, from jewelry to notebooks, to hostess gifts, to robes, is very chic and very expensive. This is the kind of place that should be your first stop: You stare at and touch everything and then sigh.

RIBBON EMPORIUM

33A Haiphong Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST), and other locations

I'm not sure which is funnier, the name of the store or my calling it a resource for arts and crafts. It's what many people would call a jobber and, despite the name, does not sell ribbon. But it does sell many arts and crafts items—from clothes to handbags to zip sacs—at unbeatable low prices. There are heaps of stuff everywhere. Not all of the stores are the same; there are several branches around town.

BATH PRODUCTS

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See the “Spas” section (p. 141) for more information, and remember that this is a city where the InterContinental Hotel has a 24-hour “bath butler”—all sorts of beauty products for the tub (and shower) are readily available. For brands you may not be familiar with, high-tail it to any of the big malls.

One of the most popular imports is **Lush**, from England. There are some Lush stores in the U.S., but if you do not know the brand, this could be a good place to get acquainted. See “Cosmetics & Fragrances,” below. The Canadian chain **Fruits & Passion** is similar to Body Shop when it first started out; it has branches in various malls, including Harbour City. I am also fond of Japanese bath salts. You can buy them in any drug-store or even grocery store and can somewhat tell the flavors by the pictures—since the package is entirely in Japanese.

BOOKS

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

COSMOS

96 Nathan Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST)

I stop in this bookstore because it is at the corner of Nathan Road and Granville Road, where I shop in the bins for close-outs. English-language books and stationery supplies are downstairs.

DYMOCKS

Star Ferry Terminal, Central (MTR: Central); IFC mall (MTR: Central)

There are a few branches of this store around town, but the most fun experience 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 fiction and nonfiction in English.

PAGEONE

Lower level, Times Square mall, Causeway Bay (MTR: Causeway Bay)

Branches of this small chain are often in malls alongside the grocery store City Super. Everything is in English, and the magazine selection is huge. There are a few nonbook items; the trophy of one of my sprees was an eight-lens camera for \$50.

SWINDON BOOK CO. LTD.

13–15 Lock Rd. (behind the Peninsula Hotel), Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon (MTR: TST)

Although this medium-size store carries everything, the most impressive range is the selection of art books and books on Chinese culture.

CAMERAS

Forget it. Buy at home. And for heaven's sake, avoid those guys on Nathan Road. Okay, maybe that's not helpful. If you're talking serious money, buy at home.

If you're talking inexpensive, look around but don't get suckered. And please remember this little tale: I decided I needed a credit-card-size digital camera and tried to buy one for \$59 on my flight from Hong Kong to Shanghai, but they were sold out. The same camera cost \$149 on the flight from Hong Kong to Paris.

KING DRAGON

33 Mody Rd. (behind the Holiday Inn), Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon (MTR: TST)

This shop is for pros and those who know a lot about cameras. Ask for Alan.

CHAMPAGNE COURT

Off Granville Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon (MTR: TST)

This is a destination, not a single store. All of the dealers in this courtyard sell professional cameras to knowing photographers. They also carry many secondhand parts.

CASHMERE

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Cashmere from the Orient is not of the same quality as that which comes out of Scotland or Italy because of how the yarn is combed and milled. Meanwhile, Iranian cashmere, which is of even lower quality than Chinese, is flooding the market. Price should be related to the ply number (from 1, the lowest quality, to 4); 2 is the usual number available in Hong Kong.

You can find cashmere in many of the outlet stores in the **Pedder Building**, in several different stores at the **Peninsula Hotel Shopping Arcade**, at **Stanley Market**, and even at the Chinese department stores. Quality will be a big issue here—it affects the hand (feel) as well as the price. Most likely, you can get cashmere at home for prices similar to those in Hong Kong. But wait, did I tell you about the **Tse Cashmere** outlet sale?

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., meaning you get more quality than usual for the price, which is close to \$200 per sweater. Some sweaters cost less; the store also carries other items.

TSE CASHMERE

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

Tse (say “say”) is a luxury brand with expensive merchandise sold at fancy stores around the world. Once a year, usually before Christmas, an outlet sale takes place at an address announced in the *South China Post* newspaper. When I went, the floor was dirty, but the merchandise (organized by size and color) was fabulous. The staff took credit cards and spoke English. Just about everything cost less than \$100. It was a heart-stopping

shopping moment, especially good for those who need luxury labels in their bargains.

CDs, VCDs & DVDs

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CDs and VCDs (video compact discs) are sold on the street, in the usual music stores and chains (such as **HMV**), and in Shenzen.

Note that VCDs are not DVDs—DVDs are more expensive and are said to have better quality, although I have had no problem with the quality of VCDs. DVDs also hold more information, so a movie fits on one disc, as opposed to two (or more) VCDs.

The average price for a VCD in Hong Kong is HK\$35 (US\$4.50). However, when I last tested, VCDs did not play on a U.S. machine—though they do play on my U.S. laptop. New French players, even the cheapie ones that cost about \$50, do play VCDs, so things might be changing in new machinery in the U.S., too.

I have yet to figure out whether some of the Kowloon sources for DVDs and VCDs are legal—they are so out in the open and so professional that they appear to be legal. Illegal DVDs are usually sold like copy watches: in back rooms, behind closed doors, on street corners. To help crack down on pirating, producers of legal DVD are lowering prices, so you can often get a legal DVD in the U.S. for \$11 to \$16. You may find this makes more sense than buying in Hong Kong, unless you know what will play on your home machine or computer.

On Nathan Road, off Nathan Road, and, in fact, in every neighborhood in Hong Kong, plenty of stores sell DVDs. Prices begin at \$7 each. A boxed set of films or the entire season of a television show costs more. You'll find Chinese films, TV series, classic films, and more or less current films for sale.

You should also know the difference between the DVD-5 and DVD-9 formats; from my research, all I know is, if it doesn't say DVD-9 on it, don't buy it.

CERAMICS

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

OVERJOY

Kwai Hing Industrial Building, 10–18 Chun Pin St., Block B, 1st floor, Kwai Chung, New Territories (MTR: Kwai Hing, then taxi)

Located in the heart of Hong Kong's shipping and container district, where there are a few other porcelain showrooms, Overjoy is worth the trouble. Although it's not a replacement for the lost wonders of Wah Tung (see the next listing), it is a good source. The selection includes both Western and Chinese patterns. I bought ginger jars for \$5, mugs with lids for \$10, and lamps for \$40. The store offers international shipping (rates are posted) and free delivery to Hong Kong hotels. There is also a showroom in Wan Chai. When you are ready to leave, the staff will give you a small piece of paper asking your taxi driver (in English and Chinese) to take you to the MTR station. Taxis are readily available out front.

WAH TUNG CHINA COMPANY

Wholesale showroom: Grand Marine Industrial Building, 3 Yue Fung St., Tin Wan, Aberdeen; call ahead

Stores: 57 Hollywood Rd. (MTR: Central); 8 Queen's Rd. East (MTR: Admiralty)

I have bad news for old China hands: Wah Tung, which for years was fabulous, has been sold. The selection is different (the new owners are pushing "European style") and the prices much higher. I've bought tons here in the past and loved every minute of it, but I am sorry to say that I don't feel the same now. The new shop on Queensway is walking distance from the Pacific Place mall but is otherwise in the middle of nowhere Wan Chai and, to me, not worth it. A coupon in *Where* magazine gets

you 15% off your purchases. The retail stores have the same hours: 11am to 7pm daily. The factory is open Monday through Saturday 9am to 5pm. Take a taxi, but call first before schlepping out there to see whether the staff is expecting customers; they seem to be directing trade to their retail stores: © 852/2873-2272.

CHOPS

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

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

Quality varies greatly, depending 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. Nevertheless, Man Wa feels very authentic, and you may enjoy the entire experience.

Every hotel has at least one gift shop that will have your chop engraved. Allow at least 24 hours. Many shops will provide 1-hour service. A variety of dealers at **Stanley Market** offer while-you-wait service.

You may buy the chop a la carte or in a set or gift box. The boxed set comes with your chop and the inkpot in a silk-covered (or faux silk) box with an adorable clasp; expect

to pay about HK\$100 (US\$13) for a boxed set at Stanley Market.

COMPUTERS & ELECTRONICS

I am nervous about buying computers and most other electronics in Hong Kong—too much can go wrong. On the other hand, my greatest delight has been buying small DVD players to give as gifts in the U.S. They play DVDs, VCDs, and discs from all zones. Well, they play DVD-9 all over the world.

I shop for electronics at **Broadway**, a reputable chain with stores all over Hong Kong, and buy either the brands we all know or Shinco. Make sure the instructions are in English and that voltage is 110–220. You will also have to buy plugs. Another reliable chain is **Fortress**, which has stores in all trading areas. There are computer buildings, streets, and fairs (even a flea market) for locals who know what they are doing. Shop at your own risk.

BROADWAY

Times Square mall, 7th floor (MTR: Causeway Bay); 28 Soy St. (MTR: Mong Kok); and many other locations

I've had my share of bad experiences buying electronics in Hong Kong, so it's a pleasure to find a store I can trust. This is a chain with locations everywhere. I won't shop anywhere else.

FORTRESS

5 Peking Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST), and many other locations

The other trusted name in electronics, with stores all over town. This one is behind the Pen. The downstairs (ground floor) area is smallish; go upstairs.

COSMETICS & FRAGRANCES

The best buys in this category are noteworthy in terms of availability, not price—check out scents that have been introduced in Europe but not in the U.S. Whether or not you save becomes meaningless because you'll be the first on your block to have the new scent. If you care. And I am not going to mention a brand just because it's new or hot in Hong Kong, such as Kiehl's (the latest thing), because you can easily get Kiehl's for less money in the U.S.

Many big-name cosmetics companies manufacture for the Far East in and around Hong Kong; often they will have a product with the same name as the one 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.

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

Designer Brands

MADINA

Shop 2412, Harbour City, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon (MTR: TST); Times Square mall (MTR: Causeway Bay)

Those looking for something new, different, and not easily found at their local mall in the U.S. will love this line. Madina is an Italian makeup brand that is promoted as a slightly up-market mass-market brand—something for everyone. The *createur* of the brand is the makeup artist at La Scala opera house, and her husband owns the largest makeup factories in Italy, where many designer makeups are produced.

Prices on Madina are fair, and the colors are glorious.

SHU UEMURA

The Landmark, 16 Des Voeux Rd. (MTR: Central); Mall at Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Central (MTR: Admiralty); Ocean Terminal, Kowloon (MTR: TST); and other locations

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

Mass-Market Opportunities

BONJOUR

Locations all over town

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

BOOTS

IFC mall, Central (MTR: Central)

Boots is a British chemist that sells several of its own brands of makeup and treatments, among other things. Some Watson's stores carry the line at in-store boutiques, but there is a growing trend toward freestanding stores for beauty items only (these are not Boots stores as we know them in the U.K.), with an emphasis on well-being products. The line No. 7—a riff on No. 5, as in Chanel—is an excellent color cosmetics selection at a moderate price.

JURLIQUE

Landmark Atrium, 16 Des Voeux Rd. (MTR: Central); Times Square mall (MTR: Causeway Bay)

Say "Jur-leak," then celebrate Australia and this terrific brand. Lavender hand cream is the most famous of Jurlique's numerous products. I fly with Herbal Recovery Mist in my purse,

and I like the silk dust (instead of powder) for really sweaty summer days. The line is also sold at Faces, the beauty portion of Lane Crawford in Ocean Terminal, Kowloon. Prices may be lower in the U.S., but the line is not easy to find there.

LUSH

Shop 40, Festival Walk (MTR: Causeway Bay); Shop 3315, Harbour City (MTR:TST); Hong Kong International Airport, arrivals hall

You can almost smell a Lush shop before you see it; asthmatics need not apply. Despite the high prices, the British firm (which is spreading through the U.S.) is on to something charming. The deli-counter environment features beauty and bath products, soaps that are sliced like cheese, and bath bombs as large as tennis balls, ready to lob into a hot tub and make you giggle. The concepts and scents are the same throughout the world, but ingredients may be different in some international stores.

RED EARTH

Locations all over town

This Australian brand does color cosmetics and skin treatments. The moderate prices mean it's geared for a young customer.

SASA COSMETIC COMPANY

Locations 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 equal; some have more stock than others.

Many goods come directly from sources in the U.S., which makes them much cheaper locally—but not cheaper than at home, if you are American. Shop carefully. Also note that some items are closeouts and discontinued lines.

WATSON'S, THE CHEMIST

24–28 Queen's Rd. (MTR: Central), and 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 they're not all the same. Selected stores have a Boots department (see above). Watson's is actually a drugstore-cum-general store that sells many things, including other lines of makeup and treatments.

DEPARTMENT STORES

European-Style

HARVEY NICHOLS

The Landmark, 16 Des Voeux Rd. (MTR: Central)

Just when you thought the British had left Hong Kong, London's best department store arrives at the city's fanciest mall. Expected to be open by the end of 2005, the store will dance across five floors of the mall and will coordinate shopping ops with the new Mandarin Oriental Landmark, a boutique hotel in the mall.

LANE CRAWFORD

70 Queen's Rd. (MTR: Central); Mall at Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Central (MTR: Admiralty); Times Square mall (MTR: Causeway Bay); IFC2 mall (MTR: Central)

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

their jewelry and their lifestyle here. The newest branch, some 8,361 sq. m (90,000 sq. ft.) of razzle-dazzle, is in the IFC mall. Actually, I like the outlet store (p. 107) better.

LCX

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

The concept is one big warehouse, so it's a department store within a mall—and one that has no walls. Brands have different 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 know (Gap, Banana Republic), some are names you have been dying to meet, and others are totally unknown even to the savviest shopper. The space is young and hip, but it's also interesting if you just want to see something very different from an old-fashioned department store or mall.

MARKS & SPENCER

Harbour City Ocean Galleries, 25–27 Canton Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST); *Mall at Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Central* (MTR: Admiralty); *the Landmark, 16 Des Voeux Rd.* (MTR: Central); *Cityplaza III, 1111 King's Rd., Quarry Bay* (MTR: Tai Koo)

I love M&S, but there are no great 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? Need shoes? Can't get a fit elsewhere? This is your source. Just watch out for clothes marked "Asian fit," which probably will not fit you. Women's shoes go up to size 42 (U.S. size 11).

Chinese

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

Flagship: Star House, next to Star Ferry, Canton Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST); *branches throughout town*

This is the most Western of the Chinese department stores. By American standards, the prices are good, although the David Tang look-alike merchandise is just as expensive as his! Ouch! The stores are clean, easy to use, and tourist friendly, but you pay for these luxuries.

The silk-fabric (yard goods) department is fun, although the prices are cheaper in markets. 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; the sales help has been very pleasant to me—unusual for some Chinese stores. This is a good place for souvenirs. Hours in all stores are basically Monday to Saturday from 10am to 6:30pm; Sunday hours vary with the location.

YUE HWA CHINESE PRODUCTS EMPORIUM

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

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 of Chinese department store. Buy from the “Great Wall of China,” as I call the china department; get silk pjs; 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. The stores mail to the U.S. Hours are daily from 9:30 or 10am to 8 or 9pm.

Japanese

Most of the large Japanese department stores are in Causeway Bay and aren't very different from U.S. department stores. Seibu, the most upscale of all Japanese department stores, bucked the

trend by opening in the Pacific Place mall. Hard times have forced cutbacks, but the store is still open.

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. 112), 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

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Hong Kong gains designer shops every day; I cannot come to town without being annoyed that so many new ones 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 than in the U.S. or at the airport duty-free shop. Most items, however, are not. If you are interested in a certain designer line, I suggest you shop for it 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.

You'll find the latest and wildest designs by 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 shops' decor 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 turns again and becomes Kimberley Road, heading back toward Nathan Road. Also in this area is the **Rise Commercial Building** on Granville Circuit, a small, hard-to-find alley off Granville Road.

DISCOUNT

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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. 120) and a handful of good sources elsewhere. Changes at **Horizons Plaza** make it worth the trip, and there's usually a line of taxis waiting to whisk you home—a recent improvement.

With the exception of Lok Wah, none of these establishments is near the MTR; take a taxi.

JOYCE WAREHOUSE

Horizons Plaza, 2 Li Wing St., 21st floor, Ap Lei Chau

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 in hard times. Her warehouse and outlet store sells off goods that don't move out of her stores. I saw an Armani blazer for \$50 (U.S.!) and other designer bargains that left me breathless. Sizes tend to run small.

KAISER ESTATES

Phases 1, 2 & 3, Man Yue Rd., Hung Hom

This is a formerly famous shopping district that I find very boring and somewhat overpriced. A Donna Karan DKNY blazer for \$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. Most of the outlets are in Phase 1, with a few in Phase 2. Frankly, I think you can give this area a miss, but I got a note from readers who loved it here. Go figure.

LANE CRAWFORD WAREHOUSE

Horizons Plaza, 2 Li Wing St., 25th floor, Ap Lei Chau

Better than any Barneys outlet I've ever been to. Armani jackets for under \$200; suits for \$400. Shoes, accessories, home style, menswear. Gorgeous stuff. Maybe I got lucky, but it sure was more fun than the Joyce Warehouse.

LOK WAH

Lok Wah Bo, 193 Fa Yuen St. (MTR: Mong Kok); Lok Wah Top World, 175 Fa Yuen St. (MTR: Mong Kok); Lok Wah Top Place, 53 and 55 Granville Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST); Lok Wah City, 11 Lee Garden Rd. (MTR: Causeway Bay)

This small chain of jobbers operates stores that sell clothes—often including big name brands—out of bins. Each major shopping area has a store, which can be your jumping-off point in its neighborhood. I'm not saying it's the best of the jobbers, but I have done well on repeat visits and found a variety of merchandise and sizes at low every-day prices.

SPACE

Marina Sq. E., 2F Commercial Block, South Horizons, Ap Lei Chau

Space is the name the Prada Group gives to its warehouses selling all its lines—Prada, Miu Miu, Jil Sander, Helmut Lang, and so on. With all the fake Prada in China, it's hard to suggest that you visit, but this *is* the real thing, and it carries clothes, shoes, and accessories, too. This outlet is in Ap Lei Chau but not in Horizons Plaza (though it is nearby). Ask your hotel concierge to call ☎ 852/2814-9576 for directions, then have him write them in Chinese.

ETHNIC STYLE

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Costume Chinese dresses, jackets, and shirts are for sale just about everywhere in Hong Kong, from souvenir stores to **Chinese Arts & Crafts**, to the chicest of them all, **Shanghai Tang** (p. 125). However, if you prefer the look that qualifies more as boho chic, you will need a good eye and some luck.

For one of my latest trips to Hong Kong and China, I spent \$150 on an embroidered and quilted jacket from a bridge designer line. I found it in Hong Kong for \$40. That is unusual, but it shows what can happen when you shop enough. The wares in most of the local arts and crafts stores will do the trick. Chunky beads, exotic fabrics, and layers of fashion can be found here and there; those with a good eye can piece them together.

FABRICS

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As a rule, don't think that just because you are close to the silkworms, you can walk away with bargains. Silk is usually about \$15 a meter.

Buying fabrics from tailors in the PRC can be tricky (they may lie about the origin of the goods), but you can trust the fine tailors in Hong Kong to offer European fabrics for suits, shirts, and other clothing. If you don't know your tailor, don't let him sell you European fabric without showing you the bolt or sample book. Low-class tailors have been known to do a switcheroo—or just fib.

The second floor of the Western Market (p. 130) is home to a fabric market. You may get a kick out of **Excellent Silk Mill**, 17 Cameron Rd., 2nd floor, Kowloon (MTR: TST), which takes only cash but has vintage fabrics for sale off the bolt. It's near Nathan and Granville roads.

Shanghai Tang sells gorgeous silks and fabrics, but the prices may kill you. For similar fabrics, try a branch of **Chinese Arts & Crafts**.

Shenzen, across the border (see chapter 6), is a good place to shop for silk. **Li Yuen West**, in the Lanes (p. 76), is more convenient.

FURS

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Just when you thought it was safe to go out into the cold, fur is back. Fun fur—cheap, funky, colorful, and possibly fashion forward—is the latest trend and can be found in Hong Kong in the winter. There's also a far amount of fake fur around, even in markets. The most trusted name in real fur is **Siberian Furs** on Chatham Road in Kowloon.

GLASSES

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The days of truly inexpensive eyeglasses are over, but many people do find considerable savings in Hong Kong.

EYE'N-I

1 Lan Fong Rd. (MTS: Causeway Bay)

With an optometrist in the shop and more designer frames than you can imagine, this is one of the hipper spots for eyewear in a very trendy neighborhood.

NEW FEI OPTICAL SUPPLY LTD.

Lucky Horse Industrial Building, 64 Tong Mi Rd., 1-7 Bute St., 12th floor, Kowloon (MTR: Prince Edward, then shuttle bus or taxi)

This source comes from my friend Louis, who is chief concierge at the InterConti and wears glasses (I had Lasik). Louis knows everything and everyone. And I wouldn't be telling you about this if I didn't think it was a winner.

So here's the deal. This is indeed a factory. You pick your frames, you have your eyes tested, and you wait 10 minutes. If your prescription is more complicated, you may wait a half-hour. You can buy reading glasses, eye glasses, or sunglasses prescriptions; children have their own selection. There are thousands of frames, many from big-name Euro designers. The eye test is free. The setup is sort of supermarket style, then you sit at a table with a mirror and try on frames all day. Cold drinks are served.

When I visited with my scout Mary, she had the test, chose the frames, and had her new glasses within a half-hour. She got progressive reading glasses in a chic French frame for \$65. You can take the shuttle bus or a taxi from the MTR; the area is industrial but not frightening. To arrange for the shuttle bus before you head out, have a hotel staff member call ☎ 852/2398-2088. Avoid weekends, if you can; some 400 people a day pass through on Saturday and Sunday. Hours are daily from 10:30am to 8pm.

GROCERY STORES

The best grocery stores in Hong Kong are more like department stores. Indeed, one of my favorite stores in town is called **City Super**—it sells everything. **Marks & Spencer** stores sell some packaged (not fresh) foodstuffs; the local grocery store chains, **Wellcome** and **Park 'N Shop**, have small branches all over.

CITY SUPER

Times Square mall (MTR: Causeway Bay); IFC2 Mall (MTR: Central); Ocean Terminal, Kowloon (MTR: TST)

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

GrEAT

Mall at Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Central, 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.

NEEDS

New World Centre, Salisbury Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST)

Every time I check into the InterConti, next door, I make this my next stop. I'm not saying to make a special trip here (as I would suggest for any branch of City Super), but the Kmart-type establishment is a great grocery store. You can also buy health and beauty aids, electronics, and more.

SUPER WELLCOME

Causeway Bay (MTR: Causeway Bay)

Wellcome is a well-known grocery chain; this location is almost a superstore in the heart of crowded Causeway Bay, near the big hotels there. You can buy snacks and real-people needs, and browse in a fun, modern supermarket.

HANDBAGS

ASHNEIL

Far East Mansions, 5–6 Middle Rd., Shop 114 (up the stairs), Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon (MTR: TST)

As Ashneil himself says, “The quality has to be good; we have no logos.”

These bags are not copies—they do not have designer logos or anything illegal. They just coincidentally look a lot like the handbags in the fashion magazines. These bags are not cheap, but they cost less than the designer versions. The company does private trunk shows across America, but you have to sign up to be invited while you are in Hong Kong. It is also possible to choose and pay for your bags in Hong Kong and have them sent from the U.S.—you save space in your luggage and don’t worry about Customs or duties.

Ashneil is off Nathan Road a half-block from the InterConti, right behind the Sheraton. However, the building is what you might call funky, so first-timers may feel nervous. Don’t be. Walk up one flight of stairs to the first floor and follow the signs to room 114.

MAYLIN

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

If you are a regular here, note that the shop is in a different location on the same floor. If you aren’t a regular, you must

be on your first trip to Hong Kong. This is the best source for Birkin bags in strong fashion colors and reasonably priced (from around \$300).

MERLINO

Kowloon Hotel, lower level B112, Kowloon (MTR: TST)

Merlino's basic Birkin goes for about \$250, slightly less than Maylin's. Merlino also has a wider selection of styles and small leather goods. I buy fashion bags here, as well as wallets and gift items.

PENINSULA HOTEL PHARMACY

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

Yeah, I know it's a pharmacy. It also sells Birkin and Kelly handbags. Priced by size, the bags cost \$126 to \$185, and less during occasional promotions. I have bought several bags here; my most recent was a black Birkin on sale. It is not the world's best Birkin—it does not compete with anything from Maylin, Merlino, or Ashneil—but the value for the money is excellent. For more information, e-mail: yakkyoku@hongkong.com. Shipping to the U.S. is available.

SAM WO

41–47 Queen's Rd., basement, Central (MTR: Central)

Sam Wo is an old source who has been on and off these pages for years. I am very conflicted about sending you here because it takes a very good eye in order to score. When I look at all the bags, they seem to jump off the wall and race toward me. I get dizzy, and the bags look cheap.

However, when I see a single bag worn by a stylish woman, I am always shocked when she tells me her treasure came from Sam Wo. For the same sort of thing, I like Shenzen better. If you can't get to Shenzen, you may have a ball here.

Expect to pay about \$75 for a decent designer copy. The sales help claims to know nothing about the bags' hardware (metal trim). I know for a fact that they do have these items but are wary of arrest and so play dumb. You probably have to be a regular to get the extras.

Sam Wo has two shops: a tiny, stall-like location in the Lanes (p. 76) and a larger basement store, which has a door in the Lanes but an official Queen's Road address.

JADE

Books have been written on jade, and there is a small section in Chapter 3. The news here is that I now have a contact in the Jade Market, so you can ask for Erica and have her guide you to more honest dealers and help with your negotiations. She runs her business, **Jade Butterfly**, out of Booth #63. Her mobile phone, if you want to call from your hotel before you head over: © 852/9042-3872.

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 in Hong Kong 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.

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. Take the time to learn before you leap.

If you are into creating your own necklaces, you need to meet Jenny. You pick and buy the beads from her, tell her what you want, and she will string and deliver to your hotel. **Jenny Gems Company**, No. 364–65 and 410 Jade Market, Yaumatei (MTR: Jordan Road) or jennystore@hotmail.com.

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 their international clientele or will custom-make your order in 5 to 7 days. It's hard to give you an idea of price because it depends on what you have made. All the work they have done for me 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, Pedder St., 12th floor (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.

Not-So-Expensive Jewelry

ORIENTAL ARTS JEWELRY LTD.

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

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

I sometimes buy my faux pearls here, and I consider this is one of my single best sources in Hong Kong. The faux pearls I've bought here are about the best I've seen at these prices. I have seen fluctuations in quality according to stock, and I have yet to match the quality of the double-strand, 8-millimeter set that cost me \$40 5 years ago. A strand of pearls runs about \$20; the staff will string together several strands into a single necklace with a new clasp as you wait. Baroque pearls are also available.

LEATHER GOODS

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Hong Kong is a big handbag and shoe destination for several reasons:

- If you go to Shenzhen, you might buy a dozen handbags—fakes but also inspirations; see p. 149.
- Almost all American and European designer brands have shops in Hong Kong; you will find brands you've never heard of and models your neighbors haven't got.
- If you go for quality but don't need a brand name, you will be floored by the number of Kelly, Birkin, and Bolido bags in Hong Kong, usually in the \$100-to-\$300 price range. Hotel arcades (p. 124) are a good source for these items.
- The major malls and hotel shopping centers usually have stores representing European brands that often don't have distribution in the U.S. Check out **Nannini**, an Italian brand, in Ocean Centre or the Peninsula Hotel.

LOCAL HEROES

BLANC DE CHINE

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

One of the best stores in Hong Kong: chic Chinese clothes for men and women, and home style.

GOD

48 Hollywood Rd. (MTR: Central); Hong Kong Hotel, 3rd floor, Kowloon (MTR: TST); Leighton Centre, Sharp St. East (MTR: Causeway Bay)

This store does not personify any deity; the name is an acronym for “Goods of Desire.” It sells everything from furniture to soft furnishings, to home style. This is a great place for gift items.

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. The store is just as eye-catching and fabulous as any other Joyce project. For information about the Joyce Warehouse in Ap Lei Chau, see p. 107.

KAI EN LO

Private showings only

This famous jeweler no longer keeps a shop but tours the world. Your concierge can contact her, and she will come to your hotel room.

WALTER MA

49A Kimberley Rd., Kowloon (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 that make 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

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Hong Kong is totally overrun with shopping centers. It's as though a contagious disease has spread to all architects, who now feel compelled to equip hotels and office buildings with three floors of retail shops.

Central

IFC2

1 Harbourview St. (MTR: Central)

This is the new tallest building in town, the location of the new Four Seasons Hotel and the home of a very nice mall, complete with a **City Super**. There's also cinema, an MTR station, and an Airport Express stop as well as a great view to Kowloon. Just about every major store has a branch here; Lane Crawford's new flagship is here.

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, and it stays ahead of the game by adding new stores and concepts. The latest innovations are a Mandarin Oriental boutique hotel and the first Asian branch of the London department store Harvey Nichols.

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.

THE MALL AT PACIFIC PLACE*88 Queensway, Central (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 in a hurry, you may want to come by because you can pack a lot in.

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 fancy hotels grouped around the tower (Marriott, Conrad, Island Shangri-La).

PEDDER BUILDING*12 Pedder St. (MTR: Central)*

Well, the Pedder Building is looking downright spiffy. My bet is that rents have risen, which explains why almost all the old favorites have moved out. 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** at street level. Most of the outlets in the Pedder Building have dried up, but you might want to poke around and see. There are two reliable destinations: **Shopper's Safari** and **Blanc de Chine**. Note that Blanc de Chine is not discount or inexpensive or anything other than Armani with an Oriental twist.

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 connects by bridge to the Mandarin Oriental Hotel (don't miss shopping there, either) and may be more fun than the Landmark. 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.

Causeway Bay

FASHION WALK

Gloucester Rd., Causeway Bay (MTR: Causeway Bay)

Not technically a mall, Fashion Walk is a shopping concept. The street level of several adjacent buildings—three of them in sort of a triangle—houses up-and-coming designers, cutting-edge designers, Japanese designers, hopeful designers, and the likes of Vivienne Tam. There are also several cafes. On the Victoria Park side of the Excelsior Hotel, this destination is extremely refreshing because the stores are unique and you aren't inside a mall too much of the time.

LEE GARDENS 1 & 2

*Leighton Centre and Hennessy Centre, 111 Leighton Rd.
(MTR: Causeway Bay)*

This mall has so many fancy designer shops that you'll forget you are in Causeway Bay. The two buildings lie perpendicular to each other: Lee Gardens 1 is on Hysan Avenue, and Lee Gardens 2 is between Yun Ping Road and Jardine's Crescent. The two malls have brands such as Chanel, Hermès, Vuitton, Paul Smith, Prada, Cartier, Longchamp, Gucci, Bottega Veneta, and so forth. You get the picture. Philippe Starck designed the new Jean-Paul Gaultier shop.

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; it combines Western chains and big names with local dealers and small firms. There are four floors of restaurants. This is a destination, not merely a mall, and it attracts a lot of young people. My favorite shop is **City Super**, a grocery store and department store in one (enter through Lane Crawford).

Aberdeen

HORIZONS PLAZA

2 Lee Wing St., Ap Lei Chau (no nearby MTR)

This is not a mall, but it functions like one. The high-rise tower houses many furniture showrooms, wholesale sources, outlet stores, carpet stores, and gift sources. It's worth the trip because of the selection.

The **Joyce Warehouse** is in this building; I've never done well with Joyce in outlet stores, but hey, you never know. The **Lane Crawford** outlet is here; I found it great. **Tequila Kola** is sort of a large version of Pier 1 Imports: It carries tabletop accessories, bed linen, curtains, and small decorative items, but it's known for furniture. That makes it more of a source for locals—unless you want to ship (which you can) or are just looking for ideas. The large space holds a number of room sets. The tenants change frequently, but there are so many of them that you can still have fun. Each store keeps its own hours. There's a free directory at the welcome desk. Taxis wait out front.

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, and if you can successfully negotiate your way from end to end, you won't even have to come up for air. All luxury brands have stores here, as do most chains.

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 Fri–Wed 10am–9pm) at street level, but really, don't waste your time on my account. If you are a guest at the adjoining InterConti—or any nearby hotel—the grocery store (**Needs**) is a lot of fun and sells all sorts of things besides groceries.

PARK LANE SHOPPER'S BOULEVARD*Nathan Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST)*

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

Mong Kok**LANGHAM PLACE***8 Argyle St. (MTR: Mong Kok)*

With 300 stores, this is the hot new place in town for the younger crowd, as well as an attempt by the city to rejuvenate the area. Part of the mall is the snazzy new Langham Place Hotel. There are also the usual cineplex and food court. This mall is not a destination for tourists, so it's a great place to get a look at the future—Mong Kok is arriving, the young people from China are arriving, and the trendy clothes and concepts are already here. And it's not at all down-market or funky: There's a branch of the posh Japanese department store **Seibu** as well as a huge branch of **Muji**.

Hotel Arcades/Hotel Malls

The fanciest 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 (tourist trap). 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 INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL

18 Salisbury Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST)

As the hotel arcade/shopping center/mall sweepstakes heats up, this small mall offers one of every big name (including **Chanel**) and adjoins the New World Centre. This is not a destination mall but a convenience for hotel guests. More interesting is the new **Shanghai Tang** in the hotel lobby.

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.

THE MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL

5 Connaught Rd. (MTR: Central)

The glitziest stores in town fight for space in the Mandarin Oriental, 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 here, which include **Ferragamo**, **Fendi**, **David's Shirts**, and **Gemsland**, my jeweler. The Mandarin Oriental 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 (SH on the elevator panel).

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.

Also here are a branch of **Shanghai Tang**, 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. The glitzy modern pharmacy in the basement overflows with Western and Chinese goods, European perfume brands, and more handbags. (It also fills local prescriptions.) The Pen has its own store, too.

MARKETS

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Markets offer a 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 are squeamish, avoid the food markets that sell live chickens or ducks and slaughter them on the spot.

Merchandise markets are busy and hectic. Each has its own clientele and its own personality. There are no spacious aisles or racks of organized clothing. Some markets exist only at 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 and sell 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 bound them or that intersect in the middle of the market area. Most cab drivers know where the markets are by name. However, it is always a good idea to have your concierge write the name of the market and location in Chinese.

You probably won't need it, but it can't hurt. Buses, trolleys, and the MTR usually serve the markets as well. Take a hotel business card with you so you'll have the address in Chinese. The following markets are open daily.

BIRD MARKET

*Yuen Po St. Bird Garden, 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 (including grasshoppers); you will be surprised at how many bird cages you suddenly want. 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: Vendors sell used merchandise of the tag-sale variety from blankets and a few stalls on a 2-block stretch of pedestrian pavement just below Hollywood Road. One guy sells only used typewriters and used sewing machines. A few dealers sell old jade, which I like. One vendor has 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.

FA YUEN MARKET (FLOWER MARKET)

Fa Yuen St., Kowloon (MTR: Prince Edward)

This is not the Ladies' Market, although the two very different markets are close enough to be a single destination. For walking directions, see p. 87. Some people call this the Flower Market only because a few vendors sell fruit and flowers in

baskets. A nearby flower market sells flowers, plants, and plastic greenery. You're here for the fun fashions, however, and will be walking toward Argyle Street. With Prince Edward to your rear, walk toward Kowloon.

The jobbers on Fa Yuen Street (p. 87) are open during the day when the market is closed. But at about 4pm, the street becomes a pedestrian mall, filled with fruits and veggies, handbags and brassieres. The jobbers remain open, so this is a mad case of too many bins, not enough money.

You will not see many tourists in these parts; the rummaging through bins may not be to everyone's liking. This is my favorite kind of shopping, and I always find deals. You'll see men's, women's and children's clothing as well as plus sizes in various jobbers' stores on both sides of Fa Yuen running for about 3 blocks. Cash only. ATMs are not that easy to find, so be prepared.

JADE MARKET

Kansu and Battery sts., Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon (MTR: Jordan Rd. and walk a bit or take a taxi)

The market is in two freestanding tents under the highway overpass 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 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—mostly lots of trinkets, clothing, everyday goods, and the usual ringing alarm clocks, fake designer goods, electrical doodads that flash and whirr—no live snakes or chickens. It's very different from Fa Yuen Street, so visit them both, if at all possible.

THE LANES

Li Yuen East and Li Yuen West, Central (MTR: Central)

The Lanes are twin alleys, about 50m (164 ft.) apart from each other, darting between Queens Road and Des Voeux Road in Central. I had given up on them for several years, but a friend asked me to reconsider for this revision. I had a ball. Furthermore, the women I took here all liked it a lot.

The general layout of each lane is the same—stores along the thoroughfare, and a center aisle of stalls. One lane specializes in Chinese arts and crafts, T-shirts, fabric off the bolt, and blinking electronic toys that make annoying sounds. This is also a good place for reading glasses that fold up into a slim tube.

The other lane specializes in handbags and padded bras. (Could I make this up?) Bra Lane also has several jobbers; I personally have never met a jobber I could walk past. On my last foray, I bought a pair of Nautica khakis for \$10 and a T-shirt for \$4. There is also a branch of the **Ribbon Emporium** (p. 92), that crazy source. *Hint:* It doesn't sell ribbons.

The stores and stalls are crowded and active; you are pestered and pursued and pressured to buy. Haggle till dusk.

Who need a trip to mainland China when you can shop here? Also note that this is an excellent neighborhood to snoop around in—1 block from Shanghai Tang and the Landmark, yet in another world. Queen’s Road has many branches of favorite stores, even the Chinese department store **Yue Hwa**. And there are lots of banks with ATMs.

LUEN WO MARKET

Luen Wo, New Territories (KCR from TST East to Fanling, then bus no. 78 or taxi)

This is an authentic local food market quite near the border with China. The market and the merchandise are not enormously different from what you’d 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 a square city block. The shoppers are far more rural-looking than those you might find in downtown Central. You go here for the total experience, for the fact that it’s real. You might want to give it a miss if there have been avian flu outbreaks.

STANLEY MARKET

Stanley Main St., Stanley Village, Hong Kong (public transit: bus no. 6 from Exchange Sq. in Central or no. 20 from Star Ferry)

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; 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 cheap gifts. 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. The

market is open daily from 10am to 7pm. A taxi will cost about \$15 each way; the bus from Star Ferry takes about an hour.

TEMPLE STREET MARKET

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

This night market has grown a lot over the years, and as it spreads, 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.

Exit the MTR 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 (this is still Nathan Rd.). With the harbor to your back, it's the left side. Walk north on Nathan Road for 2 or 3 blocks. Keep looking to your left. You are searching 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.

This alley is only about 45m (148 ft.) long. When you emerge from the alley, you will be on Temple Street, at the corner of a real temple. Walk forward 1 block, keeping 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.

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. It has a branch of **Fook Ming Tong**, the fancy tea broker; 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. The space has a lot of energy and a number of unique stalls that sell

merchandise I haven't seen anywhere else in town. True to its name, this market is much farther 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 contrast fabric. Prices usually depend on the fabric: 100% cotton 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. For custom shirts, two fittings are necessary—one for the measurements and one with the garment.

Many shirt houses have a minimum order; 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 shirt order. Most shirt houses also make pajamas and boxer shorts.

ASCOT CHANG CO. LTD.

The Peninsula Hotel, Salisbury Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST); 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 its 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); mail order is available once your measurements have been taken. Shirts run between \$40 and \$125, depending upon the fabric and style. Top of the line. Ascot Chang also has a shop in Manhattan.

DAVID'S SHIRTS

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

David's is the other most popular of the custom shirt shops in Hong Kong. It's less glitzy than **Ascot Chang** (see above) but just as famous to those in the know. David's also has a branch in New York City. The main shop in Hong Kong is in Kowloon, on Kimberley Road. But there are more convenient branches, mostly in hotels like the Regent and the Mandarin Oriental.

David's will copy any shirt you like; just bring it with you and plan to leave it. The shop also has 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 and cuff choices. Approximately 4 to 6 weeks later, a box of new shirts will arrive.

MEN'S SUITS: MADE-TO-MEASURE

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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 you 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 will involve a partially finished suit with only one sleeve in place; the third will be to detail the finished garment. 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 two best men's tailors in Hong Kong, see below. After you check in to your hotel, the tailor should be your first stop. 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 top two, ask whether the thread 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 two biggies.
- 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. Silk-wool blends and cashmeres cost more. The finished price for a top-quality, killer suit runs \$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 Row 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, air freight costs \$20 per suit. 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 fabric swatches sent to you 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 travels to the U.S. to visit customers. Chances are, if you live in a major city (New York, Washington, San Francisco, Los Angeles, or Chicago), he or she will. Most of the 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 Names: Hong Kong's Finest Tailors

A-MAN HING CHEONG CO. LTD.

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

Fondly referred to as “Ah-men,” this shop turns out quite a few garments for the rich-tourist-and-businessman trade and, therefore, has become adept at relating to the European-cut suit. The tailors 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.

W. W. CHAN & SONS TAILOR LTD.

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

Peter Chan carries on a family business, which he has built and expanded over the years. He also has two shops in Shanghai (p. 216). The average price for a suit is \$650 to \$800; mink-cashmere blends can cost more. The W. W. Chan showroom is decidedly more relaxed than other big-time contenders’ spaces. The showroom 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. © 852/2366-2634.

PASHMINA

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Although solid-color pashmina shawls are sort of dead as a fashion statement, there's some leeway for those who want to beat the chill in the air stylishly.

FINE N' RHINE

Lytton Building, 42 Mody Rd., 3rd floor, Kowloon (MTR: TST)

This store sells handbags and some jewelry and accessories, but you want to ask to see the locked pashmina room, where all sorts of beaded, printed, and stylized treasures await. Also baby pashmina for the next grandchild.

PEARLS

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

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

The bigger jewelry shops are safe bets for 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, the shop will make amends.

Remember that part of the value of the pearls is based on color and that different cultures prize different colors. Different women may prefer differing shades of pearls to 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.

The size of the pearls and the 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.

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 as or more than the pearls, depending on size and the inclusion of gemstones.

Negotiating for the clasp (or a change of clasps) on any given strand or strands of pearls should be a separate piece of business from buying the pearls.

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

RESALE

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This is somewhat of a new category in Hong Kong (and Kowloon). It follows a major trend in London, Paris, and New York: Many socialites take their year-old designer clothes and accessories to resale shops, which sell them to the public for less than full cost. Ah, the consummate Hong Kong Hobson's choice: to buy used or fake? Used is more expensive.

AMIE/THIRD AVE. LTD.

Pedder Building, 12 Pedder St., 3rd floor (MTR: Central)

This resale shop stocks clothes as well as handbags and some shoes.

FRANCE STATION

80 Russell St. (MTR: Causeway Bay)

Heads up—this will be on the final. The resale shops related to the next listing (Paris Station) are all named after cities, so Milan Station is part of that family. This store, however, is part of a different group, with a name chosen to confuse or blend with the concept. This store's main specialty is designer bags.

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. For information about the newest shops, call ☎ 852/8200-7588.

VIP STATION

61 Granville Rd. (MTR: TST East)

I think this is a third chain getting into the action—its business cards list another store near Times Square. I like this one because after you've been bin shopping at the jobbers on Granville Road, it's fun to finish up here. Mostly designer handbags in good condition, but pricey.

SEX TOYS

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This is a relatively new subject for this book, but someone asked me to make a purchase for her, so here's what I've learned. 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.

SHOES

Cheapie

There is an entire district of inexpensive shoes in the neighborhood known as Happy Valley, but it's a schlep, and large feet need not apply. Fa Yuen Street, which has many other shopper's delights, also has inexpensive fashion shoes—yes, shoes for \$20 a pair.

Custom

LIII

*Shop 75, Tower 2, Admiralty Center, 18 Harcourt Rd.
(MTR: Admiralty)*

This store used to be called Laces, and it was inexpensive. Now it's LIII (*L* with a Roman numeral). The staff sells shoes, copies shoes, and makes shoes with your own fabric. But it's not truly cheap—expect to pay over \$100.

Designer Names

ANYA HINDMARCH

Mall at Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Central (MTR: Admiralty); Lee Gardens (MTR: Causeway Bay)

First known for handbags, this British big name now sells shoes in the oh-la-la category.

JIMMY CHOO

The Landmark (MTR: Central)

Now that *Sex and the City* is off the air, you can trade in your Manolos for Jimmy Choos. Who can tell the difference, anyway?

KATE SPADE

Mall at Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Central (MTR: Admiralty); Harbour City, Kowloon (MTR: TST); IFC mall (MTR: Central)

Located in the major malls, Spade sells handbags, shoes and some home accessories.

Large Sizes

If you wear an American women's size 10 or larger, you may have trouble finding shoes in Hong Kong. In a shoe emergency, head to Marks & Spencer, which carries up to size 42 (American size 11).

Sports

Inexpensive sports shoes are readily available in all markets. They may or may not be counterfeit. Stanley Market is a little easier to shop than Fa Yuen's night market, but prices will be better on Fa Yuen Street in Mong Kok.

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. Below are a few stores that specifically sell great gifts.

CITY SUPER

Times Square mall, Causeway Bay (MTR: Causeway Bay); Harbour City, Kowloon (MTR: TST); IFC2 mall (MTR: Central)

I listed City Super under "Grocery Stores," but it is really a department store of goodies with a complete section of dry goods separate 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.

DFS (DUTY FREE SHOPPERS)

DFS Galleria at Sun Plaza, 28 Canton Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST); DFS Galleria at Chinachem Plaza, 77 Mody Rd. (MTR: TST East)

This is a department store meant mostly for Japanese shoppers but handy to all. I don't like it for normal designer shopping only because it bores me. When it comes to souvenirs, however, DFS may have the best in town.

A department in each store sells Chinese meds, foods, and souvenirs—I'd head there, ignoring the Burberry and Chanel. Don't miss the keychains, including one that allows you to insert your own photo into the body of a Chinese warlord.

DFS sells in bulk units, with prices discounted according to how much you buy. It has shuttle bus service that makes a loop from a few major hotels to the stores, and will deliver your purchases to your hotel so you can continue shopping with free hands.

MANDARIN ORIENTAL FLOWER SHOP

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

I am not sure how to account for the name; this is one of the best hotel *gift* shops I have ever seen. Note that it's 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. Prices are higher than they would be 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 at your fingertips.

SPAS

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Most of the swank hotels in Hong Kong have had spas for quite some time, and they have all refurbished their spas to take on the competition. Especially with the problems caused by jet lag—or the general need for detoxification—a trip here is no longer complete without some sort of treatment.

Note: All of the spas listed in this section require a reservation. Most hotels let nonguests test the spa waters.

The latest trend is foot treatments. Hawkers on the street will hand you brochures or try to lure you into alleys for a treatment. One of the nicest evenings I spent in town was an early dinner with friends and then a trip (for all four of us) to a foot spa.

ACUPRESSURE & MASSAGE CENTRE OF THE BLIND

Dragon Seed Building, 39 Queen's Rd., 7th floor, 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 Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST)

I arrived at the Pen 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 energy massage began with a careful personal history, then a discussion of my health and needs, then a steamy shower with aromatherapy products. The 1-hour treatment cost just under \$100; I added a tip for a job well done. I wasn't a hotel guest that time; when I am, I book the spa and the airport transfer at the same time. Last visit, I opted for a jet-lag treatment. © 852/2315-3271.

I-SPA

InterContinental Hotel, 18 Salisbury Rd., 3rd floor, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon (MTR: TST)

Not to be confused with the E-Spa brand of spa products, I-spa will cure whatever else ails you.

I always do a spa treatment after my long-haul flight and tried “Ancient Rituals of the Orient” recently. It was amazing, right down to the part when my neck and arms were stretched against tension and sprung free from their pins and needles and jet-lag woes. The treatment was so successful in helping me get acclimated to local time that I also booked a treatment for my evening of departure.

This time I did a face treatment that actually aerated my skin. It wasn’t so relaxing, but it was therapeutic. I could see the difference immediately after the treatment and felt it was a smart thing to do before spending 12 hours in a tin can flying across the world. © 852/2721-1211, ext. 81.

PLATEAU

Grand Hyatt Hotel, 1 Harbour Rd. (MTR: Wan Chai)

This new addition includes a 23-room section of the hotel, as well as the city’s most incredible spa. © 852/2588-1234.

Foot Spas/Reflexology

Foot spas are everywhere. I am always reluctant to try just any old place (I am still Dr. Kalter’s daughter), so the ones I list here were suggested by friends and tested by my tootsies. Wherever you go, if there is no disinfectant process as you begin, grab your shoes walk out.

BIG BUCKET FOOT

Shops 1 and 2, Hoi Kung Court, 264 Gloucester Rd. (MTR: Causeway Bay)

I will always have a soft spot for this place, my first foot spa, because I first thought it was a shoe store for large sizes. It’s

half a block from the Excelsior Hotel and not too swish—but it is clean. Your feet soak in a big bucket, hence the name. The 90-minute treatment costs about \$20; I tipped HK\$20 (\$2.60) afterward. I did a treatment before leaving for the airport on departure eve and swear it helped me. © 852/2572-8611.

HENG LAM FONG

Star House, 3 Salisbury Rd., 18th floor, Kowloon (MTR: TST)

When I told Louis, the chief concierge at the InterConti, that I was researching reputable foot and reflexology treatments, he suggested this establishment. Located right at the Star Ferry, it provides traditional Chinese medicine as well as reflexology and massage treatments. The staff's English can be spotty. © 852/2376-3648.

TAI PAN FOOT SOAKED BATH

18 Middle Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon (MTR: TST)

This is one of the fancy, clean, and swank places, as befits its address right behind the Pen. You take off your shoes and socks and put them in a locker, soak your feet to disinfect them, and then settle into a first-class airline seat for a treatment that will have you floating. Prices begin at \$20. © 852/2301-3820.

TEA

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Some of the best tea in China is sold in Hong Kong. In fact, it's sold everywhere, and it 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 Yellow Label. Not that I'm knocking Lipton. If you do not know the Yellow Label line, which I don't think is sold in the U.S., you might want to try it. It makes excellent iced tea.

The listings below include individual brands and retail chains. Don't forget that every supermarket has a large selection.

BOJENMI

Chinese supermarkets such as Needs, New World Centre, Kowloon (MTR: TST)

The red-and-white Bojenmi brand box has an illustration of a girl playing the lute. I find that the tea smells like dead fish and tastes worse. But I have several friends in Hong Kong who swear by it. They claim you get used to it and then eventually like it, and that in 6 months, the cholesterol numbers will drop and life will be much more healthy. So I am doing my three cups a day. But I am nursing the same teabag through the three cups because it tastes better when it's weak.

CHINESE HEALING TEA

Locations in major MTR concourses, including TST (near exit B), Central (exit A), and Admiralty MTR (exit A)

About a dozen of these little shops—all clean and white and spiffy—operate in MTR stations. They're selling their packaging, their hype, and their marketing skills. The shops have tea, jellied tea, and a line of health products made from tea. You can taste brewed teas. I can't tell you whether any of the teas work, but for \$10 you can get a cute gift package.

FOOK MING TONG

Western Market, 323 Des Voeux Rd., Central (MTR: Sheung Wan); Ocean Terminal, Harbour City, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon (MTR: TST); IFC mall (MTR: Central); and many other locations

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, Kowloon* (MTR: *TST*); and other locations

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

TEENS & TWEENS

All of Causeway Bay—the area behind the Excelsior Hotel and between Times Square mall and Lee Gardens—is a hive of teen, tween, young, and hip fashion. It's mobbed but exhilarating. Try to avoid the hours when the kids get off work in the evenings, unless you want to observe the phenom rather than shop.

THE ALLEY

New Territories. 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" 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 and tween fashions at *grrreat* 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 MTR, walk away from the green and yellow towers, and turn right at the Hong Kong Industrial Center. Enter through parts B/C.

SUN ARCADE

78 Canton Rd., Kowloon (MTR: TST)

This small mall is underground, as is the fashion—which is mostly Japanese. Sizes are small, but the clothes are so fabulous that creativity freaks will be drooling. The crowds are also fun. Located beneath DFS.

WATCHES

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

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 gold plating. This can work to your advantage if you do not want to spend \$5,000 for a solid-gold watch but want the look. A reputable dealer will tell you that this is what you are buying and will price the watch accordingly. These watches cost \$150 to \$400.
- Check the serial number on the inside movement against the serial number on your guarantee.
- If you do not receive a worldwide guarantee, don't buy the watch.
- Do the same careful checking at brand-name dealers that you would do at a no-name shop. We know of someone who bought a brand-name watch from a reputable dealer, got the watch home, and had problems. When she turned to

the brand's U.S. dealer, she learned that, yes, indeed, she had bought one of their watches, but the movement was 5 years old. She had bought a current body with a used movement!

If you are simply looking for something unusual and fun, try **City Chain**, a huge chain with a branch in every mall and shopping district. It carries Seiko, Bulova, and Zenith, among other name brands, as well as fashion watches like Smash (a takeoff of Swatch).

Copy watches are sold in every market and on the streets of Nathan Road. Far better copies are for sale in Shenzhen, although quality varies and the whole process can be overwhelming. Expect a Triple-A quality (the best fake possible) version of a Cartier watch to cost about \$150. Prices for watches in Shenzhen begin at \$10.

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 top two tailors, only W. W. Chan has a women's division.

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 \$750, 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. 134 for the W. W. Chan address and coordinates. To make an appointment or send a message directly to Danny Chen, who makes my clothes, write danny@wwchan.com.