

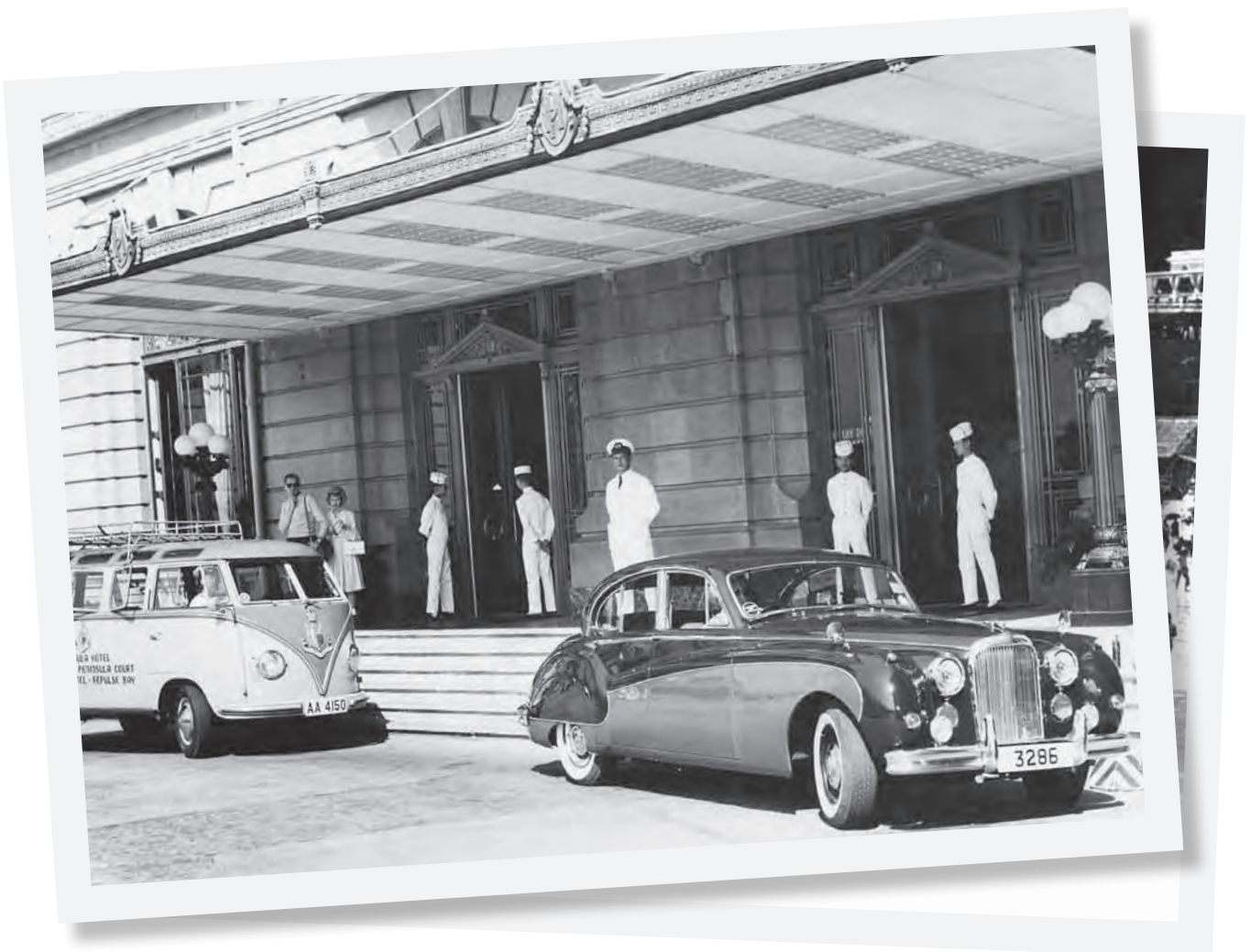


150th

THE GLAMOUR OF TRAVEL

For 150 years, the history of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels (HSH) has reflected the evolution of world travel, adding glamour and elegance to the experiences of those who ventured overseas for work or leisure.

In the mid-19th century, travel was the privilege of an elite few. After the Suez Canal opened in 1869, wealthy Europeans and Americans began to embark on luxury steamship cruises, and lavish hotels appeared along the shipping route. The magical Orient held a particular allure, and Hong Kong became a connecting port for major Europe-Asia sea routes.





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The newly formed Hongkong Hotel Company had opened Hong Kong's first luxury hotel in 1868, prominently positioned on the city's bustling waterfront. The Hongkong Hotel was soon being praised as "the most commodious and best-appointed hotel in the Far East", with well-heeled locals and international travellers flocking to its famous Gripps bar.

Meanwhile, Shanghai had become China's commercial capital and an important port of call for European and American steamship lines. In 1909, Central Stores (later renamed The Shanghai Hotels) raised the hospitality bar with its majestic Palace Hotel on

the Shanghai Bund. The company subsequently purchased the luxurious Astor House Hotel, whose renowned ballroom hosted new Jazz Age dances and popular Argentinian "tango teas".

At the same time, The Hongkong Hotel Company was planning a new luxury hotel in the Territory's Repulse Bay, an oasis where travellers could enjoy sunny days and cool evenings. Opened on New Year's Day 1920, the gracious Repulse Bay Hotel – joined in 1935 by the Repulse Bay Lido with its open-air dances – greatly enhanced Hong Kong's reputation as "The Riviera of the Orient".



Today, The Peninsula Hotels worldwide perpetuate the glamour of a bygone era of travel.



By 1923, when The Hongkong Hotel Company acquired The Shanghai Hotels, and became The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Hong Kong was facing a serious hotel room shortage. The government decided a grand railway hotel was needed at the tip of the Kowloon peninsula, close to the quays and opposite the railway terminus, with its steam trains connecting to Europe via Beijing or Moscow.

HSH took up the gauntlet, and the magnificent Peninsula Hotel opened on 11 December 1928 with the party of the decade in its Roof Garden Ballroom. Kowloon's tallest building at the time, the hotel confirmed the Company's reputation for luxury and excellence. Its Sunday concerts, nightly dinner dances

to the strains of a jazz orchestra, and afternoon tea dances attracted Hong Kong's high society.

The Peninsula's opulence quickly lured the most illustrious guests. The Duke of Gloucester stayed in 1929, followed a decade later by royalty of a different genre in the form of Charlie Chaplin and his leading lady Paulette Goddard. Film star Clark Gable allegedly spent so much time drinking in The Peninsula's sumptuous Lobby while on location for "Soldier of Fortune" that the producer banned him from it until filming finished.

In the 1930s, HSH's owner Lord Lawrence Kadoorie helped persuade the government to grant Pan American landing rights in Hong Kong. The first Clipper flying boat arrived on 23

October 1936, and its passengers and crew stayed at The Peninsula, starting a long association with Hong Kong's aviation industry. Today, rare photos and artefacts in the hotel's China Clipper lounge capture the romance of the fabled Clippers.

With the post-war boom in air travel, The Peninsula welcomed a new international clientele and became the world's first city-centre check-in terminal. It also pioneered air catering in 1958, when Gaddi's restaurant began preparing gourmet meals for Swissair's DC6Bs. A decade later, HSH partnered with Swire to create Swire Air Caterers (now Cathay Catering), and the kitchen moved to the airport. The Peninsula was also Hong Kong's first hotel to offer its guests a helicopter service.



Today, The Peninsula Hotels worldwide perpetuate the glamour of a bygone era of travel. A fleet of luxury vehicles encompasses Rolls-Royce Phantoms, including an immaculately restored 1934 Rolls-Royce Phantom II, and sporty Mini Coopers, all painted the signature Peninsula Brewster Green and customised with minibars and more.

The Peninsula Shanghai offers private river cruises on a splendid 16.5-metre yacht, giving unsurpassed views of the Bund and the spectacular Pudong skyline. The Peninsula Bangkok invites adventurous travellers to explore the city Thai-style in its customised tuk-tuk, while The Peninsula Manila proposes a bespoke jeepney, the country's flamboyant means of transport originally made from WWII military jeeps.

