

## Food and wine Hong Kong

# A year to savour

There's never been a better time to take your tastebuds to Hong Kong, writes **Briar Jensen**

IT might be the Year of the Ox in the Chinese calendar, but Hong Kong is celebrating the Year of Food and Wine, in recognition of being awarded its own Michelin guide—only the second Asian city to receive this honour (Tokyo being the other).

The Hong Kong Food and Wine Year, which runs until March 2010, combined with the recent abolition of tax on wine and beer, makes this a great time to indulge in the "culinary capital of Asia".

The Hong Kong Tourism Board has loads of great deals available, including free signature dishes, two-for-one drinks and food and wine pairing menus. Check out [www.hkfoodandwineyear.com](http://www.hkfoodandwineyear.com) for details, offers and an interactive dining planner.

With more than 11,000 restaurants in Hong Kong, the choice is enormous, so here are three atmospheric locations to whet your appetite.

### Hutong Restaurant

On the 28th floor of One Peking Rd, Kowloon, Hutong has a stunning view across Victoria Harbour to the illuminated skyscrapers of Hong Kong Island. Arrive before 8pm and watch the nightly Symphony of Light laser show through the floor-to-ceiling windows while you dine.

Hutong, which received a Michelin star, is named after the ancient Chinese courtyard homes and this heritage is reflected in the decor. The food is northern Chinese with a contemporary twist and dishes are exquisitely presented; prawns come in

a large bowl bursting with bright red chillies, while slivers of seafood are delicately arranged on long, narrow platters. In celebration of its sixth anniversary, Hutong has designed a tasting menu for \$HK780 (\$A110), which includes signature dishes of abalone and coriander, asparagus shoots with white sesame crust, and "Kung Po style" chilli scallops and prawns. The tasting menu is available throughout November and December.

### Crown Wine Cellars

Crown Wine Cellars, located in Shouson Hill, Hong Kong Island, is a private members' club and state-of-the-art wine storage facility built in a UNESCO Heritage Site World War II munitions depot. When the Hong Kong government sought partnerships to restore and preserve the remaining bunkers, Crown was granted approval to convert them into cellars for the storage and maturation of fine wines, together with a clubhouse. While it's members-only for locals, overseas guests can make a reservation for a drink or meal by contacting the cellars directly or through their hotel. Behind the new light-filled conservatory dining area, a 12m tunnel leads to the main dining room and private library, which are 20m underground. Although there's a subtle musty smell, it doesn't detract from the decor, which in the library includes cabinets brimming with Riedel glasses, old books and military memorabilia.

### Street food

No Hong Kong food experience is complete without trying the roadside food stalls or dai pai dongs, and there are plenty around Temple St Night Market. The recently renovated Novotel Kowloon is ideally situated for this. On bustling Nathan Rd, in the heart of the famous Golden Mile shopping precinct, it's an easy stroll from the hotel to Temple St, past herbal shops selling pungent remedies such as turtle jello, dehydrated squid and dried geckos. You'll see fish



**FOODIE'S DELIGHT:** Clockwise from top left—sampling seafood in Temple St Market; shellfish get hosed; the delights of the markets; the skyline from Hutong; Hutong's beautiful presentation. Pictures: Briar Jensen



swimming in plastic tubs, shellfish being hosed on the pavement and baskets of vegetables delivered on overloaded, dilapidated bicycles.

Join the locals at plastic tables and chairs in the street, where you can enjoy a delicious meal for about \$HK24 (\$A3.50).

**The writer travelled courtesy of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Accor Hotels and Virgin Atlantic.**

## Wish you were here

### Getting there

Virgin Atlantic flies daily from Sydney to Hong Kong. Return economy fares start from \$1045, premium economy from \$1845 and upper class from \$5215, including tax. **Book at [www.virginatlantic.com.au](http://www.virginatlantic.com.au), call 1300 727 340 or visit your local travel agent.**

### Stay

Novotel, 348 Nathan Rd, Kowloon. The hotel is celebrating Food and Wine Year with special food and wine pairings in both The Square restaurant and Tosca Bar. Room rates from \$A160. City Breaks specials include two nights' accommodation and breakfast, with up to two children

under 16 free, and late checkout, at savings of up to 40 per cent. **See [www.accorhotels.com](http://www.accorhotels.com)**

### Eat

**Hutong**, 28th floor, 1 Peking Rd, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon. Book at [www.hutong.com.hk](http://www.hutong.com.hk) or call +852 3428 8342.

**Crown Wine Cellars**, 18 Deep Water Bay Drive, Shouson Hill, Hong Kong Island. For bookings contact Charles Lim or Ingrid Chan on +852 2580 6287 or at [www.crownwinecellars.com](http://www.crownwinecellars.com)

**Temple St Night Market, Yau Ma Tei.** Stall holders start setting up about 4pm, but the place really comes alive after dark and runs until midnight. **More: [www.discoverhongkong.com/australia](http://www.discoverhongkong.com/australia)**