

The background image is a photograph of a bedroom with Moroccan architectural influences. It features a large bed with white linens and a tufted headboard, a checkered tile floor, and walls with intricate carvings and a deep red color. A small table with books and flowers is in the foreground.

Condé Nast Traveller

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2021

THE GOLD LIST 2021

**EVERYTHING
CLASSIC**

**EVERYTHING
EXCEPTIONAL**

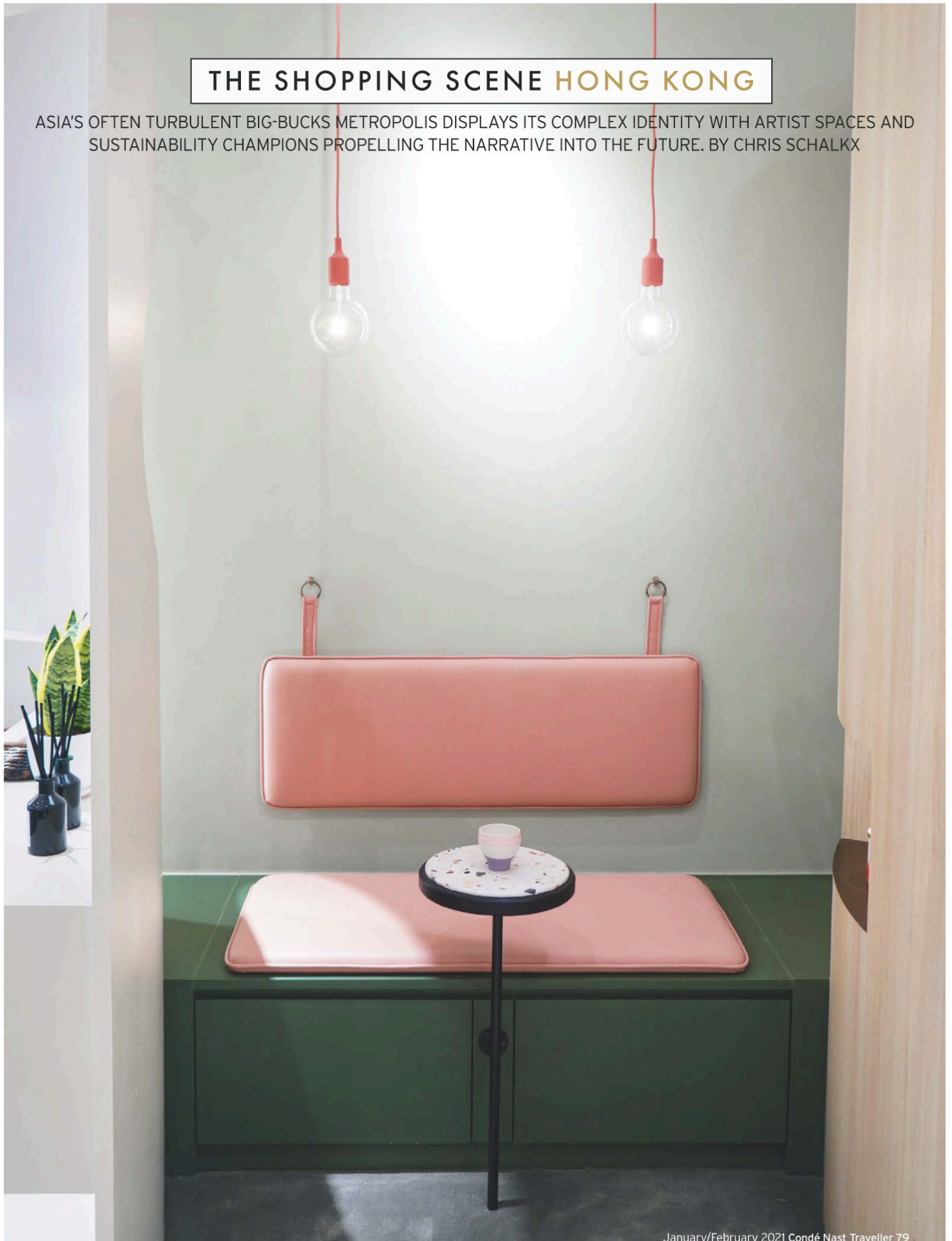
**EVERYTHING
TO DREAM
ABOUT**

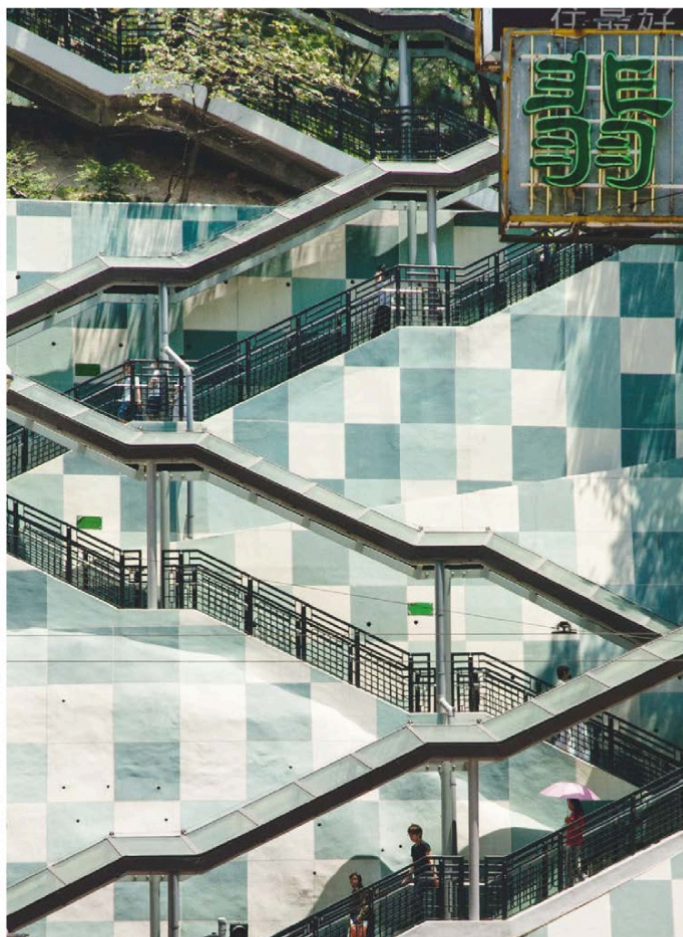


PHOTOGRAPH: WARD ROBERTS / GALLERY STOCK

THE SHOPPING SCENE **HONG KONG**

ASIA'S OFTEN TURBULENT BIG-BUCKS METROPOLIS DISPLAYS ITS COMPLEX IDENTITY WITH ARTIST SPACES AND SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS PROPELLING THE NARRATIVE INTO THE FUTURE. BY CHRIS SCHALKX





ORGANIC SKINCARE

When Edmund Ip and Gia Fox couldn't find additive-free soap in the city, they took matters into their own hands and launched **Bathe to Basics**, a green beauty line made in Hong Kong. Their shop on the third floor of the PMQ design complex is stocked with charcoal-mint bars, pomelo-leaf body-wash and beautiful reed aroma diffusers with essential oils, plus a selection of bathroom products including gauze shinto towels. While you're here, pop into **Haustage** on the first floor to browse upcycled home goods and accessories from Japan and Scandinavia. The other big name on the clean cosmetics scene is **Beautysaur**. Its high-concept flagship is set in futuristic shopping centre K11 Musea on Victoria Dockside and stocks fermentation-focused brand Biophile's rejuvenating Bio-shroom serum and lemongrass cleanser. bathetobasics.com, haustage.com, beautysaur.com

ECO-CONSCIOUS CLOTHING

Set in a sleekly renovated former textile store in Sham Shui Po, **Phvlo Hatch** serves as a coffee shop, community space and atelier for emerging creatives with ethical

credentials. The eponymous athleisure label (pronounced 'flow'), founded by Hong Kong-based Johanna Ho, cuts down on waste with transseasonal clothes made from sustainable fabrics, and online orders are collected in person to reduce packaging. phvlohatch.com, phvlo.com

HANDCRAFTED CROCKERY

Yuet Tung China Works, hidden within an industrial warehouse in Kowloon Bay, is a treasure trove of colourful ceramics. Established in 1928, the factory – one of the last porcelain manufacturers still operating in Hong Kong – has received bespoke orders from the Peninsula hotel and royal residences around the world. Inside its crammed workshop shelves are full to the rafters with blue-and-white rice bowls, painted vases and tea sets in a kaleidoscope of colours. Alternatively, let the curators at **Wai Chi Street Playground** do the digging for you: this industrial lifestyle store in nearby Mong Kok has one of the best ranges of retro plates, bamboo steamers and nostalgic kitchen tools in the city. porcelainware.com.hk, instagram.com/waichistreetplayground

LOCAL KNOW-HOW

GLORIA CHUNG

FOOD EXPERT AND WRITER

'Traditional wonton noodle shops are slowly disappearing, so I really cherish them. Yuen Hing Lung Noodles has been around since the 1950s and its wontons are just the way they should be: petite, tight and full of prawn flavour.'



'For drinks, I love The Diplomat, a speakeasy at the end of an alley in Central. Mixologist John Nugent changed my mind about Irish coffee – his version is so creamy and light! There are also mini cocktails – great for a sip after work.'

'I never thought the old-fashioned Eaton Hotel could transform into such an edgy design destination. It supports the LGBTQ+ community and hosts the Women's Festival. Make sure to try its amazing Yat Tung Heen restaurant.'

Clockwise from top left: The Shophouse; lamps at Kapok; staircase in Fortress Hill; Goods of Desire; Kapok. Previous pages, from left: skyscrapers; Beautysaur

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCESCO LASTRUCCI/GALLERYSTOCK



QUIRKY KEEPSAKES

Short for Goods of Desire, **GOD** is a cult store that's as popular with locals as it is with visitors in search of one-of-a-kind gifts. Launched by architects Douglas Young and Benjamin Lau, it does tongue-in-cheek takes on Hong Kong hallmarks such as colourful letterboxes and fortune cats. Bestsellers at the two-storey flagship on Hollywood Road – there are seven outlets around town – include *mahjong* placemats, soy candles shaped like traditional teacups and tote bags decorated with motifs inspired by the ubiquitous neon lights. god.com.hk

TRADITIONAL SHIRTS

There are slippers, tank tops and lingerie displayed in the windows of this old-timey undergarment shop in Sheung Wan, but most people come to **Lee Kung Man Knitting Factory** for its white Henley shirts. Opened in 1923, this place has provided Hong Kongers including Bruce Lee with its stylish designs for decades. Renowned for their silk-like texture and durability, the clothes are still woven on vintage machines from the 1950s and even the retro cardboard

packaging, bearing the signature golden-deer logo, hasn't changed one bit. 188 *Nam Cheong Street*

CULTURE AND FOODIE SPOTS

Taking over a colonial-era police station, **Tai Kwun** is a breezy antidote to the narrow high-rise-lined streets of the Central district. Galleries and artist studios are housed in the two large surrounding courtyards, 16 meticulously restored heritage structures and a pair of new-builds. Among the highlights are **Loveramics**, known for its barista-grade coffee cups, **LockCha Tea House** for superb Chinese brews, and **Hexadoor** for jewellery and playful accessories. On the food front, there's excellent Thai restaurant **Aaharn** by chef David Thompson, **The Chinese Library** for cross-cultural dim sum such as laksa-filled *xiao long bao* and **Behind Bars**, a cocktail bar occupying the former cell blocks. In the edgier Tai Hang district, artist hangout and concept store **The Shophouse** opened last year. The building includes a library and garden, and has ceramic installations and curated archives across four levels, with pieces by Bulgarian designer Kiko

Kostadinov and fashion legend Martin Margiela. [instagram.com/theshophouse-hongkong](https://www.instagram.com/theshophouse-hongkong), taikwun.hk

GLOBAL GOODS

Frenchman Arnault Castel moved to Hong Kong in 1996 to work in finance, but found his calling in creative retail. Ten years later, he opened **Kapok** to bring smart fashion and homeware labels from around the world to the city. They include HAY interiors from Denmark, Sessùn knits from France and kitchenware from Barcelona, plus Future Classics, his own minimalist line of womenswear. Over time, the business has extended to multiple stores, but the emporium on Sun Street – where one half is done up in plywood, the other in chromatised steel – has the widest selection. ka-pok.com

AFFORDABLE ART

Part art gallery, part bookshop, **Odd One Out** functions as a platform for local and international illustrators and graphic designers to showcase and sell their work. Rotating exhibitions focus on a variety of styles, from bold prints by Hong Kong-born illustrator Charlene Man to comic book-like cyanotypes by Pearl Law. But the evergreen archive has plenty of postcard-sized prints too, following the belief that good art should be accessible to everyone. There's also a lovely café, making this an essential espresso pit-stop. oddoneout.hk

WHERE TO STAY

MANDARIN ORIENTAL, HONG KONG

This hotel in the heart of Central, overlooking Victoria Harbour, has been a fixture on the skyline since 1963.

The vibe is old-school charm with wood-panelled walls and red-leather armchairs, marble bathrooms and silk dressing gowns. There's an award-winning spa with traditional Chinese remedies

and the restaurants include Michelin-starred Man Wah, which serves Cantonese classics such as dim sum and steamed crab with melon and ginger.

For anything else, just ask Danny Lai, who's been the concierge here for nearly five decades. *Elegant Resorts* offers four nights from £1,585 per person, including British Airways flights and transfers. +44 1244 897514; elegantresorts.co.uk

Clockwise from above left: spiral staircase at Phvlo atelier; stationery at Odd One Out; Bathe to Basics skincare and homeware



RAYA HERITAGE CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

There are no ornate rooftops at this hotel along the Ping river. It's unlikely that *sai oua* sausage or *khao soi* soup, two beloved staples of local cooking, will appear on the menu. Time-worn Buddha statues? Virtually none. Yet no other hangout feels more rooted in place than Raya Heritage, where the typical temple-inspired teakwood-and-gold look has been eschewed for a straight-lined approach to let crafts take centre stage. Terracotta brickwork. Woven reed baskets. Hand-loomed textiles. Jolts of indigo. It's a celebration of the ancient culture of Lanna, the cross-border kingdom of which Chiang Mai was the capital some 700 years ago. Not Disney-fied but fresh and bright, it's the sort of place where only your conscience holds you back from stuffing your suitcase with hand-dyed throws or lacquered bamboo catchalls (with that in mind, Raya Heritage opened its Him Gong shop in 2019). But it's not just the interiors that draw on the region's cultural patchwork. At the restaurant, linen-clad waiters serve noodle salads from Burma, Chinese *kung pao* chicken and Shan-style river prawns. The spa focuses on bone-cracking Burmese massages and a steamroom uses a rare blend by a master herbalist from a nearby village. Excursions to meet artisans can be arranged, although the 33 rooms – some with private pools – are inviting enough to loll around in all day. This address is exemplary in a country that's slowly starting to reappraise the richness of its crafts, offering a blueprint for Thai design without the tropes. *Doubles from about £230; rayaheritage.com*

MANDARIN ORIENTAL TOKYO JAPAN

Drop a handkerchief in the lobby and three white-gloved pursers will sprint to fetch it, likely greeting you by name when handing it back. This is Japan, so tip-top service can be expected, but nowhere does it better than the Mandarin Oriental. Here, on the top floors of a skyscraper in the financial district, stealth housekeeping staff whizz from room to room to wrap phone-charger cords into neat bundles with embossed Velcro straps, slide logoed cleaning cloths under reading glasses and garnish the in-room bonsai tree with a personal note. They fill the fruit bowl with those unblemished wonders – Fukuoka strawberries, peaches from Yamanashi – that cost a small fortune at the parlour downstairs and leave sleep-inducing essential oils on the bedside table. The same level of attention extends to the 12 restaurants: three have bagged Michelin stars and all draw well-heeled locals in droves, which says something in such a food-obsessed city. There's excellent sushi, of course, served on a counter hewn from a 350-year-old hinoki cypress; a funky molecular tapas bar with all the bells and whistles; and a pizza counter with Bib Gourmand credentials. But it doesn't matter what plate you have in front of you – it's all fantastic, and the views everywhere, of an infinite forest of towering glass and steel, backdropped by Mount Fuji on a clear day, are reason enough to book a table. The bedrooms shed any stuffiness during a 2019 refurb in favour of fresh textiles by Reiko Sudo and a wrapping of *washi* paper, granite and lacquered wood. It's the sum of these parts, and the absence of stiffness, that makes this place stand out high above the competition. *Doubles from about £350; mandarinoriental.com*

