

MO

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LONDON

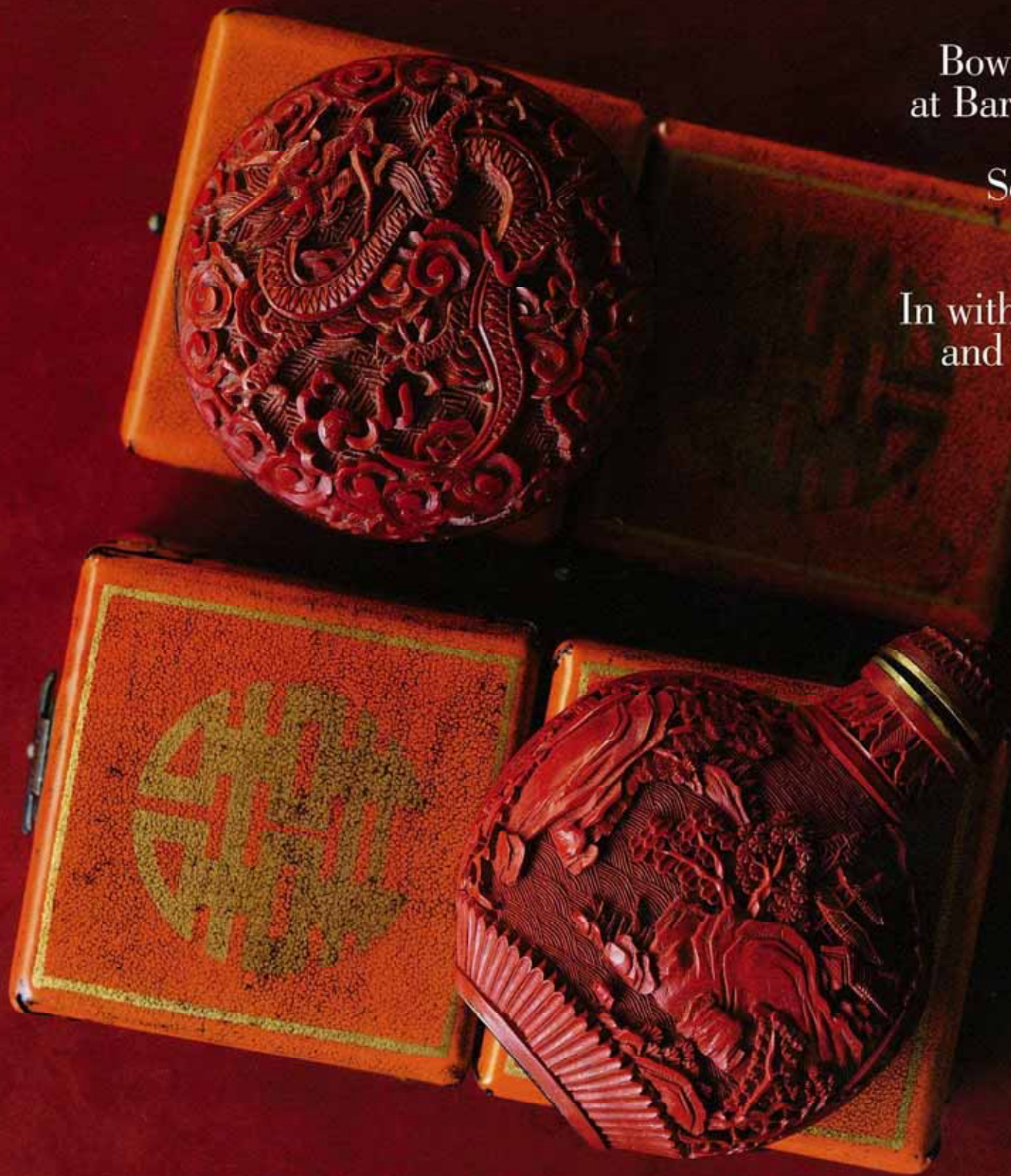
Bowled over
at Bar Boulud

TOKYO

Serene in
the city

MACAU

In with the old
and the new



10th Anniversary Special

Join MO in celebrating a decade of the Fan Campaign

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Sweep through the entrance of Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, London, through the Mandarin Bar and (from December) you'll arrive at perhaps 2010's most hotly-anticipated new restaurant: Dinner by Heston Blumenthal, a 158-seat dining space, including a terrace, private room and chef's table. Chef Blumenthal, who shot to world fame with his multi-sensory molecular style of cooking at the three-Michelin-starred The Fat Duck in Bray, Berkshire, says, 'I am thrilled at the prospect of opening a restaurant in such a central

London location. I have great respect for the Mandarin Oriental brand and working in partnership with the Hotel Group is a natural step and one which offers an exciting opportunity.' The restaurant will serve lunch, afternoon tea and dinner, with an inimitable menu, overseen by Blumenthal himself, heavily influenced by his ongoing research and discovery of historic British gastronomy but with a modern twist. Heading up the kitchen is talented Fat Duck alumni Ashley Palmer-Watts, in the role of Group Executive Chef.



And with Adam D Tihany (who also dreamed up the interior for the hotel's new Bar Boulud – see page 26) putting a traditional-cum-contemporary stamp on the interior, too, the all-round dining experience is sure to be as unique as the food.

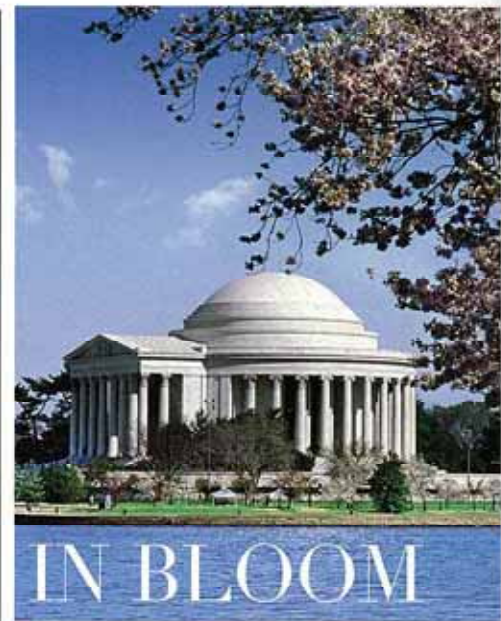
Executive Pastry Chef Hiroshi Igarashi (right) is a man on a mission: to delight guests at Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo with his 'innovative and delicious pastry ideas'. And delight he will, having led his team to gold at the World Pastry Team Championship 2010, Phoenix, USA.



MIAMI MAKEOVER

Mandarin Oriental, Miami marked its 10th anniversary in style in 2010 with the completion of extensive renovations. 'It's a perfect way to celebrate our 10 years in Miami and we look forward to welcoming guests to enjoy this milestone with us,' says General Manager Jorge Gonzalez. First up are the 295 guest rooms – elegantly understated with sleek, high-tech touches by Atlanta-based designer Jan Clausen – and the new Oriental Suite, with a 65in Bang & Olufsen plasma TV

and its own bar. The Oasis Beach Club's exotic orange and red daybeds, hammocks and loungers echo the hotel's design palette, and are even more alluring after a dip in the infinity pool or by the light of flickering lanterns at night. And if privacy and butler service are on your wishlist, reserve a luxurious beachside cabana. Book the 'Miami's Top 10' package, from US\$410 per night based on a three-night stay, and receive a US\$100 resort credit and extras. Valid until the end of April 2011.



IN BLOOM

For two weeks every spring, visitors flock to Washington D.C. to celebrate the National Cherry Blossom Festival. In 1912, Japan gave around 3,000 of these beautiful trees to the city as a gift to mark the nations' enduring friendship. Today, their graceful blooms still line the Tidal Basin and the Jefferson Memorial (above). The festival in 2011, starting on 26 March, culminates in a closing parade on 9 April – a colourful extravaganza of marching bands, giant balloons and performers on Constitution Avenue. Far from the crowds and for your own private view of the cherry blossom, book a Deluxe Water View Room or a Premier Water View Room at Mandarin Oriental, Washington D.C., both with uninterrupted outlooks across the Tidal Basin.



Sorrel Downer



As a journalist and documentary producer, UK-based Sorrel's work takes her worldwide, reporting on travel, wildlife, architecture and property for *The Times*,

Financial Times and national glossies. She is currently making a BBC film on pandas in China, and Macau is a luxurious stop en route – especially if you stay at the new **Mandarin Oriental, Macau**. Sorrel loves the Macau peninsula at night for its 'innovative walls of light' while the Canidrome greyhound racing track is a 'don't-miss', as is the Cubic club for people-watching. Find out more in her fascinating guide, *Eastern Promise* (page 38).



Danielle Demetriou



Dreams of sushi and skyscrapers prompted newspaper journalist Danielle to swap her native London for Tokyo, where she is now the city's correspondent for

Monocle magazine and *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Telegraph*, among others. For this issue of MO, she tested The Spa at **Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo** in *City Serenity* (page 20). The best part? 'The delicious teas and green smoothies, the smiling staff and floating in water while overlooking the city.' For a taste of old Tokyo, she heads to the 'atmospheric old areas of Yanaka: home to quiet lanes, shrines and wooden houses'.



Kimberly Miller



A San Francisco resident who has edited the city's edition of *DailyCandy*, writes for Condé Nast and runs a fundraising event *Wine, Women & Shoes*, Kimberly had the

perfect inside knowledge to tell us about the City by the Bay's vibrant shopping, dining and entertainment scene – turn to page 56. Another of the great attractions, says Kimberly, is its 'close proximity to innumerable world-class destinations: Pebble Beach, Napa Valley, Lake Tahoe, Big Sur, Yosemite... are all a short car-ride away'. Back in town, she says, heaven is sipping a cocktail in MO Bar, **Mandarin Oriental, San Francisco**.



Julie Earle-Levine



Melbourne-born travel, lifestyle and business journalist Julie worked in Sydney before moving to New York and has written for publications such as the *Financial Times* and

The New York Times. Now living in Greenwich Village and with a three-year-old son, Jack, she knew all the best tips for MO's feature on New York for kids, *Small Wonders* (page 46). In the name of research, they stayed at **Mandarin Oriental, New York** and were mesmerised by its Central Park views. To go local, she recommends Prospect Park in Brooklyn or Columbus Park in Chinatown – for custard tarts at bakery Dragon Land.

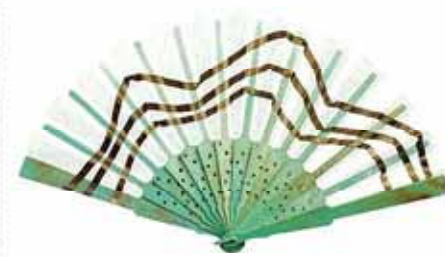


Jeremy Wayne



Jeremy is a restaurant critic for *Tatler* and UK correspondent of *Food & Wine*, plus has worked for a string of papers from *The Guardian* to

The Times. In *Bistro Chic* (page 26), he sings the praises of top chef Daniel Boulud, who has just opened his first London venture, Bar Boulud, at **Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park**. Despite dining in the best restaurants around the world, Jeremy has a confession: his favourite food is 'my wife's roast chicken', eaten at home every weekend. Another secret? 'Don't always go with the waiter's recommendation – it might be what the kitchen wants to get rid of!'



Alex Gorton



When Alex isn't interviewing some of the world's best actors, musicians, writers and business minds for MO magazine – to read

extracts from several of her interviews over the years, turn to *A Decade of Fans: 10th Anniversary Special* – she writes about travel and style for the likes of the *Financial Times*, *Evening Standard*, *Tatler* and Condé Nast *Brides* in her role as Travel Editor. For this issue, she also wrote about the rejuvenating benefits of water treatments (page 18) at **Mandarin Oriental Spas**, of which her firm favourites are in Tokyo and at Riviera Maya, Mexico.

City serenity

The Spa at Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo offers rejuvenating treatments that are as uplifting as the views, as Danielle Demetriou discovers

I AM WATCHING the city unfold 37 floors below me, with its trails of toy cars flanked by blocks of Lego-like towers that collectively vanish into a distant, hazy horizon.

So far, so Tokyo. Japan's capital has long been a city best appreciated from above, as proven by a raft of skyscraper bars, offices and restaurants boasting stunning views.

But I am not sipping cocktails, working at a computer, or tucking into a meal. Less predictably, I am floating on an ice-cream-soft massage bed, which has been tilted at precisely the right angle to maximise my appreciation of the endless city panorama, framed by a vast wall of glass before me.

'It's a shame it's overcast – on a clear day, you can see Mount Fuji straight-ahead,' says Chika Banba, my smiling therapist, pointing to the sea of cloud-brushing skyscrapers.

Inner-city spas are often home to darkened rooms where scented candles and flickering shadows replace all traces of natural light, in a bid to cocoon visitors from the urban chaos on their doorsteps. But things are done a little differently in the serene confines of The Spa at Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo. Here, all things bright, light and natural are celebrated with a design that – quite literally – revolves around breathtaking views.

Since opening five years ago, Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo has established itself as a landmark hotel that offers a calming retreat in a city more famous for its overpopulation than its capacity for serenity. For a metropolis of more than 12-million residents, this is no mean feat: packed trains, crowded crossings and flashing neon towers have long been the enduring images that hit first-time visitors. But those who scratch beneath Tokyo's surface are rewarded with the discovery that behind the gleaming and the modern, the city is also home to hidden ancient shrines, atmospheric lantern-lit lanes and old wooden houses.

In a similar vein, Mandarin Oriental taps into what lies beneath Tokyo's façade of urban chaos: a world of Japanese serenity that celebrates nature and balance, with plenty of natural light, wood and flowing water. Housed in the top nine floors of a sleek, 38-floor César Pelli-designed tower in the Nihonbashi district of Tokyo, its interior is a sanctuary of modern design, fused with traditional textures – from the moon-like paper *washi* lanterns and subtle leaf-motif bedding in the spacious guest rooms to the flickering wall of tiered fires in the top-floor reception.

And The Spa is no exception. The 1,180sq m temple to pampering – created by LTW Design Works – is home to four treatment rooms and five VIP suites, which wrap around the building to make the most of the panoramas.

Walls of smokey-grey fabrics and dark wood create a cocooning tone in the reception located in the heart of the 37th floor, where shoes are swapped for slippers and a range of Japanese teas is served in delicate cups. A network of dimly-lit corridors, with walls of wood and floors of dark grey slate, connect the reception to the treatment rooms – and, upon entering, visitors are dazzled by the burst of natural light pouring in through floor-to-ceiling windows framing a perfect Tokyo cityscape.

Those able to tear their eyes away from the vistas will appreciate how the rooms are awash with beautifully textured

The Spa's Harmony Suite, which also has a private steam shower, is perfect for dual treatments and catching the sunset



fabrics – diaphanous curtains, rich cushion covers – created by textile designer Reiko Sudo of Nuno, while modern *suibokuga* ink and wash artworks hang on the walls.

‘The views are an important part of The Spa,’ smiles Karen Aleksich, the friendly New Zealand Spa Manager who heads a team of Japanese therapists, as we sip delicate cups of green tea on a cream window seat in one of the suites.

‘Coming here is all about getting away from the mechanics of everyday life. The idea is that visitors leave everything behind at street level as they literally “ascend” into The Spa.

‘Natural light is also a great healer and very cleansing. We focus on holistic wellness, not just relaxation. We aim to show people how they can change their lives, and encourage them along that path. It’s not good to be tied to BlackBerrys 24/7. Putting them away for an hour or so does not have to be difficult.’

Putting her theory to the test and reluctantly locking my ever-bleeping phone away into a wooden locker, my spa trip starts in a space that is unique to Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo: the ‘Heat and Water’ experience.

Loosely inspired by the Japanese tradition for communal bathing, the blue and grey mosaic-tiled space – divided into men’s and women’s – consists of an infinity-style vitality pool deep enough to swim in, with back and leg-jet massages and submerged loungers. And centre stage? The panorama. Walls of glass enable visitors to float in the body-temperature waters of the vitality pool while examining the intricate city tableau unfolding below.

The pre-treatment relaxation ritual also includes a deliciously warming amethyst-crystal steam room, tropical showers and a light-filled sauna-with-a-view – the perfect spot to ponder where the city might possibly end.

Next stop is the Relaxation Room – one of the few spaces without windows – where I’m cocooned in a bed surrounded by light voile curtains and given a delicious green smoothie (all The Spa’s refreshments are prepared by the hotel’s Asian-inspired K’shiki restaurant), as my body cools in the temperature-controlled climate.

Just as I’m beginning to wonder whether my capacity for pre-treatment relaxation can be pushed any further, my therapist – always smiling – quietly leads me to the Serenity Suite, home to two walls of windows and a button-operated tilting massage bed.

The focus of my treatment is an unusual one: the small, red Japanese *adzuki* bean. More commonly found in traditional Japanese sweets, it seems that there is more to the little bean than the tastiness of its consumption: it is detoxifying, naturally deep-cleansing and bursting with anti-oxidants.

My body is first scrubbed top to toe with an *adzuki*-bean paste, before my therapist – who intuitively seems to know the exact edge to which she can push my body – embarks on a massage using patchouli and ginger oil. Feeling smooth, shiny and, most miraculously, oblivious to thoughts of work or bleeping mobiles, I am then led to the next-door Harmony Suite which, as well as offering the ubiquitous city views, has a Japanese-style futon mattress on the floor.

This is the setting for one of The Spa’s undoubted highlights: its Kiatsu treatment, based on the quintessentially Japanese shiatsu massage tradition, which involves a mix of acupressure along the body’s energy lines and elements of Thai massage. Carried out by my therapist in cream silk pyjamas, it starts with a stomach massage – which feels awkward and tender at first – before she continues to stretch various parts of my body into a sense of blissful alliance.

After more than an hour of heavenly massage, increasingly interwoven with fragments of dreams – and just as I am doubting my ability to ever stand up again – the treatment finishes with another stomach massage: this time feeling soft, gentle and calming. Massage completed and eyes prised open, I see the sky has darkened and the city is just beginning its nightly illumination show, with lights sparkling endlessly.

I drink in the warming cup of hibiscus and cinnamon tea presented to me, as well as the city views, for the final time. And as I later leave The Spa – phone still switched off and standing several inches taller – I feel more prepared than ever to deal with the endless city sprawl of Tokyo at street level.

Above left: relax in the 36°C vitality pool pre-treatment. Above right: an *adzuki* bean scrub is used as a deep-cleansing ritual. Opposite: the sleek spa reception on the 37th floor

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