



PARK HYATT, SHANGHAI

Shanghai's tallest building, the Shanghai World Financial Centre, stands out like a giant bottle opener against a skyline littered with super-scrappers. It's intimidating, especially when you're looking up at it from its base. But hop in one of the elevators and speed 492 metres skywards and you'll discover - miraculously sans stomach lurch - serenity in the form of a new Park Hyatt; the highest hotel in the world.

Spanning the 79th-93rd floors of the 101-storey tower, the best rooms overlook the metallic-pink Oriental Pearl TV tower and Chrysler-style Jin Mao building, but you can't go far wrong with views whichever side of the building you're on you're so damn high up.

The look is contemporary, hi-tech and glassy with plenty of quirky flourishes thrown in by

New York-based interior designer Tony Chi. Take for example the mossy green lawns in the superior suites, the TVs built into bathroom mirrors, or best of all, the crazy assortment of porcelain stilettos, guns, hammers and other memorabilia dangling from the ceiling in the top-floor jazz bar. This particular offering actually came from Mrs Mori, the hotel chairman's wife - a keen collector of modern art.

The Park Hyatt's pièce de resistance though, is its spa, Water's Edge, which boasts floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Bund and a huge glittering lap pool sensuously lit by oversized lanterns draped in muslin. It's like a beautiful capsule suspended in mid-air.

The spa's (sometimes too helpful) staff will shroud you in the softest towelling, deposit you

on a waffle daybed, then follow up with a constant stream of special grade Xihu Longjing tea. Floating on your back in the pool, you couldn't feel more removed from the chaos reverberating 85 storeys below.

Later on, there's no shortage of places to eat in the hotel: 30 types of fish are imported from Japan three times a week for the sushi bar, and a slim-hipped Parisian is in place in the pastry kitchen creating tarts of such fine fancy you'll want to arrange your schedule around tea times.

I had the pleasure of dining with the hotel's charismatic general manager, Christophe Sadones, in the Hyatt's buzzing brasserie, 100 Century Avenue. Sadones had been sitting in the bar for several hours just watching people beforehand: 'A couple in their sixties came in for tea, then moved on to martinis and have only just left,' he told me. 'They looked like they were having such a wonderful time sitting in the window there,' he smiled before flitting over to a flower display to show me blooms he'd hand-picked from Shanghai's famous flower and bird market.

Originally from Monte Carlo, Sadones has been living in Asia since 1992 and has high hopes for Shanghai, especially with the World Expo coming up in 2010. 'I was on the phone to Sarkozy only three days ago talking about it,' he said as our Wagyu steaks arrived, 'it's a very exciting time for Shanghai. I'm glad to be here.' Me too. parkhyattshanghai.com

HOP ON THE ART WAGON

The movements of the 'art world' are possible to pinpoint virtually week to week these days with the exactitude of satnav. Take for instance March - the art-trotters will kick off in New York for the Armory Show, pop to Maastricht for TEFAF, and those serious in the game head to Dubai for Art Dubai, dropping into Berlin en-route to check out the latest shows in the Berlin Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg districts. This circuit not only lures those in the industry, but more importantly a distinctive breed of spectator - the discerning traveller.

In the last decade, the impact of globalisation on the contemporary art scene has been formi-



MANDARIN ORIENTAL DHARA DHEVI, THAILAND

The Mandarin Oriental Dhara Dhevi resort is 60 acres of pure Thai fantasy made real. A five-star nirvana composed of ornate Lanna turreted palaces, colonial villas and lush, green paddy fields which appear so dreamlike they are almost intangible. For complete serenity and escapism you can't beat the hotel's premier suite, the Royal Residence, inspired by the Buddhist legend of the Himmaphan Forest. With six individually themed pavilions, balmy open-air salas looking out onto private lotus ponds, three king-sized bedrooms and no less than three secluded swimming pools, this complex is the ultimate in exotic playgrounds.

Furnishings are positively decadent, festooned with rich brocades and silks, overlooked by outsized antique Orientalist sculptures. The service is slick and impressive, even stretching to shining your sunglasses for you as you lounge, cocktail in hand by one of the immaculately landscaped pools. For those of an energetic persuasion there are floodlit tennis courts, yoga classes and a fitness centre. A little cerebral stimulus comes in the form of a programme of cultural lectures and a culinary academy for those wanting to brush up their stir-frying skills.

The Ayurvedic Dheva Spa has a range of excellent treatments, especially the signature Lanna massage which involves being rigorously beaten with sticks of tamarind bark. Surprisingly relaxing. Should you wish to venture beyond the confines of this oriental idyll, Chiang Mai is the most cosmopolitan of Thailand's northern cities. **SW** mandarinoriental.com Quintessentially member benefits apply, +44 (0) 870 850 8585 or quintessentially.com

dable. Be it painting, sculpture, photography or design that you're after, there are fairs and exhibitions from Moscow to Miami, Sao Paulo to Sydney.

The art world is as famed for its exclusivity as its eccentricity; its those-in-the-know haughtiness and its tight-knit social circle. Making the inaccessible accessible, Quintessentially Art offers international art experiences for those desperate for a fix of the insider's art world, looking to be challenged by the latest 'Post-Post-Modern' development or simply wanting to mix up a weekend of partying with some day-time cultural stimulation.

Head to Basel in June or why not plan a flight stopover to coincide with Art Hong Kong mid-May? Whatever sparks your imagination, Quintessentially Art advisors are on-hand at fairs throughout the year to conduct private and group tours for curious art-lovers, first-time buyers and experienced collectors alike.

Senior advisor, Nick Hackworth, will cherry-pick exhibiting gallery booths to suit your aesthetic taste navigating you through all the hype and social whirl along the way, managing your VIP access and bagging you invites to the hottest parties in town. The tailor-made experience not only accounts for your personal interests but ensures you enjoy the full scope an art fair has to offer, whether it includes a champagne brunch at a recently opened gallery or accompanying you to a private talk with a board of collectors and curators.

Quintessentially Art tours start at £100 per person per hour. For more information on these trips, please contact art@quintessentially.com or call +44 (0) 207 292 5110.

