

Macao 澳門

Travelling
through time
in Ervanários

**DIVERSE & DELICIOUS:
A CULINARY ODYSSEY**

**BATTLE OF MACAO:
400 YEARS ON**



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COVER IMAGE
At the Rua de Ervanários, only a few steps away from Macao’s most recognisable landmark Ruins of St Paul’s, decades-old businesses sell antiques next to trendy new cafes. Photo by António Sanmarful

CORRECTION: In the article titled ‘Macao’s water, now and in the future’ published in the Macao Magazine April 2022 issue, it said that the Marine and Water Bureau “is currently funding RMB 8 billion” for the Dateng Gorge Water Reservoir in Guangxi. The correct amount should be “RMB 800 million”. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

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POLITICS

Health and development top agenda at Forum Macao

Premier Li Keqiang urged stronger cooperation between China and the Portuguese-speaking nations, with Macao playing a critical role as a connecting platform.



Text **Gonçalo César de Sá**
Photos **António Sanmarful**

Premier Li Keqiang

Premier Li Keqiang has called for increased links between China and the community of Portuguese-speaking countries, with Macao as a key player.

Li made the appeal via video link from Beijing during the opening ceremony in Macao of an extraordinary ministerial meeting in April of the Macao-based Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (PSCs), also known as Forum Macao.

The meeting's theme, "Cooperating to Fight Against the [Covid-19] Pandemic, Collaborating for Common Development", focused on enhancing cooperation between China and the PSCs in the field of healthcare, and jointly promoting post-Covid-19 economic recovery.

Li addressed the video meeting with participants across four continents. Brazil's Vice President Antônio Hamilton Martins Mourão and the prime ministers of Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and Timor-Leste also took part. The meeting was held at the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Service Platform Complex on the Macao peninsula.

Trade between China and the PSCs has exceeded MOP 810 billion (US\$100 billion) for five consecutive years and reached MOP 1.62 trillion (US\$200 billion) last year. Li said China wants to improve collaboration in advancing infrastructure connectivity, industrial capacity, energy conservation, and environmental protection with the PSCs and has called for enhancing trade and investment regulations.

The Chinese premier pledged that China will contribute even more to safeguarding world peace and

promoting the mutual development and prosperity of all countries. He also called for strengthening unity and cooperation, defeating the Covid-19 pandemic as quickly as possible as well as promoting cooperation and economic recovery.

Li underlined that the current international situation is turbulent and that the Covid-19 pandemic is still dragging on around the world. He also warned that uncertainty and instability in the world economy have risen significantly, while the safety and security of all countries are interrelated.

China wants to increase cooperation with the PSCs in vaccines and healthcare more generally, Li said, highlighting the setting-up of the China-PSCs Epidemic Prevention Exchange Centre in Macao as one of the forum's initiatives, to improve global health governance.

The centre comes under the combined jurisdiction of China's Ministry of Commerce, National Health Commission of the PRC and Macao's secretariats for Economy and Finance and Social Affairs and Culture, and will be led by Forum Macao and Macao's Health Bureau. The centre will provide technical support for pandemic prevention and control as well as developing training programmes.

"Let's work together to make the cake of cooperation bigger so that the fruits of development can benefit the people of all countries," Li said.

The premier also reaffirmed Macao's role as a "bridge" connecting China and PSCs, adding that the central government will support Macao's consolidation as a unique service platform for business cooperation between China and the PSCs.

ANTI-PANDEMIC FIGHT

Chinese Minister of Commerce, Wang Wentao, who also spoke at the video conference, said that since the establishment of the Forum Macao in 2003, the platform has played a "core role" in promoting economic cooperation between China and PSCs.

Wang noted that over the 19 years of the Forum's existence, economic cooperation has increased enormously. The value of trade between China and the PSCs has increased about 20 times compared to 2003 while the value of non-financial direct investment has increased more than 50-fold.

Minister Wang also highlighted international cooperation in fighting the pandemic. "China has provided around 170 million doses of the vaccine against Covid-19 to Portuguese-speaking countries and remains available to share technology and productive capacity in the field of vaccines with the member countries of the Forum, supporting local production and its distribution," he said.

Wang said that the Macao platform should raise cooperation with the PSCs to "a new level" and assured that Macao and Guangdong province will be supported in the construction of a Sino-Lusophone international trade centre in Hengqin island.

SINO-LUSOPHONE PLATFORM

During the conference, Macao Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng said that Macao will further improve its role as a platform linking China and the PSCs and that it will speed up integration into China's dual

“

Macao will fully exploit its own advantages, and work actively with Forum Macao, to improve cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

– Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng

circulation development strategy of domestic and international markets so that the territory can serve as a bridge between the mainland and the PSCs, and help build a community with a shared future.

"Macao will fully exploit its own advantages, work actively with the Forum, to improve cooperation between China and PSCs ... The setting-up of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin will bolster Macao's role," the chief executive said.

Ho and Fu Ziying, director of the Central People's Government Liaison Office in the Macao Special Administrative Region, unveiled a plaque for the new China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Exchange Centre for Epidemic Prevention at the same ceremony.



Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng speaks at the opening ceremony



Extraordinary ministerial meeting takes place at Forum Macao

POST-PANDEMIC SUPPORT FOR PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

At the extraordinary ministerial meeting, the PSCs asked for more Chinese investment to support the post-Covid-19 economic recovery and called for a strengthening of relations between the member countries of Forum Macao.

The vice president of Brazil, Hamilton Mourão, highlighted the economic potential of Portuguese-speaking countries which are “inserted in differentiated commercial blocks” with millions of consumers and important maritime and mineral resources, and the need to promote trade and investment exchanges.

Portuguese Prime Minister António Costa spoke about support for businesspeople from the countries represented at Forum Macao and explained that Portugal is a gateway to the European Union as its ports are connected to global maritime routes and have privileged links with Latin America and Africa.

Prime Minister of Cabo Verde Ulisses Correia e Silva said that the biggest current challenge is “to overcome the pandemic” and that joint efforts, within the framework of Forum Macao, can be an opportunity to attract private investment.

Nuno Gomes Nabiam, premier of Guinea-Bissau, invited investors to visit the African state and

asked for China's support in the “development of productive technologies”. This was seconded by the prime minister of Mozambique, Adriano Maleiane, who emphasised the need for stronger cooperation between the countries represented at Forum Macao.

Prime Minister Jorge Bom Jesus of São Tomé and Príncipe asked for financial support and the Timor-Leste prime minister, Taur Matan Ruak, recalled the “devastating effects of the pandemic”, but said he was convinced that Chinese aid and the economic opportunities that exist in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area can contribute to a solution.

Lastly, Angolan Minister of State for Economic Coordination, Manuel Nunes Júnior noted the importance of Chinese investment in his country and the important political reforms underway there as well as the economic measures aimed at reducing the nation's dependence on oil revenue.

Forum Macao also welcomed Equatorial Guinea as its 10th member country, the African country's membership formalised through a joint resolution. Aside from China and Equatorial Guinea, Forum Macao includes Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Timor-Leste.

As the first online-offline event to be organised by the Forum Macao on such a grand scale, the ministerial meeting brought together leaders from around the world and a turnout of around 200 participants in Macao. ●

OPINION *The Future of Forum Macao*

A vision for the next 20 years



FRANCISCO JOSÉ LEANDRO

Associate Professor and Associate Dean of Institute for Research in Portuguese-Speaking Countries at City University of Macau

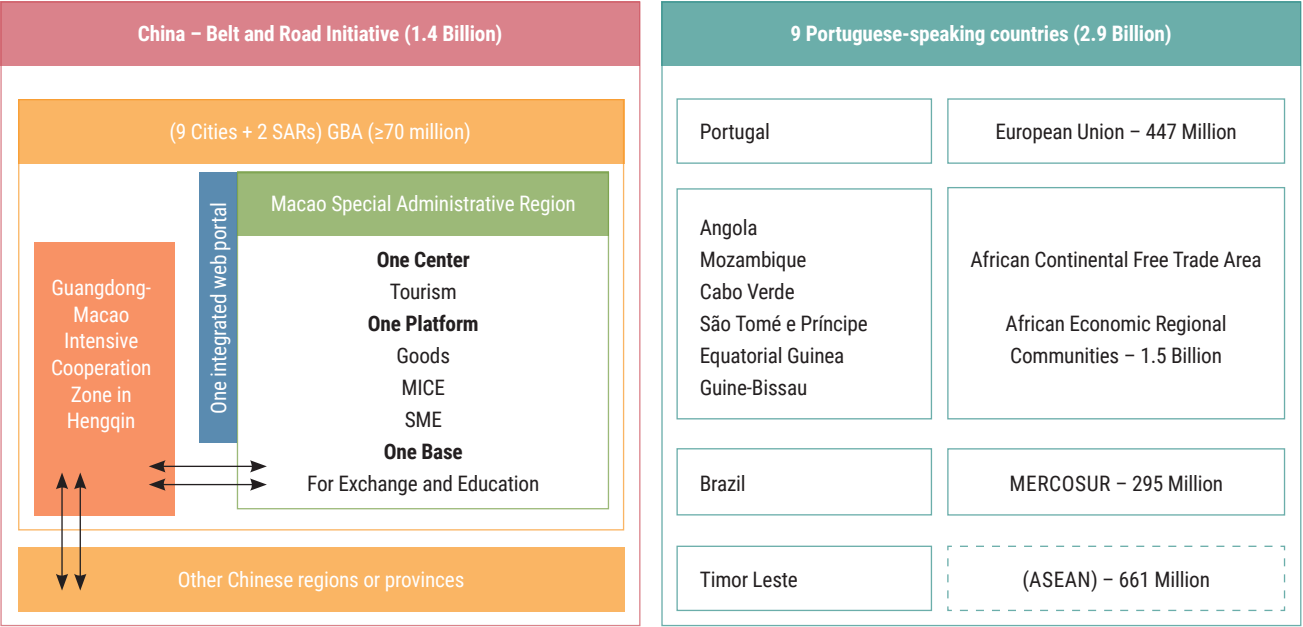
The Chinese initiative to establish the Forum Macao has proved its effectiveness, but it has yet to realise its full potential. In its nearly 20 years of existence, Forum Macao has evolved steadily, widening its membership and extending into new areas of activity, besides the core interests of economic and trade cooperation.

Since 2003, Forum Macao has reinforced the presence as well as the contribution of the eight PSCs, now numbering nine with the recent acceptance of Equatorial Guinea into membership. The aim is to strengthen trade cooperation and communication between China and the PSCs and boost Macao's role as a platform for this cooperation.

Forum Macao has carried out several organisational adjustments to increase China's national engagement and commitment to provide more information about the Greater Bay Area market in general and, more specifically, the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

China has also pushed for new ideas and new cooperation areas, with the support of all PSCs.

THE FORUM MACAO SPATIAL MARKET REACH (1+9 STATES)



Since its inception, Forum Macao has become deeply involved in many activities such as enhanced trade and investment facilitation, collaboration to advance key infrastructure projects, promote connectivity, encourage higher levels of industrial capacity, develop energy security options, supported cultural exchanges, and also boosted health and environmental protection with all the PSCs. This approach demonstrates China’s desire to improve international cooperation and at the same time the potential of Forum Macao to contribute significantly to China’s global vision of “a community with a shared future”.

Consequently, the natural evolution of the Forum is its transformation from an economic and trade cooperation body with a 10-state (9+1) framework acting as a quasi-multilateral institution, into a truly multilateral association of sovereign states.

This new organisation configuration will be designed to elevate the level of sustainable development, in an integrated (multi-actors and multi-space), intertwined (different areas of cooperation), and multi-layered (different levels of cooperation) manner. Furthermore, Forum Macao can and should enlarge its geographical reach, using the PSCs to access economic communities worldwide as the image illustrates.

The potential of the GBA is enormous as it is composed of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Macao Special Administrative Region, and nine cities in Guangdong Province in southern China. This covers approximately 56,000 square kilometres, with a combined population of 70 million inhabitants, and a GDP of MOP 13.7 trillion (US\$1.7 trillion).

The Macao SAR, as a World Class Tourism and Leisure Centre, and a Service Platform for Trade Cooperation and as an exchange and cooperation base for education in the GBA, offers a remarkable support framework for Forum Macao.

Training and education should be other important parts of Forum Macao’s future. Macao as a cooperation platform and as a centre of education, which allows for mutual recognition of academic degrees, joint professional certification as well as promoting bilingualism and the promotion of cultural literacy is regarded, by China and the PSCs, as one of Forum Macao’s most promising assets.

The longstanding pillar of Forum Macao is the mutual perception of cooperative advantages. This takes into consideration the potential of the PSCs and the GBA working together, in the context of access to all kinds of markets, including raw and manufactured materials, finding solutions for energy security, infrastructure development, improving the quality of banking and health services, facilitating technology transfer, promoting culture exchanges and education, investing in human capital, and strengthening people-to-people bonds. Therefore, Forum Macao can no longer focus merely on the promotion of economic and trade cooperation.

In this vision, Forum Macao will become a truly multilateral institution, extending economic cooperation across the world, adopting new management instruments, such as common decision-making and common budgets, and devoting itself to smart planning for development, cultural exchanges and education for mutual benefit.

Forum Macao should be an institution advancing into a common economic space for exchange and able to engage in a new world of the following 10 themes:

1. Cooperation for development, instead of economic and trade
2. Blue economy instead of maritime cooperation
3. Energy and food sustainability instead of oil, gas and agriculture projects
4. Social economic sustainable investment instead of foreign investment
5. Spatial development initiatives associated to quality criteria instead of key infrastructures
6. Tandem education to develop cultural literacy and technological skills instead of a stand alone technical expertise
7. Corporate social responsibility instead of shareholders engagement
8. Commercial and investment amicable disputes, instead of adjudicatory justice
9. Interculturalism instead of multiculturalism
10. Facilitation of flows of people, goods, services and ideas, instead of meetings, conferences, exhibitions and tourism.





POLITICS

Macao chief executive stresses urgency of economic diversification

The Macao government is supporting the unemployed by launching new initiatives such as a website with information on vacancies and job-application procedures.

Text **Gonçalo César de Sá**
Photos **Government Information Bureau**

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng responds to legislators' questions at Q&A session in April

Macao's Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng said in April that Macao still heavily relies on the gaming sector and on mainland visitors which is why Macao is suffering from a negative "synergy" from both factors amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ho noted that the Covid-19 pandemic has reduced the number of visitors to Macao to the level around the time when the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) was established in December 1999. The 2021 visitor numbers stood at around 7 million.

"The tourism sector needs to reposition itself and open up to other source markets, it cannot depend exclusively on mainland Chinese tourists," Ho emphasised.

The chief executive noted that in 2000 there were around 5,400 retail outlets, restaurants, eateries and other catering venues, employing around 22,000 people in Macao. In 2020, the number of these venues has risen to around 9,600, employing nearly 74,000 people in Macao. Prior to the pandemic, these retail and catering outlets served

millions of visitors a year, as well as local residents, which is why local businesses continue to suffer under this current pandemic.

Ho explained that the average daily number of visitors to Macao had increased to around 30,000 earlier this year; however, at this point, various areas in the mainland are being hit by a surge of local Covid-19 transmissions, decreasing the number of mainland tourists visiting the city.

Ho pledged that once the Covid-19 wave in the mainland recedes, Macao authorities will discuss with the central government the resumption of organised tour groups to Macao which have been suspended since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020.

Chief Executive Ho said that Macao health officials have been discussing the latest Covid-19 developments worldwide with mainland experts. They pointed out that no new Covid-19 variants have been detected in Western countries over recent months and as a result they concluded that the Covid-19 epidemic in the mainland would stabilise later this year.

**GAMING OPERATORS FULFIL
THEIR CORPORATE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Ho Iat Seng recognised that the six gaming operators have been shouldering their corporate social responsibility by not laying off their local staff and that even though some staff members have had to take unpaid leave or half-paid leave amid the Covid-19 pandemic, none of the operators have carried out any major lay-offs of local staff.

Ho went on to say that the gaming operators are employing a disproportionate number of staff members in relation to the current visitor numbers, but they have adhered to the basic principle of not laying off their local staff. Still on the topic of gaming operators, the government has pressed ahead with reducing the quota of non-resident workers in large-scale gaming resorts and managing non-resident worker quotas to improve local people's work opportunities.

Ho stated that the latest unemployment rate among local residents has increased to 4.3 per cent and this was partially due to the closures of some junket companies and satellite casinos over the past few months.

During the session, the chief

executive explained that the Macao government is supporting the unemployed by launching new initiatives such as a website with information on vacancies and job-application procedures; which to date has included more than 6,000 vacancies, covering a variety of posts. Ho encouraged members of the public to consider fresh employment paths and opportunities.

In addition, the Macao government plans to optimise its paid-internship programme for higher-education graduates, as well as the subsidised-training programme, allowing more Macao residents to participate in such programmes and increasing the number of training courses.

**GOVERNMENT OFFERS
FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng also announced a new round of electronic consumption benefits with the aim to relieve residents' financial hardship and support local businesses. Ho underlined that the government is aware that the "prolonged" Covid-19 pandemic has had various repercussions on Macao's economy and civil society, and understands the difficulties that residents and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face.

In addition to the new round of the electronic consumption benefit scheme, Ho said, the government is also studying other measures that can support SMEs, such as subsidising water and electricity bills.

Ho also noted that local residents started to receive this year's MOP 10,000 (US\$1,235) "wealth-sharing", urging those who have received the cash

handouts to spend it on boosting the local economy.

Ho noted that all local residents' cash handouts amount to around MOP 7 billion (US\$87 million) equivalent to the current monthly value of the city's retail sales. He added that this amount could help support many SMEs' business operations and stabilise residents' employment.

Broaching a few other topics at the end of his speech, Ho said that

the Islands District Medical Complex is expected to complete basic construction this year, with interior decoration to begin by the end of the year. He also said that the government will allow two additional international schools to be established in Macao, to help attract outside talent. Lastly, Ho said to protect our environment, government departments would use only electrically-powered vehicles in the future. ●

Chief Executive
Ho Iat Seng
discusses tools
and programmes to
address continued
economic difficulties





Text **Miguel Luigi Enriquez**
Photos **Denzel Calangi**

Can you teach an old street new tricks? Rua dos Ervanários is seeing a resurgence as a wave of modern businesses move in to the historic area

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Old street, same story

Time stands still at Rua dos Ervanários

A new generation of entrepreneurs is breathing life into Macao's historic merchant's street, fusing past and future together like nowhere else in the city.

Under the shadow of the Ruins of St Paul lies an unassuming street called Rua dos Ervanários. Despite only being a flight of steps away from Macao's most recognisable landmark, it's often overlooked by passersby. If you detour down this street, you get a sense of being between worlds. Decades-old businesses sell antiques next to trendy new cafes, locals who call the street home play mahjong with their neighbours while camera slinging tourists trod past, and cobblestone streets are juxtaposed with modern street art. Despite its small size, this street provides a great snapshot of both Macao's past and future.

RICH WITH HISTORY

The area surrounding Rua dos Ervanários has attracted merchants and traders since the 16th century. In his book *Macao Streets*, historian César Nuñez wrote that the street became the de facto centre for goods coming in and out of the city, which at the time was a burgeoning Portuguese trading port.

While the street's name is taken from the Portuguese word for herbalist, presumably after the traditional medicinal herbs that were sold in the area, its Chinese name, 關前正街 (Gwan Chin Jing Street), comes from the customs services that used to oversee Macao's foreign trade from here, according to the Macao Government Tourism Office.

With the customs building right next door, traders set up on the street displaying goods from all over the world, a global marketplace before

globalisation was commonly adopted. For hundreds of years, merchants took advantage of this prime location, their customers able to pick from porcelain vases from the mainland to intricate ornaments from Portugal.

Antique store owner Ian Siu Pou has been in business in the area since the 1970s, when he took over his father's business. "At the time, Macao had many old houses so we would buy old furniture from there and sell it at our store," he says.

The 75-year-old can still recall a time when the area was teeming with traders who would carry around baskets full of goods hanging from bamboo shoulder poles. But he says Ervanários has changed completely over the past 50 years. Street traders now prefer to sell their goods in more formal settings or over the internet.

Ian's clientele has also changed. Before Portugal handed over the city's administration to China, most of his customers were Western, the bulk of them Portuguese, coming to him for sturdy vintage furniture made with blackwood and rosewood from India, Vietnam and Thailand.

At the dawn of the new millennium, however, Ian noticed more customers from the mainland. As Beijing reforms created newfound wealth for Chinese citizens, many became interested in antique goods to display in their homes.

"The environment [here] is really changing. But I can't say whether I miss the old times or not. All I know is that it's changing. You just have to make your living," he says.

NEW NEIGHBOURS

Aside from the existing antique stores and incense shops, Rua dos Ervanários remained relatively under the radar until about five years ago, when real estate investors set eyes on the neighbourhood.

When musician and artist Fortes Pakeong Sequeira was shown available spaces in the neighbourhood, he said it was like a homecoming. “I have very good memories of this street as a child. I remember walking through here with my parents. It has a very communal feel. People would stop you and chat with you for half an hour even if you don’t know each other,” he says.

Longtime local shop owners discouraged him from investing in a space on Rua dos Ervanários, however. They told him their own businesses weren’t doing well, but Sequeira decided it was worth the risk and leased a building that used to be a blacksmith’s workshop.

In 2017, he opened A Porta Da Arte, which means ‘The Door of Art’ in Portuguese, a cafe and retail space showcasing locally made goods and vintage clothes. He named items on the cafe’s menu after metalworks and retained some of the building’s original brickwork to speak to its history.



(Opposite page) Artist Fortes Pakeong Sequeira’s fond memories of the street as a kid made starting his business here a no-brainer. “People [here] would stop you and chat with you for half an hour even if you don’t know each other”

Taiwan-raised Wallace Chan hopes his store Ho Ho Market can inspire locals to create products that embody Macao’s rich history and traditions

About a year later, Wallace Chan moved in across the street. In the building that used to house Macao’s customs services, he opened Ho Ho Market, a store that sells creative goods from places like Taiwan and Japan. Selling imported items in the same place where all imported and exported items once passed through “felt like fate”, he says.

From then on, Rua dos Ervanários developed a reputation as a hub for creative endeavours. Today, it’s home to everything from Portuguese eatery Food Truck Company, whose claim to fame is being home to Macao’s best Portuguese beef steak sandwich, to crystal healing shop Gems Awakening.

The street also hosts a bi-weekly crafts bazaar letting locals sell their

handmade goods on the streets, harking back to the street’s history as a centre for traders.

More recently, Ervanários business owners have capitalised on the city’s cafe craze. There are nearly a dozen cafes in the area. If you are nearby and need a pick-me-up, you’ll have an abundance of options, from late hangout Meta Coffee to pet-friendly Woofpetsion. Chan muses that Ervanários is beginning to be colloquially referred to as “cafe street”.

Sequeira adds that the naysayers who warned him just five years ago have changed their tune, too. “Business has changed and we have a good connection with our neighbours and the vibe is different from before.”



Pedro Esteves' Food Truck Company is widely believed to be home to the city's best *prego*, a Portuguese beef steak sandwich, but a lack of tourists is putting his business at risk

(Opposite page) Ian Siu Pou has been doing business in Ervanários since he took over his father's antique store back in the 1970s. "The environment [here] is really changing. But I can't say whether I miss the old times or not. All I know is that it's changing. You just have to make your living"

WEATHERING THE STORM

The street's revitalisation has not been immune to the pandemic. Being so close to the Ruins of St Paul used to guarantee steady footfall for businesses on Ervanários. But border closures have significantly cut off tourism, the city's main source of livelihood, and pushed most business owners to the brink of closure.

Pedro Esteves was among the first business owners to move into the area when he opened Food Truck Company in 2017. He has been in the restaurant business for over 16 years, but he says Covid-19 has been his toughest adversary yet.

Esteves hopes that Macao can reopen to visitors from Hong

Kong soon. His restaurant used to attract many customers from the neighbouring city and he finds it difficult to turn a profit from local patrons alone.

In an attempt to drive more people to Rua dos Ervanários, local associations, including the Industry and Commerce Federation of Macau Central and Southern Districts and the Macau Historical Districts Developments Promotion Association, have organised an open-air fair that will be hosted on the street until 24 June. In addition to promotional campaign drives on social media, organisers have also incorporated augmented reality (AR) attractions to encourage locals and visitors to explore the street and learn about its history.

Additionally, more than a dozen stores, including Ho Ho Market, are running exclusive promotions, and customers can take part in a virtual lucky draw offering prizes such as iPhones, iPads and hotel stays.

Organisers say they hope the activities can help shops boost business by as much as 40 per cent. It is already paying dividends for some.

"This activity has helped my business," says Chan. "Just the other day a couple spent around MOP 400 here and I gave them some lucky draw coupons and they won a hotel reservation at Lisboeta. They were really happy."

PAST AND PRESENT COLLIDE

Sequeira admits the influx of new businesses in Rua dos Ervanários could eventually transform the street's original character. But the 44-year-old thinks change is inevitable and should be embraced. "This is a new generation and people are changing and so is the culture. All I can do is what I'm good at and what I love."

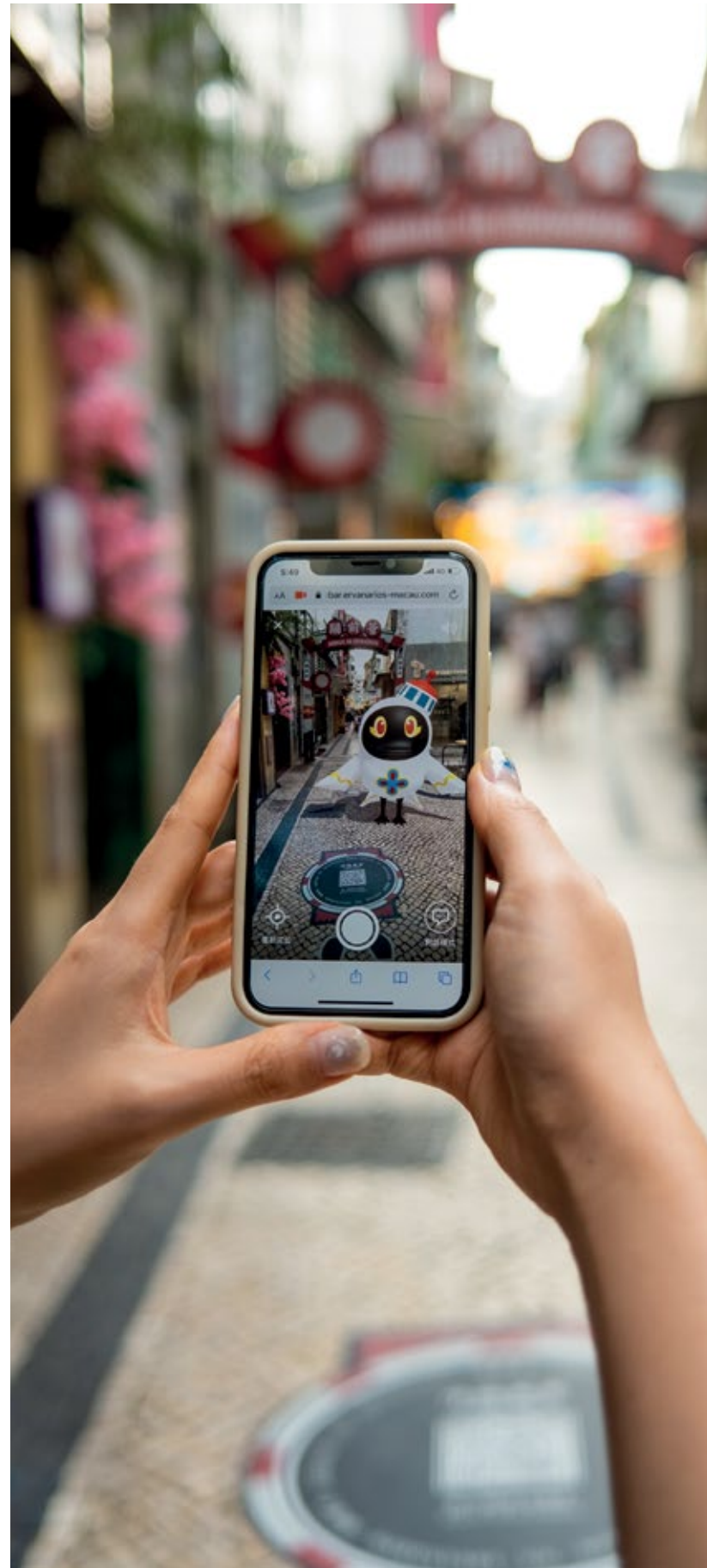
From his humble store at the end of the street, Ian watches as buildings he's known most of his life get fresh coats of paint and house new merchants. He still comes to the store everyday – "No days off," he declares – sitting among the furniture and antiques that have provided him with a living for so long. He says trendy new stores and cafes don't impact his business as they don't cater to his customers.

Next door, in another storefront Ian acquired in the '80s, his son runs a small supermarket, continuing the family's half-a-century presence in Rua dos Ervanários and providing proof that while the street continues to evolve, some things will remain the same. ●



Scan the QR code below to watch the video:





The Ervanários area (which includes its namesake street and nearby Rua da Tercena and Rua de Nossa Senhora do Amparo) is home to an abundance of shops from some of Macao's most creative minds. Some merchants have also been doing business here for several decades, making this an exciting way to experience the Macao of past and present.

Keep an eye out for the craft market fair, held every other weekend, when local vendors line the street with pop-up stalls and sell their handmade goods. Don't miss the Ervanários Fair, held until 24 June, either. Use your phone's camera to experience Ervanários through AR and unlock exclusive deals – you might even get lucky and win a prize.

To get you started on your adventure, here are five of our favourite spots to hang out and shop in Ervanários, from the new and exciting to the old and historic. Now get exploring!

① *A Porta da Arte*

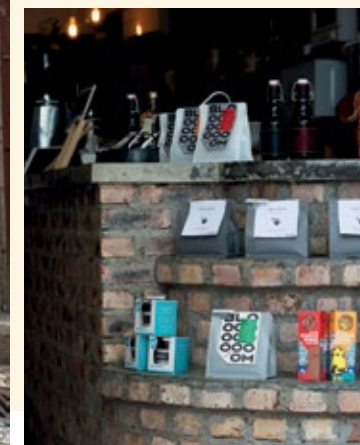
What is it? A four-storey building that houses a cafe, leather goods store and its owner's personal workshop.

Store story: A Porta da Arte was among the first wave of new shops that moved into the neighbourhood back in 2017. The building it's in used to be a blacksmith's workshop. "When I first came here, it was like an abandoned space. It was so messy but I loved it!" says owner Fortes Pakeong Sequeira. The local artist spruced up the spot but kept certain elements intact, including an exposed brick wall, to honour the

building's history. On the street level is a cafe which stocks Macao-brewed coffee beans, upstairs a local leather worker's products are displayed for sale, on the third floor is a vintage shop, and Sequeira's office and studio are perched on the top floor. The sofas peppered across the store are perfect for lounging, making this space feel more cosy than commercial. "I'm not a natural born businessman. I'm an artist. I paint, I sing and I compose. I just wanted a space to do my work and also gather some of my friends to sell their handicrafts and artwork." Mission accomplished.

PRO TIP

If you happen to run into Sequeira, ask him to let you up the building's rooftop where you can enjoy your brew with a bird's-eye view of Ervanários.



② Ho Ho Market

What is it? As its name suggests, a market for all things good and useful. You'll find whimsical (yet functional) objects, products from your childhood and even exotic succulents.

Store story: Macao-born, Taiwan-raised Wallace Chan values a good story. He set up Ho Ho Market in 2018 (that's 好好, ho ho, as in 'good good' in Cantonese) after noticing a lack of creative goods in Macao that incorporated the city's rich traditions. "At the time, most of the cultural products here lacked meaning. I wanted to see more goods with a story and items that embody local traditions so I decided to import them from abroad to inspire locals." Chan says the products need to have visual appeal to get people's attention but they also have to be useful. As a result, Ho Ho Market is a hodgepodge of all kinds of items from around the world, ranging from utilitarian Japanese officeware to quirky Taiwanese homeware. There are products that evoke nostalgia, like a label maker from Penco, and stuff you never thought you needed, like a candle that replicates the smell of a campfire. True to its mission statement, the store also stocks locally designed goods from streetwear to egg tart-shaped and -scented candles. If you're after a unique gift for someone, Ho Ho Market is sure to have something for you.



BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE

The second floor is home to a personal interest of Chan's: rare succulents. Neatly lined up under bright lamps, some of these botanical wonders look so obscure, they seem as if they're from another planet. Chan painstakingly imports them from arid places in Africa and the Americas. His pride and joy: the many agave plants he has on hand, though he doesn't plan on going into the tequila business anytime soon.



③ Gems Awakening

What is it? Holistic wellness store that specialises in crystal healing.

Store story: Gems Awakening is Macao's first crystal healing shop. Owned and operated by married couple Carol and Arthur Lim, the shop has been in business since 2020, preaching the benefits of the alternative wellness practice. "With this shop we want to educate people about the thousands upon thousands of stones out there. Different stones have different

energy, and that can help you in different areas of your life," says Arthur. They source their stones from different suppliers around the world, including those in the US, Brazil and Madagascar. Enter the store, and you'll be greeted by the smell of incense and the occasional hum of a singing bowl. Whether you buy into the purported healing properties of crystals or not, this shop is well worth a visit for the sensory experience alone. Who knows? You might just learn something new!

④ Veng Heng Cheong

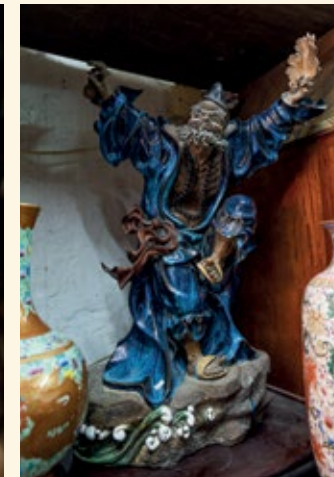
What is it? Family business selling joss sticks that has served Macao worshippers for decades.

Store story: Conveniently located near several temples, the Ervanários area is a prime spot for selling goods for worshipping. The Tam family saw this as a business opportunity back in 1968 when they opened their incense store, Veng Heng Cheong. Tam Kin Hong says the store was named after his father, Tam Veng.

His parents taught him how to make incense when he was in middle school. His mother would take him to the factory to learn the trade, and when he was 17, he apprenticed with a master incense maker. Now 70, Tam continues to run the family business, one of the last joss stick stores in Macao, but he's unsure how much longer the tradition can last. "If I am no longer in good health, I will have to stop doing this."

DID YOU KNOW?

Joss stick manufacturing was once one of Macao's biggest industries, along with matchstick and firecracker production. At one point, there were more than 40 incense factories in the city but the opening of the mainland market in the '80s ramped up competition and the local industry was not able to keep up.



⑤ Gon Kei

What is it? Antique store stocking rosewood furniture and ceramic kitchenware.

Store story: From a young age, Ian Siu Pou knew he wasn't cut out for school, so he started trailing his father, who ran an antique store. When he was only seven years old, he stopped going to school. He and his father would go to old houses and buy furniture there to sell in their store. Ian eventually took over the business in the early 1970s. He recalls mainly catering to a Western clientele in the 1980s and 1990s, but since the new millennium, he has started seeing more customers from the mainland. The furniture he sells is made from sturdy blackwood and rosewood sourced from the mainland and South Asia. He isn't sure how old some of the pieces are but says people value them for their quality and design. Now in his 70s, Ian continues to run the store. Despite the slowdown in business these past two years, he's not worried, as his son runs a small grocery in the property he acquired next door.



Text **Inara Sim**

Three-Michelin-starred Robuchon au Dôme is nestled in the dome crowning the Grand Lisboa Hotel, which opened in 2007

FOOD AND DRINK

Asia's capital of *gastronomy*

Over the past two decades, Macao has become a culinary destination to watch thanks to high-profile restaurant openings, a prestigious UNESCO nod and a deluge of awards.

When it comes to food, Macao brings a lot to the table: regional Chinese specialties, traditional Portuguese fare, seasonal Italian, authentic Japanese *kaiseki* meals and transcendent French cuisine. Whether you're looking for a quick bite at a 24-hour noodle bar or a luxurious 12-course tasting menu, there's something for everyone.

But Macao hasn't always been a dining mecca. Before the days of integrated resorts and booming tourism, the sleepy Portuguese territory was better known for its quaint antique shops, charming Portuguese buildings and local casino scene. In the 1980s, the concept of fine-dining was limited to the 'Excelsior' (now Artyzen Grand Lapa) and Hyatt Regency (now Regency Art Hotel). When the late Joël Robuchon was invited to bring his award-winning French cuisine to the city at the turn of the century, the chef later told the *South China Morning Post* that he couldn't even find Macao on a map.

Of course, the past is the past. Now, any ambitious chef worth their salt knows exactly where to find Macao. The city has evolved at a rapid clip in just two decades, and so has its dining scene. Macao was named a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy in 2017, and many of the city's restaurants feature year after year in the MICHELIN Guide, Forbes Travel Guide, Asia's 50 Best Restaurants and the Dianping Black Pearl Restaurant Guide.

"Over the last 20 years, our tourism numbers have just continued to grow," says Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, director of Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO). "In the

year 2000, Macao had a total of 9,000 hotel rooms; today we have over 44,000."

So how did this once quiet, humble territory transform into what Forbes Travel Guide has described as the "world capital of Five-Star dining"? It comes down to a mix of rapid and robust tourism development, the emergence of outposts by internationally acclaimed chefs, and evolving clientele who grow hungrier for diverse, sophisticated flavours with each passing year.

A SERIES OF CULINARY CATALYSTS

Macao's transformation began in 2002 when the 40-year gaming monopoly held by Hong Kong casino mogul Stanley Ho came to an end, and the city opened its doors to international companies such as Las Vegas Sands and Wynn Resorts. Ho set the tone for a new era of Las Vegas-style haute gastronomy, having brought in "Chef of the Century" Robuchon a year earlier to launch Robuchon a Galera at Casino Lisboa (which later relocated to the Grand Lisboa Hotel and became Robuchon au Dôme).

"One of the areas which the hotels put a lot of effort into was getting more restaurants of the highest standards to come into Macao. Every one tried to bring signature restaurants, whether on a collaborative basis or with their own chefs, which uplifted the local fine-dining scene. F&B [food and beverage] has always been one of the strong points of our tourism offerings and one of reasons why a lot of people come to Macao," explains Senna Fernandes.



Oswald Vas

Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes at the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies prior to an interview with *The Macao News* on the UNESCO Sustainable Gastronomy Day in June 2021

(Opposite page) Le Caviar dish served at Robuchon au Dôme

In 2004, the first integrated resort opened in Macao. Over the next few years, big-name resorts opened one after the next and with each opening, Macao's culinary bar inched higher and higher.

The next major catalyst came in August 2008, when Macao scrapped its 15 per cent wine tax in a bid to become a more dominant and sophisticated culinary hub.

Macao began to establish itself as a five-star dining destination, catering to those looking to spend their hard earned – and won – money on something truly special, be that premium ingredients, artfully plated dishes or a rare vintage of Bordeaux. To many, wine is an inseparable part of a fine-dining

experience. Restaurants with a vast wine list are sure to win over luxury enthusiasts and connoisseurs.

“Guests at that time were a real mixed bag,” says Mathieu Gaignon, beverage director at The Seasons (Macao University of Science and Technology Training Restaurant) and former head sommelier at Robuchon au Dôme who was part of the restaurant's opening team in 2011.

“Many VIPs would purchase the most expensive bottles of wine. Then we had other guests who were more knowledgeable about wine, and others that showed a real interest in tasting new wines and learning more about what we had to offer.”

STAR-STUDED CITY

The seismic shifts in Macao's dining scene didn't end there. Senna Fernandes says the international market is very important when it comes to fine dining. To be recognised as a fine-dining destination, you need global recognition – from facilities to standards – and international benchmarks, such as the MICHELIN Guide or Forbes Travel Guide, are essential to setting those standards.

When MICHELIN Guide Hong Kong Macau launched its debut edition in 2009, the ensuing accolades thrust Macao firmly into the culinary spotlight. That first year, six restaurants in Macao earned a Michelin star – a number that continues to rise year after year. Today, the city counts more than 20 Michelin-selected restaurants. Among them, Robuchon au Dôme, The 8 Restaurant and Jade Dragon hold three Michelin stars.

Another influential awards list, Asia's 50 Best Restaurants, launched in 2013 with a mission to celebrate gastronomy across the region. Every year, the list is selected by a group of over 300 restaurant experts called the Asia's 50 Best Academy. Macao restaurants have regularly made appearances, with Robuchon au Dôme taking the 37th spot on the inaugural list in 2013. In 2022, Wing Lei Palace ranked 47th and has been on the list for four consecutive years. Macao has hosted the awards ceremony three times so far, including the online 2022 Awards Ceremony, which took place on 29 March.

Photo courtesy of Grand Lisboa Hotel



(Inset) Mathieu Gaignon, beverage director at The Seasons (Macao University of Science and Technology Training Restaurant) and former head sommelier at Robuchon au Dôme

A trio of bites — a steamed scallop dumpling topped with carrot millet and morel mushroom, a jade dragon dumpling, and a baked crabmeat puff — delights diners at three-Michelin-starred Jade Dragon at the City of Dreams



In 2014, Forbes Travel Guide (formerly the Mobil Travel Guide) — the oldest travel guide in the US and the only independent global rating agency for luxury hospitality — further burnished the city’s image. That first year, Forbes Travel Guide showered Macao with a total of 14 awarded restaurants: five Five-Stars and nine Four-Stars.

“Precision in service sets Macao apart,” says Amanda Frasier, executive vice-president of Standards & Ratings for Forbes Travel Guide, when asked what prompted the guide to venture into Macao. “When dining at the Five-Star restaurants in Macao, you can expect everything from the plating to the service ware arrangement to be executed with the utmost attention to detail.”

As the city’s dining scene expanded, so too has its collection of star-rated restaurants. In 2022, 21 restaurants made the Forbes Travel Guide

cut, of which 20 received Five-Stars. And perhaps even more impressive are the restaurants’ consistent commitment to quality: Four of the restaurants that received Five-Stars in 2014 — Aurora, Golden Flower, Wing Lei and Jade Dragon — have maintained that status ever since.

REACHING FULL BOIL

In 2017, Macao became one of three cities in China to be listed as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy. Recognised for its 400-year-old legacy of Macanese cuisine and its emerging status as a leading culinary destination in Asia, the accolade, says Senna Fernandes, is about more than just delicious meals.

“It’s about our history and how it relates to food,” she says. “We are a city of gastronomy not just because we have good restaurants, but because we have other things that can help the city become sustainable through food or gastronomy.”

Photo courtesy of Melco Resorts



Braised lobster, chicken, ginger and spring onion in a claypot at Altira Macau's Ying restaurant

(Inset) Amanda Frasier, executive vice-president of Standards & Ratings for Forbes Travel Guide



The UNESCO honour fuelled even more momentum behind Macao’s thriving dining scene. “It certainly helped in providing awareness of Macao as a top dining city,” says Alex Gaspar, executive chef at The Londoner Macao. “But besides that, it also highlighted the local Macanese cuisine, which is in the spotlight much more now. It’s great to see — it’s a fantastic cuisine, and it should be promoted.”

The new status raised the city’s gastronomic profile and a series of international events soon followed, including Michelin-branded dinners in November of 2017. The MICHELIN Guide partnered with global wine publisher Robert Parker Wine Advocate (RPWA) to host a dining series in Hong Kong and Macao, building up to the Michelin and RPWA Gala Dinner. For the gala, which took place at the

Studio City Grand Ballroom, seven chefs from starred restaurants in the 2016 Hong Kong Macao guidebook presented an extravagant six-course meal for 700 guests, complemented by top-rated wine selections by RPWA.

When Macao became a Gastronomy member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, the government embarked on a four-year action plan that kicked off with the 2018 Macao Year of Gastronomy. In addition to celebrating the city’s culinary legacy, the initiative also highlighted international collaborations, walking tours, educational opportunities, and support for food-centric events like the Macao Food Festival, the Macao Gastronomy Carnival and cooking competitions.





Photo courtesy of Sands China Ltd

By 2018 Macao had become a magnet for some of the world’s greatest chefs. Big names like Umberto Bombana and Pierre Hermé had set up outposts in 2015, while French great Alain Ducasse followed suit at Morpheus in 2018. The city also welcomed Mauro Colagreco of Grill 58; Mitsuharu Tsumura, known for his Nikkei (Japanese-Peruvian) menu at Aji; Henrique Sá Pessoa of Portuguese restaurant Chiado; André Chiang of Sichuan Moon; and Gordon Ramsay, although Gordon Ramsay’s Pub & Grill has yet to open.

“The top Macao restaurants have always had impeccable style,” says

Frasier. “But the destination now has some of the most over-the-top restaurant designs in the world, such as Yi at Morpheus, designed by Zaha Hadid, and newcomer Palace Garden with an immersive art experience by Yang Yong Liang.”

That same year, the Black Pearl Restaurant Guide (which aims to promote Chinese culinary culture and perspectives) launched its first issue and held a press conference to announce the winners. Of 330 listed, 13 were from Macao. Two of those – Jade Dragon and The 8 Restaurant – achieved the highest three-diamond rating, regarded as “must visit once in a

lifetime” destinations. In 2022, the guide included 11 Macao restaurants, with Jade Dragon and Robuchon au Dôme earning three diamonds.

“We have a close relationship with Asia’s 50 Best and usually the hoteliers [and integrated resorts] bring in these sorts of brands and the MGTO works with them as a supporting entity. Through these [events] and different kinds of cuisines, Macao’s profile as a centre of tourism and leisure will continue to grow. The branding of Macao as a city of gastronomy is very important to sustain,” says Senna Fernandes.

(Opposite page) Alex Gaspar, executive chef at The Londoner Macao, has seen the industry grow from strength to strength over the past years

Helmed by celebrity master chef Zhou Xiaoyan, Huaiyang Garden at The Londoner Macao serves stewed meatballs with crab meat and crab roe

Michelin
by the Numbers

If the 2022 MICHELIN Guide Hong Kong Macau is any indication, Macao is fast becoming a powerhouse food city.

51 selected restaurants:

3 Three-Star restaurants	5 Two-Star restaurants	7 One-Star restaurants	7 Bib Gourmand restaurants
8 Street Food establishments	1 MICHELIN Green Star restaurant	20 MICHELIN Selected restaurants	



Photo courtesy of Sands China Ltd

“

Macao restaurants of the future will all have their own unique selling points. And I'd love to see a Macanese star-rated chef. Now that would be something special.

– Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes

Photo courtesy of Sands China Ltd

DIVERSE AND DELICIOUS

Since Macao is a relatively small city with just 650,000 people across 33 square kilometres, the explosion of restaurants could have led to an oversaturated market. But Macao avoided such a dilemma with diversification, says Gaspar.

“It became very important, not only for diversification, but also to differentiate between the resorts, to give each one their own identity and point of difference,” he says. “Our senior vice president of F&B Tom Connolly creates a wonderful theme and story for each new restaurant. I then work within those frames and try to bring it to life in terms of kitchen design, finding the team, and creating those key touch points that make a restaurant very special.”

The city's dining scene has evolved alongside guests and visitors, he adds. Gaspar, who came to Macao in 2007, says his guests have grown more “discerning” and are “looking for new experiences.”

Gaignon of The Seasons agrees. “The younger generation wants to learn more,” he says. “The mentality has changed – they have been travelling and been exposed to other cultures, and they are a lot more curious.”

That curiosity has paved the way for a wider range of restaurants to thrive, from Japanese to Sichuanese,

Italian, Thai, Portuguese, Shanghainese, Nikkei and elevated Macanese. “It was a real turning point when resorts realised that fine-dining restaurants could focus on other cuisines besides the typical French or Cantonese,” says Gaspar. “We have some wonderful restaurants now, showcasing Sichuan cuisine, Huaiyang cuisine, and a Thai restaurant in development. These kinds of things were hard to imagine back when I first arrived.”

Despite suffering setbacks during the Covid-19 pandemic, the future of Macao's dining scene is bright. “Post-pandemic it will continue to grow and become even more important in terms of promoting tourism,” continues Gaspar. “Sustainability is also something that everyone is talking about – I'm excited to see how it keeps growing and gets incorporated into all facets of restaurants from design to operations.”

Senna Fernandes echoes this optimism, though she believes the boom is likely in the past. “There will be continuous development, just not at the same speed as before,” she says. “Macao restaurants of the future will all have their own unique selling points. And I'd love to see a Macanese star-rated chef. Now that would be something special.” ●

Braised streaky pork with fish maw and preserved cabbage at The Venetian Macao's recently opened Pin Yue Xuan

FOOD AND DRINK

Rediscovering Macanese flavours

Macanese dishes have long been a staple around many Macanese family dinner tables. And now, it's easier than ever to find these treasured dishes at restaurants, too.

Text Gilbert Humphrey

With over 400 years of history, Macanese cuisine is one of the world's first fusion food cuisines. It emerged during an era of commerce and cultural exchange, as Portuguese merchants established extensive trade routes around Asia and Africa.

Macanese cuisine emerged from an amalgamation of influences, with Portuguese and Chinese as the foundation. The cuisine is also rich with influences and ingredients from Malaysia, Indonesia, India and even parts of Africa, where the Portuguese had a footprint.

For a long time, Macanese food was relegated to home kitchens.

Older generations often pass down recipes – some of which are closely guarded secrets – to their children to keep the delicious traditions alive. But more recently, restaurants around the city have tapped into this treasured culinary heritage with hopes of celebrating and sharing Macanese cuisine with more people.

Here, we have rounded up a few of the most classic Macanese dishes and where to find them. Some restaurants serve them just like Macanese grandmothers used to make them, others elevate the classics with professional techniques and equipment.

Minchi

One of the most well-known Macanese dishes is *minchi*, or minchee. The stir-fried minced meat dish comprises either beef or pork, or sometimes both, mixed with fried cubed potatoes, diced onions, garlic and soy sauce, among other ingredients, served on white rice. A fried egg almost always serves as the finishing touch. Some say this dish has been influenced by the Goan beef mince, which also uses green peas and tends to have a wetter texture.

Manuel António de Jesus, the 74-year-old owner of **Cozinha Aida** (meaning 'Aida's Kitchen' in English), says minchi was a staple growing up. "When I was little, the mothers would cook it at home on a daily basis, and the kids liked it because there are no bones," he says. "There's no season for this dish; it's our everyday food."

Jesus opened Cozinha Aida in April last year, just about a month after his mother Aida Rafaela Rosa de Jesus – dubbed the 'Godmother of Macanese Cuisine' – passed away. He started his Macanese restaurant in her memory, carrying on the legacy of the late Macanese food celebrity, who for decades ran another

well-known Macanese restaurant, Riquexó (meaning 'Rickshaw' in English), with her daughter.

Unlike other Macanese restaurants, Cozinha Aida uses only pork in its minchi, and the fried egg is optional.

Jesus, who goes by 'Gito', explains: "We only add the egg when customers ask for it and we do not use beef because a lot of Macao people like pork better than beef. [My mother even] stopped using beef [at Riquexó] about 15 years ago."

Other highly recommended Macanese dishes at Cozinha Aida include *tacho* and the Macanese chicken curry dish called *galinha à Portuguesa* (Portuguese chicken).



Manuel António de Jesus



Photo courtesy of Cozinha Aida



Tacho



Moon Tong

Also known as *chau-chau pele*, *tacho* (meaning ‘pot’) is a variant of a Portuguese dish called *cozido à Portuguesa* (Portuguese stew). Although recipes vary, most tacho recipes call for pork ribs or pork knuckle, pig skin, Chinese ham, Chinese sausage (*lap cheong*), chicken, daikon, cabbage, beans, carrots and potatoes – which takes two to three whole days to prepare and cook. Another common way to make tacho is with fish maw, pork rind, pig’s trotters and *balichão* (shrimp paste).

Generally considered a winter dish, tacho is usually eaten during celebrations like Christmas and Easter – even birthdays – which is perhaps the reason some believe it was first created by leftover

holiday feast ingredients. In the past, it was predominantly eaten by wealthy families and, even today, it’s rarely seen on menus in Macao, as it can be costly to make.

Even so, you can still find tacho at some Macanese restaurants in town, served either on a weekly basis or made to order. It’s on the menu at both Cozinha Aida and Riquexó, for example, and restaurants like Restaurante Litoral make it specifically during special holidays.

At **Riquexó**, tacho is one of the best-selling dishes, according to restaurant manager Moon Tong. “Most of our customers are local-born Portuguese and Macanese,” says the 55-year-old manager. “They say our tacho and minchi taste very authentic.”

African Chicken

Also known in Portuguese as *galinha à Africana*, this renowned Macanese dish features a piri-iri sauce-glazed barbecued chicken with signature African chicken sauce. That special sauce, many Macanese food experts say, was created in the 1970s by Macanese chef Américo Ângelo, who brought the beloved recipe for the dish to Macao after visiting some former Portuguese colonies in Africa in the 1940s.

The famous sauce combines African spices – mainly from Mozambique and Angola – with garlic, peanut butter, coconut milk, tomato, peppers and wine. Of course, like most Macanese dishes, the recipes vary from family to family, restaurant to restaurant.

At **Restaurante Litoral’s** Taipa branch, Filipe Ferreira, the 38-year-old managing director,

considers African chicken to be the restaurant’s top dish.

“Américo Ângelo created the sauce because a lot of people in Macao at that time did not like barbecued chicken to be dry,” says restaurant owner Manuela Sales da Silva Ferreira, 69, who is also Ferreira’s mother. She learned to make the sauce from Ângelo while working under him at *Portas do Sol* restaurant at Hotel Lisboa when she was just 17.

“When I opened Litoral in 1995, African chicken was the first dish that I included in the menu,” she says, adding that the *casquinha* (a deep-fried and baked stuffed crab dish) is also a contender for most popular dish at the restaurant. Manuela inherited the crab recipe from her late grandmother, who also worked alongside Ângelo at the long-gone Pousada de Macau during the inn’s glory days in the 1940s.



Manuela Sales da Silva Ferreira



Photo courtesy of Restaurante Litoral

Pato Baffasá



Charles Un

Based on the Macanese dish *porco baffasá* – pork tenderloin marinated in a turmeric-laced sauce then braised and baked – *pato baffasá*, or baffasá duck, is another beloved Macanese dish. It's first braised with a turmeric sauce then baked in the oven to achieve a golden brown crust and tender, juicy meat.

The name comes from the words *bafa* (braised) and *asá* (roast) in the critically endangered Macanese language of Patuá, a Portuguese-based creole with influences from Cantonese, Sinhalese and Malay.

Charles Un, a 28-year-old chef at the **Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM)**

Educational Restaurant, says that baffasá duck rarely appears on restaurant menus because of its lengthy preparation and cook time.

“We need to marinate the duck overnight,” he explains. Next, the chefs have to stir-fry onion, garlic and turmeric, then add the duck, water and braise it for around two hours. “We also add some *balichão* inside and use American duck, so it's meatier,” Un adds.

Un's head chef, Hans Lee Rasmussen, says that the restaurant began to focus on Macanese cuisine after the United Nations designated Macao a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy in November 2017.

“But it [Macanese cuisine] has always been an important part” of the restaurant and the IFTM, which has been recognised by the Macao government as a ‘protector’ of Macanese gastronomy,” adds Rasmussen.

Other must-eat dishes at IFTM Educational Restaurant are *porco balichão tamarinho com arroz carregado*, a tamarind pork dish with Macanese shrimp paste and pressed rice; *sopa lacassá*, a laksa-like Macanese prawn soup; and, for dessert, Macao's very own coconut milk custard, *bebinca de leite*.

For two years in a row, IFTM Educational Restaurant has earned Macao's first – and so far only – Michelin Green Star, an annual award recognising restaurants for their sustainability efforts. Keeping Macanese dishes alive and celebrating the city's heritage is part of that sustainable mission. ●

MORE ON OFFER



Ana Marques

More restaurants serving Macanese food:

- A Lorcha
- Café SAB 8
- APOMAC Canteen
- Chef Ip Café
- Cravings Macau
- La Famiglia

Other popular Macanese dishes include:

- *Capela* (meatloaf)
- *Pastéis de Bacalhau* (fried salted cod balls)
- *Feijoada* (pork and beef with beans stew)
- *Serradura* (a combination of whipped cream and Marie biscuit crumbs)



António Sammarful


BACALHAU GREEN PEA RISOTTO by Chef de Cuisine Hans Lee Rasmussen

Rasmussen says this dish borrows inspiration from two European classics: Italian risotto and a green pea soup called *crème ninon*, that's popular in French cuisine. Top that off with the famous Portuguese *bacalhau* fish and you've got yourself a Portuguese-inspired recipe! Scan the QR code to see how to make this mouthwatering dish.



Both photos on this page courtesy of IFTM



A woman with curly hair, wearing a dark blue hat and a matching jacket over a patterned top, stands in a workshop. She is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. The workshop is filled with colorful fabrics, including a large tablecloth with a vibrant floral pattern. In the background, there are shelves with various items, including a framed piece of art, a small stove, and several glass jars containing colorful powders. A rack of clothes with colorful patterns is visible on the right side of the frame.

ARTS & CULTURE

Making her mark

A few years ago, colourful artist and businesswoman Jovinia António turned hurtful remarks into the driving force behind Stardust Journey. Now she is making an impression across Macao with her budding textile business, selling bold-patterned products based on personal stories and leading workshops that teach others her unique marbling technique.

Text **Gilbert Humphrey**
Photos **António Sanmarful**

Jovinia António was “as disposable as a piece of dust”. So said her former employer in 2018 when she resigned from her full-time job as a graphic designer. But she didn’t let those hurtful parting remarks bother her – she used them as fuel for her dream to start her own business.

Four years ago, António launched her brand Stardust Journey, as well as a store called Stardust Studio. In a space beside the Social Welfare Bureau’s eye-catching, blue-coloured building in the São Lázaro district she hosts workshops on pattern-making and paper marbling (a technique that produces patterns similar to marble) and displays her vibrantly coloured products, ranging from carpets, cushion covers, blankets, teapots and umbrellas to bags, clothes, scarfs, scrunchies, ribbons and eye masks.

“I refer to myself as stardust, something very small that can one day become a planet,” António says. “I can grow and glow in the universe.”

DISCOVERING ART AT AN EARLY AGE

When the 32-year-old Macao-born artist was young, she would visit relatives from her Macanese father’s side of the family in Portugal almost every summer. She recalls being drawn to the collection of books about art her uncle, an architect, kept on his shelves. “Although I did not know Portuguese, I always looked through the pictures in those books. My uncle once said ‘maybe you will like art,’” she says.

“Art runs in my family. Apart from my uncle, another aunt and a cousin of mine are also architects. My father said I always liked drawing as a little kid, although I don’t remember it,” she says.

António didn’t become an architect like others in her family, though. She took a different path, focusing on fashion and textiles.

After graduating from Pui Ching Middle School in 2009, António went to the United Kingdom and completed an art and design foundation year at Chichester College before continuing her studies at the University of Brighton.

“Before I went to the UK, I thought there were only interior, fashion, graphic and architecture design [programmes]. Originally, I was thinking of studying graphic design. During my foundation year, I found out about textile design through one of my tutors, a textile designer,” says António.

“I like fashion but I only like styling. And I don’t like making clothes; I just like the design. I [also] like drawing, but at that time I wasn’t good at drawing. I love colours too,” she explains. “My tutor said, ‘I think what you like is actually my subject, textile design,’ then she introduced me to a couple of textile designers and artists and gave me a couple of book references.”

António switched tracks and never looked back. She graduated from university in 2013 with honours in textile design and stayed in England two more years, doing professional

courses in buying, merchandising and space management at the London College of Fashion.

FROM CRAFT MARKETS TO TEXTILE WORKSHOPS

António returned to Macao in 2015 and found work as a merchandiser for a local fashion company, then she joined a graphic design company (the one that would spark the idea for her brand name). While working full-time, she started selling products online – mostly past work from her university days that she had turned into products, such as a line of silk scarves with patterns depicting a trip she had taken to Barcelona.

She also began participating in Macao’s bi-annual Tap Siac Craft Market and saw her customer base begin to form. “Then a friend encouraged me to open a studio,” she says.



(Opposite page) Cats are a common motif in Jovinia António’s work, appearing on everything from loungewear to reusable bags

Jovinia António at Stardust Studio

“

This is the dream. There's a long way [to go] for this stardust to become a planet but at least it has some sparkles now!

– Jovinia António



In 2018, she did just that, opening a studio behind the Portuguese Consulate with the help of a silent business partner – the same friend who encouraged her to branch out on her own.

In March this year, António moved her studio to its current location near the Social Welfare Bureau. In this new space, she continues to hold workshops on paper marbling.

“I think marbling is the key to the door of textiles. If people want to get into the textile world, they should learn about patterns and marbling,” she explains.

Since 2018, more than 200 people have joined António's workshops, including marbling on other mediums, such as shoes, boots and bags. She holds four to six workshops a month, each limited to

a maximum of three people. “I want the participants to have a personal experience, not just a class,” she says.

Her studio also serves as a home base for her business. Here, she comes up with new patterns and then applies them to product designs. Once the designs are finalised, she sends them to a factory in Shanghai where they are brought to life.

The finished products are then sent back to Macao, where they are available for purchase at Wynn Palace's gift shop, Tria Spa's gift shop at the MGM Cotai and the Macao Fashion Gallery on Rua de S Roque No 47 (near the St Lazarus Church).

Her collections combine different types of eye-catching patterns and bright colours. “I believe colours can heal like therapy. Colours make you happy. I think when you first see

me you will think that I'm a happy person because I always wear a lot of colours,” she says.

They are also inspired by her travel experiences across Europe and Northern Africa, as well as some of her personal stories. Her first collection was about Barcelona, a city she visited during a university break. Then she created products inspired by Morocco. For one of her next travel collections, she says she plans to revisit one of her favourite places in Europe.

Sometimes António eschews marbling to use her work to raise awareness of social issues.

When the Yat Yuen Canidrome racetrack closed in 2018, hundreds of greyhounds were abandoned by their owners. António felt driven to cover it through her art, and so she created a pattern about these

uncared for “retired dogs”. She has also tackled elephant ivory poaching, which she depicted in a pattern design titled “Where are my teeth?”

Recently, she broached a burning issue for all of us: the upheaval caused by Covid-19, depicted in a pattern she calls “Bed of Roses”. “In Macao, we all live in this very safe bubble while we know that people outside are struggling, so we need to cherish our bed of roses,” she declares.

Although most of her customers are locals, the pandemic has nevertheless affected her business. But she has started to see signs of improvement. Three months ago, she set up an online sales platform, hoping to attract buyers from outside Macao. “Last year was really bad, but now it's getting better,” she says.

SPREADING HER STARDUST

António admits she has a long way to go in her career, but she is proud of her achievements so far.

“My business is still [growing] but at least after five years I'm still in business, still surviving,” she says. “There is a lot left to be done.” Not just at her studio, either. She hopes to inspire more artists and fashion designers in Macao to embrace textile design, especially pattern design and marbling, to boost competition across the industry.

“If the market gets bigger, it will create more opportunities [for everyone]. This is the dream,” António says. “There's a long way [to go] for this stardust to become a planet but at least it has some sparkles now!” ●

(Opposite page) Jovinia António comes up with new patterns in her studio before sending them off for production

Combining bright colors with charming motifs, Stardust Studio designs are sure to make you smile

ARTS & CULTURE

Beyond the brush

Ink art has a millennia-long history in Chinese culture. Even today the traditional artform is thriving, thanks to a new generation of artists drawing on varied sources of influence.

Text **Vivianna Cheong**
Photos courtesy of
Macao Museum of Art

Macao ink artist Cindy Ng Sio Ieng explores the possibility of ink as a medium in her *Video* (2020)

Ink has been an important medium in Chinese culture for over two millennia. In ancient times, emperors, monks, scholars and artists mastered the marriage of precision, concentration and balance that calligraphy and ink painting demanded. Early forms evolved from scripting stately forecasts on tortoise shells and the shoulder blades of oxen to, in the latter Han dynasty in the 3rd century, creative expressions on silk or paper – beautiful interpretations of natural scenery, like birds, flowers, mountains and bodies of water.

Today, Chinese artists across the world have used ink to push their creative boundaries, giving this time-honoured medium new purpose. Now, two organisations have joined forces to display style-bending ink work created by some of the Greater Bay Area’s most exciting artists.

Spearheaded by the Cultural Bureau of Macao and Culture and Tourism of Guangdong, “Wild Imagination: Contemporary Ink Art in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao from 2000 to 2022” features over 50 artists from Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macao and 80 pieces of ink artwork. The exhibition, which opened at Guangzhou Museum of Art in December 2020, will run until mid-June at the Macao Museum of Art (MAM), aiming not only to display great work, but also to show the breadth and variety of contemporary ink art across the Pearl River Delta.

Spanning photography, video, digital art, installations, painting and calligraphy, this ambitious exhibition is setting out to show that ink art is alive and well in our bustling economic region.

HISTORIC FORMS MEET MODERN TIMES

Traditional artists – as in those creating ink paintings as far back as the Han dynasty – did not aim to depict objects realistically, but rather express humanistic ideas through their imagery. That popular philosophy endured until the early 20th century, when the West introduced new media and ways to approach art. While Chinese artists still relied on ink to produce work on scrolls and canvases, they began to seek other ways to express their thoughts and emotions. Now ink art is offering today’s artists new ways to communicate ideas in forms and styles that unite, if not blur the line between, Chinese and global influences.

Curated by the revered artist Pi Daojian, the associate director of the Curatorial Committee of the China Artists Association, this collaborative exhibition deeply explores how the Chinese traditional context is reflected by the Greater Bay Area’s contemporary ink artists. “Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macao embrace cultural diversity, and [the region] nurtures diverse artistic experiments,” Pi explains. “In the dynamic structures of Chinese contemporary ink art – ranging from conventional to academic to experimental – the region has showcased excellent artwork.”



Exhibition coordinator Vivien Lei Heong Hong notes the museum features more local artists in the Macao stop of the exhibition

He adds that the exhibition also aims to advance Chinese contemporary ink art. Those efforts become clear in the one theme that reigns supreme: the digital narrative. Photography, video, animation and music feature widely throughout the exhibition. It's ink work without ink, offering a new way to engage with the medium, according to the team behind the exhibition.

"In contemporary ink art, we sometimes see ink in the work, but sometimes we don't. Those artworks [still express] the traditional spirit of ink. We'd like the audience to experience [that spirit], even if they don't see 'ink,'" says exhibition coordinator Vivien Lei Heong Hong.

"I think the whole process relates to the Zen philosophy: First there is ink, then there is no ink, then there is."

The Macao exhibition also differs from its Guangzhou counterpart in a couple of ways. For starters, the show at MAM displays 10 additional

different pieces from nine Macao artists. But it also differs in its layout. The show separates the artworks into four categories: nature as poetry, wild imagination, metaphysical thinking, and landscapes in ink and water. The last category opened the exhibition in Guangzhou, featuring contemporary interpretations on mountains and waters – traditional ink art imagery. Conversely, it closes the MAM exhibition, as if bringing the past into the present before guests depart.

"We put 'landscape in ink and water' at the end, [and] we hope the audience can gain a sense of belonging to these traditional ink art symbols towards the end of the show," explains Lei.

GOING WITH THE FLOW

Crowds have so far responded positively to the show's messages, themes and clever abstractions. According to Lei, since its opening on 9 May, it has drawn over 9,000 visitors, many of whom have been able to experience the work of leading Macao artists like Cindy Ng Sio Ieng.

Born and bred in Macao, the Beijing-based digital artist is considered a contemporary ink art pioneer, having exhibited her works far and wide in solo and collaborative exhibitions in Taiwan, Beijing, Shanghai, New York and Seattle as well as her home city. That global experience shines in her work. Ng often meditates on her culture and heritage in inventive digital pieces. Her colour-saturated, abstract work *Video* (2020), for instance, speaks to universal struggles over the past two years with reference to her experience in Macao.

"I started working on this piece in April 2020, when I was stuck in Macao for months. I really missed the days when I could stroll freely in nature, watch colourful flowers and enjoy glorious sunshine," she says. "In this work, I use iridescent colours – different from my usual practice of five shades of ink. I hope the colours – somehow expressing my desires [for freedom] – could comfort people who also feel depressed during the pandemic."

Video, like so much of Ng's work, integrates new technology into the traditional art form. The flowing ink continually shifts according to Macao's real-time weather data she collected. Temperatures affect the colours, while wind strength and direction influence the ink's movement. The background music also goes with the flow, following no set pattern but rather moving organically.

"The ultimate goal of traditional Chinese paintings is to convey an abstract feeling, with which elites express their views on nature. As [Chinese modern artist] Liu Kuo-Sung said, 'revolutionise a stroke!' It means ink should not carry the feeling of a brush. So my flowing ink – presented in digital videos – is to communicate the dynamic of ink art on its own," she shares.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY BREEDS NEW POSSIBILITIES

Other artists on display likewise turn to technology to expand on traditional motifs, such as the limits of language and text. Award-winning Hong Kong-based digital artist Hung Keung, for example, forges a connection between imagery and text in *Four Seasons* (2020), a six-channel digital installation on display at MAM, that calligraphy simply cannot.

Hong Kong digital artist Hung Keung integrates personality into characters in his *Four Seasons* (2020)



The channels chart seasonal changes that a solitary flower undergoes, to which kinetic Chinese characters – such as ‘soil’ and ‘rain’ – react. The image of the flower – beautiful and forlorn with a full flower head – is staggering. The characters are imbued with personalities, relating to both their literal meanings and the seasonal changes. For example, when the flower withers, the Chinese character on the screen changes to one of pain or sorrow.

Hung, an associate professor in the Department of Cultural and Creative Arts at the Education University of Hong Kong, says he drew inspiration for this installation from his years-long research on Chinese aesthetics, philosophy, digital art and text. “Traditionally, Chinese calligraphers could express their emotions through cursive and semi-cursive scripts, but today, people type on their phones [instead of handwriting]. You can’t tell one’s emotion through their typing; that’s why emojis have emerged,” he says. “Text somehow has become a cold vessel of meanings, but I believe technology does not limit text to its function but [instead] can make it flow with personality.”

Even the way the installation is set up creates new meaning. The channels are mounted on a small slope in a dark space, inviting the audience to experience the work in an almost ethereal setting. Having shown his work in art hubs like Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong previously, Hung says he was impressed by the attention to detail that has gone into this exhibition.

“Any trivial changes in the installation will affect the audience’s experience. In this exhibition in Guangzhou and Macao, I can see the production team’s great effort to present my work in its most exact form.”

RETURN TO IMAGERY

Guangzhou-born artist and curator Shen Ruijun, meanwhile, represents the intersection of cultures. She has buried herself in researching Chinese gardens for around eight years and says she is captivated by the abstract expression of traditional Chinese ink art, but she also admits she is greatly influenced by Western art from the time she spent studying at Montclair State University and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her installation, *Pond with White Snow* (2016), integrates both sources of inspiration – elements of Chinese and Western gardens alike, the former often poetic and contemplative, the latter expressed through clear visual cues.

Mounted in a small, recessed wall – only 14 cm by 58 cm by 34 cm – the installation illustrates a battle with a half-human, half-beast figure. Flowers planted around that figure imply the ground is a pond. The recess is also decorated with Roman pillars.

“A pond is an abstract element in a Chinese garden, as it reflects the surroundings – the surroundings somehow become part of the pond itself,” she explains. “On the surface, you can see the reflection of some figures and my drawing of their shadows. Together they create an abstract landscape, because the reflections will [come and go] according to the light, but the drawings remain.”



The centrepiece figure, on the other hand, celebrates human power “and somehow expresses a sublime yet cruel beauty,” while the withered Roman pillars speak to immortality, “which suggests an ironic co-existence between human and nature. It also shows the differences between East and West.”

The installation, part of Shen’s popular series *Boxes of Curiosity* (2013), is well suited for the exhibition, according to the artist. Shen believes it expresses the poetic and contemplative nature of ink art yet is embedded in contemporary art practice.

That is a theme that MAM’s *Wild Imagination* circles back to often: past meets present. Throughout the exhibition, visitors witness intense individual creativity, a blend of Eastern and Western influences, traditional art forms and imagery, digital technology, and narratives that examine personal and social issues. Even with all the variety, one thing remains constant. *Wild Imagination* always conveys the poetic nature and traditional feel of ink, the timeless Chinese medium that artists across the Greater Bay Area continue to reinterpret in exciting new ways. ●

Guangzhou-born artist Shen Ruijun is an avid researcher on Chinese gardens and has demonstrated her views in *Pond with White Snow* (2016)

SPORTS

A boost for the board

Chess in Macao was on its last legs until the Covid-19 pandemic renewed interest in the sport, particularly among local youth. Now, the Macau Chess Federation sees hope for the game's future in the city.

Text **Gilbert Humphrey**
Photos **Denzel Calangi**

Every year, the Macau Chess Federation holds several 'Rapid Tournaments', a series of 10-minute matches

Checkmate! When Macao resident Herman Ho was in his first year of university in Taipei, he didn't have anyone to play chess with, so he spent his free time taking on computerised opponents. That is, until he stumbled upon Taiwan's chess federation about a year later. Not only did Ho develop new friends who shared a passion for chess, but the community of local players also helped Ho unleash his potential and led him to a career in the sport.

Back in his hometown, Ho hoped to find the same buzzing community that he enjoyed in Taipei. He joined the Grupo de Xadrez de Macau (GXM) – known in English as the Macau Chess Federation – and has been its permanent secretary for the past 10 years. As the secretary, he has been trying to recruit more young people to play, but until recently, interest has been scant.

Compared to mainstream sports like football, volleyball and basketball, chess has never been very popular in Macao. "The most important thing is not to push or develop the sport but to keep it," says Ho. "I just want to find people to join the chess federation and our activities. I'm not asking much – just for chess to survive."

If the past two years are any indication, Ho might be in luck. With pandemic rules restricting travel, many people in the city have picked up new hobbies, including chess, and withdrawn from team or contact sports. At the same time, more young people have been joining the federation's chess tournaments and casual matches, and a Finnish chess pro has started up two growing chess clubs at a local school. With this renewed momentum, there might be a chance for chess to establish deeper and more lasting roots in the city.





FINDING AN OPENING IN MACAO

GXM began as a small club in the 1980s and joined the International Chess Federation (FIDE) in 1994. Despite its four-decade-long legacy in the city and international standing, the federation still falls behind peers in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore when it comes to size and stability.

According to Ho, GXM currently has around 50 active members, most of whom are teenagers, who play casual matches and participate in tournaments. By comparison, Taiwan's federation – which only became active in 2003 – has more than 1,000 members. “Chess gets more popular every year there, because in Taiwan, parents push their children to learn different activities, through which [they] can win prizes and additional marks to help them get into better universities,” he points out. “[Parents] are even willing to pay for their children's activities, whereas in Macao, many people don't want to pay.”

In Hong Kong, Ho says, the local chess federation also “has new members every year and its level is always improving. But in Macao, we always have the same people [joining our activities].”

Sometimes, GXM also loses familiar faces due to life pressures that force talented young players to stop playing chess competitively. It's common, he says, for great players to take jobs in Macao's gaming sector and stop attending tournaments due to family and work obligations. And so the federation frequently finds itself facing a brain drain, as young talents shift focus to their studies or

career. “Normally, after graduating [from school] ... they leave the city to study overseas, so only a few continue to join the federation's activities,” says Ho.

“Especially now that the economy is getting worse due to the pandemic, I can understand that everyone has to take care of their living [situation] rather than spending extra time and money [on] chess.”

Ho also points out that Macao's relatively small population makes it harder to find and cultivate chess pros. Despite these complicating factors, chess has enjoyed something of a revival recently. During the pandemic, many people looked for new hobbies that challenge the mind, calm the nerves and are relatively easy to enjoy while social distancing.

Since chess requires only two people to play, it attracted many new and returning players. In addition, the federation has been able to hold games and even some tournaments during the pandemic, unlike many team or contact sports.

GXM has seen three times the number of participants at its tournaments and casual games in the past two years when compared with pre-Covid-19 turnouts. At the group's last two Rapid Tournaments – a series of 10-minute matches held on 23 and 30 April – more than 30 people joined each event, and the youngest participant was six years old.

“In the past, only 10 people would join,” says Ho. “Maybe [it's] because there are not many other activities [available during the pandemic].”

(Opposite page) Herman Ho has been the permanent secretary of the Macau Chess Federation since 2012

More young people have joined the Macau Chess Federation's activities over the past two years



Finnish chess pro and Macao resident Heikki Kalevi Lehtinen (left) and two of his three children, 7-year-old Elias and 10-year-old Anja

NEW ENERGY FROM AN INTERNATIONAL MASTER

Prior to the pandemic, GXM regularly sent teams to international tournaments. The last time a Macao team attended an event overseas was 2018, at the Chess Olympiad held in Batumi, Georgia.

Due to ongoing travel restrictions, the federation hopes to make the most of the local momentum with its annual Macao Open, held every October. Among those looking forward to the event is Macao’s top-ranked competitor, Heikki Kalevi Lehtinen, who always goes to watch the matches.

Although he isn’t playing this year, the 42-year-old father of three competed in the Macao Open twice, in 2015 and 2019, and won both times. He also holds Macao’s highest Elo rating – a skill-level rating system in chess – of 2389. (As a reference point, chess Grandmaster Magnus Carlsen from Norway currently holds the world’s highest Elo rating of 2882, and the highest level possible is 3400 – a level only computers have achieved.)

Born in Tampere, Finland, Lehtinen learned to play chess when he was just five years old, competing against his older brother, father and grandfather. Lehtinen

joined his first competition when he was seven and represented Finland for the first time at 10 in the 1991 Nordic Junior Championships held in the Faroe Islands, where he won the bronze medal.

Lehtinen continued to represent his country in national, regional and international chess events for many years, and in 2004, he achieved the title of International Master, the second highest chess title, behind only grandmaster.

In the 2008 Chess Olympiad in Dresden, Germany, he met his wife-to-be Annie, who represented Macao at the tournament. They married in 2010 and lived in Tampere until 2015, when they moved to Annie’s hometown of Macao. Now Lehtinen teaches mathematics at the School of the Nations (SON) and runs two after-school chess clubs.

Thanks to Lehtinen’s club, a new generation is starting to fall in love with the game. “It’s very popular among our students. Currently, we have 40 students in two different groups: middle [grades 6 to 8] and secondary schools [grades 9 to 12], Lehtinen says. “Students like to compete with each other. The rules in chess are easy to learn, so they enjoy playing chess during recess,” he adds.

Not surprisingly, Lehtinen and his wife have passed their love of chess on to their children: 10-year-old Anja, seven-year-old Elias and four-year-old Matias. The older two regularly join GXM’s tournaments and activities.

“One can play chess at any age. It’s a great way to develop concentration and logical thinking skills and helps players increase their creativity skills,” he says. “I’m encouraging my children to play but not pushing them to be too serious; it’s just a nice activity that’s good for them.”



Meet the Grand Masters

Get to know the five greatest chess players of all time according to www.chess.com.

ANATOLY KARPOV



Karpov was the World Champion from 1975-1985 then went on to become the FIDE World Champion from 1993-1999. In 1993, Kasparov broke away from FIDE and eventually became the subject of Tibor Karolyi’s two-volume work, *Karpov’s Strategic Wins*.

BOBBY FISCHER



Fischer was the first and only American world champion, and many consider him to be the most famous chess player in history. From 1970-1971, he won 20 consecutive games against world-class opposition – one of the game’s most impressive winning streaks. Adding another feather to his cap, Fischer’s book, *My 60 Memorable Games*, remains one of the best books on chess ever written.

GARRY KASPAROV



Kasparov held the world title from 1985-2000. He reached the top of the rankings in 1984 and, barring a few minor exceptions, remained the world’s No. 1 chess player until 2006. He reached his peak Elo rating of 2856 in 2000 – a record Magnus Carlsen surpassed in 2014.

JOSÉ RAÚL CAPABLANCA



Dubbed the ‘Human Chess Machine’ by many, Capablanca reigned as the World Champion from 1921-1927. He learned chess at age four and defeated Cuban champion Juan Corzo at 13. He’s best known for amassing a record 40 tournament wins and 23 draws during an unprecedented eight-year winning streak from 1916-1924.

MAGNUS CARLSEN



The reigning world champion, Carlsen became the youngest player in history to reach the 2800-rating threshold in 2009. In 2014, he peaked at 2889, which is still the world record, and has been the world’s No. 1 player since 2011.



Although 14-year-old Matthew Tse only started playing chess two years ago, he can see himself playing for many years to come

GETTING MACAO'S YOUTH ON BOARD

One of Lehtinen's protégés at SON, 14-year-old Matthew Tse, started playing chess about two years ago. Lehtinen taught him to play, but Tse says he didn't get hooked until his friends started playing, too.

The more Tse plays, the more he appreciates chess's social and strategic qualities. "Chess improves my concentration and my calculation skills. I learned from chess that you have to be patient; if you are impatient, then you will most likely lose," he explains.

As a promising sign for GXM, Tse says he can see himself playing for many years to come. "It has become a part of my life; I practice chess every day."

Tse can rattle off his favourite players – Magnus Carlsen, Levy Rozman, Hikaru Nakamura and Eric Rosen – but respects his local mentor most. "I look up to Mr Heikki [Lehtinen] because he was the one that got me into chess and he is very inspirational for us students," he says.

In addition to hosting chess clubs, Tse would love to see Macao schools invest in developing chess

further. "I think many people my age are not into chess because it's too much work for them. People my age are often busy studying or doing other activities," Tse admits. But he thinks if schools encourage Macao students to give chess a try, they might be surprised by how much they enjoy it.

Apart from being a nice way to spend free time on a late afternoon or over holidays, chess tournaments tend to be social events, where players make new friends, like Ho did when he first got involved with the chess federation in Taiwan.

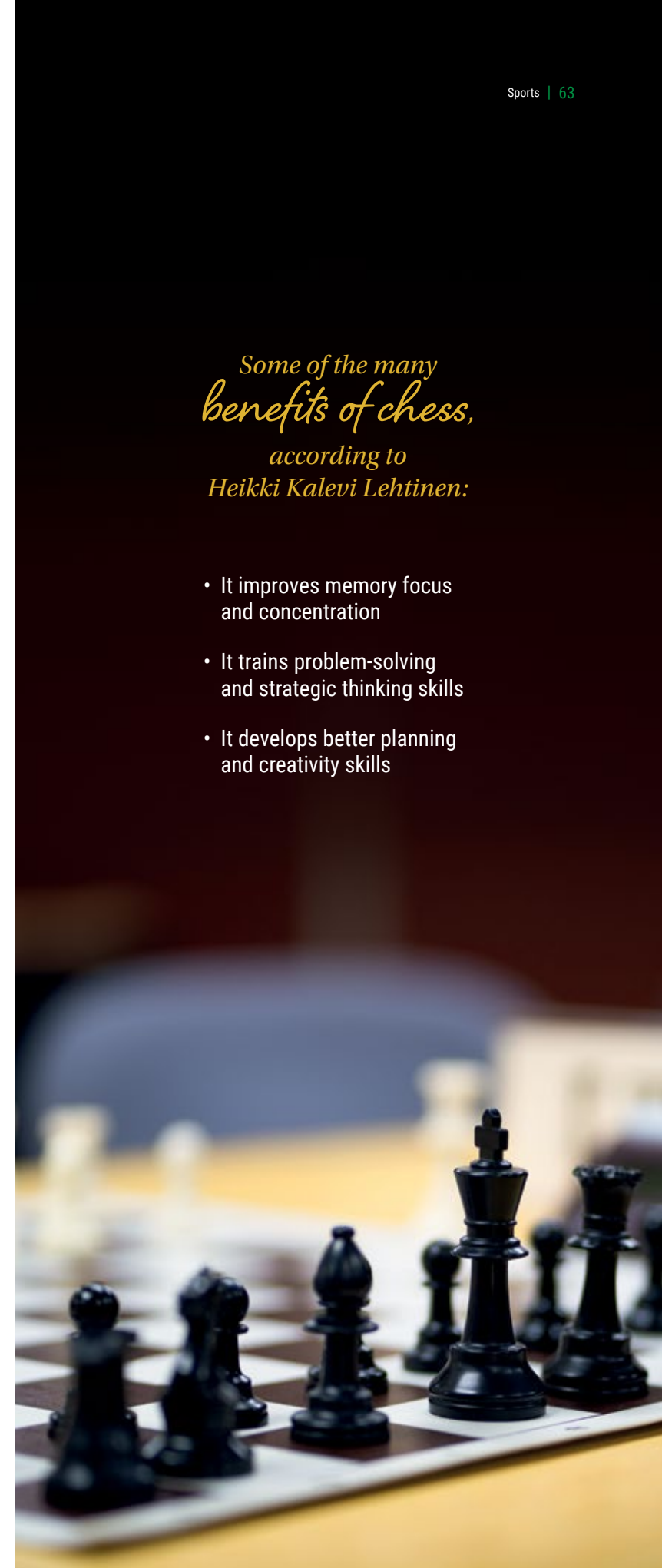
But it is the challenge of winning a game that perhaps attracts most players. For Ho, chess is also about sportsmanship and dealing with defeat – on and off the board. "In chess, there's always a winner and loser," he says, "and so you learn to accept loss, as is the case sometimes in life."

Though he remains concerned about the game's long-term popularity after the pandemic, Ho holds out hope that chess will grow in Macao – maybe not to the level it has in Taiwan or Hong Kong, but enough to give it a stronger foothold in society.

"[For instance] at the moment, we have around 10 students [who play chess]. Maybe two to three have the potential to develop further, but after graduating, maybe only one will keep playing chess," says Ho. "I hope with more students taking an interest in chess, [that number will start to grow]." ●

*Some of the many
benefits of chess,
according to
Heikki Kalevi Lehtinen:*

- It improves memory focus and concentration
- It trains problem-solving and strategic thinking skills
- It develops better planning and creativity skills



ARTS & CULTURE

For designer Au Chon Hin, personal accolades are wins for all Macao

The talented young designer has won awards and attracted clients at home and overseas, but he has his sights set on something bigger: providing new opportunities for Macao creators.



Au Chon Hin was presented with the Macau Design Award for his brand identity for Dino Burger

Text **Erico Dias**

Photos courtesy of **Au Chon Hin**

For 31-year-old designer Au Chon Hin, art came naturally.

Born in Macao in 1990, Au found joy in art and design as far back as he can remember. His family owned a mahjong school, where they taught the traditional tile-based game. After Au came home from school, he would spend his evenings at his parents' mahjong academy and pass the time doodling on the tiles – a creative hobby that his parents encouraged.

“As I grew older, I realised that [drawing] could be developed into a career,” he says.

Although Au is no longer drawing on mahjong tiles, this formative experience has nevertheless influenced his life's work. Au has emerged as one of Macao's most promising graphic artists. His work is everywhere on the streets of Macao: the posters he created for the HUSH!! Full Music concert in 2020, the logo he designed for up-and-coming burger spot Dino Burger. The founder of Untitled Macao, one of the city's most popular design companies, Au even landed one of the design world's top jobs when he was hired to produce artwork for software giant Adobe. These incredible achievements helped Au earn a Medal of Merit from the Macao government last year.

For Au, however, personal accolades are not the end game. He has even grander ambitions.



One of the vibrant posters
Untitled Macao produced for
Art Macao 2021

(Opposite page) Au receives
the TDC prize in Tokyo for his
design for the 16th Macao City
Fringe Festival

FINDING PURPOSE IN WORK

For much of his life, Au followed a familiar path for most young professionals. He attended school, studied his chosen field, design, and secured a good job with the Macao government after graduating. But this formal structure only provided a foundation for Au's career; success has come from what he has done with his opportunities, from his unique outlook on life and work.

After secondary school at Escola Catolica Estrela do Mar, he joined the Macao Polytechnic University (IPM) and graduated in 2014 with a bachelor's in design. During school breaks, he interned in big cities in the mainland including Beijing, Guangzhou and Shenzhen. Those internships not only helped him expand his professional network, they also gave him clarity for his career and provided an education he says designers can only get outside the classroom.

"We can only truly realise what the market expects [from] designers through [real-world] work," Au says.

The pieces of the puzzle had not come together by the time he graduated, though. Rather than pursuing art on his own terms right after school, he took a job with the Macao government for nearly four years. In his role, he worked on projects like the Macao Arts Festival, Macao International Music Festival and Macao City Fringe Festival. Although he remains proud of these projects, they did not leave him feeling satisfied. Something was missing.

"I tried creating designs for cultural activities, but that [kind of work] does not help designers grow in the business market," Au explains. He also says these projects often go unnoticed. "It's sad that people know Macao for its casinos, or as the second Las Vegas."

Several years into his career, Au found himself at something of a watershed moment. He feared his creative ideas would never come to fruition, that the artwork he really wanted to produce would never be seen by the public, that he would never be able to give back to his hometown. So he took a leap of faith and started his own business, Untitled Macao, in 2017.

After hiring four designers to fill out his team, Au defined the company's mission: Specialising in branding, Untitled Macao "creates a new identity" for companies in Macao. They design everything from flyers, logos, banners and posters to websites and props for events, like the Infinite Love Marathon Concerts, which took place at Sai Van Lake in February.

Their work also aims to raise the banner for Macao designers. Au believes that the city puts too much emphasis on gaming and sports, neglecting the creative talent living in the shadows of the casinos and

racetracks. With Untitled Macao, he hopes to nurture a new generation of artists and designers, providing opportunities to tap into their creative ideas and make a living out of it, too.

MOVING UP FROM THE FRINGES

As Untitled Macao began to find its footing, Au started to receive recognition for his own style – one he describes as "avant-garde and unique", featuring eye-catching colours, simple shapes and art that will leave you wanting to know more about the business or event he's covering.

In 2018, Au established himself on the international scene at the Tokyo TDC Annual Awards. The influential event organised each year by the Tokyo Type Directors Club (TDC) showcases text-based design and attracts thousands of creative professionals from around the world. Among this crowded field, Au won the TDC Prize for his work for the 16th Macao City Fringe Festival.

Centred on the festival's "Feast of Creativity" theme, his winning illustrations featured neon-hued colours, playful patterns and fluid, recognisable shapes – common food items, utensils and others that spoke to the idea of a "feast". The work reflected Au's personal mission to show to Macao residents the role that great design can play in society.

It also gelled with the vibrant, evocative artwork that infuses every aspect of life in urban environments today, from bold, bright billboards to promotional materials for events put up across cities. The judges agreed. "[They] thought my work matched with society nowadays, this generation," he says.

After winning the TDC Prize, Au was on a roll. He took home bronze

at the New York ADC Awards and won top honours at the New York ADC Young Guns 17. He followed those up with four awards at the Macao Design Award ceremony in 2022: MDA Grand Prize, SJM New Talent Award, Best New Macau Designer of the Year and Brand identity Gold Award for Dino Burger.

As the wins piled up, so did the work. "I was happy but stressed at the same time," Au says of the attention that followed his TDC Prize. The scope of his projects began to change, too.



OPPORTUNITY COMES CALLING

With Untitled Macao, Au has looked beyond the city to find clients. He has even branched out beyond the booming metropolises that make up the Greater Bay Area. "There are opportunities in the Greater Bay Area, but there are much more opportunities all over the world," he explains.

Online platforms like WeChat, ZCOOL, Tumblr and Behance have helped to spread Untitled Macao’s reach. Behance has been especially fruitful. Owned by Adobe, the makers of software like Photoshop, Lightroom, InDesign and Premiere Pro that is preferred by millions of artists, illustrators, photographers and publishers around the world; Behance is one of the industry’s most influential marketplaces. In just a few years, Au gained close to 30,000 followers and about 930,000 project views on his account. That has helped to turn the client-provider relationship on its head – rather than searching for business, business comes to him.

“We seldom approach or seek clients actively. We just share our work on these platforms,” he says. “It shows [that clients] respect our design.”

Behance has helped change the make-up of Untitled Macao’s customers, too. About 70 per cent of their projects come from clients in Switzerland, Japan and the UK. It also attracted one very notable client.

In 2021, Adobe commissioned Untitled Macao to create the official artwork for InDesign 2022. Life had come full circle. Like so many designers, Au had used Adobe software since he was in secondary school. Suddenly, he was creating artwork for the company that would be seen by millions of people like him worldwide. And the opportunity stemmed from another

Adobe product in Behance. Adobe representatives told Au they were impressed by Untitled Macao’s Behance portfolio – their vibrant, eye-catching designs, including Au’s work for the Fringe Festival, the Hush concert, Macao Design Week and the Macao International Parade 2019.

“Without a doubt, this project is the most important [of my career so

far]. I know it will only be showcased for a year, but the world will get to see it,” he says. “It is one of my biggest achievements.”

After several 6 am Zoom meetings with Adobe’s Art/Creative and Marketing Director and others in California, Au and the Adobe team agreed on a ‘DNA’ concept. In trademark fashion, the design pops with shades of pink, green and blue.

It also embodies Au’s empathetic worldview and affinity for movies related to the universe, human beings and philosophy. The DNA concept, he explains, speaks to the way we are all connected yet have our own unique characteristics.

DOING MORE FOR MACAO

While Au would never downplay his achievements – his work with Adobe, his TDC Prize, his designs for Macao businesses – they are not the reason he is so laser-focused on succeeding.

He views awards as a “bonus”, a way to gain recognition not just for himself but for all Macao designers. “My sole focus is to work on the local design industry and let people outside Macao know that a small city like [ours] has talented designers as well,” he says.

Arguably the most important step forward in those efforts happened recently. On 18 February, Au was presented with the Medal of Merit in Culture by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng at the 2021 Decorations, Medals and Certificates of Merit Awards Ceremony. “The chief executive said he appreciated my effort and contribution [to Macao’s culture] and encouraged me to do more in the future,” Au says.

Au is certainly not resting on his laurels. He says that receiving the Medal of Merit has only steeled

his determination to do more for Macao and fuelled a fire to create greater work. It has also boosted his social consciousness. With Untitled Macao firmly on the up, he hopes to offer more jobs and internships to emerging designers in the city. Although he is just one person, and Untitled Macao is just one company, he believes he can help to lead a paradigm shift.

“Many locals used to underestimate the power of culture and design [and had] no idea how to find designers to help them with the branding or design of their products,” he says. But now he thinks that is starting to change. As the city begins to invest in its creative industry, it might start to shed its reputation as a gaming hub.

“What keeps me going is the need to produce [works that benefit] society and transform the world through design,” Au says. “Every time I receive an award, I’m more convinced that I’m on the right path.” ●



Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng presents Au with the Medal of Merit in Culture

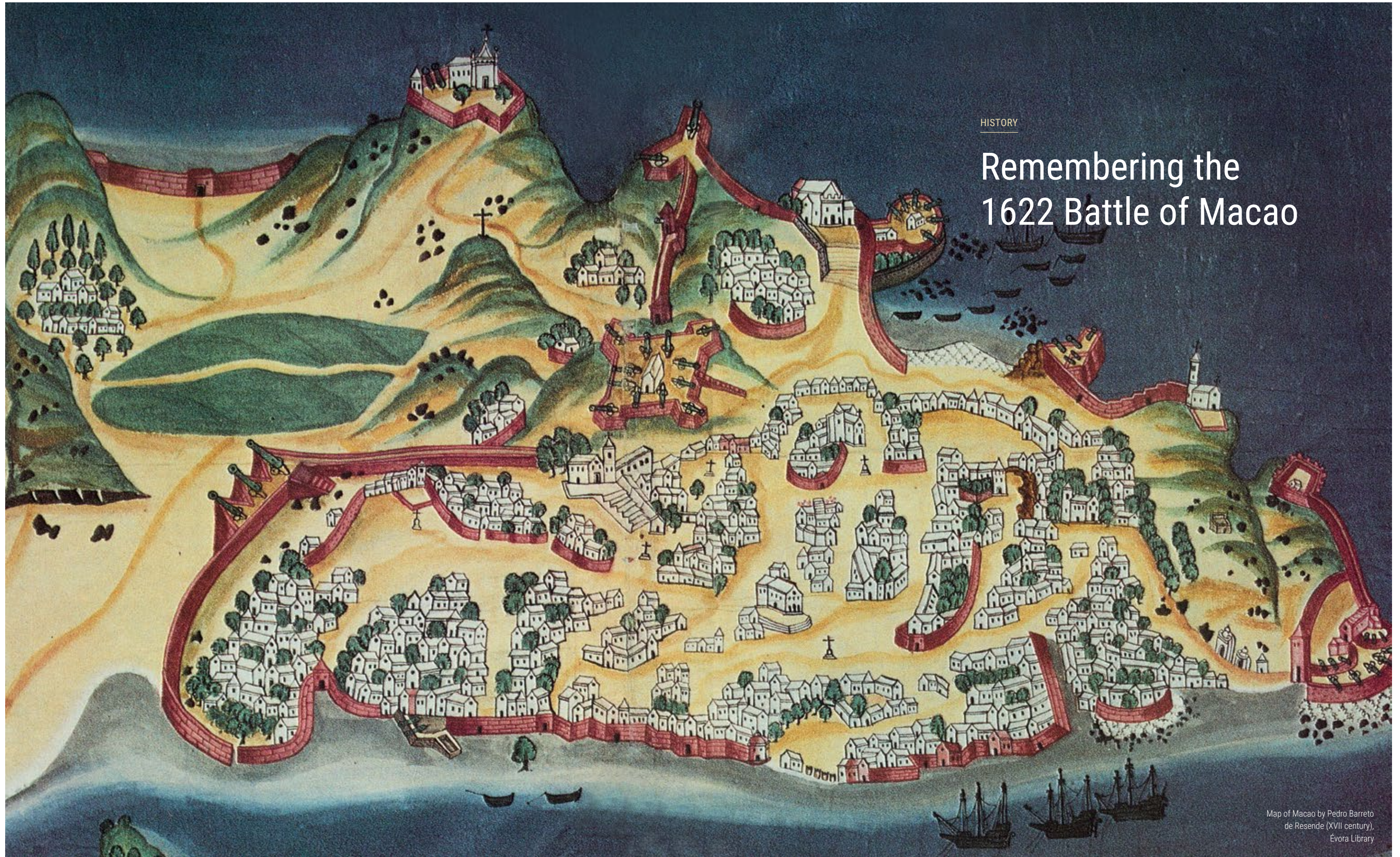


(Above) From Adobe user to Adobe creator: Au’s designs for the software giant have reached a huge global audience

Fluorescent colours and familiar shapes define Untitled Macao’s eye-catching style

HISTORY

Remembering the 1622 Battle of Macao



Map of Macao by Pedro Barreto
de Resende (XVII century),
Évora Library



Precisely 400 years ago, a group of Macao residents, religious orders, slaves and Chinese citizens fended off a Dutch invasion of the Portuguese settlement, kept open the valuable trade route to Japan and reinforced relations with Chinese merchants. As a result of the victory, the King of Portugal appointed, in 1623, the first Governor of Macao, who consolidated the settlement's defences to prevent future attacks from European nations, and Macao grew as a key trading hub in Asia.

Historian Ivo Carneiro de Sousa recalls the Dutch East India Company's attempts to conquer Macao and control trade routes in Southeast Asia, how the battle took place and how the event was recalled by the Dutch, the Jesuits and the Dominican Friars.

Text **Ivo Carneiro de Sousa**

Battle of Macao, Johan Nieuhof (1665, Peace Palace, the Hague, Netherlands)

In the first volume of *Das Kapital*, the only one of the three-part work published during his lifetime, Karl Marx recalls the history of the Dutch East India Company, the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, or VOC (1602-1799). Several times, he does so very critically.

The chapter on the “Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist” presents the VOC as the first modern capitalist company in history, denouncing the violence and massive exploitation that the Dutch trade organisation brought to Southeast Asia “dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt.”

In consequence, the pages of Marx’s seminal critique of the political economy show no sympathy for the expansion of the Dutch commercial company in the Asian seas and ports where the so-called Portuguese eastern maritime empire had settled in the 16th century. Marx stresses that the history of Dutch rule in Asia was “one of the most extraordinary relations of treachery, bribery, massacre and meanness.”

The genius of this great 19th-century German philosopher proved these harsh words with a well-known historical example in the study of the decline of the Portuguese commercial presence in the Orient during the 17th century: the Dutch conquest of Malacca, the keystone to the riches of Southeast Asia.

According to Marx, to secure Malacca, the Dutch bribed the Portuguese governor to let them into the town in 1641. They hurried at once to his house and assassinated him to “abstain” from the payment of 80 reals (today around MOP 222,606), the price of his treason. “Wherever the VOC set

foot,” Marx concluded, “devastation, and depopulation followed. Banjuwangi, a province of Java, in 1750 numbered over 80,000 inhabitants, in 1811, only 8,000. Sweet commerce!”

Unfortunately, Marx did not leave us any notes on Macao and its extraordinary historical importance in the intermediation of world trade from the late 16th century to the early 19th century. Therefore, our referential thinker ignored that the history of the VOC in the Eastern seas was not only one of conquest but also one that included dramatic setbacks. One of the most important was the failure of the Dutch mission in its attempt to invade and occupy Macao.

On 24 June 1622 – the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist in the Catholic Church’s liturgical calendar – the Dutch were utterly defeated after fierce naval attacks and deadly land clashes.

In this period, from 1580 to 1640, Portugal was ruled by Spanish kings in a dual monarchy system that became known as the Iberian Union. Soon, Portuguese cities, fortresses and trading posts throughout Asia, including Macao, inherited the usual enemies of the epochal Spanish empire: the English and the Dutch. It is worth remembering that the seven United Provinces of the Netherlands – which, with around a 1.5 million inhabitants, achieved independence through the revolt against Spain in 1581 – found in the creation of the VOC in 1602, and later, in 1621, of the West India Company (GWC), the means to guarantee the abundant overseas commercial incomes able to consolidate their political, economic and military power.

(Opposite page) Battle of Cochin, India 1663, Coenraet Decker (1682)

Jan Pieterszoon Coen, Anonymous, (c 1650, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

In the first decades of the 17th century, the Dutch fleet reached 2,000 ships, at the time more than the combined navies of England and France. This powerful fleet brought professional navigators and maritime pilots to militias associating Dutch soldiers with mercenaries from the various geographies of Northern Europe united by the same Protestant opposition to Roman Catholicism and imperial Habsburg Spain.

Since its inauguration as a modern, for-profit shared company, the VOC became not only a trade corporation but also a powerful instrument in the global maritime war against the Spanish Empire and the Iberian Union. Arriving in the East to compete with and conquer the Portuguese and Spanish settlements in the first decades of the 17th century, the VOC established

its capital in Jayakarta, changing its name to Batavia (present-day Jakarta). After that, the city-port developed following the urban mercantile pattern of Amsterdam.

From Batavia, the VOC trade and military fleet quickly identified Macao as a central platform to access China and to attack Manila, the Spanish stronghold in the region with trade connections to New Spain (today Mexico and the Western United States). The Dutch had already attacked Portuguese trade ships near Macao in 1601, 1603 and 1607 but had never attempted to assault the Sino-Portuguese enclave.

In 1614, Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629) became director-general of all VOC trade factories, and later governor-general in Batavia from 1618 to 1629. Coen promoted a militant policy based on his sinister motto: *Dispereert niet, ontsiet uwe vyanden niet* (Do not despair, do not spare your enemy). Accordingly, Coen maintained that Portuguese and Spanish competition in the Eastern seas should be eliminated by force, a hard strategy that led to conflicts with VOC's board of directors, the Heren (or 'Gentlemen') XVII, who generally preferred to achieve trade profits through less violent and costly adventures.

In 1621, Coen ordered a very expensive attack on the Banda Islands in Indonesia with the help of Japanese mercenaries aiming to control the archipelago's prosperous nutmeg trade. The result was the massacre of the Bandanese: about 2,800 killed, 1,700 enslaved and 1,000 exiled in Batavia. The violent conquest resounded in the region, especially among the Portuguese and Spanish, who had trading factories in the Spice Islands.

PREPARING TO CONQUER MACAO

In the same year, Coen started planning military action to conquer Macao, with three main commercial and political goals: controlling the Chinese junk trade to Batavia; removing the Portuguese from the Macao-Nagasaki silver trade; and building a robust naval base to attack the galleons running trade routes between Manila and Acapulco. The VOC had gathered information on Macao from several sources, including Portuguese documents collected in maritime attacks, interrogations of Chinese traders in Batavia and English reports. Coen believed that Macao wouldn't be able to deflect an invasion led by a dozen strong-armed ships and a military force of 1,000 to 1,500 motivated men.

On 10 April 1622, Coen ordered a Batavian fleet to attack and occupy Macao. Captain Cornelis Reijersen, who kept a detailed journal of the expedition, set off with eight vessels loaded with modern artillery and 1,024 men. At the end of May, the fleet attacked two Portuguese trading vessels off the southern coast of modern-day Vietnam and received reinforcements of three other ships and 100 men.

On 20 June, the expedition reached a sheltered cove near the Taipa island, where two Dutch ships and two English vessels had previously tried without success to blockade Macao. However, Coen's orders were clear: Reijersen could only accept English naval cooperation and must exclude them from the conquest and occupation of Macao, as well as all the spoils that would follow. The



captain finally assembled 13 ships and a military force of 600 European soldiers, 100 Bandanese and dozens of Malay-Indonesian and Japanese mercenaries.

On 23 June, Reijersen and the other captains identified the best landing spot: the Cacilhas bay area in the outer harbour. In the evening, three Dutch ships engaged in an artillery fight against the bulwark of São Francisco at the entry to the inner harbour, but were damaged and retreated at night. At sunrise the next day, two other vessels restarted the attack on the São Francisco bastion only to withdraw again after heavy losses.

The land invasion began at Cacilhas beach as hundreds of attackers from 32 barges disembarked and came ashore. A small Portuguese force of around 150 men led by António Rodrigues Cavalinho, a prominent trader from the Macanese municipal elite, fired against the

invaders, seriously hurting Reijersen, who had to be evacuated to his ship. Captain Hans Ruffijn took command of the Dutch and mercenary forces. The defenders (which consisted of many communities and nationalities in Macao) strategically lured the invaders to follow them up to the slopes of Guia Hill.

Here, in an area known as Fontinha (fount) due to its water springs, the Dutch forces were bombarded by artillery rained down from the under-construction Monte Fortress. Here, a patchwork of militiamen – Portuguese soldiers from the State of India, who had married and retired in Macao; Eurasian traders and their domestic servants; local and maritime Chinese; Spanish merchants and their Tagalog helpers plus hundreds of African slaves – repelled the invaders, immediately killing Captain Ruffijn and hundreds of Dutch soldiers and their mercenaries.





Batavia, Jacques-Gabriel Huquier (c 1755)

(Opposite page) Victory Monument in Macao inaugurated in 1871

Dutch sources reported the loss of 180 men, hundreds of injured and most of their military equipment. Some Portuguese sources suggest that 300 Dutch were killed and hundreds more held captive, while Spanish documents from the Manila governor increased the number of deceased to 800.

THE GREAT DEFEAT

Immediately after the heavy Dutch defeat, a process of textual representation of the victory circulated among the Portuguese, while the Dutch began a long process of justification of the failure, producing dozens of reports, including tough inquiries of the survivors. The VOC losses of both men and equipment were very high: for a profitable company, the Dutch defeat in Macao was not tolerable.

The Portuguese, meanwhile, produced two immediate representations of the

event, with some divergences. The first, in Spanish titled *Relación de la Vitoria*, was printed in Lisbon in 1623. It was written by a Jesuit visitor of the missions, the Portuguese Father Jerónimo Rodrigues (1567-1628), who explained to European Catholic readers that the victory over the Dutch was a Jesuit feat since the missionaries had led the defence against the “heretical” invasion.

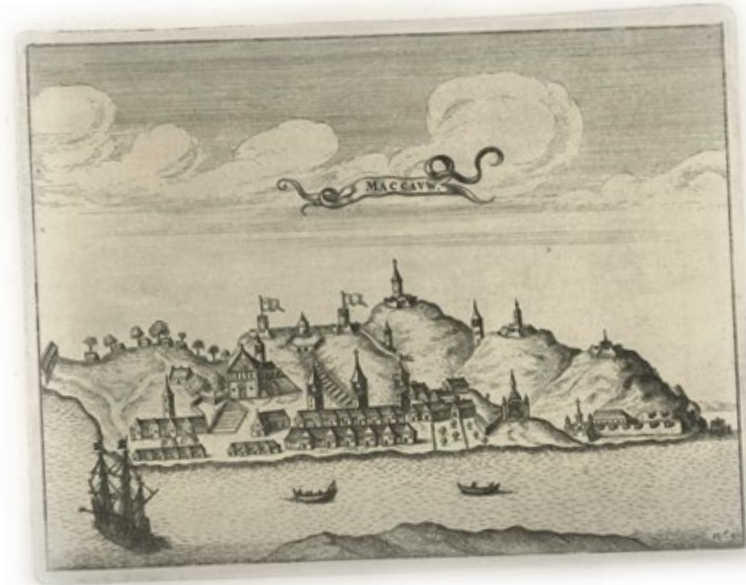
During this period, the Dominicans, who had settled in Macao by way of Manila and already criticised the Jesuit missionary accommodation strategies, produced their own interpretation of the events. The Portuguese Friar António do Rosário extolled the leadership of the city’s captain Lopo Sarmiento de Carvalho, Captain-Major of the Japan Voyage, but his text remained a manuscript. Consequently, an account mobilised by the extensive world network of the Jesuit missionaries spread and was later considered the more authentic account of the Battle of 1622.

In the Jesuit chronicles of the 17th and 18th centuries, Father Manuel Xavier provided a different account, celebrating a convenient hero: the Italian Father Giacomo Rho (1593-1638) had fired a straight cannon shot from Monte Fortress; in some versions, the story holds that he destroyed the Dutch ammunition carrier, while in others his shot exploded the admiral Dutch ship, securing the victory.

Dutch VOC sources, including Reijersen’s journal, tell a different version. Since round numbers in these accounts are not exact figures but rather loose estimates used to express “many”, the Dutch documents based on several witness accounts decreased the size of their forces and increased the number of Macao defenders. The sources agree that there were very few Portuguese fighters. The Dutch were mainly attacked by hundreds of African slaves, who did not fight as European “gentlemen” but rather slaughtered the Dutch soldiers, behaving like “savages”. Some documents from the VOC archives even suggest that the Portuguese had purposely drugged their slaves, who barbarically killed and beheaded the surprised Dutch officials and soldiers. All the witnesses questioned by VOC agents agreed that a European army couldn’t oppose the animalistic brutality of the hundreds of slaves who outnumbered the Dutch forces.

The Portuguese sources only mention the role of the *cafres* (‘kaffirs’ in English is a derogatory term for a black African), without any special emphasis or figures. However, several accounts mention that many slave owners immediately freed their slaves after the victory. The “Portuguese” representations, written in Castilian, however, agree that the slaves beheaded many Dutch, which was interpreted as a kind of memory of the day Saint John the Baptist was beheaded. Civil and religious authorities in the following years concurred to make 24 June the city’s day and observant Catholic holiday in honour of the miraculous intercession of the saint.





Macao, Joannes Janssonius (1646)

Memories of foreigners who visited Macao in the years following the victory described the festivities of that day, including a devotional pilgrimage to a stone cross erected on the site of the Fontinha and even theatrical performances by children who studied with the Jesuits, featuring miniature boats and war scenarios depicting the great victory.

Much later, in 1871, the Leal Senado, the seat of the Macao government at the time, erected a public monument commemorating the battle. A column surmounted by the Portuguese royal arms displays a large inscription on the stone body that summarises the victory, but not without a bit of manipulation. Dictated by the growing anti-British nationalism of the Portuguese commercial bourgeoisie, who, in the case of Macao, wrongly accused the British colony of Hong Kong to be the

primary cause of the economic decline of the Portuguese-Chinese city, Dutch Captain Cornelis Reijersen is engraved as “Roggers”.

THE ROLE OF MOZAMBICAN SLAVES

For a historian researching the battle of 24 June 1622, rigour forces us to emphasise that the invading Dutch forces could not have been defeated without the mobilisation of the hundreds of African slaves in the enclave. Most were Macuas and Macondes, ethnic groups native to modern-day northern Mozambique and neighbouring nations, brought by the slave boats from the “carreira da Índia” to Goa, Malacca and Macao.

In the early 1600s, there were already 2,000 African slaves in Malacca and 1,000 in Macao. At the time, their only prospect of a tolerable life was to identify themselves as closely as they could with the wishes of their Portuguese masters. In Macao, these African slaves constituted the private militias of wealthy Portuguese and Eurasian merchants; did the heaviest work, from artillery foundries to bakeries; and were diligent domestic servants, providing water to their owners’ houses and emptying their waste each day.

Traditional history has generally forgotten these communities and praised the more powerful classes and their dominant heroes. Still, the very rich and capitalist VOC has fully documented that it lost the battle of Macao in 1622 at the hands of the brave, unexpected militiamen: the African slaves who protected the city. ●

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PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

SEZs in Africa, a new track for Sino-Lusophone cooperation

Portuguese-speaking countries want to replicate the success of China's Special Economic Zones, a key part of the Asian giant's economic boom. A new academic book published in Macao helps explain how.

Text **Fei Pou Lo**

Understanding how to create a successful SEZ may be key to industrial development in the African PSCs

Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs) in Africa are looking at Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to spur economic development. And they may find in China an exceptionally suitable partner to develop these instruments of investment attraction, under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a new Macao-based study finds.

According to Professor Francisco Leandro of City University of Macau (CityU), an SEZ is a “geographical area designated to promote an economic function” which is granted special “legal, economic and policy instruments”. These ‘bubbles’ within the broader economic system aim to boost trade, investment and job creation, and have succeeded in doing so in China and many other countries over the last several decades.

The adoption of SEZs was an important component of China's instrument of reform and opening up, from the 1980s onwards. Leandro underlines this in a recent article co-authored with two doctoral students at CityU's Institute for Research on Portuguese-speaking Countries, Paulo Guilherme Figueiredo and Yichao Li. Additionally, domestic SEZs and overseas SEZs are currently key elements of the BRI, where the authors identify a commercial corridor which they call the Lusophone Maritime Silk Road (LMSR) – the extension of the China-Indian Ocean-Africa-Mediterranean Sea Blue Economic Passage. “With transport and logistical links between Portuguese-speaking countries relatively well-established,

and performing SEZs in African Portuguese-speaking countries (APSCs), plans are emerging for new and reformed SEZs”, they write.

“China's success in SEZs implementation has attracted the attention of numerous countries, including APSCs, interested in using SEZs as tools to spur economic growth, which has triggered an ample scope for cooperation between China and PSCs in the area of development”, the authors add in the article, titled *The Extension of the China-Indian Ocean Blue Economic Passage: Lessons and Challenges in the New Wave of Special Economic Zones in African Portuguese-speaking Countries*. They underline new plans for SEZs in Angola, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Cabo Verde, which are central to the countries' governments' strategies.

SEZS IN AFRICAN PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

The experience of PSCs with SEZs is varied. While Brazil has vast experience, beginning in the 1960s and is still evolving, and Portugal has made more limited use of the model, the more recent experience of African countries has been very uneven. Guinea-Bissau, which has had SEZ plans, but never implemented them, “is lacking in any one of conditions to success, among which the lack of connectivity due to its geographic location can be considered as the most important”, the study says.

In Angola and Equatorial Guinea, which have SEZs, their geographical locations allow them to have rich oil resources, “but this also brings them the disadvantage of a single economic structure”, according to the study. “Therefore, seizing the necessary development opportunities and escaping the predicament are their long-term challenges”, they add.

Cabo Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe have “great advantages in their geopolitics” and, compared with other African countries, “the development of human capital is relatively good, and the construction and management of SEZs have pretty complete legal guarantees”. “As countries that have the most potential in the development of SEZs, the challenges they face is to catch the chance of development in the future and give full play to their existing advantages”, the authors argue.

Mozambique also has “great merits in its spatial development strategy” and its Nacala SEZ “is an excellent location that integrates the deep-water port, the airport, railways, highways, and the Nacala development corridor”. However, the Nacala case is also proof of weaknesses of the model in African countries

than in China. “Human development is lagging behind and it has become the biggest obstacle to the success of the SEZ”. Although billions in foreign investment was attracted towards Nacala, “local people cannot feel the beneficial changes brought about by the development of the country in their lives, and naturally they will not support its development”, the authors say, based on previous research done on the ground in Mozambique. Using the Nacala SEZ in Mozambique as a case study, the authors attempt to conclude a comprehensive model for the analysis of SEZs.

“Understanding current limitations observed and lessons learnt in the development of SEZs in APSCs, as ‘networking’ of concurrent factors could advance the potential of a Lusophone Maritime Silk Road, that is the extension of the China-Indian Ocean Blue Economic Passage. The constitution of SEZ must not be perceived as a solution to all problems in all circumstances. Rather, if they are to be a good solution, their constitution is a long-term process of development, which relies not only with cooperation, commitment, and potential, but also in the state’s ability to face competition, uncertainties, and challenges”, the article states.

The comprehensive model for the analysis of SEZs presented by the authors is to show that not all the conditions in the model must be met in order to establish a successful SEZ. However, an unsuccessful establishment is almost certain, in lack of any one of four structural common basic requirements: political will, stability and long term commitment, regional economic integration, nation branding perceptions and temporal horizon of the SEZ.

Regarding the experience of achieving success, the authors cite a Chinese idiom – 天时，地利，人和 – to outline the conditions for success: opportune timing (天时, Tian Shi); geographical advantage (地利, Di Li); popular support and political stability (人和, Ren He); as well as an ability to attract business and operate effectively over the long term.



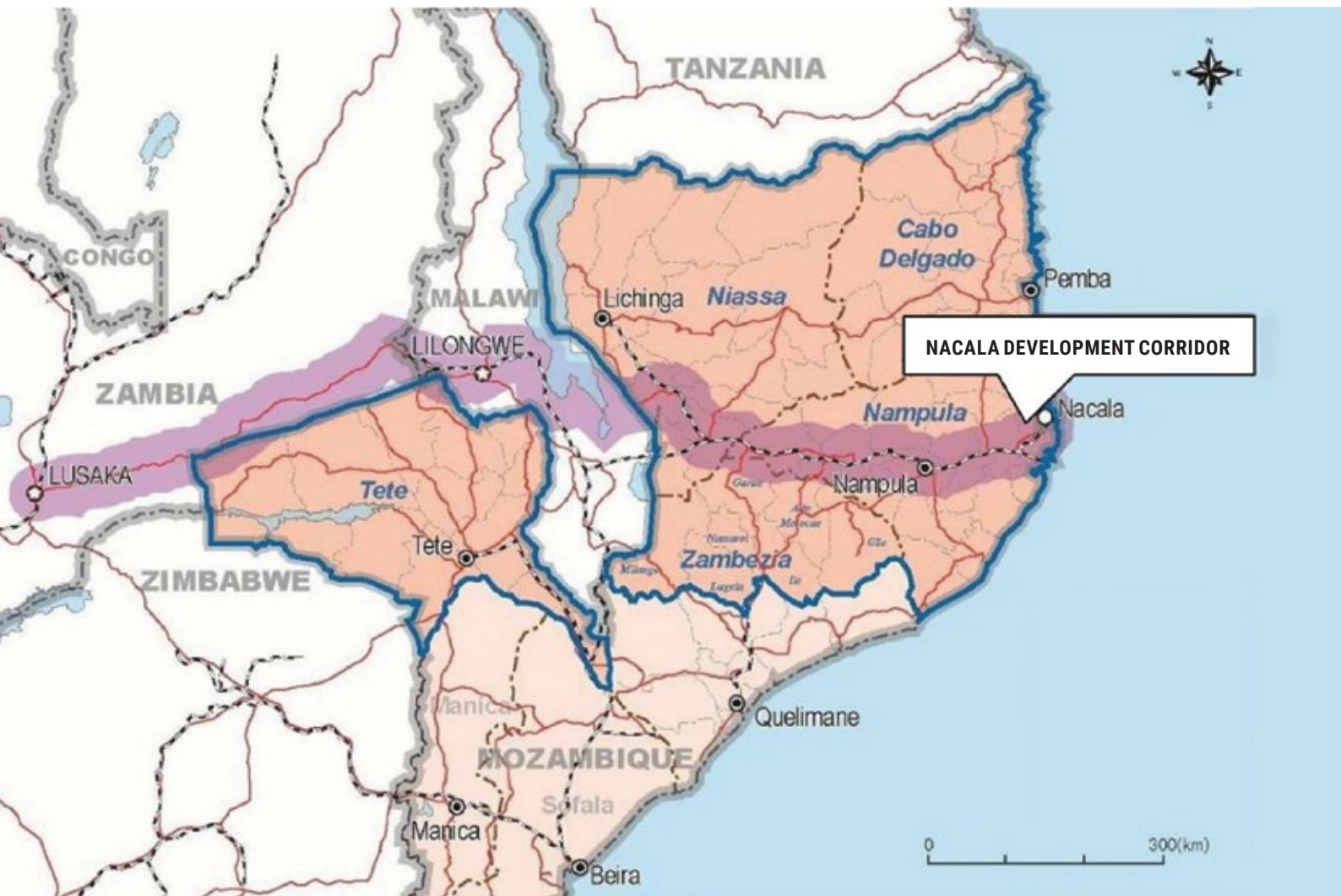
The academic *Handbook of Research on Special Economic Zones as Regional Development Enablers* by Paulo Guilherme Figueiredo, Francisco Leandro and Yichao Li

COUNTRY	SEZ	STATUS	YEAR	AREAS	CHINA SUPPORT	INVESTOR
Angola	Luanda – Bengo SEZ	Performing and under reform	2009	Food, health, metal fabrication, agricultural equipment, energy and technology	Yes	Sonangol, Huatai (2009), CITIC Construction (2016)
	New FTZs	Planning	N/A	All sectors, country-wide	N/A	N/A
Cabo Verde	São Vicente Maritime SEZ	Approved	2020	Ports, fisheries, shipbuilding, tourism, energy	Yes	Private, PPPs (Planned)
	Santiago	Planning	N/A	To be determined	N/A	N/A
	Fogo	Planning	N/A	To be determined	N/A	N/A
Equatorial Guinea	Luba Freeport	Performing	2002	Oil-related	N/A	A joint venture between GE Petrol and Luba Freeport Ltd
	Port of Bata	Under reform	N/A	To be determined	Yes	N/A
	K5 Freeport Oil Centre	Performing	2002	Oil-related	No	UAL – Universal Africa Lines
Guinea-Bissau	Bissau	Planning	Till 2025	Integrating agro-industrial activities (transformation of cashew nuts, fishery products processing), among other industrial facilities	N/A	N/A
Mozambique	Beluluane IFZ	Performing	2000	Logistics and industry	No	Mozal
	Nacala SEZ	Performing	2007	Industry, oil refining, agro-processing, technological parks, tourism, services and infrastructure	No	Vale (Brazil)
	Manga-Mungassa SEZ	Performing	2012	Logistics and industry	Yes	Dingsheng International Investment Company
	Mocuba SEZ	Performing	2014	Utility-scale solar power	No	Norfund and Scatec Solar
	Limpopo SEZ	Approved	2021	Agriculture	Likely	N/A
São Tomé and Príncipe	Baía das Agulhas	Failed	1990s	N/A	No	Western African Development Corporation (WADCO)
	São Tomé Airport Free Zone	Failed	2006	N/A	No	Sociedade de Desenvolvimento de São Tomé e Príncipe (SDSTP)
	Malanza, Cauê District	Performing	2019	Agriculture, fishing, tourism, livestock and water resources	No	N/A

SEZ – Special Economic Zones
FTZ – Free Trade Zones

IFZ – Industrial Free Trade Zones
N/A – Non Applicable

Source: Authors’ compilation from the sources included in *Handbook of Research on Special Economic Zones as Regional Development Enablers*



The Nacala SEZ takes advantage of the new road corridor development project, connecting the SEZ to neighbouring Malawi and Zambia

MACAO-BASED SCIENCE

Leandro, Figueiredo and Li’s article, which received a grant from Macao’s Institute of European Studies (IEEM), is part of a book published at the end of 2021, which these authors edited themselves for IGI Global. The academic Handbook of Research on Special Economic Zones as Regional Development Enablers includes articles from nearly 40 different authors focusing on the experiences of China, Brazil,

Nepal, ASEAN and African countries, among others.

The book discusses the diverse and international track records in the implementation of SEZs, the interplay of SEZ models and local institutional infrastructure and stakeholders, and the SEZ models that can best fit certain development states and/or settings. Covering topics such as the BRI, local and national economies, regional integration, foreign direct investment, cultural and creative

industries, and services, “this book is essential for government officials, development officers, scholars, students, researchers, entrepreneurs, public decision makers, aid agencies, company executives, investors, among others”, the authors say.

The authors argue this project is proof that it is possible to do “world-class research” from Macao with the support of local institutions like IEEM. “Macao is, in its essence, a hub of knowledge. Thousands of people walk by St Paul’s ruins everyday and don’t consider that 500 years ago, when it was a religious college, that it was perhaps the most important global center for the diffusion of Chinese culture and language in the Western world, and vice-versa. Macao has retained that role until today and to preserve and foster it in the future is a key task today for all institutions working in the scientific field”, they tell Macao Magazine.

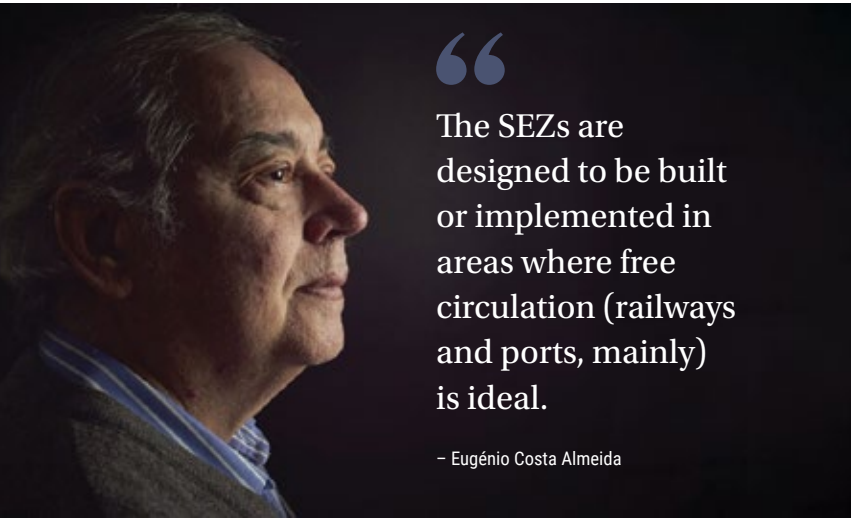
While the Jesuit scholars of centuries past are long gone, Leandro adds, today the city not only retains excellent links to the mainland and abroad, but also its universities are full of top-notch academics, doing world-class research in business, information technologies, data, social sciences and many fields. And if, as is widely recognised, it’s high time the city diversifies its economy from gaming, then science should be the starting point.

Knowledge is how you start to diversify an economy – it creates value in a scientific sense, but also in an economic sense, if the different actors have the necessary drive.

A NEW ERA FOR SEZs IN LUSOPHONE COUNTRIES?

According to Angolan researcher Eugénio Costa Almeida, SEZs can be a good way for his country to diversify the economy, as long as quality foreign investment can be attracted. The current government, he says, wants to expand the SEZs to the provinces of Benguela (Benguela and Lobito-Catumbela) and Huambo (Huambo), other than the existing SEZ in Luanda-Bengo.

“The SEZs are designed to be built or implemented in areas where free circulation (railways and ports, mainly) is ideal. And those that already exist and those planned are precisely in these or close to these areas of circulation”, he tells *Macao Magazine*.



“The SEZs are designed to be built or implemented in areas where free circulation (railways and ports, mainly) is ideal.

– Eugénio Costa Almeida



(Inset) Nuno Furtado, Cabo Verde's delegate to Forum Macao

Aerial view of Laginha Beach in Mindelo city in Sao Vicente Island in Cape Verde

At the end of 2017, the government approved the Industrial Development Plan 2025 and SEZs appear to be “beginning to bear the desired fruits in terms of the development of some industries considered cutting-edge and technological, but also the conversion of some raw materials”, Almeida says. Investment has been flowing into the construction and assembly of electrical appliances, mobile phones, small motor vehicles, manufacturing industries of ferrous and agricultural raw materials, and cutting and marketing of diamonds, among others, within Luanda-Bengo, which was slow to take off.

Cabo Verde is not only betting on SEZs, but also innovating the model, to create “cyber islands”. In March 2022, the government approved legislation that creates and regulates the Special Economic Zone for Technologies (ZEET), aiming to attract large technology companies to Cabo Verde that can market to the rest of the world. “The strong investments in the modernisation

of communications infrastructure, namely, the Technology Parks in Praia and Mindelo will have to capture the interest of the regional and international market and foreign direct investment, in order to contribute to its growth, consolidation, international credibility and to speed up the transfer of knowledge to the country”, Nuno Furtado, the country’s delegate to Forum Macao, tells Macao Magazine.

The strategy is to set up a technological hub in the city of Praia, the country’s capital, with an extension in the island of São Vicente. The launch of this hub, Furtado says, “will reinforce the country’s international connectivity capacity and will allow Cabo Verde to be a reference in the African sub-region, in terms of boosting the development of the digital economy”. Part of the strategy was the introduction of the new international submarine cable – ELLA LINK – whose

operation is underway, which will improve the fiber optic network, as well as increase the implementation of 5G in Cape Verde. With this, Furtado adds, “the country enters the digital world and becomes a space for creation, innovation and the export of technological services”.

The project aims to create opportunities for local talents working in the Information and Communication Technologies sector to test solutions in the country’s technological centers. “The government ensures that all conditions will be created for young people to be able to create, innovate, produce services and export them on a regional and world scale”, Cabo Verde’s delegate underlines.

With China’s know-how and investment matching the will power of Lusophone countries, SEZs seem set to become a new area for future cooperation – with Macao helping make the connection. ●

ZOOM

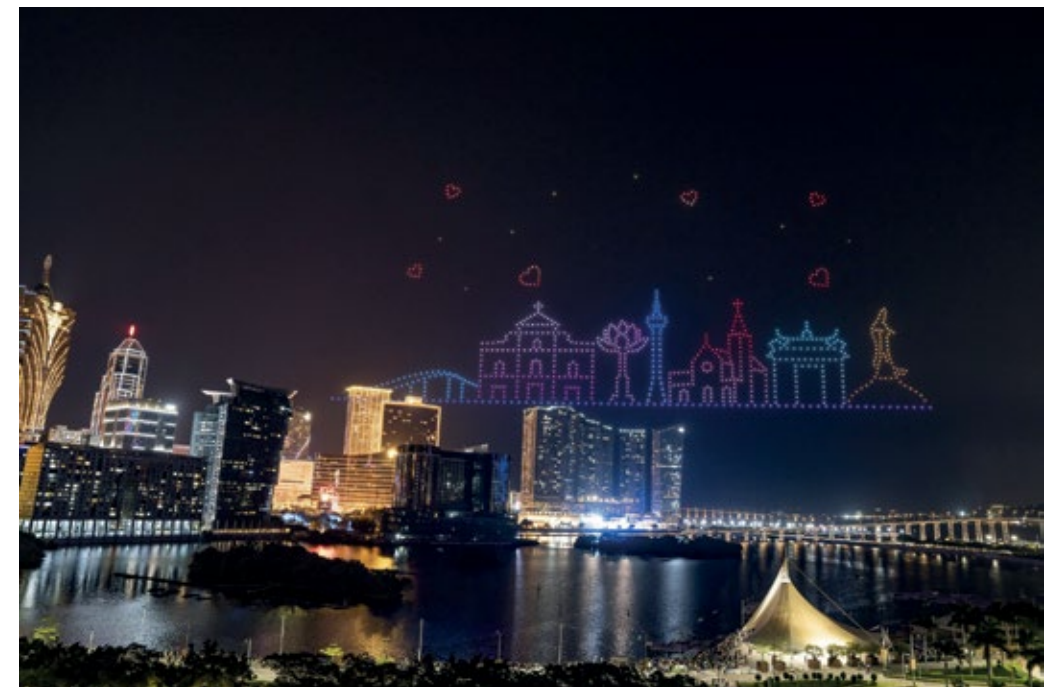
Drones take the spotlight

The Drone Gala 2022, organised by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) and partnered with Macao's six integrated resorts, was held in May in the Nam Van lake area. This year's theme was "Macao for All Seasons", showcasing elements related to local festivals, events and architecture.

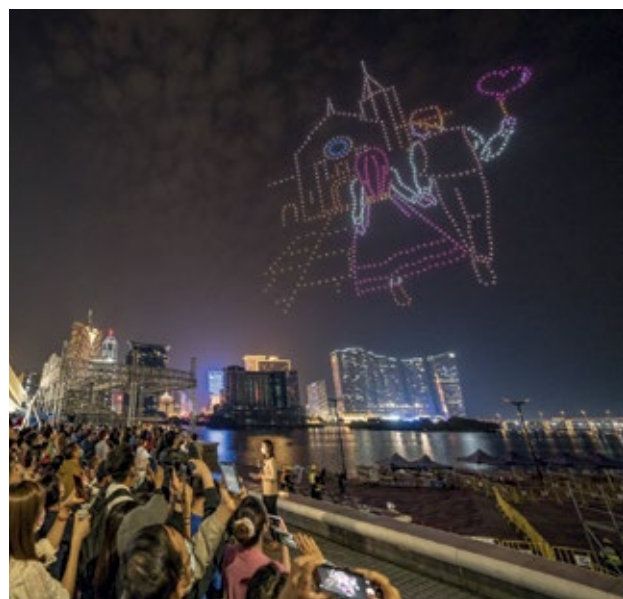
Photos courtesy of **Government Information Bureau** and **Macao Government Tourism Office**

Spanning across four nights with two showings lasting 15 minutes per set, the drone gala was put on by a technology company based in Shenzhen, the same city which was designated a UNESCO City of Design in 2008. With eight shows in total, 880 drones took to the skies of Macao delighting thousands of spectators with displays of iconic Macao imagery in 3D such as the Macau Grand Prix, lanterns, dragon boats, gondolas, the Feast of the Drunken Dragon, egg tarts, bungee jumping at the Macau Tower and Mak Mak the Macao mascot.

At the same time, MGTO organised the "Macao for All Seasons" Photography Contest, aiming to encourage photography enthusiasts to capture moments from the drone shows. ●







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