

A Cultural

ODYSSEY

*Through
Hong Kong
and Shanghai*

FESTIVAL
NAPA VALLEY
PATRON TRIP

BY LATIFE HAYSON AND OLIVIA DECKER





Evita Zhang, Rick Walker, Olivia Decker, Jose Luis Nazar, and Sienna Peck at The Asia Society Hong Kong Center gallery tour



Art exhibition at Hong Kong Convention Center



Mona Tavss, Olivia Decker, Farah Makras, Latife Hayson, and Carolyn Chang



Hilary Vartanian, Olivia Decker, and Judith Caldwell at private gallery tour at Art Central

FESTIVAL NAPA VALLEY

is known for bringing world-class performers and emerging talent to Napa Valley each summer, where music, food, and wine converge across the region's most iconic settings. For its patrons, that experience extends beyond the stage into a deeper engagement with culture, community, and place.

At the Festival's 2025 Arts for All Gala, an extraordinary opportunity was unveiled: a journey to Hong Kong and Shanghai, extending that same spirit abroad. What followed was not simply travel, but a thoughtfully curated immersion into the high-octane energy of Hong Kong and the historic elegance of Shanghai.

For those fortunate enough to join, this once-in-a-lifetime journey unfolded with remarkable access and intention, bringing together a distinguished group of patrons, cultural leaders, and supporters of the Festival. The result was a masterclass in travel: a nine-day immersion into Asian contemporary art, historic landmarks, and exceptional culinary experiences.

Our journey began at the Island Shangri-La in Hong Kong, a sanctuary set high above the city's Central District. Elevated above the density of the streets below, the hotel offered a sense of calm that contrasted with the energy just beyond its walls. The trip opened with a welcome dinner at the Michelin-starred Summer Palace, where a refined menu showcased classical Cantonese cuisine with impeccable technique. Wines from The Donum Estate of Napa Valley were thoughtfully woven into the evening, offering a subtle connection back to Napa Valley while grounding the experience in a shared language of hospitality.



Private sunset cruise
around Hong Kong
Victoria Harbor on a
wooden junk

Hong Kong Victoria
Harbor junk sunset cruise



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Kristen Sorensen, Danny Tran,
Mona Tavss, and Simone Chao



Welcome reception
at Sir Elly's Terrace at
Peninsula Shanghai

That same evening, guests stepped into the global art world with an invitation-only opening of Art Basel Hong Kong and a private tour of M+, marking the start of Art Basel Week. We mingled with international artists, curators, and collectors amid gallery installations throughout the museum's dramatic public spaces.

The following days blended the ancient with the avant-garde. Mornings began with laps in the outdoor pool and Tai Chi sessions at Yen Wellness, offering a moment of breath and alignment before each day's program unfolded. From there, the city revealed itself in layers.

On March 24, a private ascent via the Peak Tram to Victoria Peak revealed sweeping views of Hong Kong Harbor, the island, and its defining skyline. This was followed by a tea tasting and lunch at Lock Cha, Flagstaff House, where rare teas were presented as ritual alongside a curated dim sum experience.

Afternoons were anchored in contemporary art, with curator-led access to Art Basel Hong Kong and Art Central, offering insight into emerging voices and the broader forces shaping the global art market. A stroll along Hong Kong Harbor's historic waterfront led us to the Central Piers, where ferries, traditional junks, and modern vessels converge against a backdrop of skyscrapers and mountains.

From there, we boarded Aqualuna, a historic wooden junk boat, for a sunset cruise. The contrast was immediate: the rhythmic creak of timber set against glass and steel. As the iconic red sails unfurled, we moved into the harbor just as a colossal red sun dipped behind the skyline. With the Symphony of Lights beginning and reflections dancing across the water, the moment felt cinematic—less a tour than a living tableau.



Latife Hayson, Evita Zhang, Olivia Decker, and Simone Chao



Stuart Sweeney and Christina Maxwell at the Happy Valley Race Track



2026 Patron Group at The Hong Kong Jockey Club



Kathleen and Jose Luis Nazar at the Happy Valley Race Track



Karen and Rick Walker and Olivia Decker at Happy Valley horse race



Happy Valley Race with Jockey H. Bowman

The evening concluded with dinner at Yung Kee Restaurant, an institution established in 1942 and integral to Hong Kong's culinary identity. En route back, we passed through the city's most iconic nightlife district, alive with densely packed bars, lounges, and restaurants.

On March 25, we visited Man Mo Temple, where coils of incense hang overhead and rituals honoring the gods of literature and war continue amid the modern city. On foot, we explored Hollywood Road's antique shops and galleries, as well as Tai Kwun, a former colonial prison and courthouse reimagined as a major cultural destination.

Lunch followed at Michelin-starred Bo Innovation, where a multi-course tasting menu merged modern culinary technique with artistic expression, often drawing inspiration from contemporary art and global culture.

That evening, we experienced the legendary Hong Kong Jockey Club with exclusive member-level access. From a private suite overlooking the racetrack, we dined and placed bets amid the electric rhythm of race night, hosted by the distinguished Chao family. Festival Napa Valley Board member David Shimmon—who owns a horse racing team—turned a modest 50 Hong Kong dollar bet into a 5,000 Hong Kong dollar win, sharing the excitement (and winnings) with the table.

Our final morning in Hong Kong offered a choice between bespoke tailoring appointments and consultations with Chinese medicine and acupuncture specialists. Some of us opted instead for the city's exceptional couture consignment boutiques. Hong Kong remains an unparalleled destination for shopping, from luxury designers to expertly crafted alternatives.

David and Mary Beth
Shimmon on wooden junk
Aqualuna at Hong Kong
Central Pier



Carolyn Chang and
Farah Makras at Sir Elly's
Terrace reception



Shanghai Central Pier



Steve and Kate Fike,
Kristen Serenson,
and Danny Tran at Sir
Elly's Terrace reception



Latife Hayson,
Christina Maxwell,
and Stuart Sweeney
at Sir Elly's Terrace
reception



Steven Lin concert at Aviation Lounge
before welcome dinner at Peninsula Hotel





Brooke Spelman, Steven Basart, Steven Lin, Sienna Peck, and Olivia Decker at concert reception at Aviation Lounge



Brooke Spelman, Steve Basart, and Andy and Hilary Vartanian at Sir Elly's Terrace reception in Peninsula Shanghai



Rick Walker and Olivia Decker with performers Steven Lin, Alyona Marenchuk and Christina Maxwell at Aviation Lounge dinner



Performers Alyona Marenchuk, Steven Lin and Christina Maxwell at Shanghai Peninsula Hotel Aviation Lounge.jpg

An intimate luncheon hosted by J.P. Morgan professionals offered a candid discussion on global finance, art collecting, and the evolving relationship between capital and culture. Particularly compelling was the firm's focus on financial literacy for the next generation of Private Bank and Wealth Management clients, as well as its Passion and Pursue division, which finances art, yachts, and other luxury assets.

That afternoon, a private, auction house-led tour of Art Basel Hong Kong provided insider access to select presentations and curatorial insights. The evening concluded with a private gallery walkthrough at the Asia Society Hong Kong Center—set within a restored 19th-century military compound—followed by a farewell dinner at AMMO.

On the morning of March 27, a short flight brought us to Shanghai, a city that unfolds like a horizontal tapestry of history. Often called the “Paris of the East,” it juxtaposes past and future with striking clarity. We checked into The Peninsula Shanghai, an Art Deco landmark overlooking The Bund, where historic architecture lines the Huangpu River.

From Sir Elly's Terrace during our welcome reception, the contrast was breathtaking: behind us, the neoclassical grandeur of the 1920s; across the river, Pudong's futuristic skyline, built largely within the past three decades.



Wayne Hu lead the group tour at Hexin Pavilion and garden



Shanghai Yu Yuan Tourist Mart



The view of Hong Kong from Victoria Peak



Shanghai Museum
home of most significant
collection of ancient
bronzes and ceramics



Shanghai City God Temple



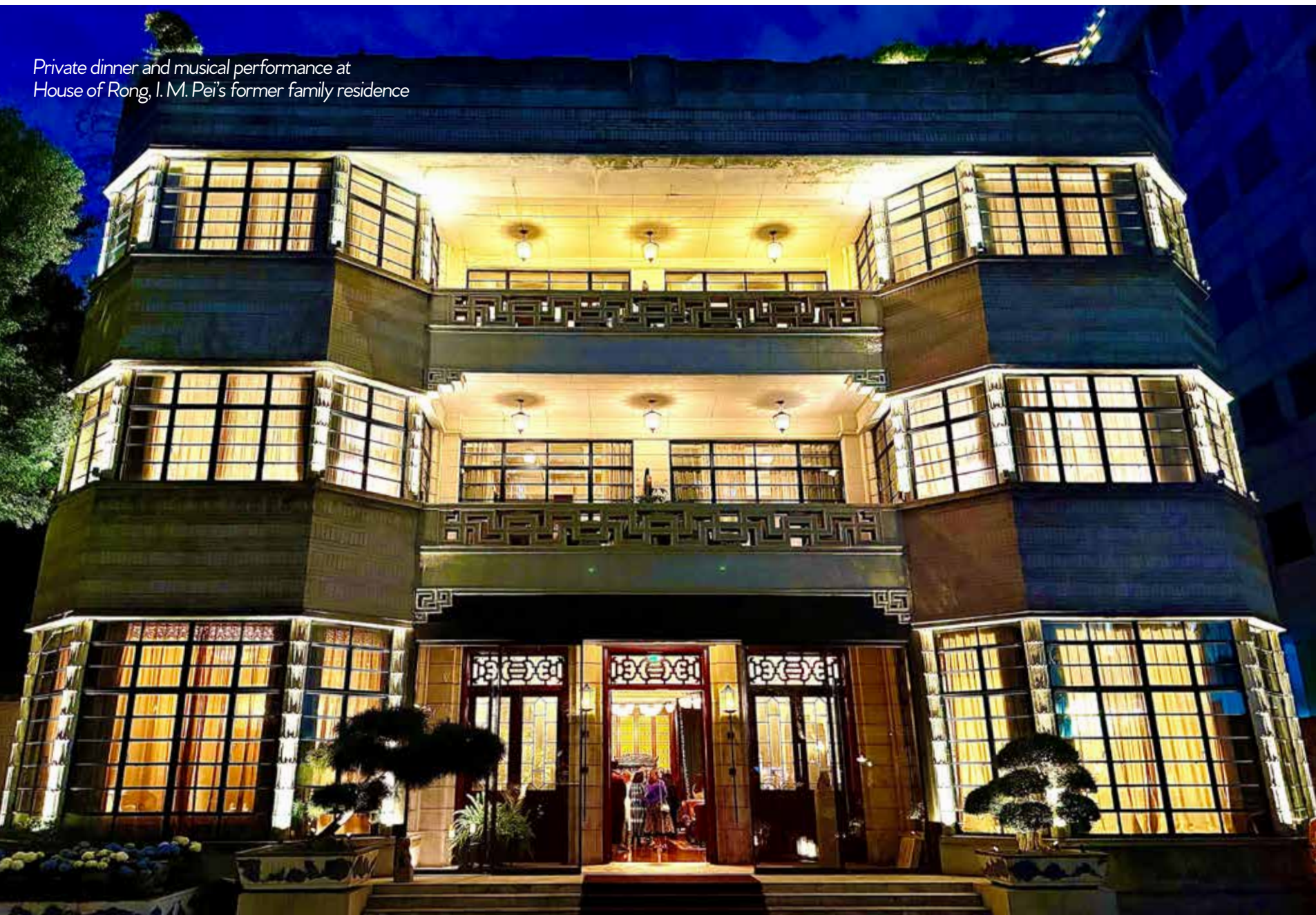
Craig and Kathryn Hall found Hall Wine on the menu of House of Rong former family home of I. M. Pei



Kathryn and Craig Hall, Olivia Decker, Alyona Marenchuk, Sienna Peck, Teresa Kepic, Frank Naeymi-Rad and Rick Walker at Michelin-starred Cheng Long Hang restaurant



Temple at Yu Garden in Shanghai



Private dinner and musical performance at House of Rong, I. M. Pei's former family residence



Water Town Zhujiajiao Canal

The evening featured a concert by Steven Lin, Christina Maxwell, and Alyona Marenchuk, followed by dinner at the Aviation Lounge. Distinguished guests included representatives from the U.S. Consulate General Shanghai, the Chinese Ministry of Culture, the European Chamber of Commerce, and Armstrong Music Art.

On March 28, we explored The Bund's grand architecture before visiting the serene Yu Garden, a masterpiece of classical Chinese landscape design. Lunch at Lost Heaven on the Bund showcased Yunnan cuisine, rich with bold spices and fresh herbs drawn from China's diverse culinary traditions.

That evening, we dined at House of Rong, the former residence of I. M. Pei, where private performances offered rare insight into the personal context behind his legacy. The residence has since been transformed into a boutique hotel and dining destination.

On March 29, we traveled to Zhujiajiao, a historic water town where canals, stone bridges, and preserved merchant homes evoke life in pre-modern Jiangnan. Lunch at Ahu Luh Zhujiajiao Dining Room highlighted regional ingredients and traditional techniques. Dinner at Michelin-starred Cheng Long Hang featured Shanghaiese specialties, including seasonal hairy crab, accompanied by traditional music.

Our final day included a private visit to "The Louis," a ship-shaped



Farewell dinner at
Shanghai Tower
Heavenly Jin Hotel
Michlin Restaurant



Chinese opera was performed at the Farewell
Dinner at Shanghai Tower Heavenly Jin Hotel



View of Huangpu River and The Bund



Theresa Kepic with
Chinese Opera performer

Louis Vuitton destination, and the Shanghai Museum East, home to significant collections of ancient bronzes and ceramics. Lunch at Café Grey Deluxe, set high above the city, offered sweeping views and a cosmopolitan menu. A guided walk through the French Concession followed.

The journey culminated with a sunset reception and dinner at Heavenly Jin, perched on level 120 of Shanghai Tower. With panoramic views and an elegant culinary program, the evening was further elevated by a private Chinese opera performance—an unforgettable finale.

Beyond the exclusive access and exceptional programming, what lingered most was the profound sense of hospitality at every turn. From the care at Island Shangri-La and The Peninsula Shanghai to the warmth of our local guides, the experience transcended language.

It offered a lens into a region where ancient traditions coexist with a dynamic, forward-looking spirit. In Shanghai especially, that entrepreneurial energy is seamlessly woven into the fabric of daily life.

We returned not only with extraordinary memories, but with a deeper appreciation for the universal language of generosity and the vibrant pulse of Hong Kong and Shanghai. As Festival Napa Valley looks ahead, it continues to define itself not only as a presenter of world-class performance, but as a curator of cultural experiences on a global stage.

To learn more about Festival Napa Valley and future Patron Trips, visit www.festivalnapavalley.org. 