

THE PENINSULA

HONG KONG

25th November 2008

SALON DE NING AT THE PENINSULA HONG KONG – NEW SIGNATURE LOUNGE CONCEPT

Hong Kong's Grand Old Lady meets 1930s Shanghai socialite "Madame Ning" as Salon de Ning, an innovative lounge and bar concept, debuts in Hong Kong in December 2008 at The Peninsula. Inspired by an elegant private residence from a bygone era, Salon de Ning is a unique combination of clubby lounge venue, collection of travel mementos and *objets d'art* reflecting the glamour and style of the "Paris of the East".

In the spirit of "Madame Ning" – a celebrated socialite, avid world traveller and international hostess who presided over *salons* in her stylish and eclectic residences around the world – Salon de Ning provides an elegant, warm and welcoming environment. From Marrakech to Paris, Giza to Angkor Wat, Mount Fuji and beyond, Madame was a keen traveller who tirelessly enriched her exotic collection of mementos. Thus, the décor features a juxtaposition of east and west, antique and modern, with Moroccan lanterns, a wood-carved ostrich sculpture and more.

The entrance of Salon de Ning incorporates traditional Chinese elements, including a granite gate archway, black lacquered doors and brass door handles, setting the tone for the experience to come. But this is a lounge where surprises await. Hence, it is music from the west that guests hear playing. Here, Art Deco, Chinese and international influences fuse into Shanghai's own stylish *mélange* of east meets west or "Shanghai Deco".

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THE MAIN LOUNGE

The main lounge of Salon de Ning is the site's heart and soul. A stage for resident band "Soulmates" provides the musical entertainment along with a DJ booth, each making certain the dance floor stays lively. Surrounding the main lounge are four themed rooms, showcasing a collection of *objets* and artefacts sourced during Madame Ning's journeys to different continents. The entrance to each private seating area is marked by giant picture frames, giving guests the feeling of walking into a photograph straight out of Madame's glamorous life.

From the ceiling of the main lounge hangs a centrepiece chandelier that hovers above the dance floor in the form of back-lit paintings created from multi-coloured crystal beads. Each chandelier painting sits in its own frame, and represents an episode of Madame Ning's life, including three "portraits" of the lady herself.

THE THEMED ROOMS

Themed rooms play an important part in Salon de Ning, considering Madame's extensive travels. Two rooms are transformed into the "L'Afrique Room" and the "Ski Room", inspired by Africa and Switzerland, respectively.

Tiger skin-like wall covers adorn "L'Afrique Room", while a roaring lion's head mounted at the entrance and an African tent set the ambience for an adventure in the Sahara desert. The room is decorated with a sculpture of an ostrich, assembled from natural wood branches, and a painting of Madame Ning riding on a camel, gazing across the endless desert. In addition, tucked away on one side is a U-shaped Moroccan-style alcove with a back-lit lattice window reminiscent of a Moroccan home.

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Meanwhile, the “Ski Room”, resembling a rustic Swiss chalet, where the walls and ceiling are created from solid timber, thereby adding a warm and cosy touch. . The fireplace makes for a perfect spot for friends to gather. Other themed rooms include the “Bailar Room” and the “Boudoir Room.” The former, bordered by an antique gold leaf picture frame, is designed like the pre-function area of a glamorous ballroom, displaying Madame Ning’s dance trophies, together with her dancing gowns and shoes. In addition, framed photos hang on the wall with various images of Madame Ning dancing, along with three pieces of digital artwork playing sepia-tone videos of Madame and her dancing partner.

Behind the doors with Lalique crystal handles lies the “Boudoir Room”, or dressing room – the place which provides the most intimate glimpse into Madame Ning’s life. Displayed here are her collection of antique dresses, jewellery, accessories and perfume bottles. On the ceiling is yet another installation, this one featuring a pendant light assembled from 13 distinct hats garnered from around the world and placed in hat boxes.

THE COCKTAILS

A wide range of cocktails – served on specially designed coasters resembling delicate handkerchiefs in pink and purple with lace embroidery – are available at Salon de Ning, including the signature “Ning Sling”, a refreshing combination featuring Absolut Mandarin and lychee liqueur, garnished with mint leaves and a lychee. Fans of bubbles will love Salon de Ning Rosé Champagne, an exclusive label created by Deutz of France, which has enjoyed a long relationship with The Peninsula Hotels, producing its signature Champagne for almost 20 years. A range of simple, light fare is also available. Each themed room in Salon de Ning has its own concealed mini-bar, disguised as a piece of furniture such as a cabinet, allowing guests to help themselves if they choose.

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THE UNIFORMS

The chic and stylish staff uniforms at Salon de Ning were created by award-winning Hong Kong-based fashion designer Ranee Kok, founder of well-loved label “ranee_k”. Kok is a graduate of New York’s Parsons School of Design, and is a former intern at Donna Karan. ranee_k was launched in New York in 1999 and the following year saw the opening of Hong Kong’s first signature boutique. The label is well known for its own east meets west look, with ranee_k described as having a “nostalgic sensibility balanced with self-expressive elegance and enhanced by Oriental details”.

Kok says, “Salon de Ning is a project beyond my wildest dreams. I’ve always loved Art Deco; I admire its mood and tone, its elegance, and the way these blend with functionality and modernity. I especially love the fusion aspects of Art Deco – in particular the influence of Oriental art from Japan and China.”

For Salon de Ning, Kok was inspired by Madame Ning’s life. “I believe Madame was an elegant and bold woman, not only in her own time but somehow, her spirit and style live on, allowing her look and influence a certain timelessness,” says the designer. “It was very important that the uniforms reflect Madame’s personality: an elegant mix of Oriental cutting with western details. The look is sexy, but not revealing, yet it is attractive and enticing, beckoning the viewer to have a closer look.”

The uniforms consist of a fitted purple jacket with a Mandarin collar and long bell sleeves in black lace complemented by black bell-bottom trousers. Explains Kok, “The body is fitted, but the bells are all about flow and movement. The details are important too: tiny glittering handbags and sequined round-toed flats add sparkle.”

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THE DESIGNER

Based on the style of the traditional Shanghainese house known as “Shikumen” (meaning “stone gatehouse” in Chinese), Salon de Ning is designed by Henry Leung, the Hong Kong-based Design Director of Chhada, Siembieda, Leung Limited. Leung has created several Chinese heritage projects for The Peninsula Hotels, including Huang Ting, the Chinese restaurant at The Peninsula Beijing; Hei Fung Terrace, the Chinese restaurant at The Peninsula Tokyo; The Peninsula Spa by ESPA at The Peninsula Hong Kong and Salon de Ning at The Peninsula New York.

Salon de Ning at The Peninsula Hong Kong is the second in a series, following a site on the rooftop of The Peninsula New York that opened in May 2008. The Peninsula Shanghai will also house its own Salon de Ning by late 2009. During the day, each venue can also be used for private art exhibitions, product launches, interviews, intimate live performances and other activities.

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