

“You crave different foods depending on your mood on the day, and the amazing thing is that this restaurant caters to just that”

Dorian Ho on The Peak Lookout

The *Devil Wears Prada*'s depiction of the fashion world is quickly dispelled when meeting Hong Kong fashion designer Dorian Ho, who is considerate and amicable, and so far from being a diva that it makes one wonder about the justice of the fashion stereotype. Relaxing under the beaming summer sun in The Peak Lookout's al fresco dining area, Ho says: "There are two sides to me; one is innate to the fast-paced fashion world, meeting people, designing clothes and preparing my fashion line. As a result, at the weekend I prefer to hang out somewhere relaxed, taking me away from the bustle. Naturally, the outdoor area in The Peak Lookout is perfect for me to find that balance."

It is not difficult to understand why Ho has chosen The Peak Lookout as his favourite restaurant. The chattering crowd by the patio looks as if it, like Ho, has found a sanctuary far away from weekday business attire. Fairy lights are strung up along the leafy branches of the overhanging trees, enchanting diners in the glorious splendour of nature on top of Asia's World City.

Ho says: "There are very few outdoor restaurants in Hong Kong that really capture the natural splendour of this city. I spent some years in Boston and Florida and the open-air patio captures the laid-back attitude I found while living there."

The elaborate menu at The Peak Lookout is anything but domestic; it's very global and features Hong Kong's international favourites – Thai, seafood, Japanese, Indian, Italian, Continental and just about any flavour from around the world. Ho's personal favourite is the seafood platter, which includes a gigantic dish of succulent and tasty fresh oysters, shrimps, clams and mussels. "What's great about this restaurant is that they have everything. You crave different foods depending on your mood on the day, and the amazing thing is that this restaurant caters to just that!" Indeed, the restaurant has specialist chefs for its Japanese, Thai and Indian cuisine to maintain superb quality and authenticity. Another favourite of Ho's is the deep-fried soft-shell crab; the dish is full of fragrant Thai flavour, scrumptiously fried in a garlic and sweet chilli sauce, and served in the shell with an appetising golden glow.

Shorts, T-shirts, sundresses and Wayfarers seem to be the dress code on this fine summer day. Patrons absorb the summer rays hoping for a quick bronze. The scene is reminiscent of the laid-back attitude of Beverly Hills' Robinson Boulevard. Ho declares that "when choosing a restaurant, the environment is my priority", adding, "I want to be in a relaxed environment that can ease my mind from normal work day stress. And the thing is, you



are bound to bump into friends here, which is great, and because of the surroundings, business pretences fall away."

Ho is a perfect example of the new generation. Though educated abroad, in Boston, in the US, the concept of his brand, which incorporates Western designs and materials while proudly bearing the "Made in China" label, is one that keeps his Asian roots at its heart.

He loves to show friends from out of town "the real Hong Kong", of markets and stalls as well as the hard-to-find nooks in this multi-layered metropolis, where he also finds inspiration for D'Orient by Dorian Ho and his other collections.



Clockwise from left: Fashion designer Dorian Ho; stuffed bell pepper with white rice, French beans, button mushrooms, parmesan cheese and black truffle paste; roast duck breast with *pommes dauphine*, asparagus wrapped with bacon and orange sauce



HEAD CHEF RAY CHAN

Head Chef Ray Chan reveals a little-known fact about The Peak Lookout: "This site has been around for about 80 years. It was previously a resting shelter for *gu lis* – rickshaw pullers and peak tram workers, serving them snacks and refreshments until 1949." Thereafter the site served as a restaurant, and only in 2001 was it named The Peak Lookout. One of the secrets to Chan's success is the extra attention he pays to the hygiene of the restaurant. "Even if the atmosphere, food and service are superb, if the hygiene were not up to standard, it simply would not suffice."



THE PEAK LOOKOUT
RESERVATIONS: Recommended **DRESS CODE:** Casual **LUNCH HOURS:** 10:00am - 3:00pm
DINNER HOURS: 3:00pm - 12:00am **SET MENU:** No **BUFFETS:** No **VEGETARIAN DISHES:** 10+ **AMENITIES:** Separate bar **CAR VALET:** No **CREDIT CARDS:** AE, V, MC, DC
YEAR ESTABLISHED: 2001

Address: 121 Peak Road, The Peak
Tel: +852 2849 1000
Fax: +852 2849 4343
E-mail: info@thepeaklookout.com.hk
Website: www.thepeaklookout.com.hk