

Casa de Macau no Canada (Toronto)



Newsletter

Vol. 3 March 18, 2005

4168 Finch Avenue East, P.H. # 39
Scarborough, Ont. CANADA
M1S 5H6
Tel: 416-299-6947
www.casademac au.ca

Board of Executives

President and Editor
Monica Alves 905-887-9408
1monman@rogers.com

1st Vice-President and Editor
Gloria Soares Anok 416-284-9095
Theanoks@hotmail.com

2nd Vice-President
Marie-Cecile Remedios 416-383-0327
Marie_Remedios@msn.com

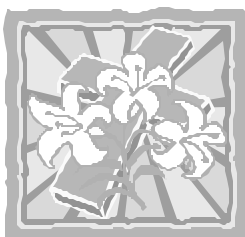
Treasurer
Barbara J. Baptista 416-283-7937
Baptistabj@rogers.com

Secretary
Helena Barradas 905-201-7155
helena.tony.barradas@rogers.com

Clubhouse Manager
Isabel Gomes da Silva 416-228-1207

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Feliz Páscoa

From the Executive



It is hard to imagine that we are now into the third month of 2005. Much has happened since the publishing of the last newsletter and more is being planned for the coming months, so we invite you to read the details in the following pages.

The inclement weather continued into January and unfortunately for us the two truly bad 'snow' days resulted in the cancellation of the January Thursday Social and Bingo night. Isabel has asked that members phone her in future if there is any doubt the Thursday Social might be cancelled due to inclement weather conditions. As this Social is a "drop-in" afternoon, she will not know who to phone to notify if there is a cancellation. Likewise, if anyone has signed up for any Casa event and the weather conditions on that day are not good, we ask that you kindly take the responsibility to phone the contact person directly to confirm if the event has been cancelled, or not. It is much easier for you to make one call as opposed to the contact person having to make 50, or more calls.

Unfortunately we have had to drop Movie Night from our regular schedule of events due to lack of support. It was an attempt on our part to offer something 'different' but obviously there was not enough of an appeal to warrant its continuation.

Your Executive has solicited the help of a number of our members and we are very grateful to all those who have accepted our request to take on the challenge of 'organizing' some of events planned for the remainder of the year. We encourage the rest of you to offer your assistance as well. The first step is always the hardest but you will find great satisfaction when all is said and done.

We have a full calendar of events so please mark the dates on your calendars and better yet, sign up early in order to avoid disappointments.

Membership Dues

Although the majority have sent in their 2005 membership renewal forms, we would like to take this opportunity to remind those of you who still have not, to please do so. Unless you are a registered member, you will be unable to attend the events open to "Members Only". Furthermore, your name will be dropped from our newsletter mailing list.

Rental of Casa

We encourage all members to carefully read the revised Agreement before signing it; and do please note that the Clubhouse Manager (Isabel Gomes da Silva) should be contacted, not the Executive. Thank you.

Cookbooks

"Macanese Cooking - a Journey

across generations” was launched at the time of the Encontro at the dinner held on the grounds of Monte Fort following the Cooking competition. A section of the book, titled the “Winners’ Gallery” contains the recipes, photos and short biographies of the winning competing cooks from all the Casas. The balance of the book contains various other recipes collected by the author, Cecília Jorge, from a number of contributors. The Casa received a total of 9 copies (3 English, 3 Chinese and 3 Portuguese), which will be made available to members to borrow. Library hours are every Wednesday, from 2 – 5 pm. Please first check with David Tavares, our Librarian, before you go.

The Executive has been approached by a number of members who have asked where the book can be purchased. We are in the process of contacting the Publisher, APIM, to find out the price of the book and to see if an order can be placed. Should you be interested in purchasing a book, kindly give your name to any of the Executives and once we find out the cost of the book and shipping fees we will contact you to reconfirm your intentions before we send in the order. Don’t delay in making your intentions known as once we get a response from Macau, we will be placing our order.

XIIIth Research Scholarship Programme

This is an ongoing offer from Macau (formerly by the Portuguese Government), now by The Cultural Institute of the Macau S. A.R. Government grants Research Scholarship for the academic year 2005/6 in order to encourage scientific research in studies concerning Macau and Sino-Portuguese relations pertaining to the following areas: History – Literary Studies – Cul-

tural Heritage – Anthropology – Sociology.

For those interested, please contact the Executive who will make available information received, as well as contacts in Macau. As the information received is very lengthy: booklets and leaflets in Portuguese, English and Chinese, it is not possible to condense and include in the Newsletter. A file folder will be available at the Casa for your perusal.

The deadline for applications is 30 April, 2005.

USA Clubs

Some good news that your Executive would like to share with our members is the agreement that has been reached between UMA, Lusitano Club of California and Casa de Macau USA Inc. On February 12, 2005: “the document setting forth the Articles of Incorporation of the planned Macau Cultural Center was signed by Arthur Britto for Casa de Macau USA, by Robert de Graça for União Macaense Americana (UMA), and by António Jorge da Silva for Lusitano Club of California, in their capacities as chairmen of their clubs’ cultural center committees. Following that historic first step, Arthur Britto, Alexander Xavier, and Maria Roliz, Presidents of the three clubs respectively, took to the podium to jointly announce the creation of a board of trustees to take over from the individual clubs the task of managing the affairs of the cultural center. They also announced having made a bid for the purchase of a building located near Lake Merritt in Oakland, California, to be established as the Macau Cultural Center.” (To read the entire article ‘A Celebration of Unity’ written by Horácio Ozório please visit www.diasporamacaense.org/index.html and click on Homeland News) On behalf of our members, your Execu-

tive has sent a congratulatory message encouraging the new board’s success and wishing them continued progress. We have since learned that, unfortunately, the original bid for the property near Lake Merritt was not successful but plans to search out other possible sites in continuing.

Casa - Social Events



Christmas 2004

We couldn’t let the success of our Christmas dinner dance fade away without thanking all the members, their families and friends for lending us their support. It must have been the coldest/windiest night this winter, and we’ve had quite a few, but it did not spoil the mood inside the Hall.

All who attended, and we just topped the 200 mark, had very positive feedback. They liked the ambience, food, prizes and so on. Guess what folks?...we thought, why not repeat a good thing so, we’ve booked the same venue for your Christmas event this year. Please mark Sunday, December 11th on your calendar.

Minchi/Karaoke

Thankfully the weather cooperated and we had a full house at the Casa on February 5, 2005. There were no fewer than ten kinds of Minchis, a variety of vegetable dishes and a wonderful spread of delectable desserts which members enjoyed. We found out that some members were celebrating their birthdays actually on or around this weekend, so they were called up and serenaded to the tune of Happy Birthday. They were Helena Barradas, Mike Barradas, Catarina ‘Meyer’ Crawford and Eddie Cruz. Having satisfied our appetites, David Tavares kicked off the Karaoke part of the evening by singing a rendition of an Elvis Presley hit “Are You Lonesome Tonight” how-

ever sung to some humorous lyrics. We would like to thank David for his help in setting up the equipment and thanks to Susana da Costa, Carlos de Lemos and David for lending us their DVD collection of Karaoke songs.

March Thursday Social

There is always a first time for everything and this proves it - hats off to the men: José Anok; Peter Cheung; Tony Gutterres; Chappy Remedios; Antonio do Serro and David Tavares who got behind the table and served the food to all present - and they did it with style! Thank you very much gentlemen, you realize, that this was only a trial run.

Upcoming events



Jantar Macaense

On Saturday March 19, 2005 once again Casa will be hosting the second Jantar at the clubhouse. As anticipated, the event was fully subscribed well before the deadline date. Don't let it be said that we did not warn you that this could happen. Even if you "hear" that an event is fully subscribed before you have had a chance to submit your name we encourage you to sign up and be put on the waiting list because inevitably there are dropouts and as long as we have your name, we will be able fill in the spaces. Similarly, if you have already signed up for an event and circumstances develop that will not permit you to attend, we ask your co-operation to notify the contact person as soon as possible so other arrangements can be made and those on the waiting list can be moved up.

Casino Rama Trip

Celsa Larcina has made arrangements for a bus to take those interested for a day's outing on Saturday April 9, 2005 to Rama. The

bus company has indicated that the minimum number of seats we must fill is 35 and the maximum is 54. The pick up point will be in the "plaza" at 9:45 a.m. sharp. Cost per person will be \$2, which will account for tip (for the driver) and 'munchies'. You will be given a free coupon for lunch and the bus will leave Rama at approximately 4:45 p.m. returning you to the "plaza". As a sign of your commitment, we are requiring from each participant a \$10 deposit to accompany your form. **This will be refunded in full** to all who board the bus at the "plaza". Please refer to the *Calendar of Events*.

Western Night

Dust off your rhinestone shirts, don your comfortable blue jeans and your worn comfortable boots and join us at the 'O.K. Casa Coral.' We are hosting a hoe down on Saturday April 23, 2005 at 6:30 pm. Come and enjoy the grub and music and perhaps we can convince you to kick up your heels to some toe tapping tunes. Please refer to the *Calendar of Events*.

Welcome Spring

What better way to celebrate Mothers Day and to welcome Spring than to travel through the Niagara region when the fruit trees are in bloom. On Sunday May 8, 2005 Casa is organizing a bus trip to do just that, and more. The bus will pick us up from the "plaza" and those wishing to test their luck will be dropped off at the Fallsview Casino for approximately an hour and a half, while others will be taken to the Rossi Glass Blowing Studio. The group will rejoin and stop at the Table Rock Restaurant in Niagara Falls for a Buffet Brunch. After lunch, we will be driven along the Niagara Parkway Blossom Drive with stops at the Niagara Botanical Gardens and Floral Clock. A stop will be made at the Kurtz Orchards Market for shop-

ping followed by wine tasting at Magnotta Winery. The estimated time of return is 6:30 pm. We need to fill a minimum of 35 seats so if you are interested, sign up early. Please refer to the *Calendar of Events*.

Bowling Tournament

Susana da Costa has arranged several lanes at Club 300 to be reserved for Casa Saturday May 14, 2005. Come on out, whether you are a 'novice' or 'pro', first timer or 'regular bowler' we are all out to have fun. Casa has a plaque listing the past tournament champions so why don't you try and see if you can have your name engraved on the plaque as high female and male scorer. As in the past, once the games are over, participants are invited to congregate at a restaurant for dinner. Please note that although the games will be subsidized for members, dinner will not. Even if you cannot join us for bowling, why not join us at the restaurant? When you fill in the form, kindly indicate if you will be participating in BOTH the games and dinner or just the dinner as a reservation will have to be made at the restaurant. Please refer to the *Calendar of Events*.

5th Anniversary RAEM dinner At the meeting convened last August 2004 in Vancouver which was attended by Dr. Rodrigues the Director of the Associação Promotora da Instrução dos Macaenses', (APIM), and the majority of the Presidents of the North American Casas various matters were discussed. There were the particulars of the Encontro that were covered as well as discussions on the Statutes concerning the Conselho das Comunidades Macaenses (CCM). Another item on the agenda was a suggestion put forth by APIM that the Casas should plan a celebration commemorating the 5th Anniversary of

the establishment of the Região Administrativa Especial de Macau (RAEM). APIM further suggested that whatever each Casa decided to do could perhaps be held sometime in February 2005.

When we assumed office in September and read through the Minutes of this meeting we discussed the possibility of perhaps planning a joint event with the Macau Club (Toronto) Inc. With this in mind we met with José and Cristina Cordeiro on November 1, 2004 to see if the Macau Club would be open to this idea. They were very receptive to the idea and there and then we drafted a proposed budget that we thought such a celebration would cost. Both the Macau Club representatives and our representatives of the CCM went to the Encontro with this budget and were prepared to discuss and present this to whichever 'body' in APIM would be assigned this project. When our representatives returned, they had no news to report as this item of the 5th Anniversary celebrations was never raised at any meeting. We all assumed that the idea had been scrapped.

To our surprise, we received an email (January 20, 2005) from the Secretary of the CCM requesting all the Presidents to send to him as soon as possible the details for our plans to hold the 5th Anniversary Dinner. It would seem things were back "on" again. As this email just fell between our Executive meeting and the Macau Club's Executive meeting an email was sent to the Secretary informing him that our budget would be submitted after it had gained the approval of both Executive Committees. The combined budget has since been forwarded to the Secretary of the CCM for approval and for consideration of granting us a subsidy to assist us in hosting this event. At the time of going to print, we have not received

a reply. Until such time as we do receive the approval and funds from the CCM, there will be no further planning done. Once a date is set and particulars are known, a circular will be sent to members.

Bingo

Due to popular request, we have rescheduled the Bingo event for Saturday June 4, 2005. Even though you might have already signed up for the original date of January 22 we ask you to please fill in the form included in this newsletter again. Please refer to the *Calendar of Events*.

Dia de Macau

This year on Saturday June 11, 2005 Casa will celebrate by hosting a subsidized dinner party with catered Portuguese cuisine, and home made Macanese dessert. Cintia do Serro has graciously agreed to take charge of the dessert. A live band (Ecos de Macau) consisting of Carlos de Lemos, Armando Santos, Bijou Heterland Santos and Alfredo Badaraco will be on hand to supply their lively brand of music.

As in the past, we will begin with Mass in the Church, with various members doing the readings, and taking a collection, proceeds of which will go to the Carmelite Sisters of Macau, located in Winnipeg.

Last month, your Executive contacted Macau Club (José Cordeiro) and extended an invitation to their Club to join with us for this event. José brought this to the attention of their social committee. However, as their Club is not in a position to subsidize their members as we do, José advised that it will not be feasible for this joint venture to take place (as it would mean a two-tier price which will not be workable). Please refer to the *Calendar of events*.

September AGM and EGM

This will be a 'combined purpose' meeting as there will be some very important decisions that members will be called upon to decide. Further details will be forthcoming.

October Bazaar

Here's lots and lots of notice for you to prepare your beautiful crafts, think of what you're going to bake, put aside all your unused gifts, books, nick-knacks, and what have you for the white elephant table. There will be a hot lunch, sold by the plate, of Macanese food – just in time for you to enjoy after Mass. Nancy Barradas has kindly agreed to take charge of the Bazaar. Details to follow towards the end of summer.

Message from our past President Mike Barros

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers, cards and good wishes following my recent surgery. I'm happy to report recovery is progressing well.

Did you know?

Beautiful Life of the Easter Lily

Linda H. Yates*
Sunday, April 20, 2003

Today millions of churches and homes across the United States and the world are graced with regal white Easter Lilies to symbolize the Resurrection. Often called the white-robed apostles of hope, the lovely trumpet-shaped flowers symbolize purity, virtue, innocence, hope and life--the spiritual essence of Easter.

Lilium longiflorian, Latin name for Easter Lily, is native to the Ryukyu Islands of southern Japan. Their journey to the altars and homes of Christian people, exactly on sched-

ule for varying dates of Easter observances, is a long one.

Japan was the source for most of the bulbs coming to the U.S. before 1941. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, Japan lost the American market.

Growers along the California-Oregon border began production and now harvest 95% of all bulbs for the potted Easter Lily trade, shipping more than 12 million each year to the U.S. and Canada. The bulbs are harvested in the fall and sent to commercial greenhouses where they are potted and forced to bloom in time for the Easter holiday. Since Easter falls on a different day each year, the first Sunday that follows the first full moon after the vernal equinox, conditions are carefully controlled in commercial greenhouses to force blooms with no margin for error.

From bulblet to mature blooming flower, Easter Lilies require from two to three years to grow and are handled as many as 40 times. It was so convenient and inexpensive to place one or two or dozens in homes and churches today that the hard and skilled labor of growing them may be overlooked. Tomorrow, they may be abandoned on doorsteps or in trash bins.

Their beauty of form and symbolism deserves better. Your Easter Lily symbolizes life so let it continue to live. To keep them in your home, as the flower bulbs mature, remove the yellow anthers before the pollen drops on the white petals or on the furniture. As a flower withers, cut it off so you can better enjoy the fresher, newly-opened blooms. Remove any plastic wrapping around the pot that will hold water and cause the bulb to rot.

Easter Lilies are perennials and will grow in your garden as do other lilies. When all the flowers are spent,

remove the plant from the pot and place it in a sunny spot outside. Plant the Easter Lily bulb three inches below ground level in rich organic matter, a mixture of soil, peat moss and compost. Water in well, leaving no air pockets. Slow release fertilizer may be added. Mulch well.

**Linda H. Yates is a Master Gardener volunteer with the University of Florida IFAS Extension in Leon County and a member of its Horticultural Advisory Committee.*

A Filhomac version of Genesis

By Doreen Remedios
(published in Lusitano Bulletin,
Summer 2002)

Decades ago, the majority of our ancestors did not read the Bible. They relied on their local priests and nuns to instruct them in matters of the faith. Our ancestral Filhomacs were more comfortable with Catholic traditions and rituals, e.g. novenas and lighting candles than Bible studies. Hence some of the Biblical stories may have taken on different interpretations when they were relayed by word-of-mouth by older relatives to the next generation.

One all-time favourite story comes from Genesis, the first book of the Bible, which tells of the wonders of God's creations and all the 'p e c h e' (f i s h) and 'aneemal' (animals). Then it will lead to the story of humankind as they retold their version of Paradise Lost in the Garden of Eden. This eventually will lead to the famous saying that all Filhomac kids must have heard at one time or another, 'Deus Logo Castigar' (God will punish) if we were disobedient.

This famous saying came about from the Filhomac version of Genesis:

"In the beginning God created Ar-

mando (Adam) and Elvina (Eve). They were very happy in paradise and had 'tantoo ang-cusa' (everything). 'Deus falar' (God said) you may eat of the 'fruta' (fruit) of any tree in the garden, except for the tree in the middle. 'Nao pode tocca!' (Do not touch).

Then the serpent appeared to tempt Armando and Elvina. They were told that if they ate from the 'noa pode tocca' forbidden fruit, they would be 'ooi de capaz' (very clever) and be all knowing like God. Of course, this appealed to Elvina, but she was already 'speta' (smart) and told Armando to 'comer fruta' (eat the fruit). Armando was hesitant and said 'eu noa carro comer' (I don't want to eat it). But Elvina would have none of this and replied 'Poofis, vos sao de veras tung tung' (you are truly dumb) if you eat it, you will be 'muito capaz' (very clever). Elvina took the first bite and declared that the forbidden fruta was 'ooi de sabroso' (very delicious). 'Armando, azzinha ya!' (hurry up) as she handed the fruta to her 'marido' (husband) and he looked at the forbidden fruit and 'correr baboo' (mouth watering) as he took a big bite.

'Nao tem juizo' (no common sense) that he will listen to the 'mulher' (woman) over the words of God.

Caramba! As soon as they both had eaten, they heard a loud voice from above asking, "Amando, Elvina, coosah! (what!) why are you hiding?" Realizing that they had no other place to "fugee" (escape) Elvina nervously said "'ferrado' (watch out), we got caught". Armando angrily replied "'Demonia' (wench) look what you've done?" When questioned by God, Armando said the 'mulher' (woman) that you gave me

made me do it. Elvina 'choorah' (cried) that she was tricked by the serpent who told a 'mentira' (lie). 'Falar sung ya' (if you say so), but God said 'Sai d'aqui' (leave this place) because of your disobedience.

Therefore, 'Deus ja castigar' (God did punish) Armando and Elvina and all their descendants to this very day. Paradise Lost....Aiie, Que sa yung!

Interesting Links



Those interested to look at photos taken at the V Encontro, visit the APIM site at <http://www.apim.org.mo/gallery>

Across the wires



Speaking up for heritage

Harald Bruning

February 2, 2005

Efforts by the last few speakers and committed supporters of Macau's unique Portuguese-Asian Creole, Patuá, to ensure the endangered tongue's protection by Unesco as intangible world heritage are gaining momentum.

Miguel de Senna Fernandes, a lawyer by profession and Patuá speaker by passion, told the Portuguese-language daily, *Ponto Final*, last week that attempts to grant the hybrid language Unesco protection "makes complete sense", adding that he had "no doubts about Patuá's heritage value."

Patuá is a linguistic mix of Portuguese, Malay, Cantonese, and a host of other European and Asian languages, that was born in Macau in the late 16th century, following the arrival of Portuguese seafarers via India and Malacca. While it was once the mother tongue of Macau's Eurasian residents, nowadays it is spoken by just a handful of people in Macau and several

hundred among the Macanese diaspora, namely in California.

Mr. Fernandes is part of an amateur theatre group that, since the early 1990s, has tried hard to keep Patuá alive through stage comedy. The theatrical approach has proved a big success. The group, known as Sweet Chatter of Macau, has become an integral part of the local culture scene. It has consciously restricted stage performances to comedies. Mr. Fernandes insists that it is unthinkable to stage a drama in Patuá for the simple reason that the language was traditionally "used in exhilarating situations", such as poking fun at powerful people.

Unesco's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage recognizes the importance of linguistic diversity for protecting the world's cultural variety. Quite rightly, China Radio International pointed out in a broadcast last year that intangible heritage is "untouchable but substantial". China's *kunqu* opera and the *guqin* (a seven-stringed zither) have already been included in the world body's intangible heritage.

I am confident that researchers and cultural affairs officials in Beijing will not hesitate to recognize the intangible heritage status-and value-of Patuá as one of the aspects which makes Macau so special within China. Besides, up to 12 of Macau's historical monuments, including the St. Paul's Ruins and the Na Cha Temple, are expected to be awarded (tangible) world-heritage status by Unesco in the summer.

As a Patuá saying goes, "time has flown by so fast" (*tempo ja agua assi azinha*) that urgent action is needed not only to stop the tongue joining the world's list of dead languages, but also to "cultivate" its continued existence through academic research, publications, thea-

tre performances and – perhaps even language lessons.

Still my Macau

Mike Currie

February 12-13, 2005 HK Standard

It is a journey into the unknown.

I wrestle feelings of dread and fasten the seatbelt with a heavy heart as the steward makes a final check of the aisles to ensure all luggage is stowed.

There is a festive atmosphere among the passengers, but for me this trip marks the end of self-imposed exile stretching back more than a dozen years.

OK, I know. It will only be for a couple of days, and the destination is Macau, not Mosul. Friends urged me to return to the former Portuguese enclave. They had had a great time. I'd love it, they enthused.

But I knew better. They have not experienced the quintessential Macau. That has gone forever.

I decided to turn my back on Macau in the early 1990s. I had been invited to stay at the then newly opened Westin Resort on Coloane island. The hotel seemed a little out of place at the time. It was open for business but work had not yet started on the golf course, and the airport was still in the planning stage.

The management provided me with a suite, but the hotel seemed lifeless. There were few guests, and I sat in an empty lobby listening to a mechanical piano. Play it again, Sam. Hey Sam! Where are you?

So I wandered off along a deserted Hac Sa beach in search of a Texan who had settled among the villagers in Coloane, renovating an old house, from which he was running a riding school with a few nags. We trotted around the beach and along dirt footpaths into the low hills.

In the evening I slipped over to Fernando's restaurant for Portuguese food and wine, and strolled back to the hotel along a deserted street.

The villagers retired early on Coloane.

Macau had the casinos and massage parlors; Taipa and Coloane islands offered tranquility, and good Portuguese food. But things were beginning to change rapidly.

Taipa island was losing its character. The old village was still there, but the speculators had moved in, changing the landscape. Blocks of high-rise flats had mushroomed around the island, but no one lived in them. There were an estimated 20,000 empty apartments.

An airport was going to be built. There was money to be made. My Macau was going to disappear under concrete and when I drove back across the narrow old causeway that joined Coloane with Taipa island, I vowed never to return.

A knee-jerk reaction?

Well, I first started visiting Macau in 1982 when it was a laidback weekend escape from the pressures and overcrowding of Hong Kong. Sometimes I'd take the slow boat overnight with a cabin. The vessel would arrive off Macau in the early hours and we'd be allowed to sleep on until the immigration desks opened.

Mostly, I took a jetfoil. Hong Kong Chinese would be queuing to get off even before we had berthed, as if they couldn't wait to lose their money in the casinos. And of course many expats and Chinese would visit just to go window-shopping in seedy hotels, selecting a sexy masseuse from the many who posed in glass-fronted rooms, by the number pinned to her blouse. But we'd nip over the bridge to Taipa and dine at what I was told was Macau's first Portuguese restaurant, Pinocchio's, tucked away along the narrow streets of the old village. It was in a large roofless yard then, and was always packed. Fresh food, crisp salads with olives, good wine.

Back on Macau, we'd walk the promenade facing Praia Grande

Bay, admiring the grand old Portuguese homes, and watch the mudskippers doing just that behind the sea wall.

In the evening we'd head up narrow cobbled streets (ballast from old Portuguese trading vessels, I was told) to a grand old theater to watch the Crazy Paris show, a risqué nightly dancing performance by a bevy of beauties brought in on contract from Europe.

And we'd stay up on Penha Hill at the Bela Vista Hotel, known among expats as the Fawly Towers of the Far East, a former colonial mansion built in 1870 that had fallen on hard times but oozed character.

It was staffed by gruff, sleepy old waiters who lounged around in crumpled black jackets. We would sleep in musty, high-ceilinged rooms under dusty brass propeller fans that creaked and groaned, protesting that they had worked too hard for too long.

In the morning we would have breakfast on the long verandah, overlooking the bay. "Could I have scrambled eggs, please?"

"No, this is Sunday. Scrambled eggs on Wednesday. Sunday, fried eggs."

We'd be back out there in the evening with a bottle of Vinho Verde, though, for a sundowner, looking over towards Stanley Ho's Lisboa Hotel and casino, its garish roulette-wheel-shaped structure dominating the skyline in the tourist area.

I first stayed in the Bella Vista in 1982. Today, it is home to the Portuguese Consul, who no doubt can order eggs any style he wants, seven days a week.

The Bela Vista was full of surprises. I remember losing sleep because of a nightlong din in the dining room. In the morning, I went in for breakfast to find the dining room floor covered with camera cables, and a couple of technicians asleep on the floor. Golden Harvest had been shooting a period movie. The film company agreed to pay for

my room when I protested. I lost the money later playing blackjack.

During my visit to the Westin in the early 90s, the old Bela Vista was already being refurbished at a cost of more than US\$6 million (HK\$48 million), to become a luxury hotel for the rich and famous. It would comprise only eight suites, from around HK\$2,500 a night. I would not be able to afford to stay there again, and I doubt if I would have wanted to.

And whatever happened to the waiters?

Now, more than a decade later, I am speeding back to a Macau that is no longer a Portuguese enclave, and I know I am in for a shock. The changes are apparent even before I pass through immigration.

Immigration at Macau used to comprise a few old desks and metal barriers to contain the weekend surge of gamblers from Hong Kong. Pushy staff at duty-free shops would solicit for custom, bellowing at passersby. Now it is a little like arriving at Hong Kong International Airport, modern, spacious, efficient, and completely lacking in character. Outside, my heart sinks. I don't recognize anything. Not surprising, though, as the whole new terminal has been built on reclaimed land.

The 15-minute drive to my hotel, The Ritz, on Penha Hill, only five minutes' walk from the former Bela Vista Hotel, unveils underpasses, overpasses, and a new mini-city mushrooming on even more reclaimed land, that dwarfs Stanley Ho's Lisboa Hotel. A business district is under construction, too - Downtown Macau - of course, on reclaimed land.

The pleasant promenade overlooking the mudflats with its mudskippers near the Lisboa Hotel is now a new road and the view from Penha Hill is dominated by the Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Center, one of the world's tallest buildings.

Take a lift to the observation deck

223 meters up, and you'll get a birds-eye view of the pollution from nearby Zhuhai, which at times partly obliterates Macau. But I don't have to look out on the Tower from the room in my five-star hotel. My view is exclusively the concrete wall of an adjacent building.

Thoroughly depressed, I set off with my wife to see if anything is left of the old Inner Port area, on the other side of Macau, and wow, it is still intact!

We wander aimlessly through a maze of twisting, cobbled back streets with tiny bakeries and mom and pop candy stores where naughty schoolchildren are spending their lunchbox money. Here are real people getting on with their day-to-day life, friendly and helpful too, and totally unconcerned about what the tycoons are up to over on the other side of the island. No tourists here. No casinos, either.

But we do find a charming little Portuguese restaurant, O Porto Interior, where photographs of celebrities adorn the walls, including an autographed picture of a young-looking Audrey Hepburn. The waitress, a woman in her 40s whose name is Rosalina, joins us. "Yes, she really came here, but she was old already," Rosalina says. "She had the photograph with her, and signed it for my boss."

After a delightful meal, we set off exploring again. The Inner Port area is packed with living history. This used to be the hub for sea trade in Macau, and Chinese shophouses offer a mind-boggling array of goods, from ships chains with links as thick as a man's neck, to dried meat and traditional Chinese medicines.

I squeeze past a bunch of children buying waffles that sizzle on a street-vendor's hot plate, and come across a back alley with a hole-in-the-wall barber's shop. No perms or Canto-pop dyes offered here. But if you want short back and sides, Mr Ho's the man. "The shop has been

here for 50 years, and I've been cutting hair here for 35 years," he says proudly. The heavy, swiveling barber's chairs have been in use since the shop opened. Does Mr Ho realise his customers are sitting on antiques?

Further down the main street, we find the 118-year-old Sailor's Palace, a two-story hostel that is still open for business. Washing is strung up above the entrance, and inside, the elderly owner is assisted by an unsmiling couple. He needs assistance. He has obviously had a stroke, which has left him paralyzed.

He can only move his left arm, which arcs slowly back and forth, feeding his mouth a cigarette. When we enquire if we can take photographs, an almost imperceptible movement of the head is a signal we can.

The shroffs counter, encased in iron bars for security, is just as it was when the establishment first opened. Battered flasks for hot water line the walls and a passage has cubicles on either side. Tariff for one night: HK\$30.

We wander the Inner Port maze for hours, and nearly every street has something special to offer. Turn a corner and you might find an historic Portuguese house or office under renovation. One old house is so narrow there wouldn't be room to swing a cat.

The Macau SAR government is spending tens of millions of dollars renovating many of the former enclave's heritage sites. Ironically, heritage buildings neglected by the Portuguese are being restored by Chinese who recognize their potential for tourism.

What a shame that Hong Kong lacks this vision.

Many restored buildings are on and around the Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro, a major old shopping artery that connects both sides of Macau.

Here, for example, one of the city's

last old pawn shops on the ground floor of a three-story building closed recently. But the pawnshop has been left exactly as it was, and the building has been carefully restored. The upper floors, where pawned goods were stored, have become an arts and crafts shop. Climb the steep wooden steps with care!

Macau is also promoting other attractions, even as it gears up to become a Las Vegas-style gaming metropolis. Tourists are offered leaflets with information on fortresses, walking tours, temples, churches and museums.

As domestic tourists pour in, the government realizes that only a minority are high rollers. Down in the Inner Port area, for example, busloads of mainlanders visit the Temple of A Ma, which pre-dates the arrival of the first Portuguese sailing ships in the 16th century.

Rosalina welcomes us back like long lost friends on our return to the O Porto Interior restaurant the following evening, and clucks over us like a mother hen. It is a hurried meal, as we have to catch our jetfoil back to Hong Kong. She dashes off to the roadside as we are finishing the meal to wave down a taxi. She doesn't expect or want a tip.

I don't have time to get back to Taipa or Coloane islands. I know now that it is possible to drive to the mainland from the narrow causeway I crossed all those years ago. Of course, the sea around it has been reclaimed. And a second bridge now leads to Taipa from Macau.

Speculation in property is at last being rewarded in Taipa. A Chinese friend tells me prices are rising rapidly. Over in the Inner Port area the highest block is still six stories, and a flat there with a roof is difficult to sell because there are no lifts.

Taipa will keep growing, and no doubt the pollution from Zhuhai will worsen. But a lot of Macau's charm is intact. So I'll be back. OK,

I admit it. I just can't wait.

Cook's Corner



Love her or love to hate her, there is no denying that Martha Stewart knows her way around the kitchen. As we look forward to Spring and Easter, a traditional meal served in many households for Easter dinner is roast lamb. Reproduced below is one of Martha Stewart's recipes for Herb Crusted Leg of Lamb... "a good thing".

Herb Crusted Leg of Lamb

Ingredients:

- 2 nine-pound leg of lamb, bone in trimmed of excess fat
- 1 tablespoon plus ¼ teaspoon olive oil
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 medium head garlic
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- ¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup brandy
- 1 ½ cups low-sodium chicken broth

Method:

Let lamb stand at room temperature for one hour. Heat oven to 325°. Remove all but a thin layer of fat from the lamb. Rub lamb with 1 tablespoon oil; sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Place on a rack in a heavy roasting pan.

Meanwhile, rub head of garlic with ¼ teaspoon oil; wrap loosely in foil. Bake until garlic is very soft, about 1 hour. Let cool.

Cut off top of garlic head; squeeze roasted garlic into a bowl. Using a fork, mash garlic to a paste. Add extra-virgin olive oil, lemon juice, oregano, parsley, and remaining ½

teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper; mix well.

Rotate pan after lamb has roasted 1 ¼ hours. After 30 minutes more, slather lamb with roasted-garlic paste. Roast an additional hour (for a total roasting time of about 2 ¾ hours), or until an instant-read thermometer inserted at the thickest part reads 160°. Remove from oven, and let rest 20 minutes.

Transfer lamb to a carving board. Pour off fat from the roasting pan; place over medium-high heat. Sprinkle with flour, and stir with a wooden spoon. Pour in brandy; scrape up brown bits from bottom of pan. Lower heat to medium; let liquid reduce by half. Add stock, stirring until incorporated. Add rosemary and salt and pepper to taste.

Note: Serves 8 to 10

What better accompaniment to roast lamb than a steaming bowl of mashed potatoes.

Did you know that high-starch potatoes make the fluffiest, lightest mashed potatoes and happily absorb all the cream and butter you can add? Examples of high-starch potatoes are the Russets, Idahos, or baking potatoes. Medium-starch potatoes make a mash that's a bit denser than high-starch potatoes but is still smooth and light. Examples are the White all-purpose and Yukon Golds. Low-starch potatoes will turn gummy if you try to make a classic mash. These are the Reds or boiling potatoes. (*Fine Cooking*, March 2003)

Perfect Mashed Potatoes

Martha Stewart

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds Russet or Yukon gold potatoes
- 1 tablespoon salt, plus more to taste
- 1 cup milk or cream
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter

- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

Method:

Peel and cut potatoes into 1 ½-inch-thick slices. Place in a medium saucepan. Cover with cold water; add 1 tablespoon salt and bring to a simmer. Keep potatoes at a low simmer until a knife slips in and out easily. Drain potatoes in a colander. Place milk in a small saucepan over medium-high heat.

If using a potato ricer, place a heat-proof bowl on top of a double boiler over a pan of simmering water. Press hot, drained potatoes through ricer into bowl.

Stir potatoes with a wooden spoon until smooth, about 1 minute. Using a whisk, incorporate butter. Drizzle in hot milk whisking continuously. Add pepper, nutmeg and salt to taste; whisk to combine. Serve immediately.

Note: Serves 4 to 6

Health Hazard Alert

Flower shitake mushrooms from China may contain dangerous bacteria

CBC Marketplace

March 7, 2005

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is warning the public not to consume Flower Shitake Mushrooms from China because the product may be contaminated with the bacteria responsible for botulism, a food-borne illness in humans.

The affected product, Flower Shitake Mushrooms, packaged by Fu Jian Ningde (Shenzhen) Yongjia Trade Co., Ltd, China, is sold in a vacuum type-package bearing UPC 6 916119 752065. The affected product does not contain lot codes or Best Before dating.

The affected product is being voluntarily recalled from the marketplace. It has been distributed in British Columbia.