

Ultimate Critique

Get to grips with the recent flurry of gastronomic guides.

TEXT: STEPHANIE SHIU

The Miele Guide: Your Guide to Asia's Finest Restaurants 2008/2009

Panel: 84 restaurant critics and food writers from 16 Asian countries. Journalists nominate what they consider the top eateries in their own country.

Perfect for: Foodies on a mission around Asia

Glass half full: Widening the scope to Asia highlights keeps the competition interesting. Good amount of detail for top picks.

Glass half empty: Narrowing down the 20 best restaurants in the continent leaves many out in the cold. Not particularly comprehensive if you're looking to eat your way around a single city.

Top of the class: Joel Robuchon's restaurants in Hong Kong, Macau and Tokyo were all featured in the top 20. Hong Kong emerges as the best eating city, followed by Singapore.

Near misses: Pierre Gagnaire's whimsical approach is not even worth a mention.



Michelin Guide: Hong Kong and Macau 2009

Panel: 20 anonymous inspectors (only two of whom were Chinese) who make regular visits to restaurants and hotels and settle their own bill.

Perfect for: Those that like to be in-the-know. Or anyone up for a fiery foodie debate.

Glass half full: Despite the controversy caused by the first set of local results, Michelin is still the guide that chefs care about. In terms of history and reputation, it still reigns supreme.

Glass half empty: Skimps on details with overly brief write-up. Lack of locals on the panel raises issues about how familiar inspectors are with the nuances of Chinese cuisine.

Top of the class: Lung King Heen was the only restaurant worthy of three stars, making world history with the first Chinese Michelin-starred chef.

Near misses: Some were surprised that Spoon and Nobu didn't make the cut.



Mobil Travel Guide: Hong Kong & Macau

Panel: The inspectors are journalists, most of them expats.

Perfect for: First time visitors to Hong Kong

Glass half full: A good, basic guide — Hong Kong for beginners if you will. Clearly categorises sights, spa, shopping, restaurants, nightlife, art and culture by location.

Glass half empty: The dining section won't placate foodies as restaurants are merely listed, not rated.

Top of the class: Hard to say without a rating system but Café Deco, H One, Lung King Heen and Wasabisabi garnered rave reviews.

Near misses: Low-brow options such as burger chain Triple O's by White Spot make an appearance, as does tourist hot spot American Peking. Enough said.



WOM GUIDE 2009

Panel: This year's edition featured 1,300 eateries reviewed by more than 5,000 WOM members

Perfect for: True blue Hong Kongers

Glass half full: The only survey-based guide written by locals for locals. Includes a wide array of restaurants from *cha chan tengs* to private kitchens as well as hotel establishments and touristy spots.

Glass half empty: Write-up could be meatier.

Top of the class: In addition to the usual suspects, D.Diamond Restaurant & Bar, Da Domenico, Derby Room, Forum, Fu Sing Shark Fin Seafood Restaurant, Inagiku, Kenjo, Matusbishi

Near misses: Some of the more obscure eateries (*dai pai dongs* and the like) are listed but missing feedback and comments.

