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HONGKONG GUIDES FOR FOODIES

Gourmets and just plain foodies know Hongkong is a glutton's paradise, and three new guides are available in the market to help them navigate the bewildering array of menus and choices.

• MICHELIN HONGKONG MACAU 2010, US\$22

The 100-year-old *Michelin Guide*, Europe's best-known food and accommodation guide, is released annually in 23 countries. Each of the local versions features an extensive list of restaurants and places to stay approved by Michelin inspectors.

In 2007, Tokyo became the first Asian city to be reviewed by Michelin, yielding more star-rated restaurants than even France itself. Hongkong followed in 2008.

The latest edition features a total of 245 establishments in Hongkong and another 53 from Macau, with two Hongkong restaurants receiving a three-star rating, the highest honour that Michelin bestows, with the rest being awarded one or two stars. According to Jean-Luc Naret, director of the Michelin

Guides, more than 60 percent of the featured eateries in the red booklet are Chinese cuisine from the various regions, including Shanghainese, Cantonese, Beijing and Sichuan. A surprise awardee was Tim Ho Wan, a simple eatery but renowned for its dim sum, which earned a one-star rating.

The guide also features 50 Bib Gourmand restaurants, which Michelin inspectors have tagged as good food priced HK\$300 (US\$39) and below. Here, you can find many *cha chan tings* and *dai pai dongs* (translated literally as Cantonese tea houses and signboard stalls), the lifeblood of Hongkong's dining scene.

WHERE TO BUY: Leading bookstores. For more details, visit www.michelinguide.com/us/index.html

• WOM GUIDE 2010 FOR FOODIES, US\$21

On its fifth edition, the *WOM (Word of Mouth) Guide 2010* continues to take pride in being a food guide "for the locals, by the locals".

Reviewers are "Wommers", generally Hongkong residents, who register themselves at WOM's website and post their reviews online. About 5,000 individuals helped bring the 2009 edition into print. There is no rating system

and relies solely on personal opinions and tastes.

The WOM guide classifies Hongkong's cuisine in typical and original categories, ranging from Western to Asian, or For The Look and For The Fun.

Restaurants recommended are generally along the higher-end of the price tag.

WHERE TO BUY: Leading bookstores and from the guide's website at www.womguide.com

• MIELE FOOD GUIDE 2009/2010, US\$18

Also released annually, the *Miele Food Guide* features not just Hongkong and Macau's dining scene but Asia's as well. On top of listing a total of 450 restaurants in 16 Asian countries, the guide also highlights a "Top Five" for each country.

The two-year-old Singapore-based publication conducts four rounds of voting to narrow down the choices. Voters consist of invited food critics around Asia, the in-house Miele team and the online public. Meanwhile, individuals register to take part in the voting process.

WHERE TO BUY: All major bookstores across Asia and from the guide's website at www.mieleguide.com

Liu Hongzuo