

Where to live?

REPULSE BAY

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(Australia)

Where do you live? What is the neighbourhood called?

My family and I have lived in Repulse Bay on the south side of Hong Kong Island for six years.

Why did you choose this area to live?

Primarily to have the proximity to the city without actually living in the midst of the high rises; plus, the spectacular view and the accessibility to schools, shopping and leisure activities. Of course, being Australian and with two young boys, the closeness to the beach and the sunshine were definite factors. We were told when we arrived that the sun seems to shine more on the south side. After living here, I think it's true.

Best thing about living here?

My daily walk from Repulse Bay along Seaview Promenade to Deep Water Bay. I love that it is right out the front of our apartment and weaves its way around the foreshore. There is so much to see: families, dogs, helpers, runners, walkers, fitness groups, fishing, boating, sailing, all types of watercraft. I also like seeing the locals going about their business with their boats. It's never dull and can be quite therapeutic.

Why did you choose this particular apartment complex?

When we arrived, we had the idea that we wanted to live in Repulse Bay – we had friends who had lived here. While we spent days looking at everything available, in the end, the decision was pretty easy. We chose this apartment complex for the quality and range of its facilities, its reputation and good management, the view, the sense of community and the atmosphere. On a clear day, you look out the window or stand on the balcony and feel like you are on holiday. You could never get lonely here.

Which facilities were important to you?

The indoor/outdoor pool, fantastic gym, school bus route, shuttle bus service and the accessibility to The Repulse Bay shopping complex.



What is a common misconception about your neighbourhood?

That anything on the south side is too far from Central or too far from the action. In our opinion, we get the best of both worlds and the tiny travelling distance is never an issue.

Is public transportation easily accessible from your location?

The bus system on the south side is great and taxis are never a problem. Although there is no MTR to Repulse Bay there will be an MTR station very close by in Aberdeen in less than two years.

What is missing from your area?

Nothing, really, but I would like to see more cafés, bars and restaurants! The more the better.

Any drawbacks to living where you do?

The only time I ever think of moving is when the rents go up or when the traffic along Island Road is held up due to roadwork.

Recommendations in your area and beyond:

Shopping: I like exploring, but the regular haunts are Times Square and all around Causeway Bay, Pacific Place and Stanley markets.

Leisure: The Victoria Recreation Club in Deep Water Bay. My husband and boys are keen kayakers and love going to the VRC when they are not playing rugby or soccer at the HK Football Club, our other leisure spot.

Restaurants: We are really enjoying the return of Coco Thai in Deep Water Bay – casual and great Thai food, perfect on a summer's night. My friends and family have long enjoyed the reliable food, service and ambience of Lucy's at Stanley and Spices at Repulse Bay. We are also fans of the many little Japanese restaurants in Happy Valley. For a special occasion, Shui Hu Ju in Peel Street has always been a favourite. And a cheap and cheerful restaurant that has been our staple for the past six years is Yi Jiang Nan, which has recently moved from Staunton Street, Soho, to Soho East (Sai Wan Ho); fabulous food at the right price.

Bar: Anywhere in HK, but a fun place to go any time of day is South Bay Beach Club, especially on weekends.

Hidden gem: My special place right now is in Wong Chuk Hang, Aberdeen. I have just opened my own private art gallery/studio called **Sally Spence Art** in The Factory, 1 Yip Fat Street (by appointment, www.sallyspenceart.com). It is the latest area of Hong Kong Island to take off and is changing by the day. With companies like Manks, Simply Décor, Mirth and L'hotel, and with the MTR going in right at the door, the area is going ahead in leaps and bounds. Plus, it is right at the exit of the Aberdeen Tunnel and only 10 minutes from Repulse Bay.

Complete this sentence: your neighbourhood is perfect for...

... families who want it all – convenience, proximity, space, the outdoors, beach, hiking, shopping – the perfect balance in Hong Kong.



Where to live?

CHOOSING A NEIGHBOURHOOD

Considerations to keep in mind when deciding where to make your home in Hong Kong include lifestyle, commute, schooling and, of course, budget.

The city suffers from a lack of space, so some compromise is needed when it comes to square footage. At the same time, 40 percent of Hong Kong is designated as national park, so it's easy to access green spaces from almost any part of the city.

Here is *Expat Living's* roundup of the neighbourhoods where you're most likely to find members of Hong Kong's expatriate community, along with some of the main plusses of living in those locations.

Ap Lei Chau and Aberdeen

This area, while retaining some of its original charm with houseboats and fishing junks, is slowly being infiltrated by expats looking for cheaper rents in some of the hundreds of high-rises, or those looking for a quirky converted loft in an industrial warehouse.

Clearwater Bay and Sai Kung

If space and clean air are priorities then head for Clearwater Bay and Sai Kung. Here, many traditional village houses have been converted into stunning family homes. Close to Hong Kong's best beaches and walking trails, these areas offer a more rural lifestyle just half an hour from the city centre.

Discovery Bay

A 30-minute ferry from Central takes you to Discovery Bay, a resort with golf course, marina and white sandy beaches. Looking to immerse yourself

in Hong Kong culture? This isn't the place. But for families looking for more space, it's a good choice.

Gold Coast

From sea-view apartments to beachfront townhouses, this enclave in the New Territories brings Aussie-style coastal living to Hong Kong. The complex boasts excellent facilities including tropical gardens and even a 58-foot luxury yacht that can be rented by residents.

Happy Valley

Happy Valley is best known for its racecourse but the area is loved by many expats for its village atmosphere and tree-lined avenues. Property is often less glitzy than Mid-levels but rents are lower.

Hong Lok Yuen

Just a few minutes from Shatin is the expat enclave of Hong Lok Yuen. Residents here can enjoy homes with gardens and fantastic facilities

including pools, tennis courts, supermarkets and close proximity to international schools.

Lantau

The largest island in the territory, Lantau (*pictured, opposite*) has remained almost unchanged, Disneyland aside. Its numerous beaches are still flanked by village houses; some are the weekend retreats of city dwellers, others the homes of expats escaping city life, or pilots working at the nearby airport. There is a good international school at Mui Wo and the schools at Discovery Bay are also close.

Mid-levels Central

City-lovers should have Mid-levels Central at the top of their residential wish lists, with its short commute and ample green spaces. Most properties here are high-rise, boasting fantastic facilities, but you can also find quirky low-rise buildings with more space and a lower price tag.



Mid-levels East

Taking in Jardine's Lookout and Tai Hang Road, this area boasts a certain charm but is less populated by expats. Most properties overlook Happy Valley Racecourse and with wider streets and large private homes, it has the air of an exclusive suburb. Central is a 20-minute cab ride away.

Mid-levels West

This is definitely city living: don't even consider it if you want to wake up to open spaces every morning. Convenience is the buzzword, with every conceivable amenity on your doorstep and the Mid-levels escalator taking you from Caine Road to Central in minutes.

Pokfulam

Just a seven-minute drive from Central, the residential area of Pokfulam is becoming increasingly popular. Offering more space for your buck, properties here include high-rises as well as low-rise townhouses, most with stunning views over the Lamma Channel.

Shouson Hill and Deep Water Bay

Green and hilly with narrow winding roads down to Deep Water Bay, Shouson Hill retains an air of Hong Kong's colonial past. Properties are low-rise, ranging from charming and roomy older apartments to large, modern townhouses. Local attractions include Ocean Park and the boardwalk between Deep Water Bay and Repulse Bay.

Southside

A short drive south from Central takes you to the beachside neighbourhoods of Repulse Bay, South Bay, Stanley, Chung Hom Kok and Tai Tam. Sandy beaches and open views combined with high-quality residential developments and townhouses make these areas popular choices for expat families.

Sheung Wan and Kennedy Town

20 years ago, expats were rare in these western districts of the island but they are fast becoming the trendy location for young singles looking for cheaper rents than Mid-levels. Property developers are also staking a claim with the MTR extension soon to make this area even more desirable.



Shek O

This tiny village at the south end of Hong Kong Island is a popular weekend beach spot. Residents include those who want to get away and live in a traditional village house to the upper echelons of expat society who enjoy the ultimate lifestyle in the vicinity of exclusive Shek O Golf & Country Club.

The Peak

With property here boasting some of the highest prices in the world, The Peak isn't within everyone's budget, but if you're lucky enough to live here, you'll enjoy your pick of luxurious, high-quality houses and stunning modern developments with panoramic views. The Peak Tram means you can commute quickly and in unique style. 🚠