

"There, to his joy and surprise, he found a friendly and prosperous population who made haste to display what I have always regarded as our oldest tradition — that of hospitality to strangers." *Lost Horizon*, James Hilton

It was through this 1933 classic that we found our name. And it was this novel that inspired our heartfelt hospitality. Every hotel around the world has its own story to tell and, in keeping with how it began, each captures its account in a little book. Collect as many books as you can from over 70 hotels and resorts around the world.



# ABOVE THE CLOUDS



China World Summit Wing, Beijing  
A Shangri-La Hotel





**China World Summit Wing**

BEIJING

AT CHINA WORLD TRADE CENTER

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A SHANGRI-LA HOTEL

THERE'S NO  
GREATER ACT OF  
HOSPITALITY  
THAN TO EMBRACE  
A STRANGER  
AS ONE'S OWN.



THE CELLIST'S CONTEMPORARY YET MASTERFUL interpretation of an old classic was the perfect accompaniment to my journey through the gleaming metropolis. My gaze was transfixed beyond the limousine window as we rolled past monument after monument, each seemingly more awe-inspiring than the last.

My heart was held rapturous by the city's epic imperial grandeur, a spectacular contrast against the many modern architectural marvels that it also holds. Among them, soaring 81 storeys above the China World Tower, was my hideaway among the clouds.

The lobby was the height of contemporary artistry with its exquisite expanse of golden marble, rich textures and trove of museum-worthy art pieces. As if she could read my thoughts, the concierge warmly acknowledged that one particularly breathtaking mural was the artist's eloquent expression of the enchantment and romance epitomising Shangri-La. I wondered if she knew that I could also feel it in the gentleness of her smile, so reassuring and familiar, as if I might have known her from somewhere else.







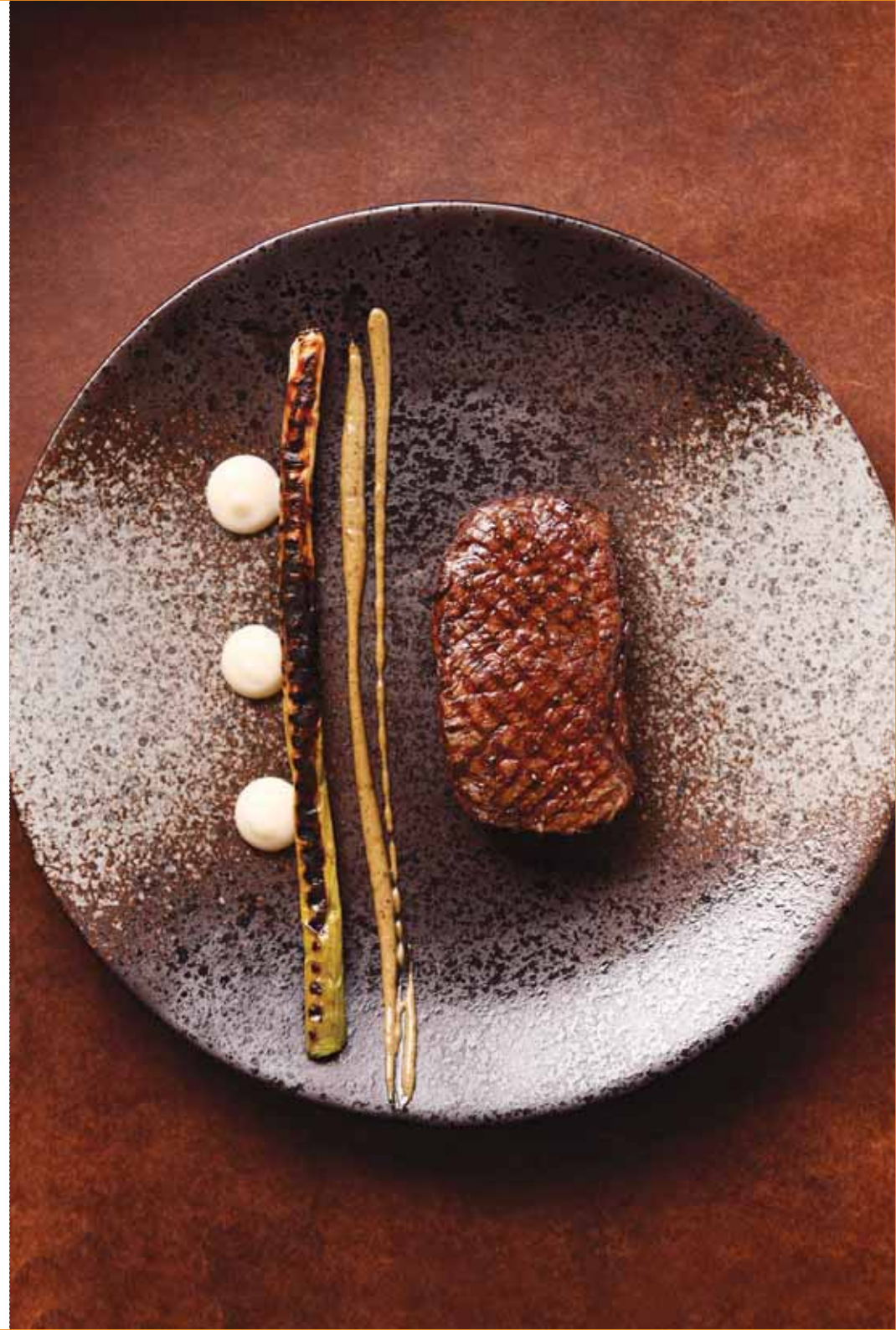




GLIDING THROUGH THE GLITTERY SCARLET and rosewood interiors of Grill 79, we settled down at our regular table overlooking the historic centre of the capital city. From that imposing height, I felt like a modern day royal inspecting the golden rooftops of the Forbidden City; a glowing reminder of the days I had whiled away dreamily, exploring the ancient palace grounds and reliving their days of decadence from centuries past.

The delicious aromas of freshly grilled prime beef brought me happily back to the present. Paired beautifully with a full and elegant Bordeaux recommended by the friendly sommelier, each bite melted in our mouths with medium rare perfection.

Strolling up to the 80th floor from Grill 79, the massive bronze tree sculpture offered us a warm welcome with its long willowy branches. I sank comfortably into the bejewelled plushness of Beijing's highest bar, ready to continue my wistful observation of the world beneath and beyond. Swirling a glass of single malt, I was soon lost in the veritable maze of courtyards, *hutongs* and skyscrapers.









THOUGH DARKNESS HAD FALLEN,  
not even the twinkling lights could dim the  
city's structured splendour.

Like all-seeing portals, the full-height windows  
of my suite opened my eyes to the austere  
sanctity of Tiananmen Square, the divine  
symbolism of the Temple of Heaven and  
more. The unabashedly modern architecture  
of the CCTV Tower lifted my soul in the  
knowledge that ancient ambitions could only  
grow bolder 3,000 years on.

Surveying the refined comforts of my room,  
I wondered if this was how emperors and  
empresses would live should their dynasties  
continue to prosper. I ensconced myself  
deeper into the silky, heavenly softness that  
reminded me of billowing clouds in the sky.  
Minutes later, I had spirited away on a galloping  
horse scaling the undulating magnificence of  
the Great Wall, watching over the mighty empire.









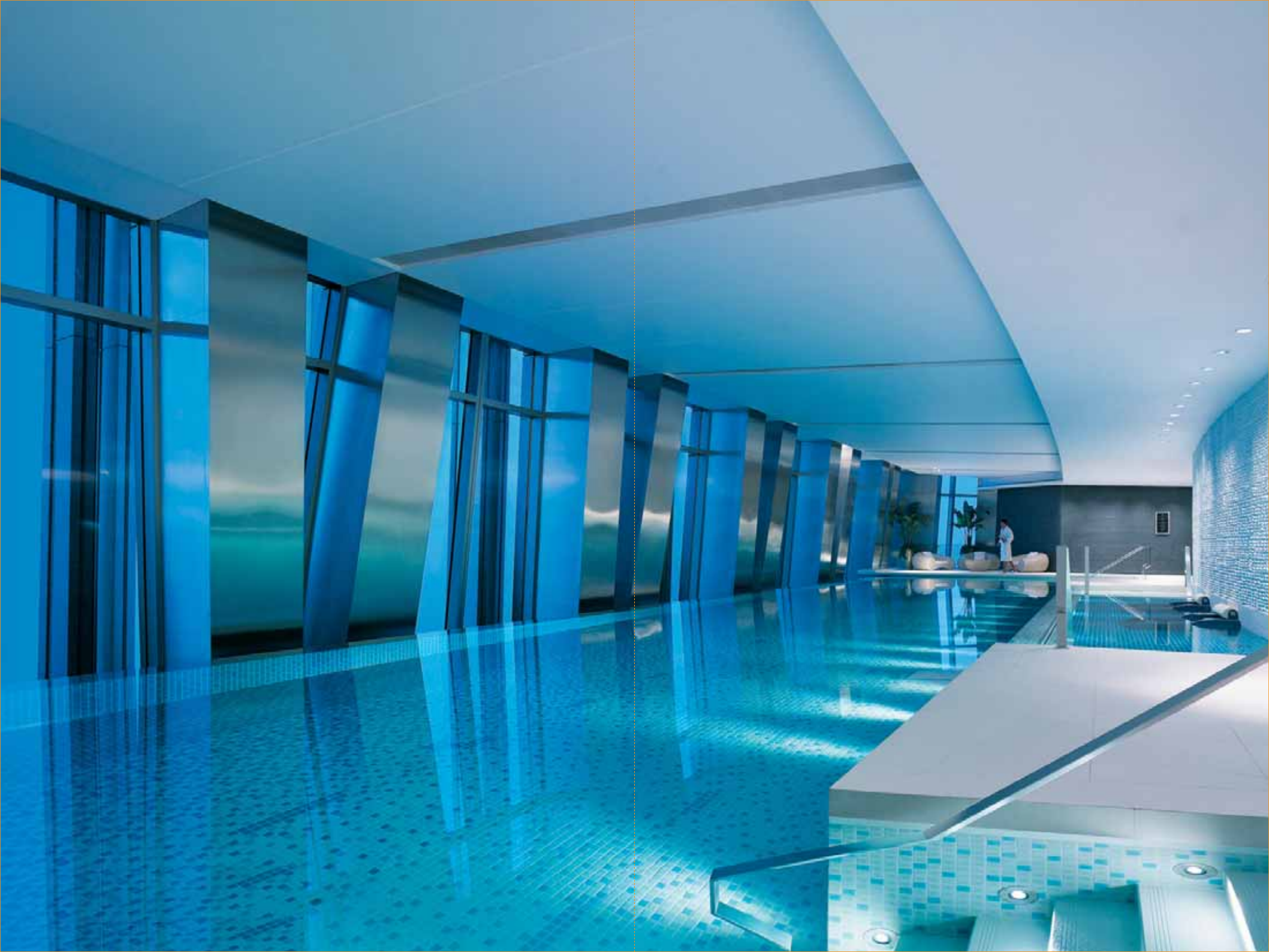














AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF CALM washed over me as I entered the crimson and gold-spun cocoon of CHI, The Spa. Elevated well above and away from the bustling capital, I felt as though I was stepping on clouds, each fluffier than the other.

My face was coaxed expertly with a gemstone infused cream that promised to be a modern day elixir of youth, an artful blend of science and tradition. I faintly recalled the many rulers from bygones who had warred for such a coveted remedy. But I was digressing.

Long sweeping strokes next kneaded away the tenseness of my body, transporting me into a languid state of bliss. Heady from the scent of warmed coconut oil and banana leaves, I was told somewhere in a state of half sleep that my body would be healed of energy imbalance and blockage. Whispering words of gratitude, I drifted into a palatial oasis of serenity.









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Published in Hong Kong 2012. Printed and bound in China.

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