

A New Way Forward



Kevin Salthouse
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I am proud to announce on behalf of the company management that the Selnate Group is entering into a new phase of its operations in Japan.

Until now, each company within the Selnate Group has operated as a separate entity with distinctly separate functions and identities. Within the group, Interac Co., Ltd. has risen to be the most well-known and widely recognized.

In order to take advantage of this nationwide recognition, it has been decided to reorganize our existing companies, such as Selnate and AP 18, under one banner that will be known as the Interac Group. This will take effect as of October 1st, 2010.

The reorganization will enable us to ease the administration workload between the companies and take

full advantage of the strength of the Interac brand, which has an exceptional reputation for the quality of the services provided.

From a day-to-day perspective, nothing will change as a result of this reorganization, and we would like to set your minds at ease that the company is continuing to go from strength to strength. Earlier this year saw the opening of our new branch in Kita-kyūshū, and we are planning new branches in other areas to meet the needs of our expanding client base.

If you have any questions concerning the reorganization, please feel free to confer with your managing consultant at your respective branch offices.

Hong Kong

You Must Experience it for Yourself

Hong Kong. The name itself is familiar. But if you've never seen it with your own eyes, forget everything you think you know. Hong Kong is a miracle—and a disaster. It's the future, but it's also the past. It's one of the most crowded cities on Earth, yet you'll find corners here that make you forget you share this planet with 7 billion other people. Hong Kong is everything you could ever want in a huge metropolitan environment, from dizzying ultra-modern skyscrapers and trendy clubs to sublimely quiet beaches and ancient monasteries. If you're visiting Asia (or Earth for that matter), Hong Kong is the place to be.

The harbor city is home to some 7 million people. Even though China regained sovereignty over this once-British colony back in 1997,

don't let that fool you: Hong Kong is not China. It has its own laws and regulations, its own political system, its own currency (the Hong Kong Dollar), even its own language. Being a major tourist destination and one of the world's leading business centers, visa regulations in Hong Kong have been made as straightforward as humanly possible: If you're a national of the United States, Europe, Australia, or New Zealand, you don't need a visa to enter Hong Kong for stays of up to 90 days (6 months if you're a UK national).

'Okay,' you might say, 'that's all nice and pretty, but it still sounds like any other major city to me.' Well, sure. Los Angeles has beaches, too. Paris has Louis Vuitton and art galore. Tokyo has everything from Shibuya to the Imperial Palace. What makes Hong Kong so special?



Hong Kong's Cheung Chau Island (Photo by Micael Azi)



Me & Bruce Lee (Photo by Mickael Azi)

It's the little differences. It's the incredibly cheap, immensely reliable transportation system, where the same rechargeable/scannable pass you use to get on the subway can be used at convenience stores, buses, grocery stores, and even McDonald's all over Hong Kong. It's the free high-speed internet access points scattered across the city (yes, you get free wireless at the airport, too). It's gazing at the futuristic night skyline from 'The Peak,' Hong Kong's most spectacular attraction, and feeling like you're watching a science-fiction movie. It's the food—everywhere, any time of day or night, from *unagi* to gnocchi to dim sum to escargots, whether at luxurious restaurants or dirt-cheap open-air street-side food stalls (*dai pai dong*s, as they're referred to in HK). It's all there, and at prices that defy the imagination. It's the shopping centers. It's the fact that everybody speaks more than one major language (Cantonese, Mandarin, English...). It's those quiet parts of town where nature still reigns supreme in spite of all the chaos that surrounds it. It's the accessibility of it all.

Granted, this kind of environmental mix can be found in countless other major cities across the globe. However, Hong Kong makes it so inviting and accessible, so easy to navigate through, that you'll wonder why the rest of the world's leading capitals can't be so efficient. Sure, it's crowded, polluted, and hot in the summer. But Hong Kong is also as safe a city as any you'll ever visit. The locals are friendly and always helpful, and if that's still not good enough for you, it even has a Disneyland!

Here's what a perfect weekend in Hong Kong is like to me:

I start my first day with an early breakfast in Tsim Sha Tsui, a major tourist hub abounding with restaurants, hotels, and museums. I have my usual *unagi don* set for ¥300 at the food court in Harbor City Mall. Next, I head to Ngong Ping on Lantau Island via the Ngong Ping cable car. By the time I'm done taking pictures of Po Lin monastery and admiring the giant bronze Tian Tan Buddha, it's time to enjoy a sizzling hot, freshly-made snake soup at one of the traditional Chinese restaurants in the area (or just hit a Starbucks if you're not feeling adventurous). After lunch, I head back to town and walk around Mong Kok, where I shop for top-of-the-line electronics (or rare antiques, if that's your thing), before catching a late afternoon showing of the latest Hong Kong production (you can't leave Hong Kong without going to the movies at least once). Then I hop back on the crowded MTR (Mass Transit Railway) and get off at Central Station to have dinner at one of HK's last official *dai pai dong*s. I finish the evening sipping on a lychee martini and chatting the night away at my favorite bar in Lan Kwai Fong, Hong Kong's nightlife hub.

The next day is spent cycling around Cheung Chau Island and resting on a quiet beach, staring at the sprawling oceanfront. Cheung Chau is only a 20 minutes from the city. It's beautiful and serene, so much so that if the McDonald's restaurant wasn't one of the first things you spotted upon getting off the ferry, you could almost feel as though you'd landed in Paradise.

That's Hong Kong for you. And it's just four hours from Tokyo.

Mickael Azi, Kannami ALT

Japan Perspectives is Interac's **monthly online magazine**. Written entirely by Interac ALTs and staff, it appeals both to those of us already living in Japan and to those considering taking the plunge.

Updated with new content on the first of each month, Japan Perspectives can be accessed through Interac's recruiting site at www.interacnetwork.com.

The October edition will feature articles on exploring Japan **photographically**, learning how to **surf**, and the unusual '**rampage festival**' in Ishikawa Prefecture. Every month, our goal is to have something that will appeal to everyone!

For submissions, please contact Michael Kanert at:

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Deals for Interac ALTs:

The Foreign Buyers' Club (www.fbcusa.com)



The Foreign Buyers' Club, the nation's top service for importing foreign food into Japan, now offers a special discount for Interac employees.

FBC discounts ¥1500 from your first order over ¥3000 when you become a member (Coupon Code = INTERNEW). This covers one year's membership and free basic shipping. Make sure you click 'pay ¥1000 membership fee' when you use this coupon. If you are already a member of FBC, you get free shipping on all orders over ¥3000 (Coupon code = INTER10). If FBC does not have what you want, let them know and they will try to get it for you!

Correction

Last month's description of the FBC discount was partially inaccurate. The text above outlines the actual conditions.



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