

## Heidi Fuller-love's Hot Hotels - The Review

### MANDARIN ORIENTAL TAIPEI

Chill in style at Taipei's brand new Mandarin Oriental, a luxurious, art-studded spa retreat within easy metro-reach of the city's iconic sights.

**First impressions:** Check into a Mandarin Oriental and you expect gorgeous deco and superb service; luckily their newest Taipei property delivers on all fronts. Set back from tree-lined Dunhua road, the Mandarin's classical façade failed to catch my eye, but the lobby with its silver reception desk, blue leather chairs, and Czech designer Tafana Dvorakova's massive Murano chandelier, is a real head turner.

Corridors and lobbies are usually pretty boring, so a major plus point at the Taipei Mandarin are the original art works – most of them by Taiwanese artists – scattered around the hotel. I also got a buzz out of exploring intriguing nooks and crannies, including an avant-garde, high ceiling-ed reading room full of arty books.

**Why go now?** With less heat and humidity, and fewer crowds, May is a good time to discover this country, designated as one of the top ten destinations to visit in 2015 by travel search engine Skyscanner.

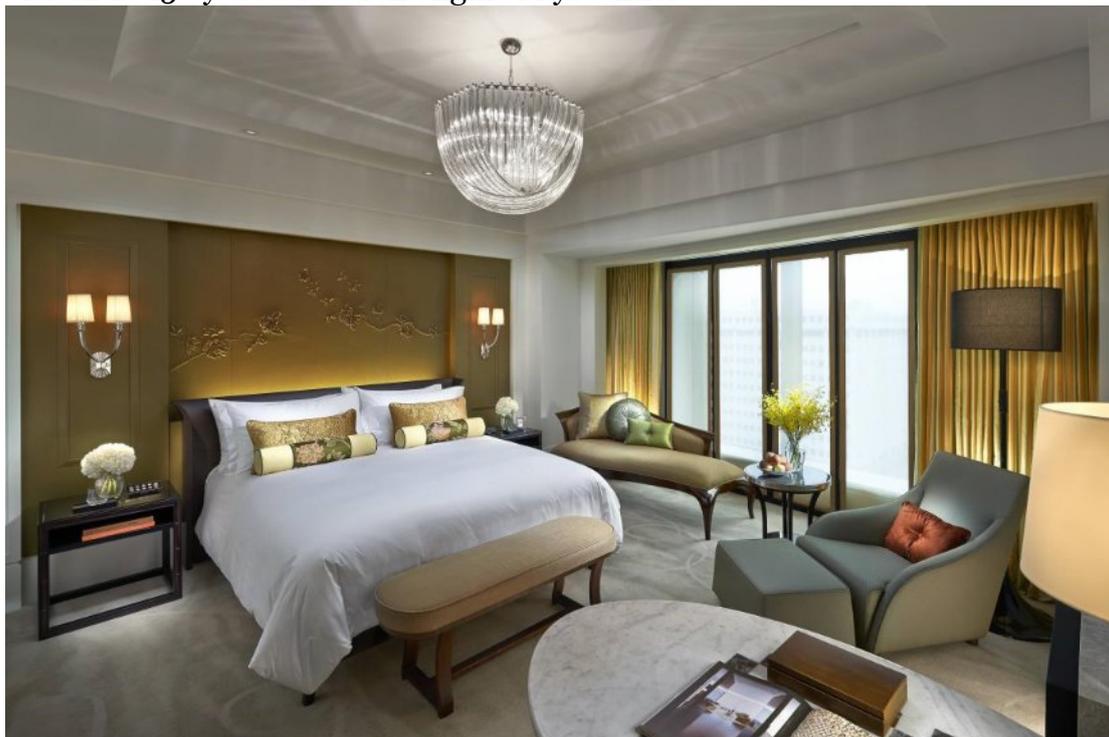


Figure 1 I stayed in a Deluxe room at the top.

**Room stuff:** The Mandarin Oriental has 303 rooms and suites and I stayed in a deluxe room at the top, with panoramic views over Taipei's buzzy business district. I loved the walk-in wardrobe, although wished I had a lot more rags to hang in it, but a handcrafted cocktail from the hotel's art deco-styled M.O bar, and floundering for an hour with Diptyque goodies in the Helen-Amy Murray-designed circular marble tub, made me feel better about my sparse wardrobe.



Figure 2 I floundered for an hour in the Helen-Amy Murray-designed circular marble tub.

**Spa stuff:** with 12 treatment rooms, fitness area and vitality pool, The Mandarin's Yabu Pushelberg-designed spa is the biggest in the Asia Pacific region, but does 'bigger' spell 'better'? After a mammoth two-hour Taiwanese herb body massage, followed by a Guasa face massage, where the masseuse chipped away at my face like a woodpecker with finger-sized flints of black jet (sounds painful, but is actually very relaxing and worked wonders on a travel-puffy face) I'd say 'yes'.

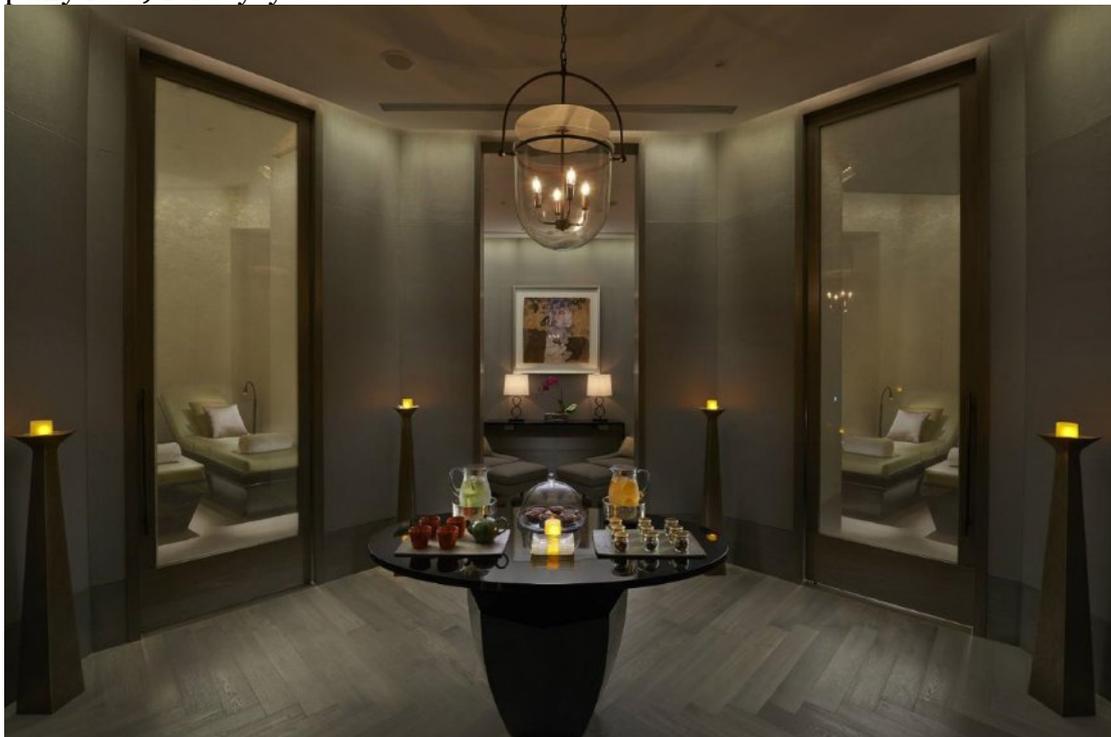


Figure 3 Motpe Spa. Is bigger better? In this case I'd say 'yes'.

**Food stuff:** Although the Taipei Mandarin has a French bistro and Michelin star-rated chef Mario Cittadini's Bencotto Italian restaurant, I had dinner at Ya Ge, where chef Tin-Mo Wong – previously from Two-Michelin star Hong Kong restaurant, Ming Court - dished up a refined Cantonese menu, including fragrantly refreshing Matsutake mushroom soup made with Chinese herbs, luscious wok-fried giant Garoupa and butter-tender Taiwanese suckling pig in paper thin crackling. The meal was served with aged Saushing, a pungent and slightly oily Taiwanese rice wine, best served with a lime slice.



Figure 4 Loving Ya Ge's super-healthy Matsutake mushroom soup.

**Check out?** For in depth information about Mandarin Oriental, Taipei, speak to Director of Communications, Luanne Li.

**Check in?** [Visit Mandarin Oriental, Taipei.](#)

**Don't miss:** the bonanza of activity suggestions for Taipei in my [Tales of Taiwan feature.](#)

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