



Hidden treasure

The world knows Macau for its casinos, but a small scratch beneath the surface uncovers a wealth of art in this melting pot of Eastern and Western culture

Portuguese occupation from the mid-sixteenth Century through to 1999 left an indelible mark on the autonomous state at the southern tip of China. Just 65 kilometres west of Hong Kong, Macau is the most densely populated region in the world.

Reflecting a mix of Portuguese and Chinese culture, the calendar is packed with holidays, festivals and events, including the International Music Festival and Macau Grand Prix in October and November.

The 31st International Music Festival will run from 29 September through to 30 October across The Macau Conservatory, the Lobby of Cultural Affairs Bureau Building, Macau Art Garden and Cinematheque Passion and under

the theme of young artists. The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra will also play in the Macao Cultural Centre Grand Auditorium on 29 October.

These cultural buildings have come into prominence since the transfer of sovereignty, with the purpose of offering unique venues for artistic events, international



conferences and exhibitions, enhancing cultural exchange and expanding the horizons of the Macau public.

Downtown Macau will become a Grand Prix street circuit between 16-19 November. Ayrton Senna, Michael Schumacher and David Coulthard have all won the event that is now in its 64th edition.

With humidity levels relatively low, calendar year-end is the best time to visit the peninsula and there is a plethora of rich cultural heritage to take in, such as the UNESCO sites A-Ma Temple and the 16th-century ruins of St. Paul's Cathedral. The Old Taipa Village is one of only two

Above: The ruins of St. Paul's, built from 1602 to 1640 Left: The famous central Food Street

'traditional' villages that exists in Macau, in stark contrast to the casinos that can be views from Monte Fort – a 400-year-old stone military centre.

Senado Square is the European urban centre of Macau with pastel-coloured neo-classical buildings reminiscent of Mediterranean tourist hubs.

Hidden in plain sight and often overlooked are some of Macau's fine art pieces, such as the Forever Handshake sculpture at Sun Yat Sen Park or the \$US20m Jeremy Railton-designed Crystal Pool at Galaxy Macau. Salvador Dali's Alice in Wonderland and Dalian Dancer are on permanent display at MGM Macau while Li Xiaofeng's Porcelain Dress is at the Mandarin Oriental and the 18th-century Chinese porcelain Buccleuch Vases are in the lobby of Wynn Macau.

The Macau Museum of Art houses a more obvious, but still brilliant collection of historic local and global work.

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