

GSS

THE GOLD SERVICE
SCHOLARSHIP

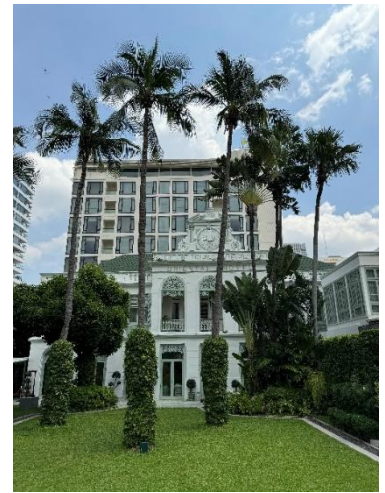
Patron: The Late Queen Elizabeth II



Mandarin Oriental Bangkok

October 2024

Simona Federová



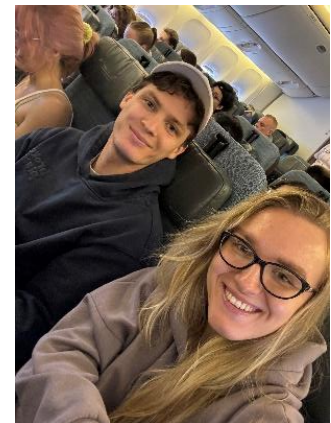
Dear sponsors,

As a runner-up of the Gold Service Scholarship Competition 2024, I received “The Most Consistent Performance” award and was given an opportunity to accompany The Scholar Scott Crowe on an educational trip to Bangkok and Hong Kong, which was an honour.

After arriving at the Bangkok Airport a hotel employee was waiting for us at the arrival hall and escorted us to the taxi that took us directly to the hotel. Upon reaching the hotel, we were straight away warmly welcomed by hotel employees and gifted with Thai tradition, fresh flowers garland. I was straight away blown away by the beautiful lobby area with loads of



fresh flowers and decorations. Assistant Director of Food and Beverage, Rodolphe, came to greet us at the reception and gave us a brief introduction to the upcoming week. We then made our way to rooms where lovely welcome cards and amenities were organised by the management. We spent the rest of the day at leisure and headed to the pool as temperatures were above 30 degrees Celsius. In the evening we went to explore Asiatique Markets which offered a huge amount of food stalls, restaurants, clothes and jewellery markets and souvenir places. To get back to the hotel we took the very famous and traditional “tuk-tuk” which was an experience in itself.



The second day we started with an amazing breakfast at the riverfront terrace which offers not only an excellent selection of juices, fruits, pastries, hot and cold breakfast options but also stunning views across the river. Straight after, K Aom showed us around the HR Department. We have been explained how they are supporting their employees as they are the priority. They organise many events, parties, activities and get together to show their appreciation. The walls of the department are covered with pictures, awards and notice boards that display what employees have done to improve the services or how they contributed to enhancing the guest experience. Everything is very much staff and culture-oriented to show respect and make the employees feel recognised and appreciated. Afterwards, we had an introduction to the basics of Thai culture to be able to show



respect to the people and the culture as well. We learned how to correctly greet people with the Wai greeting, how to say thank you and the most important dos and don'ts when visiting Thailand. Then we had lunch with Rodolphe where we discussed his role within the hotel, how he runs the department and any challenges they are currently facing. The last part of the day was a tour of the whole hotel provided by Praifoon, F&B raising fan. She showed us around various restaurants, spas, gym, pool and Mandarin Oriental Residencies. The hotel is located across two sides of the Chao Phraya River which can be accessed by beautiful wooden boats that are the means of transport for guests and employees to connect both sides. We finished the day with dinner in a grand shopping centre, The Icon Siam.



We started day three at the Head of Departments meeting which was really interesting to be part of and hear the discussions. All the important previous and upcoming events have been mentioned, guest complaints have been highlighted how they were handled and any changes announced. At lunchtime, a visit to the Mandarin Oriental Shop at Siam Paragon shopping centre was organised for us where we received a lovely welcome by the shop employees with their signature mocktail. Further, we were kindly given a dessert with hand written chocolate message to welcome to the shop. The shop offers a large selection of pastries, cakes, teas and gifts but also they serve quick snacks, afternoon tea and a selection of drinks. The shop and its products are very popular with not only the guests from

the hotel but also with visitors to the shopping centre or people who want to experience Mandarin Oriental service without staying in the hotel. In the evening, we had our first training session at The Verandah which is an all-day dining restaurant with a beautiful river view. They offer a selection of classic Thai dishes but also an Exclusive Set Menu. It was pleasing to see the attention to detail that is put into the service even in the fast-paced environment. The lovely touch of a fresh rose in an ice bucket with a bottle of champagne makes a difference.



For the lunch session of a day four, we were allocated to go to a different restaurant. I spend time at The Authors Lounge which is their Afternoon Tea area. Afternoon tea is very popular in Thailand and therefore the Lounge can get very busy. This is located in the original building of the hotel with stunning decorations and layout. For this reason, it is often used for private events and weddings. I have been very well looked after by the Assistant Manager K May

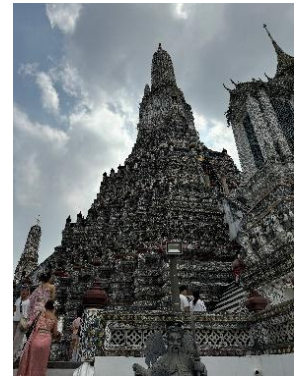


they offer. An example is an Oriental Afternoon Tea Set which is made of traditional and local Thai ingredients. I have learned a lot about the various types of teas they have on the tea menu and their special service or use in mocktails/welcome drinks. Attention to detail in this department was also adhered to for example in the form of a birthday cake that is presented on a trolley with dry ice and the servers sing Happy Birthday at the same time. K May very thoughtfully organised for me a small selection of savouries, bakeries, pastries and tea mocktails from the oriental selection to try which I really appreciated and absolutely loved the flavours. For the evening

session, we were both together at the Le Normandie, one Micheline star fine dining restaurant led by two Micheline star chef Alex Dilling. I have spent a lot of time alongside Thelma, F&B Rising Fan, who clearly explained the sequence of service and how they operate.



During the morning of day five, we went and explored a bit of Bangkok, visiting a temple in the heart of the centre, The Grand Palace. From there we took a boat to the other side of the river to visit another temple, Wat Arun Ratchawararam. Both are huge but stunning buildings dating back centuries. For the rest of the day, I was working at the Le Normandie restaurant. The first half of the lunch service I was helping with the service on the floor. This was where I really realised how much a culture affects the way of service. Thai people have a completely different approach to



service and how they perform compared to my experience in Europe. It's not only about how employees treat the guest but also how employees treat each other. To show respect towards other colleagues is one of the most important rules. In the second half of the service, I was in the kitchen observing Senior Sous Chef George Kay and his team. Their operation and communication were very calm and focused which made the service very smooth. The chef was very kind and explained some of the dishes and their form of preparation.





Further, the chef arranged for us some samples of the dishes and these were some of the best flavour combinations I have ever tried. The dinner service was a bit different because they had 6-course wine dinner experience organised for that night. Chateau D'Issan was the star of the evening providing excellent wine pairing alongside each course. A banqueting service style was applied throughout this evening which was amazing to see and be part of as it's rarely done in Michelin-star restaurants.

On day six, our last day, we started with a short session at the terrace where breakfast was served. We were observing the service of the very fast-paced environment. I have learned that it's very important to split the duties between staff so they stick to the same task and this will ensure the service runs smoothly. Afterwards, it was time to pack our suitcases and make our way to the airport to catch the flight to Bangkok.

I would sincerely like to thank everyone from the Gold Service Scholarship, sponsors and the staff at Mandarin Oriental Bangkok who helped in organising this work experience for us. It was truly an honour to spend a week at this unique property. Not only did we chance to observe and work with your team but also gained a bit of understanding of Thai culture. This was once in a lifetime opportunity I am very grateful for being the one who could experience it.

Thank you,

Simona Federova





Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong

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October 2024

As a runner-up of the Gold Service Scholarship Competition 2024, I received “The Most Consistent Performance” award and was given an opportunity to accompany The Scholar Scott Crowe on an educational trip to Bangkok and Hong Kong, which was an honour.

After we spent 6 days in the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok we travelled to our next destination, Hong Kong. We were picked up at the airport by a hotel employee who drove us in a hotel limousine directly to the hotel. The welcome we received at the hotel entrance was exceptional. We have been greeted by at least at least six members of staff. One of them was Assistant Director of Food and Beverage, Christoph Schrottenbaum who was also a winning finalist of GSS in 2012. He and the rest of the employees escorted us straight to the room where we did in-room check-in. Chris informed us about a table booking for dinner at one of their restaurants as we arrived late in the evening and also about a breakfast reservation for the following morning which was greatly appreciated. The whole process from arriving at the hotel entrance to finding myself in a beautiful room on the 19th floor took no more than 5 min and I still get goosebumps when I think of the welcome now. We had a quick dinner and a sneak peek outside of the hotel and went to bed.



Day two started meeting another Assistant Director Food and Beverage, Patty who gave us a warm welcome, us through how would split the session into different F&B



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outlets and gave us a tour around the hotel. Straight after, we attended a daily F&B briefing where we met managers from all outlets. For the whole of the week, me and Scott worked separately and my first training session was in Man Wah. This is one Micheline star Chinese Restaurant located on the 24th floor with stunning views of the Victoria Harbour. I was truly amazed by the place as it was my first time in a Chinese restaurant with such high standards. I was greeted and looked after by Assistant Restaurant Manager Marco who explained the service procedures and concept of the restaurant. They offer classic chines dishes such as Dim Sum or

Peking Duck, and a large selection of various teas as well as wines. I have learned that the tea culture in Hong Kong is very extensive and people drink tea all day long. Oftentimes they change tea to hot water as this has a lot of health benefits for the human body. From the beginning I was observing the service and not long after I was helping to serve food, ironing table cloths, relaying tables and assisting with service as much as I could. I genuinely enjoyed my time here I have experienced this kind of service and style of restaurant for the first time. Dinner service I spend in Cafe Causette, a day casual dining restaurant. At the beginning of the session Kennedy, the restaurant manager explained how he runs the restaurants, how he splits the shifts and does rota and what are the SOPs of the service. Afterwards, I helped with clearing tables, folding napkins and relaying tables.



Day three I started at the Room Service department which I found very informative as I had no previous experience in this field. Richard, the manager of the department was very welcoming and knowledgeable. Firstly, he explained to me what the responsibilities of the room service department are and how they manage them all. I started by packing and labelling amenities that I later on helped deliver to rooms. I also assisted with breakfast delivery to the guest room which I honestly found quite intimidating to enter a room when guests are still in bed or working. I do

believe you can get used to it but it was certainly a very interesting experience. Later on, I was shown how to answer calls, take orders put them through and report and allocate all amenities and room deliveries. They are using various systems to communicate with other departments of the hotel to ensure smooth service and excellent guest experience. Afternoon and sessions I was allocated to spend in Clipper Lounge. This is a dining restaurant serving buffet-style breakfast, lunch and dinner also traditional afternoon tea. I have been helping with serving clearing tables and topping up drinks.



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On the morning of day four, we took the very famous star ferry over to Hong Kong-mainland to explore that part of the town as well. Later, for the whole day, I was staying at The Aubrey. It is a Japanese Izakaya-style restaurant and bar recognised as one of Asia's 50 Best Bars offering various types of experiences from a set lunch menu, and omakase cocktail experience to nightclub dancing. Devender, The Beverage Manager for the whole hotel and the person behind the whole idea and theme of The Aubrey. He introduced me to the concept of the restaurant and taught me a lot about Japanese Shochu which I had never heard of

before. It is a distilled beverage which can be made from over 50 different ingredients such as rice, barley or sweet potato and in Japan, it is as popular as Sake. Further, he showed and taught me how to prepare a drink with the throwing method as that's something I wanted to learn. In the evening I was for some time running food but then jumped behind the bar and learned how to prepare some of their most popular cocktails. For the rest of the night, I absolutely enjoyed being behind the bar and assisting the bartenders preparation of all sorts of cocktails.



During the lunch session of day five, I was observing and helping in the very famous Mandarin Cake Shop. This is the smallest F&B department but oftentimes reaches the largest profits of all other F&B departments. A team of 6 people look after selling and serving cakes, parties, salads and beverages on the premises, they are also in charge of an online shop where all of the above can be ordered and then picked up in the shop. Further, they are responsible for taking orders, boxing the cakes and coming up every month with new promotions. I found it very impressive how this department is run and organised to ensure no orders are missed and everything is delivered/picked up on time. In the afternoon, both I and Scott has short sessions in IT, Purchasing, housekeeping and engineering



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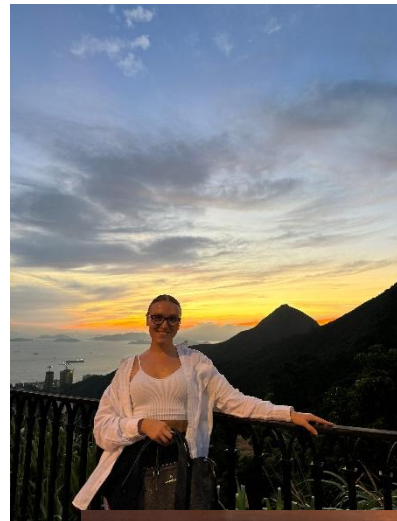
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organised to ensure no orders are missed and everything is delivered/picked up on time. In the afternoon, both I and Scott has short sessions in IT, Purchasing, housekeeping and engineering

departments to give us a brief idea of how these departments run and work. We have even been taken to the hotel roof from where the view was unbelievable. We then headed to one of



most popular tourist attractions the city, Victoria Peak. We took an tram to the peak and got there when the sun started setting so had an absolutely stunning view the top over the whole of Hong Kong.



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Our last training session was on six and I have been allocated at the Mandarin Grill and Bar. One Micheline fine dining restaurant that offers a lot tableside experiences such as the carving of smoked salmon, filleting Dover sole or carving of roast beef. I spoke to the Hotel Sommelier about their wine list and what they offer. An interesting fact I discovered is that he used to be the Head Sommelier at The Vineyard Hotel in Newbury. In the afternoon and Scott I was finishing a presentation that we had to share with the F&B service team. It focused on our journey, what GSS is and to talk about how



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improve in using guest names and enhance guest interaction. We do believe that this presentation went well and that we shared interesting tips and information from our own experience. After finishing we had no more training sessions organised until the departure day so in the evening we went to have snack in The Baker and



the Bottleman Restaurant which is owned by a three Micheline star chef Simon Rogan. Then we headed to horseracing as we were recommended to do so by many people. Truly a memorable experience.



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Day seven was dedicated to exploring more of Hong Kong. Hotel Manager, Michael Groll, organised for us to go and see the Mandarin Oriental Landmark, Hong Kong. We were greeted there by Assistant Director of Food and Beverage, Max Xie, who showed us around the F&B outlets of the hotel. Afterwards, he very kindly organised for us to try one of the dishes they were serving at their two Michelin star restaurant Amber. His hospitality was above and beyond and we were very thankful for being able to visit this premises.



For the last evening of the trip, we decided to visit the tallest bar in the world on the 112th floor with a view of the whole of Hong Kong. We finished having a delicious dinner at Hutong restaurant where we tried Peking Duck which was a carved table side. Amazing experience to finish the whole trip with an even better view.

I would sincerely like to thank everyone from the Gold Service Scholarship, sponsors and the staff at Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong who helped in organising this work experience for us. It was truly an honour to spend a week at this unique property. Not only did we have a chance to observe and work with your team but also learned from the best in the industry. This was once in a lifetime opportunity I am very grateful for being the one who could experience it.

Thank you,

Simona Federová

