

Lasting Impressions

Remarkable encounters far from home

By Paul Lasley and Elizabeth Harryman



He looked more handsome than in his photographs—lightly tanned and clad in a perfectly tailored suit.

“Welcome to Highgrove,” said Prince Charles to our group of eight journalists, part of a larger gathering at his country estate in Britain’s Cotswolds to meet him and later hear his speech in praise of rural tourism. He spoke in a mellifluous baritone.

“You have a beautiful voice,” said Paul. “You could do radio.”

“Well, if things start to go badly here, I’ll give you a call,” said the Prince of Wales, smiling. His wit and charm captivated us.

Prince Charles is far from the only memorable person we’ve met on our travels. Engaging with people is one of travel’s joys, and we relish reminiscing about some of the most remarkable people we’ve encountered.

When we first visited China in 1984, we interviewed the late Ying Ruocheng, who at the time was the director of the Beijing People’s Art Theatre. “China is opening up,” said the actor, director, and playwright who had spent three years in prison during China’s Cultural Revolution and who would go on to appear in such films as *The Last Emperor*. He had invited us to watch a rehearsal of *Amadeus*, in which characters entered the stage on skateboards. “The play addresses issues such as what it means to be an artist,” he continued, “things that China is dealing with today.”

It’s not only the famous we remember. Ordinary people taking extraordinary care in their work have left indelible impressions. On a boat tour in the Louisiana bayous, we met a fellow passenger who was a construction worker. “I helped build that,” he said with pride, referring to a highway overpass that curved above us like a giant sculpture. “That’s a beautiful thing.” Now when we look at construction projects, we think of them as works of art.

When we interviewed a James Joyce scholar in Dublin, Ireland, for our radio program, he recited passages of *Ulysses* with a passion that gave us chills. We needed no further proof that Joyce had wanted his works to be read aloud. And in Egypt, two teenagers peddling scarves greeted us in four different languages, demonstrating that you don’t have to attend Harvard Business School to be a successful entrepreneur.

Travel is a boundless gift. The insights we gain from encounters with other people deepen our understanding of the world.

Worth the Trip

The dish before us appeared to be a fresh, whole, ripe tomato. On closer inspection, we discovered that the tomato had been peeled and lightly cooked. Opening the top revealed fried rice with minced Wagyu beef and egg. The flavor combination and cooking technique convinced us that chef Cheung Long Yin of the **Shang Palace** restaurant in Hong Kong’s Kowloon Shangri-La hotel deserves his two Michelin stars. Crisp Parma ham slices and shredded ginger provided textural counterpoint to the clean flavor of pan-fried spotted *garoupa* served with minced vegetables and an egg white sauce. A tea sommelier suggested a delicate oolong to accompany our dinner, one of the finest Cantonese meals we’ve had. For dessert, fragrant strawberries and a chilled sago cream with mango and pomelo created a three-dimensional culinary still life. shangri-la.com/hongkong/kowloonshangrila.



BOTTOM RIGHT: COURTESY KOWLOON SHANGRI-LA, HONG KONG

From the Insiders When visiting museums and attractions, **buy tickets online** in advance wherever possible to avoid waiting in line. To beat the crowds, **go early**, and if a timed entrance is offered, choose the earliest time available.

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