



Travel Stories by Amaru & Suzanne



Viva Las... Macau!?!?

by Amaru & Suzanne, November 9th 2009

We're in Macau, the Vegas of the East...

Since we were in Hong Kong and only an hour away from Macau we decided to pay it a quick visit too. Our ferry took an hour to cross the distance and was very comfortable. Suz and I decided to splurge and get the Superclass tickets, the seats might have been the same but we were served breakfast and the best part was that the rest of the boat had to wait for us to disembark before they were allowed to....hehe, talk about feeling like a VIP.

Getting off the boat first was great though as it meant we didn't have to line up for too long through immigration and customs (and yes, Suz didn't fill in the option regarding her cough here either).

Once we were out we changed some money into the local currency and then just caught the local bus into town.



Our ride to Macau
A fast new ferry



Hong Kong to Macau
We decided to splurge with Superclass

We were on the bus and all of a sudden we noticed that we were driving on the race course for the upcoming Macau Grand Prix (almost as fast too as the bus driver had a heavy foot).

On the bus we must have looked lost whilst trying to find out where we were by reading our map and street signs because a lady came up to us, asked where we were going and then advised us which station to get off at.... Don't you just love when people do that?

Thanks to her directions we were soon standing in the centre of town, the Senado Square! Here you could be forgiven for thinking you were somewhere in Europe instead, the Portuguese influence on Macau is massive. Not only do the buildings look European but every sign is also written in Chinese and Portuguese.

We strolled around for a while seeing the local sights; St. Dominics Church, the Ruins of St. Paul and Mount Fortress before heading back into town.

After an extensive search we finally found a cafe where we could sit down and have a Pastéis de Nata. When we travelled through Portugal a few years ago we totally fell in love with these custard tarts and couldn't wait to have some here... Unfortunately the tarts here were not so much custard as egg tart.... not bad by any means by not what we wanted either!

Well, after our snack we were ready to tackle a few of the many casinos in Macau.... First on the list was Casino Lisboa which was an old fashioned style casino, cramped and with lots of people gambling on some sort of dice game.



The seats in Superclass
Very comfortable



We're on the actual race track
Race day is about 2 weeks away

We couldn't really understand the rules so we moved on and entered the new massive casinos Wynn and MGM (almost made us feel as we were in Vegas once more).

As always we gambled just as much as we normally do... about HK\$10 each. Suz played quite a few rounds before she ran out of money, I played one round, didn't have enough to play a second and cashed my winnings of \$4 (and no, I didn't collect the money either)!

After our extensive gambling it was time for lunch and we were trying to find a Portuguese place for lunch. After some wandering we came upon a local place that said Portuguese food and stepped inside. We now really thought we had been teleported to Lisbon as the restaurant and menu just looked 100% genuine.

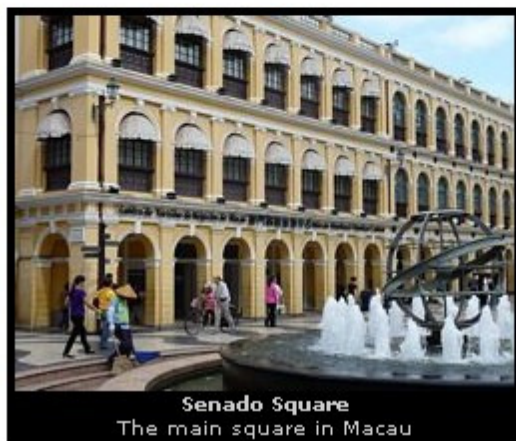
I ordered the same rice and prawns dish I had in Portugal last time while Suz got some ribs. The ribs were nice but my stew was absolutely beautiful!!

After lunch we made our way over to Macau Tower for some aerial views of the city. While there we also managed to see some people do a bungee jump and also some ledge walking.... all done by the NZ company AJ Hackett (the same one that I did my bungee jump with in NZ).

I thought the jump I made in Queenstown has high (134m) but this one was a massive 233m.... that's quite a fall!! I was very close to actually strapping on a jumpsuit and just leaping off the building but Suz held me too tight and I couldn't get away, I believe that she doesn't like the idea of me throwing myself off a building ;)



Macau Town Centre
You can see the European influence



Senado Square
The main square in Macau

After this there wasn't a lot more we could do during a day trip so we headed back to the Ferry Terminal and caught a ferry back to Hong Kong (it's easy when the ferry runs every 15min).

It was great to experience Macau and to be able to visit the casinos that we hear so much about but it's not a place we feel we would come back to. And even if we felt like gambling, Las Vegas still feels more like the real thing.... but who knows, give this place a few more years and it might overtake Las Vegas!



St. Dominics Church
Almost believe we're in Portugal again...



No Fakes...
Just so you know



The Ruins of St. Paul
Only the facade remains...



Suz and I
In front of the ruins



The view from the top
of the ruins of St. Paul



One of the cannons from
the top of the Mount Fortress



Macau skyline
from the Fortress



Macau Museum
Also found on top of Mount Fortress



These strips of meat are called Yuk Gon
Not sure what they taste like though



Butcher shop
Everything is in Chinese and Portuguese



Enjoying a coffee
and a Macau Pastéis de Nata



All signs are in
Chinese and Portuguese writing



Looking out over the Casinos
The Wynn and MGM...



Grand Lisboa Casino
A very shiny casino



Casino Lisboa
One of the few old casinos left



See the seats?
There for the race...



Wynn Casino
Almost think I'm in Vegas!



Suz is hitting the slot machines
Trying to win some money!



My turn...
one the one-arm-bandit



My Winnings!!
\$4 Macau Dollars is about \$AUD 0.50



I love Portuguese Food!!
Salivating over my plate of rice and prawns!!



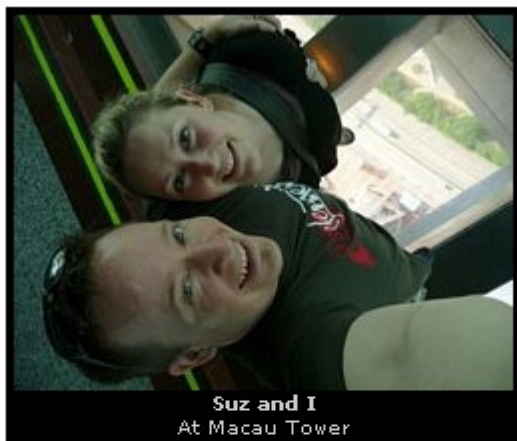
Kun Lam Statue
A Buddhist Goddess



We're on top of Macau Tower
Looking down through the glass floor



Suz walking along the glass floor
Small, small steps...



Suz and I
At Macau Tower



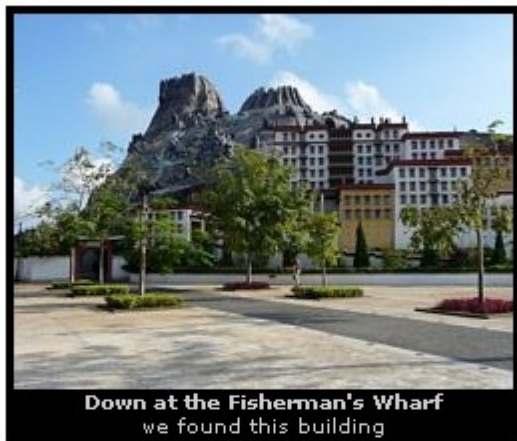
A massive 233m bungee jump...
And I thought my 134m was high



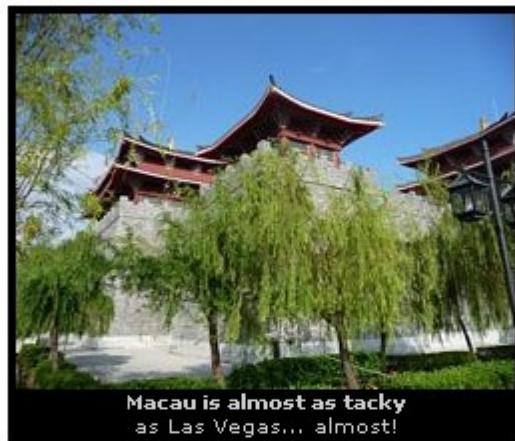
Walking on the ledge
Looks pretty freaky doesn't it



Macau skyline
from Macau Tower



Down at the Fisherman's Wharf
we found this building



Macau is almost as tacky
as Las Vegas... almost!

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