

“A bubbling type of place”

Fast-paced, colourful and dynamic, Hong Kong has long attracted people from all over the globe. **Rebecca Taylor** meets some of those who have made it their home



HONG KONG

HENRY STEINER

Graphic designer whose work includes the HSBC logo and some of Hong Kong's bank notes

I was born in 1934 and grew up in Baden bei Wien, a spa town outside Vienna. My childhood was disrupted in 1938 by the Anschluss, when Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany. My mother was worried and searched desperately for a way to get us out of the country. She heard about an American-Austrian film producer who spent his summers in Baden. She knocked on his door and said she needed a guarantor to get my family to the States. He said he'd received many similar requests. She pulled out a picture of me saying, "If not for me, then for my son." He replied, "How can I refuse this little Chinese boy?" If you look at pictures of me as a child, I did look quite Chinese.

My family arrived in New York in 1939. At kindergarten I learnt English and, shamefully, refused to speak to my parents in German. After studying art at Yale, and taking up a Fulbright Fellowship in Paris, I returned to New York to work at The Asia Magazine, which was handed out with English-language newspapers around Asia. I became its design director and moved to Hong Kong in 1961. The World of Suzie Wong had been released and James Clavell's book Tai-Pan came out in 1966. Things were bubbling. In 1964, I set up my own company.

These days, I'm involved in the art museum, M+. I've always been struck by Chinese design and incorporate it playfully into my work. My 'schtick' is playing with western and eastern sensibilities. In some of my posters I even sneak in some Yiddishkeit.