

KAREN'S HONG KONG LUXURY HANDBOOK

Home Spa

Women with extra rooms and cash can splash out on cutting-edge facial and body equipment to create a home beauty retreat. Hong Kong organises many interesting beauty trade shows such as the Beauty & Fitness Expo held at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre every June (www.hkcec.com.hk). A home spa is more exclusive and private, and has more character than some of the top spas in the world. After all, you're its only member!

Top repair product

Though Karen first discovered La Mer The Essence (below), which costs \$3,670, in Hong Kong, this 21-day treatment product is also available in Singapore. Consisting of three treatment vials sitting in separate glass tubes charged by a magnetic field within, this essence repairs, re-energises and rejuvenates the skin with three different types of rare ferments. Owned by less than 20 Singaporean women, according to La Mer's marketing manager, Cynthia Ng, this top luxury cream is available by order only.



Unavailable Beauty

Lane Crawford (www.lanecrawford.com), at the IFC Mall beside Hong Kong MTR Station, carries products that are currently unavailable in Singapore. A recent addition is Jo Malone, which consists of a line of fragrances and candles. There is even a beauty concierge service to keep you up-to-date with the latest products available, as well as the science behind them.



KAREN NG, PAID \$54,000 FOR A MASSAGE CHAIR

A woman is only worth what she thinks she's worth, and if you ask Karen Ng, fashion stylist to top local celebrities like Fiona Xie, she's well worth a \$54,000 massage chair and a \$3,670 face cream.

"I used to attend many beauty trade fairs when I was residing in Hong Kong (as a stylist to celebrities and socialites). During one such fair, I found an endermologie machine — a type of professional slimming equipment that features rollers and a suction device to improve circulation and reduce cellulite. It cost HK\$300,000 (S\$54,000). I thought it'd be a nice idea to create a home spa, so I bought it and got my maid to work it (on me) every other day. I found that it really firmed up my body," shares the 36-year-old.

Two years ago, when the stylist moved to

Singapore, she nonchalantly left this \$54,000 machine (the equivalent of four Birkin bags), to a friend.

Excessive? The stylist begs to differ. "Some people say that I am materialistic, but I think that there is nothing wrong with aiming for the finer things in life.

"Not spending is what's really wasteful. I've met many *tai tais* in Hong Kong who have a lot of money but simply don't bother spending. Isn't it more wasteful to neglect the beauty we are endowed with? I, for one, am so turned on by a woman who makes the effort to carry a hand cream in her bag, or a purse perfume, especially if it's a pure rose scent like Jo Malone's Red Roses.

"Luxury items are worth their price because you are paying for the exclusivity and the research that goes into their development," she says.