

3 left-behind greys take pioneering trip on bridge to HK airport

Foster families wanted for ill greyhounds

Lesley Wells

In a first for the greyhounds that have been left behind at (Yat Yuen) Canidrome Co. Ltd., three were driven across the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) yesterday to Hong Kong's international airport to catch a flight to Philadelphia in an experiment by local animal protection group Anima to see if it was possible and, if so, it could see the animals leaving almost daily within the next few weeks or so.

When the racetrack closed its doors at midnight on July 20, after five decades in business, over 530 ex-racing hounds were left behind. The Civic and Municipal Bureau (IACM) stepped in and with the help of Anima, the animal rescue centre began taking care of the abandoned greyhounds.

Over the last month or so up to 10 greyhounds a week have been making the arduous journey to various greyhound rescue centres dotted around the US by way of an overnight barge to Hong Kong, then spending the day in a Hong Kong pet hotel before going to Hong Kong airport to catch the evening flights to various parts of the US.

Anima President Albano Martins was worried about the stress that such a long journey would have on the already stressed animals, and yesterday he was happy to try out the new route. "It reduces their travelling time by up to two days," he said.

Martins said in a Facebook post on Wednesday, "Now with the new bridge they leave



This photo provided by Anima shows a greyhound called Dream Doll in his flight crate at the ex-Canidrome being seen of by Anima President Albano Martins (left) before setting off for Hong Kong's international airport across the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) yesterday.

Macau on the day of the flight at 5 p.m., for instance, arrive in HK in just one hour and arrive [at] the airport 10 minutes after arriving in HK!

"With this procedure we help the greyhounds by reducing the risk of that [long] travel and in just a few hours they are in a very good air-con environment!

"And the cost is also much less!

"If you have a licence for driving on the

bridge and you want to help our greyhounds, please contact Anima and help us!

"We need drivers to take as many as possible greyhounds to HK airport! With this facility we do not have airport limitations!"

Martins had asked for volunteers with vehicles with the double registration plates of Macau and Hong Kong that could use the bridge to help out with the transportation of

the greyhounds but only two of three volunteers and vehicles finally turned up. "Unfortunately we got only two volunteers, one of them taking two dogs!" Martins lamented on Facebook last night.

In a Facebook post also at 7 p.m. yesterday, Martins said that the three greyhounds, males Oyster Claimant and Dream Doll plus female So Glad were all "safely at Hong Kong airport".

Appeal for fosterers

Also on Wednesday in another Facebook post, Martins appealed for local families to foster the ill dogs that are languishing in the Canidrome untreated.

Ten greyhounds have died at the Canidrome since July. They were not in good health when IACM and Anima took over and local vet clinics do not have the space to keep the canines for the duration of their treatment and recovery, Martins posted, "We may see more 20 to 30 greyhounds dying before being re-homed!

He added, "This is an appeal to our Macau local families: we can take out many greyhounds from the Canidrome before they are sent to [the] US, Europe, Australia and any other area provided we have families capable of receiving and taking care of them temporarily!

On top of this appeal Anima is still looking for volunteers to walk the greyhounds at the ex-Canidrome. ■

Luxury hotel opens in quarry near Shanghai

SHANGHAI — A hotel development sunk into a disused quarry opened its doors yesterday on the outskirts of Shanghai to deep-pocketed clientele.

Preventing the 88-metre-deep pit from flooding was among the chief challenges for engineers working on the swanky 336-room InterContinental Shanghai Wonderland — part of a US\$288 million development that also includes a theme park.

The hotel, which is one of a growing number of bold architectural designs springing up in mainland China, hugs one side of the pit wall, with a waterfall cascading down the opposite face.

The subterranean 17-floor hotel is about an hour's drive from the centre of Shanghai, with room charges starting at 3,394 yuan a night.

There is a floor of suites below the water level, but don't expect to gaze directly into the depths of Shengkeng Quarry — the windows are instead buffered by large fish tanks.

"Why do we say there is nothing in the world that compares to the quarry hotel project?" Chen Xiaoxiang, chief engineer with the real estate giant, Shimao Property, told AFP.

"It's a project that's completely new, a project we have never encountered before.

"There were no references, cases or experience we could learn from to solve all the difficulties," he said.

That meant engineers were met with unexpected problems.

Before construction started in 2013, for example, heavy rainfall caused a nearby river to overflow into the quarry, filling half of it.

"If something like that had happened after construction was complete, it would have been a devastating blow," Chen said.

Designers built an embankment around the edge of the pit to prevent that happening in future, when hundreds of well-heeled guests are sipping cocktails on the deck far below.

A pump house is used to help regulate water levels.

'Totally unique'

The waterfall is one of the

development's most eye-catching features. Adventurous guests can also indulge in rock climbing.

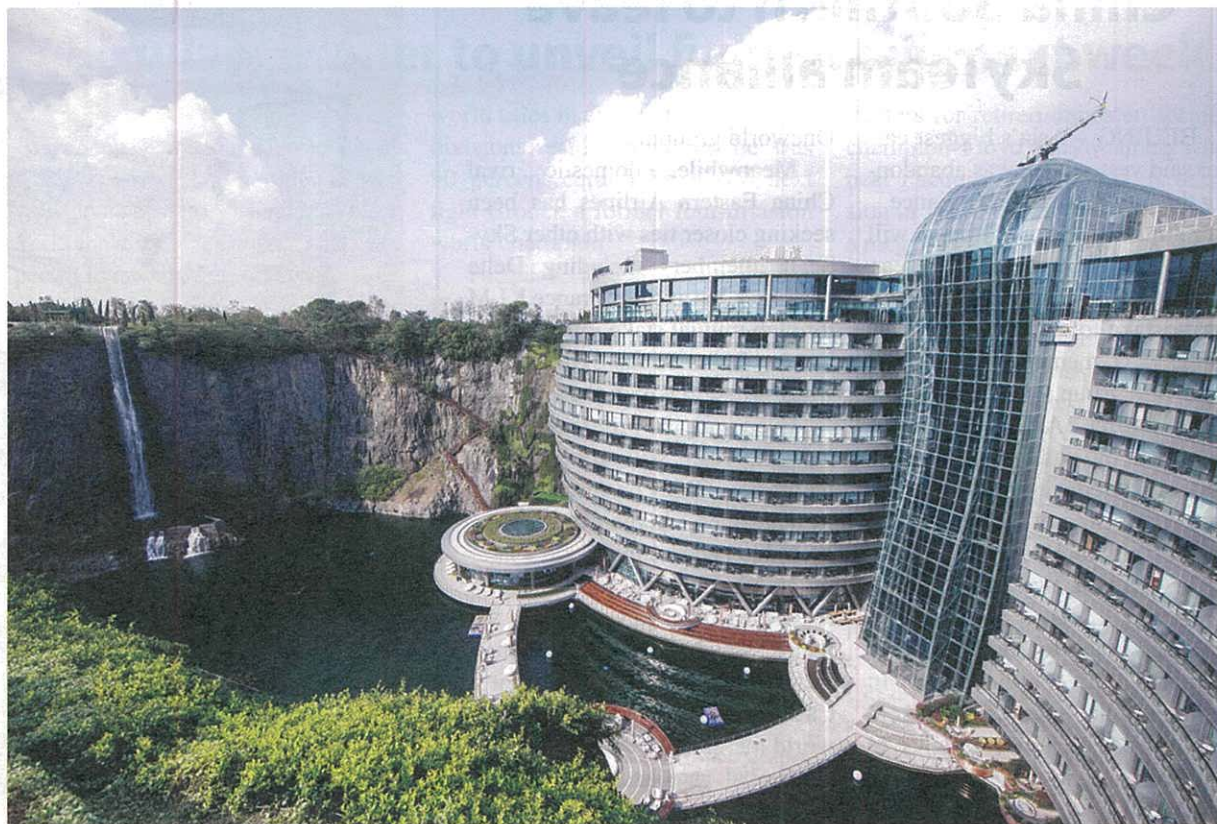
The project's masterminds talk up its environmental bona fides, saying abandoned quarries often become landfills.

"This was a totally unique idea, to really do something special with a site that was forgotten and nobody knew what to do with, and to give it new life," said Martin Jochman, a British architect with the project since it started 12 years ago.

"I never lost my belief that it would be done one day, but it is here now, and I am really excited and amazed by the whole thing," he said.

Mainland China's rapid economic growth has been accompanied by a construction boom that often throws up outlandish designs.

The Beijing headquarters of state broadcaster China Central Television has been nicknamed "The Big Underpants" because it resembles a giant pelvis. — AFP



This photo taken on Tuesday shows the InterContinental Shanghai Wonderland, built inside an abandoned quarry, on the outskirts of Shanghai.

STOCK MARKETS

HK, Shanghai stocks close sharply higher

HONG KONG — Hong Kong stocks rallied with Shanghai yesterday on hopes that Beijing and Washington can ease trade tensions, while market heavyweight Tencent surged on the back of better-than-expected earnings.

The Hang Seng Index jumped 1.75 percent, or 448.91 points, to close at 26,103.34.

The mainland's benchmark Shanghai Composite Index closed 1.36 percent, or 35.93 points, higher to 2,668.17, while the Shenzhen Composite Index added 1.45 percent, or 20.04 points, to 1,398.40. — AFP