

# Right here, right now

## *Centennial celebrations launch after months of careful planning*

What does it take to put together an all-American celebration over 365 days? As the curtain rises on our Centennial year, let's take a look behind the scenes and hear about the hard work and many hands behind our year-long party.

We met with the Centennial Committee's Chair and Vice Chair to talk us through their extensive planning and to give us a preview of all the fun that's coming our way.

### **Decision-makers assemble!**

To paraphrase the well-known Chinese proverb, our journey of a thousand miles begins with... a Club Committee.

In January 2022, the Centennial Committee began the serious work of implementing and executing plans for 2024-25. Board Members Carol DeMaio and Christina Tam took the reins as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. But they weren't starting from scratch.

The Committee inherited an early framework from former Board Member Lin Shi, who co-chaired the first 'edition' of the Centennial Committee along with Alice Wong. They had worked with Club senior management to sketch out the original idea for the Centennial year. Although Lin had to relocate to Tokyo for work, she gave the Committee their starting point.

"She asked the first questions," Carol said. "What should it look like? How do we envision this? How much money can we spend? How do we engage the community, both externally and internally? How do we record the history? And how do we involve people of all ages? They were really trying to think as big and broadly as they could."

### **Early achievements**

After Carol and Christina came on board, the Committee's first order of business was to design a logo in collaboration with many stakeholders. This process took eight months.



*The Centennial Committee. Front row (L/R): Carol DeMaio (Chair) & Christina Tam (Vice Chair). Back row (L/R): Carrie Chen, Paul Frost, Rebecca Turner Lentchner, R.J. Asher, Claire Shah & David Ketchum. Not present: Gary Liu, Kate Carango, Mona Shah & Perry Lam.*

“It’s not an exaggeration,” Christina explained. “Yes, we laughed because we did go back and forth about the logo, but it was very important. There’s a lot of emotion, there’s a lot of symbolism behind it. This is a big birthday for the Club, so I think it was much more than a logo.”

Working with the “right-fit” design agency after a lengthy search process, the Committee, Board and Club management team settled on a classic look for the logo. One that incorporates both American and Hong Kong elements and that “everybody is very pleased and proud of,” as Christina said.

In addition to the logo, the Committee has overseen the development of the Centennial micro-website and an ongoing social media presence. There is also a series of fun and informative online videos, featuring chapters that capture the story of the celebration at 100.americanclubhk.com and on the Club’s App: Centennial 100ACHK.

**Something for everyone**

Turning their attention to Centennial socializing, the Committee had two objectives: adding new festivities to the Club calendar and giving existing events and parties the ‘Centennial treatment’.

A year-long series of events meant the Centennial could, as Carol said, “touch almost every aspect of the Club, in some way, shape or form.” This part of the planning and executing has been a collaboration between the Committee, and various Club teams: Marketing, Events, F&B, F&R, and Facilities.

Carol highlighted the creativity of Clare Cheung, Club Events Manager, who imagined ways to bring in the themes of the ‘1920s’ and ‘100 years’ while also making sure everyone, from Club kids to Senior Life Members, were included in the celebrations.

“It was looking at what would really benefit the members,” Christina said. “And I think the management team and the Centennial team have put together

a fantastic line-up of events that everyone will get a chance to enjoy.” All of the planning went hand-in-hand with lengthy budget discussions. Deciding how, and how much, to spend on every aspect of the year was a crucial responsibility for the Committee. Expenditures also required Board approval as well as Club management input.

Carol explained, “You want to have a good time, but you need to be responsible about it as well. So, that process was interesting to work with the Board on (budgeting) – to decide how each thing would go.”

**Finding a balance**

Throughout the three+ years of preparation, the Committee has faced numerous conceptual, financial and logistical challenges. But one question has permeated almost every step of the process: how does the Club, as a visible American presence in Hong Kong, strike the right tone with both members and the public during its Centennial year?

It’s an issue that Carol, Christina and the entire team approached with a great deal of care and sensitivity.

How do we celebrate the Club but not be too brash?” is how Carol summarized the situation. She added, “We’ve been here for 100 years and we’ve played a part in developing communities in Hong Kong, so there’s a balance that needs to be maintained. And it’s a delicate balance.”

Echoing Carol’s thoughts, Christina said that the Centennial installation exhibit, which will be on display at The Rotunda Exchange Square in May 2025, in particular prompted the Committee to carefully consider how they would present the Club’s story for an audience of both members and the public – celebratory but not ostentatious.

**A deeper meaning**

While challenging and sometimes divisive, the discussions about representation, event concepts, and

*Our Centennial Calendar of Events*

**A Star-spangled Independence Day**

July 6 | Country Club

**Welcome Back Party: 1925 Golden Glory Beach Party**

August 23 | Country Club

**The Annual Town Club Party: ‘Studio 24’**

September 6 | Town Club

**Launch of the Centennial Exhibition Installation Scavenger Hunt Centennial Cornhole Competition**

September 18 | Country Club

**Halloween Centennial Twist: Boogeyman**

October 24 & 25 | Country Club

**Harbour Secrets 1924 Murder Mystery Wine Dinner**

October 26 | Vista Ballroom

**Thanksgiving Centennial Style**

November 28 | Town Club & Country Club

**Memorial Day Weekend**

May 24, 2025 | Country Club

**The Annual Town Club Party: ‘The Greatest Gatsby’**

June 7, 2025 | Town Club

**Speaker Series: Luncheon with Moira Moser, Country Club Architect & Interior Designer**

May/June 2025 | Town Club

**Independence Day & the Club’s 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday!**

July 4 – 6, 2025 | Country Club



even logos were all a necessary part of the Committee process. It has helped that while a few people have come and gone on the Committee, the core group of 12 has stayed relatively the same over the last two-and-half years.

“One of my favorite things actually about working on this is our Committee. Every single person knows that they have a place and a voice, and they aren't afraid to speak up,” said Carol, a Club member since 2008, and a Board Member for the last three years.

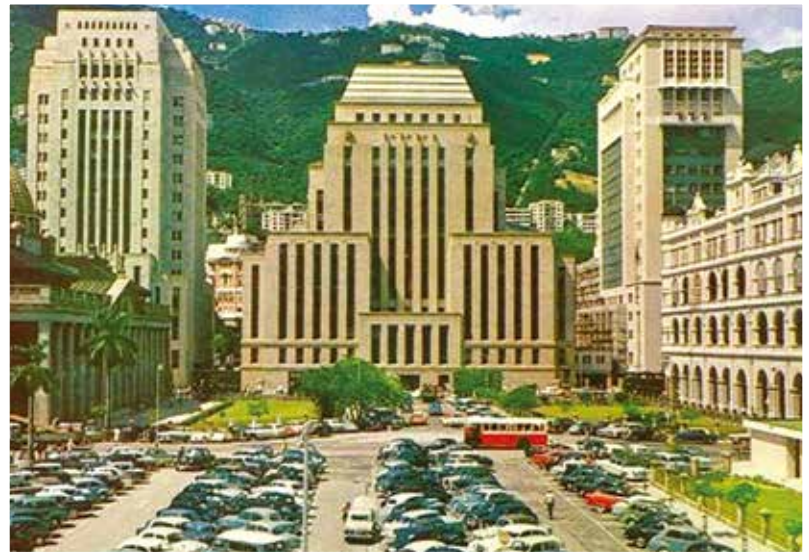
She described Committee members who are strong in areas such as governance, marketing and public relations as well as other members with different backgrounds and vital connections within the community. “That part has been really lovely, because they all bring something different to the table.”

Both Carol and Christina remarked on how the journey, although far from over, has led them to a greater understanding of the Club and its membership.

“Having now sat on my second year on the Board and on a few Committees, it's interesting to see people's perspectives on the Club and their identity with the Club,” said Christina, who has been a Club member for nine years. “It's helped me to understand how the Centennial celebrations will resonate with these different audiences.”

Carol added that, while each Committee Member knows why they love the Club, it's been important to represent the views of the entire membership, and “to get a feel for: What does everyone value? What is important to them?”

As they look ahead to the Fourth of July kick-off, Carol and Christina – along with the entire Committee and Club team – know that they haven't crossed the finish line yet. And while it can often feel, in their words, like “herding cats”, they take pride in bringing together members, past and present, old and young, to celebrate a shared, 100-year-old history.



*Did you know the HSBC Building was the third home of The American Club from 1936 to 1969? Find out more on the Centennial website/Our Story '100 Years of Memories'. Photo courtesy of HSBC Hong Kong.*

## ***Honoring history***

### **Centennial installation turns back the clock**

Designed as a fascinating multimedia exhibition, the Centennial installation will take visitors back in time and trace the Club's history from 1925 until now. The installation will launch as a teaser site on September 18 at the Country Club Member Services area and then move to The Rotunda Exchange Square in late May 2025 for a two-week showing.

The Committee and Club team have been working closely with project designer Sugar HK and historian and writer Dr. Chris White, who consults for museums and multinationals through his company Winkle-Picker. The objective has been to craft an immersive and comprehensive narrative, using not only the Club's archives but also member contributions.

The installation will also explore the Club's role within the broader American expatriate community and as one of the American pillars, along with the U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong and Macau, American Chamber of Commerce, American Women's Association, and Hong Kong International School.

As Carol explained, the installation was a huge undertaking in which millions of ideas were discussed and discarded before the team could settle on the right people, the best narrative structure, and the perfect words and images to tell the Club's journey to become 100 years old. While the Committee was responsible for helping to guide the direction of the installation and getting the necessary Board approvals, Carol said the enormous job of organizing the installation and its visual elements was undertaken by the Marketing team with help from Paul Onslow, who is a history guru and part of the Capital Projects team.

Their tremendous efforts will last long after the installation's display period. As part of “Project 100”, the scanned images and memorabilia that were gathered and donated for the installation, along with the written texts, will become a permanent part of the Club's digital archive, which was created as part of the Centennial preparations.

Members are invited to explore the installation at the Country Club this fall and then join us in the spring as we share our Club history with the public.



***Don't forget the swag!***

**Remember the year with Centennial merchandise**

Have you tried the Centennial Young Master beer yet? It's just one of our unique branded items that's bringing a touch of 'Centennial' to the Club. Take a look at "The 100 Collection" online or at the Country Store for the latest Centennial merchandise: cornhole sets, YETI cups, pins, tote bags, polo shirts and retro logo caps for adults and kids along with Young Master Brewery t-shirts and a commemorative SCMP front page reprint.

There will be more items launching over the course of the year – all carefully considered and designed to help you celebrate and memorialize the Club's special birthday.

Whether you're in search of a gift for family, something retro to send a former Club member, or an item that's meaningful to you, "The 100 Collection" has got you covered.

**Order yours now!**



***Centennial Dining Specials***

Throughout the Centennial year, our dining outlets will be featuring clam chowder, a 6oz burger, Waldorf salad and apple pie with a Centennial twist. Look out for the special menus at both the Town Club and the Country Club!

***What is the Centennial Arc of Delight?***

- (a) A phrase coined by Committee Member David Ketchum;
- (b) An ad-hoc Centennial-themed special;
- (c) A secret treat that you'll find only at the Club;
- (d) All of the above!

Throughout the Centennial year, special 'somethings' will await members when they come to the Club.

What is it, you ask? We're not saying, yet.

But it'll be a simple pleasure that brightens your day. A fun, possibly tasty, reminder of our Centennial year.

Prepare to be (d)elighted!

Learn everything about the Centennial celebrations at [100.americanclubhk.com](http://100.americanclubhk.com).

