

# USA REPORT CALIFORNIA EDITION

INSIDE: 9-PAGE SPONSORED SECTION IN COOPERATION WITH DISCOVERY REPORTS



The United States is a global powerhouse across a range of sectors, from politics to natural resources and the economy. Photo: Thinkstock

## Trade continues to grow stronger

**Hong Kong** enjoys a long-established connection to US prosperity that spans immigration, education, business and finance. Reports by Ed Peters

**H**ong Kong's symbiotic relationship with the United States stretches back a long way. American merchants were among the first to start trading in Hong Kong in the wake of Britain hoisting the Union Jack in 1841, and Chinese miners joined the California gold rush at the end of that decade in the thousands, many of them prospering. Since then, the exchanges of people and goods have strengthened the ties across the Pacific Ocean.

And trade continues to be one of the most important links. More than 8 per cent of Hong Kong's domestic exports, worth more than HK\$55 billion annually, are bound for the US. Similarly, just over 9 per cent of the city's re-exports, which last year were valued at a total of HK\$3.6 trillion, are shipped stateside. Fewer goods flow in the opposite direction, however, as US education, especially at the higher seats of learning, continues to be highly valued by Hong Kong parents who send their offspring overseas in substantial numbers.

From Hong Kong's point of

view, trading with the US makes sense, as it is the world's largest national economy, accounting for around 22 per cent of the global gross domestic product, which at the end of the first quarter of 2015 was estimated to be in excess of US\$17 trillion.

While Hong Kong's currency is pegged to the US dollar, the greenback is the currency most used in international transactions and is the world's premier reserve currency. It's used as the official currency by several countries, including Ecuador and East Timor, and in many others it is the cash of choice. The US enjoys a mixed economy and has maintained a stable overall GDP growth rate, an unemployment rate that remains moderate, and exceptionally high levels of research and capital investment. Asia is one of its largest trading partners, with China, Japan and South Korea occupying pre-eminent positions, while its other most significant trading countries are Canada, Mexico and Germany.

Part of the United States' economic predominance can be traced to the country's plentiful

natural resources, which go hand-in-hand with a well-developed infrastructure and high levels of productivity. Long associated with the concept of a land of plenty, Americans have the highest average household income and employee income among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development nations, and the US has been the world's largest national economy since the end of the 19th century.

The nation is as rich in mineral resources as it is in fertile soil, and it is fortunate to have a generally moderate climate. It also has extensive coastlines on both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and on the Gulf of Mexico. Rivers flow from far within the continent, and on the US border with Canada, lakes Superior, Huron, Michigan, Ontario and Erie – the Great Lakes, which span 246,000 square kilometres to make up the largest body of fresh water on the planet – provide additional shipping access. These extensive waterways have helped shape the country's economic growth over the years.

Superlatives seem to naturally

attach themselves to the US. It is the world's third-largest producer of oil and natural gas, the second-largest trading nation and the second-largest manufacturer, representing a fifth of the global manufacturing output. Out of the world's 500 largest companies, 128 are headquartered in the US, including Wal-Mart, ExxonMobil and Chevron. Today, it is home to more than 29 million small businesses, one-third of the world's millionaires, and nearly half of the world's billionaires.

Ever since its emergence as an independent nation in 1776, the United States has encouraged science and innovation. As a result, it has seen many inventions which are taken for granted in the 21st century, such as the aeroplane, the internet, microchips, lasers, cell phones, refrigerators, e-mail, microwaves, personal computers, LCD and LED technology, air conditioning, assembly lines, supermarkets, bar codes and automated teller machines.

While Hong Kong's Hang Seng index is markedly robust, it works in parallel with the US financial markets, which are

among the world's largest and most influential, led by the New York Stock Exchange. Foreign investments in the US have passed the US\$2 trillion mark, while American investments in foreign countries are rated in excess of US\$3.3 trillion.

The US economy heads international rankings in venture capital as well as research and development funding. Consumer spending made up nearly three-quarters of the economy in 2013, and the country remains the largest consumer market in the world, with American households spending five times more than their Japanese counterparts. The labour market has attracted immigrants from all over the world – Hong Kong and China being notable contributors – and its net migration rate is among the highest in the world.

Though vastly different in size, Hong Kong and the United States share a dedication to doing business, an admiration for entrepreneurship, and a commitment to free trade – qualities which have seen both Pacific Ocean "neighbours" blossom and flourish.

## Committed to boosting ties

The trade across the Pacific Ocean between Hong Kong and the United States is not confined to things that can be loaded inside a shipping container.

The US runs a number of programmes – some strictly by invitation only – to enhance international cultural exchanges.

"People-to-people ties are an important part of the United States' relationship with Hong Kong," says Clifford Hart Jr, the US consul general to Hong Kong and Macau.

"Immigration and our history of educational and cultural exchange have fostered mutual understanding for generations. Hong Kong has long been one of the top per-capita sources of foreign students to America, and more than 8,000 people from Hong Kong are currently studying in the US.

"In the course of my duties as consul general, I interact regularly with people at all levels who have had the opportunity to experience America first-hand – whether as a student, exchange programme participant, or even a tourist – which affords them a deeper understanding of our society, history, and culture.

"I'm also proud of the work of the 100,000 Strong Foundation and others in increasing the number of American students coming to Hong Kong and China. We have clearly laid the foundations for our productive relationship to continue in the years to come."

Perhaps one of the United States' best-known exchanges is the Fulbright Program, which was founded by Senator J. William Fulbright in 1946.

It sets out to increase mutual understanding between the people of the US and other countries through study, teaching, and research, and via the exchange of ideas to contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns.

Fulbright alumni include 78 Pulitzer Prize winners, 53 Nobel Prize winners, and 18 have served as head of state or government.

Equally wide-ranging, the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) is the US Department of State's premier professional exchange programme. Through short-term visits – lasting about two to three weeks – to the United States, current and emerging foreign leaders in a variety of fields experience the US first-hand and cultivate lasting relationships with their American counterparts.

Through short-term visits – lasting about two to three weeks – to the United States, current and emerging foreign leaders in a variety of fields experience the US first-hand and cultivate lasting relationships with their American counterparts.

Through short-term visits – lasting about two to three weeks – to the United States, current and emerging foreign leaders in a variety of fields experience the US first-hand and cultivate lasting relationships with their American counterparts.



Clifford Hart Jr

through professional meetings that reflect the participants' professional interests. IVLP participants are nominated and selected annually by the staff at US embassies and consulates around the world, and many former IVLP participants are prominent and current state leaders.

Less well-known, the Gilman Scholarship Program offers grants for US undergraduate students of limited financial means to pursue academic studies or credit-bearing, career-oriented internships abroad.

The programme aims to better prepare US students to assume significant roles in an increasingly global economy and interdependent world and encourages students to choose non-traditional study and intern destinations, especially those outside of Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

The Gilman programme supports students who have been traditionally underrepresented in education abroad, including students with high financial need, community college students, students in underrepresented fields such as the sciences and engineering, students with diverse ethnic backgrounds, and students with disabilities.

One of the more original exchanges is the Fulbright NatGeo Storytelling Program, which provides opportunities for US citizens to participate in an academic year of overseas travel and digital storytelling in two or three countries on a globally significant theme, and bring it to a global digital audience.

Participants produce stories that may use or combine text, photography, videos, audio, graphic illustrations, and social media for the purpose of producing content suitable for a *National Geographic* blog.



Educational and cultural exchanges have fostered mutual understanding. Photo: Thinkstock

## Los Angeles features a laid-back vibe and plenty of activities



Los Angeles pretty much sums up the Californian idyll of ease and plenty. Photo: Thinkstock

America boasts a vast range of accommodation to host travellers, and practically nowhere has such a diverse, quirky and welcoming range as California.

Few parts of Los Angeles have a cooler vibe than Santa Monica, whose lengthy, sun-kissed beach pretty much sums up the Californian idyll of ease and plenty. In sight and sound of the Pacific Ocean, and hard by the historic Santa Monica pier, Shutters on the Beach's (shuttersonthebeach.com) 198 rooms and suites are spread over three separate buildings clad in iconic slate-grey shingles.

"Shutters is less a hotel than a residence masquerading as a hotel," general manager Gregory Day says.

"Many hotels have a great location, or unique offerings, but Shutters blurs the lines between luxury and familiarity to provide an experience that is quite singular. This is probably why our owners have never

attempted to duplicate it; it would simply be too hard to do so."

North of LA, artsy Carmel-by-the-Sea is famous for its former mayor, movie star Clint Eastwood, and for its especially liberal attitude to dogs, who are welcomed in many hotels and restaurants, while store owners put treats and bowls of water outside their premises. The town's oldest boutique hotel, the Cypress Inn (cypress-inn.com), dates from 1929 and employs a director of pet relations, a multicultural pooch named Sadie. The 44-room enterprise is co-owned by veteran actress and animal activist, Doris Day, and is located in the heart of Carmel, allowing for easy exploration on foot – or four paws.

California is synonymous with films, and one of the state's best-known locations is the seaside town of Bodega Bay, which featured both in Alfred Hitchcock's spine-tingling 1963 horror flick *The Birds*, and, more

recently, *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. This is also California's wine country, and just up the coast from Bodega the Timber Cove Inn (timbercoveinn.com) – which was designed by a protégé of Frank Lloyd Wright – makes for an ideal base for oenophiles. Its 49 rooms and suites overlook the ocean, and the on-site restaurant, Alexander's, pays daily tribute to the culinary bounty of the immediate area.

On the doorstep of California's awesome redwood forests, and just outside the heroically named town of Eureka, the Victorian Inn (victorianvillageinn.com) stands in the quaint village of Ferndale. Built at the end of the 19th century, the inn combines historic accommodations with modern amenities such as a charging station for electric cars. Each room is characterised by vintage furnishings and fittings, lofty ceilings and a private bath. Most visitors come to experience

the nearby Avenue of the Giants, a 20km stretch of redwoods that are among the oldest and tallest living things on the planet.

"Whether you are searching for a romantic getaway, taking a family vacation, or travelling on business and expanding your horizons, Victorian Inn is privileged to accommodate you," says co-owner Jenny Oaks.

Naturally, California wouldn't be California without a healthy dose of green living. The Stanford Inn by the Sea (stanfordinn.com) is an eco-friendly resort on the Mendocino Coast; kayaking and bicycling head up the activity list, and the Centre for Living Well provides tips and strategies for leading a better lifestyle. The Ravens is one of North America's most well-regarded vegan restaurants, while the spa provides an enticing range of massages, facials and Ayurvedic treatments.

All the rooms and suites come with a wood-burning stove and a private deck.

# Sunrider transforms lives with financially sound wellness model

At its core, the principle of yin-yang is about the interdependence of contrary forces. Raised on Chinese traditional medicine since childhood, renowned herbalist Dr Tei-Fu Chen fused yin-yang and Western technology to create a wellness model that helps to achieve a balanced life.

This paradigm is known to millions of advocates around the world as the Philosophy of Regeneration, which holds that the body can balance itself and maintain healthy systems by simultaneously nourishing and cleansing it with proper nutrition. Sunrider International, Chen's vehicle for this vision, has led its advocates to abundance with lifestyles built around highly potent health supplements, skincare products and cosmetics.

"We're part of the Chinese culture, but our technology is from the Western world," says Chen, chairman of the board of Sunrider. "We have been established and focused on quality for the past 33 years."

Chen leads a multidisciplinary research team in formulating potent solutions from carefully chosen natural herbs. Representing this fusion of ancient herbal knowledge and Western medical technology, Sunrider products are available in 2,000 retail stores in Asia and across nearly 50 countries today.

It was a profound need for health and financial independence that gave life to Sunrider. Chen and his wife, Sunrider president Dr Oi-Lin Chen, are no strangers to a life of struggles and imbalance.

As a sickly boy, Tei-Fu Chen ate herbs to improve his health and learned about them from his grandfather. Inspired by his grandfather's passion for Chinese herbal philosophy, Tei-Fu Chen studied ancient herbal manuscripts and earned his pharmacy degree from Kaohsiung Medical University in Taiwan. He married Oi-Lin Chen, then a medical student from Hong Kong, and immigrated to the United States to pursue a better life. The couple struggled for many years until Tei-Fu Chen seized the opportunity to start his own company.

At the crest of her family life, with her youngest child being only five years old, Oi-Lin Chen was diagnosed with nasopharyngeal cancer 25 years ago, and was given a 10 per cent chance of survival. Determined to stay alive, Oi-Lin Chen underwent surgery and extensive chemotherapy and radiation sessions while religiously taking Sunrider supplements to strengthen her immunity. Exposure to such procedures makes cancer patients highly susceptible to pneumonia and other fatal complications. Oi-Lin Chen suffered none of these side effects and is in the pink of health except for a slight hearing difficulty.

"We are the first to use our products," Oi-Lin Chen says. "We don't test on animals during research and development. If I like the product and it works really well for my family, then we sell it."

## Harnessing the power of natural ingredients

Sunrider has developed more than 400 wellness products over the past three decades. Melding ancient herbal science with modern medical technology, Sunrider captures the health benefits of natural ingredients through state-of-the-art extraction and concentration processes.

Selecting a large amount of the finest raw herbs and using trade-secret manufacturing methods, Sunrider cleanses, formulates, extracts, spray-dries, enhances and coats the herbs to produce a small amount of concentrated product. Maintaining its merchandise's purity and quality, Sunrider does not use animal proteins nor add chemicals to its products.

"Our strongest point is identifying the nutrient, analysing it inside the food, concentrating it and removing the unwanted substances," Tei-Fu Chen says. "Too much of any one ingredient is not good for us. But there are so many phytochemicals and antioxidants that are very important for optimum health, so we focus only on those useful for nutrition."

Apart from producing dietary supplements, Sunrider opened a one million sq ft manufacturing plant in Kunshan, China, to produce noodles and other prepared food using all-natural and imported ingredients. Sourcing eggs, beef, soy sauce and other whole-food items from known and established producers ensures the quality and safety of Sunrider's food products. Sunrider herbal foods are also free of chemical additives, artificial sweeteners and preservatives.

Applying environmentally-friendly systems, Sunrider's seven

manufacturing facilities worldwide use food-grade, biodegradable lubricants and paints to keep machines running smoothly. Safety and quality control measures are done throughout the production process to test each batch for contaminants.

Standing by the quality and safety of Sunrider products, Tei-Fu and Oi-Lin Chen have passed on the tradition of owner expertise and groundbreaking innovation to two of their sons: Eric Chen, an organic chemist, and Dr Reuben Chen, a medical doctor and acupuncturist. Together, the Chen family leads a team of scientists in personally overseeing the research, formulation and production of Sunrider products.

## Products that nourish and cleanse

As today's fast-paced lifestyle and environment promote unbalanced diets and produce more stress, there is a greater need for more energy and better nutrition. To achieve optimal health, the body must consume large amounts of food to get the required daily volume of nutrients. Sunrider food supplements help people to gain proper nourishment without having to consume too much food.

"My point of view is very simple: can I concentrate the food so people get high nutrition, but don't need to eat too much?" Tei-Fu Chen says.

"I've always believed that overeating is one of the biggest problems today, so we developed SunTrim Plus. Take it 30 to 45 minutes before a meal, and it will help people feel fuller without overeating. Our herbal foods, such as SunBar and Vitashake, are very highly concentrated so they provide our bodies with better nutrition without overeating. We can have healthy and good nutritional food and diet."

Backed by 30 years of experience in the beverage business, Sunrider has developed Evergreen and Fortune Delight super juices that pack high doses of herb essences rich in phytochemicals, antioxidants and bioflavonoids. Evergreen's main ingredient is chlorophyll, which helps clean the intestines and aids in digestion. Fortune Delight is a concentrated tea drink that maximises the benefits of catechins and polyphenols to naturally cleanse the body.

"Certain ingredients need to be concentrated so the body can get the full benefits of the nutrient," Tei-Fu Chen says. "People take health supplements because they want something more nutritious to help them. We also don't focus too much on chemicals such as vitamins. Our concentration is mainly on food."

With falling birth rates and increased life expectancy, Asia's large and ageing population also presents a burgeoning opportunity for Sunrider's nutritional supplements and anti-ageing products.

"We want to grab the tail of youth," Oi-Lin Chen says. "We all hope we can live longer and look a little bit younger. I think the nutritional supplements, skincare range and weight management areas will continue to expand for us."

To meet the demand for anti-ageing products, Sunrider launched Dr Chen Youth Emulsion using the latest DNA technology. Precious stem cell extracts from French grapes and Swiss apples help to repair the signs of ageing and renew the skin's youthful appearance. Addressing concerns among Asians over dull skin tone and age spots, Sunrider's gentle yet effective Brightening Serum will lighten the skin tone without damaging skin.

## Win-win opportunities

Sunrider has successfully integrated the potential of high-quality wellness goods into a worthwhile business strategy. It distributes its products through its independent business owner (IBO) division and authorised business owner (ABO) system. The IBO division caters to markets in Hong Kong, Japan, South Asia, North America and Europe using a direct-selling system. Meanwhile, the ABO system governs retail and franchise stores on the mainland and in South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan. It has been life-changing for many business owners in Asia.

"Our product is very good, so people want it and they are willing to invest their own money selling it," Oi-Lin Chen says. "Our job now, besides selling the product, is also helping people regain their financial freedom."

Offering fair and lucrative compensation schemes, Sunrider provides store owners with inventory management support such as ordering, shipping and

warehousing systems. With low investment and overhead costs, the retail store model has grown rapidly in Asia. Successful business owners are keen on opening new stores in order to build a legacy that they can pass on to their children and family.

"Store owners in China and Asia can usually live on the store profits," Oi-Lin Chen says. "They are able to send their children to America to study. Once the children go back home, they continue managing the store, and that's how they expand."

One of those who continue to benefit from Sunrider's health products and business plan is Tang Kam Tim from Macau. Prior to joining Sunrider 25 years ago, Tang was a salesperson with just a high school education. Today, he is a successful business owner who has earned US\$25 million with Sunrider.

"People are very happy and they make handsome money when they join Sunrider," Tei-Fu Chen says. "It is a win-win situation."



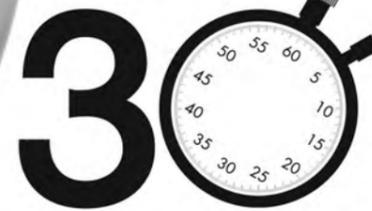
(From left): Dr Oi-Lin Chen, president, and Dr Tei-Fu Chen, chairman of the board

# SUNRIDER®



## suntrim+®

works in just



# 30 minutes

**FAST RESULTS  
for a Healthy,  
Trim Body**



# SUNRIDER®

www.sunrider.com

©2015 The Sunrider Corporation dba Sunrider International. All rights reserved.