

New York ETO welcomes Year of Snake (with photos)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, New York (HKETONY) hosted its annual Hong Kong Spring Reception on February 4 (New York time), welcoming close to 400 guests (tbc) from government agencies, businesses, think tanks, non-profits, academic institutions, cultural organisations and the media to usher in the Year of the Snake.

The Director of the HKETONY, Ms Maisie Ho, extended a warm welcome to attendees and highlighted Hong Kong's resilience and recent accomplishments amid global challenges.

"This year, we welcome the Year of the Snake in the Chinese zodiac – a symbol of wisdom, adaptability, and transformation. The snake sheds its skin to embrace new beginnings, reminding us that change, though sometimes challenging, is essential for growth. In many ways, this symbolism resonates deeply with Hong Kong's journey. We have always been a city that adapts, innovates, and thrives in the face of change."

"In 2024, Hong Kong maintained its position as one of the world's top four IPO venues, raising a total of US\$10.6 billion. Invest Hong Kong also had a record-breaking year, assisting 539 overseas and Mainland companies – including 24 from the United States – to set up operations in Hong Kong. We also saw an all-time high of 15 126 non-Hong Kong companies registering in the city," she shared.

Ms Ho further emphasised the strength of Hong Kong's economic ties with the US, noting that Hong Kong is home to 1 390 US firms, the highest in recent history. "The US is one of Hong Kong's leading trading partners and consistently enjoys trade surplus with Hong Kong over the years. Over the past decade, there has been a trade surplus amounting to US\$270 billion," she said.

During her address, Ms Ho expressed gratitude to the "Hong Kong Family" – the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Invest Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), and the Hong Kong Association of New York – for their on-going support.

The evening was further enriched by a special performance featuring three talented Hong Kong musicians: violinist Ding Yijie, erhu player Yang Enhua (both from the Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong), and professional pianist Laurina Hong. Sponsored by the HKETONY and Cathay Pacific, the trio presented a captivating selection of music blending Eastern and Western traditions, showcasing Hong Kong's commitment to diversity and inclusivity.

Hong Kong's creativity was also celebrated with two striking inflatable art installations by local creative brand Chocolate Rain. These pieces were

part of the "Hong Kong Meets America – Pop Art Exhibition" at the American Dream Mall last October, adding a unique touch to the evening's festive atmosphere.

Additionally, the HKTB featured renowned wine and spirits expert Anthony Giglio, who shared his insights into Hong Kong's bar scene and introduced the evening's signature cocktail, "The Cloud Nine", which added a distinctive and flavourful touch to the celebration.

