

150th Anniversary of Guia Lighthouse

The Guia Lighthouse was designed by Carlos Vicente da Rocha, a Portuguese born in Macao. It has been 150 years since the Lighthouse was built in 1864 and began operating for the first time on 24 September of the following year, witnessing silently the hundred-year change of Macao up on the hill. In 1992, the Lighthouse was selected as one of the “Eight Attractions of Macao” and was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as part of the Historic Centre of Macao in 2005.

Situated on the top of the Guia Hill, the highest point on the Macao peninsula, on the Guia Fortress as well as beside the Chapel of Our Lady of Guia, the Lighthouse is one of the oldest lighthouses on the coast of China. It was the landmark for ships entering the Pearl River before radars became popular. The geographical position of Macao on the world map is defined by the coordinates of the Lighthouse.

Before electricity was in use in Macao, the Lighthouse was originally operated by a kerosene lamp. It was seriously damaged by a typhoon in 1874 and was later restored in 1910, with a new lens assembly and a rotating system installed. In 1927, light bulbs became the source of light whereas the rotating system was replaced by an electric motor in 1975. Nowadays, there is a modern system of illumination, of which the light it emits can be seen 16 nautical miles away, rotating anti-clockwise at a speed of about three revolutions per minute, guiding the way for navigators. As the Lighthouse is in an elevated position, a mast, where typhoon and strong monsoon signals are hoisted, is erected next to it.

Painted in white with a red dome, the magnificent Lighthouse is a 15-metre high cylindrical structure. The base of the Lighthouse is seven metres in diameter and narrows upwards to five metres. The Lighthouse has three storeys, with a flight of spiral stairs connecting the vertical space. The staircase leads to the top of the Lighthouse, from which a panoramic view of the Macao peninsula and the “Historic Centre of Macao” can be enjoyed. Tourists and citizens are free to visit the interior of the Lighthouse on the “Marine and Water Bureau Day” every year and go up there to appreciate the beautiful view of Macao.

Marine and Water Bureau