

'Gold rush' for new iPhones in Hong Kong and China

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A gold iPhone 5S at Apple's headquarters in Cupertino, California last week. Apple's first gold-colour iPhone sold out immediately in Hong Kong and mainland China, according to reports and online buyers desperate to snap up the new status symbol.

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State-run news website sh.eastday.com reported Wednesday that the gold iPhone 5S models were quickly bought up after online pre-orders began Tuesday morning.

"The Apple reservation page went down once. In forums, many people talked about how they were begging to buy the gold model," it said, adding that by 1:00 pm (0500 GMT) on Tuesday all three 5S colours in every store had been reserved.

Favoured by emperors and representing wealth and luxury in Chinese culture, gold has become a badge of the country's newly wealthy.

Pre-orders for the iPhone 5S—also available in silver and "space grey"—launched at 6:00 am Tuesday in both Hong Kong and mainland China.

"Right after it started, the champagne gold model was sold out," Phoenix TV—a Hong Kong-based broadcaster with most of its audience living on the mainland—said on its website.

It was not clear how many gold phones had been made available to pre-order.

Users on Hong Kong forums who had managed to pre-order the grey or silver version of the phone were looking to trade for a gold one.

"Do I have to wait a while for there to be more stock? From the bottom of my heart, I really want a 32 gigabyte gold iPhone," sliverfly said on Hong Kong forum Discuss.com.

Although Hong Kong resellers say demand is down for the new 5S and

5C models because they are also available on the mainland—the first simultaneous launch to both markets—one dealer told AFP that the gold phones could still resell at a profit.



A woman inspects custom-built iPhone cases in Hong Kong. Pre-orders for the iPhone 5S—available in gold, silver and "space grey"—launched at 6:00 am Tuesday in both Hong Kong and mainland China.

"Gold represents you are actually holding a new phone," said Lau Chi-kong of G-world Mobile in the commercial district of Mong Kok.

"There will be (a margin) of a few hundred dollars to a thousand (Hong Kong dollars)".

Another told Hong Kong newspaper Apple Daily that the gold iPhones could sell for at least HK\$8,000 (\$1,000), an HK\$2,000 mark-up on the

official price.

There are also rumours on some mainland Chinese technology websites about the possibility of a new gold-colour iPad.



A \$25,760 (200,000 HKD) custom-built iPhone 5 with a rose gold dressing, on sale in Hong Kong in April. Favoured by emperors and representing wealth and luxury in Chinese culture, gold has become a badge of the country's newly wealthy.

Apple's Hong Kong website on Wednesday took down the link to the 5S pre-order page, saying reservations would resume on September 21.

The company brought in the pre-order system in Hong Kong after chaos at the iPhone 4S launch in 2011, where hundreds queued for days to buy a phone from the city's flagship store and resellers crowded the area.

And in January last year Apple suspended sales of the 4s at its China stores after fans desperate to get their hands on it fought with security and threw eggs at an official outlet.

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